

Which works better for speaking? Task-based vs. cooperative role-playing in vocational EFL contexts

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ABSTRACT

Speaking proficiency in the vocational high school context is often hindered by a range of challenges. Learners frequently experience anxiety, possess limited vocabulary, encounter difficulties in collaborative interaction, and demonstrate reluctance to speak in front of their peers. Consequently, students provide minimal verbal responses due to concerns about making errors or facing negative evaluation. This study aims to compare the effectiveness of task-based role-playing (TBRP) and cooperative role-playing (CRP) in improving students' speaking skills. A quasi-experimental design was employed involving 69 eleventh-grade students from a tourism service program at a vocational high school in Yogyakarta. The participants were divided into an experimental group TBRP and a control group CRP. Data were collected through pretest and posttest assessments and analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test in SPSS version 22 due to non-normal data distribution. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($p < 0.05$), indicating that students taught through TBRP achieved greater improvement in speaking performance compared to those instructed using CRP. The results imply that task-based role-playing, which emphasizes meaningful tasks, contextual language use, and active learner engagement, is more effective in fostering communicative competence. Additionally, the results may not be as applicable to larger educational environments or other vocational programs due to the relatively small sample size and its confinement to a vocational high school. Future research is recommended to use more rigorous designs, such as randomized controlled trials, and to use a bigger and more varied sample to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

Keywords: communicative competence; cooperative role-play; speaking skills; task-based role-play; vocational EFL

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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency has become a crucial competence in vocational high schools, where language skills are directly linked to employability, in the context of globalization and increasing workforce mobility. English is positioned as a compulsory subject in vocational high schools aimed at developing students' communicative competence. The learning outcomes emphasize students' ability to use English in

functional communication across personal, social, academic, and vocational contexts, particularly in preparing them for workplace interaction and professional communication. Students are expected to demonstrate functional communicative competence to interact with international clients and perform job-related tasks in the tourism service program of a vocational high school. For authentic communication and meaningful language use, pedagogical approaches become important in the setting of teaching English.

Speaking is the most complex and challenging to develop among the four language skills. These skills are interconnected, and their effective development requires instructional methods that accommodate all four elements (Nan, 2018). Speaking necessitates both language proficiency and the capacity for communicative situations. Speaking ability is shaped by multiple linguistic components, particularly vocabulary mastery, grammatical competence, and sentence structure, which collectively influence learners' ability to produce accurate and meaningful communication (Christianty & Tauran, 2026; Suciati & Nur'aini, 2026). However, many vocational students face persistent challenges in developing speaking proficiency, including limited vocabulary, low confidence, and a high level of anxiety. These challenges often result in passive classroom participation and limited opportunities for meaningful communication.

In addition to task-based language teaching (TBLT), role-playing activities are well known for being a successful tactic for developing speaking competence. Role play allows learners to stimulate real-life situations, providing opportunities for contextualized language use and interaction. Through role play, students can practice speaking in a setting with fewer worries, which may lead to a rise in assuredness and improved communicative performance (Angelica & Wulandari, 2025). Role-play improved pronunciation and vocabulary and significantly enhanced students' speaking achievement (Maulana & Lolita, 2023). Although prior studies have separately confirmed the efficacy of TBLT and role-playing independently, limited investigation has examined task-based role-playing as an integrated approach. The integration of task-based principles into role-playing activities, referred to as task-based role-playing (TBRP), offers a promising approach to enhance students' speaking skills by engaging them in purposeful and contextually relevant communication.

In addition, cooperative learning approaches, including cooperative role-playing (CRP), encourage learners to share duties collaboratively, share responsibilities, and encourage one another in constructing meaning through interaction (Slavin, 1980). Although both task-based and cooperative role-playing are widely used in EFL classrooms, their effectiveness has been examined separately rather than comparatively. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence on which approach is more effective in improving students' speaking performance. Moreover, most studies focus on general EFL contexts, with little attention to vocational high schools, particularly in tourism settings that require context-specific communicative skills. In addition, there is a lack of comparative and experimental research providing strong statistical evidence on instructional effectiveness.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to compare the effectiveness of TBRP and CRP in enhancing students' speaking skills in a vocational EFL context. Specifically, it examines statistically significant differences in speaking performance between students taught using TBRP and those instructed through CRP, employing a quasi-experimental design to provide empirical evidence on which approach works better for speaking. This study contributes both theoretically and practically to language education. Theoretically, it provides comparative evidence on the integration of task-based learning and role-playing strategies in speaking instruction. Practically, the findings offer insight for teachers in vocational settings in selecting effective instructional approaches, highlighting that TBRP is a relevant alternative for enhancing students' workplace-oriented communication skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Task-based language teaching and speaking skill development

