

# A Task-Based Learning Strategy to Develop Primary School Pupils' EFL Oracy Skills

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## **Abstract:**

The current study aimed at investigating the effect of a task-based learning strategy on developing primary stage pupils' EFL oracy skills. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. The participations were forty pupils from Qutb Diab2 primary stage enrolled in the six year from Bahtit, Abo Hamad Directorate, Sharkia Governorate, who were equally divided into an experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught by the task-based learning strategy while the control group received regular instruction in the first term of the academic year (2022-2023). The experiment lasted for eight weeks. The researcher carried out 8 sessions; each session took about 90 minutes. To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher designed these instruments: an EFL oracy skills checklist, a pre-post oracy skills test, a rubric of the oracy skills test. The data obtained were statistically treated through the SPSS program. Results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in oracy skills due to the use of the task-based learning strategy. These results indicated that the task-based learning strategy has a positive effect on developing primary school pupils' EFL oracy skills. It was recommended that task-based learning strategy should be used in EFL teaching to enhance oracy skills and other language skills.

**Keywords:** Oracy skills and the task-based learning strategy.

## استراتيجية التعلم القائم على المهام لتنمية المهارات الشفاهية باللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية لدى تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية

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### المستخلص:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية لدراسة اثر استخدام استراتيجية التعلم القائم على المهام على تنمية المهارات الشفاهية لدى تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية. ولقد تبنت الدراسة التصميم شبه التجريبي بالاعتماد على اربعين تلميذا من الصف السادس الابتدائي بمدرسة قطب دياب ٢ ببحطيط ، مركز ابوحماد ، محافظة الشرقية ، كعينه في الدراسة وقد تم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين متكافئتين: الأولى تجريبية والتي تلقت تعليماً بواسطة استراتيجية التعلم القائم على المهام والثانية ضابطة تلقت تعليماً نظامياً عادياً. وقد استمرت التجربة ثمانية اسابيع من الفصل الدراسي الأول للعام الدراسي (٢٠٢٢ - ٢٠٢٣م)، تم تنفيذها في 8 جلسات، كل جلسة استغرقت ٩٠ دقيقة. ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة تم تصميم واستخدام الأدوات التالية: قائمة بالمهارات الشفاهية باللغة الانجليزية، واختبار الشفاهية بالانجليزية القبلي والبعدي، ومعيار تقييم لاختبار الشفاهية بالانجليزية. وتم معالجة البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها إحصائياً من خلال برنامج SPSS. حيث اظهرت النتائج أن المجموعة التجريبية تفوقت على المجموعة الضابطة في المهارات الشفاهية بسبب استخدام استراتيجية التعلم القائم على المهام. ومن خلال هذه النتائج اثبت أن استراتيجية التعلم القائم على المهام لها تأثير إيجابي على تنمية المهارات الشفاهية باللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية لدى تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية. وأوصت الدراسة باستخدام استراتيجية التعلم القائم على المهام في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لتعزيز المهارات الشفاهية والمهارات اللغوية الأخرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المهارات الشفاهية، استراتيجية التعلم القائم على المهام.

## Introduction:

Language is a system of communication between different societies, so when people learn their native language, they normally start by listening, then speaking, then reading, and eventually writing. These are called the four language skills. People develop the language skills that help them become good listeners and good speakers as well.

Oracy is an important part of the EFL curriculum. It serves as a foundation for all types of learning and broadens learners' understanding by allowing them to express and explore ideas in order to make connections between what they know and what they are about to learn ( Nicholson, 1998). Oracy assists learners in processing their own thinking and the ideas of others, inspiring them to make connections and develop new understanding (Lifford et al., 2000).

Unlike literacy skills, oracy skills have not previously been recognized as a separate skill that need to be developed in their own right. Furthermore, in follow up exercises, learners should be taken beyond the particular speaking text or listening piece of discourse. This can occur in one of two ways:

- 1- Transferring speaking skills to other texts.
- 2- Integrating speaking skills with other language skills particularly listening (Philips, 1992).

Listening is an important part of communication that arises from people's daily lives. According to Mendelson (2000: 9), listening accounts for 40-50% of total communication time; speaking accounts for 25-30%; reading accounts for 11-16%; and writing accounts for 9%. This highlights the significance of listening in language learning.

Listening is essential not only in everyday life but also in classrooms. According to Lynch and Mendelsohn (2013:190), language learners become aware of their remarkable feats of listening only when they are in a familiar listening environment,

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such as listening to a language in which they have limited proficiency.

