

The Optimization of the Speaking Skill of EFL Students via a Career-Focused Theme-Based Approach

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Abstract: The incorporation of content into language teaching has become the trademark of modern education; henceforth, the article scrutinizes the efficacy of the Theme-Based Approach (TBA) in optimizing the speaking skills among third-year EFL students in Skikda's university. Adopting a quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-test measures, the research involved 70 participants divided into experimental and control groups. The intervention group engaged in nine-week Career-Based Instruction lessons featuring role-plays replicating professional careers while the control group received conventional instruction. Quantitative analysis using SPSS revealed striking disparities in learning outcomes: the experimental group demonstrated marked optimization in speaking proficiency, whereas the control group exhibited shocking regression from the initial results. These findings authenticate the pedagogical significance of content-integrated language learning, that theme-driven learning environments optimize EFL students' speaking skills.

Keywords: *Theme-Based Approach; Speaking Skill; EFL Students; Quasi-Experimental design; Content-Integrated Language Learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Fluent speech serves as a mirror that reflects the intricacies of one's cognitive processes while simultaneously transmitting genuine emotions and perspectives with clarity. In professional and academic spheres, where discourse demands rigor and nuance, the ability to communicate with eloquence and coherence becomes not merely advantageous but indispensable (Harmer, 2003). This imperative is further compounded in a globalized landscape where English, as the current undisputed lingua franca, governs socioeconomic mobility. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, the expectation to attain a level of spoken proficiency that is both vibrant and strategically adept introduces profound layers of cognitive and pedagogical complexity, especially with the rise of the

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communicative language teaching approach Duff, 2014). The chasm between these expectations and the conventional, grammar-centric instructional paradigm, which sadly remains entrenched in many EFL classrooms, renders the current state of affairs not only paradoxical but fundamentally untenable. Modern pedagogical scholarship has long discredited the efficacy of decontextualized, rule-based language instruction, positing instead that linguistic competence flourishes most robustly when embedded within meaningful, thematically rich content (Brinton & Snow, 2017). Following this backdrop, the present research seeks to empirically examine the transformative potential of a contemporary pedagogical framework, namely the Theme-Based Approach (TBA), in optimizing the oral proficiency of third-year EFL students at the University of 20 August 1955, Skikda, who serve as the focal cohort of this empirical investigation.

Thus, the central question guiding this study is:

- Can the implementation of a Career-Focused Theme-Based Approach significantly optimize the speaking skills of EFL students under quasi-experimental conditions?

Through a methodically designed quasi-experiment, the article seeks to contribute actionable insights to the ongoing discourse on EFL pedagogy, specifically, the speaking skill in the EFL context. The article is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical sections. In the theoretical part, we carefully introduce the main pillars of the study: the shift from traditional approaches to the communicative language teaching paradigm; the theme-based approach; the speaking skill; and finally, role plays. This is made in the hopes of providing a robust background to the study. In the practical part, we introduce the sample, the content of the pretest and posttest, the treatment, and the assessment criteria. After that, a demonstration of the quantitatively-based data is shown along with a discussion of the results.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Grand Exodus: From Structure to Content

The term Exodus is not a nod to the Bible's second book, though, on a more serious note, the comparison might not be far off. Instead, it signifies the shift of paradigm in language education: educators are abandoning rigid formalist approaches in favor of a more rigorous, content-driven philosophy of second language acquisition (Marsh, 2003; Marsh, 2009). According to Harmer (2003), the traditional approaches are obsessed with structural patterns, grammatical rules,

and rote memorization of word lists. This had left behind a generation of learners who could recite rules of conjugations, differentiate between subordinating and coordinating conjunctions, and reckon in details the functions of parts speech; nonetheless they could not for the sake of them hold a basic conversation about weather, favorite football team, traditional food or cognize/recognize intersexuality even if the meaning is spelled out to them like a child. For that, the Exodus is the abandonment of the old-fashioned approaches and the adoption of serious methods that yield stern and positive outcomes, especially for communication's sake which seems to pose a grave issue for many EFL students who find themselves in intricate positions when facing a critical audience, which forces them to set aside their individuality; maintaining a low profile, restricting interactions, and putting up a reserved attitude when speaking with their peers (Littlewood, 1981).

