

Task-Based Language Teaching through Speed Debating: Tool for Enhancing Oral Fluency of English Language Learners

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ABSTRACT

Oral fluency is integral to language learning, but many students struggle to speak English confidently. The study examined the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in enhancing the oral fluency of Grade 6 students using a mixed-methods approach. The study compared students taught through task-based language teaching with those who learned using traditional methods, focusing more on oral fluency using a quasi-experimental design. Pretest and posttest results showed that students in the experimental group (task-based speed debating) made more significant progress in speaking fluency than those in the control group (traditional method). Interviews with students also revealed that they felt more confident, motivated, and engaged using this method. The combined test results and students' feedback indicate that task-based language teaching is a practical, student-centered approach that supports both language development and emotional growth in the classroom.

Keywords: *Oral Fluency, Task-Based Language Teaching, Speed Debating, Grade 6 Education*

INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a challenging task that involves multiple critical stages. For decades, these processes have been examined through observations, surveys, and experiments to provide a concrete description in language. Previous research found that teacher-centered teaching methods and second language acquisition demonstrated variations in learner achievement in language learning. This revelation resulted in a shift in focus and more.

Oral fluency is critical to language proficiency, enabling effective communication in various contexts. However, traditional instruction often emphasizes grammar and vocabulary over practical speaking skills, which leads to challenges in students' oral fluency. To address this issue, task-based language teaching (TBLT) involves providing learners with meaningful tasks that encourage language use in real-world contexts.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) helps improve oral fluency in different educational contexts. According to Hasnain and Halder (2024), TBLT effectively develops speaking skills and improves communicative ability in the English language. Similarly, Zúñiga et al. (2023) found that TBLT helps learners become motivated to learn a new language and enhances language development. Some Asian countries, such as China and South Korea, have demonstrated that learners exposed to TBLT-based instruction outperform those who receive instruction using the traditional method of oral fluency assessments, as noted by Ellis (2003) and Bao & Du (2015). These results suggest that TBLT may significantly enhance students' language proficiency and speaking skills.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), particularly speed debating, provides an interactive approach to enhancing oral fluency. This activity encourages students to quickly exchange arguments on various topics, prompting them to think critically, organize their thoughts, and communicate effectively. It is not just about improving language skills but also about building critical thinking and keeping students engaged. Research indicates that incorporating debates into language lessons can enhance students' confidence in speaking and increase their engagement in class (Smith & Johnson, 2017; Chen, 2020; Miller, 2018; Roberts & Wang, 2019).

In the Philippines, where the official language is Filipino, English is a second language frequently used in business, media, and education. However, many Filipino students still find it challenging to communicate spontaneously, as the traditional teaching approach focuses more on grammar than on developing speaking ability. According to Jennibelle R. Ella (2018), language is a complex process involving several essential tasks, such as developing communication skills. In Metro Manila, studies reveal that students with exposure to communicative and task-based activities show better improvement in fluency compared to those taught through traditional lecture-based instruction (Tupas & Lorente, 2014). These findings underscore the need to incorporate more interactive language teaching strategies into Philippine classrooms.

The researchers, based in Davao City, observed that numerous students are unsure and lack confidence when speaking English. Through continuous classroom observation, it became clear that traditional teaching methods do not always encourage students to speak up, as they do not receive sufficient opportunities to practice and improve their speaking skills.

Teachers often rely on textbook-based exercises and scripted dialogues, which, while helpful in specific contexts, do not fully prepare students for spontaneous communication. With these observations, the researchers must explore innovative teaching strategies, such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasizes real-world language use and promotes fluency development. The researchers believe that incorporating TBLT can provide a more interactive and engaging approach to language learning, which will help students develop confidence and fluency in speaking English. Although studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing oral fluency among ESL learners, limited research has explored its application through speed debating, particularly at the elementary level. Most studies have focused on older students or general speaking tasks, often missing the potential of engaging in activities like speed debating to help younger Filipino learners improve their fluency. Furthermore, there is limited research, particularly in Grade 6 classrooms and the context of the Philippines. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring how task-based speed debating can help improve oral fluency among Grade 6 students in Davao City, providing insights into more interactive and communicative teaching methods.

Addressing the gap in oral fluency is essential for preparing students to communicate effectively in academic, social, and professional settings. Implementing TBLT offers a practical solution by providing learners with structured yet flexible tasks that encourage meaningful interaction and engagement. The goal of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving oral fluency among Grade 6 students in Davao City, Philippines. By investigating this approach, the researchers aim to contribute valuable insights to language education practices, enabling teachers to create more engaging and effective learning experiences for their students.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to investigate the use of Task-Based Language Teaching in enhancing the oral fluency of grade 6 students. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the mean gain score of the students in the experimental group (students exposed to the Task-Based Language Teaching approach)?
2. What is the mean gain score of the students in the control group (students exposed to a traditional teaching approach)?
3. Is there a significant difference in the mean gain score between students taught using the Task-Based Language Teaching approach and those taught using the traditional teaching method?
4. What are the perceptions of students on task-based language teaching in improving their oral

fluency?

