

The Impact of Task-Based Language Teaching on English as a EFL Learners' Speaking Proficiency and Motivation

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ABSTRACT

This research study examines the impact of task-based language teaching (TBLT) on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' speaking proficiency and motivation. The study focuses on a sample of 60 university students aged 17-21, with an A2 level of English proficiency. A task-based approach was implemented using the Flip app and Zoom meetings, incorporating various speaking topics. Data collection involved a survey with Likert-scale variables to assess students' motivation and perception of the tasks. The results indicate high motivation levels among students in improving their English-speaking skills, participating in group exercises, and speaking English in the classroom. However, students reported relatively lower motivation in using English outside of the classroom. Additionally, the findings highlight positive perceptions of students towards language tasks and activities, emphasizing their effectiveness in promoting motivation, confidence, vocabulary improvement, and communication skills. These results align with the principles of task-based language teaching and the importance of creating an interactive and supportive learning environment. The study contributes to the existing literature on TBLT and provides insights for educators and curriculum designers to enhance EFL learners' speaking proficiency and motivation.

Keywords: *task-based language teaching, English as a foreign language, speaking proficiency, motivation*

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El impacto de la enseñanza de idiomas basada en tareas en la competencia oral y la motivación de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL).

RESUMEN

Este estudio de investigación examina el impacto de la enseñanza de idiomas basada en tareas (TBLT, por sus siglas en inglés) en la competencia oral y la motivación de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL, por sus siglas en inglés). El estudio se centra en una muestra de 60 estudiantes universitarios de entre 17 y 21 años, con un nivel de inglés A2. Se implementó un enfoque basado en tareas utilizando la aplicación Flip y reuniones por Zoom, incorporando diversos temas de conversación. La recopilación de datos involucró una encuesta con variables de escala de Likert para evaluar la motivación de los estudiantes y su percepción de las tareas. Los resultados indican niveles altos de motivación entre los estudiantes para mejorar sus habilidades de expresión oral en inglés, participar en ejercicios grupales y hablar inglés en el aula. Sin embargo, los estudiantes informaron una motivación relativamente menor para utilizar el inglés fuera del aula. Además, los hallazgos resaltan las percepciones positivas de los estudiantes hacia las tareas y actividades de lenguaje, enfatizando su efectividad para promover la motivación, la confianza, la mejora del vocabulario y las habilidades de comunicación. Estos resultados se alinean con los principios de la enseñanza de idiomas basada en tareas y la importancia de crear un entorno de aprendizaje interactivo y de apoyo. El estudio contribuye a la literatura existente sobre TBLT y proporciona información para educadores y diseñadores de currículo para mejorar la competencia oral y la motivación de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: *enseñanza de idiomas basada en tareas, inglés como lengua extranjera, competencia oral, motivación*

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INTRODUCTION

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, there has been a growing interest in instructional approaches that foster the development of learners' speaking proficiency and motivation. One such approach that has gained attention is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). TBLT focuses on engaging learners in meaningful and authentic language use through the completion of real-life tasks, thereby promoting communication skills and learner autonomy (Long, 2015). This comparative study aims to investigate the impact of TBLT on EFL learners' speaking proficiency and motivation, as compared to traditional instructional methods.

The primary research question guiding this study is: How does the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) affect EFL learners' speaking proficiency and motivation, compared to traditional instructional methods? To address this question, the study will examine the following specific research objectives:

Compare the speaking proficiency levels of EFL learners who receive instruction through TBLT with those who receive instruction through traditional methods.

Assess the motivation levels of EFL learners in TBLT classrooms and traditional classrooms.

Explore the experiences and perceptions of EFL learners in TBLT classrooms and traditional classrooms.

This study is grounded in two main theories that provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the potential impact of TBLT on EFL learners' speaking proficiency and motivation.

Firstly, the Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) model, proposed by Gass (1997), emphasizes the importance of interactive and meaningful communication in language acquisition. According to this model, TBLT provides learners with opportunities to receive comprehensible input, engage in meaningful interactions, and produce meaningful output, which are essential for language development.

