

## IMPROVING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATES BY MINIMIZING L1 INTERFERENCE USING TASK-BASED TEACHING METHOD

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Most of the Sri Lankan graduates undergo various rigors due to their inability to communicate effectively in English. Although there are many reasons for this recurrent issue, out-dated teaching methods play a vital role as they demotivate the students and diminish their enthusiasm in learning English. Task-based teaching method, according to many research done by a number of scholars around the globe, has been proven to be successful in helping L2 learners to efficiently acquire English compared to traditional teaching methods. In the present study, the researcher has chosen a sample of 46 second year undergraduates (2014/2015) who had been following the degree Tourism and Hospitality Management offered by the Faculty of Management Studies of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This particular sample was selected as many visible errors could be identified in their spoken English although these undergraduates are needed to be equipped with effective English communication skills when they enter their carrier paths. The main objective of this study was to find out the effectiveness of the task-based teaching method in improving English speaking skills of undergraduates by minimizing the L1 interference. As for the methodology of the study, the researcher has used a pre-test and a post-test by subjecting the students to deliver impromptu speeches on given topics. These tests were to compare their improvement after applying task-based teaching method for three months. During the pre-test the researcher could identify various errors in the English speaking due to L1 interference of these subjects such as substitution of /f/ for /p/ and vice versa, substitution of /s/ for /ʃ/, /z/ and /z/, and substitution of /ʃ/ for /z/, insertion of /i/ before word onset consonant clusters commencing with /s/, using long vowels incorrectly to enhance the meaning of the word, incorrect pronunciation of silent sounds, using fillers taken from their first language etc. After the application of task-based teaching method, the post-test explicitly substantiated that many of these errors have been reduced, and thus their English speaking had been conspicuously improved.

**Keywords:** *Task-based teaching, L1 interference, Second language learners, English speaking skills, Errors*