Review of Related Literature

The literature explores Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and its effectiveness in enhancing oral fluency among learners. The focus is on applying TBLT, mainly through speed debating activities, to improve oral fluency in Grade 6 English students.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has proven to be a practical approach to language learning. TBLT has demonstrated efficacy in improving students' communicative ability, particularly in speaking. Bao and Du (2015) thoroughly evaluated Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in the Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, emphasizing its contribution to enriching meaningful language use and enhancing oral fluency. Similarly, Hasnain and Halder (2024) examined the impact of TBLT on ESL students' speaking accuracy and fluency in interactive learning contexts. Zúñiga, Mayorga, and Ruiz (2023) investigated the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on enhancing oral fluency among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. They focused on real-world tasks that promote spontaneous language output. Their findings suggest that task-based activities boost learners' Confidence while reducing speaking anxiety. Quynh (2024) adds to those findings by claiming that TBLT improves grammatical accuracy, vocabulary diversity, conversational richness, and speech pace.

TBLT is closely related to Vygotsky's Social Constructivism, which holds that learning is a social process helped by interactions with peers and more knowledgeable individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). TBLT enables learners to engage in scaffolded discussions with the assistance of professors and peers, facilitating improvements in their oral fluency. A study at the VMG English Center found that students who participated in reasoning-gap and problem-solving tasks for eight weeks showed significant improvement in their oral proficiency, fluency, and confidence. Prior research indicates that learners in non-native English-speaking environments often struggle with fluency due to limited exposure to communicative exchanges (Solak & Bayar, 2015). Traditional teacher-centered methods often discourage students from speaking; however, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) provides a structured yet flexible environment where learners can practice speaking in authentic scenarios. A study by Sosas (2021) at the University of Southern Mindanao examined the integration of contemporary technologies, such as video conferencing and social media interactions, into English language teaching. Findings suggest incorporating digital tools within a TBLT framework enhances students' speaking skills, promoting fluency and accuracy. These results highlight the value of technology-driven TBLT activities, particularly at the elementary level, where engaging and interactive learning methods are important.

The current TBLT practices originate from the communicative language teaching movement that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s (Ellis, 2018). Unlike traditional grammar-centered approaches, TBLT emphasizes the use of language as a medium through which communication and problem-solving can occur (Willis & Willis, 2007). Over the past few decades, TBLT has gained popularity due to its learning-centered approach and its promising qualities of enabling and stimulating actual language use (Nunan, 2004).

Among the strategies of TBLT is speed debating, which has been recognized as an engaging method for improving learners' speaking skills. Nation (2019) argues that debate-based tasks encourage learners to think on their feet, organize their thoughts quickly, and respond effectively. In a study by Huang and Hung (2021), students showed improvements in their fluency and accuracy due to the repetitive nature of the activity. Furthermore, Farahian and Rezaee (2020) noted that debate exercises foster critical thinking and promote interactive learning, which aligns well with the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Another study by Alasmari and Ahmed (2021) highlights that debate can scaffold learning processes, leading to significant language development. While specific literature on "speed debating" as an intervention is limited, the broader application of debate in educational settings has been explored globally.

For instance, interventions combining antecedent strategies with consequences have been shown to improve students' reading rates in the context of oral reading fluency. Eckert et al. (2002) found that pairing interventions and previews with reinforcement, such as listening passages, can enhance oral reading fluency. A systematic review by Wexler et al. (2020) examined various fluency interventions for students with reading difficulties. The study revealed that repeated reading procedures were commonly employed, emphasizing the importance of practice and reinforcement in developing fluency. Studies show that activities like debates can help students improve their speaking skills. Using speed debating as a learning activity may give students more chances to think quickly and express their ideas clearly, leading to better fluency. Integrating speed debating into Grade 6 English classes can allow students to practice the language in dynamic and interactive contexts. By engaging in debates on familiar topics, students can develop their critical thinking skills and articulate their thoughts clearly and concisely. This aligns with findings from a study by Torky (2006), which demonstrated that task-based instruction enhances students' overall speaking performance and Confidence (Torky, 2006). Although there is limited research on speed debating, existing studies on debate and fluency suggest that it can effectively enhance students' speaking skills.

One of the primary challenges in developing fluency is the lack of opportunities for real-life conversations. Speaking anxiety further hinders progress, as many EFL learners avoid

participation due to fear of making mistakes, ultimately limiting their language acquisition (Pipuš, 2021).

