



Research Article

IMPACTS OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING ON SPEAKING AND ORAL PROFICIENCY: AN INITIAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach that has received considerable attention for its potential to improve language learners' communicative competence, especially in speaking skills. This study is a review study that sought to investigate the effect of TBLT on language learners' speaking skills by analyzing 12 articles from the Scopus database. The study sought to achieve its objective by synthesizing information obtained from these articles on how TBLT affects various aspects of language learners' speaking skills and learner-related factors such as confidence and motivation. The study found that there were significant improvements in language learners' fluency in speaking, moderate improvements in accuracy and complexity, as well as positive learner and teacher perceptions of TBLT. The study found that various experimental and mixed-methods designs were used in all these articles. The study concludes by affirming the efficacy of TBLT in language learners' speaking skills in various ESL/EFL contexts.

Keywords: impacts of TBLT; oral communication; review; speaking; TBLT

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The growing need for communicative competence in a globalized world has put the spotlight on efficient EFL instruction strategies. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), a learner-centered approach that emphasizes meaningful and communicative tasks (Ellis et al., 2020), has attracted attention as a viable option for the promotion of authentic language use. Language instruction has moved away from traditional models based on grammar, vocabulary, and translation towards more authentic language use. In this process, TBLT represents a paradigm shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction and from structure-based to meaning-based instruction.

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TBLT reflects contemporary language instruction theories that focus on active learning, constructivism, and authentic language use. In a globalized world where the need for effective cross-linguistic communication is growing, language instruction strategies are increasingly being adopted over theories. TBLT emphasizes authentic language use for real-life tasks, which leads to communication, learner engagement, motivation, critical thinking, and error tolerance. Empirical studies have also shown the effectiveness of TBLT (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019).

1.2. Research objectives and questions

This review aims to bring together recent studies that have shown the impact of TBLT in improving accuracy, fluency, and complexity in language learners. In addition, the objectives and methodologies of the studies will be synthesized for future implications. This review will focus more on TBLT and its impact on communication in the general field of language learning. This review will address the following key questions:

1. How does TBLT impact students' development of communication skills?
2. What interventions have been taken to influence the effectiveness of TBLT in developing communication skills?
3. How have the involved participants perceived TBLT?
4. What adaptations or modifications of TBLT are necessary for different educational contexts?
5. What are future research directions drawn from these studies?

2. Method

This review article aims to examine the application of TBLT in terms of speaking and oral proficiency, as well as the publication trends of TBLT in the Vietnamese context. The methodology used in this review article was based on a thorough process of searching and selecting relevant peer-reviewed journal articles.

2.1. Search Strategy

The literature search was done using the Scopus database, which is a renowned academic database. It was used to search for journal articles relevant to TBLT and its effect on speaking and oral skills and TBLT research in Vietnam. Two keyword searches were done to ensure that a wide and focused range of literature was searched. The keywords "task-based language teaching" and "speaking" or "oral" in the "article titles" field were used to search for articles. This gave a total of 16 articles. After removing one book chapter, there were 15 journal articles remaining. Out of those, 12 articles were available in full text, and 3 articles were not available due to restricted access. The search was restricted to journal articles to ensure academic rigor and quality.

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure relevance and focus, the following inclusion criteria were used for this study: (a) The articles were published in peer-reviewed journals, (b) The articles explicitly dealt with

TBLT in relation to speaking or oral proficiency, and (c) The articles were available in full text for further analysis. The exclusion criteria for this study were articles not published in journals, articles not available in full text, and articles that did not deal directly with TBLT and speaking or oral proficiency. The final corpus for this study consisted of 12 unique articles available in full text.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The full texts of the 12 identified articles were retrieved and reviewed. The process of data extraction concentrated on salient features such as the purpose of the study, methodology used, and findings and implications for TBLT in speaking and oral proficiency development. Emphasis was placed on methodologies used, the efficiency of TBLT in developing speaking and oral proficiency, and other salient features explored in the articles, such as the study participants’ beliefs and challenges encountered during the research process. This process guaranteed a thorough and targeted review of literature that laid the groundwork for analyzing the role of TBLT in oral proficiency development.

