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Improving Oral Production Through Interactions in a Task-Based Approach

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**Abstract**

This action research aimed at establishing the impact of Task-Based-Learning to foster

class interactions and improve oral production. It was conducted in a public school in La

Ceja, Antioquia with 47 sixth graders. Action strategies included the three-step cycle of

TBL to measure students' prior knowledge and needs. The requirements of the Task, to

build and share the Task and, to give the Feedback of the Task were applied. Data gathering

instruments included teacher's journal, students' artifacts, and a focus group. Findings

referred to interactions in English, interactions to support each other, improving oral

production, the use of patterns as support for oral production, and the use of prior

vocabulary to oral participation in class.

*Keywords:* Task-Based Learning, interactions, oral production.

Título en Español: Mejorando la Producción Oral a través de Interacciones Usando un

Enfoque Basado en Tareas.

**Degree requirement**

This action research project is submitted as a requirement to obtain a bachelor's

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**Preface**

I am a student of foreign languages teaching program from a public university in Antioquia, Colombia. I am a teacher interested in fostering students' interactions and class participation. The desire for this research arose in my idea that students are more confident and engaged when they work with their peers. Therefore, I wanted to provide opportunities for students to interact and communicate with one another as they support each other and share information. This research study was carried out from August 2022 to the June 2023. As a pre-service teacher, I conducted the project in a public school in La Ceja, Antioquia, and I was assigned to observe a group of 47 sixth graders. This research project is mainly addressed to educators, interested in interactions as a space for students to work collaboratively and communicate orally in English.

Diego Piedrahita Cardona

La Ceja, Antioquia, June, 2023

**Description of the Context**

The institution where this action research was carried out was an urban public school located in La Ceja, Antioquia, Colombia. It offers education services to students from preschool to high school levels. Its mission is to guide research, human thriving, and technical training. As for its vision, the institution intended to prepare upright human beings, researchers, workers, people with artistic and ecological sensibility, as well as skillful in technology.

Regarding the English course, lessons were three times per week in a 60-minute period. It followed the government guidelines, the standards of competences and the Basic Learning Rights. The evaluation system is based on competencies and accumulative grades. The competencies are –interpretative, cognitive, citizenship, argumentative and procedural. Furthermore, according to its curriculum, the course also includes an auto-evaluation, a co-evaluation and a hetero-evaluation.

Participants in this study were a group of 47 seventh graders, whose ages range between eleven and twelve years old. They were mostly lower middle class. Some of them liked English and would like to learn it, but some others said they do not like the English course. They preferred activities with music, video games, YouTube and stories. They did not like to solve worksheets, to work on grammar exercises, or when the teacher explained too much.

The cooperating teacher holds a B. A. in Languages and has 20 years of experience as an English teacher. He thinks that teaching grammar is very important because the goal

of the schools is to succeed in "Pruebas Saber", and considering that this test is about

grammar, the English course is focused on it.

The main issue found in this context was that all lessons were focused primarily on

grammar and its general goal was to achieve a high score in national standardized tests.

Therefore, the lessons did not foster an active use of the language, lingering at the level of

repetition and memorization.

## Statement of the Problem

After observing this group of students, the main problem that I identified was that

the lessons were not offering spaces for students to interact in English neither with one

another nor with the teacher. Hence, the interactions that took place were bound to an initial

greeting in English. Moreover, this greeting was memorized and unenthusiastically

responded by a few students. The rest of the interactions were in Spanish (Observation

excerpt, August 1 and 2, 2022). Therefore, students' participation was passive and limited,

they mostly listened to the teacher's explanations, repeated short tenses that the teacher

wrote on the board, or they searched for information online (Observation excerpt, August 1,

2, 2022). Additionally, when the students addressed the teacher to express doubts or to ask

for explanations, it was always in Spanish, as well as teachers' explanations and responses.

Another issue is that the course was following a Grammar-Translation Method,

focusing on the identification and memorization of grammar structures, namely the

structure of verbal modes such as the present perfect, the present continuous, and so on

(Observation excerpt, August 1, 2, 2022). Similarly, the students were expected to

memorize information rather than understand it, therefore they had to repeat without

analyzing or connecting that information with real life situations (Observation excerpt,

August 16, 30, 2022). Furthermore, since the course did not include real-life contents, it did

not consider the students' needs and preferences, it appeared to some of them rather

abstract and disengaging. In this sense, the course did not justify the need to learn the target

language.