Rost (1994:141–142) explained the importance of listening in a language classroom as follows:

1. Listening is important in a language classroom as it provides input for learners. Any learning cannot begin unless such an input is provided at the appropriate level of comprehension.
2. Spoken language provides a means of interaction for learners because understanding requires interaction. It is critical to have access to native speakers of a language.
3. Authentic spoken language presents a challenge for learners to comprehend language as native speakers use it.
4. Listening activities give teachers a way to direct learners' attention to new language forms (vocabulary, grammar, and interaction patterns).

Speaking is regarded as a valuable skill. Nirmawati (2015), in particular, reported that in real-life situations, learners are most judged on their speaking abilities. Speaking is an essential component of everyday interaction. The ability to speak fluently and understandably is frequently used to form a person's first impression.

According to Zyoud (2016), speaking is a process that includes many different elements in addition to the pronunciation of individual sounds, the physical illustration of an abstract system or the grammatical structure of a language, or both. Speaking is also a skill that requires three different types of knowledge (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary), as well as the use of the appropriate words in the appropriate context and with the correct pronunciation. No matter how much they are familiar with the English language, EFL learners still encounter several challenges.

Speaking, according to Bailey (2006), is important in terms of ongoing language acquisition. It is regarded as the process and outcome of foreign language acquisition translated into oracy. Despite the importance of oracy skills and the benefits they can bring to the foreign language learning process and learners, research on developing EFL oracy skills is limited. Besides that, the interest they have received in teaching practices in the classroom (McCarthy and O' keeffe2004).

Because of the wide literature that confirms the importance of oracy (listening and speaking) skills, a host of studies have investigated various strategies of teaching to develop them. Helal (2017) aimed at developing some EFL Listening comprehension and speaking skills of the sixth year primary pupils by using an interactive strategy based on (Total Physical Response , Role – play and Simulation). The findings of the study revealed that using interactive strategies has a positive effect on improving listening and speaking skills.

El-Shehawy (2017) aimed at developing some EFL oracy skills and motivation of Saudi university students by using project - based digital storytelling. The findings of the study revealed that using the digital storytelling method resulted in a positive effect on improving oracy skills (listening and speaking skills) and motivation.

Mohammed (2018) aimed at developing some EFL oracy skills for preparatory stage students by using an integrative strategy based on community language learning, audiolingualism, direct instruction and the Total Physical Response methods. The findings of the study revealed that the integrative suggested strategy resulted in a positive effect on improving EFL oracy skills for preparatory stage students.

It seems like a great challenge for an EFL teacher to motivate and encourage all learners to be orally active in an English foreign language classroom. According to Al Hosni

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(2014:26), most of EFL learners struggle with organizing and communicating their thoughts and ideas orally. This could be because they do not get enough practice and opportunities to speak in the classroom. First, learning to speak is a complex process that learners are unfamiliar with; they are unfamiliar with the skills and strategies they can use to improve their speaking ability. Second, EFL learners have few opportunities to practice arranging their ideas cohesively and coherently while communicating. Third, EFL learners are unfamiliar with the criteria used to evaluate their oral performances.

Regardless of the causes of EFL oracy skills, EFL teachers and researchers should not ignore these skills by coming up with fresh ideas to improve lessons and teaching strategies by finding new methods to enhance activities and methods inside classrooms.

Modern approaches to teaching language emphasize the integration of the learners into pedagogic tasks based on communication, as this may develop oracy skills. This makes task-based learning especially popular for developing language skills. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) proposes the use of tasks as a central component in a language classroom because they provide better contexts for activating learner acquisition processes (Shehadeh, 2005). Task-based language teaching is thus based on a theory of language learning rather than a theory of language structure.

Task-based learning is a learner-centered approach to language; the emphasis is on encouraging and enabling learners to share their knowledge, as well as to emphasize their needs, motivation, and interests, so that language-based tasks compel them to participate (Tuan, 2011).

Tasks consist of some form of input, which can be verbal or nonverbal, followed by an activity derived from the input. Tasks have objectives and roles for both teachers and learners. Nunan (2004) discussed that, course designers should consider the following elements when designing a task: goals, input, activities, teacher role, learner role, and settings.

Experts have suggested some of the advantages of task-based learning, which teachers can use to implement it. Firstly, task-based learning provides a clear context for language use. The ordinary meaning can be achieved by assigning learners a variety of tasks. As a result, they study the language directly. Learners must collaborate to complete the instructor's assignment. They have numerous opportunities to learn a language in a natural setting (Larsen, 2000:144). Secondly, task-based learning is learner-centered. The teacher should only present the word in pre-task in accordance with TBL teaching procedures. Learners are then permitted to utilize their language during the work cycle and language orientation. It encourages learners to engage in active learning. Finally, they engage in task-based learning. As a result, they are more likely to be linked to learning the target language (Willis, 2006). The researcher can use them as guides to select task-based learning to teach English based on some of the benefits listed above.

