# Evaluation of Task-Based Teaching Method to Enhance Oral English Language Teaching among Teachers in China

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**Abstract**
The aim of this study is to enhance students' oral expression abilities by incorporating task-based teaching as an approach grounded in communicative competence. Employing a mixed research methodology that combines both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, the study utilized quantitative measures to evaluate the influence of the task-based approach on students' oral interest, responsiveness to questions, and topic narration through questionnaires and oral tests. Qualitative data, obtained through interviews with teachers, aimed to comprehend challenges in the implementation of the task-based teaching method. The findings indicate that task-based teaching significantly positively impacts students' interest in speaking, speaking performance, and topic narrative skills. However, challenges emerged during the implementation of the task-based teaching method, including inadequacies in task design relevance, insufficient assessment and feedback mechanisms, and a mismatch in task complexity and difficulty with the students' proficiency levels.
**Keywords:** Task-Based Teaching, Oral English Teaching, Applications Effectiveness

**Introduction**
With the globalization and the popularization of information technology, English has become a universal language (Brown, Yule 2000). There is a certain gap in oral English teaching level in junior high schools in China compared with other countries such as Europe, America, Japan, and Singapore (Kela 2019). Canada pays attention to diversified oral English teaching, such as immersion teaching and task-based teaching. (Nunan, 1989). Oral English teaching in New Zealand focuses on cultivating students' communication skills and language application skills (Ellis, 2018). The traditional teaching methods focus on the instillation of knowledge and mechanical practice, neglecting the cultivation of practical communication skills. Oral language teaching places too much emphasis on the learning of grammar and vocabulary and lacks training in real contexts and practical applications (Qin and Xiaotang, 2020).

In the pursuit of enhancing students' English-speaking proficiency, educational researchers and teachers have been exploring effective teaching methods. The Task-Based Language

Teaching (TBLT) method has garnered significant attention as an approach rooted in communicative competence. This method places emphasis on cultivating students' capacity to fulfill specific tasks within authentic contexts, promoting active participation and communicative competence (Ellis, 2018). Traditional teaching methods often fall short in engaging students' interest and encouraging active involvement in the learning process, resulting in sluggish improvements in speaking skills. To address this challenge, the task-based teaching method is gradually being introduced into the secondary school English speaking curriculum. By applying the task-based teaching method, the instruction of spoken English in secondary schools can become more aligned with students' practical needs and interests, thereby kindling enthusiasm and enhancing academic performance (Willis, 1996).

While existing studies have offered insights into the application of the task-based teaching method in secondary school English speaking instruction, there are still notable limitations. Firstly, there are concerns regarding the assessment of effectiveness; some studies exhibit constraints in the tools and methods used to evaluate the impact of the task-based teaching method. Consequently, the assessment results of students' speaking ability may lack comprehensiveness and accuracy (Nunan, 1989). Secondly, the prevailing focus of current studies tends to center on the effects of task-based pedagogy on students, neglecting the crucial aspect of addressing the training needs of teachers in the teaching process. This oversight may potentially impede the effectiveness of implementing task-based pedagogy.

**Background of the Study**

Edwards & Willis, (2009) pointed out that with the development of globalization and the popularization of information technology, English has become a global language. Oral language is a core component of language, and through effective oral language teaching, students' comprehensive language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing can be promoted. Hadley (2013) pointed out that the improvement of oral proficiency helps students to better understand and use English and improve their overall language skills.

Improvements and enhancements in oral language teaching can stimulate students' interest and motivation in learning. Kola (2019) points out that there is a gap in the level of oral English teaching in secondary schools in China compared with other countries. Some countries have focused on developing students' oral expression skills at the secondary school level, using more interactive teaching methods and training in real contexts, and emphasizing students' practical language use skills. Nunan (2020) argues that Canada focuses on diverse approaches to oral language teaching, such as immersion and task-based teaching methods. Students are exposed to a large amount of English in a language environment that encourages them to engage in real communication and practical activities.

According to Ellis (2021), oral language teaching in New Zealand focuses on developing students' communication and language use skills. Teachers encourage students to role play and group discussions in real situations to provide opportunities for practical language use. However, many students still have difficulties in oral expression in the traditional teaching methods in China. According to Ke Qin and Xuyang (2021), the traditional teaching methods focus on the instillation of knowledge and mechanical practice, neglecting the cultivation of practical communication skills. Oral language teaching places too much emphasis on the

learning of grammar and vocabulary and lacks training in real contexts and practical applications.

