

# The Use of Task-Based Learning Approach to Enhance the English Speaking Skill of Grade 4 Bhutanese Students

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**Abstract** This quasi-experimental study was focused on examining the English speaking skill of grade 4 Bhutanese students before and after the use of Task-Based Learning Approach (TBLA). This study also aimed to investigate their learning satisfaction. The research participants consisted of a class of 29 grade 4 students. The quantitative data were collected through a speaking proficiency test (pretest and posttest) as well as a survey questionnaire. These data were analyzed using statistical measures such as paired sample t-test, mean, and standard deviation, with a significance level of  $\leq 0.05$ . Qualitative data, obtained through semi-structured interviews and classroom behavior observation, were analyzed using content analysis. The result of the speaking proficiency test indicated enhancement in the grade 4 student's English speaking skill, after the implementation of TBLA. The pretest mean score was 8.22 and the posttest mean score was 10.79, with a mean difference of 2.56 and a significance value of .01. The findings from the survey questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and classroom behavioral observation also revealed students' satisfaction with the use of TBLA. Therefore, the findings suggest that TBLA effectively enhances students' speaking skill.

**Keywords** Task-based learning approach; English speaking skill; Learning satisfaction; Grade 4

**Received:** August 31, 2023

**Revised:** November 7, 2023

**Accepted:** November 11, 2023

## Introduction

English is widely recognized as the first global language and it is extensively used as a medium of communication in international relationships, entertainment programs, trade, telecommunications, and research. Since it is the largest and the most commonly spoken language, it facilitates effective communication, and connect people from diverse cultural background enhancing understanding and fostering relationships (Putra,2020; Taylor, 2022).

For the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, English permeated during the colonization of India by the British (Tshering, 2020). Since then, it has been used alongside with national language in offices, international communication, and education (Dendup, 2020). Therefore, to assist Bhutan in achieving its objectives to become a full charter member of the United Nations and enhancing its capacity for meaningful participation in diplomatic discussion during global interaction (Department of Curriculum and Professional Development, 2022) English served as the medium of instruction in the Bhutanese education system since the start of Western education in 1961.

With the adoption of English as the primary language of instruction, it benefited the country in producing capable citizens in managing governmental and commercial organizations who can communicate clearly and fluently in challenging situations, even with the international community ( Royal Education Council, 2018) . Further, it is imperative to have a good command over the language, and speaking is considered the most important compared to reading, writing, and listening as the speaker should know the situation and act accordingly. Moreover, it is the most prominent skill, as linguistic knowledge and background can be used to convey ideas, negotiate meaning, and explore thought (Safitri et al., 2020).

Regardless of the awareness of the importance of English language proficiency in the global market and being exposed to the language from a tender age, researchers have stated that Bhutanese students still lack English speaking skills (Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment, 2017). It is observed that the primary challenge of speaking for most students is attributed to the lack of speaking habits at home. Om (2018) discovered that a lack of English exposure at home and school has potentially resulted in low speaking aptitude. Tram (2020) further contends that students who share a common mother tongue tend to use their language as it presents a more accessible means of expression. Students mostly communicate with their friends and family in their native tongue or a regional dialect once the English-speaking activities are over, which affects the development of their speaking skill (Jaya et al., 2022).

In addition, the fear of making mistakes and facing criticism from peers are significant obstacles that hamper students' willingness to participate in speaking lessons (Tashi, 2018). Most students are often hesitant and lack confidence and they tend to pause while speaking for fear of being judged negatively which eventually makes it difficult for them to speak English (Shen & Chiu, 2019).

The new English curriculum implemented in 2021 shows a reduced emphasis on speaking and listening, with only 30% of the evaluation focused on these skills, while 70% is allocated to reading and writing strands ( Department of Curriculum and Professional Development, 2022) . Moreover, examination in the Bhutanese education system is based on content and oral proficiency is being excluded. Thus, speaking skill is still disregarded by teachers which reduces the significance of speaking skill (LaPrairie,2014; Singye, 2018).

Despite the shift from a traditional approach to student-centered learning, it was found that the majority of language teachers still rely on obsolete approaches which have little efficacy on students' language development (Royal Education Council, 2018). Besides, the lack of opportunities for oral practice despite a series of educational reforms from the traditional approach to student-centered and oral proficiency exams reduces the significance of speaking skill (Singye, 2018).