Rahman (2010) described the applications of the task-based approach to teach EFL oral communication skills in an academic setting. A course in 'Oral Communication Skills' is taught to the participants of Engineering and Technology at Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad to make them proficient in EFL oral skills through using task-based approach for teaching . The findings of the study indicated that the final EFL

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performances of the participants were impressively polished and much improved, that is, the final product was of high level of 70 percent participants scored grade 'A'. In addition, TBA has a positive effect on the participant's EFL performances.

Masoud (2018) investigated the effectiveness of a task-based learning program in developing speaking skills and phonological awareness. Participants were 20 students chosen from 4th-year English majors at the Faculty of Education, Minia University. Instruments of the study included a needs assessment questionnaire to determine the sub-skills of speaking and another questionnaire to determine the phonological awareness. Analysis of data revealed that the experimental group significantly achieved higher on the post speaking and phonological awareness tests results, as the difference in the mean scores of the two administrations was statistically significant in favor of the post-performance results.

In conclusion, TBLI acts as a bridge between the classroom and everyday life through its communication activities, necessitating learner engagement in order to complete a task in class. Learners are not only expected to know the language, but also to utilize it (Yildiz & Senel, 2017).

### **Context of the problem:**

The problem of the present study has been emphasized in the following ways:

- a) Working as an EFL teacher in the primary stage, the researcher observed a lack in EFL oracy skills among these primary school pupils.
- b) Reviewing the previous studies that tackled EFL oracy skills (Helal, 2017; El-Shehawy, 2017; Mohamed, 2018).
- c) Conducting a pilot study on a group of 30 pupils in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Qutb Diab2 primary school in Bahtit, Abu

Hammed, Sharkia Governorate. The researcher designed an EFL oracy test to assess the pupils' EFL oracy skills. Results indicated that these pupils' EFL performance level in the pilot study was below the average score (50%) as shown in table (1).

Table (1)

**Pilot study results**

Oracy skills	Sub-skills	Percentage of pupils' levels
Pronunciation	▪ Pronouncing EFL sounds correctly.	23.3%
Comprehension	▪ Listening for specific information.	20%
	▪ Listening to class discussions.	23.3%
Vocabulary	▪ Matching EFL words with pictures.	40%
	▪ Producing appropriate word form that convey the meaning.	26.7%
Organizing information	▪ Using correct forms of the target language to convey the meaning.	23.3%

- Pilot test scores showed the weaknesses of the pupils' EFL oracy skills.

**Statement of the problem:**

Based on the aforementioned discussion, the problem of the current study has been that a great number of six-year primary-stage pupils lack EFL oracy skills. Hence, the present study was an attempt to develop EFL oracy skills by using task-based Learning strategy.

**Questions of the research:**

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The current study attempted to develop the EFL oracy skills and reduce speaking anxiety, which were necessary for the six-year primary pupils through the task-based learning strategy.

The current study attempted to answer the following main question:

**What is the effect of a task-based learning strategy on developing EFL oracy skills of six-year primary school pupils?**

The main question branched out into the following sub-questions:

- 1) What are the EFL oracy skills targeted for six-year primary pupils?
- 2) How far do six-year primary pupils successfully perform oracy skills?
- 3) What are the features of a task-based learning strategy that may develop the six-year primary pupils' EFL oracy skills?
- 4) What is the effect of a TBL strategy on developing six-year primary pupils' EFL oracy skills?

### **Purpose of the research:**

This study aimed at:

- 1) Developing EFL oracy skills for six-year primary stage pupils by using task-based learning strategy.

### **Significance of the research:**

The current study might hopefully be beneficial to the following:

#### **1. Pupils:**

- It might improve their EFL abilities to listen attentively and speak fluently in the classroom.

- It might change pupils' roles from passive recipients to active learners through different EFL tasks they would be asked to do.

**2. EFL teachers:**

- It might provide them with a list of EFL listening and speaking (oracy) skills necessary for the six-year primary school pupils to be taken into consideration while planning oracy activities suitable for the pupils.
- It might provide them with guidelines for using task-based language teaching as a strategy in teaching EFL listening and speaking activities.

**3. Curriculum designers:**

It might help them take into consideration the principles and propositions of the task-based learning approach while designing EFL oracy tasks to be included in pupils' textbooks.

**4. EFL researchers:**

It might pave the way for them to conduct further studies on using the task-based learning approach in teaching EFL oracy skills.

