

Empowering Interior Design Students and Local Communities through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Agung Krsna Lila Dasa^{1*}, GDA Wicaksana¹

¹Institut Desain dan Bisnis Bali, Bali, Indonesia

*Correspondence: agung.krsna@idbbali.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on improving speaking comprehension among 23 interior design students at Institut Desain dan Bisnis Bali (IDB Bali). Using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach based on Kemmis and McTaggart's model, students participated in two learning cycles, where they engaged in online speaking tasks submitted via Google Drive. Speaking performance was evaluated across five key indicators: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. The results indicate a 3.3% improvement in speaking comprehension from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2, with fluency and pronunciation showing the most significant gains. These findings confirm that TBLT, combined with digital submission methods, enhances students' ability to communicate effectively in professional settings. Beyond academic outcomes, this study highlights the potential of TBLT as a tool for community-based training, particularly in supporting local creative industries. By equipping students with effective communication skills, this approach can improve client interactions, business negotiations, and cross-cultural collaborations in interior design and related fields. Future research should explore the long-term impact of TBLT and its integration into industry-driven language training programs.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research; Speaking Comprehension; Task-Based Language Teaching.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, communication is considered one of the most important skills for success in the business world (Sumaiya, Srivastava, Jain, & Prakash, 2022). Effective communication involves more than simply sharing information; it requires understanding the emotions and motivations behind the message. It is essential to convey ideas clearly while actively listening to ensure full comprehension, which suggests that effective communication is not merely an innate ability but a skill that can be developed (Mahadi, 2021; Ayagan et al., 2023). Because communication plays a vital role in daily life, it is a fundamental requirement for both academic and professional success, shaping interactions in both personal and professional settings, particularly in education (Verheijden, Giroldi & Timmerman, 2023). Education is crucial for a nation's progress as it gradually influences an individual's behavior and interactions with their surroundings (Yahsi, 2021; Ningsih, et al., 2024).

Additionally, educational institutions serve as the ideal place to introduce and develop students' talents and interests. Strong communication fosters respect and trust, enhances understanding, and creates a conducive environment for meaningful discussions (Matthews & Wyk, 2018; Guo et al., 2024). Despite its apparent simplicity, much of what people express is often misunderstood, leading to conflicts and emotional distress. To communicate effectively, it is essential to understand the emotional context behind one's words. Mastering the art of clear and effective communication at home, work, and in social situations can

significantly strengthen relationships. This kind of knowledge should be taught equally to all members of society (Maulidia & Sanjani, 2023). However, the current reality differs, as disparities in language proficiency remain. Enhancing language skills promotes cultural awareness and sensitivity, recognizing that students' literacy levels vary. While also contributing to a more efficient, adaptable, and innovative workplace environment (Wandi et al., 2023).

Language is essential for human communication, serving not only as a tool for daily interaction but also as a reflection of the cultural and social values embedded within a community (Lut & Starenkova, 2022; Romanowski, 2021). Teaching the English language presents significant challenges for students, particularly in rural schools where learning conditions are less favorable. These difficulties are closely related to the lack of adequate learning resources and an unsupportive environment (Gürsoy, 2022; Nambiar et al., 2018). Compared to urban schools, rural schools have fewer opportunities for English learning, with limited access to instructional materials and exposure to the language (Indriani et al., 2024; Kovacevic et al., 2021). As a result, students in rural areas rarely encounter English in their daily lives, leading to a lack of familiarity and reduced motivation to learn the language (Harlina & Yusuf, 2020).

