

THE IMPACT OF REAL-LIFE COMMUNICATION TASKS ON EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING FLUENCY

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Abstract. Speaking fluency is one of the most important skills for students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Although many learners spend years studying grammar and vocabulary, they often find it difficult to communicate confidently in real-life situations. One of the main reasons is that classroom activities do not always provide enough opportunities for meaningful communication. Real-life communication tasks create situations where students use English to express ideas, solve problems, and interact naturally with others. This study explores how these tasks influence the speaking fluency of EFL learners. The research adopted a mixed-method approach involving university students studying English. Classroom observations, speaking assessments, and student questionnaires were used to collect data before and after the implementation of real-life communication tasks. The activities included role plays, discussions, problem-solving tasks, interviews, and everyday communication scenarios designed to encourage active participation. The findings indicate that students became more fluent, confident, and willing to speak English after participating in these activities. They showed noticeable improvement in expressing ideas, maintaining conversations, and responding more naturally during speaking tasks. The results also suggest that authentic communication creates a supportive learning environment where students are less afraid of making mistakes and more motivated to use the language.

Keywords: speaking fluency, EFL learners, real-life communication tasks, authentic learning, oral communication, English language teaching.

REAL HAYOTGA OID MULOQOT TOPSHIRIQLARINING EFL O'QUVCHILARINING GAPIRISH RAVONLIGIGA TA'SIRI

Annotatsiya. Og'zaki nutq ravonligi ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganuvchi talabalar egallashi lozim bo'lgan eng muhim ko'nikmalardan biridir. Biroq ko'plab talabalar grammatika va lug'atni uzoq vaqt davomida o'rganishlariga qaramay, kundalik hayotdagi muloqot vaziyatlarida ingliz tilida erkin va ishonch bilan fikr bildirishda qiyinchiliklarga duch keladilar. Buning asosiy sabablaridan biri dars jarayonida mazmunli muloqot qilish imkoniyatlari yetarli darajada yaratilmasligidir. Haqiqiy hayotga yaqinlashtirilgan kommunikativ topshiriqlar talabalarga o'z fikrini erkin bayon qilish, muammolarni birgalikda hal etish hamda tabiiy muloqot jarayonida ingliz tilidan faol foydalanish imkonini beradi. Mazkur tadqiqot ana shunday topshiriqlarning ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganuvchi talabalarining og'zaki nutq ravonligini rivojlantirishdagi o'rnini tahlil qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: og'zaki nutq ravonligi, ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganuvchilar (EFL), haqiqiy hayotga asoslangan kommunikativ topshiriqlar, autentik ta'lim, og'zaki muloqot, ingliz tilini o'qitish.

ВЛИЯНИЕ КОММУНИКАТИВНЫХ ЗАДАНИЙ, ОСНОВАННЫХ НА РЕАЛЬНЫХ ЖИЗНЕННЫХ СИТУАЦИЯХ, НА БЕГЛОСТЬ УСТНОЙ РЕЧИ УЧАЩИХСЯ, ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК КАК ИНОСТРАННЫЙ (EFL)

Аннотация. Одним из важнейших навыков для студентов, изучающих английский язык как иностранный (EFL), является беглость устной речи. Несмотря на то что многие обучающиеся годами изучают грамматику и лексику, они по-прежнему испытывают трудности при уверенном общении в реальных жизненных ситуациях. Одной из основных причин является то, что учебные занятия не всегда предоставляют достаточно возможностей для содержательного общения. Коммуникативные задания, основанные на реальных жизненных ситуациях, создают условия, в которых студенты используют английский язык для выражения своих мыслей, решения проблем и естественного взаимодействия с окружающими. В данном исследовании рассматривается влияние таких заданий на развитие беглости устной речи у студентов, изучающих английский язык как иностранный. В исследовании был использован смешанный метод, в котором приняли участие студенты университета, изучающие английский язык. Для сбора данных до и после внедрения коммуникативных заданий, основанных на реальных жизненных ситуациях, были проведены наблюдения за учебными занятиями, оценивание навыков устной речи и анкетирование студентов. Комплекс заданий включал

