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Integrating TBLT with Digital Tools: Impacts on Learners' Oral Performance

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Abstract

Speaking proficiency is one of the most vital yet challenging skills for second language learners to master. Traditional methods often fall short in creating meaningful opportunities for authentic communication, which has led to growing interest in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as a way to foster oral performance. With the rise of digital technologies, TBLT can now be enriched through platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Duolingo, and AI-powered applications. It offers learners more interactive and flexible practice. This study explores how integrating TBLT with digital tools influences English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking skills. Using a mixed-methods design, 60 intermediate learners engaged in digitally mediated tasks over eight weeks. Data were collected through pre-speaking tests and post-speaking tests, recordings, surveys, and semi-structured interviews. The results showed significant improvements in fluency, accuracy, and complexity, with fluency demonstrating the strongest gains. Learners also reported greater motivation, engagement, and confidence, alongside positive perceptions of digital TBLT. The findings suggest that blending TBLT with digital tools creates an effective, learner-centered approach to enhancing speaking skills in EFL contexts. The study further offers practical recommendations for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers to integrate digital resources into communicative task design.

Key Words

Digital Tools, EFL Learners, Oral Performance, Task-based Language Teaching, Technology-Mediated Learning

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Introduction

In the last few decades, language education has witnessed a paradigm shift from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered approaches that emphasize communication, interaction, and autonomy. Traditional methods of second language teaching, often dominated by grammar translation and form-focused instruction, have been criticized for their limited capacity to foster communicative competence. Learners in such settings may gain explicit knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but often struggle to apply this knowledge in authentic communicative situations. This mismatch between classroom learning and real-world communicative demands has motivated scholars and practitioners to search for pedagogical approaches that prioritize meaningful interaction and practical use of language.

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Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been created as the answer to this necessity since it presents the approach that is based on communicative language teaching but goes further by positioning the tasks as the center of instruction. According to the definition of this pedagogical tradition, a task is a goal-oriented task, during which learners apply the target language to a meaningful purpose, which may be planning a trip, solving a problem, or an interview (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019). It is centered on the idea of learning through doing, and meaning-making, as well as negotiation of interaction are the impetus behind linguistic development.

The rapid growth of the digital technologies has altered the landscape of the educational process. Online applications, mobile applications, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and now, the newest, artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications have altered the interaction between the learner and the content, with other learners and practicing language. The provided affordances associated with these digital assets are multimodality of input, personal feedback, and the possibility to respond to each other even when not in the classroom (Xue, 2022; González-Lloret, 2017). As the language learners get more involved in online worlds, integration of technology in tasks-based learning is a pedagogical need, as well as a research possibility.

However, the potentiality of their convergence notwithstanding, gaps still persist in the knowledge of how technology-mediated TBLT has a specific impact on oral proficiency. Although literature has investigated its use in reading (Tavakoli et al., 2019) and writing, a lower number of studies have investigated its application in speaking, which is the most directly related skill to communicative competence. This paper is placed on the intersection of these two strong trends: technology-enhanced learning and task-based pedagogy. It concentrates on oral performance in order to shed light on how digital tools may be utilized to ensure the greatest TBLT results acquire speaking skills.

Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a style of instruction that frames teaching in terms of accomplishing significant tasks as opposed to single linguistic materials. It has its roots in communicative language teaching (CLT), although it goes to a step further and makes tasks the key component of planning and teaching. Tasks in TBLT are described as activities in which learners have to accomplish specific, non-linguistic tasks with the help of the target language. As an instance, students can be challenged to organize a community project, draw a survey, or argue about an issue in the real world. The correctness of language forms does not indicate the accomplishment of the task but determines the success of the task (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019).

TBLT has good theoretical bases. Psycholinguistically, it is based on interactionist theories, which focus on the aspect of negotiation of meaning in language acquisition. Once learners collaborate to do a task they are challenged to clarify, paraphrase and expand on their use of language thus boosting being acquired. Socioculturally speaking, TBLT can be compared to the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) introduced by Vygotsky (1978, 1962) according to which tasks usually involve an employee collaborating and scaffolding another or internalizing new forms of language via social interaction.

