

# **The Exploration and Reflection on Task-Based Language Teaching in Spoken English Teaching at Primary Schools: A Case Study of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County**

Jinli WU, Ruolin LIN

Department of English Education, School of International Studies, Guangdong University of Education, Guangzhou, Guangdong, 510303 Corresponding Author: Ruolin LIN, Email: [linruolin@gdei.edu.cn](mailto:linruolin@gdei.edu.cn)

## **Abstract**

This study aims to explore how the task-based approach can be effectively implemented in the teaching of spoken English in primary schools and to reflect on its impact on students' speaking outcomes. In recent years, TBLT has been increasingly adopted in primary English language teaching due to its ability to create a more engaging, authentic, and student-centered classroom environment. However, despite its theoretical advantages, TBLT still faces many challenges when applied in primary school contexts. Using Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County as a case study, this research collects and analyzes data through classroom observations, student questionnaires, and teacher interviews to examine the practical effects and implementation challenges of TBLT in teaching spoken English in primary schools. Potential problems are identified through this empirical investigation, and strategies are proposed to enhance the effective application of TBLT in the teaching of oral English in primary schools while supporting teacher professional development.

**Keywords** Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT); spoken English teaching; coping strategies

## **1 Introduction**

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a significant paradigm in modern language education, centered on the core principle of “learning by doing.” It advocates driving language learning through the completion of authentic, meaningful communicative tasks. Compared to the mechanical memorization and imitation in traditional teaching, TBLT places greater emphasis on the practical application of language, which particularly aligns with the cognitive characteristics of elementary school students, who are lively, active, and adept at imitation.

In recent years, with the new curriculum standards placing greater emphasis on core competencies, this student-centered teaching method, which emphasizes participation and authenticity, has gradually gained attention in elementary school English classrooms. However, a gap remains between the ideal and reality. The uneven distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas has led to

inadequate hardware facilities in some schools. Moreover, the absence of an immersive English learning environment has weakened the continuity of language input. In addition, most teachers, due to insufficient professional training, struggle to accurately grasp the gradient and complexity of task design. These issues have become key bottlenecks hindering its effective implementation.

In this context, conducting in-depth research on the implementation pathways and effects of TBLT in primary school settings holds significant theoretical value and practical significance. In view of this, this study aims to explore the practical efficacy of task-based language teaching in primary school English classrooms and evaluate its impact on enhancing students' oral communication skills and classroom adaptation mechanisms. Additionally, this study intends to identify the challenges faced by both teachers and students during the implementation of TBLT and propose corresponding strategies. By providing insights into practices and reflections on potential improvements, this research contributes to the development of more effective language teaching methodologies for primary schools and promotes the professional growth of English teachers.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Definition of Task-based Language Teaching

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) emerged in the 1980s within the broader context of communicative pedagogy, which was prevalent at the time. David Nunan (1989), in his book *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*, defines TBLT as a learner-centered method that improves language use by engaging learners in communicative tasks such as discussions, role-plays, and information-gap activities.

Michael Willis (1996), in *A Framework for Task-based Learning*, outlines the basic framework of TBLT. He defines it as a meaning-centered approach in which learners acquire language by completing tasks designed around real-life situations, allowing them to use language naturally in the process.

Hu (2023) defines TBLT as a task-driven approach that links tasks to the curriculum and guides students through multiple interactions to enhance literacy. Jiang (2023) describes TBLT in English teaching as a new method in which teachers assign specific tasks and students complete them through communication, discussion, and analysis to achieve learning outcomes. Hu (2024) further explains that TBLT centers on teaching tasks, serving curriculum goals through a series of structured teaching activities.

In addition, many other scholars have contributed to its development, and with the continuous evolution of educational theory and practice, the definition of TBLT has been further enriched and refined.

### 2.2 Studies on Task-Based Language Teaching at Home

In China, numerous studies have focused on the implementation and effectiveness of task-based language teaching in primary English education, revealing the challenges of and responses to its application.

Some scholars have elaborated on the positive effects of TBLT. Ni and Gu (2018) introduce its implementation process and practical use in oral English teaching in primary schools, guiding students to use English in completing tasks, which can effectively improve students' oral proficiency.

Scholars such as Chen (2019) and Liu (2021) further explore strategies for applying TBLT in oral English teaching, emphasizing its importance in stimulating students' interest in learning, improving teaching quality, and cultivating communicative competence, and argue that highlighting students' subject position in the classroom and focusing on students can stimulate interest and make teaching closer to life. Hou (2022) briefly discusses and analyzes the effects of the application of TBLT in primary school oral English teaching, stressing that it can strengthen students' oral communication ability and enhance teaching effectiveness.

Other scholars point out problems in the implementation of TBLT in primary school English teaching. Jiang (2018) finds through questionnaires and interviews that there are problems in task-based teaching, such as teaching goals emphasizing knowledge rather than ability, teachers' vague concepts, complicated tasks, reversed teaching sequences, misplaced links, and a single teaching evaluation. Jiang (2023) also analyzes the problems and countermeasures in the application of TBLT, pointing out that the teaching method has novelty and reasonableness but also limitations that require teachers to reflect deeply in their teaching practice.

In response to the problems and challenges of TBLT in oral English teaching in primary schools, some researchers propose improvement strategies. Hu (2023) proposes solutions from five dimensions: interest-based teaching, hierarchical teaching, informative teaching, cooperative teaching, and evaluative teaching, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in primary schools. Zhou (2023) emphasizes that when implementing task-driven teaching, it is important to focus on the authenticity, contextualization, and attractiveness of tasks to stimulate students' learning interest and motivation. In addition, considering the dilemmas facing the implementation of task-driven teaching in rural primary schools, Hu (2024) proposes solution strategies such as strengthening teacher training, improving teaching conditions, and enriching teaching resources, expecting to enhance the effectiveness of task-driven teaching in rural primary school oral English teaching.