To enhance students' English-speaking proficiency, educators and researchers are actively exploring effective teaching methods. The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) method has garnered significant attention as an instructional approach rooted in communicative competence. This method prioritizes the cultivation of students' capacity to accomplish specific tasks within authentic contexts, emphasizing active participation and communicative competence (Ellis 2005).

The secondary school level is a critical period for students to learn English and an important stage for developing speaking skills. However, traditional teaching of oral English in secondary schools tends to focus on textbooks and grammar, lacking actual language use and communication contexts. In this instructional setting, students frequently encounter challenges in cultivating self-confidence and achieving fluent oral expression. Consequently, this study has shifted its emphasis towards implementing the task-based teaching method in secondary school oral English instruction. Through the incorporation of the task-based teaching method, students have the opportunity to engage in authentic communication scenarios, fostering the development of their listening and speaking skills, as well as enhancing their communication and language proficiency.

*Research Related to Task-Based Teaching and Its Methods*
The task-based teaching method orchestrates the teaching and learning process through task-based activities that are participatory, experiential, interactive, communicative, and cooperative. It represents an advanced approach to foreign language instruction, enabling students to fully utilize their cognitive, hands-on, and practical abilities, acquiring knowledge through experiential learning. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a language instruction approach that emerged in the 1980s, involving teachers guiding language learners through tasks in the classroom. Research on this methodology has been ongoing since the 1980s.

In the article discussing "Strategies for Implementing the Task-Based Teaching Method in English Speaking Instruction" by Chen Yan (2019), the author outlines a two-step approach to utilizing the task-based teaching method in English practice. The initial step involves task design, emphasizing how tasks should be structured. Subsequently, the second step involves the actual performance of these tasks. The third and final step involves the evaluation of the completed tasks.

In a similar context, Yao Te (2018), in his dissertation titled "The Application of Task-Based Teaching Method in Teaching English as a Foreign Language," places emphasis on the fundamental principles that steer the execution of the task-based teaching method. These guiding principles encompass the purpose principle, highlighting the goal-oriented nature of tasks; the cooperation principle, underscoring the significance of collaborative learning; and the fun principle, emphasizing the element of enjoyment in the learning process.

*The Importance of Task-Based Teaching Method*
Yao Te (2018), in her thesis, not only outlines the principles that govern the utilization of the task-based teaching method in oral English instruction but also highlights the importance of

putting these principles into practice. According to Yao Te, the task-based teaching method represents an innovative approach, acting as both an extension and transformation of traditional teaching methods. In comparison to traditional English oral instruction, this method seamlessly Integrates teacher-led instruction with student practice, providing students with enhanced opportunities to refine their oral skills within the classroom. This approach fosters an optimal learning environment for students to cultivate their oral proficiency effectively.

Similarly, Ping (2018), in her thesis titled "The Utilization of Task-Based Teaching Method in English Speaking Instruction in Colleges and Universities," highlights the pervasive issue of weak English speaking abilities among students, attributable to the influence of exam-oriented education. She argues that the traditional English teaching approach fails to capture students' attention and fortify their English proficiency. Consequently, Liu Ping advocates for the incorporation of the task-based teaching method in English speaking instruction as an essential measure to address these challenges.

**The Utilization of Task-Based Teaching Method in Oral English Teaching**
*The Relationship between Task-Based Teaching Method and Students' Interest in Oral English*
Hovland (1960) proposed the theory of interest which is an important theory supporting the task-based approach to students' interest in learning spoken English, and interest is a great motivation for people's activities. They propose a psychological theory of attitude change and persuasion. The theory explores how individuals form and change their attitudes toward various objects, ideas, or issues. In their study, Hovland and Rosenberg proposed a model that decomposes attitudes into three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. These components represent different attitudes of an individual toward an object, idea, or problem.

Chunling (2017), observed a substantial increase in students' interest and motivation to learn oral English through the utilization of the task-based teaching method. Engaging in challenging and authentic tasks instilled a sense of enjoyment and accomplishment in students, serving as a source of motivation for their learning endeavors. Similarly, Wei (2018) demonstrated that the task-based teaching method led to significant growth in students' interest and motivation in learning spoken English. By completing tasks, students acquired practical language skills, bolstered their self-confidence, and honed their oral expression abilities, ultimately fostering increased interest and motivation in the learning process. Xin (2019) highlighted that the task-based teaching method significantly elevated students' interest and motivation in learning spoken English. The design and execution of tasks prompted active student participation, fostering language use in genuine situations through collaboration and communication with peers, thereby enhancing their interest and motivation to learn. Li (2020) discovered a notable improvement in students' interest and motivation in learning spoken English within the task-based teaching method. Xiaoqing (2021) demonstrated a significant upward trajectory in students' interest and motivation to learn spoken English under the task-based teaching method.