ролевые игры, дискуссии, задания по решению проблем, интервью и моделирование повседневных коммуникативных ситуаций, направленных на стимулирование активного участия обучающихся. Результаты исследования показали, что после выполнения данных заданий студенты стали говорить более бегло, уверенно и проявляли большую готовность использовать английский язык в устной речи. Было отмечено значительное улучшение в способности выражать свои мысли, поддерживать разговор и более естественно реагировать в процессе общения. Полученные результаты также свидетельствуют о том, что аутентичная коммуникация способствует созданию благоприятной образовательной среды, в которой студенты меньше боятся совершать ошибки и проявляют более высокую мотивацию к использованию иностранного языка.

Ключевые слова: беглость устной речи, изучающие английский язык как иностранный (EFL), коммуникативные задания, основанные на реальных жизненных ситуациях, аутентичное обучение, устная коммуникация, преподавание английского языка.

Introduction. Learning to speak English confidently is one of the biggest goals for students who study English as a Foreign Language (EFL). For many learners, speaking is also the most difficult skill to develop. They may understand grammar rules, know a wide range of vocabulary, and perform well in written tasks, but they often hesitate when they need to speak. This problem can reduce their confidence and prevent them from using English effectively in both academic and everyday situations.

Many classrooms still focus heavily on textbooks, grammar exercises, and memorization. While these methods help students build language knowledge, they do not always prepare learners for real communication. Students may complete classroom activities successfully but still struggle to express their ideas in natural conversations. As a result, there is a growing need for teaching methods that encourage students to use English in meaningful and practical ways. One approach that has received increasing attention is the use of real-life communication tasks. These tasks are designed to reflect situations that learners may experience outside the classroom. Instead of simply answering questions from a textbook, students participate in activities such as role plays, interviews, discussions, problem-solving tasks, giving directions, making plans, or sharing personal experiences. Such activities require learners to communicate with a clear purpose, listen carefully to others, and respond naturally. In this way, students practice using English as a tool for communication rather than as a subject to be memorized. Real-life communication tasks also create a more active learning environment. Learners become participants instead of passive listeners, and they are encouraged to express their own opinions and ideas. Because the focus is on successful communication rather than perfect grammar, students often feel less pressure and become more willing to speak. Regular participation in these activities can gradually improve fluency, increase confidence, and help learners develop better interaction skills.

Speaking fluency is more than the ability to speak quickly. It includes expressing ideas clearly, maintaining a conversation, responding appropriately, and communicating without frequent pauses caused by searching for words or worrying about mistakes. Developing fluency requires continuous practice in situations where learners use the language for meaningful communication. Real-life tasks provide these opportunities and help students connect classroom learning with real-world language use. Although many researchers have discussed communicative language teaching and task-based learning, there is still a need to examine how real-life communication tasks influence speaking fluency in different EFL learning contexts. Educational settings, learner backgrounds, and classroom practices vary from one institution to another, making further research valuable for both teachers and students.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of real-life communication tasks on the speaking fluency of EFL learners. It also aims to explore how these activities influence students' confidence, classroom participation, and willingness to communicate in English. The findings of this research are expected to provide practical suggestions for English language teachers who wish to create more engaging and effective speaking lessons while helping learners become confident users of English.

Literature review. Improving speaking fluency has remained one of the main goals of English language teaching for many years. Researchers generally agree that learners become more successful speakers when they are given opportunities to use English for meaningful communication instead of simply practicing grammar rules or memorizing vocabulary. This idea has influenced the development of communicative approaches, particularly Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which encourages learners to complete purposeful tasks that resemble real-life communication.