### 2.3 Studies on Task-Based Language Teaching Abroad

In foreign countries, research on the application of TBLT in primary school oral English teaching has been quite mature.

In terms of enhancing oral proficiency, Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2010) point out that TBLT can meet learners' communicative needs and improve their oral proficiency by simulating the use of language in real-life situations. Sariçoban and Karakurt (2016) further confirm the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing ELLs' listening and speaking skills, finding that students' listening and speaking scores are significantly higher after implementing TBLT. They also find that students' attitudes toward the method are generally positive, suggesting that TBLT not only enhances language skills but also increases motivation and interest in learning. Similarly, Feiteiro and Básico (2018) support the effectiveness of TBLT in increasing elementary students' proficiency in spoken English in a primary school in Portugal, with students' speaking fluency and accuracy improved after the implementation of TBLT. Masuram and Sripada (2020) emphasize the importance of TBLT in the development of English speaking skills, pointing out that the design of challenging and practical speaking tasks can stimulate students' language learning potential, improve their oral expression skills, and develop their linguistic thinking and self-directed learning abilities, thus laying the foundation for future language learning.

In terms of specific implementation strategies, foreign scholars have explored them in depth. For example, Omar et al. (2021) use the task-based approach to teach spoken Malay in their study in Singapore, and find that designing tasks that match students' cognitive levels and life experiences can significantly improve students' oral fluency and vocabulary use, which proves that this approach is also effective in cross-cultural oral language teaching contexts.

With the development of information technology, Mulyadi et al. (2021) begin to explore the integration of technology and task-based language teaching. They show that through the integration of online resources and digital tools, students can be provided with more diversified language input and output opportunities, which can effectively promote the development of their listening and speaking skills.

## 2.4 Summary of Literature Review

According to the definitions of the task-based language teaching method proposed by scholars at home and abroad, the author believes that the task-based language teaching method refers to an emphasis on student-centeredness, enabling students to improve their language use ability, problem-solving ability, and comprehensive literacy in the process of completing real or simulated tasks designed in accordance with the requirements of the curriculum.

Studies at home and abroad have shown that TBLT has positive effects on elementary school English teaching, such as improving students' oral proficiency, stimulating learning interest, and developing communicative competence. However, TBLT also faces challenges in implementation. Teaching resources are limited, especially in rural areas. Teachers' understanding and application abilities vary, and some still cling to traditional modes. Designing engaging tasks is an urgent need.

Therefore, this study, based on prior research, will explore TBLT's implementation and effects in primary English-speaking classes, aiming to offer new insights and references.

## 3 A Case Study of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County

### 3.1 Research Issue

Based on the above analysis of background and significance, this study aims to provide elementary school English teachers with strategies for solving the problems related to the application of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in speaking classes in order to improve its effectiveness. This research will focus on the following key questions: How is task-based language teaching specifically integrated into the English-speaking classroom of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County? What challenges are faced by the teachers and students of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County in the process of implementing task-based language teaching? What are the effective coping strategies for addressing these challenges in the implementation of task-based language teaching?

### 3.2 Research Object

The research objects of this study were Grade Three to Six students and teachers of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County.

For the student part, all students from the third to sixth grades of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County were surveyed. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed and collected, with a response rate of 100%. The survey covered students' basic information, classroom participation, views on TBLT, and perceptions of English oral learning, aiming to understand students' experiences and attitudes toward TBLT in English oral classes.

Regarding the teacher part, three English teachers from Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County were interviewed. Teacher A, with 8 years of teaching experience, Teacher B, with 10 years of teaching experience, and Teacher C, with 24 years of teaching experience, shared their understanding, application, and challenges of TBLT in oral English teaching, as well as their suggestions for its improvement and future development.

### 3.3 Research Methodology

To achieve the research objectives, three main methods will be employed: classroom observation, student surveys, and teacher interviews. Classroom observation aims to provide a detailed account of how TBLT is implemented in real teaching settings. The student questionnaire gathers data directly from students regarding their experiences with TBLT in English oral classes. Interviews with teachers offer an in-depth

understanding of their experiences and perspectives on implementing TBLT. Through these methods, this study will gather qualitative and quantitative data to illustrate the practical aspects of applying TBLT and assess its impact on language learning outcomes.

### 3.4 Research Results

#### 3.4.1 Classroom Observation

The lesson observed was Unit 3 *Amazing Animals*, Part A *What pets do you know?*, taught by Miss Chen from Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County, using the new version of the People's Education Press textbook for the third grade of primary school. This lesson takes pets as the topic, is close to students' lives, stimulates interest, and adopts the task-based language teaching method, which realistically reflects the condition of oral teaching in this school and provides a typical case for the study of the effects and problems of applying TBLT in oral teaching in elementary schools.

The implementation of each stage of TBLT in this class, including the pre-task, task-cycle (comprising task, planning, and reporting), and language focus (including analysis and practice), based on the three steps of task-based classroom teaching proposed by British linguist Jane Willis (1996) in her monograph *A Framework for Task-based Learning*, was observed and analyzed, and its effects and existing problems were evaluated. The situation and effect of each part of this English class using TBLT are as follows.