Willis and Willis (2007) highlighted a substantial increase in students' interest and motivation in learning spoken English when adopting a task-based approach. The tasks' realistic and contextualized nature provided students with a sense of meaningful learning, leading to heightened motivation and engagement. Bygate et al. (2009) discovered a significant surge in

students' interest and motivation to learn spoken English under the task-based approach. Practical task completion instilled a feeling of success and accomplishment, contributing to enhanced motivation. Skehan (2014) observed a noteworthy increase in students' interest and motivation in learning spoken English within the task-based teaching method. Through cooperation and communication with peers, students had the chance to practically use the language, serving as a motivation for their learning. Pica and Doughty (2016) demonstrated a significant rise in students' interest and motivation in learning spoken English under the guidance of task-based pedagogy.

Students felt the joy of success and improved language proficiency by engaging in specific, challenging tasks, which increased their motivation and engagement in learning. Nunan's (2018) study found that students' interest and motivation in learning spoken English showed a significant increase in the task-based teaching method.

*Task-Based Teaching Method and Students' English Speaking Learning Performance*
Hong (2017), found that students' English speaking learning performance significantly improved under the task-based teaching method. By engaging in various tasks, students used English to communicate and express themselves in authentic contexts, improving their speaking skills and language fluency, which led to better speaking scores. Li Wei (2018) showed that under the guidance of task-based teaching method, students' English speaking learning performance was significantly improved. The design and organization of tasks prompted students to actively participate in speaking practice, which developed their language use and communicative competence, resulting in better performance in oral examinations. Xin (2019) pointed out that by engaging in tasks, students practiced and used language in real situations, improving their oral expression and language accuracy, which in turn improved their oral learning performance. Zhang Jianguo (2020) found that students' English speaking learning performance increased significantly under the task-based teaching method. Through the setting and implementation of tasks, students were given more opportunities to practice speaking and develop their speaking and language application skills, which led to better performance in speaking exams.

Jie (2021), showed that under the guidance of task-based teaching method, students' English speaking learning performance improved significantly. By engaging in tasks, students practiced and used language in real situations, which stimulated their interest and motivation to learn, and in turn, achieved better oral learning performance. Skehan's (2003), found that there was a significant increase in students' performance in oral English learning in a task-based approach. The task setting and cooperation among students promoted student participation and motivation, and students improved their speaking and expression skills through task completion, which in turn led to better performance. Pica and Doughty (2018), pointed out that there was a significant improvement in students' English speaking learning performance under the task-based teaching method. Students gained more practice and feedback in the actual use of language and achieved better oral learning performance. Willis and Willis (2012) found that students' oral learning performance in English significantly improved with the support of task-based teaching methods. By working with others on tasks, students gained experience related to practical communication and enhanced their oral expression and language accuracy, resulting in better oral learning performance. Bygate et al.

(2014) showed that in the task-based approach, students showed a significant increase in their English-speaking learning performance.

Through involvement in demanding tasks, students had the chance to apply language skills in practical situations, fostering the development of their speaking and communicative abilities, subsequently resulting in enhanced performance in oral examinations. Nunan (2016) highlighted considerable advancements in students' English speaking learning achievements when utilizing the task-based teaching method. The design and execution of tasks served to stimulate students' interest and motivation for learning, leading to substantial progress in oral learning achievements by enhancing oral fluency and expressive skills through task completion.

*The Relationship between Task-Based Teaching Method and Students' Ability to Narrate Oral Topics*

Xiaoming (2017), found that students' English speaking topic narration skills were significantly improved under the task-based teaching method. By engaging in tasks on different topics, students expressed and communicated in authentic contexts and developed their topic narration and language organization skills, thus enhancing the accuracy and fluency of their oral expressions. Lei (2018), showed that by completing challenging tasks, students actively participated in oral practice and developed their topic narrative skills and language application skills, which in turn enhanced their expressive skills in oral topic narratives. Fang (2019) pointed out that by engaging in different types of tasks, students practiced and used language in real contexts, which stimulated their interest and motivation to learn, thus improving their topic narration and language expression skills. Jian (2020) found that the setting and organization of the task led to students' active participation in oral practice and developed their topic narration skills and language fluency. Li (2021) showed that students' English speaking topic narration skills were significantly improved under the guidance of task-based teaching method. By engaging in specific tasks, students practiced and expressed their speaking in real situations, which enhanced their topic narration and language expression skills.

