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Improving Communicative Competence and Speaking Skills in EFL/ESL Classrooms: Strategies, Techniques, and Pedagogical Approaches

Omer Elsheikh Hago Elmahdi¹ , Mohammed AbdAlgane² , Khalid Othman² ,
Mohamed Kamal Mustafa Alhaj³ , Intisar Zakariya Ahmed Ibrahim² , Abbas Hussein Abdelrady^{2*} ,
Omaira Alkhier Mohamed Ahmed⁴ 

¹ Department of Languages & Translation, College of Arts & Human Science, Taibah University, Taibah 42353, Saudi Arabia

² Department of English Language & Literature, College of Languages & Humanities, Qassim University, Buraydah 52571, Saudi Arabia

³ Humanities Department, Ranyah University College, Taif University, Taif 11099, Saudi Arabia

⁴ Department of Languages and Translation, University College of Haqel, University of Tabuk, Tabuk 71491, Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

Communicative competence (CC) has proved to be the most pressing yet elusive objective in EFL/ESL learning. Learners often do not develop good speaking skills, with which they are dissatisfied, mainly due to inadequate opportunities for practice, high anxiety, and various institutional constraints. This study uses a qualitative design through document analysis and a systematic literature review of 35 peer-reviewed sources from different contexts in the Global South. The analysis covers the years 2018 to 2025 and thematically examines pedagogical strategies, technological tools, classroom practices, and cultural factors. Triangulation does enhance validity with critical attention to systemic barriers on the improvement of communicative competence and speaking skills in EFL/ESL classrooms. Findings also highlighted

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Abbas Hussein Abdelrady, Department of English Language & Literature, College of Languages & Humanities, Qassim University, Buraydah 52571, Saudi Arabia; Email: ab.altaher@qu.edu.sa

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that the task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach significantly fosters fluency through engagement via real-world tasks, resisted by a teacher-dominant or exam-centric system. Automatic speech recognition (ASR) and technology tools substantially enhance pronunciation accuracy. However, they further accentuate inequity gaps in Asia and Africa due to inadequacies in enabling digital infrastructure. Listening attentively while shadowing boosts interactive communication; the method needs adaptation because of cultural norms like gender-segregated activities found in conservative societies. Major systemic barriers were found in the insufficient teacher training, rigid curricula, and misaligned assessment systems. Global and local approaches include the hybrid TBLT-grammar tasks and low-tech responses. They should be transformed into an institutional priority for teacher training, exam revision to test pragmatic skills, and more systematic partnerships with NGOs for the resource gap. Pedagogical innovation, cultural sensitivity, and equity-based policies that can encourage students to speak fluently in real-life communication.

Keywords: Communicative Competence; Task-Based Learning; Technology Integration; Equity in Education; Cultural Relevance

1. Introduction

CC is defined as contextually appropriate language use which is essential for the academic and professional mobility of EFL learners. This has resulted in speaking skill deficits at the tertiary level in Global South contexts, such as Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan with an overwhelming 68% of undergraduates who have more than six years of English instruction still possessing inadequate oral proficiency^[1]. It is in light of these facts that this paper has tried to find challenges and ways through which the CC and speaking skills can be improved in EFL/ESL classrooms.

From the review of theoretical and empirical studies, this paper highlights how task-based learning, technology, active listening, and interactive communication effectively foster fluency or pronunciation or engagement. It further describes what motivation and classroom dynamics require in the setup of a supportive environment for language development. Thus, based on previous studies and practical insight gained, this article attempts to arm educators with tools to help EFL/ESL learners surmount barriers that stand in the way of speaking English confidently and effectively, thereby contributing to the broad discussion on language teaching and learning.

This review is unique by integrating recent empirical findings of task-based learning and technology-enhanced pronunciation tools with culturally sensitive classroom adaptations in Global South contexts as actionable strategies that help bridge the often much-lamented gap between theory and classroom practice.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Even though the CC in EFL/ESL teaching has been upgraded, learners still complain about weak speaking skills since speaking forms the baseline of English communication. The problems found in classrooms today include inadequate vocabulary, and problems with pronunciation, low confidence among learners, and lack of enough practice in interactive activities. There is a need for evidence-based strategies that will cater to the diverse needs of EFL/ESL learners because education is rapidly technologically integrated with new methods. These challenges are exacerbated by the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical application in classroom settings. This situation places educators on a quest for techniques to enhance speaking fluency and dynamic communication. Therefore, this study seeks to develop and assess strategies that can be seamlessly infused into lessons for raising students' CC.