Table 1: The Recording of Classroom Observation Form about TBLT

Teaching Link	Observation points	Procedures	Evaluation
1. Pre-Task	Lead-in of the task	The teacher reviewed the knowledge of Unit 1 through daily greetings and introduced the class naturally. Asked questions with the theme of pets, such as Do you have a pet and What pets do you know, and also used the song <i>I have a pet</i> to create an atmosphere and guided students to pay attention to the pet-related issues. The song created an atmosphere that led students to pay attention to pet-related content and naturally led in the classroom task.	This effectively activated students' existing knowledge, attracted their attention, stimulated their interest in the topic of pets, and paved the way for the subsequent tasks, but the clarity of the objectives of the task could be further strengthened in the introductory link.
2. Task-cycle			
a. task	Task types and students' performance	In this lesson, the teacher arranged activities such as read and check, listen and fill, role-play, and do a survey, so that students could use their language knowledge to carry out tasks related to the topic of pets in real-life situations.	Students had more opportunities to participate in language practice and improved their language skills to a certain extent.
b. planning	Teacher's guidance and students' preparation	The link was not clearly shown in this lesson.	As a result, it was unclear whether students were preparing for reporting, and there was a lack of organized processes for students to prepare on how to report task completion to the class.
c. reporting	Students' reporting process and content	This section was not shown in this lesson.	Students lacked the opportunity to report the results of the tasks to the whole class, which was not conducive to the development of students' ability to summarize and express themselves, and it was also difficult for the teacher to get a comprehensive understanding of the overall situation of students' task completion.
3. Language focus			
a. analysis	Analysis of other groups' tasks	This lesson did not mention the analysis of other groups' performance through audio recording.	Students couldn't gain experience and found problems from others' performance, which was not conducive to the comprehensiveness and accuracy of language learning.
b. practice	Practice of language difficulties	This lesson focused on teaching vocabulary and sentence patterns, and drills by listening to the recording, filling in the blanks and pair-work.	The activities could help students consolidate the difficult points to a certain extent, but there was a lack of systematic special practice for the difficult points, and the depth and breadth of the drills were insufficient.

Overall, although this lesson adopts some concepts of TBLT, there are deficiencies in the task-cycle process and in the implementation of the complete language focus stage. These shortcomings limit the full effectiveness of TBLT, but the design and implementation of these stages can be improved in future teaching to enhance the overall teaching effect.

#### 3.4.2 Questionnaire for Students

The subjects of the survey were all students from Grades 3 to 6 of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County. The sample was representative and reflected the overall situation of primary school students' experiences with task-based language teaching in English-speaking classes at this school.

Based on relevant theories of TBLT and the characteristics of oral English teaching in primary schools, a questionnaire was designed to cover students' basic information, classroom participation, views on task-based language teaching, and perceptions of oral English learning. The questionnaire included single-choice, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions to ensure that authentic feedback from students could be comprehensively collected. After the questionnaires were collected, the data were organized and analyzed.

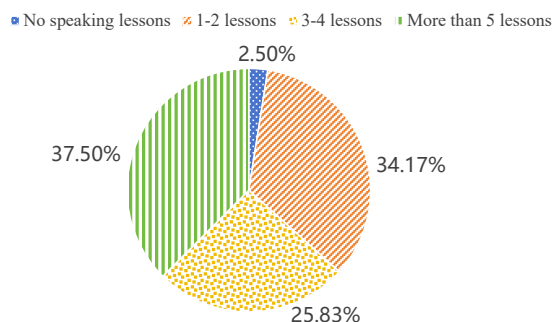


Figure 1 The Frequency of Spoken English Lessons

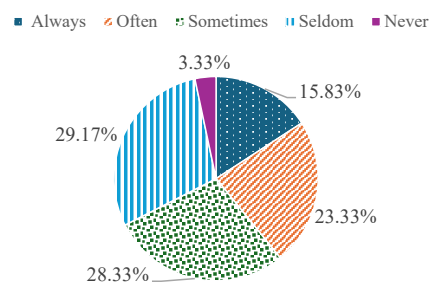


Figure 2 The Frequency of Teachers Assign Some Small Tasks in Teaching

In terms of the frequency of spoken English lessons, Figure 1 shows that more than 60% of students have at least three spoken English classes per week, indicating that the school attaches a certain degree of importance to speaking instruction. However, some students reported having few or no speaking lessons, which highlights the problem of uneven allocation of resources for spoken English teaching in the school.

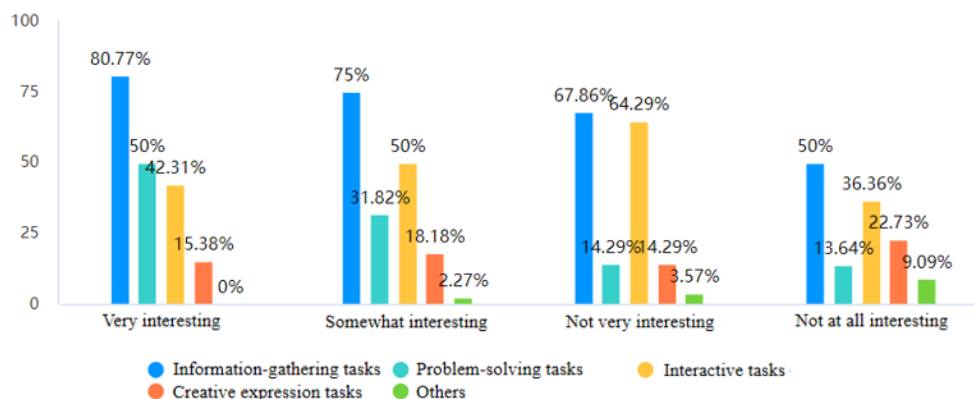


Figure 3 Cross-tabulation Figure of Students' Perceptions of Small Tasks in Spoken English Class and Students' Preferences for Types of Task Activities in English Spoken Class

Regarding classroom task assignments, students' feedback shows varied characteristics. As shown in Figure 2, more than one-third of students believe that teachers assign small tasks infrequently, suggesting that the role of TBLT still needs to be strengthened. Figure 3 further shows that, in terms of students' interest in tasks in oral English classes, information-gathering tasks are the most popular, with 80.77% of students rating them as "very interesting," indicating that such tasks strongly attract learners. Interactive tasks also have a relatively high percentage of "somewhat interesting" and "very interesting," demonstrating that they are well received by many students. By contrast, problem-solving and creative expression tasks are less popular overall, although some students enjoy them. This suggests that teachers should optimize the design of these tasks to increase their appeal.