Willis and Willis (2013) found that students' English speaking topic narration skills were significantly improved in a task-based approach. By engaging in specific tasks, students practiced and used language in real situations, developing their topic narration skills and language organization. Skehan (2014), pointed that students' ability to narrate English speaking topics significantly improved under the task-based teaching method. Ellis (2015), found that the design and organization of tasks encouraged students to engage in oral communication and topic narration in authentic contexts, which developed their language organization and expression skills, thus increasing their proficiency level in topic narration. Gass and Mackey (2016) showed that students' English speaking topic narrative skills showed a significant improvement in the task-based teaching method.

Through participation in demanding tasks, students exercised and implemented language skills in authentic contexts, honing their ability to narrate on various topics with increased linguistic precision. Nunan (2017) observed noteworthy enhancements in students' English speaking topic narration skills through the utilization of the task-based teaching method. The varied tasks provided students with valuable communication experiences, fostering

improvements in their topic narration skills and linguistic proficiency, ultimately leading to substantial advancements in topic narration.

## Methods

The objective of this research is to investigate the impact of task-based teaching on oral English instruction in middle schools, with the aim of providing effective teaching strategies and fostering the enhancement of students' oral expression abilities. Specifically, the study aims to assess the influence of task-based teaching methods on students' interest in oral learning, their performance in oral learning, and their skills in narrating topics during oral instruction.

A mixed research approach, incorporating teaching experiments, questionnaires, and interviews, was employed in this study. The questionnaire was used to assess whether the implementation of task-based teaching methods in oral instruction contributes to an increased interest in learning oral communication. The teaching experiment was employed to examine whether the integration of task-based teaching methods in oral language instruction enhances students' oral language performance and their ability to narrate topics. Additionally, interviews were conducted to identify challenges in the application of task-based teaching methods in oral instruction from the teachers' perspective.

The study focuses on ninth-grade students from Zhengzhou No.9 Middle School, a regular institution where the students' proficiency in oral English aligns with the typical standard for middle school students. Specifically, the research involves students from Grade 9 (5) and Grade 9 (6). Class 5 of Grade 9 comprises 40 students, while Class 6 has 42 students, making a total of 82 students participating in the three-month experimental teaching. The ninth grade (5) class serves as the control group, receiving oral teaching, whereas the ninth grade (6) class acts as the experimental group, undergoing task-based teaching. Table 1 provides detailed information about the students in both the experimental and control classes.

Table 1
*Basic information of students in the experimental and control classes*

| Classes | Number of people | Average age | Male students | Female students |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control class | 40 | 14 | 20 | 20 |
| Experimental Class | 42 | 14 | 22 | 20 |

In the study, purposive sampling was selected for the qualitative research group. Seven ninth grade English teachers from Zhengzhou Ninth Middle School were selected and interviewed, including three male teachers and four female teachers. The educational background of these participants is a master's degree and teachers who have some teaching experience and have extensive experience in teaching spoken English. Professionally these seven teachers all have English Speaking Professional Certificate VIII.

The questionnaire of this study is designed with reference to the questionnaires about oral English learning interest adapted from Lihui (2016) and Jia (2015), and reasonable adaptation according to the actual situation has been made, designed according to the actual needs of this research. The questionnaire comprises 10 questions, categorized into three dimensions: cognitive (questions 1-3), emotional (questions 4-6), and behavioral (questions 7-10). A total

of 42 questionnaires were distributed, utilizing the same questionnaire before and after the experiment. SPSS 26.0 was employed for analysis. Table 2 depicts the validity and reliability of the research instruments, demonstrating that the Cronbach's alpha index for this questionnaire is 0.851, surpassing the threshold of 0.8, indicating good reliability.

