

## THE EFFECTS OF TASK BASED SPEAKING INSTRUCTION ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING PERCEPTION AS SHAMBU SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: October 2023 Revised: March 2024 Published: April 2024	<i>Task-based speaking tasks offer significant benefits to students by providing opportunities to use the target language to convey meaning and engage with real-world topics and tasks. This approach allows students to draw upon their prior knowledge and background experiences to express opinions and ideas effectively. In line with this, the present study aims to investigate the effects of Task-Based Speaking Instruction (TBSI) on the speaking perceptions of students at Shambu Secondary School during speaking skill performances. To achieve this goal, two intact classes were selected from Shambu Secondary School. The treatment group underwent a twelve-week teaching program implementing TBSI, while the comparison group received conventional instruction as per usual practice. Data for this mixed-methods study were collected through speaking perception questionnaires, and both quantitative and qualitative analyses were employed. Quantitative analysis, utilizing ANCOVA, revealed that TBSI positively influenced students' English speaking perception, particularly in areas related to their speaking performances during English language learning. Furthermore, thematic analysis of interview data uncovered several themes highlighting the benefits of TBSI on students' perceptions of their speaking skills performance. In conclusion, the findings of this study have implications for various stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers. By recognizing the positive impact of TBSI on students' speaking perceptions, educators can consider integrating this approach into their teaching practices to enhance students' language learning experiences. Policymakers and curriculum developers are encouraged to support the implementation of TBSI in language education programs, thereby fostering the development of effective speaking skills among students.</i>
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### INTRODUCTION

Task based Speaking Instruction (TBSI) was widely used as a second language learning strategy in the early 1980s to develop language based strategies and communicative activities that help students learn to use real words and improve their communication skills. Recent research has shown that there are three iterations of various interpretations of TBSI in classroom practice: TBSI is based on students' pedagogical philosophy; counted in terms of concepts such as goals, processes, and specific outcomes (East, 2017; Ellis, 2017, 2019) encourage contextual action rather than formal speech (East,2021; Ellis, 2017)

Task based speaking instruction is accepted as an alternative teaching method because it prefers effective communication (Ellis, 2003, 2019; Willis, 1996). According to Ellis (2003) and Willis (1996), TBSI is an effective way to create a learning environment that allows students to use the target language they believe will most likely achieve their communication

goals. In addition, Richards and Rodgers (2014) reported that active language teaching increases the interest in language use.

However, curriculum design lacks effectiveness as a basis for knowledge building and classroom teaching, and there is little data on its impact or performance on students' perception effect about TBSI. Task based speaking instruction builds a strong understanding of communicative language teaching (CLT). It aims to create a second language vocabulary by including students in the class (Ellis, 2003, 2019; Richards, 2016). Thus, language learning leads to the creation of appropriate communication in the classroom (Richards, 2006), which helps develop students' thinking and motivates people to learn more in learning. In addition, TBSI focuses on the use of real materials, language skills, cognitive processes (East, 2021; Ellis, 2003, Ellis, 2017, 2019) and facilitates effective communication in language teaching.

During the speaking task, the student gains more benefits for the language by performing different speaking tasks to develop their skills; this helps them to understand the meaning (Willis, 1996). The TBSI research has improved in many ways, including understanding, considerations, and reasons for using TBSI (Bernard & Viet, 2010; Le, 2014). However, in English-speaking countries as a foreign language, students rarely use it as a language in their daily lives. Therefore, a genuine approach is required to use speaking perception in the classroom which increases the speaking performance of students (Jeon & Hahn, 2006).

In particular, TBSI has not been adequately studied or demonstrated in Ethiopia. In other words, TBSI was not examined in the context of English as a foreign language, not the behavior and thoughts of learners of English as a foreign language. Students' perceptions about the approach of language teaching-learning processes have a significant impact on their speaking performance. (Meseret, 2012; Abate, 2017; Yinager, 2015). There are few studies examining the effects of TBSI on students' perceptions of language learning in Ethiopian English learners, particularly in Shambu secondary school. Therefore, it is necessary to assess students' perceptions of TBSI in the context of EFL in Ethiopia, Shambu secondary school, including the fundamental role, theory and perspective of TBSI. (Meseret, 2012; Abate, 2017; Yinager, 2015)

As an alternative method, TBSI is important for learner to increase students' perception. Rifkin (2000) argues that the student's behavior during learning is an important factor in determining the student's failure or success depending on the teaching method. Teachers need to understand students' thinking perception in order to achieve better learning outcomes because this approach helps or hinders students' language acquisition. Teachers should be aware of students' feelings, but they should also be seen to make the right education choice (Cray & Currie, 1996).

