Fostering oral fluency in EFL classrooms through task-based learning and online collaboration

ISSN 2657-9774; https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2026.05.05

Nicole Stefany Peña-Sánchez*, Juan Sebastian Aranda-Samboni**, Paola Julie Aguilar-Cruz***
*Universidad de la Amazonia, Colombia;ni.pena@udla.edu.co
**Universidad de la Amazonia, Colombia; j.aranda@udla.edu.co
***Universidad de la Amazonia, Colombia; pa.aguilar@udla.edu.co

Abstract
This study reports an action research project on oral fluency development in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) with high school students in Florencia, Colombia. The aim was to analyze the contributions of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach, supported by online collaboration with students from India, to improve students' spoken performance. Thirty-four 11th graders participated in three task-based sessions designed around real-life and contextualized activities. Data were collected through questionnaires, field notes, and audio recordings. Results showed that students increased their participation, teamwork, and self-confidence, while reducing fillers and producing more complex sentences. In conclusion, the use of TBL and collaborative practices provided meaningful opportunities for communication, confirming their potential to foster oral fluency in secondary EFL classrooms.

Keywords*: Online collaborative learning, language learning, language teaching, oral fluency, task-based learning*

Introduction

Improving students' communicative competence in English has become a priority in Colombian secondary education, where studies such as Buitrago (2016) have shown that traditional grammar-centered practices limit oral interaction, despite the growing role of English as a global lingua franca. Within this competence, oral fluency has gained special relevance, as it enables learners to express ideas naturally and confidently in diverse social, academic, and professional contexts (Romero & Pérez, 2021). However, in Colombian classrooms, oral skills have often been overshadowed by grammar-centered practices, limiting students' opportunities to engage in meaningful communication. As Kürüm (2016) establishes "speaking is considered to be the mostly sought skill for an individual to be accepted competent in a foreign language" (p. 264). Therefore, it becomes necessary to provide students with new alternatives that help them achieve greater proficiency in this skill.

One pedagogical alternative that addresses this challenge is the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach, which integrates authentic, real-life tasks into the classroom (González & Arias, 2009; Ramírez & Artunduaga, 2018). According to Mojica (2007), the use of real-life tasks in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting connects students' learning to their realities. Moreover, Urrutia and Vega (2010) contend that the main purpose of speaking is to allow learners to interact naturally with each other. That means, EFL speaking tasks should be related to students' contexts and provide spaces for natural interaction.

Previous studies have also shown that TBL fosters participation in topics connected to learners' day-to-day lives, while collaborative tasks create an environment in which students feel more confident, motivated, and comfortable expressing themselves (Córdoba, 2016; Peña & Onatra, 2009; Urrutia & Vega, 2010). Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyse the contributions of implementing the TBL approach, supported by collaborative practices, to foster oral fluency in EFL among 11th graders at a

state-funded school in Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia. In line with this purpose, the research seeks to answer the following questions: *What are the contributions of implementing the TBL approach in online collaboration to foster oral fluency among Colombian high school students?*

Conceptual framework

Task-Based Learning (TBL)

Galvis (2011) argues that TBL is a process-oriented approach to language education that connects classroom practices with real-world contexts, highlighting the importance of "metacognition in learning, and the key role of learning by doing" (p. 200). Likewise, Moreno and Jiménez (2005) agree that "if students' sense that the task has a clear relation with their world, they are likely to discover easily the reasons to take part in the activity and, as a consequence, put forth their best effort to perform it" (p. 56). In sum, TBL provides learners with authentic opportunities to engage in meaningful communication (Ramírez & Artunduaga, 2018), bridging classroom instruction with real-life contexts and promoting both linguistic development and learner autonomy.

In addition to this, Peña and Onatra (2009) point out that "students are initially accompanied by the teacher on activities which are similar to the ones they are supposed to work on autonomously, and thus can see the logic involved in the final task" (p. 14). Moreover, TBL is conceived as an approach that enables students to comprehend and solve issues associated with their day-to-day context (Romero & Pérez, 2021). Therefore, the TBL approach needs to be seen as an opportunity to use the language in situations related to students' reality which increases students' autonomy and motivation and fosters their English performance.

The role of TBL in Online Collaborative Learning (OCL)

Harasim (2012) explains that Online Collaborative Learning (OCL) theory and pedagogy are designed to engage learners in the discourse practices of knowledge communities, enabling them to participate in the creation of knowledge and the refinement of ideas. TBL plays a significant role in enhancing OCL, particularly in language education and skill development. In online settings, where physical presence is absent, TBL encourages students to communicate effectively through digital platforms. The need to complete tasks collaboratively fosters frequent interaction, enhancing language skills, critical thinking, and teamwork (Aguilar-Cruz & Xiang, 2023). Students must negotiate meaning, share ideas, and provide feedback, which are essential components of both TBL and OCL.

Additionally, TBL in OCL requires students to take responsibility for their own learning. To this respect, Lee (2002) emphasizes that online exchanges using TBL create a dynamic space for Second Language Acquisition (SLA), where learners can engage in input and output processes through negotiation of meaning. This interaction is crucial in OCL, as it allows learners to actively participate in tasks that mirror real-life communication scenarios.

