Potential Implications of Task-Based Language Teaching on Developing EFL Learners' Oral Fluency

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Abstract. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an instructional approach that cultivates communicative competence by exposing learners to English speaking practice. This study examined the perceptions and implications of implementing ten fluency-based tasks with twenty EFL learners at a private university in Medellin, Colombia. These tasks addressed barriers, including a significant frequency of pauses, a low speech rate, and limited speech length, which hindered learners' ability to express themselves fluently. The research used qualitative date collected by means of a questionnaire, interviews, and oral production rubrics. The findings indicated that 100% of the learners held a positive perspective of TBL as a qualified methodology that assisted them in reducing the considerable number of pauses in communicating their ideas, moderating their pacing smoothness, and balancing their speech rate to speak with a moderate clearness and consistency. Learners valued the strategy as a potential method that enabled them to communicate their ideas, regardless of occasional mistakes. In conclusion, the tasks aided them in increasing their speech rate and enhancing speech fluency during conversations.

Keywords: communication; interactive tasks; oral interaction; oral fluency

1. Introduction

Oral fluency is an essential component that provides students with more opportunities to engage with their peers and proficient language users, enabling them to communicate ideas and participate in conversations with reduced anxiety. Masuram and Sripada (2020) have noted that spoken fluency allows students to converse with minimal hesitations and avoid unnecessary pauses. Additionally, Gorkaltseva et al. (2015) have stated that enhancing oral fluency

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helps students acquire the ability to interact confidently in verbal communication with other language users. In this context, McDonough, and Sato (2019) have emphasized that in modern EFL classrooms, the focus should be on building fluency and assisting learners in becoming more proficient in oral communication. Ghasemi and Mozaheb (2021) have suggested in EFL education there is a continued need to develop learners' speaking fluency in EFL to increase their confidence as language speakers.

Furthermore, oral fluency is considered a performance indicator of successful communication. Therefore, fostering such skills is essential for learners to be concise and convey clear messages that avoid misunderstandings. However, the research team observed that 20 third-semester undergraduates faced serious fluency barriers when communicating their thoughts and ideas. These students made unnecessary breaks between ideas, leading to long pauses accompanied by silent moments and fillers that hindered the production of a smooth message. Their messages were unclear and lacked conciseness owing to pronunciation mistakes and a slow speech rate. These difficulties made it challenging for students to engage effortlessly in conversations. These constraints further impeded learners from succeeding in oral assignments and participating in spontaneous dialogues in lessons and hindered their ability to socialize in the second language (L2).

Thus, this study aims to explore the learners' perceptions of the design and implementation of ten oral fluency-based assignments and to determine the implications of such a plan for fostering speaking fluency in this group of twenty undergraduates studying EFL. Accordingly, this research seeks to answer the following questions: What are the learners' perceptions of task-based language teaching (TBLT)? and What are the potential implications of TBLT on the development of EFL learners' oral fluency?

2. Literature Review
TLBT is a teaching and learning approach that uses tasks that resemble the learners' daily experiences to enhance communication and oral interaction. Sholeh (2020) suggests that this method creates a classroom pathway in which the students learn a language by developing assignments the primary goal of which is to foster communication. In this view, Adiantika and Purnomo (2018) state that such a methodology enables teaching and learning processes to be active and collaborative. Students practiced what they were learning via assignments that required them to negotiate meaning and exchange ideas. Safitri et al. (2020) offered plenty of opportunities to promote language competency among the students. They complete assignments that involve writing, reading, listening, and speaking informally; these experiential opportunities make learning meaningful and natural.

To that end, Córdoba Zúñiga and Rangel Gutiérrez (2018) conclude that TBLT is essential to provide suitable learning opportunities purposefully in the EFL teaching and learning process. Furthermore, Córdoba Zúñiga (2016) asserts that this approach supports teachers to maintain reliable language practice. In this

study, the researchers have used TBLT and agree that this method enables students to comprehend and produce language, as well as interacting because tasks are primarily meaning-based activities related to real-world language usage.

