

Boosting English Speaking Skills of 10th Grade Students at MA Tahfidzul Qur'an Darussalam Muhammadiyah Purbalingga through Task-Based Learning and Role Play on Descriptive Text in 2024

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to enhance the English speaking skills of 10th-grade students at MA Tahfidzul Qur'an Darussalam Muhammadiyah Purbalingga through applying Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Role-play techniques, explicitly focusing on descriptive texts. As speaking remains a critical component of language proficiency, many students struggle with fluency and confidence in English communication. This study employs Classroom Action Research (CAR) with a three-cycle model comprising four key stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, such as pre-test and post-tests. By integrating TBL and Role Play, which emphasize interactive, student-centred learning and real-life context application, the research explores the effectiveness of these methods in improving students' speaking abilities. Preliminary results suggest that combining task-based activities and role-playing significantly increases student engagement, vocabulary acquisition, and speaking proficiency. Since the average student score before applying the Task-Based Learning method with the Role Play strategy was 6.5, the average score in Cycle I increased to 8.3 and in Cycle II, it further improved to 9.8. The findings provide valuable insights for educators looking to foster an engaging and effective learning environment in secondary schools.

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English proficiency, particularly speaking skills, is crucial for students in today's globalized world, as it facilitates effective communication and opens doors to wider opportunities in both academic and professional domains. Speaking ability is one of the essential skills in learning English as a foreign language. This skill is of significant focus because it reflects students' mastery of communication aspects, including fluency, accuracy, and confidence in using the target language. For students at the 10th grade level, developing strong speaking skills is essential, especially when learning to communicate about various topics, such as descriptive texts, which are commonly taught in high school curricula. However, many students face challenges in expressing themselves fluently and confidently in English, which often leads to anxiety and limited participation in classroom discussions.

In the context of MA Tahfidzul Qur'an Darussalam Muhammadiyah Purbalingga, an educational institution with a focus on religious and academic excellence, students' English-speaking skills are still developing, with a noticeable gap in their ability to articulate ideas in English, particularly when dealing with descriptive texts. However, based on preliminary observations at MA Tahfidzul Qur'an Daarussalaam Muhammadiyah Purbalingga, it was found that students' speaking ability is still categorized as low. This is indicated by the challenges faced by students, such as a limited vocabulary, pronunciation errors, and a

lack of confidence when speaking in front of the class. Despite the importance of speaking skills, traditional methods of teaching English often fail to actively engage students and promote practical communication.

This issue is exacerbated by the use of conventional teaching methods that do not actively engage students in the learning process. The lecture method, which is the dominant teaching approach in the classroom, causes students to become passive and not get enough opportunities to practice speaking. As a result, students' speaking skills do not develop optimally. Therefore, there is a need for more effective, interactive, and contextual teaching methods to address this problem.

To address these challenges, it is important to implement teaching strategies that provide a more interactive and engaging learning environment. Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Role Play have proven to be effective approaches for enhancing speaking skills. TBL, with its emphasis on using language in real-world tasks, encourages active student participation and promotes language use in meaningful contexts. Similarly, Role Play provides students with opportunities to practice language in various situations, which builds their confidence and fluency while also fostering creativity and critical thinking. Descriptive texts, which require students to describe people, places, events, or things in detail, offer a suitable context for applying both TBL and Role Play. These methods, when used together, can provide students with an opportunity to practice English speaking skills in a more dynamic, enjoyable, and communicative way. Task-Based Learning (TBL) with a Role Play strategy emerges as a relevant solution to improve students' speaking skills. TBL places authentic tasks at the core of learning, enabling students to actively use language in meaningful contexts. Meanwhile, the Role Play strategy gives students the opportunity to simulate roles in real-life situations, thereby boosting their confidence and communication skills. Previous studies have shown that the combination of TBL and Role Play significantly enhances students' speaking skills (Rojas and Villafuerte, 2018; Brown, 2020).

Thus, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning and Role Play in boosting the English speaking skills of 10th-grade students at MA Tahfidzul Qur'an Darussalam Muhammadiyah Purbalingga, specifically focusing on their ability to engage with descriptive texts. By investigating these teaching methods, this research hopes to contribute to the improvement of English language education at the school, offering insights into how interactive, student-centered learning approaches can enhance language proficiency in real-world contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Task-Based Learning (TBL) is a teaching method that places authentic tasks at the core of the learning process. According to Afifah & Devana (2020), this approach allows students to actively participate by completing tasks that are relevant to real-world contexts. Hassan et al. (2021) explain that the TBL process consists of three main stages: the pre-task stage, the task cycle stage, and the post-task stage, which aim to gradually build communication skills.

