



Fostering communicative competence: a task-based approach to public speaking materials development

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ABSTRACT

While ample studies have explored the creation of task-based materials to enhance the English proficiency of university students, there has been limited research on how such materials can be tailored to promote university students' public speaking competence. This paper presents findings from a research and development (R&D) study aimed at refining English teaching materials using a task-based approach to bolster university students' public speaking abilities. The study was conducted in the English Language Department at a public university in Medan and followed the R&D model by employing a multi-phase methodology. Initially, a needs analysis was carried out using a questionnaire to gather student data, focusing on their learning needs and preferences for public speaking skill development. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics to identify key trends. Based on the findings, task-based public speaking materials were developed, featuring structured debates, role-plays, and presentations that encouraged students to engage in real-world speaking tasks. These materials aimed to cultivate both linguistic and strategic competencies necessary for effective public speaking in academic and professional contexts. The materials were then validated through expert evaluation to ensure content accuracy, alignment with public speaking objectives, and pedagogical relevance. Following validation, the materials were piloted in the classroom, and qualitative feedback was collected from both the lecturer and students through interviews and surveys. The validation process confirmed the practicality and effectiveness of the task-based materials. Additionally, both the lecturer and students reported positive outcomes, noting significant

improvements in the students' public speaking competence and increased engagement due to the real-world relevance of the tasks.



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INTRODUCTION

Although public speaking courses are widely included in university curricula, traditional public speaking materials often fail to address the comprehensive communicative competencies required in today's dynamic communication landscape. Many existing materials focus narrowly on linguistic proficiency, neglecting essential 21st-century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability in diverse speaking contexts (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011). This gap creates a disconnect between conventional teaching approaches and the skills students need to succeed in academic and professional settings (Lucas, 2011). Consequently, current public speaking materials often do not sufficiently prepare students for real-world communicative demands, where effective communication involves fluency and the ability to engage, persuade, and respond thoughtfully.

Therefore, in higher education, where students are preparing for academic and professional success, it is essential to incorporate pedagogical approaches that meet the communicative requirements of the 21st century (Barrett & Golubeva, 2022; Kulp, 2018; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). One such approach is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which has become an engaging and learner-focused method in language pedagogy. TBLT aligns well with the demand for 21st-century skills, emphasising real-world implementation of language skills through meaningful tasks, fostering practical language use and communicative competence (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007).

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been highly effective in a range of language learning contexts (Huang, 2024; Van den Branden, 2006; Waluyo & Wangdi, 2024), yet studies exploring its specific impact on enhancing university students' public speaking abilities remain scarce (Al-Tamimi et al., 2020; Boonma & Swatevacharkul, 2020). Research (Azizifard, 2024; Hasnain & Halder, 2024) indicates that TBLT can significantly improve communicative competence by providing learners with realistic, interactive tasks that promote meaningful language use. Yahya's (2019) study on Malaysian undergraduates, for example, provides strong empirical support for using TBLT to enhance public speaking skills and communicative competence. By engaging students in tasks like presentations and debates, the study demonstrated notable improvements in fluency, confidence, and motivation to speak in English. Furthermore, Yahya observed that TBLT fostered a supportive environment, boosting students' willingness to communicate. Yahya's findings suggest that TBLT can be a powerful tool for developing the communicative

competence needed in academic and professional settings. By integrating TBLT into public speaking instruction, educators can better address the communicative challenges students face in the 21st century.

This research seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the development of TBLT-based public speaking materials tailored for university students. Integrating TBLT principles into public speaking education can provide a more authentic and engaging learning experience (Al-Tamimi, 2014; Guerrero et al., 2020; Ji, 2014). By integrating materials that reflect 21st-century communicative competence, this study seeks to boost students' communication abilities across academic, professional, and social settings (Richards, 2008).

The rationale for this research is grounded in recognising that the development of public speaking skills has often been overlooked in traditional English language curricula, which prioritise grammatical accuracy and written proficiency over oral communication skills (Nunan, 2004). Traditional public speaking courses often focus primarily on rhetorical structures and formal delivery, neglecting effective communication's interactive and real-world nature (Brown & Yule, 1983; Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1994; Goh & Burns, 2012).

Public speaking courses at Indonesian universities have not yet achieved a level that fosters communicative competence (Hapsari et al., 2021; Sugiyati & Indriani, 2021; Werdiningsih & Mukminatien, 2023) and are often linked to ineffective teaching materials (Hakim & Abidin, 2018). These materials tend to be traditional, focusing mainly on linguistic competence, and fail to support the development of communicative skills necessary for academic and professional success. Based on the researcher's observations, this problem is evident among English Language Education students at the State University of Medan. Preliminary data indicated that they relied on traditional learning materials for public speaking, leading to student boredom and reluctance to participate. This finding underscored the need for learning materials that prioritise 21st-century communicative competence. In order to develop the expected materials, this study followed a structured process beginning with a needs analysis to identify students' specific learning requirements. Questionnaire data revealed a strong preference among students for materials that enhance public speaking skills. Experts then designed and validated task-based materials, confirming their practicality and soundness. Both lecturer and students provided positive feedback, noting the materials' effectiveness in improving public speaking abilities.