**Definition of terms:**

**EFL oracy skills:**

Allwords.com Dictionary (2007) defines EFL oracy skills as "the ability to express oneself in EFL coherently and to communicate freely with others by word of mouth". MSN Encarta Dictionary (2007) refers to EFL oracy skills as "oral communication and comprehension: the ability to convey thoughts and ideas orally in a way that others understand what is said."

**The operation definition of oracy:**

In the current study, oracy is defined operationally as the skill that enable pupils to communicate confidently in a variety

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of situations, from giving presentations in front of an audience to successfully participate in group discussions and collaborative activities. It is also the skill of listening actively, understanding and expressing spoken language.

### **Task-Based language learning:**

According to Nunan (2005), TBLT is a method for integrating skills. It enables learners to comprehend, create, manipulate, or interact in the classroom. This approach typically necessitates real-world tasks in which learners play key roles and apply the four skills; this allows them to explore the possibilities of communicating orally and comprehending a text in order to complete the task. Richard and Rogers (2014) referred to TBL as an approach that is based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching.

### **The operation definition of task-based language learning:**

Can be a teaching approach in which the six-year primary pupils learn EFL oracy skills through interaction among themselves by providing them with a series of tasks.

### **Delimitations of the research:**

The study was delimited to:

- a. A group of six-year primary stage pupils at Bahtit Primary School, Sharkia Governorate, Egypt.
- b. Some EFL oracy skills suitable for the six-year primary stage pupils (comprehension – pronunciation – vocabulary - organizing information) approved by the jury members.
- c. An EFL task-based learning strategy was introduced through three main stages: pre-task phase, while-task phase, and the post-task phase to suit the study participants.
- d. The study experiment conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2022/2023.

### **Review of Literature and related studies:**

#### **Oracy skills:**

Multifarious classifications of oracy skills were

provided by many researchers. According to Stables (2009), “Oracy is a special type of dialogue within different areas of the curriculum”. Baker (2006), described language competence in terms of the four “language abilities’ (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). He classified them into two groups: oracy, which includes “listening” as a receptive skill and “speaking” as a productive skill; and “literacy abilities,” which include reading and writing skills.

Oracy skills refer to speaking and listening skills and they are as important as other fundamental skills such as numeracy and literacy (Millard & Menzies, 2016). Speaking and listening are two sides of the same coin that together make up oracy skills. Speaking and listening are typically combined since they go hand in hand.

Table 2. The EFL oracy skills framework

Generic oracy skills	Specific oracy skills
<b>Physical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice</li> <li>• Body language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency and pace of speech, tonal variation, clarity of pronunciation, voice projection</li> <li>• Gesture and posture</li> </ul>
<b>Linguistic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Language variety</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Rhetorical techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate vocabulary choice</li> <li>• Register, grammar</li> <li>• Structure and organisation of talk</li> <li>• Metaphor, humour irony, mimicry</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content</li> <li>• Clarifying and summarizing</li> <li>• Self-regulation</li> <li>• Reasoning</li> <li>• Audience awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choice of content, building on the views of others</li> <li>• Seeking information and clarification through questions, Summarizing</li> <li>• Maintaining focus on task, time-management</li> <li>• Giving reasons to support views, critically examining ideas</li> <li>• Taking into account level of audience</li> </ul>
<b>Social and emotional</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with others</li> <li>• Listening and responding</li> <li>• Confidence in speaking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding or managing the interactions, turn-taking</li> <li>• Listening actively and responding appropriately</li> <li>• Self-assurance, liveliness and flair</li> </ul>

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Adopted from (Mercer, Warwick and Ahmed 2017).

As shown in table (2), the oracy skills framework presents oracy development in terms of four strands of skills: physical, linguistics, cognitive, and social and emotion. Firstly, physical strand refers to voice and body language. Secondly, linguistics strand refers to grammar and vocabulary used in the talk. Thirdly, cognitive strand refers to the organization and contents of the talk. Lastly, social and emotion strand refers to working with others, listening and responding and confidence in speaking interaction. To effectively perform oracy skills, one needs be both a good speaker and a good listener.

Despite the importance teachers place on developing students' oracy, LKMco's research found there are barriers to them doing so (Millard and Menzies, 2016). A lack of time is the most common, cited by 31% of teachers. A quarter of respondents talked about avoiding oracy-based activities for fear of making shy or under-confident students uncomfortable. Consequently, the students who might potentially benefit most from such activities can miss out (Millard, W., & Gaunt, A. 2018).

