

## VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF TASK-BASED LEARNING (TBL) IN SPEAKING CLASS

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### **Abstrak**

*Pembelajaran berbasis tugas (TBL) telah diperbincangkan secara luas di antara para peneliti belakangan ini. Implementasi dari metode ini telah terbukti bermanfaat untuk mengajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Penelitian survey ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa SMK terhadap penggunaan TBL dalam kelas berbicara. Data kuantitatif dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang disebar ke 103 siswa kelas 11 program Otomatisasi dan Tata Kelola Perkantoran pada salah satu SMK di Kota Kediri. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa para siswa memberi respon positif pada penggunaan TBL untuk belajar bahasa Inggris untuk Keperluan Khusus karena mereka merasa santai ketika diajarkan bahasa Inggris menggunakan TBL, merasa termotivasi untuk belajar bahasa Inggris menggunakan TBL, dan merasa bahwa TBL harus lebih banyak digunakan selama kelas bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, mereka juga dapat melihat diri mereka meningkat dalam keterampilan berbicara, dalam hal kefasihan, pengucapan, tata bahasa, dan kosa kata. Jadi, disarankan bagi para guru bahasa Inggris lebih sering mengimplementasikan dan mengeksplor aktivitas pembelajaran berbasis tugas, sedangkan para peneliti selanjutnya dapat mengeksplor kesulitan yang dialami siswa SMK ketika belajar bahasa Inggris menggunakan TBL.*

*Kata kunci: pembelajaran berbasis tugas, motivasi belajar, keterampilan berbicara, Bahasa Inggris untuk tujuan khusus*

### **Abstract**

*Task-based learning (TBL) has been widely discussed among recent researchers. Its implementation is proven to be beneficial for English as a foreign language teaching method. This survey research aimed to explore the vocational high school student's perceptions of the use of TBL in speaking class. Quantitative data were obtained through a questionnaire as instrument which was distributed to approximately 103 11<sup>th</sup>-grade Office Authorization and Governance students at one of the vocational high*

*schools in Kediri. The findings revealed that the students had positive perceptions of the use of TBL to learn English for Specific Purposes because they felt relaxed when taught English using TBL, felt motivated to learn English using TBL, and perceived that TBL should be used more during English class. Furthermore, they could also see themselves improved in their speaking skills, in terms of fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Thus, it is recommended for English teachers that they implement and explore task-based activities more in the teaching and learning process while future researchers can also explore vocational students' difficulties while learning English with TBL.*

***Keywords: task-based learning, learning motivation, speaking skills, English for specific Purposes***

## **INTRODUCTION**

The government regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 29 of 1990 addresses Indonesia's secondary education, chapter 1, article 3(2) states that vocational schools should allow their students to develop specific skills that support them to enter professionality when they have graduated. Being able to speak English has also become an essential need for vocational high school students. Due to its popularity and function as a bridge language that connects different parts of the world, many job fields require candidates that could speak English.

In fact, Indonesia's high school students have low English-speaking mastery. This is in line with a study conducted by (Dewi, 2021) that revealed more than half of vocational high school students had poor speaking mastery. Apsari (2022) reveals factors hindering vocational high school students from practicing their speaking skills. There are internal factors comprising lack of motivation, fear of making errors, vocabulary and grammar inadequacy, and incorrect pronunciation. Other than those, the provision of an implementationive learning environment and difficulties in seeking speaking partners also affect their speaking mastery. Furthermore, the school's curriculum and the applied materials are sometimes mismatched. This implies that the learning source provided by the school cannot fulfill the student's needs (Khasanah,

2019) Vocational high school students wish that there will be suitable materials provided to their program since they are taught with materials in General English (Nimasari, 2018) Thus, the curriculum still lacks in the application of English for Specific Purposes.

In resolving problems arising from the students' speaking difficulties, vocational school teachers should seek suitable treatments to be applied to prevent further problems. An approach namely Task-Based Learning (TBL) could be offered as a solution. As it is a part of the communicative approach, TBL encourages students to communicate in real-world contexts and recognize how to implicate linguistic forms naturally (Badrus, 2021).