2.2. The Theme-Based Approach

To solve the speaking handicap, particularly in a world molded by innumerable cultures, restructured by an assortment of career options that demand skilled individuals, miscellaneous educators are pushing for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), where language is learned not as an abstract system, but as an authentic mechanism for real and genuine communication (Brinton & Snow, 2017). One of the salient approaches that emerged as a part and partial of content-based instruction is the theme-based approach (TBA). The former is described as an approach that is extensively used to refer to all the approaches which integrate language and content in the EFL classroom (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989). As for the latter, it has been reported to be successful in teaching several subjects, such as literature, culture and psychology for EFL students (Brinton, 2001). In fact, following TBA suggests that educators opt for topics/subjects/themes in the form of substantial content in which several learning activities are designed to meet real-world needs (Brinton, 2001). This means that learning language's system is not directly the focal point of TBA, yet language is a tool for delivering the content; by the end of it, EFL students acquire linguistic structures and crucial knowledge at the same time. Therefore, speaking becomes fascinating and worthy of note since it is not based on mere memorization of selected material. For this very reason, we believe that TBA is unquestionably a suitable teaching approach for the four language skills, mainly speaking.

2.3. The Building Block of EFL: The Speaking Skill

“Speak so that I may see you”, are the eminent words of the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, when addressing a young man; it makes it known that speaking and communicating one’s thoughts essentially translates the inner recesses of the mind, showcasing the true character of an individual. Hence, speaking is a deep-seated gadget for social cohesion, hierarchical positioning, and business interactions. What is more is that it serves of the essence for language acquisition, putting forward an environment predominantly contributing to learning and communication (Bygate, 1987). Given its versatile implication, the pedagogy of speaking warrants the utmost attention in EFL contexts. For that, speaking fluently is a hallmark of successful linguistic control (Harmer, 2003), especially in foreign language education. It has become a treasured skill, essential for students to fit into professional and academic domains during their education and after graduation when seeking job opportunities. According to Ur (1984), "Many if not most foreign language learners are interested in learning to speak" (P.120). For this reason, speaking is one of the four language skills that is described as the most significant one of them all since it is the measurement of good performance (Harmer, 2003). One of the features that seems to be prevalent in speaking is oral fluency. Koponen and Riggensbach (2000) characterize oral fluency as a lively aspect of speech involving the following: continuity, smoothness, and a broad lexical range. Similarly, Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, and Thomson (2004), emphasize its correlation with pauses, non-verbal fillers, and speech rhythm. Lestari (2019) describes fluency in speaking as a demanding skill that requires speakers to process language spontaneously, by which they engage their knowledge and capabilities in real time. Harmer (2012) further emphasizes that fluency is influenced by factors such as topic familiarity, planning time, and subject knowledge. Herrera and González (2017) identify fluency as a fundamental indicator of spoken proficiency, particularly in English language assessments. Exams such as IELTS assess fluency in conjunction with coherence, defining it as the facility to sustain a natural and cogent flow of speech. TOEFL and MET in the same way evaluate fluency based on pacing, intelligibility, and delivery. Harmer (2003) identifies elements that categorize the speaking skill: connected speech (As in fluency); expressive devices (As in pronunciation); lexis and grammar (linguistic competence). All of these aforementioned components play a major role in operationalizing what speaking is meant in the context of the study. Adopting the TBA approach allowed the researcher to add one more significant element, which is the content relevancy. Speaking, henceforth, entails

the ability to control the language in the following aspects: oral fluency; clear pronunciation; accurate grammar and vocabulary; and finally, knowledge about content relevant to the students' studies or real-world context needs.

