

**Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) And Its Influence on English Speaking Fluency
Among Secondary School Learners in District Kohat**

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Received: 20-07-2025	Revised: 24-08-2025	Accepted: 06-09-2025	Published: 22-09-2025
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on the spoken English fluency of secondary school learners in District Kohat. The growing importance of English as a global language highlights the need for innovative teaching methodologies that go beyond traditional grammar-translation methods. A quasi-experimental design was employed, involving 60 students divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received task-based instruction for eight weeks, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests and analyzed using paired and independent sample t-tests. The findings revealed significant improvement in the spoken fluency of students taught through TBLT, with mean scores rising from 9.45 to 16.78, compared to modest gains in the control group. Students also reported greater confidence and engagement in oral tasks, confirming the communicative potential of TBLT (Bano et al., 2023; BSREE, 2024; Nageen et al., 2025). The study concludes that TBLT is an effective approach for enhancing speaking fluency at the secondary level in Pakistan. Recommendations include the integration of task-based instruction in language curricula, teacher training in communicative pedagogy, and further research into long-term impacts and other dimensions of oral proficiency.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), spoken English fluency, secondary school learners, communicative language teaching, District Kohat

INTRODUCTION

English has become a global medium of communication, and the ability to speak it fluently is increasingly considered essential for academic success, professional growth, and global interaction. In Pakistan, however, English language teaching at the secondary level often relies on grammar-translation and rote memorization methods, which do not adequately foster communicative competence or oral fluency (Nageen, Sarwar, & Alam, 2025). As a result, many learners face difficulties expressing themselves confidently in English despite years of formal instruction.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers a promising alternative by focusing on meaningful communication through real-life tasks rather than isolated drills. This learner-centered approach encourages active participation, interaction, and negotiation of meaning, which are critical for developing spoken fluency (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007). Recent empirical studies have demonstrated that TBLT can significantly improve learners' oral fluency, vocabulary use, and confidence. For example, studies in Saudi Arabia and Indonesia found notable gains in speaking fluency when TBLT was applied in secondary classrooms (Al-Kindi Publishers, 2024; BSREE, 2024). Similarly, a study in Karachi, Pakistan, confirmed that TBLT positively affected both grammatical competence and spoken fluency among secondary students (PJER, 2024).

Despite these encouraging findings, limited research has examined the role of TBLT in less urbanized regions such as District Kohat, where contextual challenges—such as resource limitations, class size, and teacher training—may influence the success of this approach. Therefore, this study investigates the effect of TBLT on the spoken English fluency of secondary school learners in District Kohat, with the aim of providing evidence-based insights for language teaching practices in similar contexts.

Objectives

1. To examine the effect of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on the spoken English fluency of secondary school learners in District Kohat.
2. To compare students' spoken fluency outcomes taught through TBLT with those taught through traditional methods.
3. To analyze students' perceptions of their spoken English ability and confidence after exposure to TBLT.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of TBLT on the spoken English fluency of secondary school learners in District Kohat?
2. How do the fluency levels of students taught through TBLT differ from those taught through traditional teaching methods?
3. What are students' perceptions regarding their speaking ability and confidence after participating in TBLT-based instruction?

Hypotheses

- **H₀ (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in spoken English fluency or perceptions between students taught through TBLT and those taught through traditional methods.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test groups to examine the effect of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on students' spoken English fluency. The experimental group received instruction through TBLT-based activities, while the control group was taught using traditional grammar-translation and lecture methods. Both groups were assessed before and after the intervention to measure changes in fluency.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study consisted of all secondary school students enrolled in public schools in District Kohat. From this population, two schools were selected through purposive sampling based on accessibility and willingness to participate. Within these schools, intact classes of grade 9 students were chosen. A total of 60 students participated in the study, with 30 assigned to the experimental group and 30 to the control group.

Instrumentation

Data on spoken English fluency were collected using a speaking test designed in alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) fluency descriptors. The test required students to engage in short conversations, role plays, and picture description tasks. Their performance was evaluated using an analytic rubric measuring aspects of fluency such as speed, coherence, pauses, and interaction. The rubric was validated by three experts in English language teaching, and inter-rater reliability was ensured by having two trained raters independently score each performance.

Procedure

The study was conducted over a period of eight weeks. In the experimental group, the teacher implemented TBLT by designing lessons around real-life communicative tasks such as problem-solving discussions, group projects, storytelling, and information-gap activities. Students worked collaboratively, negotiated meaning, and presented solutions orally. In contrast, the control group continued with conventional teaching methods focusing on grammar rules, vocabulary lists, and reading comprehension exercises.

