

ENHANCING EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING FLUENCY THROUGH TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH FOREIGN TOURISTS IN YOGYAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in authentic field interactions between Indonesian university students and a foreign tourist in Yogyakarta. The research aimed to explore students' perceptions of TBLT activities, the effectiveness of task-based interaction in enhancing speaking fluency, and tourist's responses to Yogyakarta's cultural diversity. Participants consisted of two undergraduate students from the English Language Education Department and one foreign tourist visiting Yogyakarta. The present study used a qualitative case study where the data were collected through field interviews, direct lecturer observation, video documentation, and student reflection journals, and analyzed using methodological and source triangulation. Findings show that students perceived TBLT as challenging but beneficial, enabling them to apply classroom theory into real communicative practice while building confidence. The activities proved effective in developing fluency, as students were able to sustain natural interaction, employ communication strategies, and reflect positively on their progress. The tourist responded warmly, emphasizing Yogyakarta's cultural richness, culinary heritage, and hospitality, which fostered intercultural dialogue. The study concludes that TBLT not only promotes linguistic gains but also enhances intercultural competence, with students acting as cultural ambassadors in authentic encounters. Future research is recommended to involve a larger participant base and diverse tourist sites to broaden the scope of findings.

Keywords: EFL Students, Speaking Skills, Task-Based Language Teaching, a Foreign Tourist, Yogyakarta



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INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills are an important element in mastering English as a foreign language (EFL). It is one of the skills needed to perform a conversation with other people. This skill is useful for students to express their ideas, opinions, and information to others (Emirza & Sahril, 2021). In the 21st century, oral communication skills in English have become a prerequisite for higher education and a key factor in producing graduates who can compete internationally and contribute to community development (Al-Hooti et al., 2023). The social function of speaking is expressing ideas verbally and nonverbally. It is not just about communication skills, but also about learning academic content. It is needed for students in the current era to communicate with foreigners. We know that tourists come to Indonesia's destinations to learn about the culture and natural beauty. The large number of foreign tourists visiting these attractions presents an opportunity for students to practice speaking English directly with them. So that when tourists visit Indonesia and need help with communication, students can provide accurate information.

However, many students are still reluctant to speak directly with foreign tourists. They still face limitations in obtaining authentic speaking opportunities outside the classroom. A lack of speaking practice in real-life situations causes students' low fluency and confidence. Despite having learned vocabulary and grammar, many students remain reluctant to engage in conversations because they are not accustomed to spontaneous interactions with tourists. Although they have already learned vocabulary and grammar, due to a lack of practice, feelings of anxiety and reluctance to communicate arise (Abid &

Moalla, 2020). In another study, it was explained that if language teaching is more theoretical than practical, students will not have the skills to use English directly to communicate with people outside (Inayah et al., 2019; Urona et al., 2025). Therefore, it is crucial that current learning to speak emphasizes practice over theory, so students can develop the skills to communicate internationally (Al-Hooti et al., 2023). In this research, students are not accustomed to communicating directly with tourists at tourist sites. This situation requires a shift from overly theoretical teaching methods toward a more direct, experience-oriented approach (Abid & Moalla, 2020; Chen & Hwang, 2022; Ebadi & Ebadijalal, 2022). Previous research has stated that when students speak directly with foreign tourists about culture, it produces a positive impact because they can communicate directly about their respective cultures, thus increasing awareness of cultural values (Lee et al., 2023; Trang & Phuong, 2023).

The lecturer should understand and select the appropriate approach to help students overcome their problems with speaking English. It is needed to encourage students to practice speaking English more. Consequently, the researcher chooses Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to enhance their speaking skills. This teaching approach emphasises meaningful communication over mechanical drills, encouraging students to use English in real-life task contexts (Ellis, 2024). The application of TBLT can significantly increase student participation and reduce anxiety when speaking (Aisha Majeed, Natasha Memon, 2022; Meyra Nugrahaeni, 2022).

TBLT is an approach used to encourage students to be more active. This



approach enables students to increase direct practice, such as observation, role-playing, and interviews (Rahayu et al., 2022). Other researchers state this approach is capable of increasing students' active participation in communication, reducing anxiety, and facilitating direct speaking in real-world settings (Cai, 2024; Chunliu & Guangsheng, 2025; Mudinillah et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, unlike previous research that confines TBLT to classroom settings, this study engages EFL students in direct communication with foreign tourists in Malioboro, Yogyakarta, a culturally rich and linguistically diverse environment. The novelty of this study uniquely tasks students not only as language learners but also as cultural ambassadors to convey cultural diversity to foreign tourists. The research questions of this research involve: 1) What is the student's perception of the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching to enhance speaking skills with Foreign Tourists in Yogyakarta? 2) What is the foreign tourist's response to cultural diversity in Yogyakarta?