2.4. Role-Plays

The best form of activity we consider to go hand in hand with the career-focused instruction is role-plays. The latter are used to denote all kinds and types of classroom activities whereby students visualize themselves in situations, imitating real-life occurrences by playing the role of other people, whether specifically or generally laid out (Ur, 1984). In the same line of thought, Doff (1988) described role-plays as a brawny pillar for optimizing speaking as students are given the chance to utilize the language in completely new situations and contexts that require specific/general topics; this positively can incite them to be spontaneous and natural at the level of "expressions and intonation, as well as gesture" (P.240). "*The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied linguistics*", published in 2010 by Richards and Schmidt, exemplifies how role-plays usually take place as they are used to: "To practise how to express complaints and apologies in a foreign language, students might have to role-play a situation in which a customer in a shop returns a faulty article to a salesperson" (P. 501). Thus, role plays are a very engaging and appealing forms of learning, yet if the implementation is dull and sluggish, nothing much can be done to get a hold of the attention of the EFL student; adopting a career-focused theme-based approach is a neat premeditated treatment that makes role plays enthusiastic and fervent, in an attempt to put such claim into truth, a quasi-experiment is put forward in the following practical part of the article.

3. Methods and Materials

We utilize the quasi-experimental design following a non-random criterion of participants' selection. To achieve the objective, the research employs a pretest-posttest experimental design to investigate the actual effects of theme-based instruction on the speaking ability of third-year EFL students.

3.1 Population and Sampling

The population encompasses more than 400 EFL students selected from the department of foreign languages at the University of 20 August 1955, Skikda. As for the sample, it encompasses 70 EFL third-year students, for whom the experiment was conducted during the academic year of 2023/2024. The researcher was responsible for teaching the sample during two academic semesters, as they

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are divided accordingly to two groups: the first one is assigned to be the experimental whereas the second is the control one. The level of the groups is not far off from each other, making them equally put under empirical scrutiny. The type of sampling in the research is the nonprobability type, reflected through the haphazard

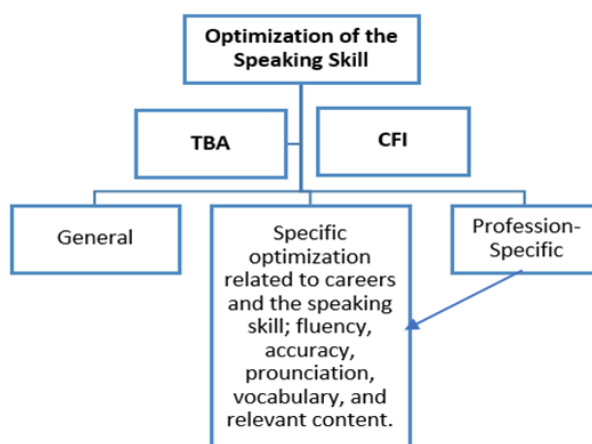
sampling process. Moreover, the third year is a pivotal period since it is the last year to mark the completion of the licence cycle. Many of the students who graduate become teachers and instructors at primary schools or private institutions. Therefore, learning and mastering speaking is undoubtedly a serious task that demands practical considerations to prepare the students for real-world contexts in which they become teachers and professionals; therefore, learning to speak is a must, not a privilege.

3. 2. Conceptual Framework for Career-Focused Instruction

The theme of *careers* is the one that has been selected to use in the treatment. Therefore, we are determined to name the treatment as the “Career-Focused Instruction” (CFI). It is proposed to optimize the speaking skills of third-year EFL students by the integration of career-related themes via role-playing in the oral expression module. It is modeled after TBA, focusing on meaningful interactions between students as they engage in conversational opportunities related to various careers, inciting students to learn various discourses, specialized vocabulary and workplace interactions. The following figure represents the relationships between TBA, CFI and the speaking skill:

Figure 1

The Synergy of TBI and the CFI for Optimizing Speaking (Designed by the researcher for illustration)



The design of the CBI is to simply indicate a specific set of concerns related to both the skill of speaking when emerging in career related scenarios. Each career demands different roles, tasks, objectives and specialized language, alluring the EFL students to engage in various real-world contexts without feelings of dullness, annoyance and infuriation.