Panduwangi (2021) and Devana (2020) agree that a task is a cycle of actions that starts by offering students inputs, suggestions, and modelling, followed by execution, and evaluation. According to Bakhshandeh and Jafari (2018), input is an integral part of learning a foreign language because it provides students with an example of required product. In TBLT, inputs are helpful for the students to respond to the expected outcomes and then model what the teachers expect them to do. Consequently, Taghavi and Aladini (2018) state that input empowers students with a mental representation of what they will be doing and what they need to do to comply with the expectations. In real-world classrooms, input should relate to what the teacher expects students to do in the application phase. In other words, if the outcome is a video describing learners' districts, the input should show how to describe such a context and produce a video about the same topic.

Several studies (Anjum et al., 2019; Bhandari, 2020; Lume & Hisbullah, 2022, Ma'mun, 2018; Santhosh & Meenakshi, 2017) have proven the efficacy of TBLT in mastering communicative competencies in EFL. In addition, many studies (Hima et al., 2021; Lekha, 2020; Liando et al., 2019) have investigated learners' perceptions toward TBLT. The findings of these studies concluded that this methodology encouraged students to improve their language skills, allowed them to be an active part of the lessons, and helped them to be proficient in the target language. However, the research team found that these studies have not examined the perception of the 20 EFL undergraduates in the Colombian context or investigated the potential implications of tasks on developing EFL learners' oral fluency.

For this reason, the research team seeks to design and implement ten oral fluency-based assignments to ascertain the students' perceptions of the potential implications of these assignments to overcome the barriers that limit them to speak English fluently. One might suggest that barriers such as unnecessary pauses, overused fillers, and low speech rates do not interfere with or stop a conversation going, yet Harmer (2015) mentions that developing oral fluency leads to more effective communication processes. As EFL teachers, the researchers believe that enhancing rehearsal opportunities to work on speaking fluency assignments would assist EFL learners in becoming confident in communicating their ideas.

Oral fluency holds several definitions, including the capability to speak a language with few pauses as well as the ability to express ideas coherently, rationally, and clearly. Crowther et al. (2015) define oral fluency as the ability learners develop to communicate at an average speed. Furthermore, according to Brand and Götz and Crowther et al., "…oral fluency should be more broadly defined as the learners' ability to produce a rapid and comprehensible speech" (as cited in Albino, 2017, p.2). Most recently, "…someone is a fluent speaker when he

properly uses the language, communicates orally with each other in different communicative situations, expresses ideas freely, as well as produces natural language with breath group, hesitation, pauses, and repetition" (Magdy and Hassan, 2020, p.34). These definitions of oral fluency suggest that a fluent English speaker must avoid excessive stops and maintain a dialogue at a standard speech rate and length while exchanging opinions and beliefs. In this respect, Albino (2017) and Pangket (2019) contend that mastering speaking fluency supports students in improving their abilities to elaborate a better discourse that assists them in interacting with their classmates without anxiety. Houn and Em (2022) and Ho (2018) agree that accurate speech production encourages clear oral interaction among speakers. To this end, twenty basic English undergraduates were required to communicate their ideas orally in a placement test. The examiners reported that the students were unable to interact with them owing to various reasons: they mispronounced words, hesitated to express their ideas, made unnecessary pauses, and their speech rate was low which prevented them from passing the oral section of the examination.

Based on that, the research team designed and implemented ten oral fluency-based assignments to assess students' exposure to speaking fluency assignments and determine their perceptions of implementing such a plan. Masuram and Sripada (2020) concluded that the focus of TBLT on interaction, speaking ability, and learners' exposure might be crucial to teaching students how to speak fluently. Ardi (2021) agreed that oral production assignments represent an excellent source for creating opportunities for students to become fluent. Islam (2022) indicated that TBLT may help students improve their fluency because the approach promotes communication and interaction opportunities. These findings provided a theoretical background to applying TBLT as a response to strengthen oral competence and served as insights to analysing the potential implications of implementing such a methodology in diverse contexts.

3. Research Method
3.1 Context and Participants
This study was conducted in the undergraduate Spanish and English degree program at a private university located in Medellin, Colombia. The participants enrolled in an intermediate English course. There were 25 students that semester; 20 of whom needed to work on their oral fluency, namely, 12 girls (60%) and eight boys (40%) between 18 and 23 years old. Their English level was A2 based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages based on an entry test. The participants had studied three English courses before participating in the study. The sampling was a convenient method, and the participants signed a letter of consent for their participation in the research project. The university was selected because it was convenient to obtain the letters of consent and these learners had been identified as presenting difficultly in speaking fluently.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

This research study used three data collection methods: interviews, observations, and oral production rubrics.