To address this need, this study investigated the effects of TBSI on students' perception towards learning English as a foreign language. This study presents general effects of TBSI on students' perception through an experimental questionnaire based on the results of the questionnaire and interview. These findings will help teachers plan and implement real communication and help students understand how to speak English as their native language. Most TBLT studies were conducted in English as a second language (ESL). In recent years, however, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) country have become more interested in TBLT, especially after encountering varying opposition and success (Ellis, 1996). However, there is no harm in using speaking tasks in English classrooms.

As McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) found in their study of working English classrooms in Thailand, it may take some time for students to adjust to the TBLT discussion when they spend time learning the teacher's instruction. In vocational classes, students need more training in grammar and language structure. They also hope to receive more guidance and assistance from teachers. There may be different opinions about the aims of language

teaching. Ilin, Inözü, and Yumru (2007) reported in a study conducted in EFL freshman year in Turkey that classroom activities focused on language rather than exercises and words. The teachers in their work were aware of the purposes of the TBLTs, but used them as needed at the end of the language lesson.

Ho and Wong (2004) argue that Western approaches such as TBLT may not be compatible with the needs of the public and may conflict with academic and cultural practices in non-traditional contexts. While there are some issues with using TBLT in the EFL context, the research also acknowledges the advantages of the concept and looks at all the positive responses from students. They found that TBLT is essential to develop students' independence and flexibility and to provide students with opportunities to practice English (Ho & Wong, 2004). Tasks can also be changed to analyze the lessons (Ilin, Inözü, & Yumru, 2007). The positive results of this study seem encouraging; however, TBSI research is not conducted in Ethiopian context therefore, more practical research is needed to obtain better results in Ethiopian EFL contexts.

#### Research on Students' Perceptions of TBSI

Many studies have focused on students' perceptions of TBLT, but there are some differences between these studies. In his study, Meseret (2012) found that students' lack of awareness about task-based learning led them to not talk about the importance of task-based writing. This in turn made it difficult for students to perceive task-based writing. Therefore, some students received training to increase their awareness of how to write based on assignments. After three months of training, students demonstrated a better understanding of the writing tasks and were more willing to practice writing. Moreover, they valued their contribution to improving their own writing skills. This eventually led to some improvement in their writing skills.

Meng and Cheng (2010) found in their study that the majority of Chinese learners are interested in and evaluate ways to perform tasks effectively. Students are satisfied with many tasks and they think it is good because the more they are involved in the task, the better the assessment. However, more than a third of respondents were disappointed in their work. It is recommended that teachers teach the study as soon as possible and give students time to prepare for the study. Also, teachers should take action when students encounter problems. The teacher plays an important role during and after the activity.

Hadi (2012) also examined students' understanding of TBLT. He studied 88 Iranian women in an open-ended survey. The results showed that students had a positive attitude and welcomed the new TBLT experience. Students see TBLT as an opportunity to collaborate, interact with each other and express their motivation for language use. Huang (2015) showed positive responses to TBLT among ELT students. This study shows that TBLT engages and increases learners' interest and makes them more self-confident. Students stated that TBLT enhanced their interest in language learning and increased independence through task planning and enhanced searching for different materials.

Students are not limited to experiencing new learning in real life. Teachers should be sensitive about this issue. It is not easy to create an environment where learners care and are committed to learning. Teachers can combine TBSI with traditional teaching. As in many other countries, Ethiopian students also should have student centered access of approach where students are happy to explore their interests. Students need to understand how they love and interact with speaking in their real life. Consequently, it is mandatory to conduct whether or not TBSI can have an effect on students' speaking perception by having the objectives to examine the effects of the TBSI on the participants' speaking perceptions and students' perceptions on the use of TBSI.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

This study used a quasi experimental as the research design. Quasi-experiment is studies that aim to evaluate interventions but that do not use randomization. Similar to randomized trials, quasi-experiments aim to demonstrate causality between an intervention and an outcome (Creswell, 2014). This study investigated the effects of TBSI on students' speaking perception at Shambu secondary school and aimed to answer the basic research questions regarding the effects of TBSI on students' speaking perception after they had been participating in the intervention and the uses they gained during the intervention. To answer the research questions as an embedded mixed research approach, two instruments of data collection were used. The speaking questionnaires were given before and after the intervention and an interview was conducted for some participants for triangulation.

