

Exploring Obstacles and Effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Approach in EFL Speaking Instruction: Insights from an Adult EFL Classroom

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Abstract

The use of speaking skills in adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction is complex and multifaceted. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) offers an opportunity to improve EFL speaking abilities. However, more research is needed on the practical challenges of incorporating TBLT in adult EFL settings. The current study aimed to (1) identify obstacles in implementing the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in adult EFL speaking instruction, (2) explore learners' perceptions of difficulties, (3) assess the effectiveness of TBLT methods, and (4) provide recommendations to improve the use of TBLT in adult EFL speaking classes. The study utilized qualitative research methods where 58 participants from an adult EFL speaking class in Dhaka, Bangladesh, were selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected through 90-day observations in an EFL-speaking classroom, audio and video recordings, and semi-structured interviews with 10 students and one instructor. The study found that students struggled with understanding English instructions and relied heavily on their first language (L1) during group discussions. Task-based activities and traditional language exercises were crucial for effective learning, but obstacles like nervousness, lack of confidence, and grammatical faults hindered the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Adult EFL learners recognized TBLT's effectiveness in improving speaking skills, emphasizing the importance of regular practice and a supportive learning environment. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need to address obstacles like lack of confidence, language difficulties, and inadequate instructional assistance in adult EFL instruction to improve speaking abilities and effectively achieve language learning objectives.

Keywords: adult literacy, English as a foreign language, TBLT, adult EFL learners, speaking skills, learners' perceptions, obstacles of TBLT, effectiveness of TBLT

1. Introduction

Speaking is one of the primary language abilities. It is an interactive process of meaning construction that incorporates language processing, production, and reception (Luoma, 2004). Furthermore, speaking is the most crucial language ability. It is perhaps the most crucial of the four macro skills required for language communication (Zaremba, 2006). Speaking is a talent that only some students find simple to acquire. This issue is caused by a variety of learner-related reasons, including a lack of vocabulary, uncertainty about when to use proper words, bad pronunciation, grammatical ignorance, anxiousness, lack of confidence, hate of studying grammar, and unfamiliarity with speaking (Heriansyah, 2012).

In addition to challenges brought on by learner-related issues, there are challenges brought on by factors connected to the teaching process. According to Chang (2017), traditional teaching methods, which are primarily teacher-centered, produce students who are passive and not fluent in English. On the other hand, active, communicative learning is the most effective way to acquire language abilities, and language training that considers the context and meaning of the language being taught is the most successful (Ellis, 2003, p. 45).

Numerous language specialists have argued that communication and interaction are essential components of language acquisition (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2006), and they have given credit to CLT for emphasizing interaction. According to Nunan (1992), 'task learning' promotes student conversation, creates a calm classroom environment, and strengthens students' understandable contributions. Additionally, he

made note of the potential importance of the task-based language approach in the communicative language classroom, emphasizing that different activities may be used by the requirements, interests, and language competence levels of the students.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) provides English learners a chance to improve their speaking skills. It gets attention in language education. However, using TBLT with adult English learners has unknown difficulties. Despite its theoretical promise, little is known about the practical challenges of applying it.

The existing body of literature has mainly highlighted the benefits of task-based learning approaches. However, there is a lack of research that investigates the complicated issues, potential solutions, and specific outcomes connected with incorporating TBLT concepts into adult EFL speaking instruction. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive examination and evaluation of TBLT's application in the context of adult EFL speaking training.

This research is a comprehensive study that clarifies the challenges faced by teachers when incorporating TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) ideas. The study also investigates the viewpoints of adult EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners regarding the challenges they face with TBLT-based speaking assignments. Furthermore, the efficiency of TBLT strategies in resolving these issues will be assessed, and useful suggestions for improving the application of TBLT in adult EFL speaking training will be provided.

Another critical component of this research is improving language learning outcomes in adult English as Foreign Language (EFL) settings. This can be accomplished through putting policy measures into place, creating efficient curriculum design techniques, and enhancing language instruction methods. By examining the unique difficulties and solutions associated with the application of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in adult EFL training, the research will further the continuous improvement of language education methodologies.

Therefore, although TBLT offers a viable approach to enhancing English speaking ability in non-native language environments, its use in adult EFL courses is complex and multidimensional. The advantages of task-based learning have been well documented in the literature; nevertheless, further research is necessary to fully understand the unique difficulties, possible solutions, and observable results of TBLT in adult EFL speaking training. Thus, this study aims to thoroughly analyze the obstacles preventing the successful implementation of TBLT in adult EFL environments. By addressing these issues, the research hopes to provide valuable insights to teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers, leading to enhanced language learning outcomes in adult EFL classes.

The specific objectives of the current study are to (1) pinpoint the challenges associated with implementing the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in adult EFL speaking instruction, (2) delve into learners' perceptions of these challenges, (3) evaluate the efficacy of TBLT approach, and (4) offer recommendations for enhancing the use of TBLT in adult EFL speaking classes.

2. Literature Review

As a CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) expression, TBLT opposes conventional language teaching approaches that emphasize language form, such as the grammar-translation method, which has been accused of reducing the authenticity and grammar-orientedness of language acquisition (Iveson, 2019). During task-based language training, however, students are expected to actively participate in their work and are encouraged to utilize the target language (Nunan, 2004). In this approach, teachers utilize tasks to create an authentic learning environment in the language classroom (Long, 2016). As engagement with others is the primary goal of task-based learning (Ellis, 2017), students can utilize it to improve their communication skills, which can be challenging for language learners (Muslim, 2017).