Since communication is considered essential, it is taught in educational institutions (Hasanah & Gunawan, 2020), including Institut Desain dan Bisnis Bali (IDB Bali). As its name suggests, this institution focuses on design and business and has a diverse student population, creating a heterogeneous academic community. Based on preliminary observations and interviews with one of the lecturers, IDB Bali emphasizes both design and business expertise, requiring students to develop strong communication skills. Effective communication is crucial for students, as they must be able to present well-structured design concepts and align them with client needs, ultimately leading to successful business outcomes (Mamawa et al., 2023). Given this context, communication is essential for college students to maintain professional relationships with clients and business partners. Therefore, this study aims to examine the improvement of students' speaking comprehension as a key aspect of communication by implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). This approach highlights the use of meaningful language-learning activities centered around real-life tasks to achieve communicative goals (Mulyadi et al., 2021). Furthermore, the TBLT framework can be effectively applied within student communities at educational institutions.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing speaking comprehension. Adiantika and Purnomo (2018) conducted a study examining task-based instruction in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching, specifically focusing on speaking skills, along with the advantages and challenges faced by both teachers and students. The findings revealed that task-based instruction actively engages students in the learning process and significantly improves their speaking abilities, despite some challenges in implementation. Similarly, Salfitri, Rafli, and Dewanti (2020) investigated TBLT's impact on speaking skills in the Department of English, involving 15 third-semester students. Their study analyzed data from pre-tests, post-tests, interviews, and observations, showing that task-based learning enhanced students' speaking accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension. Additionally, Saricoban and Karakurt (2016) conducted a study at a State University in Turkey, specifically in the School of Foreign Languages, Department of Basic English (B1 and B1+ levels). Their research, which involved 56 participants, aimed to improve EFL learners' listening and speaking skills using task-based activities. The results confirmed that TBLT plays a significant role in developing listening and speaking proficiency in an EFL setting.

Based on this phenomenon, this study is expected to provide academic benefits within the student community and beyond, particularly in relation to diverse student backgrounds. Since higher education institutions incorporate community service programs, students are encouraged to return to their hometowns and contribute their knowledge. In this context, TBLT serves as a practical and effective method to facilitate language learning, helping students engage with local communities and promote English literacy. Given that English remains a global language, improving communication skills through TBLT can create opportunities for international collaboration, particularly in interior design projects that involve working with clients and professionals from different countries.

2. Method

This study employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model as cited in Burns (2010), which follows a cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection (see Figure 1). The goal is to identify and address challenges in students' speaking skills while refining instructional strategies over multiple cycles. In addition, a Community-Based Participatory Approach (CBPA) is integrated to ensure that learning activities align with real-world needs, particularly within the interior design industry. Students were encouraged to apply their speaking skills in professional contexts, such as client presentations and design discussions, making the learning experience more practical and industry relevant.

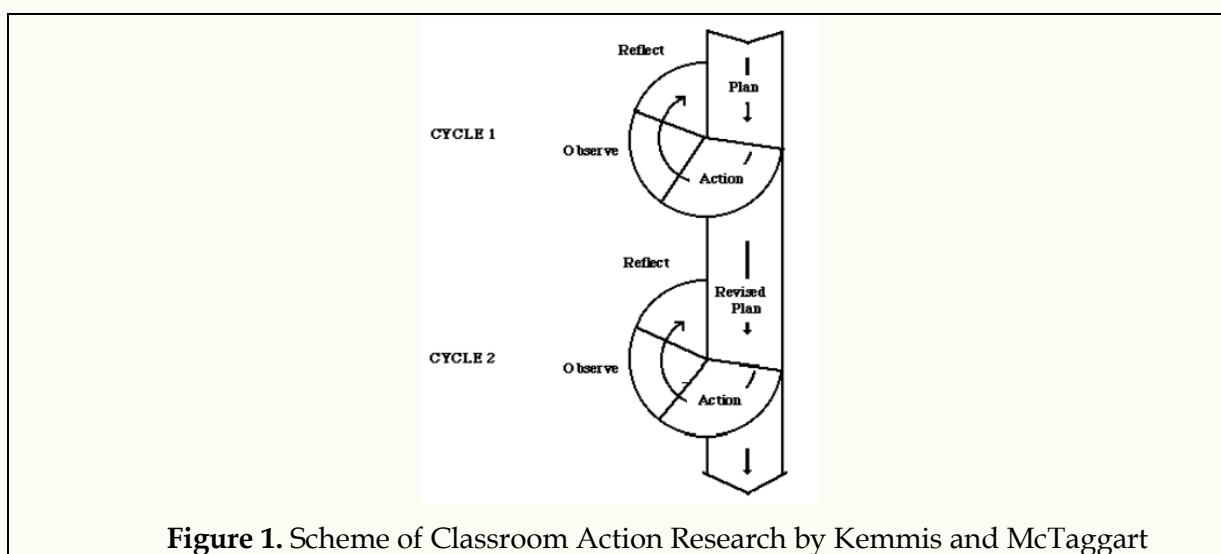


Figure 1. Scheme of Classroom Action Research by Kemmis and McTaggart

The study involved 23 undergraduate students from an Interior Design program at IDB Bali, selected based on their enrollment in a speaking-focused course and active participation in studio-based learning activities. Data collection combined quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Speaking performance was measured using five key indicators of speaking assessment:

- Fluency – Assesses how smoothly students speak without excessive pauses, hesitations, or repetition. This indicates their ability to maintain a natural flow of speech.
- Pronunciation and Accent – Evaluates students' ability to articulate words correctly and maintain an understandable accent that enhances communication.