3.3. Criteria of Assessment

The rubric score designed for assessing the control and experimental groups before and after the implementation of the treatment focuses on five main areas of speaking, which the research made operational in nature: fluency, pronunciation, Grammar, vocabulary and relevant content. The latter is judged based on the selected career and its required specialized discourse (Some even had informal discourses, such as movie actors' theme). The areas selected for assessment are partially influenced by the work of Harmer (2012).

- **Oral Fluency** based on the speaker's confidence and natural flow of speech. The researchers determined a score of 5, which indicates that the EFL research participants communicate smoothly without constant hesitations, whereas a 3 suggests sporadic pauses as they search for words. The lowest score, 1, is given when the speaker skirmishes recurrently with hesitations and word recall; disrupting the flow of ideas.
- **Pronunciation** is evaluated for accuracy and overall clarity. A score of 5 reflects correct inflections, syllables, and nuances, making speech easily comprehensible. A 3 denotes pleasing pronunciation with occasional errors that may hinder clarity but not to a large extent where it is not comprehensible. The score of 1 is reserved for speech that is very difficult or impossible to comprehend.
- **Grammar Command** is judged on the correctness and appropriateness of language use. A score of 5 means the speaker's grammar is nearly flawless, comparable to a native speaker. A 3 indicates sporadic mistakes, such as incorrect verb tenses, but with the ability to self-correct. A score of 1 is given for frequent and grave grammatical errors that affect sentence structure.
- **Vocabulary Knowledge** is assessed for sufficiency and accuracy in terms of the selected career. A score of 5 signifies a broad and precise word choice, while a 3 reflects moderate vocabulary with occasional need for help from the teacher or peers. The lowest score in this case is a 1, which is assigned when vocabulary is severely inadequate or words are often misused.
- **Content Relevancy** refers to the speaker's knowledge in the selected career. A score of 5 shows exhaustive, germane, and perceptive contributions in the

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activities (Check table 1 for reference). A 3 suggests rudimentary cognizance. A score of 1 is given when the speaker establishes diminutive intellect whereby, they deliver lazy statements and language.

In summary, the researcher paid attention to the following areas as a criterion of assessment while the participants engaged in the pretest-posttest: “fluency” (5 points); “pronunciation” (5 points), “grammar” (5 points); “vocabulary” (5 points): “content” (5 points) = (25 points). Therefore, the total score combining all of the aforementioned criteria, with a maximum of 25 points reflects the overall speaking proficiency that the research seeks to consider.

3.4. Description of the Pretest and the Posttest

The pretest and posttest are based on similar grounds and shared objective: testing the participants’ speaking competency in professional contexts before and after applying the treatment. Using career-based scenarios as pretest and posttest involved an implicit approach to probe for the research participants’ weaknesses and identify the overall differences between the two groups’ mean scores by showcasing statistical significance. The research aimed at detecting any optimization after the application of the treatment.

In the pretest, the participants were asked to perform the role of a football commentator. The materials used included a data show presenting the participants with 10 10-minute and fifty-five-second-long football game attained from YouTube (Algeria versus Nigeria during the African Cup tournament, 2019). The video was muted; the classroom was quiet and fixated, the participants (In pairs) took the front seat and commenced to perform the following activity (4 minutes each) as hastily instructed by the teacher:

- Assume the role of a football commentator by adjusting the tone, the paralinguistic communication, the pitch, and the linguistic choices (Anaphora).
- Allocate trivial backgrounds to both football teams (The participants were allowed to falsify data since what is salient is the act of speaking itself).
- Engage and interact with their pair by utilizing humor related to the video at sight.

The participants of both groups were all promised that the test scores do not affect their presentation mark to allow them the chance of performing under little to no pressure in order to obtain better results that are reflective of their nature.

In the posttest, the teacher brought to the classroom a variety of products (Books, cosmetics, devices, jewelry, clothes, food, etc.). The participants were asked to pick a product, unfortunately, insufficient time was given to the participants due to the restrictions of the duration of sessions. The participants were asked to

promote the selected item on the spot to be sold for the audience- following the instructions provided below:

- Assume the role of a businessperson by adjusting the tone, the paralinguistic communication, the pitch, and the linguistic choices.
- Allocate significant background to the product which must sound truthful and engaging.
- Engage with the audience and include them by asking and answering questions related to the product sustaining a professional tone.