### Research Participants

The research participants in this study comprised grade eleven social science students enrolled in the English subject at Shambu Secondary School, located in the HGWZ of Oromia during the 2022 academic year. The selection criteria for these participants were based on their future academic requirements, particularly the need to engage in numerous English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking tasks in subsequent years. Additionally, their ongoing educational trajectory highlighted English proficiency as integral to their future careers. Hence, the study employed a pre-post quasi-treatment design, utilizing two intact classes. This design facilitated the examination of the effectiveness of the intervention by assessing changes in participants' speaking perceptions before and after the treatment. By focusing on students at this stage of their education, the study aimed to provide insights into the efficacy of interventions aimed at enhancing EFL speaking skills in a crucial phase of language acquisition and development.

Table 1

The demographic data of the research participants			
Groups	Participants		Total
	Gender		
	Male	Female	
Experimental	20	22	42
Control	19	23	42
Total	39	45	84

### Research Instruments

#### Questionnaire

The first data collection instrument was questionnaire which was used to measure the two group's students about the effects of TBSI on their speaking perceptions in their speaking classroom before and after the treatment. In this study, responses to the questionnaire was used in a more general way to the degree of positive/ negative affective participants' responses to the particular TBSI. The speaking perception questionnaire was adapted from Murad (2009) with a little development and including informed-consent form which informed students about the questionnaire and it was conducted with the 5-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) and administered before and after the tasks treatment for the two groups. The rubrics for speaking perception evaluations were adapted by the researchers from Murad (2009). The validity and reliability of the instruments were checked in such a way that the instruments could measure what they were supposed to measure. The feedback obtained from the EFL teachers helped the researchers to modify and make changes. Like the questionnaire, some of the changes were regarding the wording of the statements, their order, format, content and clarity.

#### Interview

Another instrument used to examine students' views of the effects of TBSI on their speaking perception in speaking skills which is used to triangulate the findings was conducted with eight students from the treatment group. The students' participation was entirely voluntary, and they signed informed consent forms prior to the interview. Hence, the researchers prepared a set of preplanned interview questions to elicit various conceptions. In this case, the researchers investigated outer and inner conceptions of secondary school students about their experiences with TBSI intervention and how it affected their perception about their capabilities to generate specific levels of performance in speaking perception and how TBSI helped them to be ready to enter into conversation, at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using English language. The interview was thoroughly audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using a content analysis approach.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Before the process of gathering data, the researchers made series contact with the school directors so as to get the necessary information and cooperation. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school. Then, the relevant literature was reviewed to establish the theoretical background of the study. After the researchers selected the participants of the study, they assigned the students into treatment and comparison groups. Then, the researchers adjusted an EFL teacher to make a contact with them after giving training how the EFL instructor teaches and how the two raters analyze to assess the students. After the researchers adapted the questionnaire, the EFL teachers and the researchers checked the reliability and validity of the test questionnaire. Then, the questionnaire was administered by EFL teachers for both treatment and comparison group students in order to assess both groups self efficacy level before the treatment.

Next, the pre-questionnaire was analyzed, and the task based instruction was implemented by a volunteer teacher selected voluntarily. The instruction was applied in between March to June by EFL teacher for both groups because the comparison group was forwarded conventionally. After three months of the TBSI intervention, the post questionnaire was given for both treatment and comparison groups to check the effects of TBSI on EFL students' speaking perception achievement. At the end of the intervention, an interview session was held with the treatment group having the representatives from each group. It was used to triangulate the answers for the first basic research question. The findings of the study were analyzed and discussed by the researchers.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

The study employed the Speaking Perception Questionnaire as both a pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire, alongside interviews, to address its primary research inquiries. To begin the data analysis process, the responses from both questionnaires were examined and converted into mean and standard deviation values. The initial step involved determining the mean and standard deviation of each score obtained from the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire. Following this, the assumptions required for conducting an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were thoroughly reviewed. Subsequently, ANCOVA, as described by Pallant (2010) and Tavakoli (2012), was utilized to compare the scores using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 26. This statistical analysis aimed to ascertain whether a statistically significant difference existed between the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire scores. In parallel, for the qualitative data, content analysis (CA) emerged as the chosen methodological approach. This technique, as outlined by Clarke and Braun (2013), was essential for identifying and analyzing repeated patterns within the textual data collected during interviews.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Findings**

Research question one delved into investigating the impact of the Teaching by Speaking Improvement (TBSI) program on participants' perceptions of their speaking abilities. To address this fundamental research inquiry, the data collected both before and after the intervention were subjected to analysis employing both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Prior to conducting inferential analyses such as ANCOVA, it was imperative to examine the skewness and kurtosis of the data to ensure its suitability for such tests. Following this, descriptive statistics were utilized to compare the mean scores of the pre- and post-intervention groups. The outcomes of these descriptive analyses are detailed in Table 2, providing a comprehensive overview of the distribution and central tendencies of the data.

