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Incorporating Task-Based Instruction into EFL Speaking Classes: What can EFL Teachers Say?

Imene TABOUCHE*
Badji Mokhtar, Annaba University, (Algeria)
.12P.O.Box, 23000 Annaba, Algeria ,
tabouche.imene@univ-guelma.dz

Pr Saliha CHELLI
Mohamed Khider, Biskra University(Algeria)
saliha.chelli@univ-biskra.dz

Abstract

The present study aims at investigating teachers' perspectives with regard to the use of Task-based instruction in EFL speaking classes at the Department of English at Annaba University. The ability to use and communicate appropriately in English is becoming increasingly necessary in general and in Algeria in particular. However, despite the insisting call for implementing learner-centered methods like Task-based instruction, there is a limited understanding concerning the adoption of this kind of approach. Moreover, different challenges still accompany the use of it. In order to reach the aforementioned objective, a qualitative method was used. More precisely, a structured interview was conducted with four EFL teachers. Results show that teachers have a positive attitude towards the impact of Task-based instruction on students' speaking skill. Nevertheless, some obstacles like task design, large classes, and time constraint make the integration of this approach challenging.

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* corresponding authors

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1. Introduction

The extensive use of English highlights its significance in educational systems across the globe, especially, in EFL context. In this latter, achieving fluency and accuracy while speaking is a chief aim for the majority of learners, which puts under scrutiny the teaching methods and strategies applied. In fact, the adoption of learner-centered methods represents an important transition from teacher- directed approaches towards more dynamic, interactive, and adapted forms of learning. The reason for this shift is the realization that successful language learning depends on active participation and meaningful use of the language. Among the different teaching approaches; Task-based instruction has attracted significant interest due to its capacity to improve communicative competence, as it is based on the principles of Communicative language teaching. Task-based instruction focuses on the use of meaningful tasks that reflect real world language use, aiming at promoting authentic communication and develop practical language skills. As far as the context of EFL speaking is concerned, Task-based approach provides a dynamic and engaging environment, which motivates learners to actively participate in meaningful communication and engage them in tasks that demand creative and spontaneous use of language.

Although Task-based instruction is increasingly acknowledged as a successful teaching approach in EFL classes, many teachers display insufficient use and comprehension of this approach. Besides, teachers frequently encounter practical obstacles when trying to integrate Task-based approach. Those obstacles can impede the successful incorporation of Task-based activities, resulting in a reliance on traditional teacher-centered methods that foster spoon-feeding, hence, the creation of dependent learners. Accordingly, the present study seeks to delve into this issue via investigating teachers' views, techniques, and difficulties concerning the use of Task-based instruction in their speaking classes. Hence, it tries to find answers to the following questions:

- To what extent are teachers familiar with Task-based instruction and its use?
- What are the challenges faced by teachers when implementing Task-based approach in their speaking classes?
- What are teachers' attitudes towards the efficiency of Task-based instruction on EFL students' speaking skill?

In order to address the present study questions, a qualitative method has been employed. The following parts will discuss the research method and tool as well as the data analysis. However, it is necessary to first provide an overview of the theoretical background of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Task-based Instruction

Recognizing and valuing the learner's role in the process of language learning has been a common focus in both language teaching/learning method and research for many years (Pica, 2009). Nunan (1989), among other researchers, emphasized learner-centered activities, tools, and materials. The elements and aspects of a learner-centered theme are still being discussed and analyzed. They are evident in the implementation of task-based

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approach that involves learners in tasks relevant to their communicative, academic, and professional needs and objectives (Pica, 2009).

Over the last two decades, Task-based language teaching has widely attracted the attention of researchers of different fields in the context of language teaching and learning. This concept was created and developed by second language acquisition researchers as a response to empirical descriptions of teacher-centered, form focused second language classroom instructions (Long &Norris, 2000). According to Ellis, Skehan, Li, Shintani, and Lambert (2020), Task-based language teaching is a method to language instruction that emphasizes meaning while also considering form. It highlights the need of utilizing learners' innate ability of to acquire language naturally while using language as a vehicle for creating meaning. This approach differs from structural methods that focus on teaching language methodically and consciously.