TBL is effective in English learning because it combines cognitive and practical elements. Leong & Ahmadi (2017) state that this method increases students' confidence in speaking by providing opportunities to use the target language communicatively without excessive pressure on mistakes. Additionally, this approach motivates students to learn through creative exploration and reflection on their language use.

However, the implementation of TBL requires careful planning. Sholeh (2021) highlights that in large classes, monitoring and evaluation can be a challenge for teachers, while Kurniawan et al. (2022) add

that students with lower autonomy may need more guidance in completing tasks. Nevertheless, the advantages of this method in improving speaking skills have been supported by several studies, including Safitri et al. (2020), who found that TBL is highly effective in enhancing the speaking abilities of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students.

Role Play is a teaching strategy that involves role simulation to create an interactive and contextual learning environment. Maulana and Lolita (2023) reveal that this strategy is effective in building students' speaking skills because it allows them to practice the target language in real-life scenarios. According to Lestari & Rahmi (2024), role play enhances clarity in understanding, encourages participation, and builds confidence in students. It helps learners empathize with the roles they play, motivating them to better understand real-world problems and solutions. Additionally, it helps students practice speaking skills such as debating, reasoning, and negotiating.

Dimastoro & Bharati (2022) explain that role play encourages students to speak more actively and confidently because they are involved in simulations that resemble everyday life situations. This is supported by Ghasemi & Mozaheb (2021), who found that role play helps students reduce speaking anxiety through context-based practice. Furthermore, this strategy strengthens students' understanding of language structure, as they learn directly from practical experiences (Nurhayati et al., 2023). However, the implementation of role play requires readiness from both students and teachers. Hakim (2023) notes that the main challenge in applying this strategy is ensuring that all students are actively engaged in the simulation. Additionally, teacher creativity is needed to design scenarios that are engaging and relevant to students' learning needs.

Descriptive text is one type of text taught in English learning at the secondary level. This material aims to train students to describe people, places, or objects in detail. Nasution & Nasution (2020) emphasize that teaching descriptive texts requires an approach that encourages students to speak spontaneously and use rich vocabulary.

Previous research indicates that the use of the TBL method and the Role Play strategy in teaching descriptive texts can yield significant results. For example, Rojas & Villafuerte (2018) found that the combination of TBL and role play improves students' speaking abilities because both approaches create a relevant and meaningful learning environment. Another study by Brown (2020) also supports this finding, mentioning that task-based learning and simulations help students understand the cultural nuances of the target language.

METHOD

This study employs Classroom Action Research (CAR) with a three-cycle model, comprising four key stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Each cycle aims to identify, apply, and evaluate the instructional strategies implemented to achieve optimal learning outcomes. The three cycles include:

1. Pre-Cycle: An initial observation is conducted to assess the students' baseline speaking abilities and learning conditions. The data collected serves as the foundation for designing interventions in subsequent cycles.
2. Cycle I: Implementation of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach using the Role Play strategy in teaching Descriptive Text. This phase includes planning, execution, observation, and reflection on the learning outcomes.

3. Cycle II: Refinement of the instructional approach based on reflections from Cycle I. Learning media such as flashcards and videos are integrated to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation skills.

The participants in this study comprise 12 tenth-grade students from MA Tahfidzul Qur'an Daarussalaam Muhammadiyah Purbalingga during the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The class consists of two male and ten female students. This group was selected due to observed challenges in their speaking skills, necessitating an intervention to improve their speaking skill proficiency in descriptive text material.

Data collection was conducted through observation, documentation, and speaking tests. The instruments used include teacher journals, field notes, smartphone-recorded videos, and a speaking skill rubric assessment. Teacher journals and field notes were utilized to document observations throughout the learning process, while video recordings captured students' performances during role-play activities. The speaking skill rubric assessment served as a guideline for evaluating students' speaking skill.

The collected data were analysed using a qualitative descriptive approach. Numerical scores were interpreted and elaborated upon descriptively to provide a comprehensive overview of the students' progress in speaking skill proficiency.

RESULT

The students' learning outcomes are presented in Table 1. Based on the data in Table 1, the mean score, standard deviation, and frequency were calculated to assess the progress of students' learning under the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach with the Role Play strategy in descriptive text material.