Table 2
*Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments*

| Dimensions | Cronbach Alpha | Number of items |
|---|---|---|
| Cognitive dimensions | 0.928 | 3 |
| Emotional dimensions | 0.93 | 3 |
| Behavioral dimensions | 0.919 | 4 |
| Total questionnaire | 0.851 | 10 |

**Results**
*Effects of task-based teaching methods on students' interest in oral learning*
The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions aimed at evaluating whether the task-based teaching method could augment the interest of students in the experimental class in their oral language acquisition. The same set of questionnaires was given to individual students in the experimental class before and after the experimental study, maintaining identical content in both instances. A total of 84 questionnaires were distributed on two occasions, resulting in 84 valid responses. The subsequent analysis compares the results of the two questionnaires administered before and after the study. **Table 3** presents the cognitive dimensions evaluated in the questionnaire.

As depicted in Table 3, within the cognitive dimension (questions 1-3), students place considerable importance on learning oral English. In the initial question, 52.5% of respondents in the former questionnaires deemed learning oral English as highly important, a figure that increased to 55.5% in the latter questionnaires. Similarly, in the second question, students' self-assessment of their oral communication skills showed improvement, with the proportion of students rating their oral communication ability as very good escalating from 35% to 72.9%. Furthermore, in the third question, students' inclination towards speaking English in class witnessed an increase, with the proportion of those expressing preference or strong preference rising from 54% to 82.9%.

Table 3
Cognitive Dimensions of Questionnaire

| Question number | Questionnaire | Very Good | Good | General | Not | Very Not Good |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Do you think it is important to learn to speak English? | Pre-questionnaire | 52.5% | 27% | 16.5% | 1.8% | 2.2% |
| | Post-questionnaire | 55.5% | 29.5% | 12% | 1.3% | 1.7% |
| 2.How do you think your oral communication skills are? | Pre-questionnaire | 5% | 30%. | 55%. | 7%. | 3%. |
| | Post-questionnaire | 2.4%. | 70.5% | 19% | 6%. | 2.2% |
| 3.Do you like to speak English in class? | Pre-questionnaire | 31.5%. | 22.5% | 38% | 3.8%. | 4.2% |
| | Post-questionnaire | 42.9%. | 40.2% | 8.9%. | 4.2% | 3.8% |

The emotional dimension, as outlined in Table 4 (questions 4-6), indicates a notable enhancement in students' attitudes toward learning spoken English. In Question 4, there was a substantial increase in students' preference for learning spoken English, with the percentage of those expressing a strong liking rising sharply from 57.3% to 87.3%. This signifies an improved interest and enjoyment in learning spoken English among students. Question 5 reveals a greater willingness among students to actively participate by answering questions, as the percentage of those strongly agreeing or agreeing surged from 40% to 77.3%. In the sixth question, there was a significant rise in students' anticipation for teachers to organize speaking activities, with the percentage of those expressing a strong desire increasing from 50.5% to 85.2%. This points to a heightened positive sentiment among students regarding oral learning.

Table 4
*Emotional Dimension of Questionnaire*

| 4.Do you like learning to speak English? | Pre-questionnaire | 20% | 37.5% | 22.5% | 9% | 11% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Post-questionnaire | 60.3% | 27%. | 4.8% | 3.9% | 4% |
| 5.Do you often take the initiative to answer questions? | Pre-questionnaire | 10%. | 30%. | 50%. | 5.1%. | 4.9% |
| | Post-questionnaire | 7.1%. | 70.2% | 12.7%. | 4.9% | 5.1%. |
| 6.Do you want teachers to organize speaking activities often? | Pre-questionnaire | 50.5%. | 12.5% | 27%. | 7.1%. | 2.9%. |
| | Post-questionnaire | 85.2% | 2.4% | 2.4%. | 2.8%. | 7.2%. |

The behavioral dimension as shown in **Table 5** (questions 7-10) shows that students have changed their behavior in oral communication in English. In question 7, students' preference for using English to communicate outside of class time increased, with the percentage of those who like it very much increasing from 27.5% to 37.5%. This indicates that students are

more willing to use their oral communication in English outside of class time. In question 8, students were more satisfied with the current method of teaching spoken English, with the percentage of very satisfied increasing from 2.5% to 69.8%. This shows the increase in students' recognition and approval of the speaking teaching methods. In question 9, the frequency of opportunities for students to communicate with other students in English speaking classes increased, from 64.5% to 85.6% for very frequent and from time to time. Finally, in question 10, students' confidence in learning to speak English well also increased, with the percentage of very confident increasing from 8.5% to 34.1%. This indicates that students have greater confidence in their abilities and prospects in learning spoken English.