1.2. Research Objectives

An examination of the major problems that EFL/ESL learners face in the acquisition of speaking skills and CC. A study on the effectiveness of task-based learning, technology-based learning, active listening, and interactive communication methods in helping learners improve their speaking fluency and pronunciation. An analysis of how motivation and classroom dynamics contribute to or hinder the establishment of a favorable climate for speaking skill development. Offering educators actionable steps to apply evidence-based strategies within EFL/ESL classrooms.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What are the main difficulties encountered by EFL/ESL learners in developing speaking proficiency and CC?
2. How well can task-based learning combined with technology help EFL/ESL students improve their speaking fluency and pronunciation?
3. What role does active listening play in enhancing interactive communication and verbal proficiency in EFL/ESL classrooms?
4. What drives a classroom to help students improve their speaking skills in an EFL/ESL setting?
5. What are the greatest, most practical tactics that teachers can employ to help students in an EFL/ESL classroom enhance their speaking and communication skills?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Advantages of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

TBLT builds CC by putting students in real-life situations where they have to speak and listen, which they may apply in the real world through meaningful interaction. It is called by several names, but the content is the same: it focuses on getting students involved by relating work to their lives, which boosts motivation and other types of independence through different types of collaboration. TBLT promotes critical thinking through the incorporation of problem-solving and analysis, hence enhancing academic and professional competencies^[2,3]. Research has indicated enhanced linguistic competency, predominantly in practical contexts^[4,5]. The method's adaptability allows for modifications to diverse syllabi and the integration of technology, benefiting various learners^[6-8]. Ultimately, TBLT fosters learner autonomy, empowering students to utilize language independently beyond the classroom^[2,9].

Problems and Things to Reconsider

The primary problems in the implementation of TBLT pertain to teacher training and institutional support. Teachers need more training on how to plan and carry out activities well, as well as resources and flexibility in their curriculums from a number of schools^[4,7]. Another issue is finding a

good way to test task-based instruction, since it would have to test both language use and the accomplishment of task objectives^[2,3]. Even though these may seem scary, they are a small price to pay for the huge benefits that TBLT brings to learning a language through meaningful communication, real-life tasks, and learner-centered instruction that builds up confidence and skills.

2.2. Connecting Real Communication and Communication Skills in Learner-Centered Classrooms

Through real-world tasks, students can cultivate pragmatic communication skills that improve their proficiency in authentic language and communicative competency. The TBLT approach is based on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, which emphasizes meaningful participation over rote practice. This approach helps learners gain the skills they need to use the language for everyday and practical purposes^[4,6,9]. A key feature is that genuine tasks are being done (such problem-solving or role-playing) that meet the demands of learners in their daily lives, so purposeful language happens in context^[3,9]. In a learner-centered approach, where teachers enable collaborative work among groups, it fosters autonomy and critical thinking^[6,10]. Additionally, holistic tasks that combine speaking, listening, reading, and writing improve language skills^[11,12]. The TBLT approach is the greatest way to improve pragmatic competence because activities focus on communication, which helps learners negotiate meaning and adapt language to different cultures. These real-world assignments make students more interested, motivated, and able to do well since they are immediately relevant to them. Tasks in TBLT often include sociocultural aspects that might help students learn how to communicate with people from other cultures. Empirical data has shown that this strategy connects what students learn in the classroom to what they do in real life by giving them abilities they may use in diverse settings. The aforementioned strategy will enhance linguistic proficiency and motivate the student to utilize the language autonomously beyond the educational environment.

2.2.1. Enhancing Communicative Proficiency

TBLT enhances oral engagement through meaning negotiation and fosters a balance between fluency and correct-

ness, so cultivating speaking skills that underpin the listening abilities essential for coherent dialogue. A student who finished group projects would be able to improve their speaking and listening skills. Negotiating meaning in task-based learning cultivates problem-solving methods that can subsequently be applied to surmount communication barriers. Fluency is achieved by extensive language production, while accuracy is attained via contextual feedback, so instilling confidence and linguistic precision in learners throughout communication.

2.2.2. Empirical Evidence Endorsing TBLT

Numerous studies have demonstrated that TBLT improves communication skills and the authentic use of language. The subsequent findings have demonstrated the benefits of TBLT: it was determined that language competency, especially in speaking and listening, can be improved by the implementation of TBLT. TBLT improved the language skills of Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) learners by 25%, while the control group only saw a 10% improvement. Task-based language instruction increases learners' interest and motivation because they are more likely to be involved in the learning process when they are given activities that are both engaging and useful. Assignments in TBLT that have cultural themes help students learn more about other cultures. Cultural tasks assist CSL learners in comprehending Chinese culture and enhancing their language acquisition. TBLT encourages students to study on their own. Confidence in solving problems on one's own and working with others increases the skills needed to learn a language on one's own^[13,14].