- Vocabulary – Measures students' ability to use a wide range of vocabulary appropriately in different speaking situations, especially in explaining design concepts.
- Accuracy and Grammar – Focuses on the correctness of sentence structures, grammatical forms, and the ability to convey meaning precisely without errors that might hinder understanding.
- Comprehension – Analyzes how well students understand spoken language and how effectively they respond to questions, discussions, or client interactions in a relevant and meaningful way.

Students submitted self-recorded speaking tasks via Google Drive, which were assessed using a structured rubric. The lecturer evaluated students' performance, comparing results between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 to determine improvements. During the action stage, the lecturer observes the situation in the class as well as the result to use it for the reflection. This reflection was used as a reference to revise the plan to improve the plan to implement the second cycle with the same stage (plan – action – observe – reflect). After the result was obtained, the lecturer compares the result from 1st cycle and 2nd cycle and draws a conclusion.

3. Result and Discussion

This research was conducted in an Interior Design class at IDB Bali, consisting of 23 students from diverse backgrounds. Instruction and training can be tailored to meet individual learning needs. Students actively participate in various sessions throughout the learning process. Before implementing any instructional approach, it is crucial to first understand and recognize students' learning habits. This process helps students adapt more effectively, while discussions and observations provide additional support by offering contextual understanding. The implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in this class is evident when the lecturer assigns speaking tasks, which students must submit via Google Drive, as illustrated in the following figure.