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been widely recognized as a learner-centered approach that promotes meaningful communication through authentic tasks (East, 2023; Ellis et al., 2020). Recent studies consistently highlight its effectiveness in improving speaking skills by emphasizing real-world

language use rather than isolated grammar instruction. For instance, research demonstrates that TBLT enhances learners' fluency, confidence, and interaction in communicative authentic situations (Nayak & Patel, 2023). A quasi-experimental study found that students taught using TBLT showed significant improvement in speaking in contrast to those instructed by traditional means (Sari et al., 2025). However, despite these positive findings, several studies also point out implementation challenges, including limited instructional time, varied student proficiency, and the need for careful task design to ensure meaningful interaction (Mulyanah et al., 2018).

Task-based language teaching helps learners develop a natural feeling for the language so they can speak and interact without thinking. Learners pick up knowledge about how the language is structured and how it's used by doing real tasks, instead of just following direct instructions. Ellis (2003) says that task-based learning helps students use their current abilities, which supports their language growth by applying what they already know. In addition, it helps students focus on achieving a clear goal, where language is used as a tool and its proper use becomes very important. Students can speak well only if they have enough knowledge about language and also know things from their own experiences and background. However, just knowing something isn't enough for good communication unless students do different kinds of speaking activities. A task is an activity where students work with provided information to reach a specific goal, and teachers can watch and help along the way (Prabhu, 2004).

One thing that makes a task special is that students use the language skills they already know to complete it. From the viewpoint of task-based learning, tasks help give students a clear purpose and situation to learn in, encouraging them to use their language skills as they work on the given activities (Ellis, 2003). Nunan (2003) highlights the move away from old, repetitive language exercises towards a teaching approach that focuses on real communication and interaction. Language learning should focus on both speaking smoothly and using words correctly. Students should practice by talking in real situations, such as acting out roles or pretending to be in different scenarios. It is also important to understand the parts of language that help in speaking, like grammar and vocabulary. Nunan (2003) also suggests that teaching should mix planned language exercises with chances for students to speak freely and talk with others, which helps improve their speaking abilities better.

Role-playing as a pedagogical strategy in EFL speaking

Role-playing has emerged as a complementary strategy to TBLT, particularly in enhancing students' speaking competence through simulation of real-life communication. Role-play allows learners to engage in contextualized interaction, which can reduce anxiety and increase confidence in speaking (Angelica & Wulandari, 2025; Maldin & Sianipar, 2025). These activities not only improve fluency but also help students develop pragmatic competence and situational language use.

In addition, role play supports affective factors in language learning. Studies report that students feel more engaged and less anxious when participating in interactive and collaborative speaking activities, particularly when tasks are aligned with their future professional contexts (Lestari et al., 2025). Role play allows students to practice speaking in contextual and meaningful situations, thereby increasing fluency and confidence (Rahmawati, 2025). Moreover, role play is an interaction-based learning model that fosters active student participation and communication (Doğantan, 2020). According to previous studies, pupils' speaking abilities significantly increase when they engage in role-playing exercises. For example, a quasi-experimental study found that learners learn through role-playing achieved significantly higher speaking performance compared to those instructed using conventional methods (Eppendi, 2016).

It has long been acknowledged that role-play is an efficient way to learn languages and enhance students' speaking skills through contextual and experiential learning. It promotes active participation, builds confidence, and improves students' ability to express ideas in communicative situations (Angelica & Wulandari, 2025; Fiani & Nahak, 2025). In line with the concept of learning by doing, role play provides real-life simulations that align with the communicative goals of language instruction. Furthermore, the integration of task-based role play offers more focused and purposeful interaction

by engaging students in practical tasks such as giving directions or ordering food, thereby strengthening language use in authentic contexts (Abdulla et al., 2023). Nevertheless, existing studies often examine role play as a general strategy without distinguishing between different types or models of role-playing, such as task-based versus collaborative role play. This limitation reduces the ability to ascertain which particular strategy works best for improving speaking abilities.

