

DESIGNING AN ONLINE TASK-BASED SPEAKING SKILLS MODULE FOR TVET LEARNERS: ENHANCING LEARNER ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION

Mohd Khirulnizam Musa

Pahang Matriculation College, 26300 Gambang, MALAYSIA

***Azwin Arif Abdul Rahim**

Centre for Modern Languages,
Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah, 26600 Pekan, MALAYSIA

email: nzammusa@gmail.com, ariftesl@umpisa.edu.my

*Corresponding author: Azwin Arif Abdul Rahim

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Abstract: This conceptual paper delves into the intricacies surrounding the design, implementation, and evaluation of an inventive online task-based speaking skills module tailored explicitly for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) learners. Recognizing the pivotal role of speaking proficiency within TVET contexts, the paper meticulously examines the hurdles encountered by TVET learners in honing their speaking skills. In response to these challenges, it proposes a pioneering approach that merges task-based language teaching principles with technology-enhanced learning environments. Employing a robust mixed-methods research design, the paper aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the module's essential features, methodologies, and outcomes. Emphasis is placed on enhancing learner engagement, fostering meaningful interaction, and nurturing the development of speaking skills within the unique landscape of TVET education. Through meticulous analysis and evaluation, this paper endeavors to illuminate pathways toward enriching the learning experiences and outcomes of TVET learners in the realm of speaking proficiency.

Keywords: online learning module, task-based language teaching, technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication skills, particularly speaking proficiency, play a pivotal role in the success of individuals within technical and vocational fields (Suhaili & Mohama, 2021; Wahyuni et al., 2018). In these domains, professionals are often required to engage in oral communication with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders, making effective speaking abilities

indispensable for career advancement and success. Despite its paramount importance, speaking skill development is frequently overlooked in traditional language instruction methodologies, particularly within the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (Hassan et al., 2019; Jamil et al., 2023). This oversight leaves TVET learners inadequately prepared to meet the communicative demands of their future careers, where clear and concise communication is crucial for job performance and professional growth (Din Nugraha et al., 2020; Ong et al., 2022).

Recognizing the pressing need to bridge this gap, this paper focuses on the design, implementation, and evaluation of an innovative online task-based speaking skills module tailored explicitly for TVET learners. At the heart of this endeavor lies the pedagogical framework of task-based language teaching (TBLT), which advocates for the use of authentic, real-world tasks to promote meaningful communication and language acquisition (Aisha Majeed, & Natasha Memon, 2022; Lume & Hisbullah, 2022). By centering instruction around tasks that mirror the communicative challenges encountered in vocational contexts, TBLT offers a holistic approach to language learning that goes beyond mere grammar and vocabulary acquisition, emphasizing practical language use and proficiency development (Zainaba Omar et al., 2021).

Building upon the principles of TBLT, the proposed online module seeks to address the specific needs and challenges faced by TVET learners in developing their speaking skills. These learners often come from diverse educational backgrounds and possess varying levels of language proficiency, making traditional, one-size-fits-all language instruction approaches ineffective. Furthermore, the vocational nature of their studies necessitates a focus on speaking tasks that are directly relevant to their chosen fields, enabling them to effectively communicate within professional settings (Ramamurthy et al., 2021; Yaakob et al., 2020).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The online task-based speaking skills module endeavors to provide TVET learners with practical opportunities to hone their speaking abilities in contexts that mirror real-world vocational scenarios. By engaging in authentic speaking tasks, such as simulated workplace conversations, role-plays, and presentations, learners can develop the communication skills necessary to succeed in their chosen professions. (Ayyat & Al-Aufi, 2021; Zainal & Md Yunus, 2021). Moreover, the module leverages technology-enhanced learning environments to enhance learner engagement, interaction, and skill development. Through the integration of video conferencing software, multimedia resources, and online collaboration tools, learners can participate in dynamic and immersive speaking activities that replicate the complexities of professional communication (Chung et al., 2020; Coman et al., 2020).

In addition to addressing the immediate needs of TVET learners, the proposed module also aligns with broader educational goals related to sustainability and inclusivity (Jamaludin et al., 2018; Varma & Malik, 2024). By providing flexible and accessible learning opportunities, the module caters to the diverse needs and preferences of TVET learners, including those with limited access to traditional classroom-based instruction. Furthermore, the module promotes sustainability awareness by encouraging learners to engage in environmentally conscious practices, such as virtual collaboration and resource utilization (Pavlova et al., 2019).