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative case study method (Miles et al., 2014). The data was collected through interviews with a foreign tourist, observation, documentation, and reflective journals. The implementation of TBLT in this study followed three main instructional stages: Pre-task, in-Task, and Post-task, each contributing distinctly to the students' learning experience in the field.

In the pre-task stage, students were introduced to the goals and expectations of interviewing foreign tourists in Yogyakarta. They practiced vocabulary, question formation, greetings, and conversation strategies, supported by a model interview.

Together, they designed open-ended questions to explore tourists' motivations, impressions, and cultural experiences, which reduced anxiety and activated background knowledge. The while-task stage required students to apply these skills in real-life contexts, specifically at Malioboro, where they interviewed a foreign tourist from India. Students interacted spontaneously, adjusted to the flow of conversation, and employed non-verbal communication to enhance understanding, while their lecturer observed and peers documented the process through video. In the post-task stage, students reflected on their experiences through journal reports, analyzing challenges, strategies, and outcomes, which strengthened their oral proficiency, cultural awareness, and confidence.

Participants consisted of two first-semester students from an English Education program, enrolled in a Survival Speaking course that emphasized practical communication with foreigners. The course's final assignment involved authentic interviews, and the chosen tourist was an Indian visitor who volunteered to participate. As a pedagogical case study, the research focused on depth rather than representativeness, exploring how authentic interaction supported speaking fluency. While the study's findings were not intended for broad generalization, they highlighted the transformative process of students shifting from passive learners to active communicators and cultural agents, capable of engaging in meaningful cross-cultural dialogue.

Data collection applied methodological and source triangulation to enhance validity. Four techniques were used: student interviews with the tourist, direct lecturer observation, video



documentation, and student reflection journals. These provided complementary perspectives on both verbal and non-verbal communication. Source triangulation compared insights from three parties: students as interviewers and reflective writers, the tourist as an external cultural voice, and the lecturer as an objective observer. This multi-angled approach ensured credibility, with tourist responses confirmed through observation and student reflections reinforcing learner experiences. Data analysis followed Miles et al.'s (2014) interactive model of data collection, condensation, display, and conclusion drawing, offering rich insights into how TBLT and experiential learning foster communicative competence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data were collected from four main instruments. First, a field interview with a foreign tourist from India on Malioboro Street. Second, observation notes taken by the supervising lecturer during the interaction. Third, video documentation of the student-tourist interaction. Fourth, student reflection journals are written after completing the interview task. Each of these data sources contributed distinct yet interconnected insights, enabling cross-verification and a deeper interpretation.

The findings are presented in relation to the three research questions: (1) students' perception of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) with foreign tourists, (2) the effectiveness of task-based activities in enhancing students' speaking fluency, and (3) a foreign tourist's response to Yogyakarta's cultural diversity. Data were drawn from interviews, observation notes, video documentation, and student reflection journals, and were analyzed thematically.

Students' Perceptions of Task-Based Interaction

The students perceived the task as challenging yet exhilarating. From reflection journals, both participants emphasized the need for better preparation and more exposure to real-life encounters. Despite initial anxiety, they expressed satisfaction after completing the interview. The students also employed several communication strategies, including repetition to gain time in formulating ideas and clarification requests, when struggling to catch tourist responses. This situation relates to a previous study that found the students have greater confidence in applying task-based approaches to achieve better learning outcomes for their students (Sang & Loi, 2023). Therefore, task-based lessons were able to enhance speaking accuracy of students effectively (Quoc et al., 2023).

Effectiveness of Task-Based Activities in Enhancing Fluency

The students positively evaluated the effectiveness of task-based activities in enhancing their speaking fluency. Their reflections revealed that the Survival Speaking course with task-based projects allowed them to directly apply theoretical knowledge to authentic communicative practice. One student explicitly stated:

"Yes, this approach is suitable for this course."

Another reflection further emphasized the adequacy of the approach for improving fluency:

"This approach that has been applied in the Survival Speaking course is very adequate. Because with the projects and related assignments given, we as students can immediately apply every theory we learned during class. So, this approach used in this



course is suitable to be continued in the future."

These responses demonstrate that students perceived TBLT as not only effective in promoting fluency but also in bridging theory and practice. They recognized that classroom knowledge was transformed into practical speaking competence through authentic interactions with foreign tourists.

This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that TBLT can help students improve their fluency by practicing the target language more often, not only at school but also in public areas (Sabaruddin & Melati, 2022). Thus, both reflections confirm that task-based language activities are effective for improving speaking fluency in authentic, survival-level communication tasks.

Tourist's Response to Yogyakarta's Cultural Diversity

The foreigner showed that his interest in coming to Indonesia was due to the natural beauty and cultural diversity, especially when visiting Yogyakarta. The tourist highlighted Yogyakarta's natural and cultural richness, including notable attractions such as Mount Merapi, Parangtritis Beach, and the Yogyakarta Palace. The friendly nature of the local people and culinary experiences (e.g., gudeg) were also mentioned as major attractions. This reflects the multi-dimensional appeal of Yogyakarta, combining heritage, nature, and hospitality. This finding supports the role of cultural capital in attracting international tourists (Sulistiono et al., 2021). However, this is one of the reasons why foreign tourists visit Yogyakarta.