Integration of TBLT and role-playing in vocational contexts

Recent studies have started to investigate the integration of TBLT and role-play, particularly in vocational education, where communication skills are closely linked to workplace demands. Role-play is considered a form of social interaction as it involves communication between learners in simulated real-life contexts. Through role-play activities, students use language to interact, respond to others, and adapt their communication based on specific social situations, thereby enhancing their communicative competence, social awareness, and confidence (Lahbib & Farhane, 2023; Maulana & Lolita, 2023). In such contexts, task-based role-playing provides (TBRP) opportunities for students to engage in simulated professional scenarios, such as customer service interactions. Job interviews and technical explanations (Lisa et al., 2025).

Findings indicate that this integrated approach enhances not only linguistic competence but also workplace readiness. Students report that task-based speaking activities are more relevant and meaningful because they reflect real-world communication needs (Mawaddah, 2025). Moreover, task-based role-play encourages active participation and collaborative learning, which are essential for developing communicative competence. In TBRP, students are assigned to complete communicative activities, i.e., hotel check-in procedures, restaurant interactions, providing information, and handling customer service scenarios. These activities enable learners to develop practical English skills for everyday and professional contexts while enhancing their confidence in authentic communication (Abdulla et al., 2023).

Figure 1

Task-Based Role Play

CARD-1	CARD-2
You are a customer	You are a clerk
- You are looking for gifts for two people - Your father and a friend - Ask for the varieties of gifts - Ask for suggestions - Ask for the prices/discount - Ask him/her to wrap the gifts - Thank him/her	- Offer the help to customer - Inform him/her what is on sale today - Suggestions: A bottle of perfume for father, a pair of shoes to a friend - Price details - Guide him to the bill desk - Thank him/her for the shopping

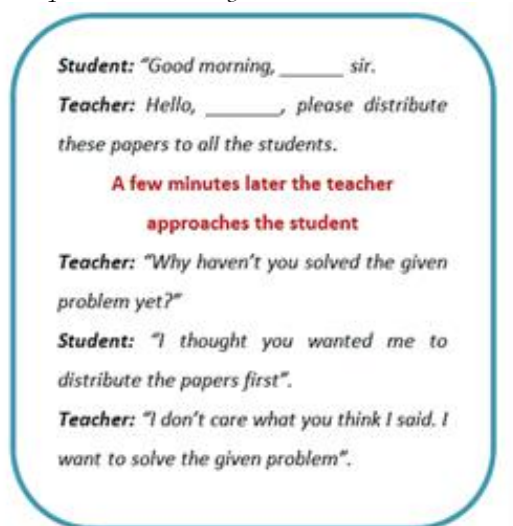
Cooperative role-playing means working together to achieve a common goal. For example, students plan a farewell party for their teacher by discussing various preparations, such as inviting the principal and other teachers, creating a food list, and dividing tasks. In this role-play, each student plays a supportive role and collaborates. Activities like this are highly beneficial for shy students, as they help them feel more comfortable and strengthen relationships within the group, as mentioned by Abdulla et al. (2023).

Cooperative learning and role-playing

Cooperative role-playing (CRP) integrates role-playing activities with principles of cooperative learning, where pupils cooperate to complete common problems. It emphasizes interaction, shared responsibility, and the collaborative creation and acknowledgment through discussion and peer support (Gillies, 2016; Gilles, 2023). In language learning contexts, cooperative learning has been

shown to create a supportive environment that reduces speaking anxiety and promotes active participation, enabling learners to build confidence and engage more effectively in communicative tasks (Anshar et al., 2024; Meilasari et al., 2023).

Figure 2
Cooperative Role-Play



The implementation of role-play typically follows a structured sequence consisting of four main stages: preparation, enactment, reflection, and follow-up. In the preparation stage, teachers define learning objectives, select relevant scenarios, and assign roles to students. During the enactment stage, students perform role-play activities based on given instructions, while the teacher facilitates and monitors interaction. The reflection stage involves debriefing and discussion, enabling learners to evaluate their performance and develop awareness of their communicative and social skills. Finally, the follow-up stage includes feedback and further skill development through more complex tasks.

This structured procedure supports active learning by encouraging learners to participate, reflect, and improve their performance through iterative practice. As a result, role-play improves communication skills and promotes teamwork, critical thinking, and social competence in language learning contexts (Sato & Ballinger, 2016).

METHOD

Research design

The study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental design, specifically a non-equivalent control group pre-test-post-test design, to examine the effect of the task-based role-playing (TBRP) model on students' speaking proficiency. This design was selected due to the impracticality of random assignment in the school setting while still allowing for comparison between groups. Such designs have been extensively applied in EFL speaking research to evaluate instructional interventions through pre-test and post-test measures (e.g., experimental vs. control groups), allowing researchers to assess learning gains systematically (Abdulaal et al., 2022).