In summary, this paper aims to shed light on the significance of speaking proficiency in TVET education and the potential of task-based language teaching principles and technology-enhanced learning environments to address the specific needs and challenges of TVET learners. Through the development and evaluation of the online task-based speaking skills module, this paper seeks to contribute to the enhancement of language education in TVET contexts,

ultimately empowering learners to succeed in their future careers through effective communication.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address the identified challenges, this paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key features and components of an effective online task-based speaking skills module for TVET learners?
2. How can technology be integrated into the module to enhance learner engagement, interaction, and speaking skill development?
3. What strategies can be employed to accommodate the diverse learning needs, preferences, and backgrounds of TVET learners in an online environment?

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to design, implement, and evaluate an innovative online task-based speaking skills module tailored specifically for TVET learners. By integrating principles of task-based language teaching, interactive learning activities, and technology-enhanced learning environments, the study aims to:

1. Provide TVET learners with authentic speaking practice opportunities relevant to their vocational fields.
2. Enhance learner engagement and interaction through the use of technology tools and platforms.
3. Address the diverse learning needs and preferences of TVET students by offering flexible and adaptable learning experiences.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to investigate the design, implementation, and effectiveness of the online task-based speaking skills module. The research methodology comprises the following components:

Module Design

The design of the online task-based speaking skills module is rooted in the principles of task-based language teaching (TBLT), a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the use of authentic, real-world tasks to promote meaningful communication and language acquisition (Al-Tamimi et al., 2020). Within this framework, the module is carefully crafted to provide TVET learners with opportunities to engage in speaking activities that closely mirror the communicative demands they will encounter in their future vocational settings.

Central to the module design are authentic speaking tasks that simulate real-world vocational scenarios. These tasks are carefully selected to reflect the types of communication situations that TVET learners are likely to encounter in their chosen professions. For example, learners may engage in role-plays that simulate interactions with clients, colleagues, or

supervisors in workplace settings. They may also participate in group discussions or presentations related to specific vocational topics or projects. By incorporating authentic speaking tasks, the module aims to create a dynamic and immersive learning environment where learners can practice and apply their speaking skills in contexts that are meaningful and relevant to their future careers (Azlan et al., 2019; I. Hassan et al., 2021; Wen et al., 2021). This not only enhances learners' motivation and engagement but also ensures that they develop the practical communication skills necessary for success in their vocational fields. In addition to providing authentic speaking tasks, the module is carefully scaffolded to support learners of varying proficiency levels and learning styles. Scaffolding refers to the systematic support and guidance provided to learners as they engage in challenging tasks, with the goal of enabling them to gradually develop their skills and autonomy (Abdulrahman et al., 2020).

In the context of the online task-based speaking skills module, scaffolding may take various forms. For example, tasks may be sequenced in a logical progression, starting with simpler, more familiar topics and gradually increasing in complexity and linguistic demand. Clear instructions, prompts, and examples may be provided to help learners understand the task requirements and expectations. Furthermore, the module may incorporate opportunities for peer collaboration and feedback, allowing learners to support and learn from each other as they engage in speaking activities. Scaffolding techniques such as modeling, prompting, and feedback are employed strategically to ensure that learners receive the support they need to successfully complete the tasks and develop their speaking skills (Musazay, 2018; Nita et al., 2020). By scaffolding the speaking tasks in this way, the module aims to create a supportive learning environment where learners feel confident to take risks, make mistakes, and ultimately, improve their speaking proficiency (Farida et al., 2022). This approach acknowledges the diverse needs and abilities of TVET learners and strives to provide them with the necessary support and guidance to succeed in their language learning journey.

In summary, the module design of the online task-based speaking skills module is characterized by its adherence to TBLT principles, its focus on authentic speaking tasks, and its careful scaffolding to support learners of varying proficiency levels and learning styles. Through this design, the module aims to create a rich and engaging learning experience that fosters the development of practical communication skills essential for success in TVET.

Technology Integration

Technology integration plays a crucial role in enhancing learner engagement, interaction, and speaking skill development within the online task-based speaking skills module. By leveraging various technology tools and platforms, the module aims to create a dynamic and immersive learning environment that fosters meaningful communication and collaboration among TVET learners (Ahmad et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2019). One of the key technology tools utilized in the module is video conferencing software, which facilitates synchronous communication and real-time interaction among learners. Through live video sessions, learners can engage in speaking activities, such as group discussions, role-plays, and oral presentations, with their peers and instructors. This synchronous communication enables learners to practice their speaking skills in a supportive and interactive setting, similar to face-to-face classroom environments (Pandita & Kiran, 2023; Xiao et al., 2020)