The researcher adopted the same criteria of assessment as mentioned in the pretest for both groups involved in the study.

3.5. Description of the Treatment

The following section provides a detailed description of how implementing TBA in the form of career-focused treatment, which took place over the period of nine weeks; each session was 90 minutes long, in which the experimental group engaged in several scenarios in the selected theme using role plays as an activity. In fact, the researcher planned for ten weeks; however, due to some technical issues related to the tests and exams period, it was not possible. The last session was to include the role of a police detective/private investigator who interrogates crime suspects. We insist, however, that the latter should be included by EFL educators who wish to implement the proposed treatment in their Oral Expression module's syllabus for third-year EFL students.

This treatment immerses students in real-world career roles through thoughtful simulations and collaborative tasks. Each week features a different career, allowing the research participants to build professional skills while engaging deeply with practical, scenario-based activities. Guided by structured objectives, supportive materials, and active facilitation, the research participants are anticipated to gain vital insight into diverse professions while refining their communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

The first week launches with a diplomatic simulation, where students step into the role of *United Nations Speakers* to deliberate the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, particularly focusing on the events of October 7, 2024 (It was an extremely trendy topic at the time). Divided into country-representing groups, learners receive briefing sheets, flags, and background documents to prepare. After introducing the conflict and simulation guidelines, the class engages in strategy discussions, a structured 40-minute debate, and a reflective debrief. The teacher plays the role of facilitator, supporting the flow and ensuring equal participation.

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In the second week, learners act as *Translators*, bridging Arabic and English through focused linguistic exercises. With one group reading Arabic texts, generated with the support of AI tools and the other translating, the class moves through reading, rendering, and peer comparison. The teacher provides translation process overviews and manages timing. The objective is to foster listening comprehension, vocabulary expansion, and accurate interpretation skills in a bilingual context.

The third week thrusts the study participants into the courtroom as lawyers, judges, and jurors. Each group receives a criminal case file complete with evidence and role descriptions. After a case presentation, teams prepare their arguments and deliver structured presentations, with jury deliberation leading to a final verdict. The teacher upholds legal structure, monitors fairness, and ensures everyone rotates roles. This builds logical reasoning, persuasive speaking, and ethical decision-making.

As *movie actors* in the fourth week, the research participants step into the world of performance and improvisation. Using prompts, scene work, they participate in physical and vocal warm-ups, followed by imaginative improvisation games. The classroom transforms into a stage with props and minimal set pieces. The teacher fosters an open and energized space to inspire creativity, spontaneity, and self-expression, reinforcing both confidence and teamwork. The main objective of the session in particular, was to allow them free expression.

In the fifth week, *entrepreneurship* takes the spotlight as the research participants become Entrepreneurs. With guidance from the teacher, groups brainstorm business ideas, sketch out simplified business plans, and pitch their concepts to classmates. Supported by brainstorming tools and plan templates, this activity encourages innovative thinking, introduces basic business vocabulary, and helps students articulate compelling pitches.

The sixth week turns the classroom into a studio, as students try their hand at being *TV Hosts*. After an introduction to hosting formats and segment structures, learners develop their segments, ranging from news to talk shows, rehearse, and deliver performances. Supported by scripts, show topic lists, and optional recording tools, this creative week improves public speaking, interview skills, and on-camera confidence. The session focused on the famous American TV show called “Family Feud”, replicating it in an innovative form.

In the seventh week, students assume the delicate role of *psychologists*, practicing therapeutic consultations in paired scenarios. After a brief introduction to key principles, the classroom is reconfigured to emulate a cozy office environment. The participants rotate between playing psychologists and patients, exploring

empathy, emotion, and nonverbal communication. The teacher introduces the session, supports scenario assignments, and observes respectfully. This deepens students' emotional intelligence and interpersonal connection.