Moreover, since the lessons are bound whether for a teacher's explanation or to a

students' research online, there was not a clear sequence of steps and activities to be

developed. Consequently, the lessons did not include, for example, a warm-up or a

presentation phase to identify and activate the students' previous knowledge of the subject.

Likewise, when a lesson was demanding students to search for online information, the

teacher was just writing some questions on the board without contextualizing or justifying

the purpose or the objectives for this task (Observation excerpt, August 1 and 2, 2022).

Besides, although the questions are written in English, the students are expected to look for

the answers in Spanish. Similarly, there was not a closure to verify the students'

understanding of the topics or to give them the opportunity for expressing doubts or

questions. Lessons normally finished without real closure, since there was never a space for

students to present a task or share their viewpoints or feelings about their work.

Regarding the *resources* that this course was incorporating, though they were

varied, all of them were misused. Materials such as the board, markers and the internet,

were only used for explaining and seeking information in Spanish (Observation excerpt,

August 1 and 2, 2022). There were also the copies that the teacher used as exams, in which

the students must answer multiple choice-type of exercises intended to practice the type of

questions for the standardized test "Pruebas Saber" (Observation excerpt, August 18 and 30, 2022).

As the institutional and course objectives were focused on preparing students for a national standardized test, the dynamic of the class did not require an advanced English knowledge. Neither listening nor speaking or writing skills were addressed. (CT' Personal communication, August 16 and 18, 2022). Therefore, it discarded the practice of the four skills.

**Theoretical Background**

This section presents the theoretical basis for this research project. Firstly, I describe the concept of Classroom Interactions. Secondly, I introduce the definition of Task-Based Learning. Lastly, I present the concept of Oral-Communication in terms of the capability of delivering and receiving oral comprehensible messages.

The first concept to address in classroom interactions. According to Fernandez Abarca (2004,), there are three types of classroom interactions: Teacher dominated, teacher centered, and student centered. The first one refers to interactions where students are mere spectators or receptors of the teacher's knowledge, but they never use it. The second one relates to interactions where the students take active participation, but the teachers maintain a central role. And the third one takes place during activities that aim at students' interactions and participation, and the teachers assume a secondary role.

Additionally, Sundari (2017) analyzed several speaking roles in the classroom depending on the type of interaction, namely: The role of teacher for giving explanations,

praising, correcting mistakes, giving information, questioning, clarifying, directing drills, encouraging, translating into L1. The role of the students for answering, asking questions and calling for clarifications. And lastly, the role of students when interacting with one another consists primarily in collaborative work in pairs or in groups.

Regarding the importance of classroom interactions in learning a language, Thoms (2012, as cited in Sundari 2017) asserts that "Language learners develop their competences in social interactions and relationships via participation in communication whether with same-level fellows or with more experienced, knowledgeable, and competent participants, such as teacher and/or peer" (pp. 99-100).

Another important concept that supports this research is Task-Based Learning. According to Nunan (2006), the following are some of the principles and practices that underpin the Task-Based-Learning: A needs-based approach to content selection, an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language, and finally, the linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom. Additionally, this author states that TBL should include three phases that characterize its implementation or setting: (a) 'Pre-task', it entails the activities that teachers and students can undertake to prepare, plan, understand, process or scaffold the task, (b) 'During task', it involves students in using their previous knowledge, as well as other linguistic resources (including their mother tongue, gestures and other grammar structures), and the scaffolding of the pre-task phase, to accomplish and present the task and (c) 'Post-task' which involves follow-up procedures or evaluation on the task performance.

Furthermore, Nunan (2006) also defines a pedagogical task as an activity or action which is accomplished through processing or understanding language. Thus, in a pedagogical task the learners rely on language for a communicative purpose, since this communication is how tasks are carried out. Furthermore, Nunan subdivides pedagogical tasks into rehearsal and activation tasks. Rehearsal tasks, as the name suggests, are designed to provide learners with opportunities for direct rehearsal in the classroom of everyday tasks. Activation tasks have instead only an indirect relationship to the real-world, and they just aim to activate the language forms and functions that students have been learning.