Semi-structured interviews: Ten semi-structured interviews were piloted to validate the information and learn more about learners' perceptions of implementing the project and its implications for enhancing oral fluency. Laforest noted that these interviews are essential for gathering qualitative information, identifying needs and priorities, and monitoring students' progress (Cordoba, 2016, p.18). A checklist and interview notes were used to prioritize areas, reorient the focus of the interviews, and write down relevant information to understand students' perspectives toward the study. Each interview that lasted an hour consisted of 12 questions, and the information was audio recorded, transcribed, and labelled.

Survey questionnaire: This method was employed to determine the learners' perceptions of TBLT and its potential implications for fostering oral fluency. The students completed a 25-statement questionnaire at the end of the implementation. The structure of the questionnaire elicited information related to the application of TBLT and the potential implications of such implementation to foster oral fluency. In total, ten statements based on the theoretical review and the goals of the project were created. To determine participants' points of view, five Likert scales were used, namely Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly agree.

Oral production rubrics: To ensure the study's reliability, the research team used ten oral production rubrics (see Table 5 and Table 6) to triangulate the information with observations and interviews. The oral performance rubrics evaluated students' speaking fluency skills, scrutinized specific features they may need to determine areas where learners were making significant progress, and emphasized the ones they needed to work on.

3.3 Implementing Procedure of the Oral Fluency-Based through TBLT

To conduct the study, the research team spent 24 weeks, 10 hours weekly, and 240 hours over a semester of the year 2022. It was decided to break down TBLT procedures (pre-, during, and post-) into five steps, namely the five D's (Disclosing, Deducing, Displaying, Developing, and Discovering) to fulfil this study's goals. Logically, it was confirmed that these steps were within the principles of TBLT. They were adjusted to achieve the objectives of the approach mentioned in the literature review. Further information is provided below on the planning and implementing of these stages (Five D's):

Step 1: Disclosing. In this step, the students were informed about what they were going to do for each one of the assignments. This included the areas that needed to be rehearsed, the reason, the aims, and the projected results they needed to achieve. As part of the discussion, a rubric was shared with them to help them understand how they would be evaluated and how it was planned to achieve the goals. Essentially, this phase is similar to that proposed by Willis and Willis (1996). The researchers commenced by discussing the study with the students,

identifying weaknesses, and helping them to overcome them. It was necessary to raise the students' awareness of what was expected of them before they began their assignments.

Step 2. Deducing. The Deducing phase aimed at reasoning and inferring original oral production by sharing extracts of movies, videos, podcasts, and audio materials in which people talk about areas students needed to cover to do their assignments. Students spent ten minutes listening to conversations between native and advanced language learners to determine the fluency of their speech before they started on their own tasks. Students were also encouraged to comment on the way they talked, the number of pauses, the speech rate, how natural they sounded, and the flow of their speech.

Step 3. Displaying. In the Displaying phase, the materials were played again, and the participants practiced, held dialogues, discussions, and debates, and further exchanged opinions on how to communicate better. However, teachers may do this in the pre-task or while-task model presented by Willis and Willis (1996). This phase was divided up to enable students to gain experience in the practical use of English, exposing them to different practices, allowing them access to authentic conversations, and encouraging them to participate in the initial class discussion. Additionally, in this stage, the research team modelled authentic oral communication according to which students adjusted their speech by following real-life examples of natural language in daily life.

Step 4. Development. Once the previous phases had been completed, learners reached the Developing stage. They worked on ten oral-fluency tasks (see Appendix 2: ten oral-fluency assignments) that were based on five daily-life topics (getting to know each other, my university life, friends, family, and free time, exploring community, and life in the future) in the semester syllabus. Students selected someone to work with to complete the assignment, review the rubric and the goals of the tasks, and consider what specific language items they needed to strengthen in each one. Then, the students commenced the assignments by negotiating, discussing, talking to each other, helping among the groups, completing open-ended oral questionnaires, and conducting oral interviews, group debates, and dialogues. The researchers observed the students, offered clarifications, and guided them to converse spontaneously. To do that, students used draft versions to practice and talk to the team about their assignments and how they were completing them. Finally, presented these to the whole group.