On the other hand, peer feedback and collaborative learning in TBLT classrooms enable students to self-monitor their speech and gain Confidence. This aligns with Zúñiga et al. (2023), who emphasize that student-to-student interactions provide valuable opportunities for fluency development. TBLT has been widely adopted in various educational settings, including primary and secondary schools. Prahalathan (2021) investigated the effectiveness of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in improving students' speaking skills and found that those who engaged in task-based speaking activities exhibited enhanced fluency, reduced hesitation, and improved sentence structure compared to students in conventional classrooms.

Task-based speaking activities, interactive discussions, and real-life communication scenarios significantly improve students' confidence and proficiency in English. While these support the integration of TBLT strategies, such as debate and collaborative speaking tasks, in various educational settings, limited research explicitly explores the use of speed debating in elementary-level classrooms, particularly within the Philippine context. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how task-based speed debating can improve oral fluency among Grade 6 ESL students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, the researchers employed a quasi-experimental design to investigate the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on students' oral fluency. This design was chosen because it provided a practical and effective means to evaluate instructional interventions within an authentic educational setting, requiring fewer resources than randomized controlled trials (Harris et al., 2006).

The study followed a pretest-posttest design with experimental and control groups. The experimental group underwent TBLT-based instruction, while the control group received conventional teaching methods. The comparison of pretest and posttest results determined the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing students' oral fluency.

For the qualitative phase, the researchers asked selected students to answer guided questions to understand their thoughts about the intervention. These questions focused on their experiences, opinions, and feelings about the TBLT-based activities, especially the speed

debating tasks. The students' answers gave helpful information that supported the quantitative results and gave a clearer picture of how they felt TBLT helped improve their oral fluency.

Research Respondents

This study involved 64 Grade 6 students from two private schools: 37 from School A and 27 from School B. The participants were divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group, using a non-random sampling technique based on classroom size. The control group consisted of 29 students, 17 from School A and 12 from School B. In comparison, the experimental group consisted of 35 students, comprising 20 from School A and 15 from School B. After data collection, the researchers combined and analyzed the data from both schools.

After the experiment, the researchers conducted individual interviews with selected students to explore further their experiences and perceptions related to the intervention. Interview participants were chosen using purposive sampling, a technique in which researchers select individuals who are exceptionally knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomenon under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). The purposive selection of participants allowed the researchers to gather in-depth qualitative insights that supported and enriched the quantitative findings of the study.

Sampling Method

This study employed purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specific traits that align with the research goals (Palinkas et al., 2015). Two sections of Grade 6 students were selected because they were at a stage where improving their English speaking skills was very important. Their level of learning made them a suitable group to study how task-based speed debating through TBLT can help improve oral fluency.

Purposive sampling was a good choice for this study because it allowed researchers to focus on students who were actively learning English and could benefit from structured speaking activities (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). By selecting these participants, the study ensured that the data collected was relevant and helpful in understanding how task-based learning helped with speaking skills.

Data Collection

A pre-post-test assessment checklist developed by Torky (2006) was used for data collection. This instrument was selected to evaluate the effectiveness of the Task-Based Language

Teaching (TBLT) intervention. The goal of the oral fluency checklist was to identify the essential speaking skills required by sixth-grade students. This checklist included four core skill categories: grammatical competence, discourse competence, pragmatic competence, and fluency. Each category encompasses sub-skills, such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and coherence. The researchers used a checklist with 35 points to evaluate students' speaking skills in both the pretest and posttest assessments, measuring their progress after the intervention.

During data collection, a pretest was conducted during the first week preceding the intervention, during which the participants performed a structured speaking task. Their performance was evaluated using Torky's (2006) checklist, and the researcher conducted the assessment, followed by a posttest, after the task-based language teaching activities using the same checklist. Both the pretest and posttest assessments were recorded and scored live to ensure accuracy and consistency in evaluation.

The intervention consisted of daily sessions for School A and School B. Aligned with the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) strategy; the intervention was structured into three distinct stages: the pre-task phase, the task phase, and the post-task phase. Each stage focused on different aspects of speaking skills.

The data collected from were analyzed using the Likert scale to assess the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in improving students' oral fluency.

Raw Score	Percentage %	Descriptive	Interpretation
32-35	90-100%	Excellent Fluency	The speaker demonstrates a high level of fluency, with smooth, natural speech and minimal hesitation.
26-31	75-89%	Good Fluency	The speaker communicates effectively, with only minor pauses or hesitations, yet maintains good fluency.
21-25	60-74%	Average Fluency	The speaker has a moderate level of fluency, with noticeable pauses and occasional struggles in maintaining speech flow.
14-20	40-59%	Needs Improvement	The speaker experiences frequent hesitations, difficulty in structuring sentences, and inconsistent fluency.
0-13	Below 40%	Poor Fluency	The speaker has significant difficulty

			maintaining speech, with frequent pauses, unclear pronunciation, or broken sentences.
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Pre-implementation Activity

Phase 1: Pretest

At the beginning of the experiment, both the experimental and control groups were asked to deliver a 2-minute impromptu speech on the topic: "My Favorite Hobby." Students were given one minute to prepare, during which they could jot down notes but were not allowed to read from them. This speech task served as a baseline measurement of their oral fluency. It was assessed using the rubrics in Appendix I (Torky, 2006). This task was designed to capture students' natural speech flow, vocabulary range, and ability to organize thoughts quickly as a comparison point for their performance after the intervention.