The significance of this study extends beyond the immediate academic context. Graduates with strong public speaking and communication skills are better positioned to navigate a competitive job market, collaborate in interdisciplinary teams, and contribute meaningfully to societal discourse (Collins, 2014; Dwyer & Davidson, 2021; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Thus, the impact of this research extends to the broader goals of higher education, including academic excellence and the holistic development of students as effective communicators and global citizens (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011). Moreover, the study acknowledges university students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. TBLT, by design, accommodates this diversity, allowing for personalized learning experiences that consider individual learner needs (Ellis, 2003). The materials developed through this research will be

contextually and locally relevant, promoting inclusivity and catering to university settings' linguistic and cultural diversity (Tomlinson, 2016).

In summary, this study addresses a critical gap in public speaking education by integrating TBLT principles into the development of materials specifically designed to enhance university students' communicative competence. The materials aim to improve students' fluency, confidence, and ability to adapt to different audiences and settings through task-based activities that encourage active participation, meaningful interaction, and real-world practice. This approach offers a more practical and targeted method of building the comprehensive public speaking skills essential for academic and professional success in the 21st century. Through this research, we hope to provide significant insights into the realm of language pedagogy, ultimately benefiting students and educators alike in their pursuit of communicative competence in the modern era (Grieve et al., 2021; Hancock et al., 2010; Quinn & Goody, 2019).

METHOD

Research Design

This research utilised the Research and Development (R & D) approach proposed by Dick et al. (2008). The R & D framework is well-suited for developing educational materials, emphasising an iterative process of creating, testing, and refining products. This model was chosen for its systematic approach to creating educational interventions, ensuring that the developed materials are theoretically sound and practically effective.

The study involved an English lecturer and an intact class of 25 English Language Education students enrolled at a state-owned university in Medan. The lecturer, a seasoned professional in teaching public speaking, offered important perspectives on the instructional needs and contextual realities of the classroom. The students were selected because they were third-year students representing typical learners preparing for careers where public speaking and communicative competence in English are crucial. These students participated in various stages of the research, providing data on their needs, experiences, and the effectiveness of the developed materials.

Instruments and procedures

The study comprised five main stages: Needs Analysis, Design, Development, Validation, and Evaluation. Each stage was carefully executed to ensure the creation of effective task-based public speaking materials. The needs analysis stage was guided by the model outlined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and aimed to determine the learners' specific needs regarding public speaking skills. The needs analysis classifies learners' needs into target needs (necessities, lacks and wants) and learning needs. The researcher distributed a questionnaire to the 25 students to gather this information. Designed on a 5-point Likert scale, the 14-item questionnaire investigated the extent to which

students need to master target skills (i.e. English and public speaking skills), to what extent they lack material support to achieve these skills, their expectations of what they hope to achieve after using the new material, and the strategies they believe would help them learn these skills. The questionnaire was validated through expert review to ensure its relevance and clarity in assessing students' needs for this study (see Appendix A). To ensure comprehension, the questionnaire was administered in Indonesian.

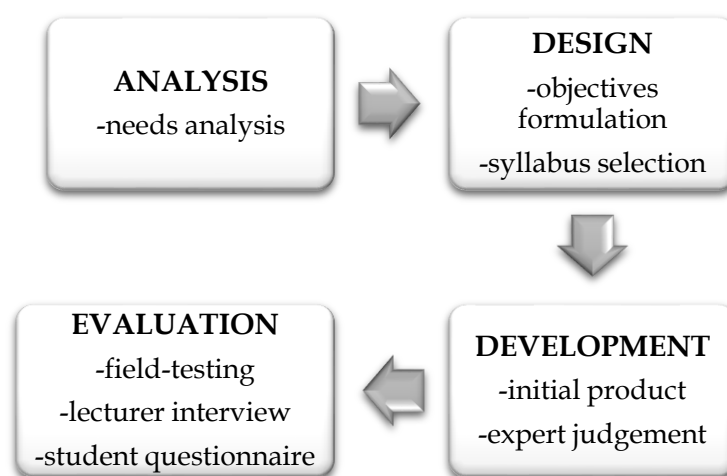


Figure 1. Research and Development Model, adapted from Dick et al. (2008)

A task-based approach called Task Generator (Willis & Willis, 2007) was chosen as the primary paradigm for designing teaching materials. This approach emphasises the creation of tasks that promote meaningful communication. Drawing on the needs analysis results, task-based lessons were designed to address the students' needs for mastering public speaking skills. These tasks involved communicative, collaborative, critical-thinking, problem-solving, and creative activities around a single topic, giving students plenty of chances to communicate in the target language. The tasks were crafted to be engaging and relevant to the students' interests and future professional needs. Real-world scenarios and topics were selected to ensure students could relate to and benefit from the activities. For practical purposes, the tasks included individual speeches, group presentations, impromptu speaking exercises, and peer feedback sessions.