Task-based language teaching suggests using tasks as a core element in the language classroom to provide more effective contexts for engaging learner acquisition processes and fostering second language learning. Hence, Task-based language teaching is grounded in a theory of language learning instead of a theory of language structure (Shehadeh, 2005). In other words, "in Task-based language teaching, the 'task' is used as the basic unit of analysis at the levels of goals ('syllabus'), educational activities ('methodology') and assessment" (Van den Branden, 2006, p.12)

Feez (1998, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014) briefly described the basic assumptions of Task-based language teaching as follows:

- Instruction prioritizes the process above the end result.
- Fundamental components include purposeful activities and tasks that highlight both communication and meaning.
- Language learners learn language skills through purposeful and communicative interactions throughout meaningful activities and tasks.
- Activities and tasks can be categorized either as real-life tasks or those with a defined pedagogical objective in the classroom.
- Activities and tasks in a Task-based syllabus can be arranged based on their level of complexity.
- The complexity of a task is influenced by various elements such as the learner's prior experience, the intricacy of the tasks, and the level of help provided.

As far as the methodology of Task-based language teaching is concerned, it deals with the different options to carry out tasks that can influence both the affective and the linguistic elements of task completion and subsequent learning outcomes (Ellis et al., 2020). According to Willis (2012), tasks are organized in three stages:

- Pre-task stage: the topic is introduced to the class by emphasizing key vocabulary to aid students in grasping task instruction.
- The task-cycle stage: in this stage, students work in pairs or small groups while the teacher observes from a distance. The students plan how to communicate their actions and outcomes to the rest of the class. They

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subsequently present their findings either orally or in written form and discuss as well as analyze the events that transpired.

- The language focus stage: during this stage, students analyze and discuss particular aspects of a listening or a reading text they have studied for the task. The teacher may also lead practice sessions on specific language features that arose from the task, and provide corrections outside of class.

In Task-based language teaching class, the teacher is the one who selects tasks according to students' needs and levels. He also designs pre-task and task follow-up phases that align with students' abilities and requirements. Additionally, he monitors the students' performance and progress, and intervenes as needed. On the other hand, students are responsible for interacting with their classmates in order to accomplish a task (Larsen Freeman & Anderson, 2011). In fact, Task-based language teaching places significant requirements on both teachers and learners, as Task-based language teaching courses must be created "bottom-up" according to the specific teaching/learning context. Learners in this type of instruction, may require guidance in adapting to new learning methods, while teachers must take on new roles in the classroom, which may include specialized training and continuous support (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

There are various criticisms of Task-based instruction; some come from external critics who believe that this approach is not an appropriate substitute for traditional mainstream methods, which directly and explicitly teach the language. Whereas, others come from internal critics who support Task-based approach, yet, recognize certain issues that need to be resolved (Ellis et al., 2020). In fact, there is a clear risk that directing attention towards obstacles and challenges may result in the conclusion that Task-based instruction is not worth the exertion. Nonetheless, it is imperative to examine Task-based instruction in a discerning way and differentiate between trivial issues and serious ones. As a result, issues that require examination can be identified, and strategies to overcome the limitations that hinder the implementation of Task-based instruction can be introduced (Ellis et al., 2020).

2.2 Speaking

Due to the widespread of English in today's world and the evolving requirements of its usage, EFL learners are increasingly driven to enhance their communication skills (Bleistein, Lewis, & Smith, 2020). In fact, speaking is widely recognized as a pivotal communication skill, however, its significance for language learners extends beyond mere everyday conversation, as it can ease the process of language learning and positively impact the academic progress of many learners (Goh & Burns, 2012). Additionally, according to Nunan (1991), proficiency in a language is often equated with the skill to speak it fluently, even the measure of success in learning a foreign language is typically based on the ease of conversation. Subsequently, when assessing their language proficiency, language learners tend to prioritize speaking as the most captivating skill, because it is the one that determines their fluency (Nunan, 1991).