Table 2: Cross-tabulation Table of Students' Perception of the Difficulty of Tasks and Students' Participation Situation in Completing Tasks in English Spoken Class

X/Y	Always actively participate	Usually actively participate	Occasionally participate	Hardly participate	Total
Very easy	9(60%)	3(20%)	1(6.67%)	2(13.33%)	15
Relatively easy	5(20.83%)	7(29.17%)	8(33.33%)	4(16.67%)	24
Moderately difficult	2(6.25%)	4(12.5%)	20(62.5%)	6(18.75%)	32
More difficult	1(4%)	4(16%)	8(32%)	12(48%)	25
Very difficult	5(20.83%)	1(4.17%)	6(25%)	12(50%)	24

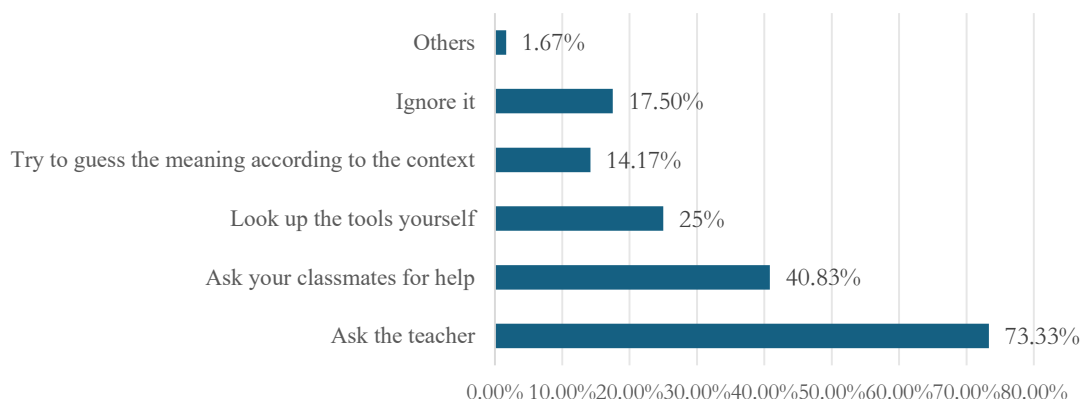


Figure 4 Students' Approach When Encountering Words or Expressions They Don't Understand in English Spoken Class

Table 2 presents a cross-tabulation of students' perceptions of task difficulty and task participation. The results show that the easier the task, the higher the rate of active participation; the more difficult the task, the lower the level of active participation—especially for “very difficult” tasks, where 50% of students reported “hardly participate.” This indicates that task difficulty significantly influences students' engagement, and teachers should carefully manage task difficulty.

Figure 4 illustrates students' responses to unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions in spoken English classes. When encountering such difficulties, 73.33% of students reported asking the teacher for help, suggesting a high level of dependence on teachers and a weak ability to solve problems independently. Therefore, teachers should place greater emphasis on cultivating students' autonomous learning skills.

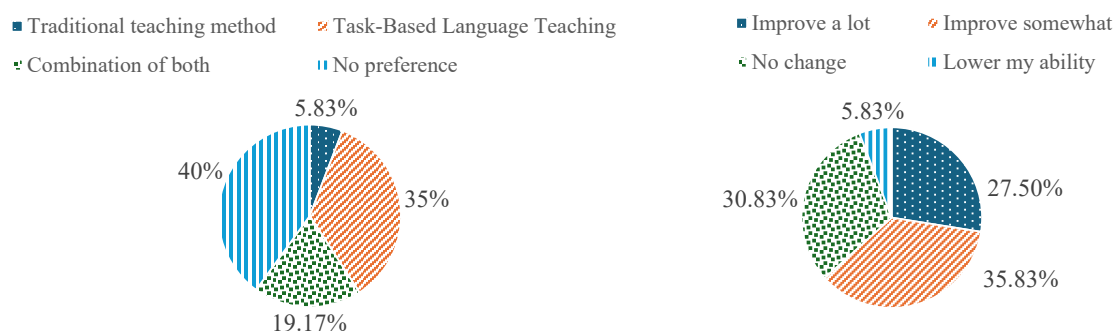


Figure 5 Students' Preferences for Traditional Teaching Method or Task-Based Language Teaching

Figure 6 Students' Opinions on Whether Task-Based Language Teaching Method Enhances Their English Spoken Ability

As shown in Figure 5, 35% of students prefer task-based language teaching, 19.17% prefer a combination of the two, while 45.83% report having only a vague understanding of TBLT or a preference for traditional methods. Figure 6 shows that 63.33% of students recognize that task-based teaching can improve their speaking ability, whereas 5.83% believe that their ability has declined. These findings suggest

that although task-based teaching is generally effective, it still requires continuous optimization to ensure that every student can truly benefit and improve their spoken English proficiency.

### 3.4.3 Interviews with Teachers

In contemporary primary school English education, Task-Based Language Teaching, a student-centered teaching approach that emphasizes practical language proficiency, is increasingly demonstrating its unique educational value. Through in-depth interviews with three English teachers at Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County, we gain insights into the real-world application of this teaching method in grassroots educational practice. Drawing on their extensive teaching experience, the three teachers shared their views on the advantages, practical applications, challenges, and improvement suggestions for TBLT from multiple perspectives, providing valuable firsthand insights for optimizing elementary school English oral teaching.

All three teachers acknowledged the significant role of TBLT in stimulating students' proactive learning. They pointed out that traditional rote learning often leads to students passively absorbing knowledge, whereas TBLT transforms language learning into a process of completing specific tasks by creating real or simulated real-life scenarios, thereby making students the central focus of the classroom. For example, Teacher A observed that after adopting TBLT, students could actively associate topics such as weather and cuisine when discussing seasonal themes, rather than mechanically memorizing textbook sentence patterns, demonstrating the flexibility and creativity of language learning. Teacher B designed a task titled "Describe a Room," where students had to collaborate in groups to observe images and describe the room layout in English. In this process, students not only improved their oral expression skills but also engaged in logical thinking to organize their language, while cultivating teamwork spirit. This "learning by doing" model shifts language learning from mechanical memorization to meaning construction, effectively enhancing students' learning interest and confidence. Teacher C mentioned fun designs like "adventure games" and "rescue missions," which further show how TBLT can motivate students to learn. By incorporating teaching content into a series of game-like tasks, students naturally acquired language while completing tasks and felt a sense of accomplishment when they succeeded, creating a positive cycle of "interest—participation—skill improvement."