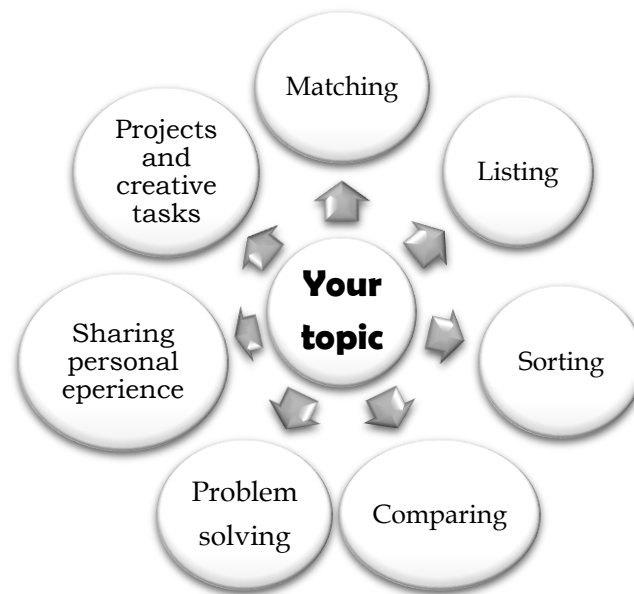


Figure 2. Task Generator, adapted from Willis and Willis (2007)

The development stage followed Nation and Macalister's (2010) framework of syllabus design, focusing on three aspects: content, presentation, and assessment. The existing textbook materials were adapted to align with the new task-based syllabus. Key differences included presenting each topic using seven task types to encourage practical communication in English, providing meaningful activities to develop 21st-century communicative skills, and shifting assessment from grammatical correctness to successful task completion. This stage involved creating detailed lesson plans, instructional materials, and assessment tools. Each task-based activity accompanied a detailed lesson plan outlining objectives, procedures, materials needed, and assessment criteria. Teaching materials like handouts, presentation slides, and audio-visual aids were developed to support the instructional process. Assessment Tools such as rubrics and feedback forms were created to evaluate students' performance in public speaking tasks. These tools were designed to provide specific, actionable feedback to help students improve.

The validation stage involved reviewing the developed materials by two experts working at a state-owned university. One expert was a senior English lecturer with over 20 years of experience developing English materials. The other expert was an experienced English lecturer in public speaking education. While we recognise the importance of involving experts in learning models and R&D design, only two experts were involved in this stage due to practical constraints. However, their expertise in English materials development and public speaking education provided valuable insights for validating the task-based materials. Validation focused on four areas:

language, process, content, and layout. The experts provided feedback on linguistic accuracy, pedagogical effectiveness, alignment with the identified needs, and material clarity. Their suggestions were incorporated to refine and improve the materials before field testing.

The evaluation stage consisted of field-testing the developed materials in the classroom, administering a student questionnaire, and conducting an interview with the lecturer. The field-testing followed a case study design, focusing on in-depth observation and analysis of the implementation of task-based materials in an actual classroom setting. This design provided insights into the practical application of the materials and their impact on student learning. In practice, the task-based activities were implemented in an intact class of 25 students. The regular lecturer was asked to teach three self-selected lessons using the new materials. Observations of these lessons were conducted to document the lecturer's implementation of the task-based materials, student engagement and attitudes towards the lessons, and the alignment of the materials with the intended learning outcomes. An observation checklist and a video recorder were used to record interactions during the lessons.

Following the field-testing phase, students were given an attitude questionnaire containing 15 closed-ended questions to rate their experiences on a Likert scale. The questionnaire session, which lasted for 20 minutes, aimed to gather students' feedback on the usefulness, enjoyment, and engagement of the materials and their perceived improvement in public speaking skills. Additionally, an interview was conducted with the lecturer who implemented the materials in the classroom. The semi-structured interview focused on the lecturer's observations regarding student engagement, the appropriateness of the materials for the course objectives, and suggestions for improvement. This 30-minute interview provided in-depth insights into the effectiveness of the materials and any observed improvements in students' public speaking skills.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a thorough assessment of the developed materials. Quantitative analysis of the student questionnaire data (i.e. needs analysis and post-lesson questionnaires) was conducted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were determined to encapsulate the students' needs for the material development and their feedback on the developed materials. Qualitative data from classroom observations and the lecturer interview were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. The classroom interactions and interviews were transcribed and then coded to identify recurring themes and patterns. The coding process involved categorising the data into meaningful units and

developing a coding scheme based on the research objectives. Narrative interpretations were constructed to describe the findings, illustrating how the materials were used in practice and their impact on students' learning. The qualitative data helped triangulate the quantitative results, offering a more detailed understanding of how effectively the task-based materials enhance public speaking skills.

In conducting the study, the researcher adhered to ethical guidelines to safeguard the rights of the participants. Both the lecturer and the students signed consent forms stating that they understood the study requirements and had the right to cancel their participation at any point. The researcher preserved confidentiality by anonymising the data and using pseudonyms in reporting findings.

This study employed a thorough research and development process, ensuring that the developed task-based public speaking materials were theoretically grounded, practically relevant, and rigorously evaluated. Integrating quantitative and qualitative data analysis offered a comprehensive insight into the materials' effectiveness and identified areas for improvement.

FINDINGS

In this section, the study findings are presented in several key areas: the needs analysis, the materials creation and validation, and the lesson implementation and evaluation.

Need Analysis

The research began with a needs analysis to understand the students' perspectives on their learning needs and evaluate their program's existing English language and public speaking materials. The analysis highlighted that a significant majority of students recognised English language proficiency and public speaking skills as essential for their future academic and professional success (overall mean = 4.82). Students clearly understood that these skills would enhance their ability to engage in academic discussions, present research, and communicate effectively in professional environments. Students broadly agreed on the necessity to revise the current textbook to better support the development of English language and public speaking skills (overall mean = 4.74). They reported that the existing materials did not promote practical application and real-life communication. There was a strong consensus that the students wanted to improve their English and public speaking abilities after learning the new materials (overall mean = 4.82). This feedback underscores the importance of aligning educational resources with students' needs and expectations.