3. Results and discussion

This section reports the synthesis of these studies.

3.1. Objectives of the studies

Table 1 displays the summary of each study’s objectives.

Table 1. Objectives of these studies

| Authors | Main Focus | Key Objectives |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| BavaHarji et al. (2014) | Multimedia & Task Complexity | Integrate multimedia into TBLT and examine the effects of varying task complexity on complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). |
| Albino (2017) | Fluency & Learner Views | Assess fluency gains via TBLT; gather learners’ views on the approach. |
| Saragih et al. (2022) | Teachers’ Perceptions | Identify teacher perceptions and challenges of TBLT in speaking classrooms. |
| Widiastuti et al. (2022) | CALL & Student Experience | Evaluate CALL-TBLT using video recording; explore learner experiences and perceptions. |
| Hasnain and Halder (2023) | Fluency & Learner Perceptions | Measure fluency improvement; understand learner attitudes toward TBLT. |
| Zúñiga et al. (2023) | Oral Fluency & Learner Perceptions | Explore learner perceptions of fluency-based tasks; assess implications for improving fluency. |
| Hasnain and Halder (2024) | Fluency, Accuracy & Planning | Examine the impacts of TBLT and task planning on fluency and accuracy. |
| Jassem and sarkhosh (2024) | CAF Development | Assess TBLT’s effect on speaking CAF; explore learner attitudes. |
| Kiruthiga and Christopher (2024) | Technical Learners | Enhance speaking among ITI learners using TBLT; evaluate effectiveness. |
| Basireddi et al. (2025) | Engineering Students | Evaluate TBLT’s impact on speaking, confidence, and engagement in engineering colleges. |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| Gan (2025) | Technology-Enhanced TBLT | Investigate tech-enhanced TBLT’s impact on CAF; identify challenges and future research. |
| Lu et al. (2025) | Localized TBLT vs Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) | Compare localized TBLT to PPP in exam-oriented contexts; measure impact on CAF. |

These studies dealt with different aspects of TBLT’s efficiency in developing oral language competence. Some of the studies dealt with different aspects of oral speaking ability, including fluency in terms of fewer hesitations and increased rate of speech (Albino, 2017; Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Zúñiga et al., 2023), grammatical and lexical accuracy (Hasnain & Halder, 2024; Jassem & Sarkhosh, 2024), and complexity in terms of syntactic and lexical variety (Jassem & Sarkhosh, 2024; Lu et al., 2025). Other studies dealt with other aspects of oral language competence, including communicative confidence and coherence in higher education (Basireddi et al., 2025; Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2024). Some of the studies dealt with learner perception and its different aspects, including learner motivation and interest in learning and reduced anxiety (Albino, 2017; Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Widiastuti et al., 2022; Zúñiga et al., 2023). Other studies dealt with teacher perception and its different aspects (Lu et al., 2025; Saragih et al., 2022). Some of the studies dealt with the use of technology in TBLT and its different aspects (Bava Harji et al., 2014; Gan, 2025; Widiastuti et al., 2022).

3.2. Methodology used in the reviewed studies

Table 2 summarises information related to participant profiles and sampling techniques, intervention design, methods used, data collection tools, and analysis used in these studies.

Table 2. Summary of methods, data collection, and analysis used in the reviewed studies