The eighth week invites students to explore journalism by becoming investigative journalists. Given a simulated event or topic, the participants follow journalistic ethics to gather information through interviews, draft articles, and engage in peer editing. The teacher introduces the responsibilities of ethical reporting and interviewing practices, while students craft compelling news content. This role-play sharpens their research skills, analytical thinking, and storytelling ability.

The final week brings the journey full circle, permitting the research participants to become *teachers* themselves. Selecting their topics, they plan, prepare, and deliver short lessons to their peers. Provided with materials such as whiteboards and optional slides, they are guided in effective teaching techniques and receive feedback on their classroom presence. This culminating activity reinforces public speaking, organization, and leadership, building the EFL students' ability to educate and inspire others. Thus, it can optimize their speaking skill.

3.6. Results and Discussion

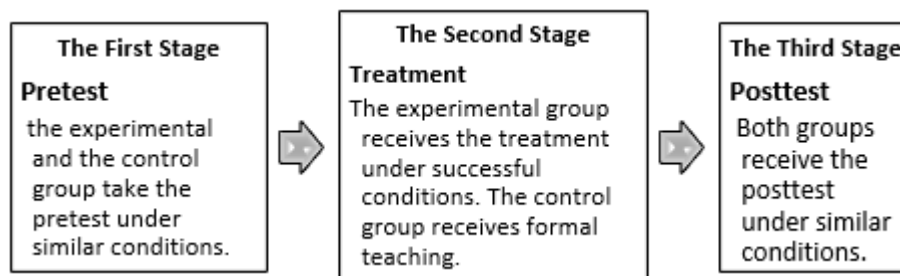
The application of the treatment is marked by consistent nine weeks of ensuring that all the research participants of the experimental group take part in the scenarios and role-play activities proposed in the study (Check table 1) in order to optimize their speaking abilities and validate the treatment's effectiveness. Additionally, the researcher maintained a traditional teaching method for the control group. It was all flaunted by success under positive pedagogical conditions.

Therefore, the research seeks to examine the effect of TBA, which plays the role of the independent variable reflected through the theme of "careers" in the optimization of the speaking skill of the EFL students who are chosen as research participants. By selecting the pretest-posttest design, it makes it possible to compare between the results of the two groups; the following figure represents the various stages taken in the quasi-experimental study to view the effect of the aforesaid on the experimental group and eliminating the treatment from the control group to ascertain that the obtained results reflect the efforts of the cause (The treatment/the intervention) not an extraneous variable(s):

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Figure 2

Stages in the Experimental Design



In this part of the research, the results of both control and experimental groups are analyzed and compared; the researchers inserted the control group's results in the excel sheet which were then uploaded in the statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27, which automatically delivers statistical data regarding the input focusing on the central tendency; allowing for descriptive statistics the latter measures the central tendency, which is inherently known as the epicenter of the obtained data when presented in terms of a regular observation (Tuft, 2001). Afterwards, the researchers, using SPSS, perform *the independent samples t-tests* to the mean results of the posttest of both experimental and control groups to compare the significant statistical differences.

3.7. The Control Group's Results

Below, the descriptive statistics obtained from SPSS related to the control group are demonstrated, showcasing the range, mean and SD:

Table 1

The Central Tendency of the Control Group's Results

Control Group	N	Rang e	Minim um	Maxim um	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	35	20	1	21	9.49	5.893
Posttest	35	19	1	20	8.51	5.055
Difference	35	7.00	.00	7.00	1.6286	2.08758
Valid N (listwise)	35					

The control group's results offer a meticulous comparison between pretest and posttest scores across the 35 research participants as it indicates minimal change in performance between the pretest and posttest. It evidentially proves that the traditional teaching method had a limited effect. The mean score decreased slightly from 9.49 in the pretest to 8.51 in the posttest; an overall decline rather than improvement is consequently shown. While individual differences varied, the largest recorded change was 7 points, with some research participants showing no difference at all. On average, the group's scores changed by only 1.63 points. The standard deviation decreased, but only marginally, indicating little change in the consistency of scores. Additionally, the range of scores remained relatively high, with the minimum score staying at 1 and the maximum decreasing slightly from 21 to 20. These findings suggest that the traditional teaching method did not yield substantial progress, as the control group in our case did not show any significant improvement.