Table 1: Student Learning Outcomes

No	Student Code	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
1	Student A	9	10	12
2	Student B	4	5	7
3	Student C	5	7	8
4	Student D	6	8	10
5	Student E	4	6	7
6	Student F	9	11	12
7	Student G	9	10	12
8	Student H	9	12	15
9	Student I	5	7	8
10	Student J	9	10	12
11	Student K	4	6	7
12	Student L	5	8	8

Average	6.5	8.3	9.8
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From Table 1, it is evident that the average student score before applying the Task-Based Learning method with the Role Play strategy was 6.5, which falls into the "Needs Improvement" category (according to the speaking assessment rubric) with 58.33% of students scoring below the "Satisfactory" level. The main challenges identified include limited vocabulary, pronunciation errors, and low confidence in speaking. At this stage, learning was primarily lecture-based, which did not actively engage students. The average score in Cycle I increased to 8.3 (Satisfactory), and in Cycle II, it further improved to 9.8 (Still Satisfactory).

Table 2: Student Scores in Pre-Cycle

No	Score Range	Number of Students	Category	Status
1	13.01–16.00	0	Excellent	Passed
2	10.01–13.00	0	Good	Passed
3	7.01–10.00	5	Satisfactory	Passed
4	4.01–7.00	7	Needs Improvement	Not Passed
5	0.00–4.00	0	Needs Improvement	Not Passed

As seen in Table 2, the students' learning outcomes were initially low, with seven students categorized as "Needs Improvement" and none achieving the "Excellent" category. This result motivated the researcher to conduct an intervention using Task-Based Learning with the Role Play strategy in descriptive text material. After implementing Cycle I, the following results were obtained:

Table 3: Student Scores in Cycle I

No	Score Range	Number of Students	Category	Status
1	13.01–16.00	0	Excellent	Passed
2	10.01–13.00	2	Good	Passed
3	7.01–10.00	5	Satisfactory	Passed
4	4.01–7.00	5	Needs Improvement	Not Passed
5	0.00–4.00	0	Needs Improvement	Not Passed

From Table 3, there was an improvement compared to the pre-cycle phase. Initially, seven students were in the "Needs Improvement" category, but this number decreased to five, indicating progress in two students. Additionally, two students reached the "Good" category. The average score improvement suggests a shift towards satisfactory learning outcomes. However, reflections revealed that students still struggled

with vocabulary and were not yet fully engaged in the role-play activities. Based on journal notes and speaking rubric evaluations, vocabulary remained an area requiring enhancement. Consequently, flashcards were introduced as a supplementary learning medium in Cycle II. The results of Cycle II are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Student Scores in Cycle II

No	Score Range	Number of Students	Category	Status
1	13.01–16.00	1	Excellent	Passed
2	10.01–13.00	6	Good	Passed
3	7.01–10.00	5	Satisfactory	Passed
4	4.01–7.00	0	Needs Improvement	Not Passed
5	0.00–4.00	0	Needs Improvement	Not Passed

Cycle II demonstrated further improvement, with six students achieving the "Good" category (compared to only two in Cycle I), and one student reaching the "Excellent" category. These enhancements in students' speaking abilities are clearly illustrated in the following graph:

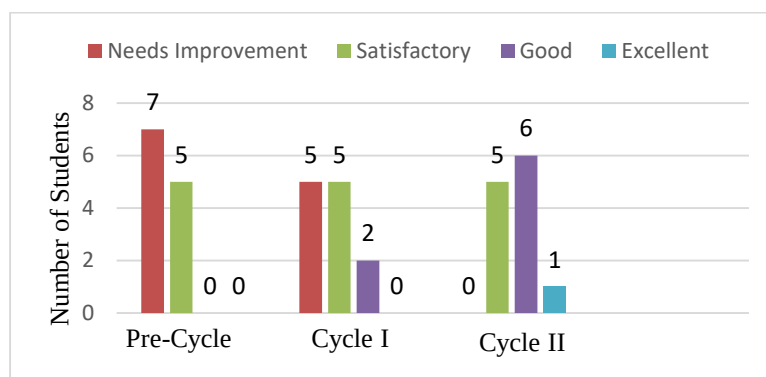


Figure 1: Student Learning Outcomes Graph

As illustrated in Figure 1, there is a significant improvement in students' speaking skills from the pre-cycle to Cycle II. Prior to the implementation of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) method with the Role Play strategy, most students, 58.33%, fell into the "Needs Improvement" category, with a notably higher proportion compared to other categories. However, following the introduction of this approach in Cycle I, a positive shift was observed, with some students progressing to the "Satisfactory" category and 2 students reaching the "Good" category.