Two intact classes were assigned as research groups: one as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The experimental group was treated using the TBRP model, while the control group received instruction through the cooperative role-play model. Both groups were administered pre-tests and post-tests to measure changes in students' speaking performance. The design of the study can be illustrated as follows (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Table 1*Research Design*

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O1	X1 (Task-Based Role Play)	O2
Control	O1	X2 (Cooperative Role Play)	O2

This research was implemented at a vocational school. This school served as the research location due to its accessibility, curriculum alignment, and relevance to the study's vocational focus. The implementation period spanned two weeks. The population was eleventh-grade students from the tourism service program. Two intact classes were selected using purposive sampling, considering schedule feasibility, teacher coordination, and similarity in prior academic achievement (Akanbi et al., 2022). The sample consisted of XI ULW 1 as the control group, $n=35$, and XI ULW 2 as the experimental group, $n=34$. The sample of the population was 69 pupils.

Research instruments

A speaking test was utilized as the main tool, and it was given as a pretest and a posttest. The test required students to perform role-play tasks based on contextualized vocational scenarios. Students' speaking performance was assessed using an analytic scoring rubric covering fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension. Analytic rubrics are recommended in EFL speaking assessment because they allow detailed evaluation across multiple dimensions of speaking ability and improve diagnostic feedback (Limgomolvilas & Sukserm, 2025). Recent studies emphasize that speaking assessment is inherently subjective; therefore, structured rubrics and clearly defined criteria are essential to ensure fairness and consistency in scoring (Bijani et al., 2022).

Experts examined the tool to guarantee content validity in English language teaching. Additionally, inter-rater reliability was established by involving two independent raters. Ensuring reliability is crucial in performance-based assessment, as scoring inconsistency may affect the accuracy of results (Sureeyatanapas et al., 2024).

Data collection procedure

There were four phases to the process of collecting data. First is the preparation stage, where development of lesson plans, speaking tasks, and scoring rubrics was carried out. Second was the pre-test administration. A pre-test was conducted to measure speaking proficiency. Pre-test procedures are essential in quasi-experimental research to establish equivalence between groups (Abdulaal et al., 2022). Next is the treatment implementation. Here, TBRP was implemented for the treatment group, emphasizing meaningful tasks and real-life communication; a cooperative role play then was used to another group. Task-based instructional approaches have been widely recognized for promoting communicative competence by engaging learners in authentic interaction and goal-oriented language use (Sarabi et al., 2024). The last was an administration in which, after the treatment, both groups completed a post-test using comparable tasks and the same rubric to measure improvement.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum score) were calculated to summarize students' speaking performance. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption testing was conducted; the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess data normality. Levene's Test was used to examine homogeneity of variances. When data are not normally distributed, non-parametric tests are recommended, as they provide more robust statistical interpretation in educational research (Li et al., 2022). Therefore, the following tests were applied: Wilcon Signed-Rank test to compare pre-test and post-test scores within each group, and Mann-Whitney U Test to compare post-test scores between groups. The level of significance was set at $p<.05$.

FINDINGS

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with purposive sampling to select participants. The sample consisted of two groups: an experimental group comprising 34 students from class XI ULW 2 and a control group consisting of 35 students from class XI ULW 1.

Data were collected through pre-test and post-test speaking assessments in the form of role-play tasks. The experimental group was instructed using the TBRP, while the control group received instruction through the CRP method. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption tests were conducted to examine the suitability of the data for statistical analysis. These included tests of normality and homogeneity, followed by non-parametric tests, namely the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test and the Mann-Whitney U test.

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution, which is a prerequisite for selecting appropriate statistical procedures. In this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed. The null hypothesis (H_0) stated that the data were normally distributed and was accepted when the significance value exceeded 0.05. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) indicated that the data were not normally distributed and was accepted when the significance value was below 0.05. The results of the normality test are presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2

Normality Test

Grouping	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Pre-Test Experiment Class	.211	8.089	.001
Post-Test Experiment Class	.233	7.431	.000
Pre-Test Control Class	.137	10.07935	.092
Post-Test Control Class	.173	8.58844	.009

Based on the results presented in [Table 2](#), the data did not fully meet the assumption of normality across all variables. Only the pre-test scores of the control group showed a significance value above the threshold of 0.05 ($p=0.92$), indicating that this dataset was normally distributed. In contrast, the remaining datasets yielded significance values below 0.05, suggesting deviations from normal distribution. Therefore, non-parametric statistical tests were considered more appropriate for subsequent data analysis.