Implementation Activities

Phase 2: TBLT Intervention

The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) intervention was conducted following the standard sequence: pre-task phase, task phase, and post-task phase. The activities were adapted from a study by Alshahrani and Saud (2024), which provided a structured approach to improving oral fluency through debate-focused tasks. Each meeting featured a specific speaking activity, including speed debating, designed to enhance students' fluency. The researchers introduced the participants to the basic structure of debates, commonly used expressions, and quick-response strategies. The teacher modeled sentence starters and guided students through short practice debates. Students worked in pairs and were given topics such as "Online learning is better than classroom learning." They had three minutes to prepare their arguments, followed by a one-minute speech and a 30-second rebuttal from each participant. Afterward, students reflected on their performance, received teacher feedback, and evaluated their peers using a simplified rubric based on Torky's (2006) guidelines.

The researchers integrated debates into job interview role-plays. Students alternated between the roles of applicants and interviewers. Each participant had to justify why they were suitable for a given position while their partner responded or challenged their claims. This task emphasized the use of clear and professional language, appropriate vocabulary, and spontaneous speaking. Moreover, the researchers gave topics that focused on real-life school issues, including cheating, gossip, and absenteeism. Students formed pairs or small groups, took opposing positions, and were given five minutes to prepare their arguments. They then delivered structured speeches, including opening statements, rebuttals, and closing arguments,

which lasted between 30 seconds and one minute. Teachers and peers assessed their performance using the oral fluency checklist.

In the final phase of the intervention, students participated in formal team debates on social issues, including "Social media does more harm than good" and "Physical books are better than e-books." Each team was given ten minutes to prepare and assigned specific roles such as opening speaker, rebuttal speaker, and summary speaker. Speaking turns lasted one to two minutes, and debates were recorded for thorough evaluation and analysis. These structured activities targeted different aspects of oral fluency, including grammatical accuracy, vocabulary range, coherence, and pragmatic competence. Feedback from peers and teachers, guided by the rubric, helped monitor and support student progress throughout the intervention.

Post-Implementation Activity

Phase 3: Posttest After the TBLT Intervention

After completing the TBLT intervention, a posttest was administered to evaluate the participants' progress in oral fluency. This posttest activity was adapted from the structured framework of Alshahrani and Saud (2024), ensuring alignment with the pretest procedures. Both the experimental and control groups were asked to deliver a two-minute impromptu speech on the topic "My Favorite Hobby," which was the same prompt used in the pretest. The impromptu speech allowed the researcher to make a direct comparison of each student's oral fluency before and after the intervention. Students' posttest performances were evaluated using the oral fluency checklist originally developed by Torky (2006). As in the pretest, all speeches were recorded and scored live to maintain consistency and ensure accurate evaluations. The posttest results were then compared with the pretest scores to assess the impact of the TBLT intervention on students' speaking skills.

In addition to the quantitative data collected from the pretest and posttest, a qualitative phase was conducted to gain deeper insights into students' learning experiences during the intervention. The researchers used an interview guide, which served as a structured framework outlining key topics, guiding questions, and prompts for discussion. This guide helped maintain consistency in the interviews while also allowing flexibility for open-ended responses. It was used to explore participants' opinions, learning behaviors, and reflections related to the task-based language teaching focusing on speed debating activities. The guide typically includes open-ended questions to gather detailed insights into participants' experiences, opinions, or behaviors related to the research topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This approach enabled the researchers to capture meaningful feedback that complemented the quantitative findings and provided a more comprehensive picture of how the TBLT intervention influenced the development of oral fluency (Patton, 2015).

Research Instrument

To ensure the reliability of the oral fluency checklist used during the pretest and posttest, a pilot test was conducted prior to the actual data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's alpha. The subscale for grammatical competence yielded an alpha of .882 across three items, indicating good reliability. Discourse competence, assessed with two items, had an alpha of .773, which is considered acceptable. Pragmatic competence and fluency were each measured using a single-item rating, both yielding an alpha of .921, suggesting excellent reliability. These results indicate that the checklist was a consistent and reliable tool for assessing various components of oral fluency (George & Mallery, 2003).