Table 5
*Behavioral Dimensions of Questionnaire*

| 7.Do you like to communicate in English after school? | Pre-questionnaire | 27.5% | 17.5% | 45%. | 5.8%. | 4.2%. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Post-questionnaire | 37.5% | 20.8% | 32.7% | 4.6%. | 4.4% |
| 8.Are you satisfied with the current oral English teaching methods? | Pre-questionnaire | 2.5%. | 12.5%. | 75%. | 6.4% | 3.6%. |
| | Post-questionnaire | 69.8% | 17.4%. | 4.8% | 3.6% | 4.4%. |
| 9.Do you have the opportunity to communicate with other students in your English-speaking class? | Pre-questionnaire | 8.5%. | 56%. | 23.5% | 6.1%. | 5.9%. |
| | Post-questionnaire | 39.6%. | 46%. | 2.4%. | 6.2%. | 5.8%. |
| 10.Do you have confidence in learning to speak English well? | Pre-questionnaire | 8.5%. | 48.5%. | 31%. | 7.5%. | 4.5%. |
| | Post-questionnaire | 34.1% | 55.5% | 2.4%. | 4.6%. | 3.4%. |

To sum up, from the three dimensions of cognition, affection and behavior, the students' preference for the importance of oral English learning and their attitude towards active participation have been significantly improved after the adoption of task-based teaching method.

**Effects of Task-Based Teaching Methods on Students' Interest in Oral Learning Performance**
*Comparative Analysis of the Pre-Test Speaking Performance of the Experimental and the Control Class*
From **Table 6** it is known that the average pre-test oral scores of the experimental and control classes were 4.83 and 4.62, respectively, and there was not much difference between the average scores of the two classes.

Table 6
*The average of the pre-test oral scores of the experimental and control classes*

| Class | Mean | Standard deviation | Standard error of the mean | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Classes | 4.62 | 3.060 | .472 | 42 |
| Control class | 4.83 | 2.881 | .456 | 40 |

From **Table 7** the test value of significant difference sig is 0.351, which is greater than 0.05 proving that there is no significant difference between the pre-test oral scores of the experimental class and the control class, and the pre-test oral scores of the two classes remain basically the same before the experiment.

Table 7
*Results of Independent Sample T-Test for Pre-Test Oral Scores in the Experimental and Control Classes*

| | | Levene's test for variance equations | | t-test for the mean equation | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig.(two-tailed) | Mean Difference | Standard error value | 95% confidence interval of the difference | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | |
| Scores | Equal variance hypothesis | .880 | .351 | -.313 | 80 | .755 | -.206 | .657 | -1.514 | 1.102 | |
| | Unequal variance hypothesis | | | -.314 | 79.991 | .754 | -.206 | .656 | -1.512 | 1.100 | |

*Comparative analysis of the Post-Test Oral Scores of the Experimental Class and the Control Class*

To confirm the enhancement in oral performance within the experimental class following the implementation of the task-based teaching method, a comparison was made with the oral performance of students in the control class. The post-test oral scores for both groups were subjected to independent samples t-tests using SPSS 26.0. Notably, the average pre-test speaking scores were 8.43 for the experimental class and 6.60 for the control class, indicating significantly higher scores for the experimental class. Table 8 presents the mean values of post-test oral scores for both the experimental and control classes.

Table 8
*Mean values of post-test oral scores in the experimental and control classes*

| Classes | Mean value | Standard deviation | Standard error of the mean value | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Class | 8.43 | 1.484 | .229 | 42 |
| Control class | 6.60 | 2.590 | .410 | 40 |

Table 9 reveals a significant difference in post-test speaking scores between the experimental class and the control class, with a test value of significance (sig) at 0.00, considerably below the 0.05 threshold. The results indicate more substantial changes in the experimental class

after the experiment, with post-test speaking scores significantly surpassing those of the control class. This highlights the superiority of the task-based teaching method over the traditional oral teaching approach in enhancing students' oral performance and expression skills.

Table 9
*Results of independent sample t-test for post-test oral scores in the experimental and control classes*

| | Levene's test for variance equation | t-test for the mean equation | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig.(two-tailed) | Mean Difference | Standard error value | 95% confidence interval of the difference | | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower Bound | | Upper Bound |
| Scores | Assuming equal variance | 31.215 | .000 | 3.946 | 80 | .000 | 1.829 | .463 | .906 | 2.751 |
| | Assuming unequal variances | | | 3.897 | 61.483 | .000 | 1.829 | .469 | .891 | 2.767 |

*Comparative Analysis of the Pre-Test And Post-Test Oral Scores of the Experimental Class*
To further validate the impact of the task-based teaching method on enhancing students' oral expression skills, paired-sample t-tests were conducted on the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental class. As indicated in Table 10, the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test speaking scores of the experimental class was -3.810. This implies that, on average, students' post-test oral scores increased by 3.810 points following the implementation of the task-based teaching method compared to their pre-test scores. The significant difference test value (sig) was 0, which is less than 0.05, underscoring the considerable significance of the difference between students' post-test and pre-test oral scores.