Table 2  
Descriptive Statistics of The Pre/Post Speaking Perception Questionnaire Mean Scores

		Report	
Group		Pretest	Posttest
Experimental	Mean	65.8571	81.3571
	N	42	42
	Std. Deviation	4.26884	4.21855
Control	Mean	64.9524	68.7857
	N	42	42
	Std. Deviation	5.16060	3.57181
Total	Mean	65.4048	75.0714
	N	84	84
	Std. Deviation	4.72909	7.42153

As Table 4.1 depicts, the pre-means for the CG ( $M = 64.95$ ,  $SD = 5.16$ ) and the EG ( $M = 65.85$ ,  $SD = 4.26$ ) were similar before treatment. The means for the CG ( $M = 68.78$ ,  $SD = 3.57$ ) and the EG ( $M = 81.35$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ) were different after treatment. The post-mean score of the EG ( $M = 81.35$ ) was larger than the post-mean score of the CG ( $M = 68.78$ ).

The Ancova were performed to verify if there were significant differences in the two groups' pre/post mean scores at the 0.05 significance level. After Levene's test was calculated to test whether the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met Ancova was run to identify if a significant difference existed in the two groups' post mean scores. The results of ANCOVA test is shown in Table 3.

Table 3  
Ancova test for comparing both Groups' Post questionnaire Mean Scores

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects								
Dependent Variable: post test								
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared		
Corrected Model	3331.705 <sup>a</sup>	2	1665.853	108.830	.000	.729		
Intercept	2072.210	1	2072.210	135.377	.000	.626		
Pre test	12.848	1	12.848	.839	.362	.010		
Group	3248.681	1	3248.681	212.235	.000	.724		
Error	1239.866	81	15.307					

Total	477972.000	84
Corrected Total	4571.571	83
a. R Squared = .729 (Adjusted R Squared = .722)		

Table 4.2 shows that the Ancova value obtained from the scores of the two groups has sig value 0.000,  $p < .05$ ), indicating the existence of significant difference between the two groups. The table also shows that effect size (eta squared) was 0.724, indicated a large effect. The results can suggest that the TBSI helped treatment group develop their speaking perceptions by controlling the covariate. In summary, the Ancova analysis indicated that the treatment group did make significant progress in speaking perceptions. But the comparison group showed insignificant progress in speaking perceptions towards TBSI. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative one was supported. Concerning the second research question the students' interview also confirmed that they have positive perception towards TBSI and if they learn by using it they can develop speaking performances. Because it has developmental instrumental, integrative and travel orientation values. The results also showed that students' motivation to practice TBSI is changed. Most students prefer the task based speaking instruction because they like the collaboration, discussion, and motivational abilities best. Many students are interested in TBSI as it is suitable for teaching methods. They can share their knowledge and experience in learning English speaking skill and increases their performance in speaking during learning using this approach, even though there are some study results about the implementation difficulties of the approach concerning time, large class size, difference of proficiency level of students and etc. .

## Discussion

The primary aim of this research was to investigate the impact of Task-Based Speaking Instruction (TBSI) on the speaking perceptions of students at Shambu Secondary School. To achieve this objective, the researchers designed a study involving two distinct groups: a treatment group that received instruction through TBSI methods, and a comparison group that underwent conventional teaching approaches. By employing these two groups, the study sought to evaluate the efficacy of TBSI in enhancing students' perceptions of their speaking abilities when compared to traditional instructional methods. In analyzing the findings, the discussion is structured around the fundamental research questions posed by the study. Each aspect of the results is examined in relation to these overarching inquiries, allowing for a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the effects of TBSI on students' speaking perceptions. This approach ensures that the discussion remains focused and aligned with the primary objectives of the research, thereby facilitating a clear understanding of the implications of the findings for both theory and practice in language education.