Along similar lines, Lopes and Castro (2022) remark that online interactions enabled by TBL not only facilitate task completion but also provide students with a platform to express their identities, share their life circumstances, and explore what it means to belong to their cultural and social contexts. Thus, TBL in OCL empowers students to collaboratively engage in real-world tasks, enhancing their ability to negotiate meanings and communicate effectively in diverse, authentic contexts.

Oral fluency in TBL

Oral Fluency is considered a key aspect concerning the ability to communicate in a target language. Febyanti and Sari (2022) claim that "fluency is a feature that gives a very natural quality of speech, including when students give a slight pause, rhythm, intonation, stress, speech rate, and such original use exclamations and interruptions" (p. 12). Besides, Peña and Onatra (2009) establish that "learners feel that they have to perform perfectly from the first time they try to speak partly because teachers sometimes

highlight accuracy rather than fluency, and thus errors are not considered part of their learning process" (p. 13). Hence, Oral Fluency assisted with the TBL approach is essential to create comfortable environments where learners will perform themselves with confidence and interest.

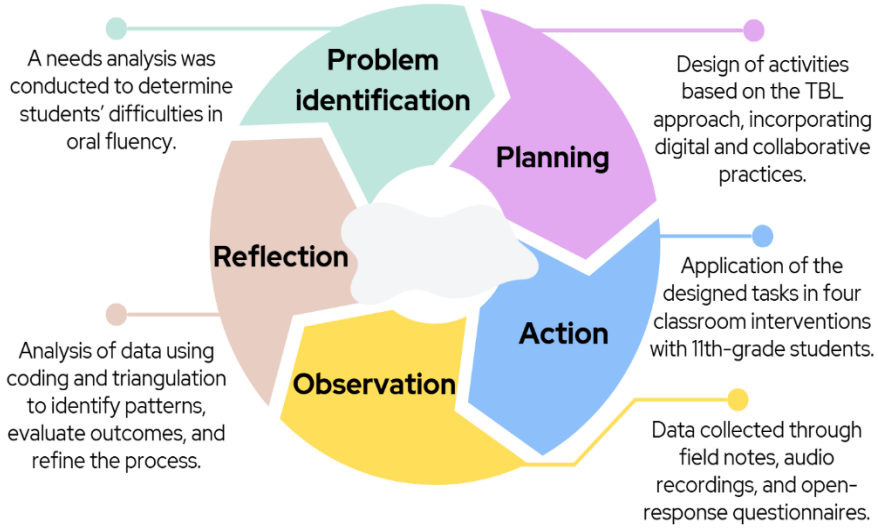
The mix of the TBL approach with Oral Fluency give authenticity to the tasks students are expected to develop and increase their reliance upon English language performance. To this respect, Córdoba *et al.* (2023), determine TBL helps to "develop learners' speaking fluency by offering them an experience in how to master fluency to maintain a conversation and interact with other language users" (p.146). Besides, the originality of such tasks improves students' self-confidence when performing oral use of the language in real situations.

Methodology

Research design

The methodological design selected for this research process was qualitative action research, since it allowed the researchers to identify a pedagogical problem in the classroom, implement an intervention, and reflect on its outcomes (Burns, 2009). Action research is particularly suitable in educational contexts because it is cyclical and participatory, enabling teachers and students to collaboratively address challenges and generate practical solutions (Kumar, 2011). Hence, our research was developed in 5 phases, as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research phases based on action-research.



Source: Own elaboration.

This action-research design not only facilitated the systematic observation and analysis of students' progress but also provided a reflective framework to analyze the impact of the TBL approach on fostering oral fluency in the EFL classroom.

Data collection instruments

To gather information to analyse the contributions of using the TBL approach through online collaborative practices on students' oral fluency, three data collection instruments were used: questionnaires, field notes, and audio recordings.

Questionnaires

Creswell (2014) claims that questionnaires are implemented to obtain participants' insights about a certain topic. Similarly, Brown (2009) establishes that these questionnaires "provide a way to find out, in an unstructured manner, what people are thinking about a particular topic or issue" (p. 201). Hence, this instrument allowed us to get information from the target population regarding their perceptions about the implementation.

The questionnaire used in our study consisted of five main questions, including one Likert-scale item that required to be justified in the following sub-question, and four open-ended questions. The Likert-scale item was designed to check students' comfort to express their ideas in the TBL activities, ranking it from very uncomfortable to very comfortable. The follow-up sub-question asked students to justify their choice and mention the factors that contributed to their comfort or discomfort. The remaining questions were open-ended that aimed to gather students' conceptions and beliefs towards their motivation, the effectiveness of the tasks, and the challenges faced during the implementation of the intervention process and the impact of collaborative work. The questionnaire was applied at the end of each of the three intervention sessions and completed anonymously by the 34 students.

Teachers' field notes

Hood conceive field notes as careful narratives of the setting, individuals involved, and occurrences during that time. In addition to this, Hood (2009) state that field notes need to be thorough and provide extensive, context-driven details from the setting to avoid making broad generalizations and provide a more accurate representation of the phenomenon being observed. Hence, this instrument provided us with a deeper understanding of the problem as it allowed us to get immersed in the natural setting where the implementation process took place.