Step 5. Discovering. The Discovering section was used for three processes: learning and evaluating; instructors encouraging students by praising their performance and pointing out what they did well; and the research team highlighting the positive aspects they identified during the final product presentation. In the same way, students were asked to self-evaluate their performance to identify areas in which they did well and those that needed improvement. The research team then evaluated students by utilizing a rubric to assess each one of the assignments and share the outcomes with the students. This process was followed by the second process, called the follow-up. The research

team recommended follow-up assignments, provided recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of future assignments, and reassigned additional activities to those students whose performance was not up to standard. Finally, the follow-up was continued, the main objective of which was to give individualized instructions to those students who needed more practice. Extra meetings and study sessions were held with low-performance learners to help them overcome their failures and keep up with the group.

3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data examination followed a thematic analysis and included the following six phases: (a) familiarizing with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for them, (d) reviewing potential themes, E) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the report. Percy et al. (2015) and Hlophe et al. (2017) agree that this approach is essential to provide validity to the analysis. To become familiar with the data, it was transcribed, read, and reread to write the first notes, namely a list with all data at this initial stage. Then, the initial codes were generated, reread, reviewed, and adjusted to find potential themes. These were then defined and named for the final report (Table 1). Additionally, a three-point Likert scale was employed to denote Neutral, Satisfactory, and Very satisfactory. Statements were created to ascertain learners' points of view on TBLT, the implementation, and the contributions of this methodology to develop their oral fluency.

Table 1: Thematic analysis process

Data collection	Familiarizing with the data	Generating initial codes	Potential themes	Reviewing and defining themes
Survey questionnaire Semi-structured interviews Oral production rubrics	After transcribing the data, we found that some learners think that TBLT is challenging. TBLT opened opportunities to new practices. TBLT is essential to change. They also suggested that they may break down fluency problems.	Challenging. Improves learners' oral performance. Promotes oral practice. Challenging. Important to change. Fascinating experience. Communicates ideas. Expressing ideas clearly and proficiently. Advances oral fluency.	Challenges/ importance of TBLT Benefits for new experiences Challenges/ importance of TBLT New experiences Potential benefits for fluency Work on breaking down barriers.	Perception on TBLT Opinions on implementation Perception on contribution and implication for oral Fluency

4. Findings and Discussion

The analysis conducted, as outlined in the data analysis and interpretation section, involved the initial creation of codes. These codes were then thoroughly scrutinized to reveal potential themes within the data. This process played a fundamental role in establishing the definitive themes and codes, as detailed in Table 2. This regular approach ensures the reliability and accuracy of the findings presented in this section.

Table 2: Final codes and themes

Codes	Potential themes	Reviewing, defining, and naming the themes
Quality of the methodology.	Challenges/ importance of TBLT.	Learners' perceptions about TBLT.
Challenges of the methodology for the students.		
Potential benefits for low EFL learners.	Benefits for communication.	
Procedure of the implementation.	Challenges of the procedure.	Learners' perceptions about the implementation of the assignments.
Quality of assignments implemented.		
Challenges experience in the implementation.	Experience implementing TBLT.	
Language proficiency improvements.	Potential benefits for fluency.	Perception on contributions and implications of TBLT on oral fluency.
Oral fluency development.		
Challenges associated with oral fluency.	Work on breaking down barriers.	

As observed in Table 2, the codes were categorized into three main themes: Learners' perceptions of TBLT, learners' feedback on the implementation of assignments, and learners' insights into the contributions and implications of TBLT on oral fluency. A detailed analysis of the results for each theme is presented as follows:

4.1 Learners' perceptions of TBLT

As presented in Table 3, all 20 learners developed a positive perception of TBLT for the quality that this method brings to the EFL learning process. The learners stated four insights that encouraged them to determine that this method has some beneficial characteristics: TBLT provides relevance to EFL education, TBLT boosts language proficiency, TBLT is adjustable to meet specific language goals, and TBLT tailors different learning styles.