Many studies have been done regarding the implementationiveness of TBL to increase vocational high school students' basic language abilities. The first study was conducted by Prianty (2022) who explored teachers' and students' perceptions on TBL in improving students' speaking ability. The study was conducted at one of Indonesia's vocational schools. It involved an English teacher and his thirty-five students as the research participants. The study used an explanatory case study design. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. The interview questions focused on the impact of TBL on the improvement of students' speaking skills in general. The results showed that the students reacted positively to the implementation of TBL. They shared that they were encouraged and motivated to speak English more.

Another study conducted by Afifah (2020) examined the influence of TBL on students' speaking skill development. The research participants were thirty-six English study program students of Baturaja University. A quasi-experimental study was utilized in this study. The primary data were in the form of pre-test and post-test scores collected through speaking tasks as the research instrument. Secondary data were collected through a questionnaire asking students' perception of learning English using

TBL. The results from the comparison indicated that students who learned using TBL had significantly improved their speaking ability than those who did not. They also perceived that learning with TBL helped them enjoy learning English.

The last study was conducted by Nguyen (2021) who appraised TBL as a problem solver of students' speaking difficulties. The design of the study was Classroom Action Research (CAR) and employed a mixed-method approach. The data were collected quantitatively utilizing a speaking test and questionnaire and collected qualitatively via classroom observation and interview. There were 109 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students at Viet Anh Lower Secondary School involved as research participants. The results of the study showed that students had considerably improved their speaking ability in their post-test. The implementation of TBL also benefited the students in which they got motivated to attend English classes and self-evaluate their speaking progress addressed in the administered questionnaire. In the present research, TBL has been implemented to teach vocational high school students. It was revealed in the preliminary data that their speaking score improved. To fill the gap in the previous studies, the present study explored the vocational high school student's perceptions of the use of task-based learning in a speaking class on a wider sample.

### ***Perception***

Perception is needed to find out the potentiality of something from one's point of view. According to Suharnan (2005), perception is the first step in processing and managing information gained through one's senses, as well as interpreting the information. As one keeps connecting to their surroundings, their perception would be made as they receive information and messages through their senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell (Slameto, 2015). It helps one to get to know and comprehend their surroundings, therefore it is considered one's important cognitive aspect (Desmita, 2012) In this research, the perceptions investigated were related to the

vocational high school student's opinions toward the implementation of TBL in their speaking class in relation to their learning motivation and speaking skills.

### ***Task-based Learning***

Task-based learning (TBL) is recognized as a kind of Communicative Language Teaching method. This method does not place the teachers to become the center of the class. It supports student-centeredness because students will be using English naturally while completing the task. The role of the teacher is limited to giving guidance to the students (Celik, 2017). Doing this results in students using up their knowledge to develop their communicative ability alongside their language accuracy (Ellis, 2009). TBL includes 'tasks' in its framework. The referred tasks in TBL differ from the regular activities. Skehan (1998) sets criteria for tasks in TBL, including a task should be carried out to engage in demanded contexts, there should be a problem that needs to be solved, a task is related to things students find in real life, and task emphasizes more on how the target language meets its communicative purpose. TBL has some variations of tasks given to the students. According to Willis (1996), it includes activities such as listing, role-playing, problem-solving, creative task, etc. The kinds of tasks highlighted in this research were in the form of discussion and reports while doing project works in groups which can be distinguished as creative tasks. The students mainly discussed projects such as composing office organization structure, office layout, and a series of pictures about office facilities which later were reported by the groups in front of the class.