2.2.3. Problems and Things to Think About When Putting Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) into Practice

Task-Based Language Teaching has a lot of benefits, but it might be hard to use in real life. Teachers need training and help to use TBLT. Teachers must create, implement, and offer efficient feedback systems for pupils^[4,12]. A flexible curriculum support framework is needed for TBLT so that communicative language teaching can be included. Conventional curriculum may hinder the effective implementation of TBLT^[4,9]. Because TBLT focuses on process and product, it is hard to quantify the results for learners. Portfolios and self-assessment significantly aid educators in achieving the

objectives of TBLT^[4,9].

Autonomy and Readiness: TBLT necessitates the implementation of active learning. Some students aren't ready or sure of their ability to learn a language on their own. TBLT is helpful for developing practical language use and communication competence. TBLT helps students learn how to apply language and social skills in real life by giving them meaningful tasks to do. Evidence indicates that this methodology enhances linguistic competency, student engagement, and cultural competence. But for the method to work, teacher training, aligning the curriculum, and making sure students are ready to learn all need to be taken into account. TBLT has promise for creating engaging and effective learning settings as language education evolves.

2.3. Difficulties and Restrictions in Applying TBLT in Conventional Language Classrooms

TBLT has emerged as an effective methodology for language education by emphasizing the meaningful use of language and communication in real-world contexts. This article will examine significant hurdles and limitations in the adoption of traditional classroom settings, drawing ideas from diverse studies.

2.3.1. Problems with Teachers

The main problem is that teachers are neither ready or prepared to use TBLT. Changing from teacher-centered to student-centered, task-based education means that Teachers are not trained and competent in creating and conducting TBLT. Teachers must make actual exercises, help pupils work together, and grade them depending on how well they do on tasks. Teachers who are grammar-based or lecture-type may not like the TBLT technique since they are used to the old way of doing things or don't believe in task-based approaches. Time and Money. Most teachers don't have time to design and integrate curricular activities, which might easily deter well-meaning teachers from using TBLT.

2.3.2. Problems with Students

Students who are used to teacher-led instruction may have a hard time with TBLT. For example, students who have been taught using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) or other traditional methods may have a hard time working together^[15,16]. varied Skill Levels: It can be hard to come up

with tasks for students with varied levels of language competency. Tasks could be too hard for beginners or too easy for professionals^[17]. Cultural and psychological factors, such as shyness or cultural standards, may inhibit students from engaging in public speaking or collaborative work^[18,19].

2.3.3. Problems with the School and the Curriculum

The successful adoption of TBLT relies on the institutional and curricular context, yet traditional classrooms frequently provide structural challenges. In the first place, grammar-heavy curriculum that don't allow for flexibility clash with TBLT's flexible, task-based goals^[4,20]. Second, written examinations don't measure the communicative outcomes of TBLT, which makes it hard to keep track of progress^[17,20]. Thirdly, large EFL courses make it hard to learn through tasks because they don't allow for group work or personalized feedback^[15,20]. Lastly, high-stakes tests like China's College Entrance Exam have teachers focus on rote learning instead of interactive tasks^[17,18]. Systemic impediments such as inflexible curricula, misaligned assessments, logistical constraints, and exam-centric objectives impede the adoption of TBLT, necessitating institutional modifications to harmonize pedagogy with task-based principles.

2.3.4. Problems with Resources

Another important part of TBLT is having enough resources. Many traditional classrooms don't have the tools and infrastructure needed for task-based learning. There aren't many teaching materials that are particular to TBLT. Many teachers have noticed this. Many tasks necessitate real-world resources, which may not consistently be accessible^[16,21].

Tech constraints: TBLT can be better with realistic materials and instruments for working together, but many classes, especially those in rural or under-resourced areas, don't have the right equipment^[15,22]. Lack of Institutional Support: Schools and other organizations may not give teachers the money or training they need to use TBLT^[18,23].

2.3.5. Cultural and Contextual Difficulties

Cultural and contextual factors significantly influence the success of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), especially in EFL/ESL settings. In some cultures, traditional classroom norms that emphasize teacher authority and lecture-based instruction make TBLT less favorable^[15,17].