In their research, Ng et al. (2024) pointed out that one of the challenges in language learning is students face motivational issues and lack practical engagement, which TBLT aims to resolve through dynamic, interactive tasks. The study also noted that the shift from product-based to process-oriented learning in writing, this correlates with TBLT's interactive, communicative focus on speaking.

Ngoc (2023) investigated how TBLT affected the speaking abilities of EFL students. Sixty volunteers from a Ho Chi Minh City hospitality college participated in this quasi-experimental study. For eight weeks, the students in the experimental group received instruction using TBLT, whereas the control group received instruction using a traditional approach. The students' speaking abilities were evaluated using the pre-test and post-test tools before and after the therapy, and their opinions on the application of TBLT were gathered using a questionnaire. The utilization of SPSS software enabled the analysis and interpretation of study data. An independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean values of the two groups' pre-test and post-test scores. Regarding the questionnaire, the average and standard deviation of every item were computed and analyzed. The findings demonstrated that students had positive attitudes regarding the use of TBLT in speaking classes and that it significantly improves their speaking talents.

Falah et al. (2023) investigated the impact of TBLT alteration in the context of EFL in Indonesia. This mixed-method research involved 91 students from two institutions in Kuningan, West Java, Indonesia. Data was collected using two instruments: a questionnaire and tests. This study stated that the framework-inspired TBLT might improve students' oral communication skills. Speaking proficiency test results show that the average score from the post-test (9, 67) was higher than the score from the pre-test (8.19). Furthermore, the two-tailed statistical significance value was 0.042, or less than 0.05. This indicates that practically every assessed component of speaking (vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation) is impacted by the student's performance within this framework. Additionally, from the perspective of the students, this framework has been well welcomed because it required and engaged the students to participate in class activities.

Nguyen et al. (2022) conducted research to gain insight into Vietnamese teachers' impressions of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) on sixty-two teachers. The study included the teachers' viewpoints on the implementation of TBLT, their worries throughout the teaching

and learning process, and their knowledge of tasks and TBLT concepts. Focus group interviews were used to gather data, which were then both statistically and qualitatively examined. The survey demonstrated that most of the Vietnamese instructors understood TBLT quite well and had a favorable attitude toward it. The results did, however, also mention several challenges Vietnamese instructors had while using TBLT. They are mostly related to the present educational policies, time constraints, class size, the negative attitudes that pupils are acquiring, and the effects of the conventional form-based system.

In a research conducted by Lam et al. (2021), a questionnaire about Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) of English as a foreign language was completed by 136 lecturers to find out more about the beliefs and practices of Vietnamese technical university instructors. Seven of them participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study demonstrated that the instructors had positive opinions of TBLT and were willing to use it in their classrooms. Still, there were some notable differences between the teachers' views on TBLT.

Additionally, Nget et al. (2020) used 78 ninth-grade students in a quasi-experimental study to determine how Task-Based Instruction (TBI) impacted the students' English-speaking proficiency and method satisfaction. Speaking tests and the student satisfaction survey were utilized to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The results of the poll showed that students believed TBI to be beneficial. Consequently, students viewed TBI as a method that would create the optimal language learning environment, improve their verbal communication skills, increase their confidence when speaking, and motivate them to study English.

In order to find out how task-based language learning affected the growth of secondary-level learners' speaking abilities, Anjum et al. (2019) experimentally studied ninth graders in the Islamabad District. Two groups—experimental and control—were drawn at random from a randomly chosen school in the Islamabad District and placed in a natural setting. For forty-five days, while the experimental group got treatment, the control group received conventional teaching. A pre-and post-test was employed to determine the difference in the mean scores of both groups. A two-tailed t-test was applied at 0.05 levels. Because the experimental group's post-test scores were significantly higher than the control groups, the results of the study showed that the mean speaking ability ratings of the participants varied in statistically significant ways. The study's findings confirmed the efficacy of TBLT as a foreign language, and it was suggested that Pakistani educators use a practical TBLT approach rather than battling with antiquated conventional techniques for second language learning.

Yousif (2017) carried out research to determine how communicative task-based education affected Sudanese university EFL students' ability to communicate orally. A design of experimentation was used to administer the therapy. Thirty students in their first year of college and thirty teachers made up the 63 participants in the research. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather the data. Pre- and post-tests, observation, and a questionnaire served as the study tools. Frequency distribution, chi-square test, t-test, p-value, percentages, and median were used to examine the data. The results of this study showed that task-based training improves students' speaking in a good way.

The impact of task-based language instruction (TBLT) on non-English major students' speaking performance was examined by Lou et al. (2016). Participating in the study were 65 Yangtze University first-year students. The study used an experimental design with two groups: the experimental and the control. Task-based training was given to the experimental group, whereas the PPP technique was used to instruct the control group. Before conducting the study, the oral performance proficiency of the students was assessed. There were little changes between the experimental and control groups according to the findings. Students took tests after the semester, and the results demonstrated that, in contrast to the poor outcomes the control group achieved using the 3Ps technique; task-based training had a beneficial effect on improving students' oral performance in terms of accuracy and fluency.

Wahidin (2016) also found that TBLT had a favorable impact on speaking proficiency in a quasi-experimental study conducted in another Asian nation. Fifty undergraduates took part in the study as members of the experimental and control groups. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze test-derived data. The study's conclusions highlighted that pre-task exercises can enhance students' awareness of the subject and encourage them to utilize their prior knowledge before speaking. During the task cycle phase, which includes several group or pair activities, students can improve their speaking accuracy and fluency, as well as their ability to communicate effectively with one another.