Table 3: Learners' perceptions about TBLT

Code	Statements (Perceptions)	Level of Satisfaction	Number of participants	Percentage
Quality of the methodology	TBLT provides relevance to EFL education	Strongly disagree	0	0%
		Disagree	0	0%
		Undecided	0	0%
		Agree	0	0%
		Agree strongly	20	100%
	TBLT boosts language proficiency	Strongly disagree	0	0%
		Disagree	0	0%
		Undecided	0	0%
		Agree	0	0%
		Agree strongly	20	100%
	TBLT is adjustable to meet specific language goals	Strongly disagree	0	0%
		Disagree	0	0%
		Undecided	0	0%
		Agree	0	0%
		Agree strongly	20	100%
	TBLT tailors different learning styles	Strongly disagree	0	0%
		Disagree	0	0%
		Undecided	0	0%
		Agree	0	0%
		Agree strongly	20	100%

Table 3 indicated that all learners evaluated TBLT as a relevant EFL learning methodology that assisted their EFL education. They believed that TBLT supported the development of their language proficiency by doing real-life goal assignments. These enhanced their initiative to participate in tasks designed to overcome language challenges and introduced real-world relevance to what they were learning. Also, TBLT suited their interests and learning styles, as well as adapting to their language levels.

> Learner 1 expressed that *TBLT was an excellent way to expand his ability in the language. He was always exposed to opportunities to practice by exchanging ideas with classmates, working together, and reaching agreement* (Interview 1).

> Learner 2 said that *TBLT advanced an adaptable model to learn the target language, and she felt that she expanded her language proficiency by interacting with classmates* (Interview 3).

> Learner 3 revealed that *TBLT helped him improve his language competence by adapting the assignments to how he learned. He preferred communicative tasks that forced him to socialize with his classmates: asking for information, responding to questions, and being surrounded by realistic conversations* (Interview 2).

> Learner 20 also pointed out *that such a method reshaped his language-learning process. Before, he had needed to adjust to fit the education process. However, this approach was flexible and systematically matched how he acquired the language* (Survey questionnaire 1).

Therefore, TBLT allowed learners to embrace a flexible classroom environment that challenged them to participate in oral-based practices such as interviews, discussions, and daily life situations that accommodated their learning styles, preferences, and abilities. The assignments gradually helped learners overcome their mistakes by becoming acquainted with initiating, maintaining, and ending conversations with a certain level of proficiency. These diverse oral practices trained them to break down their communicative competence barriers in the target language. Providing such diverse language learning experiences in EFL classrooms may have led learners to have a positive perception about TBLT as an appropriate methodology that assisted them to master communicative competencies by participating in flexible and diverse oral experiences that shaped their learning process. During the implementation, it was encouraging to see learners making opportunities to ask and answer questions, as well as seeking clarification, thereby finally engaging in class activities.

The results of the research, similar to those of Sholeh (2020), suggest that TBLT creates a classroom environment to promote oral interaction. Similarly, Adiantika and Purnomo (2018) suggested that this method enhances communication. Safitri et al. (2020), Córdoba Zúñiga and Rangel Gutiérrez (2018), and Córdoba Zúñiga (2016) all suggest that such a methodology engages learners in a communicative environment the primary goal of which is to broaden learners' experience in the language.

Furthermore, Anjum et al. (2019), Bhandari (2020), Lume and Hisbullah (2022), Ma'mun (2018) and Santhosh and Meenakshi (2017) all confirmed that TBLT emphasized the use of language for communicative purposes. in addition, TBLT offered these learners plenty of opportunities to improve their language proficiency through gaining more experience in language usage and engaging in tasks that required them to communicate their ideas and thoughts. Based on these insights, learners valued such TBLT as a method that offered them a unique and experiential opportunity to learn how to communicate better in the target language. This finding cannot be generalized to all EFL settings and learners because each EFL learner and context is different. The application of TBLT may be regarded as a challenging methodology that demands careful planning and

systematic application. However, this approach is believed to be flexible enough to be integrated into any context and for students to have a pedagogical alternative to widen situational language learning opportunities.

4.2 Learners' perceptions about the implementation the assignments

The data presented in Table 4 shows that all learners who participated in the study have a positive perception about the implementation of TBLT and the oral assignments in their EFL education process. They highlighted the cycle that was implemented, the quality of the assignments, and the challenges they experienced when completing each of them.