Although TBL poses several advantages, it has also been reported some limitations. According to Ellis (2006), a great limitation in TBL is its tendency to allow an oversimplification of language while privileges meaning. He also mentions that in TBL the students are so focused on completing the task that they may underrate and dismiss the linguistic elements. Since in TBL the focus is on accomplishing the task, the production and use of the target language has a narrow scope. Besides, TBL may dismiss the particularities and boundaries that characterize the classroom. Therefore, contrary to the pretension of recreating real-world communication, the TBL must be understood to organize the classroom in a very restricted way to orient its interactions and exchanges towards the completion of tasks and attaining the goals of the course.

Lastly, oral production in the EFL classroom is another core concept that guided this research. According to Silva-González and Sanabria (2018), since oral production is a skill that allows the students to express ideas and thoughts, it is also the bridge by which

students participate, interact, have fun and learn. Hence, English courses should both include speaking activities and take into account the learner's interests and needs. Otherwise, the English courses risk being disengaging and fruitless for learners.

Moreover, according to Ramírez and Artunduaga (2018), as speaking involves not only complex and dynamic linguistic rules such as fluency and coherence, but also physical, cognitive and sociocultural processes, oral production is the most difficult skill for students to develop. Therefore, in speaking activities students can be embarrassed due to mispronunciation and lack of fluency. Likewise, the students may fear receiving a negative evaluation or rude oral feedback from their teachers. Silva-González and Sanabria (2018) also mention that, unlike the other language skills, oral production does not have a clear scope and sequence in the syllabus, due to the difficulty to design speaking activities.

Regarding the aspects concerning the evaluation of oral production, when an activity aims to improve the students' speaking skill, it must have an accurate assessment. Thus, Luoma (2003) proposes several principles for the rubric to be used to assess oral production: (a) set criteria for the success of the task, (b) set language dimensions for assessment (such as communication, fluency, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary) and (c) focus on what the test takers can do, instead of what they should do.

Accordingly, some studies have found similar results that relate to the purposes of this research. For instance, Forero (2005) noticed that, in the pre-task phase, the use of creative, colorful or user-friendly material helped students to increase their vocabulary, understanding, and motivation. Moreover, she realized that the pre-tasks help students feel confident while speaking, forgetting about shyness or apathy toward language. The pre-

tasks also helped to ask students about their feelings and perceptions on the topics and

tasks.  Regarding the Task cycle, Forero (2005) saw that the instructions given to students

individually were better understood than the ones given to the whole group. Furthermore,

regarding interactions, it was seen that most of the time students participated in class using

short sentences. But, as a negative aspect, it was noted that the same students always

participated, whereas some others were not supported by the group, and they did not

participate too much. Furthermore, learners worked best when they were in groups or in

pairs. They felt more confident and helped each other. Onatra and Peña (2009), refer to the

strategies that students used to maintain communication, such as word invention, support

on L1 and overgeneralization. Furthermore, they found what is called solidarity between

interlocutors, which implies students needing enough input to grasp the meaning of the

sentence to give their interlocutor a hand by providing the information requested. Besides,

they noted that individual participation time of the students ranged from 15 seconds to 1.5

minutes, and that longer turns did not mean better fluency. Another conclusion they drew

was that showing a model or example during the task cycle is an excellent guide to better

understand the purpose and possible outcome of a task. Similarly, Suarez and Rodríguez

(2018) found that learners used their mother tongue as a vehicle to construct paths of

communication. Besides, they realized that tasks connected to the students' daily situations

made them more confident and engaged with their own language learning process.

Additionally, Gutiérrez (2005) found that students carried out interactive and

communicative tasks practicing in small groups where they could speak without the

teacher's control or grades. In this phase, they improved their oral production due to the

group work practice. In addition, she saw that students exchanged information with

different listeners using short sentences. As a conclusion, she realized that interactive tasks involved the development of the following basic phases: Exposure, interaction and feedback before the final production.

To sum up, in an English lesson the students' active participation can be both dismissed or fostered, and in some other cases the teacher can give, consciously or unconsciously, more participation to some students.  The student-student interaction is held by theory as a fruitful method to express personal ideas, share knowledge and build meaning. When implementing TBL, tasks should include students' needs and interests, and emphasize communication and meaning-development. Spoken language is a means to express ideas, feelings and emotions, and to communicate with others.