Table 10
*Comparative analysis of pre and post-test oral scores in the experimental class*

| | | Paired Differential | | | | | t | df | Sig.(two-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean value | Standard deviation | Standard error of the mean | 95% confidence interval of the difference | | | | |
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | | |
| 对 1 | Oral pre-test Oral post-test | -3.810 | 2.098 | .324 | -4.463 | -3.156 | -11.767 | 41 | .000 |

In summary, after implementing the task-based teaching method for one month, the oral performance of the students in the experimental class was significantly strengthened, which means that the task-based teaching method was significantly helpful in improving students' oral skills.

**Effects of Task-Based Teaching Methods on Students' Interest in Narrative Skills**
*Comparative Analysis of the Performance of the Experimental Class and the Control Class in Answering Questions in the Oral Pre and Post-Test*
To further validate the potential improvement in students' question-answering abilities through the task-based teaching method, this study inputted the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental class in the question-answering section into SPSS 26.0 for paired-sample t-test analysis. Table 11 indicates an average difference of -1.238 between pre-test and post-test scores, with a test value (sig) of 0, significantly below 0.05. This outcome underscores a notable and statistically significant difference between post-test and pre-test scores.

Table 11
*Comparative analysis of the scores of the question answering part of the oral pre and post test in the experimental class*

| | | Paired Differential | | | | | t | df | Sig.(two-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean value | Standard deviation | Standard error of the mean value | 95% confidence interval of the difference | | | | |
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | | |
| For 1 | Pre-test response scores -Post-test response scores | -1.238 | 1.165 | .180 | -1.601 | -.875 | -6.889 | 41 | .000 |

*Comparative Analysis of topic Narrative Scores in the Oral Pre and Post Tests between the Experimental and Control Classes*
To further verify whether the task-based teaching method can improve students' oral topic narrative skills, this study poured the experimental class's scores of answering topic narratives in the oral pre-test and the topic narrative part of the oral post-test into spss26.0 and

conducted a paired-samples t-test analysis. From **Table 12** it can be seen that the average difference between the results of the pretest and the post-test is-1.381, and the test value sig is 0 less than 0.05, which shows that there is a significant difference between the results of the post-test and the pre-test, which further shows that the application of task-based teaching method in junior high school oral English class can improve students' oral topic narrative ability.

Table 12
*Comparative analysis of the performance of the topic narrative part of the pre-test and post-test of speaking in the experimental class*

| | | Paired Differential | | | | | t | df | Sig.(two-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean value | Standard deviation | Standard error of the mean value | 95% confidence interval of the difference | | | | |
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | | |
| For 1 | Pre-test topic narrative scores - Post-test topic narrative scores | -1.381 | .661 | .102 | -1.587 | -.1.175 | -6.889 | 41 | .000 |

Examining the data presented above, it is evident that the application of the task-based teaching method over three months has significantly enhanced the oral English proficiency of students in the experimental class when compared to those in the control class. The comparison of scores between the two groups reveals a superior oral performance in the experimental class as opposed to the control class.

**Discussion**
Teaching is effective, which is the main conclusion of the study. The study also pointed out some teacher training needs and other recommendations that are crucial for further optimizing the implementation of task-based teaching methods.

Students showed higher interest and motivation in learning with the task-based approach, which was consistent with their high evaluation of the approach in the questionnaire. The task-based teaching method is more effective in improving speaking skills than the traditional 3P teaching method, which provides strong evidence for the widespread use of the task-based teaching method in oral language teaching. Task-based teaching method encourages students' active participation, cooperative inquiry, and independent learning. Students play the role of protagonists in task-based teaching and acquire knowledge and skills through the completion of practical tasks. This student-subjective approach to teaching stimulates students' interest and motivation to learn and makes them more engaged in the learning process (Gao Junmei 2019). A scholar compared task-based and traditional teaching methods and highlighted the advantages of task-based teaching methods in promoting oral expression skills (Ellis, R. 2003). How the task-based teaching method promotes students' cognitive development and language proficiency and compares it with traditional teaching methods. It

provides research and empirical findings that support the effectiveness of the task-based teaching method in oral teaching English (Skehan, 1998). A scholar used a quantitative data collection and analysis method to compare the effects of two teaching methods on students' oral expression skills. The results of the research showed that the task-based teaching method had a significant positive impact on students' oral expression skills, and was able to improve students' self-confidence, fluency, and communicative competence. (Li & Li, 2020). The results of this research show that the task-based teaching method can motivate students and increase their active participation, which is consistent with the above research results.