Although TBLT has significant advantages, its application in rural schools still faces multiple challenges. Teacher A pointed out that the lack of an English language environment in remote mountainous areas is the greatest constraint. Due to limited opportunities to encounter English in daily life, students struggle to complete complex communicative tasks within the short timeframe of class, especially in sections involving cultural background knowledge. This issue highlights TBLT's strong reliance on context and places higher demands on teachers' course design capabilities. The challenge of designing universally applicable tasks is equally prominent. Teacher B pointed out that when dealing with students of varying proficiency levels in a class, teachers must balance the need for tasks to be both challenging and foundational, akin to "walking a tightrope." Teacher C also noted that lesson design is a major challenge. While the concept of differentiated instruction is widely accepted, in practice, teachers have limited time and resources to tailor tasks for each student. Additionally, some students, due to introverted personalities or weak foundational skills, are reluctant to speak up, leading to "free-riding" phenomena in group activities that undermine overall effectiveness. The compatibility of classroom management and evaluation systems is another key challenge. Teacher B mentioned that while TBLT emphasizes student-driven inquiry, an overly free classroom atmosphere may lead to a loss of order; traditional exam-based evaluation methods struggle to fully reflect students' language application skills and collaborative spirit in tasks. These contradictions indicate that the implementation of TBLT requires supporting management mechanisms and a diversified evaluation system.



In the face of these challenges, the three teachers demonstrated rich practical wisdom. In terms of task stratification, Teacher A assigned roles based on students' oral proficiency levels, while Teacher C provided tasks of varying difficulty levels for selection, respecting individual differences while ensuring full participation. To address the issue of students' reluctance to speak, Teacher A employed encouragement strategies and role-switching methods to reduce psychological pressure and promote willingness to express themselves. Teacher B provided pre-task language scaffolding (such as key vocabulary and sentence templates) and process-oriented guidance to help students with weaker foundations gradually build confidence. Technology-enabled solutions emerged as a key pathway to overcoming challenges. Teacher C actively utilized online resources and artificial intelligence tools to assist in lesson design, enriching the authenticity of task scenarios while reducing the teacher's preparation burden. Teacher B's advocated "trial presentation—feedback—adjustment" cycle mechanism embodies a dynamic optimization mindset in course design. In terms of evaluation reform, Teacher B experimented with combining oral presentations, written records, and peer evaluations to construct a multi-dimensional evaluation system that more comprehensively reflects students' learning outcomes.

Looking ahead, all three teachers are optimistic about the potential for integrating TBLT with other teaching methods. Teacher B suggested that combining project-based learning (PBL) with TBLT can extend task cycles and deepen the depth of inquiry; incorporating gamification elements can enhance engagement among younger students. Teacher C believed that designing tasks based on local life experiences, such as simulating shopping at a farmers' market or introducing local specialties, can bridge the gap between English learning and daily life, enhancing practicality. Notably, the teachers emphasized the importance of "adapting to local conditions." Teacher A reminded that in rural schools with limited hardware resources, low-cost, easy-to-implement task formats should be prioritized; Teacher B advocated strengthening teacher training to enhance task design and classroom management capabilities. These insights indicate that the successful implementation of TBLT requires not only theoretical guidance but also localized innovations based on school and student circumstances.

## 4 The Exploration of TBLT in Spoken English Teaching in Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County

Based on the above three research methods, the problems and reasons are analyzed regarding the application of TBLT in the spoken English classroom of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County.

### 4.1 Poor Independent Learning Ability of Students

In the practice of elementary school English speaking teaching, a phenomenon that cannot be ignored is quietly emerging: when faced with learning obstacles, over half of the students instinctively turn to the teacher for answers. This seemingly ordinary behavior reflects the severe challenges in the development of contemporary elementary students' independent learning abilities. This phenomenon is particularly prominent in the implementation of the task-based teaching method, becoming a key bottleneck hindering the improvement of language practice effectiveness.

The inertia of traditional teaching models acts like an invisible shackle, severely restricting students' cognitive development. For a long time, teaching paradigms centered on knowledge transmission have transformed English learning into a mechanical memorization process, with vocabulary memorization and grammar drills dominating classroom activities. Students raised in this environment have grown accustomed to passively accepting standard answers, gradually losing their ability to actively question and explore. When task-based teaching methods require them to independently plan interview processes and design survey questionnaires, many students exhibit obvious discomfort, revealing a dual dilemma of men-

tal inertia and methodological deficiencies.

Deviations in students' cognitive structures further exacerbate this passive state. Under the influence of exam-oriented education, a significant proportion of students equate learning with reproducing textbook content, viewing teacher-demonstrated dialogue templates as the only correct form of expression. This cognitive pattern leads them to be constrained when performing real tasks, and they often get stuck even when faced with simple role-playing. More worryingly, some students have even developed a psychological dependence on "waiting for instructions" and lack the basic ability to actively break down task objectives and formulate implementation plans.

The reality of the classroom environment is also cause for concern. Although task-based teaching advocates a student-centered approach, in practice, many teachers still find it difficult to break away from traditional role definitions. Limited class time and heavy teaching schedules have compressed the task exploration phase, which should be student-led, into a rushed formality. When group collaboration becomes a monologue by top students and the presentation of results becomes a fixed script performance, so-called "independent learning" loses its substantive meaning.

This lack of ability is particularly evident in oral practice. Students can recite textbook dialogues fluently but freeze up in real-life communication scenarios; they excel at written exercises but dare not participate in impromptu debates. The frequent "wave of requests for help" during task implementation is a direct reflection of this capability gap. When teachers attempt to let students independently plan English corner activities, they often receive disorganized proposals and anxious glances.