## Research Question

How may a Task-Based Approach foster interactions to improve the English oral production in a group of sixth graders?

## Objectives

### General Objective

To explore students' capacity to reflect on their learning process through formative assessment strategies.

### Specific Objectives

1.  To compare the students' oral production in artifacts at the pre and during-Task' cycles.

2.  To gather students' perceptions about English oral interactions.

3. To gather my own reflection as a teacher researcher on the English oral interactions that take place in the lessons.

## Action Plan

The action plan stated to answer the research question included three main actions stemming from the cycle of the Task-Based Approach. The implementation of a 'pre-Task' step provided students with models about the Task: a dialogue including questions and answers to elicit personal information. Additionally, students were required to record themselves providing a self-introduction at the beginning and end of the project. As a result, I could not only compare their performances but also establish their previous knowledge, as well as their weaknesses and strengths. The second action involved the implementation of the 'during-Task' step, which aimed to guide students through the production of the Task. To support this process, scripts were written as a form of guidance for students to practice and identify any difficulties. These scripts were reviewed with the students and, if necessary, improved regarding comprehensibility, pronunciation, and grammar. The final step of the process entailed a post-Task, which mainly evaluates the process, it included self-reflection, peer assessment, and teacher feedback. Data collection instruments included a teacher's journal, students' artifacts, and a focus group.

## Development of Actions

As for the first action, I asked students to record a personal presentation audio to identify and measure students' previous knowledge and the aspects and contents that required more attention and scaffolding to accomplish the Task. The recording included greetings, name, age, people they lived with and likes or dislikes. Furthermore, I provided

some models of dialogues, patterns to introduce themselves and to ask WH-questions as

well as affirmative sentences elicited from those questions. Students then wrote a bank of

questions in their notebooks, and they worked in pairs to identify the questions that elicited

these patterns. In addition, since the Task consisted in a pair dialogue, throughout this step

students worked in pairs building dialogues and writing a bank of words, sentences, and

questions to help them in independent and peer work.

The second action, 'during-Task', involved the development of a script for the

recording of the Task. This was intended to aid students in terms of comprehensibility,

pronunciation, and vocabulary when preparing the Task. Additionally, students worked in

pairs on dialogues as a means of reinforcing and rehearsing the Task. Finally, students

submitted their Tasks.

The third step of the process included the analysis and evaluation of the students'

Tasks regarding comprehensibility, pronunciation, and vocabulary. This enabled me to

identify areas of improvement and difficulty for the students. Tasks were shared with the

entire group and students were invited to provide feedback based on the comprehensibility

of the recordings. Additionally, students reflected on their progress, expressing their

challenges, needs, likes, and dislikes.

**Data analysis**

The analysis of data followed Creswell's (2012) model: gather data, categorize,

codify and report.  The teacher's journal was written on a weekly basis and coded. The

students' artifacts included a pre-test, a post-test and two recordings, which were compared

at the end of the steps. The recordings and the focus group were transcribed, and codified.

**Findings and Interpretations**

This research project aimed at implementing a TBL approach to foster students' interactions and improve their oral production. The analysis revealed 5 findings, namely, Students were able to Interact with one Another in English, Interactions Allowed Students to Support one another, Students Improved their Oral Production, The Use of Patterns Supported Students to Use Oral English and Students could Participate Orally in Class with the Help of their Prior Vocabulary.

**Students' Interactions in English**

The implementation of TBL was expected to encourage students to interact in English with one another. An excerpt from the data revealed some of the students' reflections when they were asked about the activities that motivated them to interact with one another in English:

S2: Por ejemplo, cuando hacemos diálogos juntos, ahí toca hablar en Inglés.

S1: Profe, yo pienso que, en clase, por ejemplo, en los diálogos, sí hablamos en Inglés entre nosotros y así practicamos.[1] (Focus group, April 21th, 2023).

In the previous excerpt, it can be inferred that students could identify their interactions as both, a direct means to use English, and a way to communicate with their peers. Thus, although in these dialogues the students could rely on L1, they employed them as well to practice English.