### ***Learning Motivation***

Teachers need to motivate students first to be able to get their attention. Motivation is internal and external instincts that drive someone to achieve their goal, hence it changes one's behavior during the process (Nashar, 2004) In the academic

process, as Sadirman (2012) stated, motivation refers to what drives students to accomplish their learning goals, or what influences them to spend their time and energy to learn. Factors that affect students' motivation can be divided into internal factors which are students' behavior, interest, and comprehension, and external factors which are students' environment, including academics, family, or society (Sukmadinata, 2003). It is possible for external motivation to turn into internal motivation when students understand their priority to learn and the importance of learning itself (Dimiyati, 1994) This process should be supported by teachers as the students' guide and motivator in the academic environment as well. The teacher's role is essential to build students' motivation to engage in the lesson (Ryan & Deci, 2009). It can be done by improving their method, media, or learning sources for students in the teaching and learning process.

### ***Speaking Skills***

As one of the productive skills, speaking skills have always been considered important to be learned by students. Speaking itself is the process of constructing and communicating meaning in various contexts through verbal and nonverbal expressions (Chaney, 1998). It also means to express ideas and meanings through words using oral communication. This skill can be obtained through repetitions of practice that include the ability to give and receive pieces of information. This skill also needs to be mastered to enhance students' communication skills to interact implementationively in real-world situations in the present world (Rao, 2019) In this context, students would be learning to be able to speak English fluently. According to Florez (1999), there are main skills of speaking which are using accurate grammar structures, analyzing the characteristics of the target audience, choosing suitable vocabulary for the audience, the topic, and the context in which the speech act takes place, implementing methods that enhance comprehension, and adjusting components of speech based on the

progress of the interaction. An example of an activity that triggers interaction in the class is small talk Florez (1999). The activity could be divided into three parts, including preparation of the activity, presentation of example small talk situations, and provision of a chance to students to practice their small talk. In the step of practice, Brown (2004) mentions six possible tasks that can be done, including imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive tasks. There were two types of tasks concerned in this study. The first one was the interactive task which directed the students to have more complex interaction than small talk or conversation with other peers such as discussing projects related to office components, while the second one was the extensive task designed to have the students do oral monologue such as reporting their projects about office components in front of other groups.

### ***English for Specific Purposes***

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) differs from General English in terms of students' purpose of learning. ESP cannot be applied to any situations that happen in daily life because English is only learned based on the goal needed by the learners (Hyland, 2022). Its application as a teaching approach ought to benefit the students. As elucidated in Fitria (2020), ESP guides students to learn English in a domain context extensively. It is also said that ESP leads its students to learn English efficiently and implementationively. ESP is needed for teaching vocational students due to preparing them when adapting to communicate in their work life (Khasanah & Madya, 2019). Widodo (2016) mentions seven elements that make ESP teaching instructions, including validity, topics or themes, texts and meanings, information and vocabulary, assignments or events, participant perceptions and social practices, and pedagogical prompts. He also adds that the consideration of students' knowledge and resources of linguistics, their competence level in the language, their comprehension of specific topics, and their communicative orientations make ESP materials encouraging to be

taught. In this research, the material taught was adjusted to teach descriptive text to the vocational students majoring in Office Authorization and Governance. The topic was related to the office since it was relatable, could help the students activate their prior knowledge, and would be useful for them to understand things within an office.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

To examine students' perceptions of the use of TBL in their speaking class with specific adjustments to their vocational program, this study employed a survey method. The participants were 103 11<sup>th</sup>-grade Office Authorization and Governance students in one of the vocational high schools in Kediri who learned English utilizing TBL. A questionnaire was used as the instrument to collect the data which the items were adapted from Ismaili (2000) and Tuyen & Phuong (2022). The questionnaire consisted of 5 items that questioned students' enjoyment when learning English with specific purposes using TBL and 5 items that addressed students' evaluation on their speaking enhancement after learning English using TBL. All of the items used a four-point Likert scale ranging from "1" for "Strongly disagree" until "4" for "Strongly agree." The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested by an English Language Teaching expert and SPSS 26. It was found that the value of the r-count for each item of the questionnaire was more than the r-table ( $> 0.355$ ), meaning that it was valid. Besides, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.927, meaning that it was reliable.