Tuan and Mai (2015) investigated the difficulties that students were having speaking English. Ten professors and two hundred and three students participated in the research. Both classroom observations and a questionnaire were used to gather data. The findings from the observation and the questionnaires given to the teachers and students were quite comparable. These results suggested that elements influencing students' speaking performance include topical knowledge, listening skills, confidence, and speaking activities. Along with other issues, poor grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary cause pupils to struggle while speaking English.

Using action research, Pham and Nguyen (2014) examined how task-based speaking exercises affected 53 first-year English majors at Ba Ria-Vung Tau Teachers' Training College. The investigation demonstrated how many of the pupil's speech performance had improved. Exams, surveys, and observation notes were employed as data collection tools. According to the test results, students who get TBLT teaching talk more fluently because they have more opportunities to practice speaking with partners and feel more comfortable speaking in front of others. In the next year, Bui (2015) carried out another supplementary action research with thirty-two first-year non-English majors at Ha Noi University of Business and Technology. The authors were able to determine some of the reasons for the students' subpar speaking abilities and provide evidence for the effectiveness of TBLT in improving those abilities by analyzing and interpreting the data from the tests and surveys.

Wang (2014) addressed the challenges Chinese EFL students have in speaking clearly and persuasively in English. In the study, one hundred students took part. These university students were junior English majors. Closed-ended questions were included in the 10 items that made up the questionnaire. The results showed that speaking may have two main issues: accuracy, which includes grammatical errors, and fluency, which includes mispronouncing words, pausing, and losing knowledge while speaking.

Gan (2012) studied the issues with spoken English proficiency that tertiary ESL students faced. Twenty students took part in the study, and information was gathered through semi-structured interviews where participants were allowed to share their experiences with speaking difficulties they run into when speaking English. The results show that pupils' oral speaking was plagued by several issues, including poor vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and pronunciation. Students also lack speaking experience in the classroom and live in unfavorable environments outside of it.

Although there is an expanding body of researches on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), a considerable gap remains in understanding the specific challenges encountered by adult English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners in non-traditional settings. Most studies have predominantly focused on secondary and university-level students, with insufficient attention given to adult learners in informal or continuing education programs. Furthermore, existing research often lacks a thorough exploration of instructors' experiences and the pedagogical strategies employed to address these challenges. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of TBLT implementation in adult EFL speaking instruction, identifying key obstacles, and proposing practical solutions to enhance its effectiveness.

3. A Framework for EFL Speaking Course Design

This study's framework is distinct from prior models created by Kim et al. (2017), Llorente Bravo et al. (2022), and Kim (2019). The first distinction of this framework is pre-task activity. Through a series of videos or texts, this research sought to assist the students prior to the start of the speaking class by providing them with the speaking subject, the terminology they should be familiar with, and an example of how to present the issue in front of the class. Through this approach, the pupils will be ready for class. This phase was motivated by the work of Llorente Bravo et al. (2022), who recognized that modeling or input is crucial in a foreign language setting. However, it was noticed that spending time on these pre-task activities decreased with each class meeting.

The second difference relates to grammar. According to Kim (2019), TBLT does not significantly neglect grammar. For the pupils to talk more accurately, this is still necessary. In this model, students received grammatical correction in the post-task activity immediately following their completion of the primary speaking task. This allowed the pupil to talk more freely and not worry as much about grammar. However, the post-task exercise only addressed the grammatical flaws that were observed during the main speech; no other grammar or structures were taught, thus they were able to steer clear of the same mistakes in the future.

The third difference was the extension. In light of the fact that class time was often limited, the current study's approach included extracurricular activities. The extension enabled the students to record themselves on video and deepen their understanding of the material by extending their learning outside of the classroom. Figure 1 illustrates the processes involved in training speaking straightforwardly.

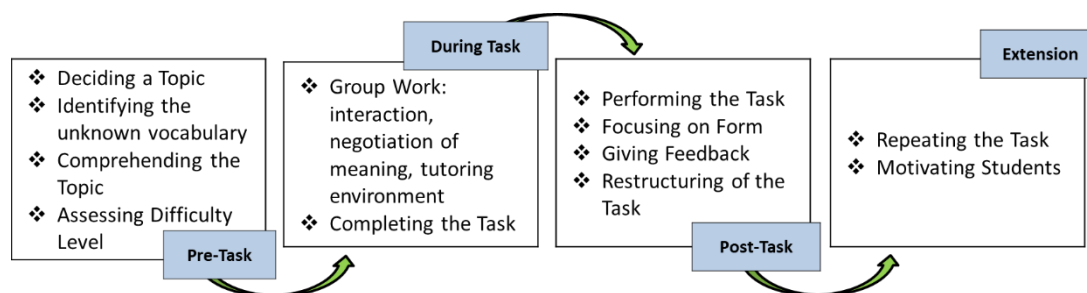


Figure 1: An Inspired-TBLT Framework

a. Pre-task: In the pre-task stage, the teacher conducted several preparatory exercises before the speaking portion of the main task to ensure that students were adequately prepared. The first exercise involved selecting a topic for students to present and complete in class. The instructor carefully chose a topic relevant to the learners' experiences and abilities, ensuring familiarity and engagement. This approach motivated students to speak at greater length on the given topic and encouraged the development of their speaking skills, which are often considered challenging to master.