In addition, a homogeneity test was conducted using Levene's Test to examine the equality of variances between the experimental and control groups. This test serves as an important preliminary step in determining whether the assumptions required for parametric analysis are satisfied. According to the decision criterion, a significance value greater than 0.05 indicates that the variances are equal (homogeneous), whereas a value below 0.05 suggests unequal variances. The results of the homogeneity test are presented in [Table 3](#) and were used to inform the selection of appropriate statistical procedures in the subsequent analysis.

Table 3

Homogeneity Test

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest and Post-test (experiment class and control class)	Based on Mean	.65	1	67	.800
	Based on Median	.088	1	67	.767
	Based on Median and adjusted df	.088	1	66.980	.767
	Based on trimmed mean	.028	1	67	.867

The result of Levene's test showed a significance value of $p=0.800$, which exceeds the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the assumption of equal variances between the experimental and control

groups was satisfied, and the data can therefore be considered homogeneous. Establishing homogeneity is important as it supports the validity of the comparisons between groups by ensuring that observed differences are not attributable to unequal variance.

To address the issue of non-normally distributed data, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test, a non-parametric statistical procedure, was employed. This test is appropriate for comparing two related samples when the assumption of normality is not met and serves as an alternative to the paired-samples t-test. In this study, it was used to examine the significance of differences between pre-test and post-test speaking scores within each group. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Experiment Class	Negative ranks	0 ^a	.00	.00
	Positive ranks	34 ^b	17.50	595.00
	Ties	0 ^c		
	Total	34		
Control Class	Negative ranks	0 ^d	.00	.00
	Positive ranks	21 ^e	11.00	231.00
	Ties	14 ^f		
	Total	35		

The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test indicate that no decreases in score were observed in either group following the intervention. Instead, a number of students demonstrated improvement in their post-test performance. Specifically, 34 students in the experimental group and 21 in the control group showed increased scores. These findings suggest a positive change in students' speaking performance following the instructional treatments. The detailed results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Test Statistics Wilcoxon Test Result

	Experiment Class	Control Class
Z	-5.099b	-4.075b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000

The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test indicate that both the experiential and control groups demonstrated statistically significant improvements, with significance values of $p < .05$ (reported as $p = .000$ in SPSS output). This finding suggests a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores within each group.

To further examine differences between groups, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed. This non-parametric test is appropriate for comparing two independent samples when the assumption of normality is not met. In this study, it was used to compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups following the different instructional treatments. The results of the Mann-Whitney U analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Mann-Whitney U Test

	Score
Mann-Whitney U	289.500
Wilcoxon W	919.500
Z	-3.705
Sig.	.000

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicated a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups, with a significance value of $p < .05$ (reported as $p = .000$ in SPSS output. This finding suggests that the two groups differed significantly following the implementation of the respective approaches.

DISCUSSION

The research compared an experimental group ($n=34$) and a control group ($n=35$) from a vocational high school setting to assess the effects of TBRP on students' speaking abilities to the CRP model. Speaking performance was assessed across four components: comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (Brown, 2004). Non-parametric statistical tests were used since the data did not fully satisfy normality assumptions to analyze differences within and between groups. This provides more robust and reliable results for small samples or non-normally distributed data. (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Furthermore, the adoption of a quasi-experimental design with intact classroom groups reflects common practice. Such designs are particularly suitable for examining instructional interventions in authentic classroom settings while maintaining ecological validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

These results indicate that both instructional approaches produced significant gains in students' speaking performance from pre-test to post-test, and that the post-test scores of the two groups also differed significantly, with the task-based role-play (TBRP) group showing the larger improvement.

This pattern suggests that anchoring role-play in a clearly defined communicative task gives learners a concrete goal that structures their language use and sustains their engagement in negotiating meaning, converting interaction into measurable speaking gains more efficiently than open-ended interaction alone. Cooperative role-play, by contrast, appears to support speaking development mainly through the encouragement and reduced anxiety that group work affords rather than through an explicit communicative goal, which may explain why its gains, though real, were comparatively smaller.

Taken together, the improvement observed within both groups and the sharper gain for the TBRP group point to a common explanation: an explicit task structure sharpens the communicative purpose of role-play and amplifies its instructional value beyond what unstructured cooperative interaction alone can provide, a pattern consistent with usage-based accounts of task-based language teaching (Ellis et al., 2020).