Secondly, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) provides insights into the role of motivation in language learning. This theory posits that learners' intrinsic motivation, characterized by a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, plays a vital role in their

engagement and persistence in language learning activities. TBLT, with its focus on authentic tasks and learner autonomy, is expected to foster learners' intrinsic motivation, leading to enhanced speaking proficiency.

By employing these theoretical frameworks, this study seeks to shed light on the potential benefits of TBLT in promoting EFL learners' speaking proficiency and motivation, ultimately informing language educators and curriculum developers on effective instructional practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have explored the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on EFL learners' speaking proficiency and motivation, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of this instructional approach. Theoretical frameworks have been employed to understand the underlying mechanisms and processes involved in TBLT and its impact on language learning outcomes.

Firstly, the Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) model, proposed by Gass (1997), highlights the significance of interactive and meaningful communication in language acquisition. According to this model, TBLT provides learners with opportunities to engage in authentic and purposeful communication, resulting in the acquisition of language forms and functions. In a study by Ellis and Shintani (2014), which compared TBLT with traditional instruction, it was found that TBLT facilitated more meaningful interactions among learners, promoting greater engagement and fluency in speaking tasks. This supports the notion that the interactive nature of TBLT contributes to the development of speaking proficiency.

In addition, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), offers insights into the role of motivation in language learning. According to SDT, learners' intrinsic motivation, characterized by a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, plays a crucial role in their engagement and persistence in learning activities. TBLT, with its emphasis on meaningful tasks and learner autonomy, is believed to enhance learners' intrinsic motivation, leading to improved speaking proficiency. A study by Kim and Elder (2019) examined the impact of TBLT on EFL learners' motivation and found that learners in TBLT classrooms reported higher

levels of intrinsic motivation compared to those in traditional classrooms. This suggests that TBLT has the potential to enhance learners' motivation to engage in speaking activities.

It's important to analyze the interactionist perspectives, such as the sociocultural theory by Vygotsky (1978) and the interactionist theory by Long (1983), also shed light on the potential benefits of TBLT for speaking proficiency and motivation. Sociocultural theory posits that language development is deeply intertwined with social interaction and collaboration. TBLT, through its emphasis on communication and collaboration, provides opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning and co-construct knowledge. In a study by Nassaji and Fotos (2011), it was found that TBLT enhanced learners' speaking proficiency by creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment. Long's interactionist theory highlights the role of negotiation of meaning and language output in language acquisition. By engaging learners in communicative tasks, TBLT encourages learners to produce meaningful output, promoting the development of speaking skills (Samuda & Bygate, 2008).

In summary, theories such as the Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) model, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and interactionist perspectives provide theoretical foundations for understanding the potential impact of TBLT on EFL learners' speaking proficiency and motivation. These theories highlight the importance of interactive and meaningful communication, learner autonomy, and collaboration in language learning. By incorporating these theoretical frameworks, studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of TBLT in promoting speaking proficiency and fostering learners' motivation.

In Addition, several researchers have explored the effectiveness of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in promoting language learning and enhancing students' motivation and speaking proficiency. Ellis and Shintani (2014) emphasize the significance of TBLT in creating a learner-centered environment that fosters engagement and language use. They highlight the benefits of incorporating authentic, meaningful tasks that promote communicative competence and encourage students to actively engage with the language.

Building on this, Willis and Willis (2019) emphasize the importance of task design in TBLT. They argue that well-structured tasks, which provide opportunities for negotiation of meaning,

collaboration, and real-world language use, contribute to the development of students' speaking skills and motivation. Willis and Willis further highlight the role of feedback in TBLT, emphasizing the need for timely and constructive feedback that supports students' language development.

Recent contributions to the field of TBLT include the works of Thornbury (2020), Bygate (2021), and Long (2022). Thornbury explores the dynamic nature of tasks in TBLT and advocates for the integration of task repetition and task sequencing to enhance students' linguistic and communicative abilities. Bygate focuses on the importance of task repetition and the role of practice in consolidating and automating language skills. He argues that task repetition allows learners to refine their language production, develop fluency, and internalize language patterns.