In our study, the teachers' field notes were written by two teachers during each intervention. These notes were focused on writing information about the students' interaction, language use, and engagement. Additionally, after the data was collected, it was reviewed and coded using grounded theory (open, axial, and selective coding) to ensure consistency throughout the process.

Audio recordings

Hopkins (2008) claims that audio recordings "are excellent for those situations where teachers require a very specific and accurate record of a limited aspect of their teaching, or of a particular interaction, say between a specific teacher and child or between two children" (p. 105). Considering the above, audio recordings were selected because they provided an accurate record of students' speech, enabling the analysis of their oral fluency without the limitations of relying on memory or recall. From the total group of 34 participants, a subset of 12 students was randomly selected to be recorded during the sessions.

It is important to note that the audio recordings were transcribed word by word, and then were transcribed. These recordings were used for the analysis of students' oral production. Therefore, the same coding procedure used for the other instruments was used to assess these transcriptions. Hence, we selected passages that accurately represented the key trends found in the data in order to keep the consistency in the analysis.

Setting and participants

The participants enrolled in our study were 34 11^{th}-grade students from the state-funded school Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, which is located in the urban area of Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia. The participants' ages are between 15 and 17 years old, with 16 years old being the most common age among students. Most of the population belongs to social strata 0 and 1, which correspond to the lowest social strata in Colombia. Just a few people from the participants belonged to stratum 2. Regarding ethical considerations, informed consent was obtained from parents or legal guardians, assent was obtained from

students, and institutional permission was granted by the school. Table 1 further describes students' demographic information.

Table 1: Students' demographic information

Basic information	Options	Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	23	67.6 %
	Male	11	32.4 %
Age	15 years old	7	20.6 %
	16 years old	25	73.5 %
	17 years old	2	5.9 %
Social stratum	Stratum 0	8	23.5 %
	Stratum 1	17	50.0 %
	Stratum 2	6	17.6 %
	Stratum 3	3	8.8 %

We implemented three sessions (90 minutes each) focused on the Sustainable Development Goal #11 (SDG), which is sustainable cities and communities, during the online collaboration process with 23 students from Delhi, India. Colombian and Indian students were organized into groups that were balanced as equitably as possible. During the intragroup collaboration process, students met independently and communicated through social media or WhatsApp groups to plan their activities. Although Indian students participated in the collaborative activities, they were not included as participants in the study data collection. For the plenary sessions, the teachers organized Zoom meetings, which students from both countries joined during their respective class times. These sessions were held every week, so students had the time to organize what they needed for the meeting (See Table 2).

Table 2: Design of task-based sessions

Session	Objective	Tasks	Collaboration format
1	To learn about some main cities in a foreign country.	✓ Students design a poster showing the main characteristics of one of the main cities of their country such as cultural aspects, infrastructure, population, and biodiversity richness.	Intragroup collaboration
		✓ Two students per group present the poster of the corresponding city.	Plenary sharing
		✓ Each group identified five aspects that some of the cities had in common and wrote them on a Google Form. The teacher then read the responses aloud to the whole class.	Intragroup collaboration and plenary sharing
2	To discover the main characteristics of sustainable cities.	✓ Each group designs a presentation of a vision board for each city, incorporating real-world facts and data regarding the transportation system, waste management, water management, economy, and renewable sources.	Intragroup collaboration
		✓ Based on the previous phase, students identify an issue from each city and look for information, aiming to create a strategy to overcome it.	Intragroup collaboration with guided research

		✓ Students discuss their ideas and create a possible strategy to be presented to the class.	Intragroup collaboration
3	To propose strategies for creating a sustainable city.	✓ In groups, students reflect on the possible strategy to overcome the sustainability issue, getting to the most accurate one to create a presentation with this strategy.	Intragroup collaboration
		✓ Two students present their corresponding issue and the strategy they created using slides and reliable data.	Plenary sharing
		✓ Students reflect on the entire process by writing down 2 or 3 key insights acquired from the strategies for solving the issue and then discuss how their understanding of the issue evolved through the diverse perspectives shared.	Intragroup collaboration and plenary sharing.

Table 2 presents the design of the three task-based sessions implemented during the online collaboration process. Each session was structured around a specific objective and included a sequence of tasks that integrated both intragroup and plenary collaboration. In Session 1, students worked in groups to design posters about the main cities of their country, presented them to the whole class, and then identified common aspects across the cities using a Google Form, which the teacher read aloud to facilitate plenary discussion. Session 2 focused on the characteristics of sustainable cities, where groups created vision boards, researched issues related to urban sustainability, and proposed strategies through collaborative work. Finally, Session 3 emphasized solution-oriented thinking, with students reflecting on sustainability issues, presenting their strategies using slides and data, and concluding with both individual reflections and plenary sharing of insights. This design highlights the balance between group collaboration, teacher mediation, and whole-class interaction to promote engagement and oral fluency.

Data analysis procedures

Data analysis was carried out through grounded theory following Creswell's (2014) procedures using ATLAS.ti 25 software. First, we examined all details of information in qualitative data through open coding. Then, we implemented axial coding to find strong connections among the codes identified in the open coding process. Lastly, to have clearer and solid results, when getting to the core categories of the study, we carried out a selective coding process. Through the implementation of this comprehensive data analysis process, we analyzed the primary data and converted it into meaningful and well-founded conclusions. Consequently, this process enhanced the depth and reliability of the research, ensuring that the qualitative findings were both meaningful and reliable.