The second subtask focused on enhancing students' vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The instructor provided students with relevant texts or videos containing key foreign terminology to support their speech production. Since a lack of vocabulary can hinder effective communication, students who struggle with fluency often experience difficulty in finding the right words. Similarly, grammar and sentence structure play a crucial role in speaking proficiency. Providing students with supplementary materials helped reinforce these fundamental aspects, improving their confidence in verbal communication.

The third exercise ensured that students had sufficient time to fully comprehend the subject matter. After receiving textual or video

support to enhance their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, students needed time to process and internalize the material. Initially, time constraints were determined by students' schedules rather than by the instructor. To address this issue, the study recommended implementing a "pre-class activity" using flipped learning. This approach allows students to engage with the material at their own pace, aligning with their learning styles and availability of time.

The final aspect considered the complexity of the topic. Evaluating students' level of difficulty with the given material before class was essential in facilitating their interaction and engagement during the main task. During the "during-task" phase, students assumed various roles while their cognitive load was at its lowest. The instructor also used this stage to assess students' comprehension and address any challenges through pre-task demonstrations. This pre-speaking activity was conducted at least one day before the actual session, but allocating additional preparation time further improved students' readiness and confidence in speaking tasks.

b. During Task: The students worked both independently and in pairs (depending on the topic) throughout the speaking class's assignment activity. Nonetheless, the first two meetings focused more on group learning than on individual learning. Students' anxiety appears to be reduced in a cooperative environment (Ngadiso, 2015). Following group or pair work, the students are required to finish the assigned assignment, present it to their peers, and discuss how they accomplished it. Thus, student contact will be considered a key factor in enhancing their speaking skills.

c. Post-task: During this stage, the task's results are evaluated using a variety of exercises. Students were invited to complete the assignments in front of the class as part of the current study's public speaking or class performance activity. It provided the student with an additional chance to engage and utilize the target language. In addition to providing corrections and feedback on the student's work, the teacher took notes throughout the performance and noted any improper vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or even context. The feedback was provided at the previous session so that the students might use it for the subsequent challenge.

d. Extension: This design not only offers feedback after speaking, but it also allows them to deepen their comprehension by repeating the job. When individuals repeat a task, their productivity improves in a variety of dimensions, including complexity, clarity of expression, and fluency. In this research, pupils perform a similar task. This stage was carried out outside of class utilizing video recording because speaking time was occasionally limited. Students shared their own videos with the instructors' email addresses and the class WhatsApp group. This practice was useful since it increased pupils' exposure to the target language. The video that was posted will also be examined to incorporate and assess further input.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Since the current study was purely descriptive, it applied a qualitative research design. This design typically focuses on in-depth and verbal descriptions instead of numerical data. To achieve the goal of this study, purposive sampling was carried out. Tongco (2007) stated that in several different research contexts, including case studies, informants with a particular skill or knowledge set, cultural practice comparisons, preliminary studies where the researcher is still determining whether a proposed research is feasible, and situations where the population is too small for a random sample, purposive sampling can be applied. This study conducted an extensive 90-day observation in an EFL classroom to gather the necessary data. The audio and video of the classroom discussion were captured. Following the 90-day classroom observation, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and students to gather their insights on the challenges and effectiveness of using the TBLT teaching approach in the EFL classroom.

4.2 Participants

This study was conducted for 90 days between January 2024 and April 2024. As participants, there were 58 students in the EFL classroom, especially the students of the Language Club of Mentors' Education Limited in Dhaka, Bangladesh. One participant of this study was an EFL teacher who completed her higher study in England and students of different backgrounds in Bangladesh. These students were learning the English language with a specific goal of improving their speaking skills in the English language, and most of them had plans to study abroad, particularly in European countries. According to first observations, most of the pupils' English competence varied. Every participant completed their upper secondary education at the Bangladeshi college with a Bangla medium of instruction. Some students enrolled in several private universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to pursue their undergraduate degrees. Even though they had taken some English language classes, they could not practice speaking in classrooms or universities as much as needed. Since Bangladesh is a Bangla-speaking nation, every participant acknowledged how uncommon it was to speak English with people outside of the classroom.

4.3 Data Collection Methods and Analysis

4.3.1 Classroom Observation

According to Pawar (2007), the classroom observation approach not only allows for the collection of rich and informative data in realistic settings, but it also helps to overcome some of the limitations of other data collection methods such as interviews and surveys. Classroom observations were carried out in the current study between January and April of 2024. The researcher also captured the classroom observations on video and audio recordings. Finally, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim as the primary source of data analysis.

4.3.2 Students and Teachers Interviews

This study involved 58 EFL students. The current study used semi-structured interviews, followed by face-to-face interviews with ten students chosen by the researcher at the end of the research procedure. The researcher interviewed one of the instructors following the classroom observation. The interviewer recorded and transcribed all interviews for qualitative analysis. In terms of research data analysis, the current study focused primarily on qualitative data. The researcher evaluated the collected qualitative data, which included interviews and classroom observations, and the analysis was double-checked by the study's supervisor. All of the interview questions were connected with the research goals, allowing the study to achieve its primary purpose.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Classroom Observation

Based on classroom observations, there were two key results about adult EFL learners with non-English major backgrounds who engaged in task-based speaking activities. First, when the teacher discussed any activities or processes that the students were unfamiliar with, the instructor had to repeat them several times because the students could not understand the instructions in English; yet, English is the sole medium used in this EFL speaking class. On the other hand, students used a lot of L1 (First Language) during group discussions or when they looked to their instructor for help, and they had a tendency to focus on finding methods to complete the task rather than utilizing and practicing the target language. Second, implementing only task-based activities during class time was impossible. Some language drills and other activities or exercises provided by the instructor during the target language acquisition process were essential for the learners' knowledge preservation.