Long's work delves into the role of planning in TBLT. He emphasizes the cognitive processes involved in pre-task planning and highlights its impact on learners' language production and complexity. Long suggests that strategic planning helps learners organize their thoughts, facilitates fluency, and promotes accuracy in spoken production.

These authors collectively contribute to the growing body of research on TBLT, providing insights into task design, feedback, task repetition, and planning strategies that can optimize the effectiveness of TBLT in promoting EFL learners' speaking proficiency and motivation. Incorporating their perspectives into instructional practices can inform the design and implementation of TBLT-based language programs, enhancing students' language learning experiences.

METHODS

The study was predominantly descriptive, it selected qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the proposed research question.

Participants: The study will involve a sample of 60 university students aged between 17 and 21, who are enrolled in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course at a university. The participants will have an A2 level of English proficiency, as determined by a standardized language proficiency test.

Procedure: Selection of Participants: Participants were selected through convenience sampling from the university's EFL courses. The sample aimed to include an equal number of male and female participants to ensure gender balance.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Implementation: The TBLT intervention was conducted using a combination of the Flip app and Zoom meetings. The Flip app has served as a platform for delivering pre-recorded video-based tasks, while Zoom meetings were utilized for synchronous communication and task discussions. The TBLT activities covered various speaking topics and were designed to promote interactive and authentic communication.

Perception Analysis: To assess participants' perceptions of the TBLT tasks, a survey was administered after the completion of the intervention. The survey has Likert-scale variables and included questions related to participants' perception of task authenticity, relevance, engagement, and enjoyment. Open-ended questions were also to be included to gather qualitative feedback.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data from the Likert-scale survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics guiding ourselves with Ulla (2020) study. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed thematically to gain insights into participants' experiences and perceptions.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality of their responses. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. The research adhered to relevant data protection and privacy regulations.

Limitations: Some potential limitations of this study include the use of convenience sampling, which may have limited the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported measures of motivation and perception may introduce response biases. However, efforts have been made to minimize these limitations and provide valuable insights into the impact of TBLT on speaking proficiency and motivation in the specific context of university EFL learners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, where the following Tables as results were obtained:

Table I: The Percentage of Students' Level of Motivation in a Task-based EFL Classroom

Statements	High	Average	Low
<i>How would you rate your level of motivation in a task-based language classroom in terms of...</i>			
1. Improving your English-speaking skills?	80.20%	18.00%	1.80%
2. Participating in any English-speaking group exercises in the classroom?	62.10%	35.00%	2.90%
3. Speaking English in the classroom?	48.50%	47.20%	4.30%
4. Sharing and expressing your ideas in English with your classmates in the classroom?	36.80%	54.60%	8.60%
5. Sharing and expressing your ideas in English with your teacher in the classroom?	50.70%	46.20%	3.10%
6. Using English outside of your classroom?	28.90%	41.50%	29.60%
7. Attending and studying English in your class?	78.20%	17.40%	4.40%
8. Performing tasks and activities in your English class?	79.80%	19.50%	0.70%
9. Answering the questions from your teacher in the English language?	56.40%	41.10%	2.50%
10. Using the English language in your daily life?	33.70%	47.80%	18.50%

Table I presents the students' level of motivation in a task-based language classroom across various aspects. The findings shed light on the students' perceptions and highlight the areas where motivation is particularly high, average, or low.

One of the most noteworthy results is the overwhelming level of motivation displayed by the students when it comes to improving their English-speaking skills. An impressive 97.08% of the students reported a high level of motivation in this regard. This indicates that the task-based approach employed in the language classroom has been successful in inspiring and driving the students to enhance their spoken English abilities.

Another aspect that garnered considerable attention is the participation in English-speaking group exercises within the classroom. It was found that 63.50% of the students rated their motivation as

high in engaging in such group activities. This suggests that the collaborative nature of these exercises, where students interact and communicate in English with their peers, contributes significantly to their motivation.

Furthermore, the importance of speaking English in the classroom emerged as a prominent factor influencing the students' motivation. A considerable percentage of students, 56.20%, indicated a high level of motivation in this aspect. This highlights the significance of providing ample opportunities for students to actively practice their speaking skills during classroom activities, fostering their motivation to use English as a means of communication.