With the 21st-century curriculum emphasizing more on student-centered learning, the need to study effective approaches for the aforementioned challenges is a must. Chalermnirudorn (2015) states that 21<sup>st</sup>-century students should have abundant opportunities to learn collaboratively with peers as it empowers them to take ownership of their education and further, it is crucial for enhancing students' oral communication (Tashi, 2018).

After reviewing a number of studies related to approaches that could enhance speaking skills, most of the studies revealed that task-based learning was one effective approach, especially for those non-native English-speaking countries. Task-based learning approach (TBLA) is one kind of collaborative learning approach where students interact with peers to complete a task. It is an approach to learning languages by placing students in situations similar to those in the real world where oral communication is essential (Costa, 2016). Unlike other strategies, TBLA provides practical, engaging, and real-life experiences that help students develop their communication skills. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) found out that since the real-world related task is targeted in a task-based learning approach, learners get more opportunities to learn about the topic that interests them. Those skills may be useful for their other academic subjects as well. Moreover, exemplifying new information through what they already know in TBLA makes learning enjoyable and helps in retaining knowledge in long-term memory (Sae-ong, 2010). TBLA provides opportunities to interact, participate, and collaborate with peers to acquire better speaking skills, catering to the different learning styles. Moreover, with its effectiveness, TBLA has been widely used to strengthen students' oral communication in different context with different grade levels as well (Muntriakao & Poonpon, 2022).

Through its communicative activities, the Task-Based Learning Approach (TBLA) is a viable choice for foreign language classrooms as the approach enables students to learn the language while also acquiring the skills, they need to function in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. TBLA offers various benefits to students. As stated by Masuram and Sripada (2020), it fosters students' interest in speaking lessons and encourages active participation and linguistic processing during task completion. The target language usage and ample opportunities for interaction with peers significantly contribute to improving students' speaking competencies. Moreover, sufficient usage of the target language during the learning process both inside and outside the classroom is the key to foreign language (Al-Zoubi, 2018). It also enhances student's competency in speaking skills as they are given ample opportunities to speak and interact with peers through the accomplishment of tasks (Nita et al., 2019).

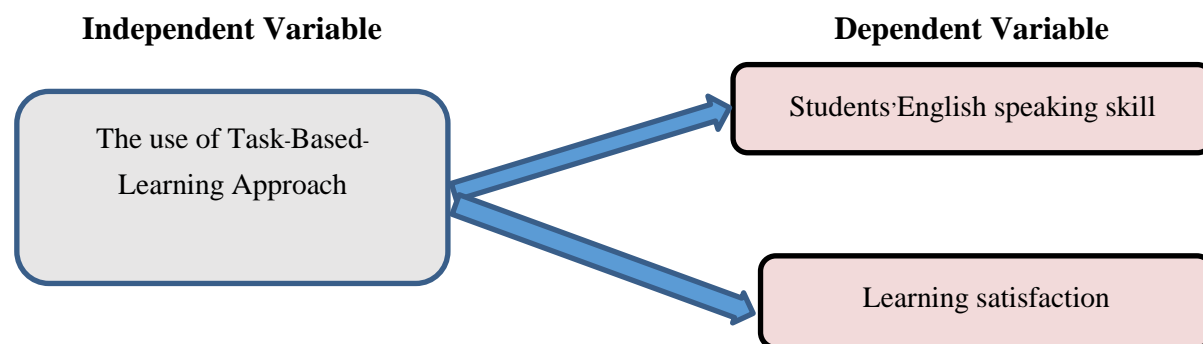
However, despite the effectiveness of TBLA, there has been insufficient research carried out on the use of a task-based learning Approach in Bhutanese classrooms. Therefore, this study was carried out to examine the English-speaking skill of grade 4 Bhutanese students before and after the use of Task-Based Learning Approach (TBLA). This study also aimed to investigate the learning satisfaction of grade 4 Bhutanese students after using task-based learning approach.

### **Research questions**

- 1) Would the English-speaking skill of grade 4 Bhutanese students be enhanced after using task-based learning approach?
- 2) What would be the learning satisfaction level of grade 4 students after using task-based learning approach?

### **Conceptual framework**

The independent variable is Task-based learning approach and dependent variables are speaking skill and students' learning satisfaction.