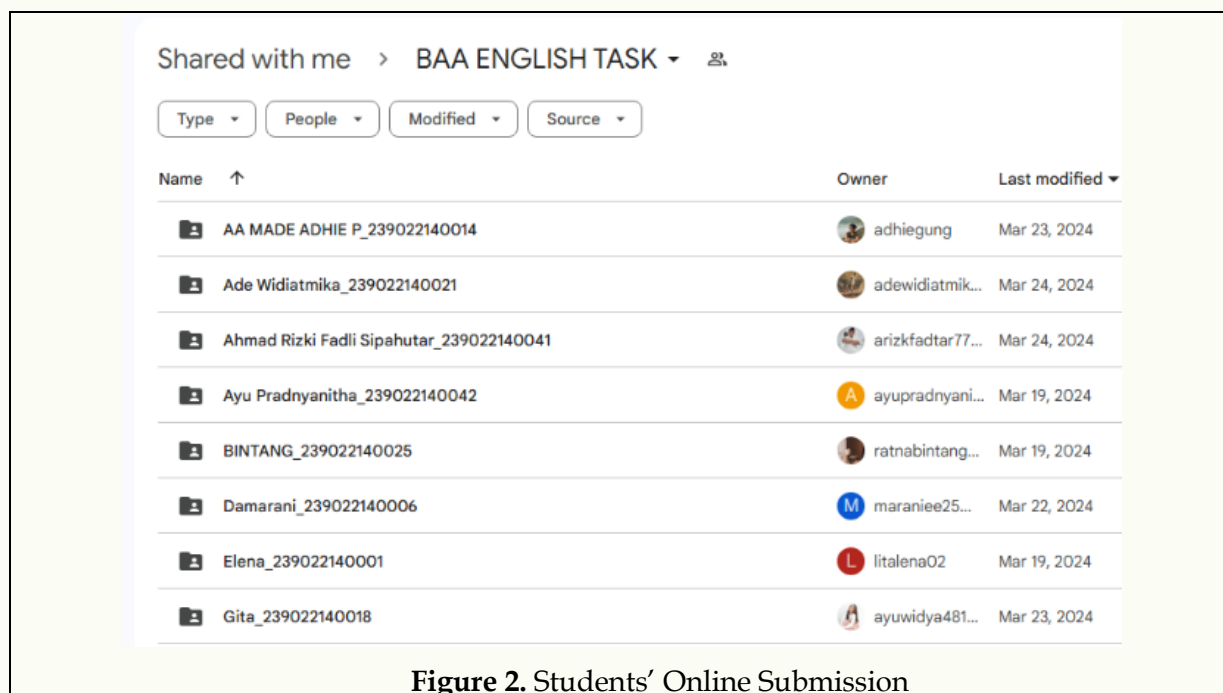


Figure 2. Students' Online Submission

Based on the data presented in Figure 2, the implementation of an online submission system by the lecturer serves to preserve students' work in a cloud-based platform, ensuring efficient document management and easy accessibility. This approach facilitates virtual communication, seamless collaboration, and effective idea-sharing (Nuryadi & Widiatmaka, 2023). In the contemporary digital era, advancements in technology and media applications have significantly expanded the possibilities for interdisciplinary learning and innovative pedagogical practices (Özcan, 2022). Through the online submission of self-recorded video presentations, students were required to promote their interior design concepts, enabling the lecturer to assess their speaking comprehension. These submissions provided a structured basis for evaluating students' language proficiency and communicative effectiveness, which contributed to the findings in Cycle 1.

Table 1. Speaking Performance Scores of Students in Cycle 1

CODE	SCORE	CODE	SCORE
DI1	94	DI13	84
DI2	91	DI14	78
DI3	92	DI15	81
DI4	88	DI16	92
DI5	84	DI17	84
DI6	83	DI18	88
DI7	88	DI19	87
DI8	83	DI20	92
DI9	90	DI21	87
DI10	79	DI22	79
DI11	73	DI23	88
DI12	79	AVERAGE	85.3913

The results from Cycle 1 reveal significant variations in students' speaking performance, with scores ranging from 73 to 94. The average score of 85.39 suggests that, overall, students demonstrated a strong understanding of speaking comprehension, though 21.7% of participants (5 students) scored below 80, indicating room for improvement. These lower scores suggest challenges in fluency, pronunciation, or confidence in verbal communication, necessitating targeted interventions to strengthen these areas.

Given these results, the lecturer identified specific areas for instructional improvement, particularly in fluency and pronunciation, which are critical for effective spoken communication. To address these challenges, the next cycle incorporated more structured practice sessions focused on articulation, pacing, and intonation exercises. Additionally, students were encouraged to engage in peer feedback and interactive speaking tasks to reinforce pronunciation accuracy and verbal clarity.

To facilitate a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by students, the session concluded with a question-and-answer discussion involving participants (Prodyanatasari, Diasandy, Azizah, Izati, & Hidayat, 2024). This discussion provided valuable qualitative insights into students' experiences, allowing the lecturer to tailor instructional modifications for Cycle 2. The findings from Cycle 1 served as a foundation for refining the TBLT approach, ensuring a more effective and engaging learning process in the subsequent phase.

Table 2. Speaking Performance Scores of Students in Cycle 2

CODE	SCORE	CODE	SCORE
DI1	93	DI13	83
DI2	91	DI14	87
DI3	91	DI15	81
DI4	93	DI16	93
DI5	91	DI17	89
DI6	89	DI18	91
DI7	91	DI19	87
DI8	87	DI20	91
DI9	93	DI21	89
DI10	85	DI22	87
DI11	85	DI23	87
DI12	87	AVERAGE	88.73913

Based on the results of Cycle 2, significant improvement was observed compared to Cycle 1. Initially, five students (21.7%) scored below 80, indicating areas needing improvement in fluency, pronunciation, and overall speaking proficiency. However, in Cycle 2, all students scored above 80, demonstrating progress in their speaking abilities. The average score increased to 88.73, reflecting a 3.3% improvement, which aligns with the expected success range. This outcome highlights the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing students' speaking comprehension and suggests that structured digital submissions and interactive exercises contributed to this growth. The comparison between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 is visually represented in the following figure, illustrating the overall improvement in students' speaking proficiency.