Data triangulation

Data triangulation involves using multiple data sources to minimize bias and strengthen the credibility of research. In this regard, Bans-Akutey and Tiimub (2021) highlight that utilizing multiple data sources minimizes biases in sampling, procedures, and researcher perspectives, thereby enhancing the foundation and credibility of the study. Data triangulation was implemented in our study to systematically establish patterns and look for intertwined information in the data collected from the three instruments implemented. In this way, by having the patterns established, we organized the information into research categories, developing categories and subcategories correspondingly for presenting the findings of the research study.

Results and discussion

Table 3 shows the categories and subcategories that emerged from coding the data by open, axial, and selective coding, identifying patterns across the three instruments. As previously mentioned, the coding process was conducted by the researcher's using ATLAS.ti 25 software following open, axial and selective coding procedures. All data collected was reviewed several times to ensure the accuracy of the found codes. Subsequently, the codes were compared across data sources and grouped into categories and subcategories based on their frequency and relevance to the research question.

Based on the patterns that appeared from the data analysis, two main categories were established. These categories provided the framework for interpreting the findings and allowed for a clearer organization of the results (see Table 3).

Table 3: Research categories

Research questions	Category	Subcategory
What are the contributions of implementing the TBL approach in online collaboration to foster oral fluency among Colombian high school students?	Real-life tasks foster participation and teamwork.	The development of tasks related to students' reality increases their participation. Contextualized activities allow students to work collaboratively.
	Continuous interaction strengthens oral language use and self-confidence.	Ongoing interaction reduces the use of fillers. More complex sentences are promoted through interactivity

Real-life tasks foster participation and teamwork

This category highlights the promotion of students' participation and teamwork when they participate in real-life tasks since the tasks require students to get involved in the activities and work collaboratively with their classmates. In this line, Arias *et al.* (2014) assert that "TBL involves collaborative work as part of its process. This is a way to share knowledge and enrich the academic processes" (p. 199). According to the above, collaborative work is implicit in the development of the TBL, which leads to students' involvement and teamwork while carrying out the activities. Therefore, two key subcategories appeared (1) the development of tasks related to students' reality increases their participation, and (2) contextualized activities allow students to work collaboratively.

The development of tasks related to students' reality increases their participation. This subcategory shows that students' participation increased when the tasks were connected to their real-life experiences. Based on the data collected, students were more willing to engage in the activities when they felt familiar with the topics, as this reduced their hesitation and helped them feel more confident when expressing their ideas. In the questionnaire responses, several students associated their participation with feeling comfortable and having prior knowledge about the topics. This can be seen in the following fragment:

> **ST-1:** *"I felt comfortable expressing my ideas during the activities, and I already knew some vocabulary and was somewhat familiar with the topic. Working in a team was also enjoyable"* **(Questionnaire)**

This response suggests that familiarity with the content allowed the student to rely on known vocabulary and ideas, which made participation easier and more natural. In this sense, students did not

need to start from zero, but instead built on what they already knew, which encouraged them to take part more actively.

A similar pattern was observed in the audio recordings. During the interactions, students continued participating even when they did not have precise or complete information. Instead of avoiding the conversation, they used their general knowledge and supported each other to keep the interaction going. This can be observed in the following exchange:

> **Indian student:** A really good job. Your English was very good, so great job on that. Do you know what companies are causing the deforestation in Colombia?
>
> **ST-11**: Ex…Exactly, we don't know, but we suppose that many companies like farming and, I don't know, for example, for… for…
>
> **ST-12:** Illegal mining.
>
> **ST-11:** Yeah, for illegal mining.
>
> **ST-12**: We know the activities that cause the harm, but not the names exactly."
>
> **(Transcript of audio recording - Session 3).**

In this interaction, students acknowledge their lack of specific information, but still attempt to answer by building on each other's ideas. This shows that they remained engaged and focused on communication rather than accuracy, which reflects increased confidence and willingness to participate. In addition, teacher field notes also support these findings. It was observed that students were more active and engaged during the sessions, especially when interacting with their international peers. As recorded in the following extract:

Students' Engagement: "*All students showed enthusiasm for developing the activities and exchanging their personal information with the international students*"

Group interaction: "*Students were actively interacting and asking different questions to their international peers, seeking to learn most about themselves and their culture.*"

(Teacher A Field Notes - Session 1).

These observations suggest that the tasks created a comfortable and motivating environment, which encouraged students to participate more and interact more freely.

Overall, the data indicate that tasks connected to students' real-life experiences foster greater participation by increasing familiarity, reducing fear of making mistakes, and allowing learners to use their prior knowledge. These findings are supported by previous studies, which highlight that familiarity with content facilitates understanding and encourages participation, while meaningful and relatable topics increase motivation in language learning contexts (Ubaidila et al., 2024; Winstead, 2013; Masuram & Sripada, 2020; Diep et al., 2022; Maharani & Marhamah, 2024). In this sense, designing tasks that reflect students' realities plays an important role in promoting active participation in the EFL classroom.