### **Task-based language teaching (TBLT):**

TBLT considers a development from CLT in its principled and systematic incorporation of a focus on formal properties of the language, on one hand, and a return to CLT's conceptual foundations in its ability to bring together content, methodology and experience, on the other (Bygate & Samuda, 2008, p. 57).

According to Nunan (2005), TBLT is an approach for integrating skills. It enables students to comprehend, create, manipulate, or interact in the classroom. This approach typically necessitates real-world tasks in which students play key roles and apply the four skills; this allows them to explore the possibilities of communicating orally and comprehending the text in order to complete the task.

According to Ellis (2003), principles of the task-based language teaching are:

- Ensuring an appropriate level of task difficulty.
- Establishing clear goals for task-based lesson.
- Developing an appropriate orientation to performing the tasks.
- Ensuring that students adopt an active role in task-based lessons.
- Encouraging students to task risks.
- Ensuring that students are primarily focused on meaning when they program a task.
- Providing opportunities for focusing on form.
- Requiring students to evaluate their performance and progress.

Nunan (1989:48-49) explains these components as follows:

- **Goals:** are the broad general intentions that underpin any given learning task. They serve as a bridge between the task and the larger curriculum. Goals can refer to a variety of general outcomes (communicative, affective, or cognitive) or they can directly describe the behaviour of the teacher or learner.
- **Input:** refers to data that serves as the task's starting point. In fact, input for communicative tasks can come from a variety of sources.
- **Activities:** refer to the performance of a task based on goals and inputs.
- **Teacher's role:** entails being a facilitator, organiser, monitor, and sometimes a student's partner, whereas a student's role entails being communicators or conversational partners.
- **Settings:** refer to the classroom arrangements and forms of classroom organization specified or implied in a task,

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such as pair work, group work, and so on, and also require consideration of whether the task is to be carried out entirely or partially outside the classroom.

According to Willis (2012), task-based language comprises three steps in its structural framework. The first step is called the pre-task, the teacher raise the students' consciousness and introduce the students with the subject. The teacher explores the topic with the students, highlights useful words, phrases and helps them understand task instruction. Here the teacher may use of recording or text as a lead into a task. The second step is called task cycle, which includes three parts; tasks, planning and report. The last step is named language focus that has two parts; analysis and practice. When the analysis is undergoing, the students examine and then discuss specific features of the text or transcript of the recording, students can enter new words and phrases. Afterward, the teacher will conduct the practice of new words and phrases.

### **Studies related on developing oracy skills and task-based language teaching and:**

EL- Menshawy (2018) investigated the impact of using an integrative suggested strategy on developing the preparatory stage students' oracy skills. The study adopted the quasi experimental design. Participants were 60 third year preparatory school students in the academic year 2016-2017. They were assigned into two groups: experimental and control groups. The instruments were EFL oracy checklist, EFL oracy test. The study proved that there was a statistically significant difference between experimental group in the pre and post administrations of the oracy test in favor of the post administration results. According to the findings of the study, the integrative suggested strategy has a positive effect on improving oracy skills of preparatory stage students. The findings ensure the need for integrative suggested strategy as an intrinsic method in teaching oracy skills.

Unimuke, Felicia (2020) investigated the effect of concentrated language encounter method on developing oracy skills among primary school pupils in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. The quasi-Experimental design was adopted for the study. A group of 60 pupils comprising 30 pupils each for experimental and control group was used for the study. The experimental group was taught using concentrated language encounter method, while the control group received regular instruction. The instrument used in data collection was oracy test. The result of the findings revealed that, pupils exposed to concentrated language encounter method performed better in oracy skills than those who were not exposed to it.

El-Masry (2021) investigated the effect of using neuro-linguistic programming techniques in developing EFL secondary stage students' oracy skills through the use of neuro-linguistic programming techniques. Two groups: experimental and control groups. To achieve this aim, two instruments were used: (1) an oracy skills questionnaire; and (2) a pre-post oracy skills test. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design. The participants of the study consisted of sixty four students, scientific section, at El Sadat secondary School for boys, Sinbillawin Educational Directorate, Dakahlia Governorate. The results indicated that there were significant differences between the mean score of the post administration of the two groups in favor of the experimental group. In addition, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre and post administrations of the experimental group in favor of the post one. The study provided evidence that using neuro-linguistic programming techniques has had a positive effect on promoting the students' EFL oracy skills.

Noura (2015) investigated the effect of task-based approach on business students' writing skills. Results showed that the task-based approach improved the writing skills of the

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experimental in comparison to the control group that was taught using the regular teaching methodology.