In addition to the teacher-student interaction in the classroom, based on the documented data of observations made throughout the experimental period, four characteristics were inferred from the task extracts: (1) according to one assessment of the classroom environment, working in pairs or groups provided students the chance to learn from one another and increased their willingness to speak out. The remaining three focused on the discourse analysis of the participants during the tasks. They are (2) the participants tended to use lots of modal particles, discourse markers, and fillers, such as mm, ah, hey, and okay, and, so, I think, well, you know, just, etc.; (3) the majority of mistakes and errors that the participants made in their oral production were subject-verb agreement and tense, and (4) most of their errors and mistakes in speaking concerned the pronunciation and accent.

5.2 Students and Teachers Interviews

The interview questions consisted of five semi-structured open-ended questions on the thoughts and opinions of teachers and students evaluating the obstacles and the effectiveness of the task-based activities they participated in. Their responses and feedback may offer the teachers insightful guidance for further consideration and revision of their lesson plans.

In the current study, 11 participants (one EFL instructor and 10 EFL learners) gave their opinions using semi-structured face-to-face interviews on exploring obstacles and effectiveness of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Approach in EFL Speaking Instruction. Thematic results are as follows:

Theme 1: Identifying Obstacles in TBLT Implementation

Participant 1 (P1) reported nervousness, a lack of confidence, and grammatical faults as obstacles to speaking tasks in TBLT classes. However, he did not notice any serious problems with his teacher while employing the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in class. Furthermore, he emphasized that particular students' lack of seriousness and occasional interruptions in class may provide difficulties for teachers executing TBLT in class. He thought any obstacles they faced were small.

Participant 2 (P2) addressed several challenges she faced while using task-based language instruction (TBLT). Although the teacher provided explicit instructions, she struggled due to a lack of fluency, nervousness, and the frequent use of fillers during spoken activities. These difficulties hindered her ability to effectively contribute to spoken English activities, like discussions. Despite the clear instructions, her lack of confidence and English proficiency prevented them from completing the task successfully.

Participant 3 (P3) revealed that a lack of confidence was a significant obstacle in completing speaking activities. Despite taking part in activities such as presentations, she struggled with confidence, which limited her ability to communicate effectively. This obstacle was found to be a substantial limitation to completing tasks successfully, suggesting that psychological issues could have a considerable impact on the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching.

During the discussion on task-based language teaching (TBLT) implementation, Participant 4 (P4) shared some challenges she encountered. She mentioned the difficulty she faced in recalling English vocabulary while speaking, which led her to construct less confident and sometimes incorrect sentences. She also expressed feeling nervous and lacking confidence, especially after breaks in classes. Additionally, she noted that some teachers had trouble recalling information during classes, which was later addressed in subsequent sessions.

Participant 5 (P5) acknowledged the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) but highlighted specific challenges encountered during task completion. He discussed a recent task, the "talk show," where he was assigned the role of a city mayor. This unfamiliar role posed a challenge as he lacked prior experience in such a position. To overcome this obstacle, he had to conduct research using virtual platforms and consult with peers and instructors for guidance. This experience highlighted the importance of clear role

clarification and preparation to facilitate smoother task completion.

Participant 6 (P6) encountered multiple obstacles during his recent appearance on a talk program as part of his spoken English training. He showed uneasiness and a lack of confidence, which were caused by his low English speaking skills. Furthermore, he stated that his teachers occasionally picked challenging concepts for class tasks. However, he noted that his instructors gave explanations and assistance to help him comprehend and accomplish the tasks.

Participant 7 (P7) expressed challenges in fluency and nervousness while completing speaking tasks. Despite being new to the speaking and phonetics classes, he faced difficulties in fluently expressing himself and felt nervous when sharing personal stories in English. This highlights a common obstacle faced by EFL learners in task-based language teaching (TBLT) environments, where the pressure to communicate effectively in a second language can lead to anxiety and hamper fluency.

Participant 8 (P8) faced difficulties with speaking tasks, including nervousness and fluency. He made grammatical mistakes, which were corrected by his instructor. Student behavior was a significant obstacle to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in his English class. Inappropriate behavior, such as noise and irrelevant topics, disrupted the learning environment and hindered the effectiveness of TBLT methods. However, the teacher managed this issue by implementing stricter classroom rules, improving the learning environment, and enhancing TBLT's effectiveness.

Participant 9 (P9) highlighted the challenges in implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Students often lack familiarity with TBLT projects, leading to difficulty in engagement and focus. Additionally, language barriers hamper students from using English effectively, limiting their language practice and fluency development. To overcome these issues, he emphasized the need for a supportive learning environment that encourages participation and reduces shyness or embarrassments, which are common challenges in TBLT implementation.

Participant 10 (P10) experienced nervousness and a lack of confidence during a task-based language teaching (TBLT) activity. She felt intimidated by the fluency of other participants, leading to feelings of nervousness. Despite these challenges, TBLT activities can be effective for language learning, but they can also pose challenges for learners, especially in terms of confidence and performance anxiety. The teacher's friendly and supportive nature contributed to a positive learning environment.