These issues are not accidental but the result of long-term educational imbalances. They remind us that the effective implementation of task-based teaching methods requires not only curriculum design reforms but also a profound restructuring of students' learning methods. Only by acknowledging this gap in skills can we truly understand the urgent need for reforms in task-based teaching methods.

## 4.2 Insufficient Ability in Task Design and Implementation

The shortcomings in task design and implementation hinder the effective application of TBLT. These systemic deficiencies manifest not only in the superficial characteristics of teaching practices but also in the underlying educational philosophy, creating implicit barriers that impede the development of students' language skills.

There is a significant imbalance between the frequency and quality of task design. Some teachers view task assignments as supplementary to regular instruction rather than the core of teaching, resulting in low frequency and lack of continuity in task implementation. This fragmented task arrangement fails to form a continuous chain of language practice, leaving students without a sense of task awareness by the time the activity concludes, and unable to experience the complete problem-solving process. More concerning is the structural bias in task type selection, with knowledge reproduction tasks dominating, while problem-solving and creative expression tasks requiring higher-order thinking remain chronically absent, resulting in cognitive challenges that remain stagnant at the memory level.

The lack of attention to student circumstances exacerbates the difficulty of task implementation. Many task designs fail to adequately consider the graded differences in students' English proficiency levels, either being too difficult for most students to attempt or too simple to stimulate thinking. This "one-size-fits-all" design approach ignores the gradual nature of language acquisition, leaving students with weak foundations trapped in a cycle of frustration while those with excess capacity miss out on opportunities for development. The ambiguity of task objectives further amplifies these negative effects, as some tasks lack clear evaluation criteria, causing students to lose direction during execution.

Insufficient professional preparation among teachers constitutes the underlying cause of the aforementioned issues. Path dependence formed under traditional teaching paradigms has led some teachers to

continue to view themselves as knowledge transmitters rather than learning facilitators. This role perception bias directly impacts the professionalism of task design, manifesting as inappropriate grasp of task elements—either overemphasizing language form at the expense of communicative function, or pursuing entertainment value at the expense of language objectives. The absence of guidance during task implementation is particularly prominent, from the creation of contextual settings at the task's inception, to timely intervention during process monitoring, to feedback and improvement after results presentation—many critical stages fail to form an effective closed-loop system.

Shallow theoretical understanding leads to superficial practical implementation. Some teachers' understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of task-based learning remains at the conceptual level, failing to accurately grasp core elements such as task difficulty gradients, the creation of authentic contexts, and the principle of meaning priority. This disconnect between theory and practice reduces task-based instruction to a formalistic classroom decoration, unable to truly fulfill its role in promoting the development of language proficiency. The disjointed nature of task chain design is particularly evident, with tasks lacking logical connections and cognitive progression, making it difficult to form a spiral-shaped trajectory of language development.

### 4.3 Incomplete Teacher Training System

Classroom observation reveals a concerning gap in the understanding and implementation of task-based language teaching among some teachers. This not only slows down the pace of teachers' professional growth but also directly impacts the effectiveness of task-based teaching methods in the classroom, creating a key bottleneck that hinders improvements in teaching quality.

The fragmented nature of the current training system significantly weakens its effectiveness. Most training activities are scattered and reactive in nature, lacking a systematic plan centered around the core elements of task-based teaching methods. Training content often focuses on isolated skill points, failing to establish a comprehensive knowledge system encompassing task design principles, classroom implementation strategies, and diverse evaluation methods. This fragmented training model prevents teachers from developing a holistic understanding of task-based teaching methods, leading to imbalances in actual teaching practices.

The practical application of theoretical knowledge faces significant obstacles. Traditional training overly relies on theoretical lectures and lacks effective integration with real teaching contexts. When teachers face complex and dynamic classroom environments, they struggle to translate abstract teaching concepts into concrete operational strategies. Especially in critical areas such as controlling task difficulty gradients, selecting student grouping strategies, and implementing formative assessment, the absence of targeted guidance leads teachers into the trap of relying on experience-based approaches. This disconnect between theory and practice prevents the unique advantages of task-based teaching from being fully realized.

The lack of authoritative professional guidance exacerbates implementation deviations. Some trainers have only a superficial understanding of task-based teaching methods and are unable to provide persuasive demonstrations and guidance. When teachers encounter difficulties in practice, they lack both a repository of excellent lesson examples to reference and timely guidance from expert teams. This vacuum in professional support forces teachers to rely on personal exploration to advance teaching reforms, significantly increasing the risk of innovation failure.

The misguided orientation of the training evaluation system further weakens its effectiveness. An evaluation method that primarily relies on accumulated class hours as an indicator fosters a formalistic attitude toward learning. Many teachers mechanically record notes to complete training tasks without truly internalizing the core concepts of task-based teaching. This training culture that prioritizes form

over substance transforms learning activities intended to promote professional development into superficial efforts to meet inspection requirements.

The inadequacy of the teacher training system has essentially caused a transmission barrier between educational reform concepts and teaching practices. When teachers' professional growth lacks a scientific and systematic cultivation path, the student-centered teaching philosophy advocated by task-based teaching methods struggles to break free from the inertia of traditional teaching models, ultimately affecting the quality of cultivating core competencies in the English subject.

#### 4.4 Uneven Distribution of Teaching Resources

Regional disparities in the allocation of basic resources directly constrain the scope for implementing task-based teaching. There are significant differences among schools in terms of English class schedules, specialized classroom facilities, and multimedia equipment, and these disparities in material conditions directly impact the richness and frequency of task design and implementation. While some schools can conduct high-interactivity tasks such as immersive drama performances and themed debates, others still rely on mechanical repetition for oral training, with the limited variety of task types severely undermining the authenticity and challenge of language practice.

