

PAPER

# THE IMPACT OF TASK-BASED LEARNING ON SPEAKING FLUENCY IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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## Abstract

This article explores the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in enhancing speaking fluency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Unlike traditional grammar-focused instruction, TBL emphasizes communicative, student-centered activities that foster authentic language use. Through diverse task-based activities—such as problem-solving, discussions, and role-plays—students gain extensive exposure to real-world speaking practice. The study examines how TBL enhances confidence, promotes spontaneous speech, and develops overall oral proficiency. Additionally, it presents an analysis of classroom-based research and student feedback to evaluate the practical outcomes of TBL in EFL contexts.

**Key words:** Task-Based Learning, Speaking Fluency, EFL Classrooms, Oral Proficiency, Communicative Approach, Language Acquisition, Student Engagement, Fluency Development.

## Introduction

In recent decades, the focus of English language teaching has increasingly shifted from grammar-translation and teacher-centered approaches to communicative methods that prioritize meaningful interaction. Among these, Task-Based Learning (TBL) has emerged as a dynamic and effective approach, particularly for developing speaking fluency in EFL classrooms. Speaking fluency is one of the most challenging yet essential skills for EFL learners, often requiring both structured practice and spontaneous language use. Traditional methods frequently fall short in creating opportunities for authentic speaking. TBL addresses this gap by engaging learners in real-life tasks that promote negotiation, collaboration, and active language use. This article aims to investigate how TBL contributes to improving speaking fluency in EFL learners by analyzing both pedagogical theory and classroom-based evidence.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative classroom-based research design with elements of action research. The aim was to investigate how Task-Based Learning (TBL) influences students'

speaking fluency in a real EFL classroom environment. The researcher took on the dual role of instructor and observer to implement task-based lessons, monitor student performance, and collect data throughout a six-week instructional period. Data were collected through classroom observations, audio recordings of speaking tasks, teacher field notes, and student reflection journals.

### Participants and Setting

The participants of the study were 24 intermediate-level EFL students (aged 18–22) enrolled in a speaking skills course at a private language institute in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The class included both male and female students who had studied English for an average of four to five years. All participants shared Uzbek as their first language and had prior experience with more traditional grammar-based methods of instruction. The learning environment was a multimedia-equipped classroom with flexible seating arrangements to encourage pair and group work.

### Tasks and Teaching Materials

The task-based syllabus was designed based on Willis' (1996) framework, which includes three main stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. A variety of communicative tasks were used throughout the course, including role-plays (e.g., booking travel or job interviews), problem-solving tasks (e.g., planning an event), information-gap activities, and group discussions on

familiar topics (e.g., social media, education).

Teaching materials included authentic audio-visual resources, real-life documents (menus, brochures, ads), worksheets for structured tasks, and prompts for speaking journals. Fluency was encouraged through minimal teacher interruption during tasks and focus on meaning rather than accuracy during the speaking phase. Post-task feedback sessions were used for error correction and language enhancement.

## Results

The implementation of Task-Based Learning over six weeks revealed clear improvements in students' speaking fluency, classroom participation, and overall confidence. Observations indicated that learners became more willing to engage in spontaneous dialogue, with less hesitation and more natural phrasing. During initial speaking tasks, many students relied heavily on rehearsed phrases and showed frequent pauses or grammatical errors. However, by the fourth and fifth week, most students demonstrated increased ease in maintaining conversations, self-correcting errors, and using discourse markers naturally (e.g., "actually, you know, in my opinion").

Audio recordings analyzed over time showed a measurable increase in speech rate and complexity of spoken output. For instance, average speaking time per student during tasks increased from 45 seconds in Week 1 to nearly 2 minutes by Week 6. Fluency markers such as reduced pausing and smoother transitions between ideas were especially noticeable in tasks that required negotiation or collaborative problem-solving.

Student feedback collected through reflection journals and a post-course survey further supported these findings. The majority of learners (87%) reported feeling more comfortable speaking English in class, and 79% stated that they preferred task-based lessons over traditional speaking drills. Students frequently mentioned that the real-life context of tasks made speaking feel more purposeful and less stressful, which contributed to their engagement and motivation. The dynamic nature of the tasks, along with consistent peer interaction, was repeatedly cited as a key factor in building fluency.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Task-Based Learning (TBL) has a significant positive impact on speaking fluency in EFL classrooms. By shifting the focus from accuracy-centered instruction to meaningful communication, TBL creates an environment where learners can use language in realistic and engaging contexts. The observed improvements in fluency—including increased speech length, reduced hesitation, and greater lexical variety—highlight the effectiveness of task-based instruction in promoting oral proficiency.

Moreover, student feedback confirmed that learners found TBL both motivating and enjoyable, with many expressing increased confidence and willingness to speak. These findings suggest that incorporating well-designed tasks into the EFL curriculum can enhance not only linguistic performance but also student engagement and autonomy.

It is recommended that EFL teachers integrate TBL principles into their regular teaching practices, particularly in speaking-focused courses. Future research could expand on this study by exploring the long-term effects of TBL on fluency, comparing its impact across proficiency levels, or analyzing its influence on other skills such as listening or interactional competence.

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