Most students strongly concurred on the significance of learning public speaking through materials that provide opportunities for both receptive

skills (listening, reading, and viewing) and productive skills (speaking, writing, and presenting). They preferred resources that encouraged active participation and real-life communication tasks. Students broadly agreed on the value of materials that promote 21st-century English competencies (i.e. communication, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, product creation, and innovation (mean = 4.75). In addition, most of the students acknowledged the need for an education that prepares them for the communicative demands of the modern world, where public speaking skills are increasingly essential (overall mean = 4.79).

The analysis showed unanimous agreement among students with the Likert scale statements regarding their target and learning needs, indicating a highly positive response towards the development of new materials aimed at enhancing proficiency in the English language and public speaking. This strong endorsement reflects the students' enthusiasm and readiness for improved learning resources.

Table 1. Student's needs analysis results (n=25)

Necessities	Mean	SD
Q1	4.84	0.37
Q2	4.80	0.41
<i>Overall</i>	4.82	0.39
Lacks	Mean	SD
Q3	4.72	0.46
Q4	4.76	0.44
<i>Overall</i>	4.74	0.45
Wants	Mean	SD
Q5	4.80	0.41
Q6	4.84	0.37
<i>Overall</i>	4.82	0.39
Learning Needs for 21st Century and Language Skills	Mean	SD
Q7	4.72	0.46
Q8	4.72	0.46
Q9	4.80	0.41
<i>Overall</i>	4.75	0.44
Learning Needs for Public Speaking Skills	Mean	SD
Q10	4.80	0.41
Q11	4.72	0.46
Q12	4.80	0.41
Q13	4.80	0.41
Q14	4.84	0.37
<i>Overall</i>	4.79	0.41

The insights gained from the needs analysis questionnaire guided the materials development process, ensuring the new materials addressed these needs effectively. The outcome of this materials development process was a teaching book designed specifically with task-based activities to enhance students' public speaking skills. This book utilised seven different task types aimed at providing a comprehensive and engaging learning experience.

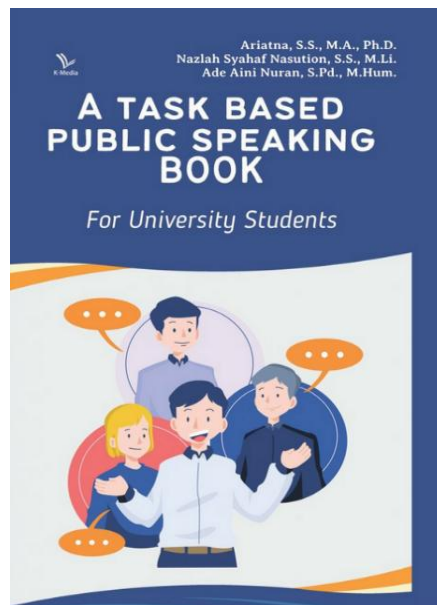


Figure 3. *The developed materials*

Expert assessment

Once the teaching book was created, it underwent a thorough validation process involving two experts in English language teaching and materials development. The validation focused on several key aspects, including linguistic suitability, engagement potential, content relevance, and the layout and visual appeal of the book. The validation data showed a broad agreement between the two experts regarding the developed teaching materials, with an average judgment percentage exceeding 90%.

Table 2. Expert evaluation scores

N o	Expert	Number of Criteria	Maximum Score	Obtained Score	Percentage
1	Lecturer 1	28	140	130	93%
2	Lecturer 2	28	140	132	94%
Overall				131	93.5%

Both experts agreed that the materials were appropriate for university students, considering their language proficiency and academic needs. The tasks were designed to challenge students while remaining within their capability to succeed, thus providing an optimal learning experience. The experts noted that task-based activities are inherently engaging and motivating for students. They highlighted the interactive nature of the tasks, which encourages active participation and sustained interest. The experts found the content highly relevant to the students' lives and future professional contexts. The activities were crafted to reflect real-life scenarios, thereby preparing learners for practical communication challenges. This relevance was seen as a key factor in encouraging learners to engage with the materials and enhance their public speaking competence. The experts were unanimous in their positive evaluation of the book's layout. They commended the well-organized structure, appealing topic visualisation, appropriate font selection and sizes, well-structured page settings, and the use of relevant pictures. These elements contributed to a user-friendly and visually attractive resource that students would likely find enjoyable to use.

Classroom implementation

Following the expert validation, the task-based materials were revised based on feedback and then implemented in a classroom setting. This field-testing phase was instrumental in evaluating the effectiveness of the task-based public speaking materials in a real classroom setting. The implementation phase took place at a state-owned university in Medan with an intact class of 25 students taught by a regular English lecturer. The field testing spanned three weeks and focused on three lessons: Lesson 2 on Artificial Intelligence, Lesson 6 on E-commerce, and Lesson 12 on Education.

The observations showed that the lecturer was adept at implementing the task-based lessons. In Lesson 2 on Artificial Intelligence, for example, the lecturer employed task-based activities that included personal storytelling and discussion sessions. At the beginning of the lesson, the lecturer initiated a storytelling activity where students shared personal experiences related to technology. This task was successful in engaging students and prompting them to use language creatively. Following the lecturer's initiation, one student narrated a story about her experience with a chatbot, which led to a lively discussion about the benefits and limitations of artificial intelligence in daily life. In short, observations revealed that the lecturer confidently guided students through the activities, prompting them to reflect on and articulate their thoughts about the impact of artificial intelligence on various aspects of life.