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[1] S2: For example, when we do dialogues together, then we must speak in English.
S1: Teacher, I think that in class, for example in the dialogues, we do speak English among ourselves and that's how we practice. (My translation)

As reported in the journal entries, I reflected on the way students could interact in English as they worked in a pair-dialogue:

> […] despite the fact that at the beginning of the activity students were talking mostly in Spanish, once they wrote some of the questions and answers in English, they were using them, repeating and trying to learn them by heart. In fact, some of the students asked me to hear how they rehearsed their dialogue. (Journal, April 19th, 2023.)

Thus, data analysis showed that students were able to use English as they interacted during the pre-tasks, indicating that dialogues were favorable for fostering interactions.

**Students' Interactions to Support Each Other**

TBL approach emphasizes the importance of communication skills as the primary focus of an English course. Language is an essential form of communication which involves interactions between individuals (Nunan, 2006). To illustrate, in the development of the main Task the students had to create a pair dialogue recreating a conversation between a school's psychologist and a student to share personal information. The Task required them to work with questions and answers to elicit information; data revealed that during the implementation, students had opportunities to interact and support one another. As expressed by some of the students in a focus group:

> […] S1: O a veces uno le explica a los otros cómo se dice algo, o también uno les puede preguntar. Pues, profe, uno trata de ayudarse.

S3: El trabajo en equipo es bueno porque uno puede estudiar con los otros y así entiende uno mejor.

S2: Sí profe, yo creo que en grupos trabajamos como más motivados.[2] (Focus group, April 21th, 2023).

Similarly, the following excerpt demonstrates that during an oral group work there was supporting interaction, as the activity involved students filling the gaps in a pattern and they shared understanding to accomplish the activity. Besides, the student who firstly participated in the activity, also motivated the rest of the group to do so:

The same when students have on the board the pattern: The ___ is between ___ and the door. In this case, one student was able to orally build the sentence: el tablero is between window and the door. And then, another student was able to add: "the board is between window and door. And finally, a third student was able to complete it: the board is between the window and the door. (Journal, May 13th, 2023).

We can infer that during the preparation for the Task, the students worked collaboratively to use oral English. Thus, relying on some of the strategies recommended by TBL, such as pair dialogues, students realized that they could learn collaboratively and without a permanent teacher's intervention. Therefore, they could work on tasks that required them to share information and support one another.

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[2] S1: Or sometimes one explains to the others how to say something, or one can also ask them. Well, teacher, one tries to help oneself.
S3: Teamwork is good because one can study with the others and thus one understands better.
S2: Yes teacher, I think that in groups we work as more motivated. (My translation)

**Improving Oral Production Through Interactions**

The main goal of tasks within TBL is for students to produce a communicative output. Instead of focusing on language form, correctness and accuracy, tasks encourage students to focus on their ability to communicate (Nunan, 2006). I rely on the concept of comprehensibility assessment proposed by Luoma (2003) as the capability of conveying messages, even when it implies making mistakes, blending L1 and L2, or employing other linguistic resources, and fluency.

Consequently, a Task, within TBL, works as a rehearsal of real-life situations. Thus, students were required to recreate a dialogue between a school's psychologist and a student, in which they had to ask questions to elicit personal information. Therefore, during the pre-task step, the students were provided with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills required to perform the task, by practicing some of the ways to ask questions and elicit answers, and they also work with dialogues to talk about personal introductions, likes and dislikes regarding the school, family members, feelings, and greetings and farewells.

The analysis of data showed that during one of the dialogues that the students created as preparation for the task, their products were understandable. The following excerpt from a class activity reported in the journal illustrates how the students were encouraged to share their dialogues with the rest of the group:

S1: Hello.

S2: Hello, you name?

S1: My name is A, and you?

S2: My name is B. You age?

S1: I have twelve years, and you?

S2: I have eleven. You live?

S1: I live with mother, father, brother, and you?

S2: I live with grandmother, mother, sister. Bye

S1: Bye. (Journal, May 15th, 2023).

Therefore, while some questions and sentences contained grammatical mistakes, most of the dialogues were still comprehensible. Additionally, their pronunciation was satisfactory, thus ensuring that the dialogues remained understandable.