**Figure 1** Independent and dependent variable

## Literature review

### English curriculum in Bhutan

Education in Bhutan originated more than a hundred years ago. However, prior to having its own curriculum, Bhutanese students were educated using the Indian curriculum with English as the medium of instruction until the 1980s ( Rai & Chalermnirundorn, 2021) . Since then, the establishment of modern schools following Indian models significantly expanded with English remaining as the mode of instruction ( Thinley & Maxwell, 2013) . Recognizing the necessity for Bhutanese students to be nationally rooted and globally competent, the National School Curriculum Framework (2020) was revised concerning the behavior, social, and cognitive development of the students aspiring students to be effective communicators, voracious readers, and creative inquirers in the digital world ( Department of Curriculum and Professional Development, 2022) . Thus, the English curriculum comprised four strands with speaking as the most prominent compared to reading, listening, and writing. Speaking enables learners to effectively convey and receive messages, reflect on their thoughts, and improve communication accuracy ( Department of Curriculum and Professional Development, 2022) . Therefore, to thrive in life, students need to develop the capacity to speak fluently and with confidence.

### Components of Speaking

The components of speaking: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension enable the speakers to communicate effectively (Haris, 1986; Rora & Omari, 2015). Four components of speaking; fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation ( English Binus University, 2018) were focused on in order to enhance the speaking proficiency skill of Bhutanese students. If the speaker is not fluent, the flow of the message will be hampered ( Gyeltshen & Chalermnirundorn, 2018) so one must not worry unduly about making mistakes; rather listen carefully, and respond accurately to be a fluent speaker. In addition to fluency, vocabulary is viewed as a crucial and fundamental tool in mastering effective communication (Alqahtani, 2015). Thus, vocabulary and language are interdependent on one another as vocabulary facilitates language use whereas utilizing language expands one's vocabulary (Lhamo, 2021).

Good pronunciation including articulation, speed, accent, phrasing, gestures mannerisms, and eye contact will boost one's self-confidence resulting in effective communication (Prashant, 2018). Therefore, pronunciation contributes to effective communication with different people around the world. Grammar is yet another system of language and is as important as other components. Communication takes place effectively when one is aware of his or her grammar rules for standard usage of spoken and written language (Shakir & Mahmood, 2021). Therefore, the key to speaking well is to have a clear command of the language.

### **Collaborative learning**

To thrive to excel in speaking, collaboration takes a greater role as students working together in a group accomplish common goals. Positive interdependence and encouragement promote interaction as students become accountable for their own learning, unlike traditional practice. Learning collaboratively with others has a positive impact on students since they take an active role in the success of other groups aside from taking their own learning responsibility (Chalermnirudorn, 2015; Om, 2018). Vygotsky's learning theory (1878) also emphasizes on the social interaction and collaboration is the prerequisite to cognitive development and knowledge construction from the environment. Numerous studies have proved that, task-based learning approach is one kind of collaborative learning approach that enhances the students learning with active participation in meaningful interactive task to accomplish the goal.