Another key element of the classroom interactions noted by the researcher was the students' responses to the task-based lessons. As the field notes showed, students reacted positively to the task-based lessons, and they demonstrated active engagement in the tasks. The tasks were designed to be engaging and relevant, and students responded well to the interactive nature of the activities. For instance, during the group discussions in Lesson 6 on E-commerce, students eagerly participated in brainstorming sessions and shared creative ideas for their e-commerce business plans. In addition, the debates in Lesson 12 saw students passionately defending their viewpoints and engaging in constructive arguments. In general, the observational data indicated that the lecturer successfully implemented the lessons and that there was a favourable reaction from the students to the task-based materials.

Lecturer and student views

To triangulate the classroom observation results, the researcher conducted an interview with the lecturer at the end of the study. An in-depth interview with the lecturer provided additional insights into the effectiveness of the materials. The lecturer noted several key benefits, which include student engagement, opportunities for practice, relevance and practicality, and suggestions for improvement. Speaking of student engagement, the lecturer stated that the task-based activities were highly engaging and stimulated students to take an active role in the classroom. The interactive tasks created a dynamic learning environment where students felt comfortable practising their public speaking skills. The lecturer, for example, commented on Lesson 12:

"In the Education lesson, students discussed different education systems. The debate activity was effective and lively as students exchanged arguments about online learning versus traditional classrooms with enthusiasm."

With regard to practice time, the lecturer stated that the tasks provided ample opportunities for students to practice organising their thoughts, delivering presentations, and participating in discussions and debates. These activities helped them build the necessary skills for effective public speaking, such as clarity, coherence, and confidence. The lecturer highlighted the importance of these opportunities for skill development, stating:

"Lesson 2 on Artificial Intelligence was useful in giving students many opportunities to improve their public speaking skills. After the first presentation, students participated in a Q&A session and responded to questions from their friends. This helped them practice both prepared and impromptu speaking, two important skills for public speaking."

The lecturer also highlighted the relevance of the tasks to real-world situations. This practical focus helped students see the value of what they were learning and how it applied to their future academic and professional contexts. The lecturer, for instance, explained how the task-based materials connected classroom learning with real-world scenarios:

"In the lesson on E-commerce, students participated in a simulated business meeting where they presented innovative online business ideas. The task was not only interesting but also relevant to the students' future careers, especially for those interested in entrepreneurship or marketing."

While the overall feedback was positive, the lecturer suggested some minor adjustments further to tailor the materials to the students' needs. These suggestions included adding more examples and providing additional support for lower-proficiency students. The lecturer noted:

"The tasks were good, but for some students, especially those with lower English skills, they had difficulties. It would be helpful to give more examples so they know what to do. Also, giving simpler instructions or helping them with key phrases could make it easier for them to join the activities."

At the end of the interview, the lecturer expressed her intention to continue using task-based materials in the future to teach public speaking due to its educational benefits.

The student attitude questionnaire provided valuable insights into students' feelings and ideas towards the task-based materials (see Appendix 1). The results showed that students' responses were largely positive regarding the usefulness of these materials in improving their English language and public speaking skills. A significant majority of students reported that the task-based materials were beneficial in enhancing their English language skills (overall mean = 4.77). This aligns with the initial needs analysis, which highlighted the importance of practical, real-life communication practice. Most students also agreed that the task-based materials helped them develop their public speaking skills (overall mean = 4.80). This is a crucial finding, as it validates the primary objective of the materials development project. The questionnaire also explored students' enjoyment and comfort levels while using the task-based materials. The vast majority of students found the tasks enjoyable and reported feeling comfortable while learning English through these materials (overall mean = 4.91). This is an important aspect, as enjoyable learning experiences can significantly enhance student motivation and participation. Students expressed highly favourable responses to task engagement items. They generally agreed that the task-based materials were at the right level of

difficulty and provided ample opportunities to participate in task-based activities (overall mean = 4.78). In the main, the students were supportive of the developed materials. This positive feedback reinforces the efficacy of task-based language teaching in fostering communicative competence and public speaking skills.

Table 3. Students' opinions on the developed materials (n=25)

Usefulness (21st century and language skills)	Mean	SD
Q1	4.72	0.46
Q2	4.76	0.44
Q3	4.80	0.41
Q4	4.72	0.46
Q5	4.76	0.44
Q6	4.84	0.37
<i>Overall</i>	4.77	0.43
Usefulness (public speaking skills)	Mean	SD
Q7	4.80	0.41
Q8	4.76	0.44
Q9	4.84	0.37
Q10	4.84	0.37
Q11	4.76	0.44
<i>Overall</i>	4.80	0.41
Enjoyableness	Mean	SD
Q12	4.92	0.28
Q13	4.88	0.33
Q14	4.92	0.28
<i>Overall</i>	4.91	0.30
Engagement	Mean	SD
Q15	4.76	0.44
Q16	4.80	0.41
<i>Overall</i>	4.78	0.42

DISCUSSION

This section reviews the results of the study in relation to existing literature and expert opinions. The discussion focuses on the necessity of modern learning materials that emphasise communicative competence, particularly in the context of public speaking, and evaluates the feasibility of the task-based approach in addressing this need.