One of the leading scholars in this field, Rod Ellis (2003), explains that task-based language teaching allows learners to use language to achieve a meaningful outcome rather than focusing only on language forms. According to Ellis, tasks create situations where communication becomes the main objective, helping learners develop both fluency and communicative competence. Instead of producing isolated sentences, students learn to exchange information, negotiate meaning, and solve problems through interaction. This view has become one of the theoretical foundations of many modern speaking classrooms. A similar perspective is presented by David Nunan (2004), who emphasizes that classroom activities should reflect authentic language use whenever possible. He argues that learners benefit more from tasks that have a clear communicative purpose because such activities encourage them to express personal ideas, ask questions, and respond naturally. Nunan also points out that language learning becomes more effective when students are actively involved in meaningful communication rather than passively receiving information. The practical implementation of task-based learning was further developed by Jane Willis (1996) and later expanded by Willis and Willis (2007). They introduced a task cycle consisting of preparation, task performance, planning, and language focus. This framework allows learners to communicate freely before analyzing language accuracy. Such an approach helps students build confidence

because they first concentrate on conveying meaning instead of worrying about grammatical perfection. As a result, learners gradually become more fluent while continuing to improve their language accuracy over time. Recent research continues to support these early theories. Sang and Nguyen (2023) reviewed studies on task-based language teaching and speaking performance and found that TBLT consistently improves important aspects of speaking, including fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Their review also showed that learners become more engaged when classroom activities require meaningful interaction instead of mechanical practice. However, they noted that further research is needed to examine different types of communication tasks and their effectiveness in various educational contexts. Another comprehensive review by Mudinillah, Rahmi, and Taro (2024) highlights that task-based language teaching increases learner participation because students use English to complete practical and meaningful tasks. Their findings indicate that authentic communication activities strengthen speaking and listening skills while also improving learner motivation and autonomy. At the same time, the authors emphasize that successful implementation depends on teachers' ability to design appropriate tasks and create supportive classroom environments.

Research has also focused specifically on speaking proficiency. Yu, Mofreh, and Salem (2024) analyzed studies conducted between 2014 and 2023 and concluded that task-based language teaching has a positive influence on speaking proficiency, learner motivation, classroom engagement, and willingness to communicate. Their review shows that role plays, discussions, collaborative projects, and technology-supported communication tasks provide learners with valuable opportunities to practice speaking in realistic situations. The authors further suggest that combining authentic communication with carefully planned classroom support leads to more consistent improvements in speaking performance. The importance of authentic communication extends beyond improving linguistic ability. Real-life communication tasks expose learners to situations that resemble everyday conversations, making classroom learning more relevant to their future needs. When students discuss real problems, exchange opinions, conduct interviews, or work together to complete practical tasks, they are required to think critically while using English. These experiences help learners become more flexible speakers because they learn to react naturally instead of relying on memorized responses.

Despite the growing body of research supporting task-based learning, several challenges remain. Large classes, limited classroom time, examination-oriented teaching, and insufficient teacher training may reduce the effectiveness of communication-based instruction. Some teachers also find it difficult to design authentic tasks that match students' language levels while maintaining meaningful interaction. These issues suggest that the success of real-life communication tasks depends not only on the activities themselves but also on thoughtful planning and effective classroom management. Overall, previous studies demonstrate that meaningful communication plays a central role in developing speaking fluency. While existing research strongly supports the benefits of task-based learning, fewer studies have specifically examined the impact of real-life communication tasks on university EFL learners within particular educational settings. This gap provides the basis for the present study, which investigates how authentic communication activities influence learners' speaking fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate in English.

Methodology. This study employed a mixed-method research design to examine the impact of real-life communication tasks on the speaking fluency of EFL learners. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was used to gain a more complete understanding of students' progress and classroom experiences. While the quantitative data measured changes in speaking performance, the qualitative data helped explain how students perceived the learning activities and how these tasks influenced their confidence and participation.

