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Developing B2 Students' Speaking Fluency Through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

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Abstract

Speaking fluency is an important part of communicative competence, especially for B2-level English learners who need to express their ideas clearly and maintain conversations in different situations. However, learners may experience difficulties with spontaneous speaking, vocabulary retrieval, organizing ideas, and speaking confidently. This article examines how Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) can support the development of speaking fluency among B2-level English learners. It discusses theoretical perspectives on task-based learning, speaking fluency, and storytelling as a classroom technique. The article also analyzes speaking activities such as information-gap tasks, discussions, and retelling activities in relation to meaningful communication and learner participation. In addition, it considers common challenges learners may face during speaking tasks and suggests possible solutions, including clear instructions, language support, pair and group work, and feedback after task completion. The discussion draws on relevant academic literature to explain how purposeful speaking tasks can create opportunities for learners to practice expressing ideas more naturally and coherently. The article argues that TBLT can provide a useful framework for developing speaking fluency when classroom tasks are meaningful, appropriately designed, and suited to learners' proficiency levels.

Key words

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT); speaking fluency; B2-level learners; storytelling; communicative tasks; English language teaching.

Introduction: Speaking fluency is an important component of communicative competence because it enables learners to express their ideas, share opinions, and participate in conversations effectively. For B2-level English learners, developing speaking fluency involves not only using appropriate grammar and vocabulary but also organizing ideas and responding to others without unnecessary hesitation. However,

some learners may find it difficult to speak spontaneously, recall suitable vocabulary, and express their thoughts confidently. These challenges highlight the need for classroom activities that provide meaningful opportunities to practise spoken English.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach that encourages learners to use language to achieve specific communicative goals. Through meaningful tasks, learners can exchange information, discuss different topics, solve problems, and share personal experiences. Activities such as information-gap tasks, discussions, and storytelling can create opportunities for interaction and help learners practise expressing their ideas in connected speech. The selection of suitable tasks is particularly important because activities should reflect learners' proficiency levels, needs, and communicative goals. The teacher also plays an important role in supporting learners during task-based speaking activities. Clear instructions, appropriate language support, sufficient preparation time, and constructive feedback can help learners participate more confidently. At the same time, teachers need to consider possible difficulties, including limited vocabulary, hesitation, and fear of making mistakes. Understanding these challenges can help teachers make appropriate instructional decisions and create a supportive learning environment.

The purpose of this article is to examine how Task-Based Language Teaching can support the development of speaking fluency among B2-level English learners. It reviews relevant literature on speaking fluency and task-based learning, analyzes selected speaking activities, and discusses possible challenges and solutions. The article is guided by the following research question: How can Task-Based Language Teaching support the development of speaking fluency among B2-level English learners? The article is based on existing literature and methodological analysis rather than new experimental research.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review: Storytelling can be used as a speaking task within Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to develop speaking fluency among B2-level English learners. It encourages learners to organize ideas, describe events, and communicate meaningfully. In this article, storytelling is selected

as the primary technique, while information-gap activities and discussions serve as supplementary tasks.

Rakhmonalieva, in *The Use of Storytelling Techniques in Enhancing Speaking Fluency*, discusses Celce-Murcia's (2001) view that fluency involves more than speaking quickly. It also includes expressing ideas coherently and maintaining interaction. This means that fluent speakers should connect their ideas logically and communicate without unnecessary hesitation. Storytelling can help B2 learners practise these skills by describing events in a clear and organized sequence.

Rakhmonalieva also discusses Wright's (1995) view that storytelling presents vocabulary and grammar in meaningful contexts. Instead of practising language structures separately, learners use them to create or retell stories. For example, they can use past-tense verbs and linking words such as *first*, *then*, and *finally* to connect events. This suggests that storytelling can support both language use and the development of coherent speech.

Further evidence comes from Salsya, Mahpul, and Deviyanti (2020), whose study, *Improving Students' Speaking Skill Through Storytelling at the Tenth Grade of SMA Al-Kautsar Bandarlampung*, involved 30 tenth-grade students. Their mean speaking score increased from 56.73 to 68.25 after storytelling instruction. This result suggests that storytelling may provide useful opportunities to practise speaking. However, the participants were not specifically identified as B2-level learners, and the study did not include a control group. Therefore, the findings support the potential value of storytelling but do not prove that it will produce the same results for all B2 learners.

Overall, these perspectives provide a theoretical and practical basis for selecting storytelling as the primary technique in this article. Within TBLT, storytelling should involve a clear communicative goal rather than simply memorizing a text. Learners can create stories from pictures, retell personal experiences, or develop narratives in pairs. Information-gap activities and discussions can complement storytelling by providing further opportunities for interaction and spontaneous speech. These activities may collectively support the development of speaking fluency among B2-level learners.

Classroom Implementation of Speaking Activities:

1.Storytelling: The lesson begins with storytelling, which introduces the topic and provides the content for the following activities. The teacher presents the topic "A Memorable Experience That Taught Me Something" and briefly asks students what makes an experience memorable. After this short introduction, the teacher explains that each student will tell a personal story and that the main goal is to communicate the experience clearly rather than produce grammatically perfect sentences.