Table 4: Procedure of the implementation

Code	Statements (Perceptions)	Level of Satisfaction	Percentage
Implementing TBLT (assignment)	The procedure of the implementation enhanced a communicative-driven environment	Strongly disagree	0%
		Disagree	0%
		Undecided	0%
		Agree	0%
		Agree strongly	100%
	The implementation challenged your language level and oral competence	Strongly disagree	0%
		Disagree	0%
		Undecided	0%
		Agree	0%
		Agree strongly	100%
	The assignments implemented provide a constructive way to deepen oral language	Strongly disagree	0%
		Disagree	0%
		Undecided	0%
		Agree	0%
		Agree strongly	100%

Table 3 demonstrated that all learners evaluated TBLT as a relevant EFL learning methodology that assisted their EFL education. They believed that TBLT supported the development of their language proficiency by offering real-life goal assignments that enhanced their initiative to participate in tasks designed to overcome language challenges and introduced real-world relevance to what they were learning. Also, TBLT suited their interests and learning styles, and adapted to their language levels.

> Learner 7 stated that *the procedure implemented was a great help to become confident in speaking English in class. She adjusted her speech*

while she was doing each one of the phases. In the end, she knew what areas she needed to work on (Interview 1).

Learner 9 assured that *TBLT advanced an adaptable model to learn the target language, and she felt that she expanded her language proficiency by interacting with classmates* (Interview 3).

Learner 12 revealed that *introducing the five D's cycle improved his oral performance. The cycle gradually presented and sequenced the assignments so that he progressed in his language skills little by little* (Interview 2).

Learner 15 indicated *that such a method assisted him in overcoming his limitations in the language. He gained more experience in oral interaction and learned new ways to express his thoughts* (Survey questionnaire 1).

Learner 19 said that *the implementation procedure enhanced a communicative-driven environment that encouraged him to express his ideas well* (Interview 2).

Learner 5 suggested that *the method challenged his language level and oral competence. The assignments demanded that he assume required active roles: asking for data, responding to a friend, and paying attention to how he communicated his ideas* (Interview 2).

Learner 12 implied that *this method introduced assignments that provided a constructive way to deepen oral language development by performing challenging tasks* (Survey questionnaire 1).

The learners expressed a positive view toward TBLT implementation and the oral assignments because such a methodology incorporated a learning cycle that gradually overcame their limitations in the language. In the Disclosing phase, the learners knew in advance what areas they needed to work on. They recognized their failures and how each one of the assignments they would be doing led them to overcome them. In the Deducing phase, they were challenged to determine how advanced and native English speakers avoided making such mistakes. They discussed the oral proficiency of those language users seen and heard in the videos, series, and audio materials. In the Displaying stage, the learners delved into more genuine language practices: interviews, oral debates, discussions, and opinions on daily life topics. It was the researchers' belief that this phase provided adequate training that encouraged students to increase their confidence and lower their anxiety by practicing before completing the assignments. Students gained experience by analysing how advanced learners and native speakers use the language in real oral situations.

After these stages, the learners reinforced their skills by completing the assignments. They exchanged ideas about their communities and their life at the university and interviewed their classmates. This practice provided ample training to increase their exposure to the language and encourage them to

communicate naturally. In the final phase, learners recognized the value of TBLT as a meaningful approach to boost their confidence in using the target language for communication.

Furthermore, the learners mentioned that the assignments provided a constructive way to deepen oral language and encouraged them to participate in a communicative environment that encouraged them to ask and respond to questions. It was concluded that TBLT led learners to gain experience by exposing them to assignments that encompassed a wide range of communicative elements such as practicing pronunciation, intonation, speech rate, and fluency. They also practiced pacing a conversation by using expressions and phrases that made their speech sound proficient. These fundamental elements revolutionized their language education and challenged their language level and oral competence.