| Authors | Participants | Tasks & Duration | Data Collection | Analysis |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| BavaHarji et al. (2014) | 57 Iranian EFL adults (19–58) | 12 multimedia tasks over 16 weeks | Audio/video recordings (CAF) | MANOVA, Duncan tests |
| Zúñiga et al. (2023) | 20 Colombian undergrads (18–23) | 10 fluency tasks over 24 weeks | Interviews, questionnaires, rubrics | Thematic analysis, Likert scale |
| Lu et al. (2025) | 101 Chinese 7th-graders | 11 textbook-based TBLT tasks over 15 weeks | Pre/post-tests (CAF, PET-based) | Statistical CAF comparison |
| Albino (2017) | 40 Angolan 9th-graders | Picture descriptions + 8 lessons over 8 weeks | Audio recordings, interviews | Qualitative + thematic analysis |
| Gan (2025) | Varied (5 studies) | Tech-enhanced TBLT (Zoom, apps, etc.) | Pre/post-tests, interviews, audio | Mixed methods (quant + qual) |
| Saragih et al. (2022) | 10 Indonesian EFL teachers | Communicative speaking tasks | Questionnaires, interviews | Descriptive stats, thematic analysis |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|---|--|------------------------------|
| Widiastuti et al. (2022) | 38 Indonesian undergrads | | CALL-mediated video tasks over 12 weeks | Pre/post-tests, questionnaires, interviews | T-tests, thematic analysis |
| Hasnain and Halder (2023) | 30 Indian trainees | B.Ed. | 10 real-life tasks over 6 weeks | Audio recordings, interviews | Qualitative CAF analysis |
| Jassem and sarkhosh (2024) | 50 intermediate students | Iraqi | TBLT vs traditional over 10 weeks | Pre/post-tests, attitude surveys | ANCOVA, MANCOVA |
| Hasnain and Halder (2024) | 52 Indian trainees | B.Ed. | 10 tasks over 6 weeks | Audio recordings (CAF), interviews | Wilcoxon test, effect size |
| Kiruthiga and Christopher (2024) | 76 Indian students | ITI | 5-week job-related tasks | Video recordings, progressive tests | Paired & independent T-tests |
| Basireddi et al. (2025) | 100 engineering students | Indian | Group discussions, interviews, etc. | Pre/post-tests, surveys, interviews | T-tests, triangulation |

3.2.1. Participant profiles and sampling techniques

The reviewed studies involved a wide range of learner populations, including secondary students, university learners, teacher trainees, and vocational students. University students were prominently featured in countries such as Iran (BavaHarji et al., 2014), Indonesia (Widiastuti et al., 2022), India (Hasnain & Halder, 2023, 2024), Colombia (Zúniga et al., 2023), and China (Lu et al., 2025). Secondary school participants appeared in studies from China, Iraq, and Indonesia (Gan, 2025; Jassem & Sarkhosh, 2024; Lu et al., 2025). Teacher trainees were examined in two Indian studies (Hasnain & Halder, 2023, 2024), while technical, vocational, and engineering students were the focus in India-based research (Basireddi et al., 2025; Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2024). Additionally, EFL teachers were studied in Indonesia (Saragih et al., 2022). Sampling methods varied, including random assignment (Jassem & Sarkhosh, 2024; Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2024), purposive sampling (Hasnain & Halder, 2023), and intact class sampling (Widiastuti et al., 2022). This reflects these studies' methodological diversity.

3.2.2. Intervention design: TBLT tasks and duration

All studies implemented TBLT interventions, drawing on Willis's framework in 1996 or comparable models to structure their tasks. The interventions featured a variety of task types, including real-life communicative tasks such as role-plays, interviews, and discussions (Albino, 2017; Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2024; Saragih et al., 2022), as well as narrative, descriptive, decision-making, and comparison tasks, which were widely used across studies (BavaHarji et al., 2014; Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Zúniga et al., 2023). Some studies incorporated localized or theme-based tasks tailored to learners' textbooks or specific learning contexts (Basireddi et al., 2025; Lu et al., 2025). The duration of these interventions varied considerably, ranging from 5 to 24 weeks, with instructional sessions typically held

once or twice a week. Session lengths ranged from 60 to 150 minutes, allowing for sustained engagement with task-based activities.