Regarding the first research question, the findings indicate a significant positive change in the speaking perceptions of students in the treatment group following Task-Based Speaking Instruction (TBSI). This change is reflected in their enhanced enthusiasm and confidence in using English as a means of communication, aligning with the assertions of Ellis (2017). Through TBSI, students not only acquire linguistic knowledge but also develop a deeper understanding of how to effectively convey information using various communication strategies. They recognize the value of TBSI in improving their English communication skills, a sentiment supported by the insights of Abate (2017). According to Abate, task-based learning affords students ample opportunity to engage in speaking activities, fostering the development and refinement of their speaking skills within the classroom environment. Thus, the positive shift in students' speaking perceptions underscores the effectiveness of TBSI in promoting active language learning and proficiency development.

The efficacy of task-based learning in enhancing English language skills has been underscored by research conducted by Jeon (2005) and Meseret (2012). Their studies provide compelling evidence that task-based learning approaches can effectively contribute to the overall development of English language proficiency. Furthermore, the shift observed in the Ethiopian English speaking environment towards the adoption of task-based speaking instruction aligns with the findings of these studies. This transition suggests a recognition of the benefits that task-based learning can offer in fostering language acquisition and proficiency among students (East, 2021; Yinager, 2015; Abate, 2017). Moreover, beyond its impact on students' language skills, task-based learning methods have the potential to enhance the performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. By incorporating task-based approaches into their teaching practices, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that promote active student participation and interaction. This, in turn, can lead to more effective teaching outcomes and better student learning experiences. Therefore, the adoption of task-based learning strategies not only benefits students in their language development but also enhances the teaching practices and pedagogical effectiveness of EFL instructors.

The research findings shed light on students' perceptions of Task-Based Speaking Instruction (TBSI), revealing a positive outlook that serves as a promising indicator of their potential speaking achievement. This positive reception suggests a readiness among students to embrace alternative approaches to learning and enhancing their speaking abilities. Unlike traditional methods such as the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model, TBSI introduces novel speech strategies that captivate students' interest and motivation. The results demonstrate a notable shift in students' motivation towards practicing TBSI, with many expressing a preference for its collaborative and discussion-oriented nature (Ellis, 2017; Meseret, 2012; Murad, 2009). The interactive elements of TBSI, including group tasks and engaging activities, resonate with students, fostering a sense of enthusiasm and willingness to participate actively in the learning process. Moreover, the opportunity provided by TBSI for students to share their knowledge and experiences in learning English speaking skills contributes to their overall performance and proficiency in speaking. The positive perception towards TBSI underscores its effectiveness in promoting student engagement and motivation, thereby facilitating a conducive environment for language learning and skill development. By embracing TBSI, students not only enhance their speaking abilities but also cultivate a deeper appreciation for collaborative learning experiences that empower them to excel in their language acquisition journey.

## **CONCLUSION**

Research examining the effects of Task-Based Speaking Instruction (TBSI) on students' perceptions within the Ethiopian educational context remains relatively scarce. Consequently, this study assumes critical importance as it places the learner at the forefront of inquiry, seeking to illuminate key aspects of TBSI from the perspective of students. By prioritizing the voices and experiences of students, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and reception of TBSI within the Ethiopian context. The findings of this study underscore the positive impact of TBSI on students' perceptions, with a significant majority expressing favorable views and opinions towards this teaching method. This positive reception highlights the preference for TBSI among students, indicating its potential as a preferred instructional approach in English language classrooms. Consequently, the study offers several recommendations tailored towards educators, students, and policymakers to leverage the benefits of TBSI effectively.

Firstly, fostering a positive perception of TBSI among students is crucial for achieving desired learning outcomes, emphasizing the importance of aligning instructional approaches with student preferences and needs. However, it is essential to acknowledge and address

challenges such as lack of self-confidence and logistical constraints, including class size and time limitations, which may hinder students' engagement with TBSI. Furthermore, English teachers are encouraged to incorporate TBSI into their instructional practices, capitalizing on its recognized benefits and alignment with students' preferences. Additionally, policymakers in education are urged to embrace TBSI and provide necessary support to facilitate its widespread implementation across educational institutions. Moreover, this study suggests avenues for future research, including investigations into factors influencing the successful implementation of TBSI and its impact on the development of various language skills beyond speaking. By continuing to explore and refine TBSI practices, researchers can contribute to the ongoing improvement of English language education in Ethiopia and beyond.

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