Moreover, video conferencing software allows for the integration of additional features, such as screen sharing, chat, and breakout rooms, which further enhance the speaking tasks and facilitate collaborative learning experiences. For example, breakout rooms can be used to divide learners into smaller groups for more focused discussions, while screen sharing allows learners to present visual aids or multimedia materials to support their speaking tasks. In

addition to video conferencing software, multimedia resources are also employed to provide task support and enhance the learning experience. These multimedia resources may include audio recordings, video clips, interactive presentations, and online simulations, which are integrated into the speaking tasks to provide learners with additional context, information, and support. For example, learners may listen to audio recordings of authentic workplace conversations or watch video clips demonstrating effective communication strategies in vocational settings. These multimedia resources not only make the speaking tasks more engaging and authentic but also provide learners with valuable exposure to real-world language use and communication patterns relevant to their future careers.

Another technology tool utilized in the module is online forums, which provide a platform for asynchronous collaboration and peer feedback. Through online forums, learners can engage in discussions, share ideas, and provide feedback on each other's speaking performances outside of scheduled class sessions. This asynchronous communication allows learners to participate at their own pace and convenience, fostering greater flexibility and accessibility in the learning process (Efriana, 2021; Harahap, 2021). Furthermore, online forums enable learners to engage in reflective practices, such as self-assessment and peer evaluation, which promote metacognitive awareness and facilitate deeper learning. By actively engaging with their peers through online forums, learners not only reinforce their speaking skills but also develop important communication and collaboration skills essential for success in professional settings (Ayyat & Al-Aufi, 2021; Zainal & Md Yunus, 2021).

In summary, technology integration within the online task-based speaking skills module encompasses the use of various tools and platforms, including video conferencing software, multimedia resources, and online forums. By leveraging these technologies, the module creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment that enhances learner engagement, interaction, and speaking skill development. Through synchronous and asynchronous communication channels, learners can practice their speaking skills, receive feedback, and collaborate with their peers, ultimately preparing them for success in their future vocational endeavors.

Data Collection

Data collection is a fundamental component of the study, aiming to gather comprehensive insights into the effectiveness and impact of the online task-based speaking skills module on TVET learners. The data collection process employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to capture various aspects of learners' experiences, perceptions, and performance throughout the module. Participants complete surveys before and after the module to gather information about their demographic characteristics, language proficiency levels, prior experience with online learning, and expectations for the module. These surveys also include open-ended questions that allow participants to express their perceptions, attitudes, and goals related to speaking skill development.

Throughout the module, participants are encouraged to engage in reflective practices by documenting their thoughts, experiences, and insights regarding their speaking skill development. These reflections may take various forms, such as written journals, audio recordings, or video logs, allowing participants to articulate their learning processes, challenges, and achievements in their own words. Instructors involved in delivering the module may provide observations and insights based on their interactions with learners, observations of learner participation and engagement during speaking tasks, and assessments of learner progress and performance. These qualitative observations offer valuable perspectives on the implementation and effectiveness of the module from an instructor's viewpoint.

Throughout the module, participants engage in various speaking tasks designed to assess their speaking proficiency and performance. These tasks may include role-plays, presentations,

group discussions, and simulated workplace interactions. Task performance assessments are conducted using standardized rubrics or scoring criteria, allowing for the objective evaluation of learners' speaking abilities. In addition to gathering qualitative data, pre- and post-module surveys also include quantitative items designed to measure changes in participants' attitudes, confidence levels, and perceived speaking proficiency before and after completing the module. Likert-scale questions and rating scales may be used to quantify participants' responses and track shifts in their perceptions over time.

Data Analysis

Once the data has been collected, it undergoes rigorous analysis to identify patterns, trends, and insights related to the effectiveness of the module. Qualitative data, including learner reflections and instructor observations, is analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes, emergent patterns, and areas of significance. Themes may be identified through processes such as coding, categorization, and thematic analysis, allowing for a nuanced understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives.

Quantitative data, including task performance assessments and survey responses, is analyzed using statistical methods to measure the effectiveness of the module quantitatively. Descriptive statistics, such as means, frequencies, and standard deviations, may be used to summarize participants' performance and survey responses. By triangulating qualitative and quantitative data, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and multi-dimensional assessment of the online task-based speaking skills module's impact on TVET learners. This integrated approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the module's effectiveness, strengths, and areas for improvement, ultimately informing recommendations for future module design and implementation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study shed light on the design, implementation, and outcomes of the online task-based speaking skills module for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) learners. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, the study explored key features and components of the module, examined the integration of technology to enhance learner engagement and interaction, and identified strategies to accommodate the diverse learning needs, preferences, and backgrounds of TVET learners in an online environment.