The digital resource access gap exacerbates disparities in teaching effectiveness. In the context of the information age, mechanisms for the co-construction and sharing of high-quality teaching resources have not yet been fully established, leading to significant obstacles for teachers in accessing task materials tailored to their school's specific circumstances. This disparity in resource access capabilities forces some teachers to rely on generic, off-the-shelf lesson plans, making it difficult to adapt them to students' actual levels, thereby trapping task design in a template-based rut.

Structural imbalances in teacher allocation exacerbate the waste of resource efficiency. High-quality English teachers are overly concentrated in key schools, while ordinary schools face dual pressures of shortages of full-time teachers and high teacher turnover. This Matthew effect in human resource distribution has led to a polarized implementation of task-based teaching methods—teachers with professional expertise can design creative authentic tasks, while substitute teachers often simplify tasks into mechanical question-and-answer formats, reducing what should be vibrant language practice into routine drills.

The digital divide in access to educational resources has created new inequalities. While the internet theoretically provides a wealth of teaching resources, actual access is constrained by factors such as family economic conditions and teachers' information literacy. Some schools cannot smoothly play multimedia presentations due to bandwidth limitations, and teachers' insufficient information retrieval skills also lead to the idle waste of high-quality resources. This digital divide makes it difficult to translate the principles of task-based teaching, such as creating contextual scenarios and cross-cultural experiences, into actual teaching practices.

The rigid constraints of course schedules amplify the effects of resource shortages. Under the exam-oriented system, many schools reduce oral language class hours to focus on grammar explanations and test paper reviews. Even when task-based teaching is implemented, it often remains confined to performance and presentation phases, lacking the necessary time for preparatory and follow-up activities. This fragmented implementation of tasks fails to form a complete language learning cycle and also hinders the development of students' habits of sustained inquiry.

The structural contradictions in resource allocation fundamentally reflect the tangible manifestation of educational equity issues. Under the principles of task-based language teaching, which emphasize authentic communication and meaning-driven learning, disparities in resource allocation directly translate into gaps in students' language proficiency. Students lacking sufficient opportunities for task-based practice are constrained by narrow input-output channels, making it difficult to transcend the stage of mechani-

cal imitation. This implicit deprivation not only affects current learning experiences but also impedes the development of future cross-cultural communication skills.

## 5 The Reflection of TBLT in Spoken English Teaching in Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County

In view of the problems in the application of TBLT in the English spoken classroom of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County, corresponding effective response strategies are proposed from the following four aspects.

### 5.1 Cultivating Students' Independent Learning Ability

Hao (2017) stated that quality education requires focusing on developing students' sense of independent learning and encouraging them to explore and think independently in tasks to achieve the best teaching and learning effect. In traditional teaching models, teachers often dominate the classroom, with students passively receiving knowledge and having little room for independent exploration. Task-based teaching, however, acts as a key to unlocking students' ability to learn independently.

Task-based teaching emphasizes task-driven learning, integrating language knowledge into real-life tasks. Teachers are no longer one-way transmitters of knowledge, but rather careful designers and guides of learning activities. In the typical task of "introducing your favorite animal," teachers skillfully provide scaffolding: first guiding students to focus on the physical characteristics and living habits of animals, then prompting them to obtain information through methods such as consulting books or watching documentaries. This inspirational task assignment ignites the spark of students' thinking, prompting them to actively embark on a journey of exploration.

During the task progression, students must independently plan their learning paths. They may gather in groups to discuss the characteristics of their favorite animals, collaborate to organize materials, or engage in role-playing as animal guides. Each step requires students to apply their knowledge for analysis, integration, and expression—key moments for cultivating autonomous learning skills. When faced with questions like "How to accurately describe the uniqueness of zebra stripes," teachers refrain from providing direct answers, instead encouraging students to continue researching and discussing in groups to develop their ability to solve problems independently.

The task presentation phase is the culmination of self-directed learning. Students present their carefully crafted posters, vivid puppet props, or creative short videos on stage, confidently introducing their "animal friends" in English. This process not only tests their language proficiency but also allows them to experience the sense of accomplishment that comes from self-directed learning through practice.

The implementation of task-based teaching is not achieved overnight. It requires teachers to precisely gauge the difficulty level of tasks, avoiding those that are too simple and lose students' interest in challenges, while also preventing tasks that are too difficult from causing frustration. Additionally, teachers must closely monitor individual differences among students and provide personalized guidance tailored to their varying skill levels.

### 5.2 Enhancing Task Design and Implementation

Ellis (2009) argued that the nature of interaction in the TBLT classroom depends on the design and implementation of the task and the proficiency level of the students themselves. Teachers need to update their teaching concepts and pay attention to students' interests and needs in order to design more attractive tasks. To this end, teachers can learn about task design, design tasks according to students' English proficiency and cognitive abilities, and reasonably control task difficulty.



Given the dominance of visual-spatial thinking among younger students, tasks such as “Animal Imitation Show,” which involve high levels of physical participation, are designed. For older students, challenges requiring logical expression, such as “Writing an Environmental Advocacy Statement,” are added. In the “pet store role-playing” case, teachers break down language objectives into real-life communication scenarios such as price inquiries, recommendations, and negotiations, allowing students to naturally use imperative sentences and general questions in buying and selling interactions. This contextualized design brings language knowledge from textbooks into real life.

Excellent teachers are skilled at embedding cooperative elements into tasks: whether it is forming an “Animal Protection Association” to hold a debate competition or dividing tasks to create a “Zoo Guide Map.” When students discuss habitat protection while wearing panda headaddresses, language is no longer mechanical memorization material but a tool for solving problems. This immersive experience encourages even introverted students to speak up, as the courage granted by their roles far surpasses the teacher’s prompting.

The wisdom of dynamic adjustment is evident in every stage of task implementation. Perceptive teachers observe changes in students’ expressions: when group discussions stall, they promptly provide mind map frameworks; when presentations exceed time limits, they skillfully guide students to simplify their expressions. After the “Share Your Favorite Animal” task, a teacher noticed that most students remained at the level of describing appearances. They immediately added a role-playing segment titled “If I Were This Animal,” instantly sparking creative expression.