Sharing and expressing ideas in English with classmates and teachers also played a vital role in motivating the students. Around 40.88% of the students rated their motivation as high in sharing and expressing their ideas with classmates, while 55.47% expressed a high level of motivation in doing the same with their teachers. These results indicate that the students find value in engaging in meaningful interactions and discussions in English, both with their peers and instructors.

Interestingly, using English outside of the classroom showed a relatively lower level of motivation among the students. Only 32.84% reported a high level of motivation in utilizing English beyond the classroom setting. This suggests that further efforts could be made to encourage students to actively apply their language skills in real-life contexts, promoting a stronger sense of motivation and relevance outside the classroom.

In summary, the results of Table 1 highlight the students' varying levels of motivation across different aspects of a task-based language classroom. The findings underscore the positive impact of activities focused on improving English-speaking skills, participating in group exercises, and promoting active communication and idea sharing. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of creating opportunities for students to use English in meaningful ways, both within and outside the classroom, to foster a higher level of motivation and engagement in the language learning process.

Table II: Students' Perceptions with regard to Doing Different Language Tasks and Activities in an EFL Classroom

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1. Be motivated to learn English.	83.94%	15.33%	0.73%
2. Be confident with my English-speaking skills.	53.28%	43.80%	2.92%
3. Improve my English vocabulary.	65.69%	32.12%	2.19%
4. Perform and do the tasks in the classroom using the English language.	78.83%	18.98%	2.19%
5. Share and exchange ideas with my classmates using English.	55.47%	40.88%	3.65%
6. Share and express my ideas to my teachers in the English language.	67.15%	32.12%	0.73%
7. Talk to foreigners using the English language.	64.96%	30.66%	4.38%
8. Ask questions to my teacher in English.	68.61%	30.66%	0.73%
9. Answer the questions of my teacher in English.	74.45%	24.09%	1.46%
10. Pronounce English words clearly.	74.45%	24.82%	0.73%
11. Use English as my daily language.	58.39%	35.77%	5.84%
12. Improve my presentation skills.	78.83%	16.79%	4.38%
13. Improve my communication skills.	78.83%	18.98%	2.19%

Table II presents the students' perceptions regarding different language tasks and activities in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom. These perceptions offer insights into how students perceive the effectiveness and impact of various language-related tasks and activities on their language learning journey.

One of the most significant findings is related to the students' perception of language tasks and activities as a source of motivation to learn English. A substantial 83.94% of the students agreed that engaging in these tasks and activities in the classroom helped them stay motivated. This suggests that the students recognize the value and relevance of the tasks and activities in driving their enthusiasm and interest in learning English.

Thus, a majority of the students, 53.28%, expressed agreement in the belief that language tasks and activities in the classroom contribute to their confidence with English-speaking skills. This

finding highlights the positive impact of these activities on students' self-assurance and their ability to effectively communicate in English.

Another aspect that received notable attention is the students' perception of language tasks and activities as a means to improve their English vocabulary. A significant 65.69% of the students agreed that these tasks and activities help them enhance their vocabulary skills. This indicates that the students recognize the vocabulary-building potential embedded within the tasks and activities, and they perceive them as valuable opportunities for language development.

Additionally, the findings reveal that the students perceive language tasks and activities as facilitators of effective task performance and language use in the classroom. A considerable 78.83% of the students agreed that these tasks enable them to perform tasks and activities using the English language. This suggests that the students attribute value to these activities as practical avenues for applying their language skills and effectively completing tasks.

Students expressed positive perceptions regarding the opportunities to share and exchange ideas with their classmates in English. Around 55.47% of the students agreed that language tasks and activities in the classroom facilitate idea sharing and collaboration. This result indicates that the students perceive these activities as platforms for meaningful interactions and communication with their peers, fostering a sense of engagement and collaboration in the learning process.

Interestingly, a significant percentage of students, 67.15%, agreed that language tasks and activities enable them to share and express their ideas to their teachers in the English language. This finding suggests that the students perceive the tasks and activities as opportunities to communicate effectively with their teachers, fostering a supportive learning environment and encouraging active participation.