In terms of qualitative data collection, a semi-structured interview guide was developed to gather deeper insights from the participants. The guide was reviewed by experts in language education to ensure content validity, clarity of questions, and alignment with the study objectives. This process of validation helped confirm that the interview questions were appropriate for eliciting relevant information related to the learners' oral fluency development.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the school administrators. Informed consent from parents and assent from the students were also secured. The study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature were clearly explained, and students were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without academic penalty. To protect participant privacy, no real names were recorded or disclosed. All data, including audio and video recordings, were stored securely and used only for academic purposes. These were deleted after the study was completed. The study posed no risk of harm and was conducted in alignment with regular classroom activities. All ethical procedures followed institutional guidelines, upholding the principles of respect, beneficence, and justice.

Data Analysis

This descriptive statistical tool summarized the data collected from the pretest and post-test. The mean scores for the pretest and post-test were computed for the experimental (TBLT) and control (traditional teaching) groups. A paired t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between students' pretest and post-test oral fluency scores. This test is appropriate for analyzing related samples, such as repeated measures on the same group (Creswell, 2018). The pretests established a baseline, while the post-test measured the improvements after the intervention.

The data gathered from the individual interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data, allowing the researchers to interpret the participants' experiences in relation to the study objectives. Thematic analysis is a flexible approach commonly used in qualitative research to uncover rich and detailed insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this process, the researchers systematically coded the interview transcripts, grouped similar responses, and developed overarching themes that captured the core meanings of the students' perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mean Gain Score of the Students in the Experimental Group

Table 1 presents the mean gain in the experimental group's pretest and post-test mean scores using TBLT approach. The table shows that the mean score of the experimental group in the pretest was 22.45 (SD = 5.57). This results in a mean gain score of 8.89. After the intervention, the post-test mean score increased to 31.34 (SD = 2.06). A paired t-test analysis produced a t-value of 9.26 and a p-value of 0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pretest and post-test scores.

Table 1. Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores Using TBLT Approach

Group	Mean Score (SD)	Mean Gain	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Experimental Group Pretest	22.45 (5.57)	8.89	9.26	0.001	Significant
Experimental Group Posttest	31.34 (2.06)				

The increase of the mean score from 22.45 in the pretest to 31.34 in the posttest suggests that TBLT improved students' performance. The lower standard deviation in the posttest (SD = 2.06) compared to the pretest (SD = 5.57) indicates that students' scores became more consistent after the intervention. The statistically significant t-value of 9.26 further supports the conclusion that the observed improvement was unlikely due to chance. The results suggest that the intervention successfully enhanced students' oral fluency and critical thinking skills. The t-test results indicate a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ($p = 0.001$). This means there is a very low probability (0.1%) that the improvement occurred by chance.

The noticeable increase in the scores suggests that TBLT positively affected the students' learning outcomes. This supports the existing literature, which emphasizes that TBLT effectively improves fluency and accuracy in language learning. Albino (2017) highlights that providing learners with opportunities to engage in authentic communicative tasks enhances their ability to process and produce language more fluently. The significant improvement in posttest scores indicates that engaging students in structured debates within a supportive learning community leads to effective language learning outcomes.

Mean Gain Score of the Students in the Control Group

Table 2 presents the pretest and post-test mean scores of students in the control group who were taught using the traditional teaching method. The pretest mean score was 24.97 with a standard deviation of 6.05, while the post-test mean score increased to 29.90 with a standard deviation of 3.90. This reflects a mean gain score of 4.93. A paired t-test analysis yielded a t-value of 4.36 and a p-value of 0.001. Based on this, the results are interpreted as statistically significant.

Table 2. Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of Students Taught Using the Traditional Teaching Method

Group	Mean Score (SD)	Mean Gain	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Control Group Pretest	24.97 (6.05)	4.93	4.36	0.001	Significant
Control Group Posttest	29.90 (3.90)				

The results suggest that students exposed to the traditional method improved oral fluency, as reflected in the mean gain score. However, the mean gain score of 4.93 suggests only a modest improvement. The standard deviation in the post-test (3.90) indicates that, although performance improved, there was still variability in individual scores. The statistical significance of the results ($p = 0.001$) confirms that the improvement is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

These findings align with Serroukh and Serroukh (2015), who cited that traditional, lecture-based methods tend to produce passive learners and result in varied learning outcomes. Wang (2022) also emphasized that while traditional methods may improve content retention, they often lack the interactive, communicative elements necessary to develop oral fluency and critical thinking. This is reflected in the moderate gain observed among the control group students.

Significant Difference in Mean Gain Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups

Table 3 presents the significant difference in mean gain scores between students taught using TBLT approach (experimental group) and those taught using the traditional teaching method (control group). It includes the mean gain scores, standard deviations, t-value, and p-value of the statistical test. The control group had a mean gain score of 4.93 with a standard deviation of 6.09, while the experimental group had a higher mean gain score of 8.89 with a standard deviation of 5.68. A t-test resulted in a t-value of 2.68 and a p-value of 0.009.