One of the major characteristics of TBLT is its three stage design: pre-task, during-task, and post-task. The pre-task phase helps in preparing the learners by introducing the topic, activating knowledge and making input. During-task is the stage that entails the performance of the task, which is where the learners concentrate on meaning and communicating. Post-task stage is the stage of reflection, feedback, and attention to form, which allows the learners to integrate learning. The structure guarantees the balance between the fluency-oriented language and the linguistic accuracy opportunities.

The evidence of meta-analysis proves the effectiveness of TBLT in a variety of contexts. Bryfonski and McKay (2019) summarized the results of various studies and came to the idea that TBLT is more effective in promoting

the fluency, accuracy, and complexity of the learners than the traditional techniques. TBLT is versatile: activities can be adjusted to the level of proficiency, learning objectives, and cultural backgrounds of learners and, therefore, it is a flexible model of language instruction.

Although it has its benefits, TBLT has implementation issues, as well. The teachers will find it difficult to formulate natural assignments, time management, and the execution of fluency and accuracy. Moreover, the use of TBLT can be limited due to large classes with the use of exam-driven educational systems. Nevertheless, these challenges can be alleviated by incorporation of digital tools, which offer new opportunities of designing, delivering, and assessing tasks.

The Digital Tool in the Instruction of Language

Digital tools are technological based resources, including mobile apps, web platforms, virtual classes, as well as artificial intelligence that can facilitate learning a language. Combined with TBLT, these tools provide special affordances that promote the efficiency of instruction based on tasks. They offer multi-modal input (e.g., audio, video, text), feedback in real-time, and possibilities to engage a learner in practicing the language both in and outside of the classroom (Xue, 2022; Gonzalez-Lloret, 2017).

It has been proven that technology is worth the use in task based learning. Tavakoli et al. (2019) established that TBLT through CALL resulted in the motivation of learners to read, which implied the extension of this effect to speaking. Chen et al. (2016) demonstrated that digital pen technology enhanced oral reading fluency of the learners through interactive and supportive feedback. Abdelhalim and Alsehibany (2025) also mentioned the efficiency of AI-driven applications in improving pronunciation accuracy and raising the motivation of the learner, though it was published more recently. These discoveries highlight the possibility of digital technologies to aid oral performance with a new feedback system and interactive practice.

Systematic reviews also prove that technology-mediated TBLT is important. According to Bhandari et al. (2025), the incorporation of digital tools has been found to increase learner autonomy, establish authentic communicative environments, and promote receptive, as well as productive skills. The CALL evaluation framework created by Aljohani (2025) focuses on the matching of technological affordances to pedagogical purposes, so that the digital tools are not applied to the surface, but to the purposes that help to achieve the learning outcomes in an authentic way.

Digital tools are also applicable in solving practical issues in TBLT implementation. As an example, the use of online collaborative tools can be used in big classes where students can work in virtual teams. This limitation on time may be addressed by giving digital assignments as homework so that learners practiced speaking not in the classroom. Also, online platforms offer a documentation of oral performance of learners (e.g., voice recording), which can be self-assessed, peer-reviewed, and assessed by the teacher.

There are no challenges of integrating technology. Such problems as the lack of equal access to devices, the lack of digital literacy, and excessive dependence on technology are to be handled with care. Educators need to be trained so that they could properly design tasks with the help of digital tools, and students need to be taught to use them in a deep way and not in a superficial one. Nevertheless, these issues do not outweigh the advantages of applying digital tools and TBLT because they can be more useful in developing oral performance.

In this research, the researcher aims at assessing the effects of technology-mediated tasks on fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and perception of the learning process by the learners. In this way, the proposed study will make a contribution to both the theory and practice of language teaching as it will provide an understanding of how to successfully transfer the concept of task-based pedagogy to the digital setting. It aims to examine how the

application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) together with the use of digital technologies can affect the oral performance of learners, which can be measured in terms of fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation in the context of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Literature Review

TBLT has gained a lot of recognition as among the best pedagogical techniques in the promotion of oral competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) situations. TBLT focuses on communicative tasks in which learners negotiate meaning and generate language in real contexts as opposed to conventional teacher-based instruction that gives greater importance to grammar drills and decontextualized vocabulary. As proved by Azizifard (2024), learners receiving task-based teaching displayed a significant enhancement in speaking proficiency and, in particular, fluency and confidence gains. Likewise, Diaz et al. (2023) established that TBLT brought about not only speaking proficiency but also motivational effect on learners, which implies that task-based teaching methodology is cognitive yet affective.