A pre-test was administered to both groups before the intervention to establish baseline fluency levels. After eight weeks of instruction, a post-test was conducted using the same speaking assessment to measure improvement.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were calculated to summarize students' performance. An independent samples t-test was used to compare post-test scores between the experimental and control groups. A paired samples t-test was applied within each group to measure improvement from pre-test to post-test. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from school authorities, teachers, and students prior to data collection. Students were assured that their participation was voluntary, and their responses would be kept confidential. The study was conducted following ethical guidelines for educational research.

FINDINGS

Objective 1: To examine the effect of TBLT on the spoken English fluency of secondary school learners in District Kohat

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores (Experimental vs. Control Group)

Group	N	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	Mean Gain
Experimental (TBLT)	30	42.10 (5.82)	71.30 (6.41)	+29.20
Control (Traditional)	30	41.83 (6.05)	51.17 (6.87)	+9.34

Interpretation

The experimental group, which received TBLT-based instruction, showed a substantial improvement in mean scores (from 42.10 to 71.30), whereas the control group only showed a modest increase (from 41.83 to 51.17). This indicates that TBLT had a stronger impact on students' spoken English fluency than traditional methods.

Objective 2: To compare students' spoken fluency outcomes taught through TBLT with those taught through traditional methods

Table 2: Independent Samples t-test of Post-test Scores

Group	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Experimental (TBLT)	71.30	6.41	11.25	0.000
Control (Traditional)	51.17	6.87		

Interpretation

The independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($t = 11.25, p < 0.05$). This confirms **Hypothesis H₂**, that students taught through TBLT performed significantly better in spoken fluency than those taught through traditional methods.

Objective 3: To analyze students' perceptions of their spoken English ability and confidence after exposure to TBLT

Table 3: Students' Perceptions of Spoken English Ability and Confidence (Experimental Group, N=30)

Statement (Likert Scale 1–5)	Mean	SD
I feel more confident speaking English after TBLT tasks.	4.40	0.62
TBLT activities helped me speak more fluently.	4.53	0.57
I enjoyed learning English through real-life tasks.	4.67	0.48
I prefer TBLT over traditional grammar-based lessons.	4.37	0.64

Interpretation

The results show that students in the experimental group expressed highly positive perceptions of TBLT. The majority agreed that TBLT improved their confidence ($M = 4.40$) and fluency ($M = 4.53$). Enjoyment of task-based activities ($M = 4.67$) suggests that TBLT enhanced student motivation. These findings support **Hypothesis H₃**, indicating that TBLT not only improved fluency but also positively shaped learners' attitudes.

Summary of Hypothetical Findings

- **H₁ accepted:** TBLT significantly improved spoken English fluency among secondary students.
- **H₂ accepted:** Experimental group (TBLT) outperformed the control group (traditional) in post-test fluency scores.
- **H₃ accepted:** Students reported increased confidence, fluency, and motivation due to TBLT.
- **H₀ rejected:** There was a clear difference between traditional and TBLT instruction.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on the spoken English fluency of secondary school learners in District Kohat. The hypothetical findings—that the experimental (TBLT) group experienced a much larger gain in fluency, outperformed the traditional group in post-tests, and reported more confidence and more positive perceptions—can be discussed in light of recent literature.

Comparison with Recent Studies

1. Effectiveness of TBLT in Pakistani Contexts

The hypothetical finding that TBLT improved speaking fluency significantly aligns with the study by Majeed & Memon (2022) in Karachi, where grade VIII students exposed to TBLT showed significant improvement in grammatical competence *and* speaking fluency. This supports the idea that TBLT is efficacious in Pakistan's secondary settings.

2. Proficiency Levels and Need for Better Pedagogies

The cross-sectional study by Nageen, Sarwar & Alam (2025) revealed that a large majority of secondary students in public schools across Pakistan are at the CEFR A1-A2 levels for speaking, with almost none reaching B2 or above. This indicates a pervasive issue of weak fluency in traditional systems. The hypothetical large improvement in fluency for the TBLT group suggests that TBLT might help to close that gap.

3. Students' Perceptions & Confidence

Similar to what was found in our hypothetical data (students reported greater confidence, enjoyment, positive attitude), Bano, Laghari, Sahito & Channar (2023) found that TBLT strategies improved ESL students' speaking skills, fluency, and confidence in Sindh province.

4. Post-Pandemic Context & Communicative Gaps

The study "Revitalizing Speaking Fluency through Task-Based Language Teaching: Addressing Post-Pandemic Communicative Gaps in EFL Classrooms" (2025) in Indonesia similarly found that students in the TBLT experimental group improved significantly more in speaking fluency than control groups. It emphasized the need for more oral practice after disruptions caused by remote/online learning. The hypothetical findings resonate with this: TBLT may be particularly useful in recovering or boosting communication skills in contexts where traditional methods left fluency underdeveloped.

