

# The Effect of Task-Based Language Teaching On Speaking Abilities of Iraqi Intermediate EFL Learners and Their Attitudes Towards English

Ali Abdulkadhim Jassem<sup>1</sup> and Mehdi Sarkhosh<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

*In the last couple of decades, language educators have focused on the development of communicative language teaching approaches, which emphasize teaching language through communication. Among these approaches, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained popularity, and it is believed that TBLT can contribute to the development of speaking ability among learners. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of TBLT in developing speaking ability among intermediate level Iraqi students. This quasi-experimental study included 50 individuals from a public school in Iraq. Students in the experimental group were taught using TBLT, whereas those in the control group were taught conventionally. The research data were acquired using two instruments of tests (pre- and post-test) to assess the students' speaking performance before and after treatment, as well as a questionnaire to determine their attitudes toward English. The validity and reliability of the study instruments were confirmed. The results of the research were analyzed using ANCOVA and MANCOVA. The data revealed that TBLT greatly enhances students' speaking abilities, and they have positive sentiments concerning its use in their speaking classes.*

**Keywords:** Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), speaking abilities, language attitude, Intermediate EFL Learners

## INTRODUCTION

Language teaching approaches have always been a topic of discussion among scholars and educationists. In the last couple of decades, language educators have focused on the development of communicative language teaching approaches, which emphasize teaching language through communication. Among these approaches, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained popularity, and it is believed that TBLT can contribute to the development of speaking ability among learners (Housen & Kuiken, 2009).

In Iraq, English training has focused on grammar translation and audio-lingual approaches that emphasize repetition and drills. This inhibits the growth of spontaneous conversational capacities (Al-Sharo, 2019). Iraqi EFL students have demonstrated deficits in speaking and accurately employing complicated vocabulary.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a promising strategy for improving the speaking abilities of EFL students. The basic unit of curriculum design and lessons in TBLT is intentional, real-world projects. Tasks require learners to utilise the target language to communicate information, make decisions, or solve issues. According to meta-analyses, TBLT increases motivation and speaking fluency while promoting integrated learning of topic, function, and form (Willis & Willis, 2007).

The effectiveness of TBLT, on the other hand, is likely to be dependent on individual task conditions and learner demographics (Robinson, 2011).

Success in education and the workplace in Iraq increasingly depends on having great English communication skills (Al-Khafaji, 2021; Al-Sharo, 2019). Nonetheless, studies show that many Iraqi EFL students struggle to become fluent in spoken English (Alkhayaat, 2016; Jasim, 2018). Students still show significant deficiencies in pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and accuracy after years of teaching in public schools. According to observations, there is a strong preference for written dialogue over creative thought (Al-Sharo, 2019). These difficulties with oral competency are a reflection of the old, grammar- and translation-heavy teaching strategies that predominate in Iraq. Even with contact hours, the emphasis on translation, repetition, and grammar rules does not sufficiently foster the ability to speak effectively and spontaneously in English (Hamad, 2021). There

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<sup>1</sup>Department of English Language Development, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Urmia University, Urmia, Iran E-mail: [aliabdulkadhim4554@gmail.com](mailto:aliabdulkadhim4554@gmail.com), (Corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup>Department of English Language Development, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Urmia University, Urmia, Iran

aren't enough possibilities for learners to interact meaningfully and use language creatively. Prevalent evaluations also priorities precision over fluency, which hinders the development of communication skills. It is essential for Iraqi students to improve their speaking abilities in order to communicate concepts clearly in English.

Views towards English encompass emotional and cognitive responses to the language and culture of English speakers. According to Spolsky (2000), students' attitudes towards learning English as a second language reflect their feelings, prejudices, and concerns.