Effective task design must be accompanied by continuous teaching reflection. Teachers should establish task effectiveness assessment records, noting which activities sparked lively discussions and which segments led to lulls. More importantly, they should listen to students’ voices: when they complain that “playing the same role is boring,” it signals the need to adjust role assignments; when someone suggests “wanting to give a speech in English,” it presents an opportunity to generate new tasks.

### 5.3 Strengthening Teacher Training and Professional Development

Currently, some teachers lack systematic training and often fall into the trap of formalism when designing tasks—either blindly copying textbook examples and losing specificity, or overly pursuing novelty at the expense of achieving language learning objectives. To break this deadlock, it is imperative to establish a tiered and progressive teacher development system.

Schools should establish a multi-dimensional learning platform: regularly invite experts in task-based teaching to conduct specialized lectures analyzing the core concepts and operational frameworks of TBLT; organize core teachers to form a professional development community, deepening understanding through lesson observations and different approaches to the same lesson. The “dual-teacher classroom” model implemented by a certain school is particularly enlightening: after senior teachers demonstrate the task design framework, young teachers take over to adapt it to local contexts. This mentor-apprentice system effectively shortens the time required to implement theoretical concepts.

Additionally, schools should establish fixed weekly research and development sessions to conduct in-depth analyses of real teaching cases: when teachers report that group collaboration has become superficial, collective discussions are held to optimize division of labor strategies; to address stage fright during oral presentations, teachers collaboratively design tiered performance tasks. This problem-based research approach transforms abstract theory into actionable teaching wisdom. Simultaneously, teachers are encouraged to participate in regional teaching forums, read classic works on Task-Based Language Teaching, and stay informed about international trends.

A teacher who integrated drama education into animal-themed tasks is an example of innovative practice inspired by interdisciplinary teaching theory. Such theory-informed teaching design ensures solid lan-



guage knowledge input while creating an open space for meaning construction. What's more, Sariçoban and Karakurt (2016) showed that a stress-free classroom environment helped students to complete tasks. Excellent teachers are adept at creating a relaxed psychological environment: using “thinking visualization” tools to help students organize their expression frameworks, establishing a “safe word” mechanism to allow for immediate assistance, and adopting a points system to replace single-score evaluations. When students realize that mistakes are met with improvement suggestions rather than criticism, the courage to speak naturally emerges.

Teachers who have undergone systematic training can precisely gauge task difficulty levels: lower grades use picture book plays to reduce anxiety about speaking, while higher grades engage in debates to enhance thinking depth. They know when to step back and let students become the true owners of the task. The language skills cultivated through this teaching model are the communication skills needed in future society.

#### 5.4 Improving the Allocation and Utilization of Teaching Resources

Mncube et al. (2023) emphasized the need to enhance resource management and utilization in rural schools, which are typically underfunded and lacked resources, to ensure effective curriculum implementation. It is necessary to establish a three-dimensional resource allocation mechanism led by the government, with schools taking primary responsibility and teachers driving innovation.

The improvement of basic hardware facilities is a prerequisite for laying a solid foundation for teaching. The government should establish a dynamic funding growth mechanism for education, prioritizing underperforming schools: equipping rural primary schools with interactive whiteboards, intelligent speech evaluation systems, and other digital devices; renovating specialized English classrooms to meet standards for natural light and ventilation; and constructing multifunctional language practice spaces featuring picture book corners and dubbing studios. These hardware upgrades not only support task-based activities such as scenario-based performances and virtual shopping but also stimulate students' learning motivation through immersive environments.

Teachers' resource coordination capabilities directly impact the efficiency of limited investments. Facing limited weekly oral English class hours, outstanding teachers adopt a “modular task cluster” design strategy: breaking down long-term projects into three phases—pre-class preparation, in-class presentation, and post-class extension—and utilizing the noon broadcast station to create an English story competition, as well as setting up a “My Speech Poster” zone on corridor walls, to transform scattered time into continuous language practice opportunities. This management ensures that every child receives ample opportunities to speak.

The integration of digital technology has opened up new avenues for resource innovation. Teachers can use AI speech recognition software for personalized pronunciation training, organize cross-class debate competitions via online collaboration platforms, and develop teaching resource packages incorporating local cultural elements. A teacher from a western school brought the Yi ethnic group's Torch Festival celebration into the classroom, where students worked in groups to design an English-language festival process manual, thereby enhancing language skills while preserving ethnic culture. Such localized innovations infuse task-based teaching with vitality.

Innovations in resource-sharing mechanisms can amplify resource benefits. County-level research offices can establish cloud-based resource repositories to aggregate high-quality lesson plans, micro-lesson videos, and activity case studies developed by various schools. Urban and rural schools can form partnership pairs to regularly conduct “joint task-based lessons,” enabling the flow and sharing of high-quality resources through remote research and development. This group-based development model effectively alleviates the issue of uneven teacher distribution.

From the perspective of educational equity, resource allocation should prioritize disadvantaged groups. An “English pen pal program” has been established for left-behind children, inviting college student volunteers to engage in regular video exchanges; tactile word cards and gesture-assisted tools have been developed for children with special needs. These heartfelt initiatives ensure that task-based teaching truly becomes an educational practice inclusive of all students.

## 6 Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the current situation of the application of task-based language teaching in oral English teaching in primary schools through a case study of Xinxu Town Central Primary School in Yangxi County. It clarifies the implementation of TBLT in various aspects of actual teaching, reveals the problems and their causes at the teacher, student, and school levels, and provides a basis for subsequent improvement. Meanwhile, domestic and international studies have shown that TBLT has a positive effect on improving students’ speaking ability, but it faces many challenges in the process of implementation, which is consistent with the findings of this study. By cultivating students’ independent learning ability, strengthening teacher training and professional development, enhancing task design and implementation, and improving the allocation and utilization of teaching resources, these coping strategies contribute to providing insights into teaching practices to help improve the effective application of TBLT and promote the professional development of English teachers.

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