The observational data obtained from preliminary observations indicated that English Language Education students at the State University of Medan relied heavily on traditional learning materials for public speaking. These materials focused primarily on language accuracy and formal delivery, leading to student boredom and reluctance to participate actively in class

activities. This finding is congruent with earlier research highlighting the limitations of traditional learning materials in fostering communicative competence and dynamic interaction. Traditional learning materials typically emphasise rote memorisation, repetitive exercises, and formal language structures, which do not engage students in meaningful communication (Richards, 2006; Thornbury, 2005). Studies by Nunan (2004) and Brown (2007) have shown that such materials often fail to stimulate student interest or promote active participation, leading to disengagement and lack of motivation. The current study's findings corroborate these earlier studies, suggesting that traditional approaches are inadequate for developing the dynamic and interactive skills required for effective public speaking. In their research, Littlewood (1981) and Harmer (2007) argue that traditional materials often neglect the communicative aspects of language learning, focusing instead on grammatical accuracy and structured practice. This focus can create a learning environment that is perceived as dull and uninspiring by students, thereby hindering their motivation and engagement. The present study supports these conclusions, highlighting the need for materials that promote a more dynamic and engaging educational journey.

The first phase of the research involved conducting an extensive needs analysis to understand the students' perspectives on their learning requirements. The significance of evaluating learners' needs in English language teaching has been underscored by numerous educational researchers and material developers. For instance, Astika (1999), Long (2005), and Tzotzou (2014) have all highlighted the critical role that needs assessment plays in effectively designing and implementing instructional materials and strategies. The needs analysis results showed that most of the students believed that mastering English language and public speaking skills is crucial for their future careers and academic pursuits. This finding is in agreement with prior research that emphasizes the significance of communicative competence in the modern world. For instance, Chau (2024) underscores the importance of communicative competence in various career fields. Barrett and Golubeva (2022) argue that mastery of communication skills is key to success in the 21st century, highlighting the need for educational materials that develop these skills.

The students' consensus on the need to enhance their current textbook to better support their language and public speaking skills is consistent with findings from previous research. For example, studies have shown that traditional textbooks often fail to provide sufficient opportunities for interactive and communicative practice, which are essential for developing communicative competence (Harmer, 2007). Richards and Rodgers (2014) note that traditional materials often focus on language accuracy and formal delivery, which can lead to student boredom and reluctance to participate.

The new public speaking materials developed in this study were designed to prioritize communicative competence and provide opportunities for meaningful interaction, addressing these limitations.

Most students strongly supported the idea of learning English public speaking through resources that allow for both receptive and productive language use. This finding supports the basic tenets of task-based language teaching (TBLT), which stress the importance of real-world tasks to promote authentic language use (Ellis, 2003). By integrating tasks that necessitate students' participation in both receptive and productive activities, the new materials aimed to provide a balanced approach to language learning. The students' agreement on the importance of materials that enhance 21st-century skills further supports the relevance of TBLT. Evidence suggests that TBLT improves language proficiency while also fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills (Ariatna et al., 2023; Long, 2015). The students' strong support for materials that promote these skills corroborates Menggo et al.'s (2019) finding that a majority of students in their survey study wanted 21st-century skills to be incorporated into their English language materials to better develop their communicative competence.

By and large, the findings reflect a highly positive response towards the development of materials aimed at improving English language and public speaking skills. Research by Dörnyei (2001) highlights the importance of motivation in language learning. Materials that engage students and make learning enjoyable are more likely to motivate them and improve their language proficiency. The strong student support for the new materials indicates that they recognised the potential benefits of a more interactive and dynamic approach to learning public speaking.

The experts' evaluations revealed that the developed book received an average score of 93.5%. This finding is consonant with other studies on public speaking materials development reporting a high level of practicality (e.g. Adhwani, 2018; Hakim & Abidin, 2018; Handayani & Prasetyo, 2022). The experts' agreement on the linguistic suitability of the materials aligns with established language education principles. Richards and Rodgers (2014) emphasise the importance of materials that are linguistically appropriate for the learners' proficiency level. The experts' validation suggests that the materials are well-suited for university students, ensuring that the language used is both challenging and accessible. In addition, the validation data confirming the materials' appropriateness for university students underscores their potential to facilitate both comprehension and language production.

The experts noted that task-based materials are engaging and motivating for students. This finding is supported by TBLT studies, which highlight the role of tasks in establishing a dynamic and interactive classroom setting. Willis and Willis (2007) argue that tasks promote active student

participation and increase motivation by providing meaningful contexts for language use. The experts' feedback is congruent with this perspective, suggesting that the materials successfully encourage students to engage in learning.

Both experts responded positively to the relevance of the content to students' lives. Tomlinson (2011) emphasises that materials should be relevant to learners' experiences and interests to maximize engagement and learning outcomes. The experts' concurrence on the content's relevance indicates that the materials were designed with the students' real-world needs and interests in mind, enhancing their applicability and effectiveness. In the context of public speaking, relevance is particularly important. Thornbury and Slade (2006) argue that public speaking tasks should reflect real-life situations to prepare students for authentic communication. The task-based materials developed in this study incorporate topics pertinent to students' academic and professional lives, thereby increasing their relevance and potential impact.

