

Research Article

Enhancing Speaking Skills through Task-Based Language Teaching in EFL Classrooms.

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This article explores the role of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in developing speaking skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It discusses the challenges learners face in speaking and the limitations of traditional teaching approaches. The study focuses on how task-based activities can improve students' fluency, confidence, and participation. It also examines the impact of interactive tasks on learners' motivation and communicative competence. The findings suggest that TBLT creates a more effective and engaging learning environment. The article highlights the importance of using meaningful tasks to enhance speaking performance in EFL contexts.

Keywords: *Task-Based Language Teaching, speaking skills, EFL, communicative competence.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the development of speaking skills has become one of the central objectives in foreign language education. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, learners often face significant challenges in developing oral communication skills due to limited exposure to authentic language use and insufficient opportunities for real-life interaction. As a result, traditional teacher-centred approaches have proven to be less effective in fostering communicative competence. One of the most promising approaches to address this issue is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasises the use of meaningful tasks as the core unit of instruction. Unlike traditional methods, TBLT focuses on engaging learners in real-world communication, encouraging them to use language as a tool for achieving specific outcomes. This approach creates a more dynamic and interactive learning environment, which is particularly beneficial for improving speaking skills. The importance of developing speaking skills in EFL contexts cannot be overstated, as effective communication is essential for academic success, professional development, and global interaction. Therefore, identifying effective teaching strategies that enhance

learners' speaking abilities is a key concern for educators. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in enhancing speaking skills among EFL learners. It also seeks to examine how task-based activities influence students' motivation, participation, and overall communicative competence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of speaking skills has been widely recognised as a fundamental component of foreign language learning. According to David Nunan, speaking is one of the most challenging skills for learners in EFL contexts due to limited opportunities for authentic communication. Similarly, H. Douglas Brown emphasises that effective speaking requires not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in real communicative situations.

Traditional language teaching methods, which often focus on grammar instruction and memorisation, have been criticised for their limited effectiveness in developing communicative competence. In response to these limitations, communicative approaches have gained increasing attention. Among them, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a prominent method that prioritises

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meaningful interaction and real-life language use. TBLT is grounded in the idea that language is best learned through the completion of meaningful tasks. Rod Ellis defines tasks as activities where learners use the target language to achieve specific outcomes, thereby promoting both fluency and accuracy. In addition, Jane Willis highlights that task-based learning encourages learners to focus on meaning rather than form, which leads to more natural language acquisition. Furthermore, research has shown that TBLT has a positive impact on learners' motivation and engagement. Michael Long argues that task-based interaction provides learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning, which enhances both comprehension and production skills. This is particularly important in EFL classrooms, where exposure to authentic language is often limited. Several studies have also demonstrated that task-based activities, such as role plays, problem-solving tasks, and discussions, significantly improve students' speaking performance. These activities create a learner-centred environment in which students actively participate and develop confidence in using the target language. Overall, the existing literature suggests that Task-Based Language Teaching is an effective approach for improving speaking skills in EFL contexts. However, further research is needed to explore its practical implementation and its impact on learners in specific educational settings.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to investigate the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving speaking skills among EFL learners. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches allows for a more comprehensive analysis of learners' performance and perceptions. The participants of the study consisted of 30 undergraduate students studying English as a foreign language at a higher educational institution. The participants were selected based on their intermediate level of English proficiency. They were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was taught using task-based language teaching methods, while the control group received traditional instruction focused on grammar

and textbook-based activities. The study was conducted over a period of four weeks. During this time, the experimental group engaged in various task-based activities, including role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and group discussions. These tasks were designed to simulate real-life communication and encourage active student participation. In contrast, the control group followed a more traditional teacher-centred approach. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test speaking assessments, classroom observations, and student questionnaires. The speaking tests were used to evaluate students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence. In addition, students' attitudes towards the learning process were analysed through questionnaire responses. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and comparative methods. The results of the pre-test and post-test were compared to measure the improvement in speaking skills. Qualitative data from observations and questionnaires were used to support and interpret the quantitative findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has a significant positive impact on the development of speaking skills among EFL learners. After the implementation of task-based activities over the instructional period, students demonstrated noticeable improvement in fluency, accuracy, and confidence during oral communication tasks.

Firstly, the pre-test and post-test comparison revealed a clear increase in students' speaking performance. In the post-test, learners were able to produce longer utterances with fewer pauses and hesitations compared to their initial performance. This suggests that task-based instruction helped learners to reduce their reliance on direct translation from their native language and encouraged more spontaneous speech production.

Secondly, classroom observations showed that learners became more actively engaged during communicative tasks such as role-plays, information gap activities, and problem-solving tasks. These activities created a meaningful context for language

use, which increased students' motivation and willingness to speak. In particular, group-based tasks fostered interaction among peers, allowing learners to practice negotiation of meaning, clarification requests, and turn-taking strategies.

Moreover, the results of the questionnaire indicated that the majority of students perceived TBLT as an effective and enjoyable approach. Most participants reported that they felt less anxious when speaking English in task-based lessons compared to traditional grammar-focused lessons. This reduction in speaking anxiety played an important role in improving overall oral performance.

However, some challenges were also identified. A small number of learners initially struggled with understanding task instructions, which sometimes limited their participation. This suggests that clear task design and appropriate scaffolding from the teacher are essential for maximizing the effectiveness of TBLT.

Overall, the results support the view that Task-Based Language Teaching creates a learner-centered environment that promotes meaningful interaction and enhances speaking proficiency in EFL classrooms. The combination of increased engagement, reduced anxiety, and authentic language use contributed to the observed improvement in students' oral skills.

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CONCLUSION

This study examined the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving speaking skills among EFL learners. The findings reveal that TBLT has a positive impact on learners' fluency, accuracy, and overall communicative confidence. The results indicate that task-based activities such as role-plays, information-gap tasks, and problem-solving activities provide meaningful communicative opportunities that encourage learners to use English more actively and naturally. These tasks also help learners develop the ability to express ideas without excessive hesitation or dependence on their first language. In addition, a noticeable reduction in speaking anxiety and an increase in classroom participation were observed, which further supported learners' oral development. The study also highlights that TBLT creates a learner-centered environment where communication is prioritized over form-focused instruction. This shift contributes to more authentic language use and improved interaction among students. The findings suggest that Task-Based Language Teaching is an effective and practical approach for enhancing speaking skills in EFL classrooms. It not only improves linguistic performance but also strengthens learners' confidence in real-life communication contexts. Therefore, integrating TBLT into English language teaching practice is highly recommended.