3.8. The Treatment Results

The table below reveals the statistical descriptive analysis results of the experimental group, displaying the range, mean and SD:

Table 2

The Central Tendency of the Experimental Group's Results

Treatment Group	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	35	19	3	22	9.69	4.788
Posttest	35	16	7	23	12.97	4.098
Difference	35	9.00	.00	9.00	3.4000	2.29065
Valid N (listwise)	35					

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The results of the experimental group reveal a discernible optimization in performance between the pretest and posttest, signifying the effectiveness of the intervention. The mean score exhibited a notable increase from 9.69 to 12.97, which underscores measurable progress. Although individual advancements varied as we can see: the highest recorded improvement was 9 points, while some research participants maintained their initial scores as they were. On average, the group demonstrated a 3.4-point increase, reinforcing the efficacy of the applied treatment (TBA). Furthermore, the reduction in standard deviation (SD) indicates a greater degree of consistency in performance showing an undeviating impact of the treatment. Notably, the lowest score advanced from 3 in the pretest to 7 in the posttest; this reflects tangible progress even among the initially lower-performing research participants. These findings collectively attest to the treatment's positive influence; therefore, it raises noteworthy improvements in the experimental group's outcomes. By comparing the mean score of both experimental and control group's posttest, the subsequent mathematical procedure has been conducted:

$$(X1) = 12,97$$

$$(X2) = 8,51$$

$$(X1) - (X2) = 12,97 - 8,51 = 4,46$$

The finding demonstrated a clear advantage for the TBA, with the experimental group showing a 33.8% improvement in speaking scores (9.69 to 12.97), while the control group declined by 10.3% (9.49 to 8.51). The percentages were calculated following the formula:

$$\text{Percentage Change} = (\text{New Value} - \text{Old Value}) \div \text{Old Value} \times 100$$

Additionally, seeking to obtain and validate the discrepancies between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group in the pretest, an *independent samples t-test* is conducted, observe the following groups statistics, independent samples test and the size effects:

Table 3

Group Statistics

Group Statistics					
	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score	1	35	12.9714	4.09796	.69268
	2	35	8.5143	5.05483	.85442

Table 4

Independent Samples Test

Independent Samples Test								
<i>Levene's test</i>								
<i>For equality of variances</i>					<i>t-test for equality of means</i>			
Assumpti on	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2- tailed)	Mean Differen ce	Std. Error Differen ce	95% Confiden ce Interval
Equal variances assumed	1.96 3	.16 6	4.05 2	68	<.001	4.45714	1.09993	2.26227 (lower) to 6.6520 (Upper)
Equal variances not assumed	-	-	4.05 2	65.21 0	<.001	4.45714	1.09993	2.26057 (lower) to 6.65372 (Upper)

Table 5
Independent Samples Effect Sizes

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
Score	Cohen's d			Lower	Upper
	Hedges' correction	4.60133	.969	.470	1.461
	Glass's delta	4.65287	.958	.464	1.445
		5.05483	.882	.363	1.389

The independent samples t-test was performed to compare the pretest scores of the experimental group (Group 1) and the control group (Group 2). The analysis revealed a significant difference between the two groups, with the experimental group achieving a higher mean score ($M = 12.97$, $SD = 4.10$) compared to the control group ($M = 8.51$, $SD = 5.05$). This difference was statistically significant, $t(68) = 4.62$, $p < .001$, indicating that the groups were not equivalent at the baseline. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested using Levene's test, which was not significant ($F = 1.963$, $p = .166$). This result confirmed that the variances between the groups were similar, allowing for the interpretation of the t-test under the assumption of equal variances. The mean difference between the groups was 4.46 ($SE = 1.10$), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 2.26 to 6.65, which reinforces the significance of this disparity. To assess the practical significance of this difference, effect sizes were