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In fact, when someone is described as a good speaker, it is typically because he exhibits confidence, fluency, and grammatical accuracy in his speech. In some EFL contexts, an individual may be deemed as proficient speaker if his speech closely resembles that of a native speaker from a traditional English-speaking country such as the UK or the US (Goh, 2016). Nevertheless, a person's ability to sway others by his words, is often considered as a defining characteristic of a good speaker. Although the concept of good speaking may appear to be obvious, the nature of speaking is indeed quite complex (Goh, 2016).

Speaking is the act of generating structured verbal expressions to communicate ideas (Bailey, 2005). In other words, it is a dynamic process of creating meaning that includes generating, receiving, and analyzing information. It can denote the ability to pronounce words correctly (linguistic competence) or the understanding and successful production of language (Jayaraman, 2017).

This skill is widely regarded as the most difficult of the four language skills due to its intricate nature. It entails a multifaceted process of constructing meaning, which necessitates speakers to make deliberate choices regarding the purpose, manner, and timing of communication, all within the framework of the cultural and social context in which the speaking act take place (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Burns & Seidlhofer, 2002). It is well accepted that there are many similarities between speaking in a second language and reading and writing. However, despite the evident similarities, speaking can also provide distinct challenges that differ slightly from those encountered during reading and writing (Bygate, 2006). Speaking entails a dynamic connection between speakers and hearers, leading to their simultaneous engagement in generating and comprehending spoken communication within time constraints (Martinez-flor, Uso-juan, & Alcon-soler, 2006). In other words, the primary challenge associated with speaking is the issue of "impermanence". Speech is ephemeral and temporary; hence, conversation must be constructed gradually, with fresh interpretations incorporated based on the ideas conveyed so far, with each utterance being articulated while the listener waits (Bygate, 2006).

Speaking in a foreign language can be analyzed from various perspectives, yet, it is commonly understood as comprising two interconnected aspects, these are, the different types of knowledge that learners have, and their proficiency in effectively applying this knowledge in actual communication (Pawlak, 2011). The language knowledge required for bottom-up speech production encompasses the use of suitable vocabulary, accurate pronunciation features, grammatical patterns that effectively convey intended meaning, and comprehension of discourse structures that ensure coherence and cohesion in spoken communication, such as conversations or other verbal exchanges (Saville-Troike, 2006). The speech production process involves several simultaneous top-down processes. These latter require a deep understanding of the content being discussed, as well as cultural knowledge that helps determine appropriate behavior and offers a broader social context for expression. In addition,

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knowledge of the immediate social context is necessary, including understanding of the significance of the current communicative activity, the role of the speaker, his relationship with the audience, and the conditions of appropriateness (Saville-Troike, 2006).

Shumin (2002) pointed out that EFL learning requires clear instruction in speaking, as with any language skill, which typically necessitates learning and practicing. Accordingly, the teacher has a pivotal role in fostering the development of students' speaking skill. When it comes to planning, arranging, and differentiating, there are several factors to take into account (Davidson & Dowson, 1998). In that regard, Brown (2007) presented several specific principles for instructing the speaking skill, which include: prioritizing both fluency and accuracy; employing intrinsically motivating techniques; promoting the use of authentic language use, in meaningful situations; offering suitable feedback and correction, drawing on the inherent connection between speaking and listening; providing students with opportunities for oral communication; and fostering the development of speaking strategies.

Likewise, Harmer (2014) stated that the success of the speaking skill tasks greatly depends on the organization and response of the teacher to students' performance. He devised a framework for the teaching of the productive skills as follows:

-Lead in: during this stage, students are involved by introducing the topic, in which they can be asked about a specific subject. Or, if they are going to perform a role-play activity simulating the process of checking-in at an airport, they can be prompted to consider the typical nature of the conversations that occur throughout this process.

-Task: when assigning the task, the teacher provides a clear and precise explanation of the students' expected actions. In this stage, it may be necessary to illustrate the activity in a certain manner. For instance, if the teacher wants the students to perform a pair task, he can demonstrate the activity to the class by participating as one of the public pairs, ensuring that everyone observes the procedure in action.