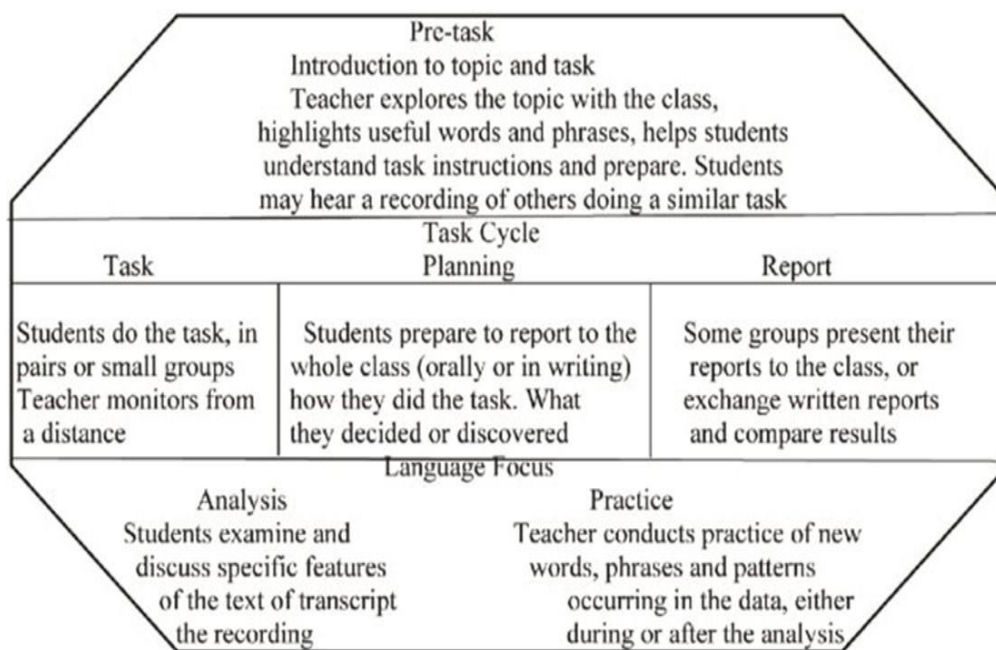
### **Task-based learning approach**

Task-Based Learning is an approach that involves a set of assignments with specific steps that require students to use the target language to reach the final goal (Lee, 2000). Learning is focused on communicative activity in the real world mainly centering on its meaning (Skehan, 1998). The communicative activity requires students to use their knowledge of grammar to express meaning with a clear beginning, middle, and end on its own rather than focusing solely on manipulating form (Nunan, 2004). Task-based learning approach does not include those activities that use language practice such as describing pictures using some of the mentioned phrases or pre-scripted role-plays rather it focuses on the language at the end (Willis, 2016). All the researches emphasize task-based learning activities in helping student practice and master communicative language skill. Since the approach is learning by doing, students are expected to learn the language by completing the task (Safitri et al., 2020). When designing a task, certain task components should be considered such as goal, input, procedure, types, teachers' and students' roles and settings (Nunan, 2004). Inputs can be either verbal or nonverbal, with appropriate settings which require students to engage with the input to achieve the goals and roles that both teachers and students have (Sae-ong, 2010). In addition, the tasks should be authentic, reflect real-world language use, and relevant to learners' lives and interests.

Different researchers proposed types of tasks to carry out during the learning process. The types of tasks vary depending on the context. Various researchers proposed different task-based activities depending on the context and the founder of TBLA proposed reasoning gap, information gap, and opinion gap as three types of tasks (Prabu, 1987). Meanwhile, the reasoning gap, information gap, opinion gap, and creative task are designed to reflect the language beyond the classroom and activate students speaking skills (Nunan, 2004). However, all the tasks share the common goal of promoting language learning through meaningful, real-world communication tasks.

TBLA has three stages: Pretask, task cycle, and language focus (Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2007; Zakime, 2018; Weller, 2021).

- Pretask: The stage, emphasizes activating the background knowledge of the students, preparing them for meaningful tasks, and clarifying task instructions (Nunan, 2004; Zakime, 2018).
- Task cycle: In this stage, students perform tasks, prepare for the report, and finally share their ideas with friends. Nunan (2004) proposed that in this stage, students are involved in actual tasks while teachers monitor students' progress
- Language focus: This stage focuses on the usage of language during the task. Students learn language simultaneously during the task (Ellis, 2006)



**Figure 2** Stages of Task-based learning approach

**Source:** Makhrib (2020)

### Implementation of Task-based learning approach in speaking skill

As a communicative approach, it enhances students' language proficiency, communicative competence, and motivation for learning to speak fluently (Prabhu, 1987) providing them with opportunities to learn and speak using the target language (Masuram & Sripada, 2020). Moreover, it has a positive impact on enhancing speaking skills compared to traditional methods as it allows for more speaking practice and encourages students to discuss their opinions (Nita et al., 2020; Pham & Do, 2021). Student-centeredness as the core of task-based learning has a great impact on students' grammatical performance. They develop the ability to use language for real communicative purposes. Thus, communicating in pairs or groups boost their collaboration skills preparing them for their own learning.

For the teachers, TBLA facilitates grouping students to create a new environment where they work in either peer or group settings to complete the assigned task. It places students at the center of the learning process and encourages them to actively construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world through interaction. Interaction in the learning process promotes constructivism theory. According to constructivism theory, students learn when they participate and share another person's frame of reference. Moreover, students can construct new knowledge, make critical thinking processes, and, make connections between new information and existing knowledge when they are actively engaged with the environment. Furthermore, TBLA manages cognitive load effectively to promote language. Collaboration optimizes the cognitive load by controlling the complexity of the task and the cognitive demand placed on the students. When students get opportunities to participate in direct, purposeful, and interactive tasks, it promotes Dale's cone of experiences. Dale's Cone also explains that students learn better when they are engaged in hands-on experiences.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits of a task-based learning approach in enhancing English-speaking skills. The study conducted by Hussan et al. (2021) demonstrated that students interacting with their peers enhanced their speaking skills, and were even motivated by the approach.