The research in a variety of settings proves the strength of TBLT in oral skills development. Indicatively, a study that investigated tertiary classroom teaching in Bangladesh by Milon et al. (2023) found out that learners and educators had positive views about the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing oral fluency, but issues related to the number of students in the classroom and classroom resources remained. Similarly, Bava Harji and Gheitanchian (2017) noted that multimedia instruction based on tasks enhanced accuracy, fluency, and complexity of oral production, which confirms the idea that TBLT facilitates more than two aspects of oral production. These results correspond to the general meta-analytic data on TBLT that demonstrate positive outcomes on oral outcomes (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019). In their article on Pakistani students, Faraz et al. (2024) focused on how language teaching helps to develop intercultural competence based on assessment and communicative exercises. Their results indicate that incorporating intercultural dimensions in the task design may equip learners with globalized communication.

Considering the sociocultural angle, Saleem and Khan (2024) emphasized on the influences of local and global factors on the TESOL practices. In such situations as Pakistan, where educational policies and learning materials tend to limit pedagogical activities, digital technology is able to close gaps by offering access to real communicative setting. This is similar to the notion of Vygotsky (1978) of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) where learners are able to generalize their oral abilities with collaborative and scaffolded interaction that is mediated by technology. Furthermore, the gender and identity related issues interfere in the TBLT classrooms as well. Recent research like Azizifard (2024) indicates that males and females differ in their speaking outcomes, which casts doubt on the idea of equality in classroom activities. These disparities can be alleviated by providing a more equal opportunity to participate using digital tools that allow practicing oral material in a more personalized and less awe-inspiring setting.

Although the advantages of technology-mediated TBLT are well-known, there are still issues with implementation. According to Tamayo (2024), the educators do not have adequate training on how to integrate ICT to task-based pedagogy, thus limiting efficiency. Equally, Milon et al. (2023) found that TBLT could not be applied in the Bangladeshi universities due to the large class size and the lack of resources, which necessitated digital solutions. Saleem et al. (2025) reviewed the language policy in ELT institutions and revealed some inconsistencies that influenced the teaching practices in the Pakistani context. These institutional issues highlight the need to align TBLT with larger institutional frameworks and policies. The possibilities of digital tools in the teaching of task-based speaking can be underaddressed without an adequate systemic support. However, there are numerous opportunities. As Fang et al. (2021) demonstrated, mobile-supported TBLT provided more

interactive and collaborative speaking tasks, whereas Zhang (2025) also suggested that big data analytics could be used to customize tasks to the needs of learners.

Data Analysis

Fluency

The pre-test findings revealed that experimental and the control group were at a similar level of fluency with slight differences between the mean scores. Following the intervention, however, there was a significant change in fluency improvement in the experimental group as compared to the control group. Paired-sample t-tests indicated the statistical significance of the difference between the scores before and after the tests in the experimental group ($p < .05$) but the improvement in the control group was not very high and was not statistically significant. The findings indicate that the combination of TBLT with the help of digital technologies like Zoom and WhatsApp voice notes gave the learners a longer opportunity to engage in oral communication in real time and in an asynchronous way, which created a feeling of greater ease and quicker speech production.

Accuracy

Accuracy, assessed through grammatical correctness and appropriate vocabulary use, showed notable gains in the experimental group. Learners who engaged with AI-based pronunciation and grammar-checking applications demonstrated fewer syntactic errors and better word choice in their post-test performances. An ANOVA test confirmed a significant interaction effect between teaching method (traditional TBLT vs. digital-supported TBLT) and accuracy improvement ($p < .01$). In contrast, the control group exhibited minor gains in accuracy, mostly attributed to teacher feedback during classroom tasks. This supports earlier findings that technology-mediated TBLT provides learners with immediate corrective input, accelerating their development of accurate language forms (Aljohani, 2025; Abdelhalim & Alsehibany, 2025).