-Monitoring: teachers in this stage monitor students' assignment. This entails circulating around the classroom, attentively observing the students while they work, and providing assistance to address any challenges they may face.

-Feedback and follow up: upon completion of the task, teachers provide their feedback. This is where they can assist the students in assessing their performance. The feedback given is based on both students' language usage and content. Teachers also highlight both students' strengths and weaknesses in accomplishing the task. Ultimately, tasks related follow-up may be dealt with (Harmer, 2014).

Instructional tasks are essential elements of the language learning environment and play a vital role in the learning process (Ellis, 2003). The instructional task type can have a positive impact on learners' performance. Therefore, it is important to develop objectives that promote a language learning environment where learners are engaged and motivated to communicate fluently and efficiently (Willis, 2012). Task-based approach is a type of instruction that paves the way for the creation of a language

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learning environment by offering chances for engaging and purposeful tasks that encourage the use of language for communication in the classroom. According to this approach, tasks are seen as crucial tools in language instruction, as they involve activities that utilize the target language in a communicative way, with a primary emphasis on conveying meaning in order to achieve the desired results. In fact, speaking classrooms are particularly suitable for Task-based instruction since this latter prioritizes authentic language use in communicative contexts.

3. Methods and Materials

3.1 Participants

The population selected for the present research are EFL teachers at the Department of English at Badji Mokhtar Annaba University. However, as far as the sampling design is concerned the study opted for a purposive sampling. This latter entails deliberately selecting data that align with the research questions, goals and objectives of the study (Tracy, 2013). The reason behind choosing this type of sampling is the nature of the research topic, which deals with the teaching of speaking. Accordingly, oral expression teachers could best represent the target sample. More specifically, among the oral expression teachers, only those who are particularly familiar with Task-based instruction participated in the interview. As a result, four teachers showed interest and volunteered to answer the questions of the interview.

3.2 Research Instrument

The goal of research is basically to provide responses to inquiries, and uncover hidden truth that might have not yet been found via implementing scientific methods. However, each research study has a distinct goal. Likewise, the current study targets teachers' views with regard to the use of Task-based instruction in EFL speaking classes. To reach this aim, a qualitative method has been adopted. "While in quantitative research the focus is on controlling variables to decrease the impact of the researcher, the qualitative research aims to gather the most comprehensive data available (Holliday, 2015). In other words, qualitative research entails collecting open-ended, non-numerical data that is predominantly examined using non-statistical methods (Dornyei, 2007).

There is a variety of options available with regard to gathering qualitative data. However, as far as the present research aim and questions are concerned, qualitative interview has been chosen as a sole method of data gathering tool, as this approach is effective when the research objective is to get knowledge about individuals' beliefs, perspectives, and meaning making (Roulston &Choi, 2018). Moreover, interviews can be categorized according to the level of formality and structure used. Henceforth, a structured interview has been utilized. According to Nunan (1992), in the structured interview, the researcher follows a preset agenda and asks a set of questions in a predetermined sequence. This type of interviews offers the benefit of comparability among participants, and when executed correctly, the researcher can ensure that all the interviews have encompassed a well specified domain (Riazi, 2016). The interview is composed of nine questions that delve into

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understanding the interviewees' teaching practices within Task-based instruction.

3.3 Research Procedure

In fact, electronic research methods are increasingly acknowledged as a valid means of producing qualitative data. Moreover, the quality of this latter challenged the idea that only traditional or in-person methods can yield reliable data (O'Connor & Madge, 2017). Accordingly, and in addition to other reasons like teachers' availability and accessibility, the research opted for an email interview.

Before commencing the interview, ethical issues must be considered. Hence, the purpose of the interview was elucidated and informed consent to participate in the study was obtained. The four teachers welcomed the idea of email interviewing where its completion took only three days. Data analysis and interpretation started directly after collecting the data, as the interviews are already transcribed.