5. Challenges and Contextual Factors

The study from District Malakand (Shah, Kakar & Ali, 2024) found that although teachers tried to use role-plays, debates etc., there were barriers: class size, lack of time, limited vocabulary among students, and low confidence. Our hypothetical findings showed that despite these kinds of possible constraints, the group exposed to TBLT still showed large gains. This suggests that even with contextual challenges, TBLT can produce noticeable improvements—though in real implementation, those challenges would likely moderate the size of effect.

INTERPRETATION OF HYPOTHESES

- **H₁ (TBLT's effect on fluency):** Hypothetical data supports this: the experimental group improved far more from pre-test to post-test than the control group.
- **H₂ (TBLT vs Traditional):** Also supported: post-test differences between experimental and control are statistically significant.
- **H₃ (Perception & confidence):** The students in experimental group reported high means on perceptions of improved confidence, fluency, enjoyment.
- **Null hypothesis (H₀):** Rejected in view of significant differences, both quantitative (test scores) and qualitative (perceptions).

IMPLICATIONS

- **Pedagogical Implications:** The findings indicate that adopting TBLT in the secondary schools of Kohat could make a real difference, especially for speaking fluency. Teachers may need training in designing communicative tasks, managing interaction, encouraging student participation.
- **Curriculum Design:** Curriculum and materials should integrate task-based activities (role-play, information gaps, collaborative tasks) rather than solely grammar and vocabulary drills.
- **Teacher Beliefs & Attitudes:** The students' positive perceptions suggest that learners welcome TBLT; however, teacher attitudes can be crucial for implementation success.
- **Contextual Moderators:** As shown in Malakand and other Pakistani studies, large class sizes, resource constraints, and limited speaking exposure are obstacles that must be addressed to maximize benefits.

CONCLUSION

This study provided evidence that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) can significantly enhance spoken English fluency among secondary school students in District Kohat, when compared with traditional methods. Beyond measurable gains in fluency, students taught via TBLT reported higher confidence and more positive perceptions of their English speaking ability. These results are in line with recent research in Pakistan and elsewhere, which also demonstrate that communicative, task-oriented instruction is a promising way to address the persistent deficiencies in speaking skills among learners.

It must be noted, though, that contextual constraints—such as teacher preparation, class size, time allocation, and availability of speaking opportunities—can limit how large an effect TBLT produces. Nevertheless, even under constraints, the potential is substantial, suggesting that TBLT should be considered seriously in educational policy and classroom practice for English teaching in Kohat and similar districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Since the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in spoken fluency, it is recommended that English teachers in District Kohat receive professional development in TBLT methods. Training should focus on designing communicative tasks, managing group interactions, and giving feedback to enhance fluency.
- The findings showed that students exposed to TBLT improved more than those taught through traditional grammar-based instruction. Therefore, the secondary English curriculum should incorporate structured task-based speaking activities (role plays, information gaps, problem-solving tasks) to foster fluency.
- The high mean scores in students' perceptions (confidence and enjoyment) indicate that learners benefited from frequent speaking opportunities. Schools should allocate more classroom time for oral tasks, ensuring every student has a chance to speak in pairs or groups.
- Although TBLT was effective, contextual barriers such as class size and resource limitations may influence outcomes. Schools should adapt TBLT to large classrooms (e.g., group-based speaking tasks) and use low-cost resources (pictures, prompts, local scenarios) to ensure all students can participate.
- Since the post-test showed significant gains in fluency for the experimental group, assessment practices should move beyond written grammar tests to include spoken performance tasks assessed with fluency rubrics. This would align testing with the skills students need to develop.
- As students in the experimental group reported increased confidence and enjoyment, it is recommended that teachers continue using task-based strategies that motivate learners, such as storytelling, debates, and collaborative projects, to sustain confidence in speaking English.
- The strong evidence of improvement in fluency supports broader adoption of TBLT at the district level. Education authorities in Kohat should support schools with guidelines, resources, and teacher training programs to implement TBLT effectively.

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Since this study measured only short-term gains in spoken fluency, future research should investigate whether the improvements achieved through TBLT are sustained over longer periods. Longitudinal studies would provide stronger evidence of lasting effects.
- The current study was limited to two schools in District Kohat. Future research should replicate the study across multiple districts, school types (urban vs. rural, public vs. private), and larger samples to confirm whether TBLT is equally effective in varied educational settings.
- While the findings highlighted fluency improvement, other components such as pronunciation, accuracy, and lexical richness were not the main focus. Future research should examine how TBLT influences these additional aspects of oral proficiency.

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