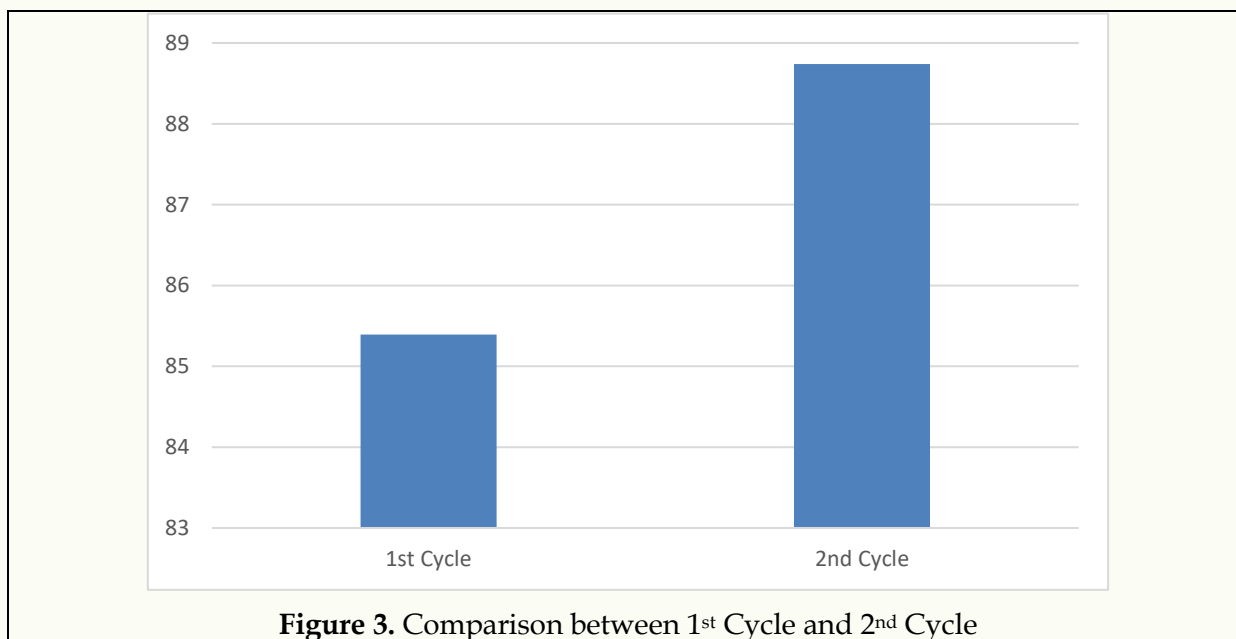


Figure 3. Comparison between 1st Cycle and 2nd Cycle

Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the improvement in students' speaking comprehension between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, with the average score increasing from 85.39 to 88.73, reflecting a 3.3% improvement. This growth falls within the expected success range of 3–5% per cycle, indicating measurable progress in students' speaking proficiency.

The observed improvement can be attributed to structured task-based learning activities, increased speaking practice, and the integration of digital submissions, which allowed students to track their performance and receive constructive feedback. Moreover, active student participation and engagement played a crucial role in reinforcing learning outcomes. These findings further validate the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Learning (TBLT) in developing students' speaking skills, aligning with previous research that highlights TBLT's role in improving fluency, pronunciation, and structured communication.

Beyond the numerical improvements, it is also essential to examine students' learning experiences and confidence-building processes. Were students initially hesitant to record their presentations? Did they perceive a noticeable improvement in structuring their speech? Addressing these aspects would provide a more holistic understanding of TBLT's impact, extending beyond statistical outcomes. Future research should integrate qualitative reflections from both students and lecturers to complement quantitative findings, ensuring a more comprehensive analysis of TBLT's effectiveness in fostering speaking development.

This study further confirms that TBLT, combined with an online submission system, enhances students' speaking skills. Within the broader community context, students who experienced significant improvements in English proficiency through TBLT are also prepared to engage in community service programs, where they can apply the knowledge gained from their academic training. These students are encouraged to utilize data-driven insights from their coursework to enhance language learning initiatives within society.

The findings suggest that TBLT plays a crucial role in developing students' speaking comprehension, which is essential for their future careers. Additionally, through interactions with local interior designers and small creative businesses, this study identified potential applications of TBLT in community training programs. By equipping local entrepreneurs with strong communication skills, this approach can enhance their ability to present design concepts, negotiate with clients, and expand market opportunities. These applications highlight the broader societal benefits of TBLT, extending its impact beyond academic settings to professional and entrepreneurial environments.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) effectively improves interior design students' speaking comprehension, as evidenced by the improvement between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. It is recommended that TBLT, integrated with online systems such as digital task submission, be continued to help students develop their speaking skills as part of preparing them for future communication in their careers. The findings of this study also confirm that TBLT is an effective approach to enhancing speaking comprehension among interior design students. Beyond its academic applications, this research suggests that TBLT can be utilized in community-based training programs to support local creative industries. By incorporating TBLT into skill development initiatives for designers and entrepreneurs, this method has the potential to enhance professional communication, improve collaboration with clients, and contribute to the economic resilience of local creative communities.

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