Contextualized activities allow students to work collaboratively. This subcategory highlights that designing activities or tasks around students' familiar contexts fosters teamwork as it encourages students to consider different perspectives or complement their classmates' ideas. The familiarization between the content of the tasks and students' realities makes a stronger bond and increases the synergies among learners. Our results showed an increment in students' ability to work as a team, supporting their classmates when needed, as can be evidenced in the following excerpt:

> **ST-6**: *"We help each other if we have any difficulty with the pronunciation or reading of unfamiliar words."* **(Q)**.
>
> **ST-11:** *"When I did not understand certain topics or ideas, I asked my classmates and teachers to explain the intended meaning so that I could later contribute to the discussion"* **(Questionnaire)**.

As expressed by the students, when they found trouble within the process, they relied on their classmates to overcome the possible difficulties. Thereby, a sense of cooperation among the students grew, creating a greater environment to work in, as can be evidenced in the following excerpt:

Indian student: Do you guys see a lot of pollution where you live?
ST-7: Yes.
Indian student: What kinds of pollution do you see?
ST-8: Air... It's... It's not... Air pollution, a little bit, but, for example, the rivers, it's a lot of rivers with pollution.
ST-7: And... buses and private vehicles, like, we have a lot of cars and motorcycles, and that contributes to pollution.
Indian student: Do you guys have a lot of electric vehicles out there, or not so much?
ST-7: Not so much. They are, like, new in our city.
Indian student: Very good. Very good information.
ST-8: Here, the people start to use electric motorcycles, but cars is... is... strange. It's really strange. See there, see here.
Indian student: Very good, guys. Great job.
(Transcript of audio recording - Session 3)

In the extract, it is observed a clear sense of cooperation among students, which was developed throughout the sessions. Students supported each other by completing ideas, paraphrasing, and clarifying points to make their communication and the ideas more effective and understandable. Such collaborative environments encourage learners to negotiate meaning and engage in real communications fostering not only the production of the language but also interpersonal growth as they recognize the value of peer interaction, teamwork and respect of the ideas in language learning. Lastly, activities related to students' lives promoted cognitive, emotional and social growth as demonstrated in the following excerpt from the field notes:

Use of target language: *"Students tried to provide as much information as possible to demonstrate they knew the topic, which led them to speak faster but present some grammatical mistakes. When students did not know how to express themselves, their group peers tried to complement the ideas*"
(Teacher B Field Notes- Session 3)

The excerpt suggests that students made a consistent effort to provide as much information as possible, aiming to demonstrate their understanding of the topic. This willingness to contribute often led them to speak at a faster pace, which, while showing enthusiasm and engagement, occasionally resulted in grammatical mistakes. Despite these errors, students remained focused on communicating their ideas effectively. When some learners struggled to express themselves or lacked specific vocabulary, their peers supported them by complementing or reformulating their ideas.

Overall, the data indicate that contextualized tasks promoted a collaborative learning environment where students actively supported one another. Working with familiar topics allowed them to share knowledge, negotiate meaning, and build ideas together, which strengthened both their communication and teamwork skills. These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the role of peer interaction in fostering collaboration and language development (Sato, 2015; Córdoba, 2016; Rojanacheewinsupond, 2015). In this sense, designing activities connected to students' realities not only supports language use but also encourages meaningful collaboration in the EFL classroom.

Continuous interaction strengthens oral language use and self-confidence

This category emphasizes the improvement in students' oral language use and self-confidence as the result of continuous interaction during TBL activities. The tasks required students to constantly engage in communication, encouraging them to express their ideas, ask questions, and respond using the target language. According to Zondag (2024) the ongoing use of English in meaningful contexts helps students become more fluent and less dependent on memorized structures, allowing more spontaneous language use. Furthermore, repeated interaction with foreign peers online helped create a supportive atmosphere, where students felt more comfortable speaking and making mistakes without fear of judgment. This

contributed to greater self-confidence and a more natural use of language during class. Consequently, two key subcategories appeared: (1) ongoing interaction reduces the use of fillers, and (2) more complex sentences are promoted through interactivity.

Ongoing interaction reduces the use of fillers. This subcategory highlights how continuous interaction among peers plays a significant role in reducing students' use of fillers during oral activities. As students engage in regular dialogues, they start the habit of expressing their ideas fluently, relying less on pauses or verbal tag lines such as "uh," "um," or "eh." This can be observed in the following excerpts from the transcripts:

> **ST-10:** Okay, continue with the… presentation. Am…, in mede, Medellín is a slightly more advanced city in the country, and this city ahhh… is the only city in Colombia that has a subway. And finally, amm… in Medellín, as in the entire country, the city has a great diversity of flora and fauna. **(Transcript of audio recording - Session 1)**
>
> **ST-10:** Okay, now cities, ok now cities where we can find this problem. The images show the level of of plastic pollution in the oceans, with China leading the way with 38.7%, followed by Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. These five countries generate more than 76% of total plastic pollution, ehh... highlighting the urgent need for global action to reduce this, this problem and impact on the city. **(Transcript of audio recording - Session 3)**

These examples show how students gradually become more confident and fluent as they participate in continuous speaking activities. Although they still hesitate at times or use filler words, they are able to express complete ideas with increasing clarity. In session 1, for example, S-10 talks about Medellin and, despite some pauses, provides clear and relevant information. By session 3, the same student speaks about plastic pollution in a more organized and detailed way, showing noticeable improvement. The progression suggests that regular participation in speaking tasks helped the student organize ideas more effectively and reduce their reliance on fillers.