The findings of the study indicate that implementation of the TBRP was associated with greater improvement in students' speaking performance compared to the cooperative role play approach. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed statistically significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores in both groups, suggesting that both instructional approaches contributed to students' speaking development. However, the experimental group demonstrated comparatively higher gains, indicating the potential advantage of task-based instruction in facilitating speaking proficiency.

TBLT enhances learners' fluency, accuracy, and complexity by encouraging authentic language use and interaction. In the context of role play, the integration of structured tasks provides clearer communicative objectives and promotes more focused language production, which may explain the higher gains observed in the treatment sample.

The result is consistent with recent perspectives on TBLT that emphasize the role of meaningful, goal-oriented tasks in promoting communicative competence. Task-based approaches encourage learners to use language for authentic purposes, thereby enhancing fluency, interaction, and pragmatic language use (Anagnostopoulou et al., 2023)

Furthermore, the results of the Mann-Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the experimental and control groups, supporting the relative effectiveness of the TBRP Model. It is in line with current empirical research showing that task-based instruction contributes to improvements in speaking fluency, accuracy, and complexity (Cuesta & Fernández, 2022). The structures and outcome-driven nature of TBRP may provide clearer communicative goals and more focused language practice compared to less structured approaches, as task-based instruction

emphasizes the completion of meaningful tasks, real-world communication, and performance-based outcomes (Chunliu & Guangsheng, 2025).

Despite these positive findings, the results demonstrated measurable improvement in using cooperative role-playing. This suggests that collaborative learning environments can still support speaking development, particularly by fostering peer interaction and social engagement (Ha et al., 2022). However, such approaches may lack the explicit task structure and performance objectives that characterize TBLT, which are considered crucial for maximizing language learning outcomes (Ellis et al., 2020).

From a methodological perspective, using non-parametric tests (Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney U) was suitable, employed that normality assumption was not fully met. Non-parametric methods are widely recommended when data violate parametric assumptions, as they do not require normal distribution and are more robust for analyzing ordinal or non-normally distributed data (Şimşek, 2023). The consistency of significant findings across both within-group and between-group analyses strengthens the credibility of the results.

Cooperative role-playing (CRP) contributed to improvements in students' speaking skills, although its impact was less than TBRP. This can be attributed to the maturity of CRP, which emphasizes collaborative interaction, shared responsibility, and a supportive learning environment. Through group work, students are able to assist one another, reduce speaking anxiety, and build confidence in communication. This finding is aligned with cooperative promotes active participation even support language development through interaction (Gillies, 2016).

However, the relatively lower effectiveness of CRP may be due to its limited task structure. While it encourages interaction, CRP does not always ensure that communication is goal-oriented. In contrast, task-based approaches such as TBRP provide more structured and meaningful activities, enabling more effective communication and language use. Therefore, integrating task-based principles into CRP is recommended to enhance its effectiveness in developing students' speaking skills (Guo et al., 2026).

CONCLUSION

The research set out to compare the efficacy of task-based role-playing (TBRP) and cooperative role-playing (CRP) to improve vocational high school students' speaking skills. The results showed that both teaching strategies improved students' speaking abilities; however, TBRP demonstrated a significantly greater impact. It is highlighted that TBRP promotes active participation, authentic language use, and higher learner engagement, which are essential for improving speaking proficiency in EFL contexts. In conclusion, the findings are particularly relevant to vocational education, where students are required to develop practical communication skills aligned with real-world and workplace demands. Therefore, TBRP can be considered a more effective and contextually appropriate alternative to conventional or less structured role-playing practices in promoting students' speaking development. When evaluating the results, it is important to take into account many limitations of this study; internal validity may be limited by using a quasi-experimental method without random assignment since possible preexisting discrepancies between experimental and control groups could not be completely controlled. In addition, the results may not be as applicable to larger educational environments or other vocational programs due to the relatively small sample size and its confinement to a single vocational high school. Future research is therefore recommended to use more rigorous designs, such as randomized controlled trials, and use a bigger and more varied sample to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings. Further studies should cooperate more detailed assessment framework and consider longitudinal approaches to examine sustained learning outcomes. Exploring qualitative or mixed-methods design may also provide deeper insights into learners' experiences, including motivation, anxiety, and engagement, while the integration of technology-enhanced environments offers promising direction for future pedagogical innovation.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT:

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