Additionally, in contexts where English is rarely used outside the classroom, learners often struggle to see the relevance of TBLT tasks, leading to decreased motivation^[19,20]. In rural or under-resourced communities, the lack of materials and opportunities for meaningful practice can result in unsuccessful implementation^[15,16]. These challenges align with broader cultural and institutional issues, such as cultural resistance in Saudi Arabia and institutional apathy in Pakistan, where assessment systems often fail to align with TBLT's communicative goals. Overcrowded classrooms in Pakistan further disrupt group tasks and classroom dynamics, directly impacting learning outcomes. Addressing these issues requires context-sensitive solutions, such as designing tasks that reflect local values—like comparing traditional and modern education in Saudi Arabia—or using gender-segregated role-plays in Pakistan to respect social norms while promoting interaction. “Micro-TBLT” seminars, where peer interviews replace a portion of lectures, can gradually build teacher confidence without disrupting institutional routines. In resource-poor settings, simple tools like newspaper clippings or donated language-learning software can foster engagement and support TBLT's communicative aims.

2.3.6. Theoretical and Practical Challenges

TBLT, significantly rooted in second language acquisition (SLA) research, faces major problems when applied. fruitfully and pedagogically appropriate assignments are not easy to design. Tasks have to be carefully constructed to improve language acquisition and make it relevant to the lives of students^[4,22]. The major problem in TBLT is task-based teaching, where linguistic form—i.e., grammar and vocabulary on the one hand—and communicative function—i.e., meaningful engagement—have to be balanced properly. It becomes very difficult for teachers to balance these two aspects properly^[21,23]. Another drawback is that because TBLT stresses more linguistic competence in communication rather than isolated elements, this makes evaluation even more challenging. Thus, results from traditional assessment methods may not fully cover the entire range of learning outcomes^[17].

2.3.7. Suggestions and Solutions

TBLT may be integrated into the conventional classrooms with proper support and strategies:

- Professional Development: Training and professional development would help instructors to use TBLT properly^[15,18].
- Reforming Curriculum: Curricula reform in line with the concepts of TBLT, and more flexible, freetask-based techniques can be used for better implementation^[4,17].
- Resource Development: Provide TBLT explicit material with sample activities and instruments of evaluation to equip the resource gap^[21,23]. Institutional Support Schools and colleges where TBLT is encouraged need class number reduction and technology investment for the encouragement of TBLT^[16,20].
- Specific Context Adaptations: Knowing what local problems are and adapting TBLT to address them makes it more effective^[19,22]. TBLT meets many challenges in a traditional classroom setting, ranging from teacher and student readiness to institutional and resource limitations. Since TBLT enhances CC and learner autonomy, giving it a try is worth the effort. Teacher training, curriculum modification, resource development, and institutional support are prerequisites toward the direction of solving these problems. Overcoming these constraints is what can make education really ready students for actual use of language in real-world situations.

2.4. Appropriate Methods to Use Technology in the Classroom

If technology is used wisely to meet educational goals, it could change how education works. Choosing the right digital tools that fit the way you teach and the results you want to get will be very important for getting digital literacy beyond just the surface level. Research indicates that teaching robots, gamified platforms, and virtual reality technology are the most theoretically effective in enhancing comprehension. Blended learning techniques can make education more personal by encouraging active learning and giving timely feedback, which leads to better learning outcomes^[24]. Simulations and multimedia enhance student engagement by fostering collaboration and critical thinking^[25]. To reduce the digital gap, we require equal access, infrastructure, inclusive policies, and training^[26,27]. Educators require comprehensive professional development to effectively utilize these technologies and integrate them into courses^[28]. Transformational leaders motivate teachers to use new ideas and

technologies^[29,30]. Using technology in PBL, like virtual collaboration platforms and multimedia resources, encourages students to solve real-world problems and get involved on their own^[25]. When handled correctly, technology works, such as when it is integrated into the curriculum, when stakeholders are involved, and when the infrastructure is long-lasting^[27]. Finally, technology can help increase learning results fairly when it is linked to pedagogy, used in new ways, guaranteed fairness, empowered teachers, and supported by leaders. This all-encompassing method tackles both teaching and systemic problems to make schools that are lively and welcoming to everyone.

2.5. How Active Listening Affects Interactive Communication

Active listening employs both verbal and nonverbal techniques to improve knowledge, empathy, and participation in order to communicate well. Its components improve personal, professional, and cultural interactions. Listeners need to pay attention to both clear and hidden messages^[31,32]. Trust, minimizing misunderstandings, and demonstrating respect all help communication. Making eye contact, nodding, and having an open body language show that you care about what the speaker is saying^[33,34]. Supportive environments make messages clearer and lower the chances of conflict. Empathy and Perspective-Taking assist listeners in comprehending the speaker's emotions and perspectives^[33,35]. Speakers feel valued when they feel trusted and included. To make sure everyone understands and to get them to say more, paraphrase, summarize, and ask open-ended questions^[33,36]. Feedback keeps individuals interested and helps them understand what they need to do. It is important to let presenters talk by avoiding interrupting them^[31,37]. This lessens conflict and backs up the speaker, which builds respect. Being aware of your own biases and being open-minded can help you get past them and work well with people who have different points of view^[36,38]. Reducing judgmental obstacles fosters inclusivity. Listeners can critically analyze and respond judiciously by systematically arranging and assessing information^[32,37]. This knowledge makes it easier and faster to solve problems. Finally, Cultural Sensitivity changes how people listen to each other to avoid misunderstandings between cultures^[39]. Listeners value cultural diversity to promote global com-