Table 3. Significant Difference in the Mean Score Improvements Between Students Taught Using TBLT and Those Taught Using the Traditional Teaching Method

Group	Mean Score (SD)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Traditional	4.93 (6.09)	2.68	0.009	Significant
Experimental	8.89 (5.68)			

The mean gain score difference suggests that task-based language teaching enhanced students' oral fluency more effectively. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the difference is statistically significant, confirming that the improvement is unlikely due to chance. The statistical significance of the results, as indicated by the p-value (0.009), confirms that the TBLT intervention had a meaningful impact. This suggests that structured debate activities enable students to practice speaking in an engaging and interactive environment, resulting in measurable improvement (Sari, 2019).

The results indicate that students in the experimental group, who were exposed to TBLT focusing on speed debating, showed more significant improvement in their performance compared to those in the traditional teaching method. This finding aligns with previous studies that demonstrate that task-based learning enhances fluency and promotes deeper engagement through social interaction. These findings align with Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning. The results also support Halliday's (1975) theory on language development through social engagement. Prior studies on task-based language learning suggest that interactive activities enhance fluency, reinforcing the effectiveness of speed debating as an instructional approach (Ellis, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Overview of Qualitative Findings

The thematic analysis explored Grade 6 students' impressions of TBLT using Speed Debating as a tool for improving oral fluency. The researchers processed and studied the transcribed interview material using thematic analysis to identify patterns in the student's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to the activity. The study identified eight key themes as shown in Figure 1. These themes emerged naturally as the researchers carefully examined the students' answers and how the method facilitated their language learning. The themes offer a comprehensive perspective on students' experiences and highlight a student-centered approach to promoting oral fluency in the language classroom.

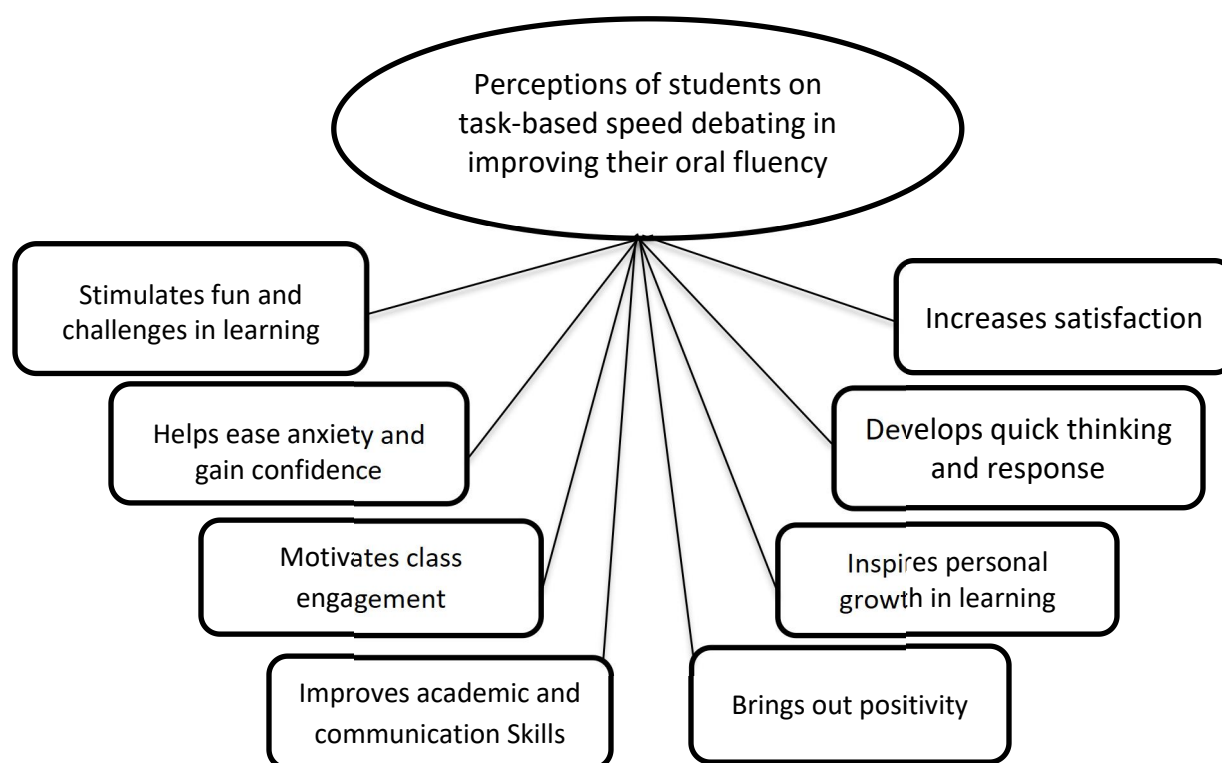


Figure 1. Themes Describing the Perception of Grade 6 Students on the Use of Task-Based Language Teaching in Enhancing Their Oral Fluency

Theme 1: TBLT stimulates fun and challenges in learning.