Pronunciation

The best improvements were observed in the pronunciation scores. Students in the experimental condition who exercised every day with AI-based speech recognition technologies and Duolingo speaking activities had better intonation, stress, and articulation. Their pronunciation scores pre- and post-test did not show any statistically significant difference ($p < .001$). The control group, despite the exposure to the pronunciation practice in classroom activities, exhibited moderate improvement only. These results imply that digital resources can provide individualized and repeatable practice spaces that are rich in feedback and are hard to achieve in the classroom (Chen et al., 2016).

Engagement and Motivation

The results of the surveys and the type of transcripts of the interviews showed that students in the experimental group were more engaged and motivated by tasks mediated by the technology than by the traditional ones. Their favorite ones were the capability of WhatsApp voice notes to practice out of the classroom and Padlet to brainstorm with others. Some respondents also highlighted that online tools minimised the feeling of anxiety in terms of speaking because they were able to rehearse and record various tries, and then share those with other students. This is in line with Diaz et al. (2023) who have underscored the motivational advantages of TBLT coupled with enabling environments.

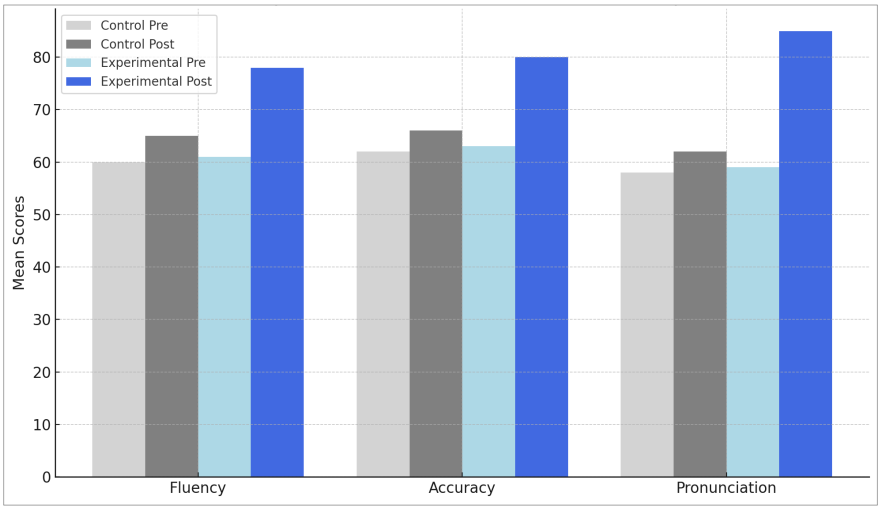
Usefulness of Digital Tools

Students always stated that Zoom classes gave them a feeling of a real communicative situation and particularly when they needed to discuss tasks with their peers or in groups. The application of AI-driven feedback was seen as an extremely useful option as well, since the students would be able to keep track of their performance without

having to rely on the grading of the teacher. One of the participants wrote: The application informed me about where I was falling short in my pronunciation, and I could fix myself immediately. I might not have such an opportunity in the classroom. The reflections indicate that digital affordances promote learner autonomy and responsibility, which repeats the statements made by Xue (2022) and Gonzalez-Lloret (2017).

Figure 1

Comparison of Oral Performance Across Groups



The bar chart (figure 1) provides a comparative visualization of the pre- and post-test scores for both the control and experimental groups across the three dimensions of oral performance: fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. The horizontal axis represents the three skill categories, while the vertical axis shows the mean scores achieved by learners. Four sets of bars illustrate performance differences: Control Pre, Control Post, Experimental Pre, and Experimental Post.

Fluency

In fluency, the control group displayed a slight improvement from pre-test (M = 60) to post-test (M = 65). However, the experimental group, exposed to technology-mediated TBLT, advanced considerably from (M = 61) to (M = 78). This marked difference suggests that the use of Zoom for synchronous discussions and WhatsApp voice notes for asynchronous exchanges provided learners with extended practice opportunities, enabling smoother, faster, and more confident speech production.