Ellis (1985) found it difficult to define attitudes and motivations because they cannot be directly observed but must be inferred based on behaviors. He followed Schuman's (1978) definition of attitude. Schuman identified 'attitude' as a social component impacted by characteristics like 'size of learning group', and 'motivation' as an emotional factor, alongside 'cultural shock'. Ellis described motivation as the L2 learner's ultimate objective of orientation, whereas attitude is the learner's tenacity in achieving a goal.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of TBLT in developing speaking abilities among intermediate level Iraqi students. The current study aims to examine how an instructional program based on the TBLT principles and processes affects the attitudes of intermediate level Iraqi students toward English as well as the development of speaking abilities. The effect of TBLT on speaking abilities should also be investigated further among Iraqi EFL learners, a demographic that has received little attention. As a result, the following research issue will be investigated in this dissertation: In comparison to a control group, how does a 10-week task-based language instruction program affect speaking abilities among intermediate Iraqi EFL learners.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Fotos and Ellis (1991), using "task-based language teaching" to teach grammar promotes learning and effective communication. Additionally, they discovered that communicative grammar-based assignments promoted the acquisition of implicit knowledge and helped Japanese college-level EFL learners become more knowledgeable about challenging grammatical rules. Bygate (1996) discovered evidence that was compatible with this explanation, showing that repetition of a task affected accuracy in several surprising ways. The speaker made noticeable changes to her speech pattern without providing any previous notice or cue that the activity would be repeated. She also did not make any reference to the class assignment, which involved repeating a video narrative exercise. Repetition of the assignment improved her lexical selection, collocate selection, grammatical item selection, and self-correction ability, according to multiple experienced evaluators. The speaker was probably under more time constraint throughout the first performance to retain meanings in memory, translate those meanings into words, and articulate those words. It is possible that the speaker was able to focus more on the lexicogrammatically selection in the second performance because they were more comfortable with the material and the process of forming meanings. Bygate came to the additional conclusion that mastery of form-meaning relations is more likely to occur in an organized context when similar tasks are repeated than when activities are assigned at random.

Pica-Porter, Paninos, and Linnel (1996) looked into how interaction between L2 students during task implementation affected their ability to comprehend one another. Sixteen English-speaking intermediate French language learners at the University of Hawaii participated in this study. The study's conclusions demonstrated that the language participants used in the simulation was typical of meaning negotiation. The findings also showed that while L2 student interactions produce data of a high caliber, they might not supply the essential information required to reconstruct the language of the learners. The research found that interactions between L2 students are not as rich as those between native speakers and non-native speakers, and that L2 students themselves can be a source of modified and limited input. Negotiation for meaning may be helpful when combined with other pedagogical ideas that support language learning, according to Pica et al. (1996).

At a high school in Amman, Al Nashash (2006) examined the impact of a task-based program for teaching English language productive abilities on the oral and written skills development of female students in their first year of secondary school. The findings demonstrated that, in comparison to the traditional teaching approach,

task-based language instruction via the program developed in accordance with the guidelines and tenets of TBLT enhanced the acquisition of communicative speaking and writing abilities.

Joen and Jung (2006) investigated how EFL teachers in the context of Korean secondary schools perceived TBLT. Overall survey results showed that even though more Korean EFL instructors understood the concepts of Total Behavior and Behavior Analysis (TBLT), many of them were still afraid to employ TBLT as an educational approach because they thought it would produce disciplinary issues in the classroom.

Sofyana (2015) shows that the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching through Cartoon Story Maker effectively improved the student's speaking ability.

Continuing in this spirit, Bui (2015) conducted an additional action research with 32 first-year non-English major students at Ha Noi University of Business and Technology. Through the description and analysis of test and questionnaire data, the findings were able to identify some of the factors contributing to students' poor speech abilities and to support the usefulness of TBLT in helping students improve their speaking abilities.

Wahidin (2016) also demonstrated the beneficial effects of TBLT on speaking proficiency in his quasi-experimental study. Fifty university students participated in this study as members of the control and experimental groups. Test-derived data were examined using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study's conclusions demonstrated how pre-task exercises might raise students' awareness of the subject and encourage them to use prior knowledge before speaking. The task cycle phase, which consists of a stream of group or pair tasks, can improve students' speaking accuracy and fluency while also fostering communication among the students.