As a final point, the EFL instructor noted that incorporating Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in adult EFL-speaking classes could be challenging. She mentioned that some of her students struggled to understand instructions, and she had to repeat them several times. To make the concepts easier to understand, she broke them down into smaller sections. Additionally, some students experienced nervousness while performing tasks, which affected their performance. To help them confidently engage in the task, she ensured they were motivated and provided a pleasant setting. However, one of the major obstacles was that some students required improved English fundamentals, which resulted in frequent speaking mistakes. This made it difficult for her to understand what they were trying to convey.

Theme 2: Understanding Adult EFL Learners' Perspectives

P1 provided valuable insights into the experiences of adult English as the Foreign Language (EFL) learners. He emphasized the need for confidence, enthusiasm, and ongoing practice while building English speaking skills. According to him, ongoing English practice, both inside and outside of the classroom, is essential for improving language ability. He noted that engaging in English-only talks during class activities significantly enhanced his speaking abilities. His experience highlights the need for intensive English language settings for adult EFL learners, emphasizing continual practice and engagement with English.

As an adult student learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), P2 has provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) from a learner's perspective. She emphasized the importance of practicing spoken English and expressed a preference for participatory events such as discussions and presentations. Despite facing initial challenges, she found that speaking exercises, along with guidance and motivation from the instructor, were effective in overcoming anxiety and improving fluency. Her positive experience with TBLT highlights the significance of interactive speaking activities in enhancing language learning and proficiency.

P3 highlighted the importance of practical English teaching techniques and expressed disappointment with the lack of practical instruction in spoken lessons. She emphasized the need for more opportunities for everyday conversation and language club activities to improve English speaking skills. Her suggestion implies a desire for intensive language learning activities that go beyond regular classroom education. She recommended more practical teaching approaches, emphasizing the significance of active engagement and immersion in spoken English. She claimed that such activities could significantly enhance adult EFL learners' language learning and confidence.

P4 provided insights into the perspectives of adult EFL learners. She observed that some students lacked enthusiasm and confidence when speaking English. Despite the teachers' efforts to motivate them, several pupils were uncertain to practice at home. However, she found certain teaching methods to be helpful, particularly group discussions and debate exercises. These activities allowed learners to identify and correct errors while also building their confidence.

P5 expressed a strong desire to improve English language proficiency, recognizing its significance in current contexts, including career opportunities and the possibility of studying abroad. He identified TBLT as an effective approach to achieving this goal. He mentioned participating in various speaking tasks, such as debates and talk shows, within their spoken English classes. These experiences not only helped in improving spoken English skills but also provided valuable opportunities for interaction and learning.

As an adult student learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), P6 suggested that more practice and presentations would be beneficial for improving English speaking skills. Despite the challenges faced, he believes that the TBLT approach has been effective in enhancing his English speaking abilities. He noted a significant improvement in his English since joining the class, indicating that the TBLT approach has positively impacted his language-learning journey.

As an adult EFL learner, P7 emphasized the importance of practice outside the classroom to improve English fluency. He mentioned reading books, watching English movies with subtitles, and listening to English music as effective ways to enhance language skills. Additionally, he highlighted the benefit of having a practice partner, indicating that collaborative learning can further support language acquisition.

P8 provided valuable insights into his reasons for enrolling in a spoken English class as an adult EFL learner. He mentioned that he decided to improve his English fluency since he identified it as a weakness, particularly in his work life as a merchandiser. He stressed the significance of the English language in establishing successful communication with overseas buyers and conveyed his eagerness to study abroad. He expressed a strong desire to enhance his English proficiency so that he could pursue better professional opportunities and thrive in an international context.

P9 highlighted the importance of practical, speaking-focused language classes, particularly those using TBLT, for improving fluency and confidence in speaking English. He emphasized the need for consistent practice, including daily English speaking. He shared their journey from initial nervousness to increased confidence and fluency through TBLT classes. He also advocated for curriculum reform to include dedicated language practice rooms and spoken English classes at the school level to enhance English proficiency among students.

P10 believes that participating in tasks that focus on speaking, such as talk shows and presentations, can be very helpful in improving English speaking skills. She considers speaking activities to be vital in language classes and believes that consistent practice and engagement in spoken English activities can lead to better English speaking abilities. Her perspective highlights the importance of practical, speaking-focused tasks in enhancing language skills, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting.

According to the EFL instructor, adult EFL learners faced significant challenges while implementing TBLT. Many of the students struggled with forming sentences correctly due to weak basics. Pronunciation, sentence structure, and accent issues were common barriers that hindered effective communication. To overcome this problem, the instructor suggested that it was crucial to focus on building a strong foundation first. Step-by-step learning ensured better comprehension and communication skills over time.

Theme 3: Assessing the Effectiveness of TBLT Approach

P1 acknowledged Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as an effective learning technique, particularly for improving speaking skills. He shared his personal experience with continuous English practice in class, which significantly improved his speaking abilities. His spoken English skills showed noticeable improvement when he participated in speaking assignments and engaged in English-only conversations in class. This evidence highlights the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing language learning, especially speaking abilities, among adult EFL learners.

P2 praised TBLT's efficacy in developing English-speaking skills. Despite early problems such as a lack of confidence and fluency, she found that TBLT-based speaking activities such as debates and presentations helped her to gain confidence and fluency. Her ability to explain personal experiences and observations in English during the interview demonstrates the real development in language skills.