A similar pattern is reflected in the teacher field notes, which provide additional evidence of improvement in students' fluency. As recorded:

> "*Students showed pauses and hesitations, but it was less often than previous classes. They showed improvement regarding this matter*". **(Teacher B Field Notes - Session 3)**
>
> "*Students hesitated less and presented fewer fillers*". **(Teacher A Field Notes - Session 3)**

These observations indicate that, although hesitation was still present, it decreased over time, suggesting that students became more confident and fluent as they engaged in continuous interaction.

Further evidence can be found in the questionnaire responses, where students reflected on their speaking performance during the tasks. For instance, one student stated:

> **ST-4:** *"I felt confident speaking in English during the tasks because, while doing the activities, I think in English and can later express it in English"* **(Questionnaire)**.

This response suggests that regular practice allowed students to process their ideas in the target language, which contributed to reducing hesitation and improving fluency. Overall, the data indicate that continuous interaction through Task-Based Learning activities supported students in reducing their use of fillers by providing frequent opportunities to practice speaking, organize their ideas, and gain confidence. As students engaged in meaningful communication, they became more comfortable expressing themselves and relied less on pauses to maintain conversation.

These findings can be understood in relation to previous research, which highlights the importance of continuous interaction and practice in improving oral fluency. As Huang and Gráf (2020) suggest, speaking activities help reduce students' tendency to pause, while Córdoba et al. (2023) explain that repeated peer interaction allows learners to gradually minimize their use of fillers and produce more structured speech. Similarly, Rangga and Noor (2025) note that regular speaking opportunities help students feel more comfortable and rely less on fillers over time. In line with this, Shrestha (2012)

emphasizes that exposure and practice play a key role in reducing hesitation, reinforcing the value of continuous interaction in EFL contexts.

To sum up, the continuous interaction provided by TBL activities played an important role in helping students reduce their use of fillers and improve their fluency. Students became more confident and learned to organize their ideas more clearly before expressing them since they were speaking regularly in the online class. In general, these findings show how consistent practice through interaction leads to more spontaneous speech and contributes to the development of more effective communication in the EFL classroom.

More complex sentences are promoted through interactivity. This subcategory highlights how peer interaction during TBL activities encourages students to produce more complex sentences. As students engaged in collaborative dialogues, they were required to explain their ideas more clearly, which pushed them to move beyond simple sentences and use more elaborate structures. This can be observed in the teacher field notes, which provide initial evidence of this development:

> *"Students used a more complex structure and advanced lexicon than they are used to in order to demonstrate they had improved their speaking".* **(Teacher A Field Notes - Session 3)**
>
> *"Students presented well-structured sentences with more complexity*". **(Teacher B Fieled Notes - Session 3)**

These observations suggest that, by Session 3, students were not only participating more but also improving the way they structured their ideas. Both teachers noted that students were using a wider range of vocabulary and moving beyond basic sentence patterns, which indicates progress in their ability to express themselves more clearly and in greater detail. Moreover, a similar pattern can be observed in the audio recordings, where students demonstrate the use of more complex and organized speech:

> **ST-12:** Impact. Deforestation affects people's health by increasing air pollution and spreading diseases. In daily life, it causes extreme heat and water shortage. Businesses like farming and tourism lose money because of damaged land and fewer natu, natural resources. It also affects transport as roads can be blocked by floods or landslides caused by forest loss. **(Transcript of audio recording – Session 3)**
>
> **ST-11:** And a solution or strategy is to promote reforestation and sustainability farming, planting trees and teaching farmers how to grow crops without cutting more forests. This helps the environment by restoring lost trees and helps cities by improving air quality, and, and protect rich water sources. Thank you. That's all. **(Transcript of audio recording – Session 3)**

These examples show how students began to organize their ideas more effectively and use more complete and detailed sentences. Instead of giving short responses, they explained the impact of deforestation across different areas such as health, business, and the environment, which reflects a higher level of language use. Even though their speech still includes some pauses or repetitions, it is evident that they are making an effort to express their ideas in a more logical and structured way. Further evidence can be found in the questionnaire responses, where students reflect on their performance during the tasks. For instance, one student stated:

> **ST-10** *"Through the presentation or vision board, I made an effort to practice my vocabulary and fluency in order to present in a clear and precise way".* **(Questionnaire)**

This response suggests that tasks such as presentations encouraged students to prepare their ideas in advance and focus on using more precise language, which contributed to the development of more complex sentences. It also indicates that the personal and meaningful nature of the task increased students' motivation to improve their performance.

Overall, the data show that peer interaction through TBL activities supported students in producing more complex sentences by encouraging them to explain their ideas in greater detail, organize their thoughts more carefully, and use a wider range of vocabulary. As students participated in meaningful

communication, they became more confident and willing to take risks with the language, which contributed to clearer and more effective expression.