Students receive approximately five minutes to prepare their stories using guiding questions: Where and when did the experience happen? Who was involved? What happened? Was there an unexpected event? What did the student learn from the experience? Students write down only key words and short notes instead of complete sentences. The teacher may provide useful expressions, including *at first, a few moments later, unexpectedly, as a result,* and *in the end*, to help students organize their narratives.

Students then work in pairs and tell their stories for approximately two to three minutes each. While one student speaks, the other listens and identifies the main events and the most important lesson from the experience. The teacher monitors the pairs and notes examples of effective communication and common difficulties, such as long pauses, repeated words, or unclear connections between events. Rather than interrupting students, the teacher allows them to finish their stories and provides brief feedback afterward. This stage helps learners practise continuous speech, organize ideas logically, and use linking expressions. The stories also provide the information needed for the next activity.

2. Information-Gap Activity: The second activity extends the storytelling stage by encouraging students to obtain and clarify information about their partners' experiences. Students remain in the same pairs and use the stories they have just heard. The teacher gives each student a short information sheet with questions about their partner's experience, including details they may not have fully understood during the storytelling stage. For example, the sheet may ask about the reason for the event, an unexpected situation, the speaker's feelings, or the lesson learned.

Students take turns asking questions such as *What made this experience important to you?*, *What happened after that?*, and *How did you deal with the situation?* Their

partners answer in their own words and provide additional details where necessary. Students are encouraged to ask follow-up questions instead of simply reading the questions on the sheet. They should listen carefully, check their understanding, and explain information clearly. Once both students have completed the exchange, they compare their notes with their partners to correct any misunderstandings.

The teacher monitors the conversations and observes whether students can maintain interaction, ask relevant questions, and respond without excessive hesitation. After the task, the teacher briefly highlights useful examples of questioning and clarification. This activity builds on the first stage because students develop the original stories through further communication. It also prepares them for the final discussion by helping them understand the experiences in greater depth and collect specific information to support their opinions.

3. Discussion activity: The discussion activity is the final stage of the procedure and brings together the speaking skills practised in the previous two activities. Students form small groups of three or four and use the stories and information collected during the earlier stages to discuss the question: "What Can We Learn from Difficult or Memorable Experiences?" Each student briefly shares their partner's experience, making sure to communicate the main events and the lesson learned. This gives students an opportunity to practise retelling information accurately rather than speaking only about their own experiences.

The group then compares the experiences and discusses which lessons could be useful in everyday life. Students are expected to support their opinions with examples from the stories, respond to their classmates, and explain whether they agree or disagree with particular ideas. The teacher encourages them to use expressions such as *In my view, this experience shows that...*, *I agree because...*, *I understand your point, but...*, and *Based on this story...*. Students should also ask each other questions and invite quieter group members to contribute.

After the discussion, each group agrees on two important lessons that can be applied to real-life situations and prepares a short oral summary for the class. The teacher evaluates how effectively students connect ideas, explain their reasoning, respond to

others, and maintain communication. Feedback focuses primarily on fluency and communicative effectiveness, while important language errors can be addressed after the task.

This final activity completes the learning sequence. Students first practise telling a coherent story, then develop their understanding through questions and information exchange, and finally use the information to compare experiences and justify opinions. The sequence creates opportunities for meaningful language use and encourages learners to speak with greater continuity, respond more spontaneously, and participate more confidently in English. However, the extent of improvement depends on factors such as students' initial proficiency, the frequency of practice, and the quality of teacher support.

Challenges and Possible Solutions

During the implementation of the proposed speaking activities, several challenges may arise. In the storytelling activity, students may struggle to organize events in the correct order or speak without reading their notes. Teachers can address this by providing guiding questions and useful linking expressions. In the information-gap activity, students may misunderstand their partners or find it difficult to ask follow-up questions. Teachers can demonstrate useful question forms and encourage students to ask for clarification. During the discussion activity, some students may dominate the conversation, while others may participate less actively. Therefore, teachers should ensure that every student has an opportunity to speak and contribute to the task. Another important challenge is time management. Teachers should allocate sufficient time for each activity, explain the instructions clearly, and monitor the progress of the lesson to ensure that all three stages are completed. They should also pay attention to each student's participation rather than focusing only on the most confident speakers. Careful time management and equal participation can help create a more effective and supportive learning environment for developing speaking fluency.

Overall Analysis

The proposed activities show how storytelling, information-gap tasks, and group discussions can work together to develop B2 learners' speaking fluency. Storytelling helps students organize their ideas, information-gap activities encourage them to ask

questions and clarify details, and discussions allow them to express opinions and support them with examples. Together, these tasks provide meaningful opportunities to practise continuous speech and spontaneous interaction. Their successful implementation depends on effective time management, equal participation, and appropriate teacher support. Although these activities have the potential to improve learners' fluency and confidence, their effectiveness requires further classroom investigation.

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