Students responded positively to enhancements in their speaking skills and confidence from the activities carried out (Safitri et al., 2020). Tasks such as negotiation of meaning and rehearsal motivate students to speak without high anxiety (Nita et al., 2020).

## Research methodology

### Research Design

Research design encompasses all elements of the study and involves advanced planning for data collection and analysis (Akhtar, 2016). It is considered a blueprint for collecting and analyzing data, with the aim of specifying effective approaches to address the research problem (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). For this study, quasi-experimental research was employed to focus on examining the English-speaking skill of grade 4 Bhutanese students before and after the use of the Task-Based Learning Approach and investigating their learning satisfaction with this approach. For quantitative data, a speaking proficiency test and survey questionnaire were carried out. A pretest was conducted for the research participants before the intervention of the Task-Based Learning Approach (TBLA). After the pretest, the participants were taught using TBLA for the duration of four weeks. A posttest with the same topic and rubric was administered after the intervention. For the survey questionnaire, fifteen items were used in three categories. For qualitative data, semi-structured interviews and classroom behavioral observation were conducted. The data obtained were analyzed and interpreted accordingly. With the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods, a comprehensive understanding of research issues can be achieved (Leavy, 2017).

### Population and sample

The population of the study consisted of 29 grade 4 students from a primary school in Wangdue Phodrang District. Since the research school has only one section of grade 4, the researcher used all the grade 4 students as research participants. Among the 29 research participants, 18 (62.1%) were girls and 11 (37.9%) were boys, with ages ranging from 9 to 12 years.

### Instructional instrument

#### Lesson plan

In this one-month study, the researcher prepared four lesson plans of 90 minutes each incorporating TBLA, with one plan used twice a week. The lesson included various tasks such as information gaps, addressing opinion gaps, performing creative tasks, and sharing experiences tasks (Nunan, 2004; Prabu, 1987; Willis, 1996) which are suitable for the Bhutanese students following all the stages of TBLA.

**Table 1** Outline of the lessons

| Lesson plans /time   | Topics  | Type of Task in TBLA    |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Lessonplan 1/week 1  | My story (4 year's experience in the school)                                      | Sharing life experience |
| Lessonplan 2/week 2  | Class trip (planning a day trip)  | Opinion gap             |
| Lessonplan 3 /week 3 | Celebration (Explaining about tshechu festival to a tourist visiting our country) | Information gap         |
| Lessonplan 4/week 4  | Picture narrating (creating stories from the pictures)                            | Creative task           |

### Quantitative data collection instrument

#### Speaking proficiency test

A speaking proficiency test, which consisted of a pretest and a posttest, was conducted for the participants to analyze the speaking skill of the students before and after the intervention of the

learning approach. The pretest was conducted before the study, whereas the posttest was conducted after the intervention of the Task-Based Learning Approach. The participants were asked to talk about the same topic for both the pretest and posttest. Students were assessed using the components; fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar ( Department of Curriculum and Professional Development, 2022) . To avoid bias, the speaking skill of each participant was assessed by two assessors: a peer teacher from the research school and the teacher researcher.

### **Survey questionnaire**

A questionnaire serves as a systematic tool for collecting independent responses from participants (Pandey & Pandey, 2015) offering flexibility, convenience, and the potential for honest responses (Walliman, 2011). In this study, a survey questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale was administered to find students' satisfaction levels with the use of TBLA. Participants were clearly briefed, and moreover, each statement was explained and guided for a better understanding of the statement and to get a reliable result.

### **Qualitative data collection instrument**

#### **Semi-Structured Interview**

In cases where a questionnaire includes unclear statements, there is a risk of respondents misunderstanding them without an opportunity for clarification. Hence, to address potential vagueness in the collected questionnaire data, a semi-structured interview in a group was administered to find out the participants' satisfaction with the use of TBLA after the intervention. The researcher included all 29 participants in a group to respond to six interview questions based on the approach. Their responses were audio recorded as suggested by Walliman (2011) to analyze the conversation in greater detail.