Sarıçoban & Karakurt (2016) investigated using task-based activities to improve listening and speaking skills in EFL context at a state university in Turkey, school of foreign language. The participants were 56 in total, studying in the academic year of 2014–2015 Spring Fall. The instruments used for collecting data were 16 lesson plans and the speaking and listening quiz results as post-tests. The data were statistically analyzed by mean, max, and min values of the scores. The results of the study showed that task-based activities improved the listening and speaking skills of students in the experimental group.

Kheder (2017) investigated the effectiveness of task-based program in international legal English for developing law students' translation skills of legal texts. The findings of the study revealed that task-based language teaching was effective in developing law students' legal translation skills of the experimental group.

### **Method and Procedures of the research:**

#### **Design of the research**

The current study adopted the quasi – experimental design. Forty pupils were chosen and assigned to two groups, experimental and control, (20) pupils each. The experimental pupils received instruction through task-based learning strategy for developing their oracy skills. On the other hand, pupils in the control group received regular instruction. A pre-post oracy skills test were given to the two groups before and after the experiment.

#### **Participants of the research**

The participants included (40) pupils of primary stage pupils of males and females in (2022-2023) academic year from Qutb Diab2 primary school in Bahtit, Abu Hammed, Sharkia Governorate. They were chosen and assigned into two groups,

experimental (n=20) pupils and control (n=20) pupils. The participants were assumed to be a homogeneous group. As a result, they were expected to have a lot in common and not differ much in terms of experience or age.

In order to make sure that the development of some of the participants' oracy skills were attributed only to the effect of task –based learning strategy, the researcher controlled some variables between the experimental and control groups were equivalent.

These variables were: Age: all pupils ' age ranged from 12-13 years. Grade: all pupils were in sixth year primary school.

The oracy skills targeted in the current study were also controlled before the study experiment, as follows:

**Table (3)**

**The EFL oracy skills pre results of both groups**

Skill	Group	N	M	S.D	t-value
Overall EFL oracy skills	Control	20	15.50	1.80	14.2
	Experimental	20	16.40	1.45	

Table (3) shows that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups, t-value being (14.2). This shows homogeneity between the two groups. That is to say, the two groups were at almost the same level of performance in EFL oracy skills. This is to say,

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the two groups were at almost the same level of oral performance before experimentation.

### **The instruments of the research:**

The present research made use of the main tool:

#### **The pre-post oracy skills test to measure sixth year primary school pupil's oracy skills.**

- **Purpose:**

The purpose of the test was to assess the six year pupils' level in some oracy skills, before and after the study experimentation. The test was pre-administered to make sure that the pupils of the experimental and the control groups were at the same level before the experiment. It was post administered to investigate the task-based learning strategy effect on developing the selected oracy skills.

- **Sources:** The oracy test was designed in the light of the following resources:

- 1) The oracy skills checklist that was validated by the jurors.
- 2) Reviewing previous studies that are concerned with language tests, especially those assessing oracy skills.
- 3) Reviewing the oracy activities in the pupil's book "Time for English" and the teacher's guide.

- **Description:**

The participants of the study were sixth primary stage pupils. The test was designed and developed to suit the level of those participants. The test consisted of seven tasks measuring four dimensions of EFL oracy skills, namely, comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary and organizing information. The questions were adapted from the content of time for English: Pupil's Book and Workbook. The time of the test was estimated in the light of the time needed for answering the test questions and determining the correct answer. The final form of the test consists of twenty-three items; given thirty points designed for

evaluating some EFL oracy skills. See (Appendix D). Specifications of the oral communication test are shown in table (4).

**Table (4)**  
**Specification of oracy skills test**

No.	Oracy Skills	Number of Items	questions
1	Listening to class discussions.	4 items	Q1 (a)
2	Listening for specific information.	4 items	Q1 (b)
3	Pronouncing consonant sounds correctly.	3 items	Q2
4	Pronouncing vowel sounds correctly.	3 items	Q2
5	Inserting the correct vocabulary in multiple-choice sentences.	4 items	Q3 (a)
6	Selecting appropriate word form that convey the meaning.	4 items	Q3 (b)
7	Expressing information or knowledge.	1 item	Q4
8	Using correct forms of the target language to convey the meaning.		

- **Validity:**

To insure the test validity, it was submitted to a group of jury members who were specialists in TEFL. They were requested to judge the following points and make necessary changes:

- 1- Determining the difficulty of the items included in the test.
- 2- Clarity of the instruction.
- 3- Appropriateness of items to the target domain.

In the light of the jury members' modifications and results of piloting the test, the final version was designed. The test validity was determined by using SPSS program. It was estimated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Test validity} = 0.87$$

The value came as (0.87) and this indicated that it was valid.