These findings can be understood in relation to previous research, which highlights the role of interaction in developing more sophisticated language use. As Ahmadian and Tavakoli (2011) suggest, interactivity helps learners produce more complex language than they might independently. Similarly, Varlamova et al. (2016) and Omar et al. (2020) emphasize that peer interaction and consistent practice support the development of structured thinking and more elaborate expression. In addition, Tabassum and Naveed (2024) highlight that active interaction increases confidence and encourages clearer communication, while Masuram and Sripada (2020) and Lăpădat and Lăpădat (2023) stress the importance of meaningful and motivating tasks in enhancing students' language outcomes.

To sum up, TBL activities helped students go beyond simple sentence structures and express their ideas in a more detailed and organized way. As they interacted with their peers and engaged in meaningful tasks, they became more confident and better prepared to communicate their ideas. This suggests that providing opportunities for interaction and meaningful communication can promote the development of more complex and effective language use in EFL contexts.

Conclusion

The implementation of the TBL approach, supported by online collaborative practices, demonstrated a positive impact on fostering oral fluency among 11th-grade students at Institución Educativa Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. The findings highlight that real-life and contextualized tasks promoted active participation, teamwork, and meaningful interaction, enabling students to connect language learning with their everyday experiences. This connection increased their motivation, self-confidence, and willingness to engage in oral communication.

Furthermore, continuous interaction through TBL activities reduced students' reliance on fillers, encouraged the use of more complex sentence structures, and enhanced their ability to express ideas with greater clarity and spontaneity. The collaborative environment fostered by the tasks also strengthened peer support, negotiation of meaning, and intercultural exchanges, contributing to both linguistic and social development.

Overall, the study confirms that TBL, combined with digital collaboration, is an effective pedagogical strategy to promote oral fluency in EFL classrooms. It not only improves students' linguistic performance but also creates opportunities for autonomy, motivation, and authentic communication. These results emphasize the need to incorporate TBL and technology-mediated practices more systematically in Colombian secondary education, as they provide learners with the tools to develop communicative competence in real-world and intercultural contexts.

Acknowledgments

This article derives from the undergraduate research project Fostering Oral Fluency through Task-Based Learning among 11th Graders at Institución Educativa Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, carried out within the Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages with Emphasis in English (BAFLEE) at Universidad de la Amazonia. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to the students of Institución Educativa Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, whose participation and commitment made this study possible. The study was self-funded, with institutional academic support provided by Universidad de la Amazonia.

References

Aguilar-Cruz, P. J., & Xiang, Z. (2023). Online Collaborative learning. *Academia y Virtualidad*, *16*(1), 89-104. https://doi.org/10.18359/ravi.5929

Ahmadian, M. J., & Tavakoli, M. (2011). The effects of simultaneous use of careful online planning and task repetition on accuracy, complexity, and fluency in EFL learners' oral production. *Language Teaching Research, 15*, 35-59. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168810383329

Arias, G. L., Roberto, E. E., & Rivera, A. M. (2014). Increasing critical thinking awareness through the use of task-based learning approach. *Hallazgos, 11*(21), 189-205. https://doi.org/10.15332/s1794-3841.2014.0021.11

Bans-Akutey, A., & Tiimub, B. M. (2021). Triangulation in Research. *Academia Letters*, Article 3392. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3392

Brown, J. D. (2009). Open-Response Items in Questionnaires. Heigham, J., & Croker, R. (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied Linguistics: A Practical Introduction* (pp. 200-219). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230239517_10

Buitrago, A. C. (2016). Improving 10th Graders' English Communicative Competence Through the Implementation of the Task-Based Learning Approach. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, 18*(2), 95-110. https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v18n2.48272

Burns, A. (2009). Action Research. Heigham, J., & Croker, R. (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied Linguistics: A Practical Introduction* (pp. 112-134). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230239517_6

Córdoba, E. (2016). Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching to Integrate Language Skills in an EFL Program at a Colombian University. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, 18*(2), 13-27. https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v18n2.49754

Córdoba, E., Mayorga, E., & Ruiz, N. (2023). Potential Implications of Task-Based Language Teaching on developing EFL learners' oral fluency. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *22*(11), 130-149. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.11.8

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th edition). SAGE.

Diep, L. T. N., Zainal, A. G., Hassan, I., Sunarti, N., Al-Sudani, A. Q. A. S., & Assefa, Y. (2022). Cultural familiarity, foreign language speaking skill, and foreign language anxiety: The case of Indonesian EFL learners. *Education Research International, 2022*(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/3910411

Febyanti, J. R., & Sari, D. M. M. (2022). Implementation pair work and storytelling in teaching speaking fluency in elementary school. *Journal of Teaching and Learning in Elementary Education (JTLEE), 5*(1), 11-18. http://dx.doi.org/10.33578/jtlee.v5i1.7888

Galvis, H. A. (2011). The Common European Framework, Task-Based Learning, and Colombia: Crossroads for an Intercultural Collision or a Path under Construction for Improvement. *HOW*, *18*(1), 198-209. https://www.howjournalcolombia.org/index.php/how/article/view/59

González, L. E., & Arias, N. R. (2009). Enhancing Oral Interaction in English as a Foreign Language Through Task-Based Learning Activities. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning, 2*(2), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.5294/laclil.2009.2.2.10

Harasim, L. (2012). *Learning theory and online technologies*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203846933

Hood, M. (2009). Ethnography. In: Heigham, J., Croker, R.A. (eds) Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230239517_5

Hopkins, D. (2008). *A Teacher's guide to classroom research* (4th edition). Open University Press.