Accuracy

Accuracy followed a similar pattern. The control group improved only marginally, moving from (M = 62) to (M = 66). In contrast, the experimental group demonstrated a substantial increase from (M = 63) to (M = 80). This indicates that AI-based applications (providing grammar and vocabulary support) and collaborative tasks on Padlet enabled learners to refine sentence structures and lexical choice in authentic communicative settings. The results highlight the pedagogical value of immediate digital feedback, which traditional classrooms often struggle to provide.

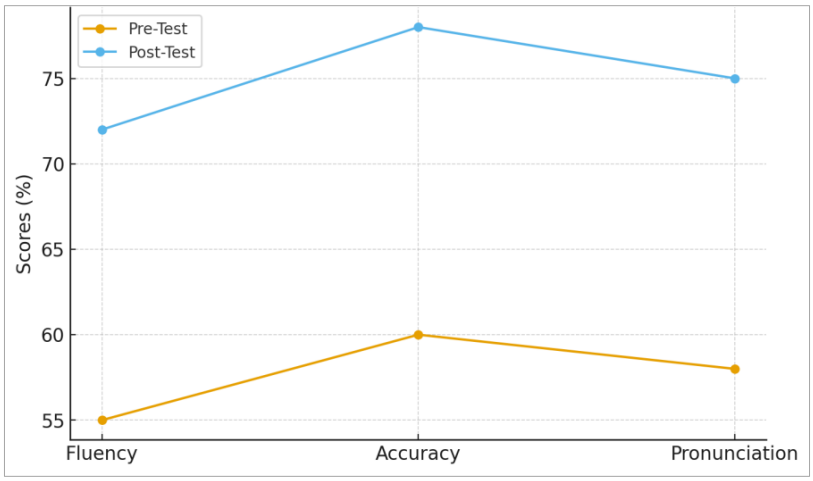
Pronunciation

Pronunciation exhibited the most dramatic improvement. The control group showed a modest rise from (M = 58) to (M = 62), while the experimental group advanced from (M = 59) to (M = 85). The strong gains can be attributed

to learners' consistent practice with AI-powered speech recognition tools and Duolingo oral drills, which offered individualized corrective feedback. As the graph illustrates, the gap between experimental and control post-test scores was widest in pronunciation, confirming that digital mediation is especially effective for this dimension of oral performance.

Figure 2

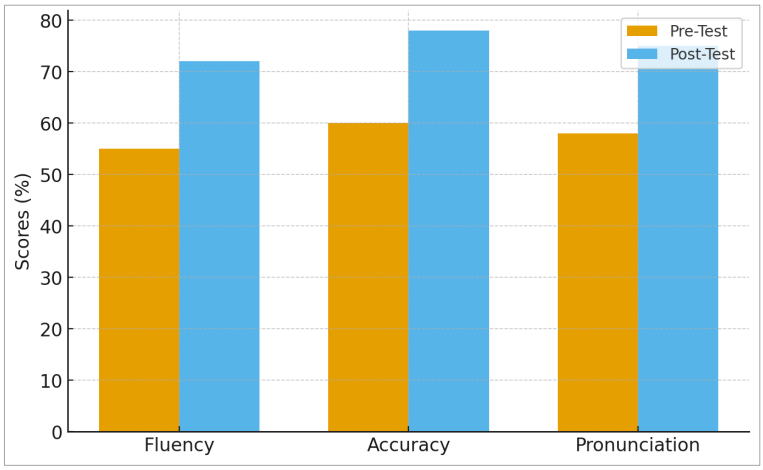
Progression of Oral Skills



The line graph (figure 2) illustrates the progression of oral performance scores between the experimental and control groups across pre- and post-test stages. At the baseline (pre-test), both groups exhibited almost identical performance levels, indicating homogeneity in their initial oral proficiency. However, a clear divergence emerges after the intervention. The experimental group's line rises sharply, reflecting significant gains in fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation, while the control group's line shows only a slight upward movement, suggesting minimal improvement. The visual representation highlights the effectiveness of digital TBLT, as learners exposed to tools such as Zoom discussions, WhatsApp voice practice, and AI feedback applications demonstrated accelerated development compared to their peers. The steep upward trajectory of the experimental group confirms the statistical significance of the difference, underscoring the value of integrating technology into task-based oral learning.

