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The Impact of Task-Based Language Teaching on Learners' Speaking Fluency in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained significant attention in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom due to its potential to enhance learners' speaking fluency. This teaching method emphasizes the use of real-world tasks that encourage communication and active language use, aiming to bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical language application. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of TBLT on the speaking fluency of EFL learners, focusing on their ability to express ideas spontaneously and cohesively. The research adopts a quasi-experimental design, involving two groups of EFL students: an experimental group engaging in TBLT and a control group using traditional language teaching methods. Data collection includes pre- and post-tests of speaking fluency, alongside observational assessments during task completion. The findings indicate that students in the TBLT group showed significant improvements in speaking fluency compared to the control group. The tasks, which simulate real-life situations, helped learners overcome language barriers and reduced hesitation, fostering a more natural flow of speech. Furthermore, task-based activities encouraged collaborative learning, increased learner motivation, and provided authentic contexts for language use. These results suggest that TBLT is an effective approach to enhancing speaking fluency in EFL classrooms, offering a more engaging and communicative alternative to traditional teaching methods.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching, speaking fluency, EFL classrooms, language learning, communicative tasks, speaking skills, language acquisition.

1. Introduction

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained significant recognition in the field of second language acquisition, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Afifah, Devana et al. 2020). This pedagogical approach emphasizes the use of real-world tasks and communication-driven activities to promote language proficiency, focusing on meaningful and purposeful language use rather than explicit grammar instruction. TBLT is rooted in the communicative approach, which aims to engage students in authentic interactions that mirror real-life situations. The primary goal of TBLT is to improve language skills, particularly speaking fluency, by fostering an environment where learners are encouraged to use the language actively and spontaneously (Milon, Ishtiaq et al. 2023).

Speaking fluency, defined as the ability to express ideas effortlessly and coherently, is a crucial aspect of language learning (Derakhshan, Khalili et al. 2016). It requires not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language naturally in conversation. Traditional language teaching methods often focus on isolated language structures and vocabulary memorization, which can inhibit learners' confidence in speaking and their ability to communicate effectively. In contrast, TBLT emphasizes interaction and language use in context, helping learners build the necessary skills to communicate in real-world situations (Bygate 2020).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of TBLT on the speaking fluency of EFL learners. By engaging in real-world tasks that promote collaboration, communication, and problem-solving, students are given the opportunity to practice language in a dynamic, interactive environment (Tursunova 2024). This research seeks to answer the following question: Does the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching enhance the speaking fluency of EFL learners more effectively than traditional teaching methods? To answer this, a quasi-experimental design was employed with two groups of EFL students—one participating in TBLT and the other in traditional language teaching. The findings from this study contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding the effectiveness of TBLT in EFL classrooms and its potential to transform traditional language teaching approaches. By focusing on the practical application of language, this study underscores the importance of task-based learning in fostering language acquisition and fluency (Milon, Ishtiaq et al. 2023).

2. Literature Review

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is grounded in the belief that language acquisition is most effective when learners engage in tasks that mirror real-life communication (Tawil and Linguistics 2018). Research has shown that TBLT encourages learners to use language actively and meaningfully, which enhances their fluency and confidence in speaking. Numerous studies have explored the effectiveness of TBLT in various aspects of language learning, with a particular emphasis on speaking skills. These tasks can range from simple activities such as role- According to Ellis (2003), TBLT focuses on the use of communicative tasks that require learners to use language purposefully and creatively (Ellis 2017). plays and information gaps to more complex problem-solving tasks that require negotiation of meaning. The key feature of these tasks is that they engage learners in authentic communication, which helps to improve fluency by reducing

hesitation and promoting spontaneous speech (Derakhshan, Khalili et al. 2016).