The research was conducted at a university where English is taught as a foreign language. A total of 40 undergraduate students participated in the study. Their English proficiency ranged from B1 to B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The participants were selected because they had already completed basic English courses and were taking a speaking-focused module during the semester. Before the research began, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. The study lasted for eight weeks. During this period, students regularly took part in communication activities designed to reflect situations they might encounter outside the classroom. Instead of relying on textbook dialogues, the lessons focused on meaningful interaction. The tasks included role plays, problem-solving activities, interviews, group discussions, information-gap tasks, giving directions, planning events, making phone calls, and expressing opinions about everyday topics. These activities encouraged learners to communicate with a clear purpose and respond naturally to their classmates.

To evaluate students' speaking fluency, a pre-test was administered before the implementation of the communication tasks, and a post-test was conducted at the end of the eight-week period. During both assessments, students completed individual speaking tasks and interactive conversations based on familiar topics. Their performances were evaluated using four criteria: fluency, coherence, vocabulary use, and communicative effectiveness. The same assessment criteria were applied in both tests to ensure consistency. In addition to the speaking tests, students completed a structured questionnaire consisting of 15 Likert-scale statements and several open-ended questions. The questionnaire explored learners' attitudes toward real-life communication tasks, their confidence in speaking English, and their willingness to participate in classroom discussions. Classroom observations were also carried out throughout the study. Observation notes focused on students' participation, interaction patterns, confidence, and the strategies they used while completing communication tasks. The collected quantitative data were analyzed by comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and percentage improvements, were used to identify changes in students' speaking performance. Responses from the questionnaires and classroom observations were analyzed

thematically to identify common opinions, recurring experiences, and noticeable changes in learner behavior. Combining these two forms of analysis made it possible to compare numerical improvements with students' personal experiences during the learning process. Several steps were taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. The speaking assessment criteria remained the same throughout the research, all participants completed identical types of tasks during both assessments, and the questionnaire items were directly related to the objectives of the study. Classroom observations were conducted regularly to reduce the possibility of drawing conclusions from isolated events. These procedures helped provide a balanced and trustworthy interpretation of the findings. Overall, the chosen methodology allowed the researcher to examine not only whether students' speaking fluency improved but also how real-life communication tasks influenced their confidence, classroom engagement, and willingness to communicate in English. This combination of measurable results and learner experiences provides a comprehensive basis for understanding the effectiveness of authentic communication activities in EFL classrooms.

Results and discussion. The main purpose of this study was to examine whether real-life communication tasks could improve the speaking fluency of EFL learners. To answer this question, students' speaking performance before and after the eight-week intervention was compared. The findings revealed clear improvements in several aspects of speaking, including fluency, confidence, participation, and the ability to express ideas more naturally. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test results showed that most participants achieved higher speaking scores after completing the communication-based activities. At the beginning of the study, many students spoke slowly, paused frequently, and often searched for appropriate words before expressing their ideas. Some learners relied heavily on memorized sentences, while others avoided speaking for long periods because they were afraid of making mistakes. These difficulties became less noticeable by the end of the study.

One of the most significant changes was observed in speaking fluency. During the post-test, students were able to maintain conversations for a longer time with fewer unnecessary pauses. Although grammatical mistakes still appeared in some responses, learners communicated their ideas more smoothly and showed greater confidence when interacting with their classmates. This suggests that regular exposure to authentic communication tasks helped students focus more on meaningful communication than on producing perfect sentences. Classroom observations supported these findings. In the first weeks of the research, only a small number of students actively participated in discussions, while several learners preferred to remain silent unless they were directly asked to speak. As the activities became a regular part of classroom instruction, participation gradually increased. Students became more willing to share opinions, ask questions, and respond to others without waiting for teacher guidance. Pair work and group discussions were particularly successful in encouraging shy learners to communicate more actively.