The data collection began by distributing the questionnaire to the students through Google Forms. The duration required for filling in the questionnaire was approximately 15 minutes. One of the researchers was on the site where the data were collected to address any difficulties and technical errors during the administration. The collected data were then analyzed using Microsoft Excel to report each item's



agreement percentage, average percentage, and categorizations in the form of tables. The categories were divided by following the formula generated by Natawiria & Riduwan (2010) then they will be classified based on Table 1.

**Table 1. Classification of Categories**

Category	Mean Percentage
Strongly Agree	75% – 100%
Agree	50% – 74.99%
Disagree	25% – 49.99%
Strongly Disagree	0% – 24.99%

Subsequently, another scale was derived to find out whether the major perceptions were inclined to positive or negative responses. The scale was obtained by finding out the score range between the possible maximum (40 points) and minimum scores (10 points) divided by the total categories (2) which resulted in the gap being 15 points. The clear score range between the two categories can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Score Range for Each Category**

Category	Score Range
Positive	26 – 40
Negative	11 – 25

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

The results of the vocational high school students' perception of the implementation of TBL on their learning motivation can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3. Students' Perception of the Implementation of TBL on Their Learning Motivation**

No.	Item	Agreement Point				Mean	Category
		SD	D	A	SA		
1.		2	2	58	41	83%	Strongly Agree

	I enjoy learning English through having discussions about customizing office organization with my group.	2%	2%	56%	40%		
2.	I feel relaxed learning English through having discussions about describing office organization structure with my group.	3	11	63	25	77%	Strongly Agree
		3%	11%	61%	25%		
3.	I feel more motivated to learn English through discussing office layouts with my group.	2	3	68	30	81%	Strongly Agree
		2%	3%	66%	29%		
4.	I am more confident to speak English while presenting pictures of office facilities with my group.	1	19	69	14	73%	Agree
		1%	18%	67%	14%		
5.	I believe I can learn English better when we have more discussions about components of the office environment.	3	0	66	34	82%	Strongly Agree
		3%	0%	64%	33%		

According to Table 3 which displays the vocational high school students' perception of the implementation of TBL on their learning motivation, the first item was at the highest average percentage by 83%, indicating that the students strongly agreed that they found learning English using TBL more enjoyable. In the second item, the average percentage reached 77%, meaning that the students strongly agreed that TBL helped them reduce their stress or burden while having group discussions in the English class. In the third item, the average percentage amounted to 81%, indicating that the students strongly agreed that TBL assisted them to be more engaged in the group discussion in the English class. In the fourth item, the average percentage was 73%, meaning that the students agreed that TBL helped students gain more confidence while having group presentations in the English class. In the fifth item, its average percentage reached 82%, meaning that the students could be better at learning English using task-based activities in the form of discussion.

In addition, the results of the vocational high school students' perception of the implementation of TBL on their speaking skills can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4. Students' Perception of The Implementation of TBL on Their Speaking Skills**

No.	Items	Agreement Point				Mean	Category
		SD	D	A	SA		
6.	I improve my English pronunciation by presenting the office organization structure.	1	9	79	14	76%	Strongly Agree
		1%	9%	77%	14%		
7.	I can present our group's office layout design in English without many pauses.	1	7	75	20	78%	Strongly Agree
		1%	7%	73%	19%		
8.	I can construct sentences in English with correct structures after receiving oral feedback from my peers and teacher.	2	16	65	20	75%	Strongly Agree
		2%	16%	63%	19%		
9.	I learn some new words about office facilities from my group's and other groups' discussions.	0	6	62	35	82%	Strongly Agree
		0%	6%	60%	34%		
10.	I can memorize more English words through having discussions about describing pictures of office facilities.	2	9	69	23	77%	Strongly Agree
		2%	9%	67%	22%		