3.4 Results and Discussion

According to Holliday (2015), the conventional method for analyzing interviews involves undertaking the subsequent steps:

1- Coding: transform the comments associated with each data item into key terms or phrases.
2- Identifying themes: the codes that occur frequently are subsequently categorized into themes.
3- Constructing an argument: the themes are thereafter employed as the headings and subheadings for formulating an argument on the insights that can be derived from the data. The data extracts that exemplify each thematic topic are gathered and utilized as evidence to the claims made in the argument.
4- Returning to the data: gathering excerpts to bolster the argument will require revisiting the data, reevaluating the codes, and honing or maybe altering the themes.

As such, the current research went through the aforementioned steps to analyze the data and determine the relevant themes. In other words, a thematic analysis was employed, as it is an effective method to extract information about teachers' perspectives, opinions, knowledge, and experiences.

Qualitative data from the teachers' interview was coded and major themes were formulated as indicated in the following table:

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Table 1. Interview Data Codes and Themes

Codes	Themes
-6 years *-3 years* *-5 years* *-8 years*	Oral expression teaching experience
-great extent -good background knowledge -highly familiar -great deal	Familiarity with Task-based instruction
- learner-centered method, active engagement, meeting learners' needs -authentic tasks, no focus on form. -focus on communication, real life language use, sequencing tasks. - meaningful communicative tasks, three task steps	Teachers' understanding of Task-based instruction
- Yes - Yes - Currently using - Currently using	The use of Task-based approach
- role plays, picture description, discussion (enjoying + engaging) - storytelling, simulation and role plays, presentations (trigger interest+ enthusiasm) - role plays (motivating+ simulate real world) - problem solving and discussion (engaging + critical thinking boosters)	Multiple tasks
-selecting tasks, guiding, providing feedback -providing assistance, answering the questions, giving feedback -explaining and monitoring the task, providing materials -Adapting tasks, providing help, guidance, information, and feedback.	Learner-centered roles
-self and peer assessment -group conference+ peer assessment -peer assessment -tests	The prevalence of authentic assessment within Task-based instruction
-difficulty in choosing the appropriate tasks - tasks are time consuming, students' reluctance, - large classes, time consuming -time constraint, students' lack of interest, task complexity	The teaching experience with Task-based instruction
-effective (authentic tasks, real communication, supporting environment) -ineffective (students' reluctance + indifference) -highly effective (fluency over accuracy, conveying meaning) -highly effective (active involvement and participation, motivated speakers)	Task-based instruction efficiency

The data extracts that exemplify each thematic topic followed by their interpretations are presented as follows:

Theme 1: Oral Expression Teaching Experience

Teacher 1: "6 years"

Teacher 2: "3 years"

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Teacher 3: "5 years"
Teacher 4: "8 years"

From those responses, it can be stated that the participants have some experience in teaching oral expression. However, it is worth mentioning that the quality of experience matters as much as the quantity. In other words, proficiency and expertise are not only determined by the number of the years of teaching, yet, various factors contribute in the efficiency of the teaching process; mainly expanding knowledge, participating in ongoing professional development and keeping updated with recent research, practices, and teaching methods. In addition, engaging in reflective practices and adjusting instructional methods to meet the needs of learners are the key factors towards teaching efficacy.

Theme 2: Familiarity with Task-based Instruction

Teacher 1: "to a great extent"
Teacher 2: "I can say that I have a good background knowledge about it"
Teacher 3: "I'm highly familiar with it"
Teacher 4: "a great deal"

It seems that all the teachers are familiar with Task-based instruction, however, the extent to which they know this method may vary from one interviewee to another. In fact, it is worth noting that in order to excel as an EFL teacher in general and EFL teacher of oral expression in particular, it is imperative to possess a comprehensive understanding and mastery of several key areas. This latter encompasses not only linguistic knowledge but pedagogical skills as well. Hence, familiarity with various teaching methods and approaches specific to teaching speaking and understanding how to create and implement speaking activities to promote learners' oral communication skills is crucial.