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### - Test reliability:

For reliability, Cronbach's coefficient Alpha formula for internal consistency was used to compute the reliability of the test. Formula of Cronbach's Alpha was used to calculate reliability coefficient of the test. The test was measured by SPSS program the coefficient Alpha for the test was ( 0.87 ). This is a statistically significant value relating to reliability of the test as a whole. Therefore the test is considered a reliable one for the current study.

**Table (5)**

**Alpha Cronbach's coefficient stability for each question and the total score of the test.**

No	Dimensions Question	Alpha Cronbach's Coefficient
1	Comprehension skills	.84
2	Pronunciation skills	.83
3	Vocabulary skills	.86
4	Organizing information skills	.85
total	Total	.87

### - Piloting:

The test was piloted to a group of 10 pupils (not included in the participating group) to determine item analysis including item difficulty and discrimination and hence omitting unsuitable items. Results revealed that the majority of pupils obtained low scores; moreover, they reported that questions requiring inference were far more difficult than those whose answers were directly stated in the text. In addition, it was estimated that 90 minutes would provide participants time to complete the test. This time was estimated as follows:

The time taken by the ten pupils divided by ten.

$$\begin{aligned} 900 \div 10 \\ = 90 \text{ minutes} \end{aligned}$$

### - Scoring the test:

To ensure the reliability of scoring, one rater besides the researcher evaluated the 10 pupils. The test was scored by using

the oracy skills scoring rubric. When scoring the test, one point was given for each correct response to their response in the rubric. The total score of the test was 30 grade.

- **Test administration:**

In the light of the previous adjustments, the EFL oracy skills test was pre-administered at the beginning of the first-semester of the academic year 2022/2023. It was also post-administered at the end of the semester. The test content and instructions for each oracy skill task was explained clearly and orally for the pupils in order to avoid misunderstanding. The researcher sometimes had to use Arabic to explain some tasks for the participants in order to make sure that they understood.

**Procedures of the study**

To answer the study questions, the researcher adopted the following procedures:

1. Reviewing literature and previous studies related to:
  - a. Oracy skills.
  - b. Task-based learning to frame the study material.
2. Designing a checklist of EFL oracy skills targets for six-year primary stage pupils and validating it by a panel of jury members.
3. Designing a pre-post EFL oracy test based on the previous checklist of skills and validating it by a panel of jury members.
4. Planning and designing the activities (treatment sessions) based on the task-based learning strategy to develop the identified EFL oracy skills for the six-year primary school pupils.
5. Taking into consideration the following points:

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- a) Deciding the targeted objectives.
- b) Phrasing the session content.
- c) Defining the teacher's roles.
- d) Defining the learner's roles.
6. Selecting the study participations from six-year primary school pupils at Qutb Diab2 primary school and dividing them into two groups: The first is the experimental group and the second is the control group.
7. Pre – administering the EFL oracy test to both the experimental and control groups to identify the pupils' real standards concerning the oracy skills.
8. Implementing the task-based learning strategy sessions to the experimental group only aiming to develop their oracy skills at the same time, the control group taught by regular method.
9. Post-administering the EFL oracy test to both the control and experimental groups.
10. Comparing the results of the two groups to conclude the results.
11. Analyzing and treating data statistically to get the study results.

### **Data Analysis and Results of the research:**

#### **- The first Hypothesis**

It was hypothesized that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups in the post EFL oracy skills test results , in favor of the experimental group. To verify this hypothesis, t- test for independent samples was used to

compare the mean scores of the two groups. Results are presented in table (6):

**Table (6) Comparing the performance of the control and experimental groups on the post-administration of the oracy test**

Skills	Test	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t. value	def.	Sig
Comprehension	Control	20	4.8	0.87	27.3	19	0.05
	Experimental	20	6.2	1.03			
Pronunciation	Control	20	3.4	0.69	24.6	19	0.05
	Experimental	20	5.5	1.05			
Vocabulary	Control	20	2.8	1.40	23.5	19	0.05
	Experimental	20	6.4	2.30			
Organizing information	Control	20	4.4	1.80	24.8	19	0.05
	Experimental	20	6.3	2.60			
Overall EFL oracy skills	Control	20	15.6	3.60	26.9	19	0.05
	Experimental	20	24.3	4.90			

\*\*Significant at (0.05)

Table (4) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the control and the experimental groups in favor of the experimental group in the post administration of the EFL overall oracy skills and its sub-skills, where t-values were, (29.6) for overall oracy skills, (27.3) for Comprehension, (24.6) for Pronunciation, (23.5) for Vocabulary, (24.8 ) for organizing information, which are all significant at (0.05). So, the first hypothesis was validated. In the light of these results, the experimental group showed a clear superiority over the control one in the total score of the test. This means that task-based learning strategy had developed EFL oracy skills more than the regular teaching.