3.2.3. *Assessment focus: Measuring CAF and beyond*

CAF measures can be operationalized through various linguistic features. Fluency is often measured through features such as words per minute, pause frequency, pause length, and speech clarity. Accuracy is often measured through features such as the number of clauses without error and grammatical accuracy. Complexity is often measured through features such as subordination, conjunctions, and vocabulary. Some studies, such as those conducted by Hasnain and Halder (2023) and Zúñiga et al. (2023), have also measured expressive features such as pacing, prosody, and interaction strategies. Moreover, subjective features such as learner confidence, learner enjoyment, and teacher observations have been included in various studies to obtain a more comprehensive view of learner development, as proposed in Basireddi et al. (2025) and Gan (2025).

3.3. *The effectiveness of TBLT on oral communication*

Table 3. Summaries of key findings in these studies

| Authors | Findings |
|----------------------------------|---|
| BavaHarji et al. (2014) | TBLT improved accuracy, fluency, and complexity—greatest impact on fluency. |
| Albino (2017) | Gains in fluency, accuracy, and interactional language; positive learner perceptions. |
| Saragih et al. (2022) | Teachers favoured TBLT; prioritized accuracy; noted design challenges and L1 interference. |
| Widiastuti et al. (2022) | Significant speaking performance gains; students valued autonomy and self-review. |
| Hasnain and Halder (2023) | Fluency and accuracy improved; learners valued collaboration and real-world tasks. |
| Zúñiga et al. (2023) | 100% positive perception; fluency gains with fewer pauses and better pacing. |
| Hasnain and Halder (2024) | Fluency and accuracy increased; repetitions also rose; no control group. |
| Jassem and Sarkhosh (2024) | Experiment group (EG) outperformed control group (CG) in all CAF areas and attitudes; strong TBLT impact. |
| Kiruthiga and Christopher (2024) | EG saw major speaking gains; real-world tasks reduced anxiety and improved fluency. |
| Basireddi et al. (2025) | EG showed significant post-test improvements across all speaking components. |
| Gan (2025) | Tech-enhanced TBLT improved fluency and complexity; mixed accuracy; mostly positive views. |
| Lu et al. (2025) | Localized TBLT outperformed PPP in fluency and complexity; accuracy was unchanged. |

The synthesized findings support the effectiveness of TBLT:

Fluency Improvements. In all studies, a notable finding was the improvement in learners' fluency after TBLT interventions. Fluency showed the greatest consistency in improvement, evidenced by increases in word count, speaking rate (Albino, 2017; Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2024), and decreases in long pause count (Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Zúniga et al., 2023). Interactive features such as role plays, group work, and planning time facilitated smooth and confident communication. TBLT interventions using technology-mediated TBLT or CALL (Gan, 2025; Widiastuti et al., 2022) also reported improved fluency, which they attributed to reduced anxiety and increased learner engagement.

Accuracy Gains. The TBLT interventions had a significant but inconsistent effect on the learners' grammatical accuracy. Some studies have found improvements in error-free clauses and grammatical structures (Hasnain & Halder, 2024; Jassem & Sarkhosh, 2024). Yet, the struggle to master complex structures like verb tenses, prepositions, and modals was evident, especially for low-level students and under time pressure (Hasnain & Halder, 2024; Gan, 2025). Teachers also focused on the importance of accuracy, seeing its value for long-term fluency (Saragih et al., 2022).

Complexity Enhancements. The TBLT intervention was also seen to have a positive impact on the linguistic complexity of the students, especially in the areas of syntactic variety, sentence length, and lexical complexity. There were reports of increased subordination and grammatical verb form variation, which indicated improved syntactic development among the students (Jassem & Sarkhosh, 2024; Lu et al., 2025). There were also reports of the positive effects of the visual and multimedia tasks, which were seen to enhance the complexity of the language use of the students, especially in the areas of lexical and syntactic variation (BavaHarji et al., 2014; Gan, 2025).

3.4. Students' and Teachers' Positive Attitudes toward TBLT

Both students and teachers generally expressed positive attitudes toward TBLT (Gan, 2025; Zúniga et al., 2023). This proposes its practical benefits and impact on language development. Students appreciated the relevance and engaging nature of task-based activities, often noting increased motivation, greater confidence, and a stronger willingness to communicate in English (Albino, 2017). Teachers also recognized TBLT's effectiveness in enhancing students' speaking skills, particularly in promoting fluency and interaction (Saragih et al., 2022).