The first theme reflects students' extremely favorable affective response to the activity. Participants praised speed debate as "fun," "exciting," and "awesome," indicating that the

method created an engaging and enjoyable classroom environment, even when combined with cognitive difficulties.

"It helped me by letting me participate more and making the lesson more fun." - Student 2, L15.

"More amazing, more fun because it tests your mind." - Student 5, L15

This finding supports Krashen's (1982) claim that low-anxiety, pleasurable surroundings increase language acquisition. Similarly, Reyes (2019) notes that affective engagement is crucial for sustaining student participation in speech tasks.

Theme 2: TBLT helps ease anxiety and gain confidence.

This theme emphasizes the student's fear, nervousness, and self-doubt during the Task-Based Speed Debating. Many described emotional challenges such as trembling, cognitive overload, fear of being judged, or extreme shyness when speaking in front of others. Despite these barriers, students gradually developed coping mechanisms, such as focusing on their goals, preparing responses in advance, and maintaining a positive mindset, which ultimately led to increased confidence in expressing themselves.

"The challenges that I faced would be, I would be very nervous and shaky, but I would shift my focus to my grades and just push myself to answer with confidence." – Student 1, L25–26

"Sometimes I stutter while trying to talk so I just think of what to say before I really say it so that I can speak it properly." – Student 3, L23–24

"I used to be quite shy when doing public speaking or speaking in front of a class or even participating." – Student 4, L34–35

"I felt scared because I knew someone is reviewing this recording. But I tried to do my best and not feel scared." – Student 10, L14–15

These reveal that emotional vulnerability was a common part of this experience. However, students began to develop internal strategies that helped them perform under pressure. Their ability to move from fear to fluency demonstrates the psychological growth fostered by the strategy. This dual emotional response is consistent with the findings of Canada and Miralles (2023), who indicate that oral communication activities frequently elicit apprehension and enthusiasm, forcing students to adjust and control their emotional states. Nonetheless, the student's ability to control their emotions and persist suggests that speed arguing has the potential to promote emotional resilience.

Theme 3: TBLT improves academic and communication Skills.

Students stated that the speed debate sessions helped them with their academic focus, verbal communication, and involvement. They reported improved critical thinking and articulation of ideas during academic debates.

*"It improved my academic performance by helping me focus more." - Student 2: L10.
"Speed debating helped me by improving my communication and participation skills." - Student 8, L-8*

These findings support the statements of Nation and Newton (2009), who emphasize the importance of task-based language training (TBLT) in increasing fluency and accuracy in relevant contexts. The findings further support Vygotsky's (1978) idea of the Zone of Proximal Development, in which collaborative activities serve as scaffolding for intellectual progress.

Theme 4: TBLT motivates class engagement.

A common theme in the interviews was the strategy's impact on motivation and classroom involvement. Motivation and engagement are essential components in fostering effective learning experiences. In classroom settings, when students feel both motivated and engaged, they are more likely to participate actively, develop confidence, and sustain a desire for continued learning. The following student voices illustrate the various ways in which classroom strategies have positively impacted their motivation and engagement. Students reported feeling more awake, responsive, and willing to contribute.

*"It motivated me and engaged me, and I want to do more in the future." – Student 6,
"Before I was very quiet... But now, I'm able to think faster. I'm able to produce more." – Student 5, L41–43*

The student reflections above resonate with several key findings in educational research. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation, such as enjoyment and interest, plays a crucial role in academic success. Similarly, engagement that stems from active participation has been shown to foster deeper learning and retention (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Students' references to confidence growth align with studies suggesting that self-efficacy and classroom support systems contribute to increased willingness to participate (Bandura, 1997). Furthermore, research by Reeve (2012) shows that when teachers adopt autonomy-supportive teaching styles, it can significantly boost both motivation and classroom engagement.

Theme 5: TBLT brings out positivity in learning.

Several participants said that the debating activity helped them gain confidence in expressing themselves in English, both in controlled and spontaneous settings. The ability to respond positively to these challenges by preparing thoroughly and maintaining a growth mindset plays a vital role in building resilience, confidence, and cognitive agility.