Table 1. Resume of Data Interview with Foreign Tourist

Theme	Interview	Documentation	Observation/Journal
The foreign tourist's response to Yogyakarta's cultural diversity	Indonesia is very rich in nature and cultural diversity. One of them is Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta has many natural tourist destinations, such as Parangtritis Beach and Mount Merapi. Yogyakarta also has many historical places, such as the Yogyakarta Palace, temples, the Vredeborg Museum, the Jogja monument, Taman Sari, and others. Yogyakarta's culinary specialties are also interesting, such as gudeg. The local people of Yogyakarta are also very friendly and easy to communicate with foreign tourists. In addition, Yogyakarta also often holds traditional dance performances with stunning costumes.	The student asked questions related to those themes	The tourist responded comfortably and happily.

The triangulated data show that Students gained confidence and fluency through authentic task-based interviews, interviews with a foreign tourist, observation, documentation, and reflective journals. This confirms the effectiveness of TBLT in

fostering spontaneous speaking fluency. This approach enhances speaking proficiency by engaging learners in real-world communicative tasks (Nurhadi et al., 2024). Then, Immersive cultural experiences enhance both linguistic and



cultural learning through positive intercultural engagement (Bagea, 2023; Hossain, 2024). While generalizability is limited due to the small sample, the study demonstrates the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing EFL students' speaking fluency.

Discussion

This study explored students' perceptions of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) with foreign tourists, its effectiveness in supporting speaking fluency, and tourist's responses to Yogyakarta's cultural diversity. The findings, although based on a small case study, can be interpreted within recent theoretical and empirical frameworks.

Task-Based Learning and Learner Perception

Students described the activity as both challenging and rewarding, reflecting the dual nature of authentic task performance. Similar outcomes were found in some previous studies that TBLT can significantly improve communication skills in various areas of language, including speaking, listening, vocabulary, and overall language proficiency (Chunliu & Guangsheng, 2025b).

Furthermore, this approach significantly improves speaking skills by providing authentic communication practice, thereby overcoming common challenges such as limited vocabulary, incorrect pronunciation, and lack of confidence (Mapiro & Dwi Permata, 2024).

TBLT has a positive impact on increasing students' speaking activity. Additionally, this activity raises their awareness of the diverse cultural norms of each person or region, enabling them to respect each other. Previous research shows that this approach facilitates more meaningful interactions and builds self-

confidence, leading to greater independence (Ahmadniay Motlagh et al., 2014; Yongping, 2022). Furthermore, when students speak directly with foreign tourists about culture, it produces a positive impact because they can communicate directly about their respective cultures, thus increasing awareness of cultural values (Lee et al., 2023; Trang & Phuong, 2023). Then, direct interaction with foreigners in a field setting was found to further improve speaking fluency (Harahap & Firdaus, 2020; Kenanga Rinda et al., 2025).

The tourist's enthusiasm for Yogyakarta's cultural richness, food, and hospitality illustrates the intercultural dimension of task-based pedagogy. The diversity of unique tourist attractions provides an extraordinary impression for foreigners. A previous study showed that emotional experiences and cultural depth contribute significantly to tourism satisfaction (Aw et al., 2024). This is one of the reasons why foreign tourists visit Yogyakarta. So, the effect of culture is important for attracting international tourists (Sulistiono et al., 2021).

Pedagogical Implications

Overall, the study demonstrates that TBLT, when implemented in real-world contexts such as interviewing foreign tourists, enhances communicative competence by bridging classroom learning with authentic intercultural practice.

These results align with a previous study showing that TBLT has considerable potential to increase student engagement and speaking skills in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) (Soongpankhao & Yuxin, 2025).



CONCLUSION

The findings show that students perceived TBLT as challenging yet highly rewarding. Through the survival speaking course project, they were able to apply theories learned in class directly to real-life communication. Their reflections emphasized that this approach was suitable, adequate, and should be continued in the future, indicating both increased self-confidence and stronger communicative competence. In terms of effectiveness, students demonstrated their ability to sustain interaction with a foreign tourist in an authentic setting. Although initially anxious, they succeeded in initiating, maintaining, and closing the conversation, which reflects meaningful linguistic gains. They also employed strategies such as repeating, clarifying, and adapting expressions, all of which supported their fluency development in natural contexts.

A foreign tourist's responses were consistently positive, highlighting Yogyakarta's natural beauty, cultural heritage, cuisine, and the friendliness of its people. This confirms that authentic interaction not only improves students' language use but also fosters intercultural competence through mutual cultural exchange. In this sense, students also acted as cultural ambassadors, introducing Indonesian culture to an international audience while simultaneously strengthening their own identity.

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