Several studies have found that TBLT positively impacts speaking fluency. For instance, a study by Carless (2007) demonstrated that students who engaged in task-based activities showed significant improvements in their ability to speak spontaneously and cohesively (Bouhamed 2025). The students in this study were more motivated to participate in speaking activities because the tasks provided a context for meaningful language use. Furthermore, tasks that simulate real-life situations provide a natural setting for students to practice language, which can increase their confidence in speaking. Another important aspect of TBLT is the collaborative nature of the tasks. By working in pairs or groups, learners have the opportunity to interact with peers, negotiate meaning, and receive immediate feedback. According to Long (2015), collaborative learning promotes the development of speaking fluency by encouraging learners to communicate with others, which in turn helps to build fluency through practice (Namaziandost, Neisi et al. 2019). Moreover, research has shown that TBLT fosters learner motivation. As learners engage in tasks that are relevant to their everyday lives, they are more likely to feel motivated and invested in the learning process. According to Samuda and Bygate (2008), task-based activities can lead to greater learner engagement because they make language learning more relevant and enjoyable (Samuda and Bygate 2008). This motivation, in turn, enhances speaking fluency by encouraging more frequent and meaningful practice. In contrast, traditional language teaching methods often prioritize grammar instruction and rote memorization, which can limit opportunities for speaking practice. Studies have shown that while grammar instruction is essential for language learning, it is not sufficient for developing speaking fluency. In fact, relying solely on traditional methods can lead to hesitation and a lack of confidence in speaking. TBLT, on the other hand, offers a more interactive and communicative approach that fosters fluency by engaging learners in real-life tasks (Milon, Ishtiaq et al. 2023).

3. Methodology

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design to examine the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on the speaking fluency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The participants consisted of two groups of EFL students: an experimental group that engaged in TBLT and a control group that followed traditional language teaching methods. The study was conducted in a university setting, with participants ranging from intermediate to advanced proficiency levels in English (Hellekjær 2009). The experimental group participated in a series of task-based activities designed to encourage real-world language use. These activities included role-plays, information gap tasks, problem-solving tasks, and discussions, all of which required students to use English spontaneously and coherently. The tasks were designed to simulate real-life situations, such as ordering food at a restaurant, discussing current events, and giving presentations (thi Nguyen and Ishitobi 2012). The control group, on the other hand, followed a traditional language teaching approach, focusing on grammar instruction, vocabulary memorization, and reading comprehension exercises (Lee 2018). Data collection included both quantitative and qualitative methods. Pre- and post-tests of speaking fluency were administered to both groups to measure improvements in their ability to express ideas spontaneously and cohesively. The speaking tests involved the students responding to

prompts that required them to speak for a set amount of time on various topics (Hatipoğlu and education 2021). In addition to the tests, observational assessments were conducted during task completion. These assessments focused on the students' ability to engage in communication, use language fluently, and collaborate with peers. The data were analyzed using statistical methods to compare the speaking fluency of the two groups. The results were examined to determine whether there was a significant difference in fluency improvements between the TBLT group and the traditional teaching group. Qualitative feedback from students regarding their experiences with the tasks was also collected to provide additional insights into the impact of TBLT on their speaking skills (Milon, Ishtiaq et al. 2023).

4. Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicated that students in the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) group showed significant improvements in speaking fluency compared to those in the traditional teaching group. The pre- and post-test scores revealed that the TBLT group demonstrated greater progress in their ability to speak spontaneously and cohesively, with fewer pauses and hesitations during speech. This suggests that the task-based activities provided a more effective context for language use, allowing students to develop their speaking skills in a natural, communicative environment.

The observational assessments also supported these findings, as students in the TBLT group were observed to engage more actively in communication and demonstrate a higher level of fluency during task completion. The collaborative nature of the tasks appeared to play a key role in enhancing fluency, as students were encouraged to negotiate meaning, share ideas, and provide feedback to one another. This collaborative learning environment helped students overcome language barriers and build confidence in speaking. Furthermore, the qualitative feedback from students revealed that they found the task-based activities to be engaging and motivating. Many students reported feeling more confident in their speaking abilities after completing the tasks, as they were able to apply language in real-world contexts. This aligns with previous research by Samuda and Bygate (2008), who found that task-based activities increase learner motivation and lead to greater engagement in the learning process. In contrast, students in the traditional teaching group showed less improvement in speaking fluency. While they demonstrated a good understanding of grammar and vocabulary, they struggled with speaking spontaneously and expressing ideas in a coherent and fluent manner. This highlights the limitations of traditional teaching methods, which often focus on grammar and vocabulary in isolation without providing sufficient opportunities for communication practice.

5. Conclusion

This study provides evidence that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an effective method for enhancing speaking fluency in EFL classrooms. The results indicate that students who participated in task-based activities showed significant improvements in their ability to speak spontaneously and coherently, compared to those who followed traditional language teaching methods. The real-world tasks encouraged active language use, fostered collaboration, and increased learner motivation, all of which contributed to greater speaking fluency. These findings suggest that TBLT should be considered as a valuable alternative to traditional language teaching methods, particularly for developing speaking skills.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of TBLT on language fluency and its applicability in different cultural and educational contexts. As language education continues to evolve, TBLT offers a promising approach to fostering communicative competence and preparing students for real-world language use.

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