Initially, the learners struggled to express their ideas and engage in the assignments. However, as the implementation advanced, learners started feeling more confident in being more involved in more exchanges. Ghasemi and Mozaheb (2021) suggested that developing students' confidence is an essential component that leads learners to master such competencies well. It is thought that TBLT may become an alternative to promoting confidence among learners. When the learners are basic English users, developing their communication skills is a process that demands time and exploration to adjust to such requirements. Learners are required to practice, adapt to the requirements, and master fluency progressively. Moreover, TBLT in EFL education aims to create a more engaging and conversation-driven language learning environment where the primary goal is effective communication rather than on language structures. Nevertheless, it is crucial that such an approach does not indicate that teachers who implement TBLT ignore linguistic foundations such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary. Instead, it highlights that language structure should be taught with a communicative purpose.

4.3 Language Proficiency Improvements
Table 5 displays the results of the rubric used to assess students' progress at the initial and final phases. This table clearly illustrates the extent of learners' progression from the beginning to the end of the study. Data analysis suggests that all 20 participants had the potential for improvement in their verbal communication as they shared ideas and thoughts. All learners insisted that TBLT expanded their opportunities for practice, enabling them to initiate and sustain conversations while expressing themselves.

Table 5: Oral production rubrics at the initial and final phases

Fluency elements evaluated	Criteria use to evaluate oral fluency		Number of Learners	
			Initial phase	Final phase
Pauses while talking	Excellent	Longer and short pauses are rare and only momentarily interrupt.	0	0
	Good	Between-sentence pauses are short and natural.	0	16
	Fair	Makes noticeable short pauses but does not stop talking.	2	4
	Needs improvement	Makes noticeable long pauses that made stopped talking.	18	0
Pacing	Excellent	Keep consistency in conversation	0	0
	Good	Was consistency moderate in conversation.	0	17
	Fair	Slow consistency in conversation.	4	3
	Needs improvement	Below slow consistency in conversation.	16	0
Expression	Excellent	Students expressed and sounded good, and their speech was natural language user.	0	0
	Good	Students expressed and sounded good, and their speech was like natural language users.	0	15
	Fair	Students expressed and sounded fairly, and their speech was not like natural language users.	5	5
	Needs improvement	Students expressed and sounded fairly, and their speech was nothing like natural language users.	15	0
Rate	Excellent	Students kept a balance rate to let their message be clear and understood.	0	0
	Good	Students were approximately slow, and their message was understood.	0	18
	Fair	Students were slow, and their meaning was barely understood.	7	2

	Needs improvement	Students were slow, and their meaning was not clear to be understood.	13	0
Speech	Excellent	Students spoke clearly, concisely, and with an excellent consistency.	0	0
	Good	Students spoke clearly, concisely, and with good consistency.	0	16
	Fair	Students spoke somewhat clearly, concisely, and with consistency.	0	4
	Needs improvement	Students spoke somewhat unclearly, unconcise, and without	20	0
Steady flow	Excellent	Students rarely paused, hesitated, repeated words and sentences, and kept the conversation going consistently.	0	0
	Good	Students hesitated, repeated words, and sentences, but maintained the conversation.	0	14
	Fair	Students hesitated, repeated words, and sentences, but it was difficult to maintain the conversation.	0	6
	Needs improvement	Students hesitated, repeated words, and sentence and it was very difficult to maintain the conversation.	20	0
Fluency	Excellent	Students spoke clearly, concisely, and with consistency.	0	0
	Good	Students spoke clearly, concisely, and with good consistency.	0	17
	Fair	Students spoke somewhat clearly, concisely, and with consistency.	0	3
	Needs improvement	Students spoke somewhat unclearly, imprecisely, and without consistency.	20	0

If the initial phase is compared with the final phase, a notable influence of the assignments implemented can be noted regarding the transformation in the students' communication skills. In the initial stage, 90% of the learners (18 out of 20) struggled with pauses and fillers to convey their intended messages, while in the final phase, only 20% (4) presented with this difficulty. The remaining 80% (16) managed to reduce interruptions when they presented their assignments. Learners became more confident and familiar with grappling with pauses and fillers to convey their intended messages.

Another possible explanation is that completing each task challenged them to demonstrate a certain level of correctness by maintaining coherent and uninterrupted conversations that led them to master ways to respond to questions

and present their work. However, 20% of the learners (4 out of 20) were still confronted with challenges in conveying their intended messages. These students belonged to 90% of the learners whose noticeably long pauses led to their being reluctant to communicate during the initial phase. In the end, they continued making noticeable short pauses, but this did not prevent them from keeping up with the flow of the conversation as had been the case before the study. They became more aware of their limitations and worked on them to interact with the researchers and classmates.