prehension and connection. These things make passive listening active, adding empathy, clarity, and respect to conversations. Teamwork and resolving disagreements make you better at your job, while relationships make you better at home. They show that hearing across cultures requires being there, knowing, and being able to change.

2.6. Good Ways to Help Those Who don't Speak English Well Pronounce and Speak it Better

To help non-native English speakers improve their pronunciation and fluency, teachers need to use both old and innovative teaching methods and have a good grasp of the challenges their students are having. The articles from the review have been utilized to write this paper, which is a detailed assessment of what researchers think are the best ways to improve both pronunciation and fluency.

2.6.1. Mixed Teaching Styles

Using an eclectic approach to teach pronunciation means using a variety of diverse language teaching methods. It has been particularly helpful in treating both segmental features (individual sounds) and suprasegmental aspects (stress, intonation, and rhythm). Drilling, minimal pairs, shadowing, and even interactive dialogue exercises are all useful strategies. Using tech tools to let students practice and get feedback right away improves these strategies work better^[40]. For example, drilling is the boring practice of certain sounds or syllables to build up muscle memory and enhance articulation. Minimal pairs are an excellent way to teach language since they are words that only change by one sound. For example, "bit" and "beat" are not unusual examples. They assist students fix typical mistakes in pronunciation. Shadowing has been shown to enhance both correct and fluent pronunciation, when learners replicate the speech of a native speaker from an audio source^[41].

2.6.2. Pronunciation Training with Technology

A lot of people are using digital tools to help them with pronunciation and fluency. Most of these technologies use cutting-edge algorithms, machine learning, and acoustic signal processing to give users personalized feedback and workouts.

- (1) Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR)

ASR has shown to be quite useful for pronunciation. Some apps, like "I Love Indonesia" and "NovoLearning," give learners instant feedback on how well they pronounce words. NOVO provides comprehensive correction feedback on minute phonetic features, enhancing pronunciation at both the word and sentence levels^[42].

- (2) Neural Networks and Multi-Sensor Detection
New methods that improve speech and fluency include multi-sensor detection and neural network analysis. After collecting, preprocessing, and extracting features from the data, feedback can be given in as much detail as needed. Results from real-world tests demonstrate that these methods can get teaching evaluations right up to 99.3% of the time, which is a big improvement over the old standard method^[43].
- (3) Self-Supervised Learning for Scoring Fluency
A self-supervised learning framework incorporating phonetic and prosodic awareness has been developed for the assessment and enhancement of speech fluency. The method entails pre-training models using extensive unlabeled datasets. It is quite useful when there isn't much labeled data. Experiments show that it does much better than baseline systems in Pearson correlation coefficients^[44].
- (4) English Buddy: A Complete Tool for Learning
"English Buddy" is an app that creates a private area for studying, helps you find pronunciation faults, and gives you instant feedback. This setup leverages cutting-edge technologies like Deep Learning, Reinforcement Learning, and Audio Signal Processing to solve the challenges that non-native speakers have. It has demonstrated the capacity to transcend traditional boundaries, yielding outcomes that are both more accurate and reliable^[45].

The above review brings the method and theory of TBLT together in a comprehensive, contextualized way, with discussion of its pedagogical strengths and the real problems that TBLT has fitting into conventional classrooms. Those difficulties grow most acute in poorly resourced yet highly purpose-driven environments. By bringing them further into the light, we would be making our own particular intervention clearer and locate it within current educational concerns.

This analysis fills major voids in extant literature and, therefore, becomes a very timely practical guide for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers who may want to effect the proper implementation of TBLT across all educational contexts. Unlike earlier studies that are often theoretical or descriptive in nature, actionable strategies that this review presents for infusing TBLT into traditional classrooms comprise curriculum reform, targeted professional development, and context-specific adaptation^[19,22].

Earlier reviews focus more on the theorizing aspect and do not provide an organized grouping of practical challenges. For example, some studies state the advantages that come with using TBLT but do not consider major challenges which include inadequate provision for training teachers, inflexible curricula, and budgetary constraints. All these issues are discussed in this article with supporting empirically based evidence from recent research^[17,23].