The experts' consensus on the book's layout, including well-organized and appealing topic visualisation, appropriate font selection and sizes, well-structured page settings, and relevant pictures, is supported by principles of instructional design. According to Nunan (2004), well-designed materials should be visually appealing and logically organised to facilitate learning. The experts' positive feedback on the layout and design of the materials indicates that these aspects were carefully considered, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the materials. In public speaking, visual aids and well-structured materials can significantly enhance the learning experience. Lucas (2011) highlights the importance of visual aids in supporting and enhancing verbal communication. The well-designed layout and relevant pictures in the task-based materials developed in this study likely contributed to their effectiveness by providing visual support and making the content more accessible and engaging for students.

Observations demonstrated that the lecturer was capable of teaching task-based lessons, confidently leading students through the activities. This finding is congruent with the TBLT tenets, highlighting the vital role a teacher has in facilitating and guiding students through tasks (Ellis, 2019). It was also found that the students reacted favourably to the lecturer's implementation of tasks. Carless (2007) found that teachers who are well-prepared and confident in their approach are more likely to create a positive learning environment that fosters student engagement and participation. The observations in this study support this view, indicating that the lecturer's expertise was instrumental in the effectiveness of the task-based activities.

To support the observational data, an interview session with the lecturer was carried out to explore her attitude towards the task-based

materials. The lecturer stated that the task-based activities were highly engaging and inspired students to actively participate in classroom activities. The effectiveness of task-based activities in engaging students and improving their language skills has been widely documented. Ellis (2003) argues that tasks provide a natural context for language use, promoting meaningful communication and enhancing language acquisition. The lecturer's feedback on how the task-based materials engaged students and their efficacy confirms Ellis's findings, indicating that tasks are an effective method for developing communicative competence. In the context of public speaking, engagement is particularly important. Luoma (2004) emphasises that engaging tasks can reduce anxiety and increase students' willingness to participate in speaking activities. The lecturer's feedback on student engagement supports this perspective, suggesting that the task-based materials effectively created a supportive and motivating environment for public speaking practice.

The lecturer praised the relevance and practicality of the developed materials, noting that they were ideally tailored to the students' academic and professional needs. This finding is supported by Long (2015), who contends that materials should be relevant to learners' experiences and interests to maximise engagement and learning outcomes. Long goes on to say that real-world tasks offer students incidental language learning opportunities and enhance the possibility that skills acquired in the classroom will be applicable in genuine situations. The task-based materials in this research incorporated topics that are pertinent to students' lives, thereby increasing their relevance and potential impact. In public speaking education, relevance is particularly important. Thornbury and Slade (2006) argue that public speaking tasks should reflect real-life situations to prepare students for authentic communication. The materials developed in this study addressed topics such as artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and education, which are highly relevant to the students' academic and professional aspirations. The lecturer's feedback confirms that the relevance of the materials contributed to their effectiveness in enhancing students' public speaking skills.

Despite the overall positive feedback, the lecturer suggested some minor adjustments to further tailor the materials to the students' needs. These suggestions included incorporating more examples and providing additional support for lower-proficiency students. This feedback is congruent with the principle of differentiated instruction, which emphasises the need to adapt materials and teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners (Tomlinson, 2001). Earlier studies have pointed out the significance of scaffolding for lower-proficiency students in task-based learning. Ellis (2003) suggests that teachers should provide clear instructions, modelling, and feedback to help students successfully complete tasks. The lecturer's suggestion to add more examples and support reflects this principle,

indicating that minor adjustments can further enhance the practicality of the developed materials.

At the end of the interview, the lecturer expressed her intention to continue using task-based materials in the future to teach public speaking due to its educational benefits. This endorsement highlights the perceived value and effectiveness of the task-based materials developed in this study. The lecturer's intention to continue using the materials suggests that they are sustainable and have the potential for long-term impact on students' public speaking skills. This finding is supported by research on the long-term benefits of TBLT. Nunan (2004) argues that task-based approaches can lead to sustained improvements in language proficiency by offering learners continuous chances to engage with language in meaningful situations. The lecturer's positive feedback and intention to continue using task-based materials indicate that the materials developed in this study have the potential to make a lasting impact on students' communicative competence.

Following the lecturer interview, students were provided with a questionnaire to assess their views on the created task-based materials. The questionnaire data revealed that students had a very positive response to the task-based materials, particularly noting their usefulness in enhancing English language skills. A significant majority indicated that these materials were effective in improving their English proficiency. This result supports TBLT premises stressing the value of tasks in providing meaningful and context-rich learning experiences that promote language acquisition (Ellis, 2003). Van den Branden et al. (2007) maintain that tasks that mirror everyday communication can notably improve language acquisition. The positive student feedback in this study suggests that the task-based materials helped advance English language skills by providing relevant and engaging learning activities.

Most students concurred that the task-based materials aided in the development of their public speaking abilities. This finding agrees with prior research underscoring the success of task-based methods in enhancing speaking skills. Ji (2014) emphasises the role of speaking tasks in developing both fluency and accuracy, offering students chances to hone their speaking skills in relevant situations. Bao and Kirkebæk (2013) found that language tasks were instrumental in building their students' confidence in speaking. Thornbury and Slade (2006) argue that public speaking tasks should encourage spontaneous and creative language use. The task-based materials in this study included activities that promoted critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, all essential for effective public speaking. The students' positive feedback indicates that these tasks successfully supported their development of public speaking skills.