3.5. Reported Challenges

Collectively, the studies have pointed out some of the challenges that can be faced while using TBLT for learners of different kinds. The challenges that have been faced while using TBLT include smaller sample sizes and the lack of control groups in some studies

(Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Widiastuti et al., 2022). Challenges that have been faced by learners include slower learning for low-proficiency learners in terms of accuracy and difficulty in peer speaking and reformulation tasks due to assessment stress and time constraints (Hasnain & Halder, 2023). Challenges that have been faced in the classroom include managing learners of different levels in terms of ability and creativity in designing tasks due to the presence of learners of different levels in the classroom (Saragih et al., 2022). In addition to this, learners using their mother tongue and the difficulty in using the target language exclusively have also been observed to be some of the challenges faced while using TBLT (Saragih et al., 2022). In addition to this, the lack of exposure to the language and the presence of psychological barriers in the form of low confidence levels among technical and vocational learners have also been observed to be some of the challenges faced by learners while using TBLT. TBLT has helped to overcome some of the challenges faced by learners in terms of providing a supportive learning environment.

3.6. Pedagogical Implications

This review further confirms TBLT as an effective and versatile method for developing speaking competence among different learner types and educational settings. Research has shown that TBLT can improve fluency, accuracy, and complexity in learners' speaking ability through sequenced tasks that promote holistic language development (Albino, 2017; BavaHarji et al., 2014; Zúniga et al., 2023). Rooted in authentic communication, TBLT can increase learners' confidence and motivation and decrease speaking apprehension (Gan, 2025; Hasnain & Halder, 2024). The incorporation of multimedia and technology, such as CALL and video technology, can add another dimension to language teaching that can encourage learner engagement, autonomy, and reflection (Gan, 2025; Widiastuti et al., 2022).

Localized and context-specific task design is important in test-focused and professional learning environments. Task relevance is increased through alignment with learning objectives and learner needs, especially for technical and vernacular-background learners (Basireddi et al., 2025; Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2024; Lu et al., 2025). Meaning-focused communicative tasks promote natural communication, risk-taking, and a focus on communicative needs rather than grammatical form.

Training teachers and task design are essential for successful TBLT implementation. Various strategies, including pre-task planning, repetition, and feedback, can aid teachers in achieving a balance between fluency and accuracy (Jassem & Sarkhosh, 2024; Saragih et al., 2022). Teachers are advised to consider incorporating technology and collaborative tasks while avoiding first-language reliance for successful TBLT implementation in heterogeneous classrooms (Gan, 2025). Teachers should be trained to effectively implement TBLT to realize its full potential.

3.7. *Synthesis of Future Research Directions*

The review of these studies shows several future directions for TBLT research on speaking skills, including diversified task types, longitudinal studies, more focus on specific linguistic and affective aspects, and digital literacy.

Diversifying Task Types and Dimensions. Future studies should look into different kinds of tasks and their effects on fluency development. Previous studies showed that interactive tasks, such as role-plays and interviews, promote more fluency development than presentation tasks (Gan, 2025; Zúniga et al., 2023). Researchers may also look into different modalities, interactivity, and communicative demands of tasks, including technology-mediated tasks such as YouTube or mobile-assisted tasks (Gan, 2025; Widiastuti et al., 2022). Complexity and strategies for task sequencing, such as simple to complex tasks, may also provide further information on how fluency development can be promoted more effectively (BavaHarji et al., 2014).

Longitudinal and Large-Scale Studies. Several research studies also suggest the need for longitudinal and large-scale research to examine the long-term viability of TBLT's effectiveness (Albino, 2017; Gan, 2025; Lu et al., 2025). The research currently conducted on TBLT has only been based on short-term research, with some research being based on limited samples (Gan, 2025; Widiastuti et al., 2022). Longitudinal research needs to be conducted on TBLT to examine its viability over time and its application to larger populations.