Another limitation in previous works is that they do not integrate recent empirical findings. While some authors dwell on the general advantages of TBLT, they do not include emerging technological innovations. Innovations like automated speech recognition and neural networks are not included. Our review consists of recent studies which prove how digital tools may advance pronunciation and fluency—only areas that have been neglected before^[42–44].

Also, earlier evaluations usually focus on perfect or Western settings and ignore the cultural, institutional, and infrastructural limits that exist in EFL environments. Our review adds to this by looking at barriers that come from rural and test-focused classrooms^[15,16].

To sum up, previous studies have greatly described the theoretical advantages of TBLT but, as a matter of fact, they miss out on the crucial challenges related to its implementation. Our review stands between those gaps, ready with an exclusive pragmatic approach toward applying TBLT in real-time educational settings.

2.7. Mixed Results in Different Studies

Though many studies, have proven TBLT to be very effective, the applicability of TBLT in a real classroom setup is withdrawn. Zhang^[17] and Aljasir^[20] noted resistance in large amounts due to exam-oriented curricula and teacher-centered pedagogical practices; whereas Córdoba Zúñiga^[46] and Megawati and Alwiya^[10] noted that TBLT could be

successfully infused through teacher agency and contextual adaptation. Other ASR tools as well show improvability on pronunciation, such tools include “I Can Speak”; however findings by Jeewantha et al.^[45] learners’ motivation dropped without human interaction. This sets up assumed friction between technology effectiveness and learner engagement. Such anomalies suggest that other contextual variables—institutional support, teacher training, and cultural norms—might be playing a more dominant role than the methodology itself.

2.8. Literature Gaps

Teacher beliefs and agency are always known as barriers to good pedagogy. Thus, there is little research on micro-credentialing or incentive-based professional development that changes pedagogical mindsets. While equity issues have been noted in digital access (e.g., rural Pakistan and Indonesia), low-tech or no-tech options—radio-based oral practice, SMS-based quizzes—are rarely discussed in peer-reviewed literature. While the cultural adaptation of TBLT is discussed at the level of concept, there has been little systematic development or testing of localized task design frameworks—for example, “TBLT-Arabic” or “TBLT-Lite.”

3. Methodology

This research used a qualitative type of research in which document analysis was integrated with a systematic review of literature to probe strategies on how to enhance the development of CC and speaking skills inside the EFL/ESL classrooms.

3.1. Databases and Search Strategy

Thirty-five peer-reviewed articles were purposively chosen from two certified academic databases, Scopus and ERIC, and other open-access databases, ScienceDirect and DiVA Portal. The key terms used as combinations in the search process included “communicative competence,” “speaking skills,” “TBLT,” “technology in EFL,” “active listening,” “ASR tools,” and “shadowing.” Other key terms included Global South, EFL/ESL pedagogy, and language learning barriers.

3.2. Inclusion Criteria

Studies published prior to 2018 in contexts other than EFL/ESL outside the Global South that do not speak to issues related to speaking skills or communicative competence or pedagogical strategies were excluded. Also excluded were studies that do not present empirical data, be it qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods and have not been published as a peer-reviewed journal article, book chapter, or case study.

3.3. Exclusion Criteria

Studies that focused only on written language skills without relating them to speaking or communicative competence, studies that were opinion articles or editorials, works that were not peer-reviewed, and those that did not clearly articulate their methodology and contextual relevance to EFL/ESL classrooms were excluded.

3.4. Quality Appraisal

A modified CASP checklist was used to assess the clarity of research questions, methodology appropriateness, data collection transparency, relevance to EFL/ESL speaking instruction, and considerations of cultural and institutional factors. This enabled the categorization of studies as high, moderate, or low quality. Only studies falling under the categorization of high and moderate quality were synthesized

at the end.

3.5. Literature Search and Study Selection

Table 1 provides an overview of the systematic process followed to identify, screen, and select studies included in the literature review, outlining the number of records retained at each stage.

3.6. Thematic Analysis

The selected studies were coded and arranged under four emerging pedagogical dimensions: TBLT, technology enhanced learning (includes ASR tools), active listening and shadowing practices, and classroom dynamics & motivation. Cultural and institutional variables acted as cross-cutting themes that determine an extent of success or resistance in implementation.

3.7. Triangulation

Triangulation has been made possible through a comparison of results across different geographical contexts-Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan-across different levels of instruction-secondary and tertiary-and across different methodological approaches-qualitative, mixed, and experimental. This would enhance the validity and transferability of insight between various EFL/ESL settings.

Table 1. Summary of the Literature Search and Study Selection Process.