According to Table 4 which demonstrates the vocational high school students' perception of the implementation of TBL on their speaking skills, in the sixth item, the average percentage reached 76%, indicating that the students strongly agreed that their pronunciation was getting better after having a presentation in English. The seventh item got an average percentage of 75%, meaning that the students agreed that they saw improvement in their speaking fluency as they could deliver sentences without taking a lot of breaks in between after doing task-based activities. The eighth item got 75% for its average percentage, indicating that the students strongly agreed that their

grammatical accuracy while speaking has improved after learning English using TBL. The ninth item was at the highest average percentage by 82%, meaning that the students strongly agreed that the TBL helped them widen their vocabulary range in their respective vocational programs through group and whole-class discussion activities. The last item got an average percentage of 77% which means that the students strongly agreed that TBL activities made it easier for them to memorize vocabulary related to their field through discussion.

The tendency of the vocational high school student's perceptions of the use of TBL in speaking class can be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5. Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of TBL in Speaking Class**

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Positive	101	98%
Negative	2	2%

Based on Table 3, 98% (101) of the respondents had positive perceptions of the use of TBL in speaking class. It means that students agreed that learning with TBL in speaking class could make them motivated to learn English and improve their speaking skills.

## **Discussion**

This study explored vocational students' perceptions of the use of TBL in speaking classes. The data were collected quantitatively and interpreted based on the results of data analysis. This study gained a positive response suggesting that TBL was beneficial to increase students' learning motivation and speaking skills.

In the first dimension regarding students' learning motivation, it was found that the students strongly agreed that TBL motivated and made them relaxed while learning ESP. This finding was in line with NamazianDost (2017) whose finding revealed that

the students who had the opportunity to learn with TBL had more motivation to learn English than those who did not. Another finding indicated that students agreed that doing task-based activities in groups helped them feel more confident to speak English. This finding aligned with a study performed by Omar et al., (2021) revealing that TBL increased students' confidence in speaking. Additionally, it was also found that students strongly agreed that TBL brought them enjoyment while learning English with a certain topic related to their vocational program. This finding supported the result of the study conducted by Nidhommil (2019) revealing that applying TBL could create an environment that made vocational students follow the teaching-learning phase as long as the topic and the level of materials given were adjusted. In brief, this dimension showed that the student's motivation to learn English increased by utilizing TBL in the speaking class.

In the second dimension related to speaking skills, the findings showed that the students strongly agreed that learning English through task-based activities with topics related to their vocational program would help them develop speaking skills in the components such as pronunciation, fluency, grammatical structure, and vocabulary. These findings were in line with a study conducted by Panduwangi (2021) who mentioned that the students who learned using TBL had improved in how they pronounced English words, constructed sentence structures accurately, spoke fluently, and widened their vocabulary range. Besides, it was also revealed by Panduwangi(2021) that the students taught using TBL had a significantly higher improvement in their speaking ability than those who did not. Another study by Winarto (2022) also specified that TBL helped the students foster speaking fluency as the result of meaningful interactions that occurred during the class. Furthermore, in the current research, it was also found that the students strongly agreed that doing task-based activities made it easier for them to memorize words. It was in line with the finding of the research conducted by Nguyen (2018) revealing that the students chose

task-based instruction as an effective way to learn vocabulary. On top of that, it also supported one of the results of a study carried out by Tuyen (2021) indicating the students felt helped in improving their language skills in which their memorization was included. To sum up, the findings of this dimension, the students' speaking skills were enhanced according to their self-evaluation after the implementation of TBL in the speaking class.

## CONCLUSIONS

Task-based Learning creates meaningful learning in the classroom. Each activity should be done with the expectation that it would provide something useful for the student's needs. According to the findings of this study, the vocational students agreed that learning using TBL could boost their motivation to learn English for Specific Purposes. Furthermore, they also agreed that implementing TBL helped them develop their speaking skills. Thus, it is recommended that English teachers utilize TBL in their classes to teach English. In this research, the task-based activities were limited to discussions and presentations, so the teachers may broaden the variation of the task-based activities while teaching the students. Moreover, the researchers also come up with a recommendation for future researchers to explore students' difficulties in learning English when their teachers implement TBL.

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