P3 stated that her speaking confidence in English improved after joining spoken and grammar classes. She recognized this improvement in a systematic approach to task-based language instruction (TBLT). However, she noticed a shortage in the application of TBLT methodologies, particularly during spoken lectures. Despite admiring the instructors' efforts, she felt that these classes lacked practical speaking practices.

According to P4, TBLT methods have proven to be effective. She noticed that students who used TBLT techniques showed improvement in their fluency and confidence in speaking English. Additionally, TBLT helped reduce their reliance on translation from Bengali to English, which facilitated a more natural conversation flow and integration of the language.

P5 highlighted the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing spoken English skills. He mentioned participation in tasks like debates and talk shows as particularly beneficial. However, he also emphasized the importance of practical application and post-task discussions. They recommended the integration of virtual platforms, such as WhatsApp groups, for facilitating these discussions. He suggested that such platforms could be used for post-class discussions and peer feedback, allowing students to apply what they learned in class and receive guidance and feedback from peers and instructors.

P6's personal experience serves as evidence of the effectiveness of the TBLT approach in improving English speaking skills. Despite initial difficulties, he noted noticeable improvements in English proficiency since participating in TBLT-based classes, highlighting the effectiveness of task-based learning methods in facilitating language acquisition and skill development.

According to P7, TBLT approaches were beneficial in improving English speaking abilities. Participating in tasks like sharing personal tales and discussions helped him conquer his phobia of public speaking and enhance his communication skills. His English communication skills improved significantly as a result of his active participation in these exercises. This indicates the effectiveness of TBLT in giving students meaningful opportunities to practice and improve their language abilities.

P8 stated his experiences with TBLT approaches, notably in spoken English classes. He discovered that different assignments, such as presentations, group discussions, and debate contests, helped him improve his English speaking skills. He described how these tasks helped him overcome fear, increase his fluency, and prepare for job interviews. He highlighted the importance of ongoing practice, both in and out of class, using activities such as viewing English movies and engaging in group discussions. He also stated that participating in frequent speaking tasks helped him build confidence and fluency in English, which made him more comfortable in real-life circumstances like job interviews.

P9 shared his experience with the TBLT approach, highlighting its effectiveness in improving English fluency through regular practice. He emphasized the importance of immediate error correction by teachers during tasks, enabling students to identify and correct mistakes. His journey from initial English inability to increased fluency and confidence through TBLT classes demonstrates the effectiveness of these methods in language skill development.

Despite facing initial nervousness and lack of confidence, P10 acknowledged the effectiveness of TBLT methods in improving English speaking abilities. She credited regular participation in speaking activities for their improvement in spoken English and highlighted the role of supportive teachers in overcoming obstacles. This suggests that while challenges exist, TBLT methods can effectively improve English speaking skills, especially when supported by encouraging and supportive teaching practices.

Lastly, the EFL instructor considered that establishing a supportive and accommodating learning environment was essential for the success of the TBLT technique. To foster open conversation, she worked hard to keep her classroom a welcoming one. She also encouraged her pupils to practice outside of the classroom by giving them a variety of tools such as textbooks, internet materials, and media. Mirror practices were one way that yielded encouraging outcomes. Many of her pupils used this strategy at home to improve their speaking abilities and gain confidence. Those who practiced speaking exercises for at least two minutes every day demonstrated significant progress over time.

Theme 4: Providing Recommendations for Enhancement

P1 suggested that incorporating activities such as debates and presentations can help improve speaking practice in the classroom. He believed that to enhance English language learning in Bangladesh, the curriculum should include more opportunities for speaking practice in addition to the typical reading and writing habits. He emphasized the importance of regular speaking chances and advised policymakers and curriculum designers to include more speaking-focused activities to improve English language learning results. His ideas align with the need for a holistic approach to language acquisition that emphasizes speaking practice alongside other language skills.

P2 provided helpful suggestions for improving the effectiveness of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) in adult English-speaking classrooms. She proposed incorporating additional speaking activities, such as reading aloud, into primary and secondary English language instruction. Furthermore, she suggested that curriculum designers may focus more on speaking exercises to help children improve their English fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary from a young age. By adding speaking tasks to the curriculum, educators can create a more immersive language learning environment that better prepares students for real-world communication.

P3 offered some valuable recommendations for enhancing the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). She suggested that teachers should include more practical and speaking-focused activities in the curriculum. She also highlighted the importance of instructors motivating and encouraging students to practice speaking English regularly. Additionally, she proposed that policymakers and curriculum designers should incorporate spoken English skills at the secondary and higher secondary school levels. She believes that early exposure to spoken English will enhance English communication skills from an early age, laying a strong foundation for later language acquisition. These guidelines emphasize the necessity of a learner-centered approach and a comprehensive language learning environment that promotes speaking proficiency.

P4 offered some suggestions to improve the implementation of TBLT. She suggested increasing the frequency of English-speaking sessions in class to allow learners to practice more. In addition, she recommended introducing spoken English classes from an early stage in the education system. Furthermore, she proposed incorporating fun activities like drama and song lyric analysis to engage young learners and help them acquire spoken English skills early on.

P5 made important recommendations for improving TBLT implementation in adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs. He proposed enhancements such as the use of virtual platforms for post-class discussions and peer input. He proposed private online groups where students may submit recordings of their speaking activities for instructor evaluation, thus encouraging peer learning and cooperation. According to him, this strategy would not only improve the efficacy of EFL lectures but would also give students vital opportunities for hands-on experience and feedback.