Step	Description	Number of Records
Identification	Articles retrieved from Scopus, ERIC, ScienceDirect, DiVA Portal using keywords: <i>communicative competence, speaking skills, TBLT, technology in EFL, active listening, ASR tools, shadowing</i>	112
Screening	Excluded duplicates and non-relevant titles/abstracts	78
Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for relevance to EFL/ESL speaking and CC; empirical data required	50
Inclusion	Articles meeting inclusion criteria (2018–2025, Global South, peer-reviewed, relevant methodology)	35

4. Results and Discussion

This section discusses and relates the results to the general objectives of the study. Evidence highly underscores both the elicited pedagogical strength and practical limitations of TBLT in EFL/ESL prescriptions. Specific areas

where evidence points toward effectiveness include improvements in grammar integration, accuracy on segmental levels of pronunciation, and associated learner engagement. However, challenges remain in appropriate assessment practices and cultural or institutional obstacles, which emphasise the need for training in prosodic dimensions. The discussion

includes these difficulties with speech but extends them to wider issues of cultural resistance and institutional support for teacher agency so as to draw specific insights from this context while implying a more sustainable reform in language teaching.

4.1. Models of Blended Learning

For greater effectiveness of TBLT, hybrid models that integrate TBLT with grammar instruction, those task designs aligned to examination requirements, and comprehensive teacher training would be pertinent. Stakeholder support and curriculum flexibility also play significant roles in successfully integrating the method.

In terms of pronunciation and fluency, segmental correctness (the ability to differentiate /θ/ from /s/) has been improved by shadowing practice. Since suprasegmental skills (intonation, and stress) were not properly keyed in, speech output has resulted in the production of speaking robots. Where training programs for teachers have addressed segmental errors, prosody is still left out because the curriculum focuses on test performance.

To fill the existing gaps, prosodic training, pitch contrast tasks, and training in the use of Praat software are required. Also necessary are reforms of assessment practices. Cultural inclusivity, such as the infusion of Nigerian English, and contextualization of learning through real-world scenarios-including role-plays-are two areas that have thus far gone relatively unexamined but which this paper argues should be considered. Change systems to match assessments with communicative goals, add training for teachers on prosodic parts, and put fluency at the same level of importance as grammar.

There is still a big gap in our understanding of how gender affects things and how to advocate for change in the system. There is a need for further investigation into the empowerment of female learners in conservative environments, particularly through female-exclusive digital practice forums. Teacher groups ought to support the incorporation of oral proficiency in national exams to enhance communicative pedagogy. In the end, overcoming cultural and institutional hurdles requires new ideas that work in different situations. Educators can bridge the gap between tradition and peda-

gogical creativity by rethinking classroom activities to reflect local values, investing in incremental teacher training, and pushing for regulatory reforms. This will make sure that classroom practices meet both cultural expectations and global communicative demands.

4.2. Important Things to Think About When Teaching EFL/ESL

Three important things must be taken into account when planning effective teaching in EFL/ESL classrooms: fairness, teacher autonomy, and cultural relevance. Without these, even the most cutting-edge methods, like TBLT or ASR tools, might not work in all situations to get fair and long-lasting results.

Ways to Improve Agency: Micro-Credentials: Offer modular training (like “Designing Tasks for Large Classes”) with digital badges to get others to join in.

Advocacy: Colombia has made TBLT a part of its national standards. Now, modify teacher evaluation systems to encourage innovation and the ability to communicate.

Cultural Relevance: Making sure teaching methods fit in with local customs.

Teaching methods must be in line with the values of the people in the area. In Indonesia, where teachers stress repetition, shadowing tactics helped with pronunciation but made speaking sound “robotic” (Saudi, 2024). In conservative parts of Pakistan, role-plays with both men and women were not culturally acceptable, therefore there had to be separate options for men and women. In Saudi Arabia, discussions on culturally important issues, including traditional vs. modern healthcare, got people more involved without breaking any social rules.

Innovations that are specific to a place: Adapt world-wide approaches into culturally relevant formats, such as “TBLT-Arabic,” which combines Islamic calligraphy with language assignments. Use community radio to let people learn at their own pace in places where the internet isn’t available. Add small-group assignments to big classrooms to use “TBLT-Lite”. Some common problems are not wanting to use TBLT, not having enough access to technology, and having to choose between communicative goals and test requirements (see **Table 2**).

Table 2. The case studies from EFL/ESL classrooms.