The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview to find out the participants' satisfaction with the use of TBLA after the intervention. The researcher included all 29 participants in a group to respond to six interview questions based on the approach. Their responses were audio recorded to analyze the conversation in greater detail.

#### **Students behavior observation**

Observation provides immediate information and is considered one of the most objective and direct assessment tools with a higher degree of validity (Volpe et al., 2005). So, to further acquire more reliable results, students' Behavior observation was carried out by the peer teacher during the intervention. It consisted of ten items for observation of students' participation in the interactive task.

### **Data collection procedures**

#### **Ethical consideration**

The researcher sought approval from various relevant stakeholders. With the letter of approval from the Ministry of Education and Skilled Development with reference number DSE/SLCD/SLCU (2.2)/2023/604, further approval was obtained from the principal and subject teacher. Moreover, the participants were briefed about the purpose of the study, and consent was sought from concerned parents since the research participants were minors.

#### **Anonymity of participants**

Through the use of a coding system as (std 1, std 2... ,) research participants' opinions and learning achievement scores were kept confidential and used for this research purpose only.

### **Validity**

The validity of the research instruments, lesson plans, test items, and students' behavioral observation forms, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews were validated by three experts.



The IOC of the instruments was calculated to see if the items aligned with the objectives. All the items of the speaking rubrics for the speaking proficiency test, semi-structured interview, survey questionnaire, lesson plans, and classroom behavioral observations were measured as valid (+1) by all the experts which were considered accurate and acceptable.

### Reliability

The research assessment rubrics were piloted on a different group of 31 grade 5 students from the same school. The researcher computed the pilot data using SPSS and then used Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to determine the learning achievement test's reliability coefficient. The result indicated that the scale was reliable with a score of 0.96 for the speaking proficiency assessment rubric.

### Result

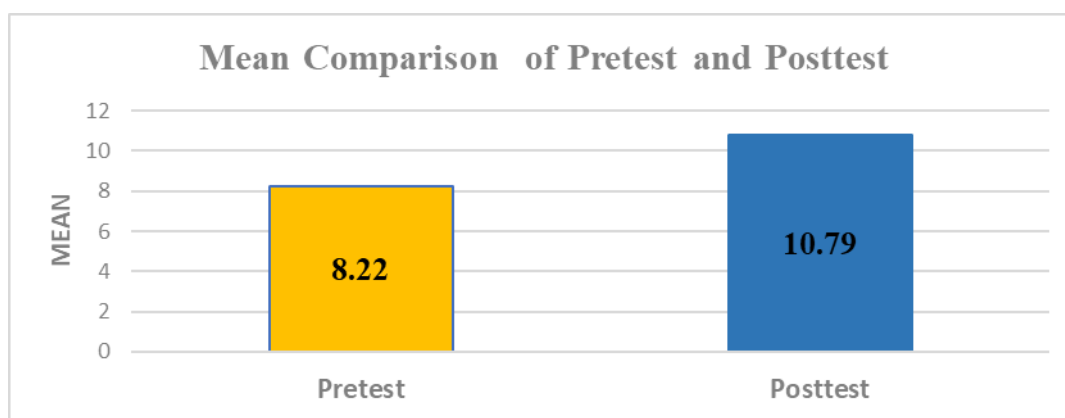
For the study, the data obtained from the proficiency test and questionnaire were analyzed using a paired samples T-test with the help of a suitable computer program. The responses on each item were analyzed using statistical descriptions based on frequency, mean, and standard deviation. The data collected from behavioral observation and Semi-Structured interviews were analyzed using content analysis techniques.

### Speaking Proficiency Test

The mean of the pretest was 8.22 and the standard deviation was 4.362. Whereas the mean of the posttest was 10.79 and the standard deviation was 4.651. The mean difference of 2.57 with a significant value of .01 shows that there is an enhancement in participants speaking skill after the intervention of TBLA. Figure 2 below represents the comparison of mean scores for the pretest and posttest.