Regarding their pace, all the learners (20 out of 20) initially found it challenging to maintain coherent and uninterrupted conversations during the early stages of the implementation. In line with their pacing, all learners (20 out of 20) expressed themselves unclearly, imprecisely, and inconsistently. Additionally, all learners (20 out of 20) frequently used repetitive expressions and sentences in their conversation attempts. Unfortunately, the extended pacing issues and their inability to respond to questions and engage in natural conversations at the beginning disrupted their interactions with researchers and classmates.

This situation gradually improved during the study as the learners developed basic oral competence and learned to moderate their speech rate, flow, and fluency. Table 5 illustrates that 90% of the learners (18 out of 20) successfully acquired the competence to convey their messages, even if they spoke at a slow pace. However, 10% (2 out of 20) still struggled with clarity in their speech. With respect to conciseness and consistency in communication, 80% (16 out of 20) consistently exhibited reliable expression, while the remaining 20% (4 out of 20) communicated imprecisely and inconsistently. Finally, 75% (15 out of 20) were able to maintain conversations but occasionally repeated words or mispronounced them. The remaining 25% (5 out of 20) had difficulty sustaining the flow of conversation at a basic level, although they still managed to communicate.

The empirical data presented in this study indicate that TBLT has potential implications for improving EFL learners' oral fluency. In this study, learners demonstrated a moderate decrease in the frequency of pauses in their spoken discourse after implementing the methodology. At the end of the study, their oral production reduced the considerable time to respond to questions, present their assignments, or interact with their classmates. At the initial introduction, these learners exhibited problems communicating in a fluid and flowing way with uninterrupted conversation. Their speech was characterized by with fillers and clusters frequent stops, and confusion in rendering their responses. When the students tried to present the tasks and engage in conversational interactions, this lack of fluency disrupted their communication.

However, during the final phase of the study, these learners moderated their speech pace, thus fostering a smoother and more coherent communication process. Mistakes no longer acted as impediments to the conveyance of their intended messages, and they exhibited an improved ability to articulate expressions with moderated clarity, conciseness, and consistency. This nuanced evaluation highlights the commendable advancements made in the specific

dimensions of communication while acknowledging the enduring challenges faced by a subset of learners who continued working on pause frequency reduction to maintain a consistent pace to enhance their oral fluency. It is essential to contextualize that these learners also made progress in expressing their ideas: despite a lack of consistency, they still manage to communicate what they meant. Consequently, the observed evolution is to be construed as a positive outcome, reflecting the students' evolving recognition of the importance of fluency in effective communication.

5. Conclusion

This analysis showed that learners hold an optimistic perception of TBLT as a qualified methodology to provide relevance to their EFL learning process. They navigated assignments that helped meet their specific language goals and tailored their learning styles by engaging them in various oral activities, including interviews, discussions, and everyday conversational situations. These experiences created a flexible learning environment that progressively assisted learners in addressing and correcting their language mistakes while gaining proficiency in initiating, sustaining, and concluding conversations. Learners engaged in taking the initiative to ask questions, provide answers, and seek clarification to overcome barriers to their communicative competence in the target language. It may then be concluded that learners viewed TBLT as a gradual method that equipped them to reshape their language-learning process by engaging them in how to meet the oral fluency requirements that boost their language proficiency.

Further, this study demonstrated TBLT as a potential method to improve learners' oral fluency. The methodology enabled the creation of an oral production classroom experience, the goal of which was to equip learners gradually with the capacity to eliminate the excessive use of fillers, clusters of pauses, and disorganization in their speech. Over time, these learners began to articulate responses, moderate their speech pace, expression, and rate, and smoothly transform their speech into a more coherent communication. It can be concluded that TBLT helped develop learners' speaking fluency by offering them an experience in how to master fluency to maintain a conversation and interact with other language users. As a result of this experience, learners' speech became more controlled, leading to smoother and more coherent communication. Such oral exposure assisted them to exhibit improved articulation with moderate clarity, conciseness, and consistency so that mistakes no longer posed significant barriers in conveying their intended messages.

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