Focus on Specific Linguistic and Affective Variables. In the future, more research should be conducted on specific aspects of the language, such as verb forms, modals, prepositions, and pronunciation, which are commonly problematic, particularly in time-constrained conditions or for low-proficiency speakers (Gan, 2025; Hasnain & Halder, 2024). Meanwhile, affective aspects such as learner anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence should also be investigated, particularly for tech-based or communicative tasks (Basireddi et al., 2025; Gan, 2025). The complex relationships between these cognitive and emotional states and task performance should also be explored.

Technology Integration and Digital Proficiency. With the increased popularity of CALL in TBLT, there is a need to examine further how particular CALL tools can facilitate speaking improvement. While Gan (2025) and Widiastuti et al. (2022) emphasize multimedia's contribution to learner engagement and fluency improvement, they also report that such improvement varies in accordance with learners' levels of digital literacy. Further research is needed to examine different CALL tools in comparison to each other, learners' attitudes towards them, and the effect of access and equity issues.

4. Conclusion

This review aimed to evaluate the impact of TBLT on the development of oral communication skills through the analysis of 12 Scopus indexed full-text journal articles. The studies reviewed have consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of TBLT in improving learners' speaking ability in terms of fluency. However, some gaps have to be filled in future studies. Firstly, future studies need to extend the variety of tasks and modalities. Secondly, future studies need to be more longitudinal and extensive in nature to ensure that TBLT can be more effectively and widely applied. Thirdly, there is an urgent need to conduct further research into particular aspects of language use. Lastly, technology integration needs to be explored.

In conclusion, while TBLT has tremendous potential for improving speaking skills in language learners, there are some research gaps that need to be covered. Teachers in resource-constrained settings can become more effective in their work by using resource-friendly materials, emphasizing collaborative learning, and using local settings in task design. This can be done by being flexible in task design to accommodate resource availability and using reflective strategies to build learners' confidence. Teachers can also become more effective by working in collaboration with local people and engaging in continuous learning. This will ensure that TBLT is effective in improving language learners' speaking skills in a comprehensive and adaptive manner.

❖ **Conflict of Interest:** Author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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**TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA PHƯƠNG PHÁP GIẢNG DẠY NGÔN NGỮ
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TÓM TẮT

Phương pháp giảng dạy ngôn ngữ dựa trên việc thực hiện các nhiệm vụ (Task-Based Language Teaching - TBLT) đã thu hút được sự chú ý đáng kể vì tiềm năng nâng cao năng lực giao tiếp của người học, đặc biệt là trong kĩ năng nói. Nghiên cứu này xem xét tác động của TBLT đối với sự phát triển ngôn ngữ nói bằng cách phân tích 12 bài báo khoa học đã được bình duyệt từ cơ sở dữ liệu Scopus. Mục tiêu chính là tổng hợp các phát hiện về cách TBLT ảnh hưởng đến các khía cạnh quan trọng của khả năng giao tiếp và các yếu tố cảm xúc của người học như sự tự tin và động lực. Đánh giá tổng quan cho thấy có sự cải thiện rõ rệt về sự trôi chảy trong lời nói, sự cải thiện vừa phải về độ chính xác và mức độ phức tạp, cùng với nhận định tích cực từ cả người học và giáo viên. Về mặt phương pháp, các nghiên cứu đã sử dụng nhiều thiết kế thực nghiệm và phương pháp hỗn hợp, kết hợp giữa các thước đo định lượng về sự trôi chảy, độ chính xác và độ phức tạp, cùng với các phân tích định tính. Nhìn chung, nghiên cứu này khẳng định hiệu quả của TBLT trong việc phát triển kĩ năng nói trong nhiều bối cảnh dạy và học tiếng Anh như ngôn ngữ thứ hai (ESL) hoặc ngoại ngữ (EFL).

Từ khóa: tác động của TBLT; giao tiếp bằng lời nói; đánh giá tổng quan; kĩ năng nói; TBLT