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### - The second Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and the post EFL oracy skills test administration, in favor of the post EFL oracy skills test administration. The t-test for paired samples was used to compare the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the EFL oracy test before and after administering task-based learning strategy. Results are as shown in table (7):

**Table (7)**

**Comparing the oracy performance of the experimental group on the pre –post administration of the oracy skills**

Skills	Test	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t. value	def.	sig
Comprehension	Pre	20	4.5	0.94	4.9	19	0.05
	Post	20	6.2	1.1			
Pronunciation	Pre	20	3.4	1.09	5.3	19	0.05
	Post	20	5.05	0.78			
Vocabulary	Pre	20	4.5	0.89	6.2	19	0.05
	Post	20	6.4	1.04			
Organizing information	Pre	20	4.2	0.95	5.7	19	0.05
	Post	20	6.3	1.1			
Overall EFL oracy skills	Pre	20	16.4	1.45	29.8	19	0.05
	Post	20	24.3	2.26			

\*\*Significant at (0.05)

Table (7) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre and the post of the experimental group in favor of the post ones, where t-values were, (29.8) for overall EFL oracy skills, (4.9) for Comprehension, (5.3) for

Pronunciation, (6.2) for vocabulary, (5.7) for organizing information: which are all significant at (0.05) level. So, the second hypothesis was validated. Such findings have proved that the task-based learning strategy has a positive effect on developing the pupils' EFL oracy skills.

**- The third Hypothesis**

It was hypothesized that " The task –based strategy has a positive effect on EFL Oracy Skills ". Cohen's (1988) equation was used to verify this hypothesis as shown in table (8):

**Table (8)**

**The effect size of the TBL on EFL oracy skills**

Skills	Test	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t. value	def.	Effect size
Comprehension	Pre	20	4.5	0.94	4.9	19	0.83
	Post	20	6.2	1.1			
Pronunciation	Pre	20	3.4	1.09	5.3	19	0.84
	Post	20	5.05	0.78			
Vocabulary	Pre	20	4.5	0.89	6.2	19	0.82
	Post	20	6.4	1.04			
Organizing information	Pre	20	4.2	0.95	5.7	19	0.80
	Post	20	6.3	1.1			
Overall EFL oracy skills	pre	20	16.4	1.45	29.8	19	0.86
	post	20	24.3	2.26			

\*\*Significant at (0.05)

The effect was measured through Cohen's equation .As indicated in table (8), the effect sizes of the experimental group in the post oracy test were higher than those of the pre-ones, where the effect sizes were (.86) for overall oracy skills, (.83) for comprehension, (.84) for pronunciation, (.82) for vocabulary

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and (.80) for organizing information, all these values were significant at 0.05. Therefore, this hypothesis was confirmed. These differences can be attributed to the task-based learning strategy. According to the findings of Cohen's formula, the percentage (.86) indicates that task-based learning strategy had a positive effect on improving the exp-participants' EFL oracy skills.

### **Results of the study:**

- 1) The experimental group outperformed the control group in the EFL oracy skills test.
- 2) The post administration exceeded the pre one in the means of scores of the EFL oracy skills test.
- 3) The Task-Based learning strategy has a positive effect on developing the primary school pupils' oracy skills.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the results of the present study, the following can be recommended:

- EFL Curriculum designers should pay attention to the effectiveness of task-based learning in developing English Language in general and EFL oracy Skills in particular.
- EFL Curriculum designers should pay attention to emphasize the importance of EFL oracy Skills in all the educational stages to achieve fruitful gains in the following stages.
- An EFL teacher should be able to create a setting that actively supports learners' development of spoken language skills.
- Development of EFL oracy is critical because most aspects of education involve some form of verbal communication, such as conversations, inquiries, or instruction.
- EFL teachers need to work hard to face the challenges of employing communicative methods, which improve the

teaching and learning process and simplify the acquisition of new abilities.

- EFL teachers should use more communicative tests to develop learners' oracy skills.
- Task-based language teaching should adhere to certain principles so that EFL teachers understand how to implement tasks effectively and how learners are guided to work on the tasks.
- EFL teachers should be controllers, organizers and change their regular methods in teaching EFL oracy skills.
- EFL teachers should also be aware of the types of tests that are most convenient to the assessed content.
- There is a serious need to develop EFL oracy skills. In EFL programmes, oracy skills development is crucial.
- Teaching should be turned from the teacher-centered to the learners-centered approach to be involved in an effective learning environment.
- It is recommended that learners should be given many activities to do while listening.

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