The majority of students found the tasks enjoyable and felt comfortable learning English through these materials. This finding is corroborated by earlier studies. Mukminatien (2004) and Rohani (2013) documented that engaging and enjoyable tasks can significantly enhance students' motivation, leading to increased participation and better learning outcomes. Willis and Willis (2007) assert that tasks should be designed to be enjoyable and motivating, as this may contribute to a more positive and effective educational journey. The students' feedback in this study suggests that the task-based materials successfully created an enjoyable learning environment, contributing to their overall effectiveness in enhancing language skills. The students' comfort with the developed materials indicates that the task-based activities were effectively designed and appropriate for their proficiency levels. Research by McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) highlights the importance of materials that are tailored to the learners' needs and levels. Materials that are too difficult can lead to frustration, while those that are too easy can result in boredom. The positive feedback in this study suggests that the task-based materials struck the right balance, providing an appropriate level of challenge that kept students engaged and comfortable.

In the main, students were supportive of the developed materials, with mean scores above 4.0 in all categories indicating generally favourable reactions. The supportive feedback from students suggests that the task-based materials were successful in enhancing their English language and public speaking skills. This result is consonant with earlier studies that underscore the advantages of task-based approaches in language learning. Van den Branden (2006) argues that TBLT can lead to sustained improvements in language proficiency by giving learners ongoing chances to apply language in authentic situations.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to enhance an existing textbook to better develop the public speaking skills of university students majoring in English language education. It followed a methodical and structured process to ensure thoroughness and accuracy. The initial phase involved conducting a comprehensive needs analysis to identify the specific learning requirements and preferences of the students. This analysis was achieved through the distribution of questionnaires, which provided valuable data on student preferences. The findings from the questionnaires revealed that there was a strong preference among students for educational materials that specifically support the development of public speaking skills.

Utilizing the information gained from the needs analysis, the researcher embarked on the formulation and creation of task-based materials aimed at enhancing the public speaking abilities of the students. These

materials were carefully crafted to address the identified needs and preferences, ensuring that they were both relevant and engaging for the students. Once the materials were developed, the next phase involved seeking expert validation. This step was crucial to assess the practicality and pedagogical soundness of the materials. Two educational experts were consulted to review the task-based materials. The validation process confirmed that the materials were well-designed and practical for use in educational settings. The experts noted that the materials provided a robust foundation for teaching public speaking, and their practical design ensured they could be effectively implemented in language classrooms.

The final phase of the research involved field-testing the task-based materials in actual classroom settings to evaluate their effectiveness from both the lecturer's and students' perspectives. Feedback was collected from lecturers who used the materials in their teaching, as well as from the students who engaged with the materials during their classes. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, with both groups noting that the developed materials were highly effective in enhancing students' public speaking skills. Lecturers appreciated the practicality and educational value of the materials, while students found them engaging and beneficial for their learning.

Overall, this research demonstrated that the carefully designed and validated task-based materials were successful in meeting the educational needs of students and effectively improving their public speaking skills. The structured process of needs analysis, expert validation, and field testing ensured that the materials were both practical and pedagogically sound, providing a valuable resource for language education in the university's English Education Study Program.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that this study faces several limitations. First, since the study was limited to a single public university in Medan, the applicability of the results to other educational settings or student groups may be constrained. Subsequent studies could benefit from including a more diverse range of institutions and student demographics to strengthen the external validity of the results. Second, the field-testing phase, while providing valuable insights, was conducted over a relatively short period. This limited timeframe may have restricted the depth of feedback and longitudinal assessment of the materials' impact on students' long-term public speaking skills development. Future studies could consider longer-term evaluations to capture sustained benefits. Third, the reliance on self-reported data from student and lecturer feedback forms could result in response bias, i.e. a condition in which participants give answers they consider socially acceptable or overestimate the benefits of the task-based materials. Future studies could employ mixed-methods approaches or objective measures to triangulate findings and mitigate potential biases. Last

but not least, the development and implementation of task-based materials relied on available resources within the university setting. Limitations in funding, time, or technological support may have influenced the depth and breadth of material development and implementation strategies. Future research could explore optimal resource allocation for enhancing task-based learning experiences.

In spite of the shortcomings mentioned above, the study provides a number of educational benefits. This study offers local lecturers valuable insights and practical guidance on integrating task-based approaches into public speaking education. By demonstrating how task-based materials effectively improve students' public speaking skills, lecturers can adopt similar methodologies to create engaging and impactful learning experiences. This approach not only enriches teaching practices but also aligns with contemporary pedagogical trends aimed at fostering communicative competence among students. Policymakers in the field of education can leverage the findings of this study to consider adopting task-based approaches in curriculum development and educational policies. By promoting the use of task-based materials that prioritise practical communication skills, policymakers can contribute to the holistic development of students' linguistic and interpersonal competencies. This study advocates for educational reforms that emphasise active learning strategies tailored to address the evolving demands of language pedagogy. For researchers working in language education and curriculum design, this study provides a robust framework for conducting similar investigations. The structured approach involving needs analysis, expert validation, and field-testing of materials serves as a model for designing and evaluating educational interventions. Future research endeavours can build upon these methodologies to explore variations in task-based learning designs, investigate longitudinal effects, or compare the efficacy of different task types across diverse student populations.

In conclusion, this study not only contributes to enhancing public speaking skills among university students but also aligns with the existing curriculum and objectives within the English department. By developing materials that complement the current syllabus, this study ensures that task-based public speaking activities integrate seamlessly into established course frameworks. The findings offer practical implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to enrich language education practices and outcomes. Emphasising task-based approaches, this research highlights the potential of innovative teaching methodologies to prepare students for effective communication in academic and professional contexts.

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