The analysis of data stemming from a focus group suggested the same conclusion. Student's speech improved in comprehensibility, even in cases where there were gaps or areas of misunderstanding. The following excerpt shows the students' assessment on their oral production in terms of comprehensibility during pre-Task activities:

S2: Pues profe hay cosas que uno no entiende, pero muchas cosas sí. Además, porque uno ya más o menos sabe de qué están hablando.

S1: Profe, con las grabaciones, uno entendía cuando no hablaban muy rápido.[3]

(Focus group, April 21th, 2023.)

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[3] S2: Well, teacher, there are things that one does not understand, but many things do. Also, because one already more or less knows what they are talking about.
S1: Teacher, with the recordings, one understood when they did not speak very fast. (My translation)

Figure 1 presents the results of a pre-test and post-test on oral production, in which students had to record a self-introduction. The analysis showed an improvement in the comprehensibility of their speech, evidenced by more understandable oral messages.

**Figure 1**

*Percentage of Students With and Without Improvement in Comprehensibility*
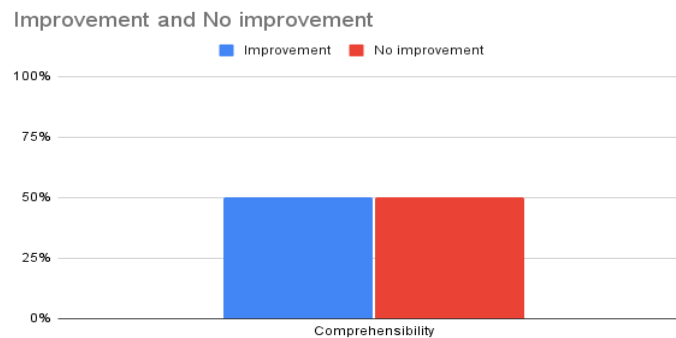


*Note.* The graph depicts the percentage of students who improved their score in this criterium. The blue column represents the students with a better grade in the post-test, whereas the red one indicates the students without improvement.

The data indicated that students' scores in oral comprehensibility were lower at the beginning of the project than at its end. This improvement was because, in the post-test, the students were capable of more fluent and connected speech. This is important for comprehensibility because a connected speech has less pauses, helping both the speaker and the listener to keep up with the development of messages (Luoma, 2003). Data also showed that students improved their capability for delivering understandable messages, resulting in increased comprehension of their speech. Hence, TBL facilitated progress in students' proficiency to convey intelligible messages, thereby leading to heightened comprehension of their spoken discourse.

**Using Oral English with the Support of Patterns**

Data analysis showed that working with patterns including information gaps, as recommended for TBL (Nunan, 2006), were helpful for students to better understand the use of oral English, as reported in the journal:

> […] there is on the board the pattern I am __ years __ (because we were working on patterns for delivering personal information), one of them is able to orally build the sentence "I am doce years old". Then, I could ask the rest of the group how to complete the model using only English, and a few of them were able to do so. (Journal, March 8th, 2023).

Therefore, the use of patterns helped students to better understand how to build oral sentences while they shared personal information and supported oral production since students just had to add part of the answer, but they could speak out the complete structure. Similarly, the data stemming from a focus group indicated that the use of patterns gave students a clear understanding of how to build oral sentences, as it was noted when they were asked about how capable they felt to record an English audio:

> […] S2: Profe, yo no me acuerdo bien, pues, de todas las cosas. Pero hay varias frases de las que sí me acuerdo.
> […] S1: A mí no me pareció tan difícil. Pues yo también me acuerdo de algunas frases.
> S3: Yo tampoco me acuerdo de todo, solo de algunas partes, pero no estaba tan difícil.[4]  (Focus group, April 21th, 2023.)

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[4] S2: Professor, I don't really remember all of them. But I remember various phrases.
S1: I didn't find it that difficult. I also remember some phrases.
S3: I don't remember all of it either, just some parts, but it wasn't that difficult. (My translation)

The previous excerpt reveals that the students had a good recall of some of the pre-Task activities that they were required to complete at the beginning of the project, despite the time elapsed, immediately realized what the activity was about, without needing a further explanation. Thus, data suggests that employing patterns, in line with the principles of TBL, aided students to understand in an easier and more straightforward way the structure of oral sentences. It also helped students to recall information.