**Table 2** Paired sample t-test

| Group        | Pretest   |      | Post test |      | Mean difference | t     | P-value |
|--------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------------|-------|---------|
| Target group | $\bar{x}$ | SD   | $\bar{x}$ | SD   | 2.56            | -8.79 | 0.01    |
|              | 8.22      | 4.36 | 10.79     | 4.65 |                 |       |         |



**Figure 3** Graphical representation of pretest and posttest mean

### Findings of the survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was provided to all 29 research participants after the intervention and the results were computed using statistical description based on mean and standard deviation. A set of 15 items was developed under three broad parts; Part A- Interest and Motivation, Part B- Engagement, and Part C- Efficacy of TBLA on students' learning. Five Likert scale was used with mean score ranges from lowest in the point range of 1.00-1.80, low 1.81-2.60, Moderate 2.61-3.40, High 3.41-4.20, and Highest 4.21 -5.00.

**Table 3** Mean and SD of students' responses

| Sl.no | Part   | Average mean | SD   | Description |
|-------|--|--------------|------|-------------|
| 1     | Part A- Interest and Motivation  | 4.67         | 0.52 | Highest     |
| 2     | Part B- Engagement   | 4.79         | 0.43 | Highest     |
| 3     | Part C- Efficacy of Task Based Learning Approach on students' learning | 4.53         | 0.56 | Highest     |

From the three-board part, the most positive response was received from Part B-Engagement with a mean score of 4.79 followed by Part A- Interest and Motivation with a mean score of 4.67, and lastly Part C- Efficacy of TBLA on students with a mean score of 4.53 which still falls under highest category. The researcher acknowledged this since the data were collected within a short span of time and it is difficult to expect a better response. Item 6 which says all the tasks carried out were interactive was rated highest with an average mean of 4.93. Whereas, item 14 which says Completing tasks on our own provided me an opportunity to reflect on my learning was rated lowest with a mean average of 4.38, however, it still falls in the highest category. Nevertheless, with the overall mean of the survey questionnaire 4.66 which falls under the highest, it is convinced that the majority of the grade 4 students are highly satisfied with the use of TBLA in English speaking lessons.

### Findings of semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview was employed to explore the learning satisfaction of the students regarding the use of TBLA in English-speaking lessons. The face-to-face interview in the group was carried out at the end of the study with all 29 research participants. The participants were interviewed in six groups, 5 groups with 5 members each and one group with four members, and all of them were numbered from 1 to 29. The interview questions were developed based on three board parts; Part A- Interest and Motivation, Part B- Engagement, and Part C-Efficacy of TBLA on students' learning where two questions were created in each part. The data collected were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique. Participants' responses were noted and to retain the uninterpreted records of what has been said, the responses were audio recorded.

### Part A interest and motivation

The participants found that the use of TBLA in the classroom was very good and interesting. All the participants stated that it was fun and enjoyable working collaboratively with friends. From the participants' responses, it was also learned that they had more ideas when they listened to their friends and they could improve their speaking skill. Some participants expressed that initially, they felt nervous about talking in English with their friends but gradually they could speak properly. Participants also shared that they were given equal opportunity to talk in the group and they felt more valued in the learning process.

### **Part B engagement**

Almost all the participants found that the task cycle was most interesting and meaningful. They expressed that during the task cycle, they had more time to interact with their friends and exchange ideas. When they interacted with friends, they understood their friends better and felt more comfortable in learning. Some participants shared that language focus was meaningful as they got to learning new vocabulary used by other groups.

### **Part C efficacy of TBLA on students' learning**

Regarding the use of TBLA regularly in English-speaking classes, almost all the participants affirmed that TBLA was very engaging and useful. Participants expressed that the use of TBLA had not only enhanced their speaking skill but also impacted them positively on their writing skill. It provided them a platform to speak their ideas to their friends using the target language and they were constantly encouraged by their friends. Most of the participants shared that when everyone was given equal opportunity, even those timid students felt more encouraged to talk. Moreover, some of the participants considered TBLA as an opportunity to showcase their talent as they had more chances to talk during the task cycle.

### **Findings from classroom behavioral observation**

A peer teacher from the research school conducted classroom observations to assess students' behavior towards the use of the Task-Based Learning Approach (TBLA). The observations were carried out in all the sessions with ten items to mark the behavior. During the initial observation, only a few students confidently used English but with encouragement. Subsequently, observations showed a gradual enthusiasm from the students. Later in the final observation, significant progress was observed, with students confidently collaborating, offering feedback, and displaying enhanced English usage despite initial difficulties.