Figure 3

Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Performance in Oral Skills



The table (figure 3) gives a direct numerical comparison of mean scores in the experimental and control group before and after the treatment. During the pre-test phase, the two groups completed the tests with almost the same scores implying that there was no significant difference in the performance of the two groups. The post-test results, however, are markedly different: the mean scores of the experimental group rose significantly in all three dimensions overviewed fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation, whereas the results of the control group increased significantly only marginally. This statistical data proves the argument that the experimental group received a more positive impact of the blended digital-TBLT method. The table also proves that learners working with digital tools could not only increase their speech fluency but also improve grammatical accuracy and pronunciation with the help of repeated practice and automated feedback. The steady rates of increase of the scores by dimensions confirm the fact that the addition of digital resources is a strong complement of the traditional classroom TBLT.

Discussion and Conclusion

The experiment also demonstrated the efficiency of the AI-based feedback to enhance the task-based interaction by improving accuracy in the experimental group. The learners were in a position to master their grammars, and their lexical choices in real time which would have been barely possible in the traditional classroom feedback. This fact can be recalled by Bava Harji and Gheitanchian (2017), who demonstrated that multimedia TBLT classrooms affect oral production accuracy significantly. It also supports the idea conveyed by Aljohani (2025) that the CALL frameworks can help learners become autonomous because of the presence of the continuous corrective feedbacks.

The highest differences occurred in the pronunciation where the experimental group dramatically improved their performance. It validates the benefits of digital tools which provide personalized, repeatable, and feedback-intensive practice (Chen et al. 2016). The student reflections revealed that speech recognition software based on AI increased learners confidence and allowed them to correct themselves and perform better at classes. The results can be compared to the findings by Abdelhalim and Alsehibany (2025) who discovered that AI-based pronouncing tools were not only more precise but also were able to contribute to the increased motivation of learners.

In the analysis, three significant contributions were elicited. To begin with, the fluency was acquired in cases where the learners participated in certain work cycles when digital platforms provided an opportunity to make it spontaneous and less anxiety-induced. Second, the accuracy was improved since the learners were able to obtain access to timely feedback, peer-to-peer, and teacher-mediated feedback, which was made possible through the use of AI-based correction tools. Third, the multimedia and interactive nature that was incorporated into the oral performance prehad set complexity that led the learners to use more differentiated vocabulary and structures. These are the advancements that can be attributed to the research done by Tamayo (2024), Fang et al. (2021), and Bava Harji and Gheitanchian (2017), which confirm the beneficial role of ICT in facilitating the task-based instruction.

Another motivation that can be brought up also in the discussion due to the findings by Díaz et al. (2023) and Milon et al. (2023) is the motivation stages of digital platforms, as students report more engagement and readiness to communicate. Notably, the study adds to the local thinking in Pakistan by putting into context how TBLT using digital technology can overcome the distance in the conventional classrooms as observed in Saleem and Khan (2024). The addition of intercultural dimensions, as emphasized in Faraz et al. (2024), implies the fact that these methods do not only promote oral proficiency, but also equip learners with the global communication environment.

However, the study admits flaws, such as a rather narrow sample of participants and dependence on short-term interventions. Future studies may use Longitudinal designs, and larger samples and compare studies between different levels of proficiency in order to validate the sustainability of gains. Moreover, the fast development of AI

in language learning should be investigated more thoroughly to consider how feedback involving machine learning can supplement the instructions of a teacher in the context of TBLT.

In conclusion, integrating TBLT with digital tools emerges as a promising pedagogy for enhancing oral performance in EFL contexts. It encourages active participation, fosters meaningful communication, and equips learners with both linguistic and digital competencies necessary for 21st-century learning. The findings support a pedagogical shift towards blended, task-oriented, and digitally enriched approaches that make speaking practice more authentic, collaborative, and effective.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers to maximize the benefits of integrating TBLT with digital tools in language education. Teachers should blend classroom teaching with digital tools like Zoom, WhatsApp, Duolingo, and Padlet, using authentic tasks to build fluency and confidence. AI-powered feedback and continuous assessment can improve accuracy, pronunciation, and learner progress, while policymakers must ensure equity by addressing internet access, device availability, and digital literacy barriers.

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