A more substantial improvement was evident in Cycle II, after enhancements were made through the incorporation of additional instructional media such as flashcards and videos. During this phase, the number of students in the "Good" category increased significantly, and for the first time, a student achieved the

"Excellent" category. These findings indicate that the TBL approach, combined with the Role Play strategy, not only enhanced student engagement in the learning process but also fostered their confidence in speaking and expanded their vocabulary repertoire.

These results align with previous research, which asserts that task-based learning coupled with role-play simulations creates a more contextualized and meaningful learning environment Rojas & Villafuerte (2018). Therefore, the integration of this method presents an effective alternative for educators seeking to improve students' speaking proficiency, particularly in the context of teaching descriptive texts at the secondary education level.

Beyond test scores, students' attitudes and motivation in learning were also observed. Based on teacher journals, field notes, and video recordings of classroom activities, students exhibited a positive attitude and motivation towards learning. This was evident in the following indicators:

- 1) Attendance: Students consistently attended lessons, despite challenges such as unfamiliar vocabulary, hesitation to speak in front of the class, and anxiety about speaking English.
- 2) Participation: All students actively engaged in role-play activities and collaborated in discussions with their peers to prepare for their performances.
- 3) Enthusiasm: Student enthusiasm was reflected in both their consistent attendance and participation, indicating an overall increase in motivation and engagement.

These findings highlight the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning with the Role Play strategy in enhancing both students' speaking proficiency and their motivation to learn English.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the implementation of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) method combined with the Role Play strategy in teaching descriptive text has proven to be effective in enhancing students' speaking skills. This effectiveness is supported by the significant increase in students' average scores from the pre-cycle to Cycle II.

During Cycle I, the results indicated an improvement in student participation and engagement in the learning process. However, some students still encountered challenges such as limited vocabulary and inaccurate pronunciation. Reflections at this stage highlighted the importance of incorporating additional learning media to facilitate the learning process. With the introduction of flashcards and video-based learning materials in Cycle II, students exhibited a notable improvement in speech clarity and vocabulary mastery. This advancement aligns with Brown's (2020) assertion that task-based learning helps students reduce anxiety and build confidence in their speaking abilities. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with those of Rojas & Villafuerte (2018), who stated that the combination of TBL and Role Play fosters a contextual and meaningful learning environment.

This study makes a significant contribution to the field of English language learning at the secondary education level. The integration of TBL with Role Play can serve as an effective instructional model for improving students' speaking skills. Teachers are encouraged to design tasks and simulations that align with students' learning needs while incorporating multimedia tools to support the instructional process.

Despite its positive outcomes, this study has some limitations, including a relatively small sample size and a limited research duration. Future studies are recommended to involve a larger number of participants and employ a more diverse research approach to further explore the effectiveness of this

method in broader contexts. Consequently, the continued development and refinement of TBL with the Role Play strategy can serve as an innovative solution for enhancing English language instruction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the success of combining Task-Based Learning and Role Play techniques in improving the English speaking abilities of 10th-grade students at MA Tahfidzul Qur'an Darussalam Muhammadiyah Purbalingga. The encouraging outcomes across all three cycles demonstrate notable advancements in student participation, vocabulary growth, and speaking competence. The significant rise in average scores from 6.5 before the intervention to 9.8 by Cycle II suggests that these approaches are effective in overcoming challenges related to fluency and confidence in English communication. These findings provide valuable guidance for educators aiming to foster engaging and effective learning environments that support language acquisition.

GRATITUDE

We would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have supported and contributed to the completion of this research. Our deepest thanks go to the students of MA Tahfidzul Qur'an Darussalam Muhammadiyah Purbalingga, whose enthusiasm and willingness to participate in this study made it possible. We are also immensely grateful to the teachers and staff at the school for their cooperation and encouragement throughout the research process. Special thanks to Polytechnic LPP Yogyakarta and Indonesia Open University for the research collaboration. Lastly, we appreciate the resources, time, and effort that have made this study possible, as well as the broader academic community for fostering an environment of continuous learning and development.

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