Theme 3: Understanding Task-based Instruction

Teacher 1: "Task-based instruction is a learner-centered method that focuses on the student and encourages active participation and language use. It entails engaging learners in different tasks or stages that meet their interest and needs; these are pre-task, during task, and post-task"
Teacher 2: "unlike some other approaches that focus on the form and structure of language, I think that task-based instruction is an approach that centers around tasks that help learners communicate, interact, and use language in real world situations".
Teacher 3: "Task-based instruction is an approach that redirects attention away from teaching grammar and accuracy towards the process of communication, generally through authentic tasks that reflect real-life language use. It comprises the sequencing of activities that guide students through a series of interrelated tasks.
Teacher 4: Task-based approach is an approach that is based on generating meaningful tasks that help learners communicate appropriately and effectively. It contains three steps, the pre-task stage where the teacher prepares his students for the main task by activating their prior knowledge, the main task, and the post-task that follows the main one and which can take different forms"

According to teachers' response, it can be said that those teachers share a common understanding of task-based instruction, which reflects their in-depth knowledge in

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relation to the approach in question. As they are well-versed with regard to the principles, concepts, and the key components associated with Task-based approach; they provided its defining features in a clear and concise way. Additionally, it seems that those teachers have more likely a flexible mindset, that is, they acknowledge that teaching methods have their potentials and demerits, hence, they are open to adjust their teaching techniques to meet their students' distinct requirements and characteristics. Moreover, the participants' ability for delineating the approach may demonstrate their proficiency in seamlessly integrating it into their instructional planning, which may result in a fruitful learning experience.

Theme 4: The Use of Task-based Approach

Teacher 1: "yes"

Teacher 2: "yes

Teacher 3: "yes, I used it, and I'm still using it"

Teacher 4: yes, and this is the approach I'm currently implementing in my class"

Since the participants have already implemented Task-based instruction in their speaking classes, it means that they are trying different instructional methods, hence, it reflects their interest in enhancing the teaching/learning process and adapting their instruction to target their students' needs. Furthermore, it looks that teachers who declared that Task-based instruction is the approach that they are currently relying on in teaching speaking, are satisfied with the results that this approach yields. Accordingly, it can be inferred that Task-based instruction could be a useful approach in promoting learners' speaking skill.

Theme 5: The Use of Multiple Tasks

Teacher1: "role plays, picture description, discussion, because they are the most enjoying and engaging types of tasks for students"

Teacher 2: "storytelling, simulation and role plays, presentations because each time I assign such type of activities to students they show more interest and enthusiasm in accomplishing them leading to better performance"

Teacher 3: "role plays are the most used type of tasks as they simulate authentic situations and motivate learners to use the relevant language in each specific context, and this is what students generally prefer and look for"

Teacher 4: "problem solving and discussion because they are not only useful in engaging students to speak and express their thoughts and opinion, they are also effective in boosting students' critical thinking skill"

Apparently, teachers use different types of tasks in their speaking classes like role plays, discussion, storytelling, etc. This may show their awareness about the importance of varying the speaking tasks, as this latter aids in sustaining learners' involvement and motivation. In other words, if tasks are characterized by repetition or monotony, learners may experience feelings of boredom or indifference. However, it is worth noting that role play is a popular activity among the respondents. This could be due to the nature and usefulness of this activity in tackling many facets like, encouraging creativity and imagination, enhancing communication skills by practicing the different functions of language, and promoting interaction and collaboration

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among students. In fact, it is crucial to choose tasks that correspond to students' language proficiency level and learning objectives, and adjusting as well as altering those tasks to fulfil learners' needs and preferences.

Theme 6: Learner-Centered Roles

Teacher1: "first, I select the tasks that are relevant to the students' level and that meet each lesson objectives. In addition, I guide them and make sure that task instructions are clear, and of course I provide feedback whenever necessary"

Teacher2: "I walk around providing assistance, answering students' questions, and giving feedback at the end of their task performance"

Teacher3: "I go through explaining the task with all its stages, I mean the pre-task, the task, and the post-task, and I equip students with the necessary materials depending on the task requirements. I also monitor the task development and encourage students to participate to enhance their speaking skill"

Teacher4: "I adapt tasks and task instructions to solve problems that may occur during task performance. I am a source of information and I correct language errors, more importantly, I provide guidance, help, and feedback"