“Sometimes I stutter while trying to talk so I just think of what to say before I really say it so that I can speak it properly.” – Student 3, L23-24

“My suggestion to improve the strategy is to do research before the debate to feel more confident during the debate.” – Student 7, L23-24

Recent literature in educational psychology supports the notion that students who approach academic challenges with a positive mindset and preparation strategies often develop greater resilience and confidence. Putwain and Symes (2018) found that students who adopt coping strategies such as preparation and self-talk experience reduced anxiety and improved performance. These findings reflect the behaviors and thoughts expressed by the students, suggesting that classroom interventions that promote structured preparation and positive reinforcement can significantly enhance student outcomes.

Theme 6: TBLT inspires personal growth in learning.

This theme reflects how learners gradually overcome initial confusion or anxiety and develop confidence, clarity, and a broader worldview through sustained educational experiences. While students acknowledged several challenges, including fast-paced exchanges, unexpected rebuttals, and organizing their thoughts, they also developed coping mechanisms such as preparation, emotional regulation, and strategic thinking.

“I feel like I learned a lot from it.” -Student 3, L28

“Before it was very hard and quite uhm confusing but over time it got easy and more understanding.” - Student 2, L27-28

These statements reflect key aspects of personal growth, including a shift from confusion to clarity, the acquisition of knowledge, increased confidence in self-expression, and cognitive expansion. These experiential accounts align with the literature on student development, particularly in transformative and reflective learning frameworks. Students often undergo significant shifts in perspective when learning environments emphasize active engagement, self-reflection, and communication skills. For example, Mezirow's theory of transformative learning continues to inspire contemporary work, which shows how reflective practices help learners reinterpret their experiences and assumptions (Illeris, 2024). Similarly, research by Chng and Lee (2023) found that when students are encouraged to express their thoughts, their confidence and openness to diverse viewpoints increase significantly.

Theme 7: TBLT develops quick thinking and response.

Students particularly appreciated the speed, spontaneity, and challenge embedded in the activity. These aspects were perceived not only as enjoyable but intellectually stimulating.

“Thinking is valuable, produce answers fast.” – Student 5, L89–90

"The part where we don't prepare. It made me think fast and be more creative." – Student 1, L12

These comments suggest that learners view spontaneity and time pressure as authentic conditions for language use, which mirrors the principles of real-time communication emphasized by Ellis (2003) in second language acquisition.

Theme 8: TBLT Increases learning satisfaction.

The theme highlights students' positive reception of the teaching approach employed in the classroom. Rather than suggesting improvements or raising concerns, students expressed contentment and approval, indicating a sense of trust and alignment with the instructional methods used.

"I already enjoy it and have no problem." – Student 1, L42

"I think the strategy is perfect as it is." – Student 2, L38

"It's already perfect as it is." – Student 3, L34

"...I think the strategy was perfect. Thank you!" – Student 6, L27

These statements reflect an overall positive emotional response and signal that the pedagogical approach resonates with the learners. Such reactions suggest that the instructional design effectively meets their learning needs and preferences, contributing to a sense of comfort, ease, and engagement. According to Rahman and Lin (2023), student satisfaction with learning strategies significantly enhances motivation, class participation, and long-term retention. Moreover, Jiang and Yu (2024) found that students who perceive strategies as clear, supportive, and well-matched to their learning styles are more likely to engage meaningfully with content and maintain a positive academic outlook. This theme of strategy appreciation also aligns with the growing emphasis on student-centered approaches, which promote clarity, flexibility, and responsiveness to feedback (Martínez & Webb, 2023). When learners recognize and affirm the value of a strategy, it strengthens the teacher-student dynamic and validates the intentionality behind pedagogical choices.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings from both the experimental and qualitative phases, task-based language teaching has proven to be an effective strategy for improving students' oral fluency, critical thinking, and speaking confidence. The quantitative results indicate a significant improvement in students' language skills. At the same time, the qualitative data revealed the students' positive perceptions of task-based speed debating, particularly its characteristics of engaging them in meaningful discussions, enhancing their reasoning skills, and promoting a sense of

Confidence in expressing their ideas. However, the relatively short duration of the experimental phase suggests that longer-term studies are needed to fully understand the sustained impact of task-based speed debating on academic performance and communication skills.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In light of both the quantitative and qualitative findings, it is recommended that schools integrate TBLT through Task-Based Speed Debating into the curriculum to advance oral fluency, critical thinking, and self-confidence in speaking. Teachers should receive professional training in task-based learning techniques and debate facilitation to ensure structured and productive discussions. Additionally, schools should allocate resources, such as debate guides, structured topics, and dedicated time, to support the implementation of task-based speed debating. While task-based speed debating is particularly beneficial in language learning, its application should be extended to other subjects to develop students' reasoning and argumentation skills. Future research should investigate the long-term effects of TBLT with focus on speed debating on communication, motivation, and academic performance across various educational settings. Furthermore, qualitative studies should delve deeper into students' experiences to better understand the psychological and social impacts of debate-based learning.

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