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calculated. Cohen's d yielded a large effect size ($d = 0.969$, 95% CI [0.470, 1.461]), suggesting that the initial advantage of the experimental group was substantial. Alternative effect size measures, such as Hedges' correction ($d = 0.958$) and Glass's delta ($\Delta = 0.882$), also supported this finding, though with slight variations due to their different computational approaches. These pretest differences draw attention to the importance of considering baseline performance when evaluating the impact of the intervention. While the experimental group started with higher scores, their further improvement in the posttest, compared to the control group's stagnation and regression, in fact, it strengthens the argument that the TBA effectively optimizes speaking proficiency in all areas of assessment undertaken in the study (Check the criteria of assessment). The control group's lack of progress underscores the limitations of the traditional teaching methods. For evidence support, these findings align with content-based learning theories (Brinton, 2001), showing that contextualized, career-focused role-play activities such as the ones experimented in the study do optimize fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and knowledge more effectively than the traditional methods. The analysis of posttest recordings revealed that experimental group participants exhibited fewer pauses, longer utterances, greater lexical diversity, and other key markers of fluency; this supports Derwing et al., (2004)'s findings. Notably, the research participants reported transferring practiced skills (Such as, negotiations and style of argumentation) to real-world settings, reinforcing the approach's practical relevance. This supports Harmer's (2012) argument that topic familiarity and frequent exposure to thematic content accelerate speaking proficiency. The control group's regression highlights the limitations of traditional teaching approaches: without meaningful communicative practice, speaking skills deteriorate (Harmer, 2003). Throughout the sessions, it is noticed that the research participants' impetus has substantially amplified, as they became very captivated in the roles of professionals, which they were assigned to. In fact, the experimental groups' participants commenced to bring materials to support the sessions on their own: lawyers' and judges' attire, painting tools (For the teacher's role; a student delivered a short lecture teaching painting basics), some introduced the famous board game, the chess then how to play it, and the sewing kits along the fabric to teach how to use them in an actual material). Consequently, it made the sessions very educational, comprising very instructive content, inciting the participants to engage and interact with one another using English. As for the control group is concerned, it did not receive any form of the aforementioned treatment. The teacher asked the students to pick topics of personal interest or preference and present them in front of the class; topics, time and the forms of

presentation were not entirely controlled. In other occasions, the teacher was the one to suggest general topics. Additionally, following the syllabus allocated by the department, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and listening comprehension activities, which were not always conducted due to inaccessibility to the audio-visual materials, were the main focus of the sessions. Generally, they appeared disengaged, demonstrated lower levels of interaction, and exhibited signs of regression throughout the sessions. This decline reinforces the hegemony of the TBA, which successfully unknotted the research participants of the experimental group's full potential by integrating in cooperation language learning and content relevant to specialized and general discourses of various careers. Therefore, answering the research question leading the article shows that the implementation of TBA under quasi-experimental conditions did optimize the speaking skills of EFL students.

4. CONCLUSION

The quasi-experimental research aimed at exploring the effect of the independent variable in the study, specifically the TBA, for the optimization of the dependent variable, namely the speaking skill of third-year EFL students. The study employed the pretest-posttest design comparing the results of the control group and the experimental one; the results showed significant positive outcomes by the former group by achieving high scores in the posttest in comparison to their pretest's initial results and to their counterpart (Control group) which did not witness any statistically proven optimization. Hence, the article confirms that TBA significantly optimizes EFL students' speaking skills compared to traditional teaching methods. For that, the integration of career-focused via role-plays as a form of instruction secured for the experimental group the opportunity to optimize fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and engagement, and real-world applicability, especially in specialized career contexts. These findings support an immediate paradigm shift toward content-driven pedagogy and CLIL in EFL curricula in Algeria, particularly at the university level, where EFL students urgently necessitate communicative competence for academic success. Henceforth, we encourage the integration of the TBA's CFI proposed in the article to be part and parcel of the Oral Expression module across Algerian universities to witness the fruitful and positive results promised to be made possible.

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