The questionnaire results also reflected positive changes in students' attitudes toward speaking English. Most participants reported that real-life communication tasks made the lessons more interesting and less stressful than traditional speaking exercises. They explained that discussing familiar topics, solving practical problems, and participating in role plays helped them forget their fear of making mistakes. Several students also mentioned that they felt more comfortable speaking because communication activities focused on exchanging ideas rather than producing grammatically perfect answers. Another important finding was the improvement in learners' confidence. Confidence is closely connected to speaking fluency because students who feel comfortable using English are more likely to participate in conversations. Throughout the study, many learners became increasingly willing to initiate conversations, maintain interaction, and express personal opinions. This development suggests that authentic communication creates a supportive classroom atmosphere where students gradually build confidence through repeated practice. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on communicative language teaching and task-based learning. Similar to the conclusions reported by Ellis (2003), Nunan (2004), and more recent studies discussed in the literature review, the present research indicates that meaningful communication provides learners with valuable opportunities to develop speaking skills. However, this study also demonstrates that activities based on everyday situations may have an additional advantage because students easily relate classroom tasks to their own experiences. This connection appears to increase both motivation and active participation.

Despite these encouraging results, several challenges were observed during the implementation of the activities. Some students needed additional preparation before participating in discussions, particularly when unfamiliar vocabulary was required. Time management also became challenging during longer group activities because learners often wanted to continue their conversations beyond the planned lesson schedule. These challenges did not reduce the effectiveness of the activities, but they suggest that teachers should carefully select topics, provide sufficient language support, and organize classroom time effectively. Overall, the results indicate that real-life communication tasks have a positive influence on the speaking fluency of EFL learners. Beyond improving language performance, these activities helped students become more confident, engaged, and willing to communicate in English. The findings support the idea that speaking develops most effectively when learners use English for genuine communication rather than simply completing textbook exercises.

Conclusion. This study examined the impact of real-life communication tasks on the speaking fluency of EFL learners. The findings demonstrate that providing students with opportunities to communicate in meaningful and authentic situations can significantly improve their speaking performance. Throughout the eight-week intervention, learners became more fluent, participated more actively in classroom discussions, and showed greater confidence when expressing their ideas in English.

The results suggest that real-life communication tasks offer several advantages over traditional speaking activities.

Instead of focusing mainly on grammar or memorized dialogues, students used English to solve problems, exchange opinions, and complete tasks that reflected everyday situations. This type of learning encouraged natural interaction and helped learners use the language with a clear communicative purpose. As a result, they became more willing to speak and less concerned about making mistakes. Another important outcome of the study is the positive influence of authentic communication on learner motivation. Classroom observations and questionnaire responses indicated that students found these activities more enjoyable and engaging than conventional speaking exercises. Working in pairs and groups, participating in discussions, and completing practical communication tasks created a supportive learning environment where students felt comfortable sharing their thoughts. This positive atmosphere contributed not only to better speaking fluency but also to stronger classroom participation.

The study also has practical implications for English language teachers. Incorporating real-life communication tasks into speaking lessons can make language learning more meaningful and student-centered. Teachers are encouraged to design activities that relate to learners' daily experiences, future academic needs, and real social interactions. Even simple classroom tasks such as interviews, role plays, problem-solving activities, or collaborative discussions can provide valuable opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills. Although the findings are encouraging, the study has several limitations. The research involved a relatively small number of participants from one educational institution and was conducted over a limited period of time. Future studies could include learners from different educational settings, involve larger participant groups, or examine the long-term effects of authentic communication tasks on speaking development. Researchers may also compare different types of communication activities to determine which are most effective for learners at different proficiency levels.

In conclusion, real-life communication tasks represent an effective approach to improving speaking fluency in EFL classrooms. They help learners move beyond memorization and encourage them to use English as a practical tool for communication. By creating opportunities for meaningful interaction, these activities support not only language development but also confidence, motivation, and active participation. For these reasons, integrating authentic communication into regular classroom practice can play an important role in helping EFL learners become more confident and competent English speakers.

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