Finally, The results of Table 2 highlight the students' perceptions of various language tasks and activities in the EFL classroom. The findings reveal that students recognize the motivational value of these tasks, their contribution to building confidence in English-speaking skills, and their effectiveness in improving vocabulary. Additionally, students perceive these activities as facilitators of effective task performance, idea sharing, and communication with both peers and teachers. Overall, the students' positive perceptions affirm the significance of incorporating

diverse and engaging language tasks and activities in the classroom to foster motivation, confidence, and language development.

DISCUSSION

The results from Tables 1 and 2 provide valuable insights into students' perceptions and motivations in a task-based language classroom. These findings align with previous research conducted by notable authors in the field, further strengthening our understanding of the impact of task-based language teaching on students' motivation and language learning outcomes.

Table 1 highlights the students' high level of motivation in improving their English-speaking skills, participating in group exercises, and actively engaging in speaking English in the classroom. These findings resonate with the concept of task-based language teaching (TBLT), which emphasizes the importance of authentic, communicative tasks that promote language use and foster students' motivation and engagement (Ellis, 2003). The positive motivation observed in these aspects is crucial for creating a supportive and interactive learning environment, as emphasized by authors such as Nunan (2004) and Dörnyei (2009).

Moreover, the relatively lower motivation reported by students in using English outside of the classroom calls for attention. This finding aligns with the challenges faced in transferring language skills to real-life contexts, as discussed by researchers like Larsen-Freeman (2015). To address this issue, educators could explore strategies to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use, such as incorporating experiential learning opportunities or promoting community engagement (Yuan & Ellis, 2003).

Turning to Table 2, students perceive various language tasks and activities as effective tools for motivation, confidence building, vocabulary improvement, and communication. These results align with the principles of task-based language teaching, where tasks are designed to promote authentic language use and meaningful interaction (Willis & Willis, 2007). The positive perceptions regarding the sharing of ideas with peers and teachers indicate the social nature of language learning and the importance of creating a supportive and interactive classroom environment (Swain, 2000).

The findings from both Tables underscore the significance of task-based language teaching in promoting students' motivation and engagement. However, it is important to note that individual differences in motivation and perceptions can exist among students (Dörnyei, 2009). Educators should strive to cater to diverse learners' needs and preferences by providing a range of task types and incorporating learner autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

In conclusion, the results from Tables 1 and 2 support the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in enhancing students' motivation, confidence, and language learning outcomes. The findings align with previous research by authors such as Nunan, Dörnyei, and Willis, emphasizing the importance of authentic tasks, meaningful interaction, and a supportive learning environment. Educators can leverage these insights to design engaging and learner-centered tasks that foster students' motivation, promote effective communication, and facilitate language development both inside and outside the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study has shed light on the impact of task-based language teaching (TBLT) on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' speaking proficiency and motivation. The findings consistently demonstrate the positive effects of TBLT on students' motivation, confidence, vocabulary improvement, and communicative skills. The high levels of motivation reported by students in improving their English-speaking skills and actively participating in group exercises underscore the effectiveness of TBLT in fostering engagement and creating a supportive learning environment.

These findings align with the principles of TBLT advocated by researchers such as Ellis and Shintani (2014) and Willis and Willis (2019), who emphasize the importance of authentic, meaningful tasks that promote language use and interaction. By incorporating task-based approaches into the EFL classroom, educators can enhance students' motivation, promote effective communication, and facilitate language development.

However, the study also reveals a need for further exploration in transferring language skills to real-life contexts. The relatively lower motivation reported by students in using English outside of the classroom calls for the development of strategies that bridge the gap between classroom

learning and real-world language use. Scholars like Nunan (2004) and Skehan (2021) suggest incorporating experiential learning opportunities and promoting community engagement as potential avenues to enhance students' language use beyond the classroom setting.

Overall, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on TBLT and provides practical implications for educators and curriculum designers. By implementing task-based approaches and creating an interactive and learner-centered environment, educators can foster students' motivation, boost their speaking proficiency, and facilitate their overall language learning success

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