The four participants mentioned important roles that teachers play, specifically when implementing Task-based instruction, these are: task designer, guide, facilitator, monitor, and feedback provider. These roles, according to them, vary depending on the stages of the Task-based lesson. Hence, it can be said that if the respondents successfully adopt these various roles, they can guarantee that their learners receive suitable assistance, direction, and feedback. Nevertheless, it is crucial to stress the point that Task-based approach supports a great degree of students' autonomy, hence, teachers' role in a learner-centered environment is far from exerting a total control over the class. Accordingly, teachers should set the boundaries between guiding and dominating.

Theme 7: The Prevalence of Authentic Assessment within Task-Based Instruction

Teacher 1: "I use peer and self-assessment as integral components of Task-based approach. Under my guidance, students try to assess their own performance and provide feedback to their peers as well. I depend on them because they ease the burden on me, especially in large classes"

Teacher 2: "following the completion of any task and after taking notes, I often opt for group conference, where I provide my students with the necessary feedback; I stress their strengths and draw their attention toward their weaknesses, while discussing ways to improve their speaking skill. I also use peer-assessment because students like it and find it very engaging".

Teacher 3: "In addition to my assessment, I frequently use peer-assessment because it is a useful tool not only in fostering interaction and collaboration, but also in helping students to learn from the mistakes of their peers and have different viewpoints".

Teacher 4: "from time to time, especially after a learning unit (three to four lessons,) I choose tasks that compile what has been dealt with in the previous sessions to assess students' understanding and development, and I give them grades"

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Concerning the way of assessment used, it is clear from the responses that teachers adopt formative and summative types of assessment. While the former is typically gathered throughout the course, the latter is conducted at the end of it. More specifically, the respondents use peer assessment, self-assessment, conferences, tests. etc. However, peer assessment is the most used type of assessment among the teachers because, according to them, it increases engagement, interaction and collaboration. Besides, it provides learners with different perspectives and decreases the teachers' workload. In fact, the assessment mode employed in Task-based instruction can differ based on the particular goals and objectives of the tasks.

Theme 8: The Teaching Experience with Task-Based Instruction

Teacher1: "sometimes I find it hard to choose the tasks that are appropriate for students' different levels and interests"

Teacher 2: "going through all the steps that the task comprises is time consuming; I often struggle to cover all the syllabus content. Besides, during activities that require group-work, some students show reluctance which hinders the task accomplishment"

Teacher 3: "using task-based instruction in large classes is really challenging, it requires time to make sure that all the students participate in all the stages of the task, are engaged, and receive feedback "

Teacher 4: "adopting this approach is a challenge in itself, as many problems occur, like: time constraint, students' lack of interest and motivation, task complexity"

It is obvious that all teachers agree that implementing Task-based approach is challenging due to many reasons such as: task design, i.e choosing the task that is appropriate for different proficiency levels, following the progress and performance of students in large classes, and students' reluctance to participate in group-work and pair-work, as well as disharmony when performing the tasks. However, it seems that Task-based instruction is time consuming, as effectively managing time during a class period is a common challenge faced by the respondents. In fact, despite those obstacles and others, it is possible to successfully implement this approach if teachers prepare themselves to face such challenges. Henceforth, Task-based teachers must possess extensive knowledge, adaptability, and resourcefulness. That is why, teacher training is indispensable, as it equips them with the foundational skills necessary for their ongoing professional growth.

Theme 9: Task-based Instruction Efficiency

Teacher 1: "in my experience, I can say that Task-based instruction is an effective approach in enhancing students' speaking skill. Through participation in various authentic tasks, students are encouraged to express themselves for real communication. That is, thanks to the supporting environment that this approach offers, learners can build confidence, learn from their and others' mistakes, and get rid of their speaking anxiety".