### **Discussion**

The study has two findings. The first finding was that the English-speaking skill of grade 4 Bhutanese students enhanced after using task-based learning Approach. The second finding was that grade 4 students had a positive learning satisfaction after using task-based learning approach. The detailed findings were as discussed below

#### **1) Enhancing English-speaking skill**

The findings from this study revealed that the use of TBLA significantly enhanced the English-speaking skill of grade 4 Bhutanese students. This was evident from the speaking proficiency test result with a mean of 8.22 in the pretest and 10.79 in the posttest. The mean difference of 2.57 and a significant p-value of .01 ( $p \leq .05$ ) as shown in Figure 1 proved that the majority of the students performed significantly better in the posttest than the pretest. It was in alignment with the previous studies by Beding and Inthapthim (2019) where the performance of Thai students increased with a mean difference of 1.57 in the post-test. With a mean difference of 3.8, Thanghun's (2012) study also proved that the implementation of task task-based learning approach helps in the development of English speaking skills of the students. Hassan et al. (2021) study reveals that students' achievement improved from low level to a moderate level after learning through TBLA. Moreover, using TBLA, students get a chance to interact with their peers to develop self-confidence, which in turn helps them acquire speaking skill (Hassan et al., 2021). This finding promotes Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (1978) and Piaget's Social Cognitive Theory which emphasizes that social interaction is the prerequisite to cognitive development, and learning is constructed by involving more than one person.

#### **2) Students' learning satisfaction**

The result of a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview declared that students found the approach fun, interesting, motivating, and even more engaging. The finding was in alignment with the study conducted by Beding and Inthapthim (2019). They revealed that students were more inspired and interested in doing tasks since the study encouraged them to use the target language to complete the task in an anxiety-free environment. Thus, they concluded that the approach had significantly affected students' oral performance. Furthermore, students expressed a high level of satisfaction that TBLA stimulated their confidence to share their thoughts. Nget et al. (2020) study shows that students were more satisfied as they got opportunities for practice and found it appropriate platform for language development. Similarly, Safitri et al. (2020) revealed that students responded positively to enhancements in their confidence though during the initial phase, they had a fear of being criticized by friends. The finding best suit Dale's cone of learning. Dale (1946) suggests that learning experiences should be able to relate to the students' back grounds and developmental stages should be in a way that helps them incorporate what they already know.

Student's behavioral observation which was carried out as a supplement to the findings of the survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview indicated that there were significant improvements in the behavior of the student. Most of the students were found to be participative by the end of the fourth observation. Similar findings were highlighted by Adiantika and Purnomo (2018) in their study that task-based instruction contributed to students' engagement and active participation in teaching and learning.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

The studies conducted by different researchers found that the use of TBLA is an effective approach to enhancing the speaking skills of the students (Safitri et al., 2020; Adiantika & Purnomo, 2018). Moreover, students enjoy sharing real-life experiences, thoughts, and views with peers (Thanghun, 2012). TBLA creates a conducive learning environment by motivating the students to voice out their opinions towards the task. Furthermore, students boost their confidence when their views are considered and acknowledged and take active participation to accomplish the task (Prabhu, 1987). Thus, with the result obtained using quantitative and qualitative data, it can be concluded that students had remarkable positive learning satisfaction after the use of the task-based learning approach.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) With positive results, it is highly recommended to use task-based learning approach in teaching speaking skill to other grades too, and further similar research can be conducted with larger sample size and different grade levels.
- 2) The student's opinion suggested that having more chances to speak assists in improving their writing skills. Therefore, teachers could consider implementing TBLA in teaching to enhance writing skill. Thus, further studies can be carried out for other skills as well.
- 3) Future researchers could conduct similar studies with multiple grades and subjects in different geographical areas, which could provide support for the use of task-based learning approach in Bhutanese classrooms.

## **Acknowledgment**

The researcher expressed heartfelt gratitude to His Majesty the 5<sup>th</sup> King of Bhutan and Dr. Arthit Qurairat, the former president of Rangsit University, Thailand for this prestigious Trongsa Poenlop Scholarship (TPS). The researcher also remains indebted to the thesis adviser Assistant Professor Dr. Nipaporn Sakulwongs for her constant guidance, positive recommendations, unwavering support, and continued encouragement to complete my thesis.

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