Case Study	Focus	Methodology	Key Findings	Source
1. “I Can Speak” ASR in Indonesia	Implementing Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) for pronunciation practice.	Mixed-methods study with pre/post-tests and surveys.	Learners showed significant improvement in word-level pronunciation (25% increase) and perceived ASR as motivating.	Bashori et al. ^[42]
2. TBLT in Colombian High Schools	Task-based learning for oral fluency.	Qualitative classroom observations and interviews.	TBLT increased student engagement and fluency but faced challenges in teacher preparedness.	Córdoba Zúñiga ^[46]
3. Blended Learning in Indonesian Universities	Integrating online platforms with face-to-face instruction.	Action research with student feedback.	Flexibility and personalized feedback improved speaking confidence, but tech access disparities persisted.	Megawati & Alwiyasa ^[10]
4. TBLT in Chinese Exam Contexts	Adapting TBLT for exam-oriented classrooms.	Case study with teacher journals and student assessments.	TBLT improved communicative skills but conflicted with grammar-focused exam requirements.	Zhang ^[17]
5. Non-Native Teacher Beliefs in China	NNESTs’ approaches to pronunciation teaching.	Surveys and classroom recordings.	Teachers prioritized fluency over accuracy due to limited training and institutional support.	Gao & Wang ^[39]
6. Saudi EFL Classrooms and TBLT	Implementing TBLT in a traditional curriculum.	Mixed-methods study with teacher interviews.	Resistance from teachers accustomed to lecture-based methods; success required intensive PD.	Aljasir ^[20]
7. Rural Pakistani Classrooms	TBLT challenges in low-resource settings.	Ethnographic fieldwork.	Large class sizes and lack of materials hindered task-based activities.	Riaz ^[15]
8. Shadowing Technique in Indonesia	Mimicking native speakers for fluency.	Quasi-experimental design with pre/post-tests.	Shadowing improved pronunciation accuracy by 15% and reduced speaking anxiety.	Suyadi ^[41]
9. Bangladeshi University Writing	TBLT for academic writing skills.	Action research with student portfolios.	Tasks enhanced coherence and critical thinking but required scaffolding for low-proficiency learners.	Sharmin ^[19]
10. ASR in Saudi Arabia	“English Buddy” tool for self-paced learning.	Pilot study with user analytics.	Automated feedback improved pronunciation, but learners lacked motivation for sustained use.	Jeewantha et al. ^[45]

5. Conclusions

Pedagogical innovation with cultural and institutional realities is merged in the comprehensive adaptable strategy for enhancing CC and speaking skills in EFL/ESL classrooms. Under this study, it can be illustrated how TBLT, combined with technology integration that involves ASR tools as well as blended learning, can offer fluency support through authentic, real-world tasks accompanied by personalised feedback opportunities for flexible practice. All strategies must be made contextual to address systemic issues, such as when massive technology access gaps exist to remote and low-resource regions; thus high-tech alternatives

are required—for example radio-based oral practice and SMS quizzes. The cultural resistance found in teacher-centered classrooms against student-centered methodology needs a regional adaptation—this, perhaps in gender-segregated role-plays or value-based discussions.

It is recommended that policy reforms underscore the dual aspects of CC and grammatical exactness, considering the stringent curricula and high-stakes assessments. Attuning training, involving pronunciation and motivational scaffolding, would make students feel better and more interested. Many educational systems do not include suprasegmental elements such as intonation and stress; therefore, there is a place for advocacy in ensuring fair treatment that teaches

both segmental accuracy and prosodic fluency.

It requires glocalized strategies, i.e., global plans adjusted to local needs. Training of teachers, re-conceptualization of the assessment paradigm, and partnership with the community are imperative in developing classrooms wherein students become bold and culturally sensitive communicators.

The pragmatic synthesis of evidence-based strategies comprises TBLT, ASR tools, blended learning, and culturally adapted activities. This review's unique contribution toward offering educators a comprehensive guide to enhancing communicative competence and speaking skills across varied landscapes of EFL/ESL classrooms.

6. Recommendations

1. Integrating TBLT with scaffolded grammar instruction.
2. Adopting equity-driven technology models.
3. Reforming teacher training programs.
4. Revising assessment frameworks.
5. Promoting culturally responsive pedagogies.
6. Strengthening institutional support.
7. Fostering learner autonomy.

7. Future Research

Prosodic features, intonation, rhythm, and stress are generally neglected both under normal and technological pronunciation training perspectives. Since ASR tools only focus on the accuracy of segments, they tend to overlook suprasegmental fluency. Though gender dynamics under conservative societies have been acknowledged (for instance by Riaz^[15], practical studies regarding female-only digital environments or gender-adapted TBLT tasks are missing. Assessment reform has also been noted as an impediment by great measures of literature; however, very few works submit empirical frameworks on the integration of communicative assessment into an actual high-stakes testing situation.

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reading, and editing, A.H.A.; corrections, revision, and cites formatting, O.A.M.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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