Huang, L. F., & Gráf, T. (2020). Speech Rate and Pausing in English: Comparing Learners at Different Levels of Proficiency with Native Speakers. *Taiwan Journal of TESOL, 17*(1), 57-86. https://doi.org/10.30397/TJTESOL.202004_17(1).0003

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. (3rd edition). SAGE.

Kürüm, E. Y. (2016). Teaching speaking skills. *Annals of the University of Oradea: Economic Science, 25*(1), 264-273.

Lăpădat, L. C., & Lăpădat, M. M. (2023). The importance of motivation in foreign language learning. *Scientific Bulletin of the Politehnica University of Timişoara Transactions on Modern Languages*, *22*(1), 142-152. https://doi.org/10.59168/VGLE2734

Lee, L. (2002). Enhancing Learners' Communication Skills through Synchronous Electronic Interaction and Task-Based Instruction. *Foreign Language Annals, 35*(1), 16-24. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2002.tb01829.x

Lopes, J. A., & Castro, R. V. (2022). Technology-mediated task-based learning: creating affordances for English language development in digital intercultural encounters. *Letras*, *32* (1), 90-105. https://doi.org/10.5902/2176148570774

Maharani, P., & Marhamah, M. (2024). Development of E-student worksheet-based task-based learning through Liveworksheets.com for high school students. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan, 16*(2), 1205-1217. https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.5183

Masuram, J., & Sripada, P. N. (2020). Developing spoken fluency through task-based teaching. *Procedia Computer Science*, *172*, 623-630. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.05.080

Mojica, C. (2007). Exploring children's cultural perceptions through tasks based on films in an afterschool program. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal,* (9), 7-24. https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.3143

Moreno, V. J., & Jiménez, D. (2005). The Generation of Power Relationship through the Students' Oral Interaction under the Use of a Task-Based Syllabus. *HOW, 12*(1), 44-60.

Omar, S. F., Nawi, H. S. A., Tengku Shahdan, T. S., Mee Mee, R. W., Pek, L. S., & Che Yob, F. S. (2020). Interactive language learning activities for learners' communicative ability. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, *9*(4), 1010. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i4.20605

Peña, M. & Onatra, A. (2009). Promoting Oral Production through the Task-Based Learning Approach: A Study in a Public Secondary School in Colombia. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, 11*(2), 11-26. https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/11438

Ramírez, S. M., & Artunduaga, M. T. (2018). Authentic Tasks to Foster Oral Production Among English as a Foreign Language Learners. *HOW, 25*(1), 51-68. https://doi.org/10.19183/how.25.1.362

Rangga A., & Noor A. (2025). The Use of Conversation Fillers in English by the Students of English Education in Intensive Speaking Class at Universitas Negeri Semarang. *J-SHMIC: Journal of English for Academic, 12*(2), 126-134. https://doi.org/10.25299/jshmic.2025.vol12(2).24191

Rojanacheewinsupond, P. (2015). The use of Cooperative Task-based Learning in Improving Students' English Pronunciation. *Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University Journal, 3*(2), 1-12.

Romero, Y., & Pérez, A. (2021). Fostering Citizenship and English Language Competences in Teenagers Through Task-Based Instruction. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, 23*(2), 103-120. https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n2.90519

Sato, M. (2015). Density and complexity of oral production in interaction: The interactionist approach and an alternative. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 53*(3), 307-329. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2015-0016

Shrestha, A. K. (2012). *Hesitation of learners in speaking English in the EFL classroom.* Doctoral dissertation, Kathmandu University, Dhulikhel.

Tabassum, A., & Naveed, A. (2024). Interactive strategies for enriching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) vocabulary: A comprehensive exploration. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research, 11*(1), 1-16. https://www.jallr.com/~jallrir/index.php/JALLR/article/view/1313

Ubaidila, B., Safriani, A., & Salim, A. (2024). The Implementation of Scaffolding Method in EFL Classroom: An Exploratory Study at Secondary School. *ICONELT, 4*(1), 342-352. https://proceedings.uinsa.ac.id/index.php/ICONELT/article/view/3131

Urrutia, W. & Vega, E. (2010). Encouraging Teenagers to Improve Speaking Skills through Games in a Colombian Public School. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development, 12*(1), 11-31. https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/profile/article/view/13831

Varlamova, M. Y., Bochina, T. G., & Miftakhova, A. N. (2016). Interactivity in teaching a foreign language. *Journal of Language and Literature, 7*(3), 190-194. https://doi.org/10.7813/jll.2016/7-3/34

Winstead, L. (2013). Apprehension and motivation among adolescent dual language peers: perceptions and awareness about self-directed teaching and learning. *Language and Education, 27*(1), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2012.669767

Zondag, A. (2024). Student teachers' experience with improvisation activities for spontaneous speech practice in English. *Language Teaching Research, 28*(6), 2190-2213. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211044725