P6 recommended that teachers engage in more personalized support by talking with individual students about the challenges they face. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of including speaking practice in school and college syllabuses from an early age, emphasizing its potential to significantly enhance English speaking proficiency among EFL learners.

P7 suggested that instructors should encourage more speaking practice in the classroom. He emphasized that speaking is essential for improvement and recommended that teachers provide more opportunities for students to speak during class. Additionally, he addressed the importance of practice outside the classroom through various English language mediums such as books, movies, and music. By incorporating more speaking activities into the curriculum and encouraging independent practice, instructors can further enhance the

effectiveness of TBLT in improving English speaking skills among EFL learners.

P8 recommended enhancing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in adult English-speaking programs by scheduling more one-on-one speaking exercises that simulate real-life discussions. Through these exercises, students may improve their confidence in communicating in English, hone their impromptu speaking skills, and become ready for future academic and professional endeavors. He also advocated for the inclusion of spoken English in the school curriculum from an early age to help children gain confidence and fluency. He emphasized the importance of English proficiency for career prospects and suggested curriculum designers' focus on spoken English alongside other language abilities.

P9 suggested enhancing TBLT implementation by promoting teacher friendliness and approachability, incorporating diverse speaking tasks like talk shows, dramas, and debates, and advocating for curriculum changes to include dedicated language practice rooms and spoken English classes from the school level. He emphasized the importance of early English language learning for fluency development and overall proficiency, thereby creating a comfortable learning environment.

P10 provided recommendations for enhancing TBLT implementation, suggesting that teachers adopt a friendly approach to create a comfortable learning environment. Additionally, she emphasized the need for more focus on spoken English activities in the curriculum, starting from the school level, to better prepare students for English proficiency exams and future academic pursuits abroad. Her recommendations underscore the importance of creating supportive learning environments and prioritizing speaking activities in language education to improve English language proficiency among EFL learners.

As a final point, to improve the use of TBLT in adult EFL speaking training, the EFL instructor made a few recommendations based on her teaching experiences. First and foremost, it is essential to develop a positive relationship between teachers and students. A friendly setting allows students to express their concerns, allowing her to give effective assistance. Regular practice at home is also required for progress. She constantly gave specific tips and techniques to meet the needs of each unique learner. Finally, ongoing evaluation and assistance, including individual sessions with students, are critical for recognizing and addressing specific issues encountered during class activities.

In a nutshell, the findings from classroom observations and interviews provide insights into the obstacles and effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking instruction. Observations in the classroom highlighted various issues. First, pupils struggled to understand English instructions, requiring repeated explanations. Furthermore, students relied significantly on their first language (L1) during group discussions and when requesting assistance from the instructor. The findings also underlined the importance of task-based activities with traditional language exercises to improve learning outcomes.

Moreover, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with teachers and students also revealed important insights into the difficulties and effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in EFL speaking training. With 11 participants, including one EFL instructor and 10 EFL learners, this study aimed to investigate the barriers and benefits of implementing TBLT in adult EFL-speaking classes. The participants of this current study identified many barriers to successful communication during speaking activities, including nervousness, a lack of confidence, and grammatical mistakes. Despite these limitations, teachers and students acknowledged TBLT's effectiveness in increasing English speaking abilities. The participants in TBLT-based speaking activities such as debates, presentations, and talk shows reported substantial improvements in their fluency, confidence, and overall linguistic ability. To address these obstacles and improve the success rate of TBLT, participants suggested including more speaking-focused activities in the curriculum, offering greater assistance and encouragement to students, and fostering a friendly learning atmosphere. The interviews' findings provide useful information for instructors, curriculum designers, and policymakers looking to maximize the use of TBLT in adult EFL speaking instruction.

Overall, TBLT has the potential to enhance EFL speaking skills, but overcoming challenges like lack of confidence, language barriers, and inadequate instructional support is crucial for its effectiveness in adult EFL instruction.

6. Conclusion

This study looked into the challenges of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in adult EFL speaking instruction and evaluated its effectiveness in improving learners' speaking fluency and confidence. The findings revealed that while TBLT enhances communication skills, several obstacles persist, including lack of confidence, reliance on L1, and difficulty comprehending instructions. Despite these challenges, learners recognized the benefits of TBLT, particularly in fostering fluency, increasing engagement, and creating a more interactive learning environment.

To address these challenges, incorporating structured activities such as role-playing, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative discussions can provide learners with authentic opportunities to practice speaking. Additionally, scaffolding techniques, such as guided prompts and gradual difficulty adjustments, can help students build confidence and improve their language proficiency. Instructors should also consider using multimodal resources, including videos and interactive digital tools, to reinforce learning and make speaking tasks more engaging.

Future researches should explore the long-term impacts of TBLT on adult EFL learners and investigate how different instructional adaptations influence learner outcomes. Further studies could also examine the role of technology-enhanced TBLT approaches and their effectiveness in diverse learning contexts. By addressing these aspects, educators and policymakers can refine TBLT implementation strategies to optimize its benefits for adult EFL learners.

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Authors' contributions

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miew Luan Ng and Prof. Dr. Md. Momtazur Rahman were responsible for developing the research objectives, conducting the literature review, and designing the research methods. They also contributed to proofreading and revising the manuscript. Mohammad Hafizur Rahman was responsible for developing the abstract, data collection, data analysis, and writing the paper. Dr. Rachel Sing-Ee Tan drafted the manuscript, while Dr. Tan Tiam Lai revised it and was also responsible for writing the references.

All authors actively participated in discussions on the research findings, contributed to the interpretation of the results, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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