The task-based approach exhibited noteworthy advancements in enhancing students' proficiency in answering questions and narrating on various topics. Notably, students in the experimental class outperformed their counterparts in the control class in these aspects, underscoring the efficacy of the task-based teaching method in refining students' oral expression skills.

Scholarly research by domestic academics, such as Hong (2017), has similarly confirmed that the implementation of the task-based teaching method in English instruction contributes to improved oral communication skills. However, some scholars, including Wei (2018) and Xin (2019), have identified challenges in the application of the Task-Based Teaching Method. Greedy task design, prevalent in some instances, may hinder successful task completion, and the overall effectiveness of task-driven pedagogy necessitates an efficient assessment feedback mechanism.

Through interviews conducted during this research, teachers highlighted additional concerns, including insufficiently realistic task design, imperfect assessment and feedback mechanisms, and tasks' complexity and difficulty misalignment with students' levels. Addressing these issues is crucial for refining and advancing the implementation of the task-based teaching method.

Recognizing the significance of task design adequacy and realism, scholars like Ke Qin and Xuyang (2020) emphasize that these factors are pivotal in ensuring teaching effectiveness. Inadequate or unrealistic task design may lead to students struggling to comprehend task objectives and requirements, potentially diminishing their motivation and interest in learning.

While some studies, such as those by Skehan (2014), suggest no significant advantage in terms of students' abilities to answer questions and narrate oral topics, it is essential to consider the unique characteristics and benefits of the task-based teaching method. Focused on practical application skills and independent learning, this approach stimulates students' interest and motivation through authentic tasks, fostering active participation, independent learning, and language expression skills that collectively contribute to improved speaking abilities.

The effectiveness of the task-based teaching method in secondary school English as a foreign language instruction is evident. Nevertheless, for a more refined implementation, teachers should enhance task design and adjustments, refine assessment and feedback systems, tailor task complexity to students' proficiency levels, and offer support and training. This support aims to assist teachers in mastering the fundamental concepts and implementation skills crucial for effective utilization of the task-based teaching method.

## Conclusion

The findings indicate a significant enhancement in students' interest and enthusiasm for learning oral English. Through a comparison of pre-test and post-test results, it becomes evident that both the task-based teaching method and the 3P teaching method contribute to the improvement of students' oral English proficiency. Furthermore, when examining the specific oral performance of students after the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), there is a noticeable improvement in the scores of individual students in the experimental class, particularly in responding to questions and narrating on specific topics, compared to their pre-test scores. This underscores that integrating TBLT into middle school oral English classes can enhance students' abilities in answering questions and delivering oral presentations. However, based on teacher interviews, some notable challenges persist in the application of the task-based approach in oral English teaching. These challenges include inadequacies in task design that may not closely align with real-world situations, imperfections in the evaluation and feedback mechanisms, and concerns about the appropriateness of task complexity and difficulty levels in relation to students' proficiency levels.

Teachers must enrich their professional quality and cultural knowledge to better understand the task-based teaching method to better apply it to the classroom. By improving the task design to ensure the authenticity and practicality of the task, students will be able to use their knowledge to improve their oral expression ability in tasks closer to the actual situation.

In task-based teaching method, students are the main body of teaching, and teachers are only the guides. Teachers can give appropriate encouragement when students report their tasks Teachers should help students if they encounter problems in completing tasks. Ask students to use the target language to complete tasks and ensure that every student in the class could use the target language and participate in tasks.

In foreign language teaching, the approach should emphasize "addition" rather than "subtraction," promoting diversification instead of simplification. It is important not to exclusively champion a single teaching method as the ultimate and discard others without careful consideration. Therefore, foreign language teachers should approach various teaching methods with a discerning perspective, acknowledging that each method has its strengths. Recognizing that no teaching method is flawless, educators should extract the advantages of each approach based on the specific conditions and needs of both teachers and students.

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