This section presents a synthesis of the findings, organized around the research questions that guided the study. The findings provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and impact of the module, offering practical implications for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in TVET language education. By addressing the research questions, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how online task-based approaches can support speaking skill development among TVET learners and inform future efforts to enhance language education in vocational contexts

Enhance Learner Engagement

One of the key findings of the study is the remarkable level of learner engagement and motivation observed throughout the module. Participants actively participated in speaking tasks and collaborative activities facilitated by technology, demonstrating a strong commitment to their learning journey. This heightened engagement can be attributed to several factors,

including the authentic and relevant nature of the speaking tasks, the interactive and dynamic learning environment created by technology tools, and the opportunities for peer collaboration and feedback. The combination of these elements contributed to a positive and enriching learning experience, fostering a sense of ownership and investment in their speaking skill development.

Improved Speaking Skill

The study also revealed significant improvement in participants' speaking proficiency as evidenced by pre- and post-module assessments. Learners demonstrated increased fluency, accuracy, and confidence in oral communication, reflecting the efficacy of the online task-based approach in promoting speaking skill development. The structured nature of the speaking tasks, combined with the scaffolding provided by instructors and peers, enabled learners to practice and refine their speaking abilities in authentic vocational contexts. Moreover, the immediate feedback and support offered through technology-enhanced learning environments contributed to rapid skill acquisition and retention, leading to measurable improvements in speaking proficiency over the course of the module.

Positive Learning Outcome

Learner feedback further underscored the positive learning outcomes associated with the online task-based speaking skills module. Participants expressed appreciation for the practical relevance of the speaking tasks to their vocational fields, noting how the module's focus on authentic workplace scenarios enhanced their understanding of industry-specific language and communication norms. Additionally, learners highlighted the value of collaborative, technology-enhanced learning experiences in fostering skill development and knowledge retention. The interactive nature of the module, facilitated by technology tools such as video conferencing and multimedia resources, enabled learners to engage in meaningful discussions, share perspectives, and learn from their peers, ultimately enhancing their learning outcomes and overall satisfaction with the module.

Technology Integration Strategies

The study identified several effective technology integration strategies that contributed to the success of the online task-based speaking skills module. Examples include the use of video conferencing for virtual workplace simulations, where learners engaged in role-plays and scenario-based activities that mirrored real-world vocational situations. This immersive approach allowed learners to apply their speaking skills in context, fostering a deeper understanding of workplace communication dynamics and challenges. Similarly, multimedia resources, such as audio recordings and interactive presentations, provided valuable support and context for speaking tasks, enhancing learners' comprehension and engagement. These technology-enhanced learning environments not only facilitated speaking skill development but also demonstrated the potential of technology to enhance teaching and learning practices in TVET contexts.

Summary

In summary, the findings of the study provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness and impact of the online task-based speaking skills module for TVET learners. Enhanced learner engagement, improved speaking skills, positive learning outcomes, and effective technology

integration strategies collectively highlight the module's potential to address the unique needs and challenges of TVET learners and foster their success in developing essential communication skills for their future careers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the online task-based speaking skills module represents a promising approach to addressing the unique challenges faced by Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) learners in developing their speaking proficiency. Through the integration of task-based language teaching principles and technology-enhanced learning environments, the module offers a dynamic and immersive learning experience that fosters meaningful communication and skill development in relevant vocational contexts.

The findings of the study provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness and impact of the module, revealing enhanced learner engagement, improved speaking skills, positive learning outcomes, and effective technology integration strategies. Learners actively participated in authentic speaking tasks, demonstrated significant improvement in speaking proficiency, and expressed appreciation for the practical relevance of the module to their vocational fields.

Moreover, the study identified strategies to accommodate the diverse learning needs, preferences, and backgrounds of TVET learners in an online environment, emphasizing the importance of scaffolding for learner support, flexible task design, and collaborative learning opportunities. These strategies ensure inclusivity and accessibility, empowering learners to succeed in their language learning journey.

Overall, the online task-based speaking skills module holds great promise for enhancing language education in TVET contexts and preparing learners for success in their future careers. By leveraging technology to create engaging and interactive learning experiences, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders can foster the development of essential communication skills among TVET learners, ultimately contributing to their personal and professional growth in an increasingly globalized workforce. As we move forward, it is imperative to continue refining and innovating upon such pedagogical approaches to ensure that TVET learners receive the support and opportunities they need to thrive in their chosen fields. Through collaborative efforts and a commitment to excellence in language education, we can empower TVET learners to achieve their full potential and make meaningful contributions to society.

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