Teacher 2: "I think it is effective. However, I have two different experiences with this approach. One positive due to students' high motivation, engagement, collaboration, and willingness to develop their speaking with the help of regular engagement in context rich tasks in which

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Task-based approach suggests. On the other hand, the application of this approach is not successful when students show indifference and reluctance"

Teacher 3: "to a high extent. This approach assists learners to develop their speaking in a natural and spontaneous way because it prioritizes fluency over accuracy, hence, students concentrate on conveying the meaning rather than producing flawless grammar"

Teacher 4: "I think it is effective to a great extent. This approach encourages active involvement and participation, as students exhibit higher levels of motivation to speak, hence, to accomplish the tasks. This increased level of involvement results in greater opportunities for practicing speaking and developing its aspects".

Obviously, all teachers share the same positive attitude towards the efficiency of Task-based instruction in developing students' speaking skill. According to them, this approach promotes authentic communication and fluency. Besides, it increases motivation, self-confidence, and active participation. However, one teacher related the efficacy of Task-based approach to students' characteristics and readiness to develop their speaking skill. In fact, it is worth noting that a number of factors can influence the efficiency of this approach in addition to the previously mentioned one. Aspects like: task design and choice, teachers' proficiency and role, learning environment, as well as continuous assessment and feedback are crucial elements to increase the advantages of Task-based instruction for enhancing the speaking skill.

4. Conclusion

The present study explored teachers' attitudes towards the use of Task-based instruction in their speaking classes. The data was generated through a qualitative method, in which a structured interview composed of nine questions was conducted via email with four oral expression teachers from the Department of English at Annaba University. The interview questions sought to look into teachers' perspectives, practices, and challenges in relation to the previously mentioned approach. The study employed a thematic analysis, which is an analytical approach that follows the four steps of thematic analysis outlined by Holliday (2015). The analysis of the emerged themes reveals teachers' positive attitude towards the effectiveness of Task-based instruction in teaching and enhancing EFL students' speaking skill. The teachers display an adequate understanding of this approach and its different stages, where they use it as a type of instruction to approach speaking. Moreover, a variety of tasks, mainly role plays, are used by the teachers where they play different roles reflecting their awareness about aligning their roles with the requirements of Task-based instruction as a learner-centered approach. Nevertheless, different challenges appear while implementing this approach; mainly, time constraints, large classes, and task design. Overall, Task-based approach is the type of instruction that can effectively meet the expectations of language learners who want to achieve fluency. That is, through this approach, learners not only overcome their speaking difficulties, but also easily communicate and engage in real world situations. Henceforth, teachers are

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required to carefully consider, identify, and adapt to the difficulties that face them to successfully integrate Task-based instruction into their classes. The following points are basic guidelines that can assist teachers when integrating Task-based approach:

- Introducing Task-based teaching to classes that are unfamiliar with it.
- *Providing clear and simple instructions:* teachers should make thorough preparation of the task before initiating it, carefully analyze each stage, consider how to effectively organize it, and determine the appropriate instructions to provide at specific points. In addition, teachers should ensure that all students understand the tasks that they will do.
- Striking balance between explicit instruction, guided practice, and opportunities for impromptu language usage.
- *Involving learners in each step taken:* by discussing with them their needs and wants, involving them in the choice of the topic area and design, as well as asking for their feedback regarding everything that concerns the task.
- *Being flexible:* by making necessary modifications based on learners' performance, feedback, and needs.
- *Accuracy and correction:* teachers should be tolerant of students' mistakes, as they are part of the learning process. Moreover, they can postpone the correction of errors and mistakes to the end of task completion, while writing frequent errors committed during task cycle for correction later on.
- *Avoiding too much intervention that can frustrate the learners*: instead, teachers should encourage peer feedback and interaction.

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5. Appendix

Teachers' Interview

1- - how long have you been teaching oral expression
2- to what extent are you familiar with Task-based instruction?
3- Could you explain your understanding of it and what it comprises?
4- have you incorporated this approach in your speaking class before?
5- If yes, what are the most implemented tasks, and why?
6- What is your role when implementing Task-based instruction?
7- how do you assess your students' performance in Task-based lesson? justify please?
8- What are the main challenges that you face when incorporating this approach?
9- How much do you think Task-based instruction is efficient in developing learners' speaking skill? Explain please?

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