**Participating in Class with the Support of Prior Vocabulary**

In general terms, from the beginning of the implementation, the students had a good knowledge of oral vocabulary related to the contents of the Task. They knew some words about personal information, about family members, and about what they liked and disliked regarding the school. This fact appeared to be relevant during some pre-Task activities in which students were able to rely on their existing vocabulary to participate in the lessons. To illustrate, students could reflect about their use of oral English in the focus group by sharing the following impressions:

S1: […] cuando decimos las palabras que ya conocemos de algún tema nuevo.

S2: O cuando usted nos pregunta cómo creemos que se dice algo en Inglés y nosotros tratamos de responder.

S4: Yo creo que también cuando usted nos habla en Inglés y nos pregunta qué entendimos o así." [5]  (Focus group, April 21th, 2023.)

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[5] S1: [...] when we say words we already know about new topics.
S2: Or when you ask us how we think something is said in English and we try to answer.
S4: I think also when you talk to us in English and ask us what we understand or like that.
(My translation)

Data showed that students were able to effectively employ their English vocabulary to participate in the lessons. Additionally, the previous excerpt reveals that the lessons offered spaces for students to share their existent understanding and link it with new contents. In a similar vein, as reported in the journal, students could draw upon their knowledge of individual words to understand the way to ask Wh-questions:

> Over this point, I ask different students to read the questions aloud and that students might rely on keywords or key expressions to gain a clearer understanding of the way to ask questions for eliciting personal information. Notice that they first mentioned the isolated words that they already knew and then, drawing on them, they inferred the general meaning of the questions. (Journal, May 15th, 2023).

Though students were not familiar with the use of those grammar structures, as they were able to understand the meaning of the questions, relying on their existing vocabulary, it was easier for them to ask oral questions.

## Conclusions and Implications

This research had the purpose of analyzing how the implementation of TBL in the EFL classroom helped the students to interact with one another to improve their English oral production. Data analysis revealed that TBL helped students to deliver understandable oral messages as they worked on communicative tasks, messages were assessed in terms of comprehensibility, meaning, eliciting a message that is understandable despite mispronunciations or grammatical mistakes. Moreover, the use of patterns suggested by TBL, showed itself as a supportive tool in students' language acquisition process in terms of sentence structure. Additionally, students' interactions allowed them to support each

other, and students were able to use their existing English vocabulary to orally participate

in the lessons.

This research project entailed some implications for teachers' practice in this

context. A first implication is that English teachers should consider the option of allowing

students to use other language resources such as code-switching and translanguaging to

make meaning and link prior knowledge with new understanding. In this sense, when

promoting English for communicative tasks, attention must be paid to the scaffolding that

the students need and the many resources that they can use to connect what they know with

what they are expected to learn. Furthermore, students need to develop self-confidence to

communicate orally, as they are not always willing to speak in front of the class. Therefore,

teachers should consider the emotional aspects of students when performing in

English. Another important implication is the management of classes with a high number of

students. In this regard, it may be problematic to manage students' behavior when the

activities are demanding them to create dialogues or to work collaboratively.

Finally, regarding further research, it is advisable to include all the language skills when

implementing the principles of Task-Based Learning in any educational context.

## Reflection

Firstly, acknowledging my lack of confidence when speaking in English,

consequently, having often felt discouraged along the process of my program, I viewed this

practicum as a valuable opportunity for both, myself and my students, to improve upon this

essential communication skill. Therefore, I sought to foster an environment of confidence

for students to speak in English in the EFL classroom. Secondly, students had several

opportunities to work in pairs, since this strategy could help them to feel more confident when using English.

Apart from providing students with the opportunity to speak in the target language, language teaching focused on speaking has several tangible benefits. Such an approach encourages students to take risks, become more confident in their language use, and develop a greater understanding of the culture associated with the language. The skills that language students gain can be utilized in their everyday lives, thus enabling them to build genuine relationships with native speakers. Furthermore, interpersonal skills such as turn taking, active listening and providing feedback can all be developed through a speaking-focused approach.

Additionally, some of the strategies and recommendations from the Task-Based Learning, helped me to better understand how to integrate the prior knowledge into the lessons as a basis for building new understanding. TBL' recommendation about how to work with models and patterns was also very useful for encouraging students to participate in the lessons.

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