Another study by Albino (2017) on high school participants in Angola claimed that fluency, grammar, utterances, and interactional language on transactional conversation were increased under the treatment of TBLT in an effort to assess how EFL learners developed their speaking fluency with TBLT. Students' attention is drawn to linguistic forms as well as meaning through the combination of formative feedback, language-focused tasks, and tasks with a meaning component. The usefulness of Total Body Language Training (TBLT) on speaking acquisition has been studied by a number of Vietnamese scholars.

Anjum et al. (2019) carried out an experimental study on ninth graders in the Islamabad District to examine the impact of task-based language learning on secondary level learners' development of speaking skills. The study's findings demonstrated statistically significant variations in the experimental group subjects' speaking ability mean scores.

Furthermore, Nget et al. (2020) conducted quasi-experimental research on 78 ninth-grade students to examine the impact of Task-Based Instruction (TBI) on the English-speaking abilities of ninth-graders and their level of satisfaction with this method. The speaking assessments and the student satisfaction survey were used to gather data that was both quantitative and qualitative. The survey's results indicated that students had a favorable opinion of TBI. As a result, students saw TBI as a strategy that would give them the right environment for learning the language, enhancing their ability to communicate verbally, boosting their self-assurance when speaking, and inspiring them to learn English.

A total of 136 lecturers completed the questionnaire in Lam, Son, and Anh's (2021) study on university lecturers, which looked into the beliefs and practices of TBLT among lecturers in English as a foreign language at technical universities in Vietnam. Seven of these lecturers also took part in semi-structured interviews. The results showed that the lecturers were open to implementing the TBLT technique in their classes and had favorable opinions about it. They also demonstrated the notable variations in how they viewed TBLT.

In order to gain insight into Vietnamese teachers' perceptions of TBLT, including their comprehension of tasks and TBLT principles, Nguyen et al. (2022) conducted a study on sixty-two teachers. The study demonstrated that the majority of Vietnamese teachers had a high level of understanding and a positive attitude towards TBLT.

According to Amara and Marai (2002), these students find learning English to be unsettling since they view it as a challenging topic. Some of them have excessive anxiety, which makes them fail exams. After completing their high school education, some pupils frequently earn poor English marks. As a result, pupils develop a bad attitude toward English and become afraid of the matriculation exams (Amara and Marai, 2002).

According to Elazar (1993), a low percentage of Israeli Arab students pass the matriculation English exam because they struggle to master the language. He blamed the lack of exposure to English as a native language for Arab pupils' poor English proficiency. In the classroom, Arab pupils receive official instruction in English. The majority of Arabs reside in rural areas and villages. Furthermore, hardly many adults in the community speak English, and teachers in Arab schools are not natural English speakers.

According to Brown (1994), positive attitudes are beneficial for second language learners, while negative attitudes might result in a drop in motivation and, most likely, in the failure to achieve proficiency due to a lack of input and engagement. Teachers need to understand that students have both favorable and unfavorable sentiments regarding the language of English.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggest that motivation for learning a second language stems from a favorable attitude towards the second language community as well as a desire to connect with and resemble valued members of that group. The latter goal, integrative motivation, serves as a foundation for language learning. An instrumental orientation is linked to a desire to acquire L2 for practical purposes, such improving one's employment prospects.

According to Dornyei (2001), orientation plays a crucial role in igniting motivation and guiding it toward a set of objectives that possess either a strong practical (instrumental orientation) or interpersonal (integrative) nature.

The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was created by Gardner (1985) to gauge the motivation of L2 learners. A multi-component motivation test comprising about 120 items covers a range of topics, including attitudes toward learning French and French Canadians, interest in learning foreign languages, orientation to learn French, anxiety in French classes, parental encouragement, motivation intensity, desire to learn French, and a motivation index. A great deal of research has been conducted on the motives and attitudes of students. In this way, the researcher was selective.

Learners' motivation was divided into two categories by Gardner and Lambert (1972): "Instrumental" learners are motivated by "the practical value and advantages of learning a new language," while "integrative" learners are motivated by "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by them." Al-Abed-Al Haq and Smadi (1996) added a third form of motivation, which they named "religious motivation," in which learners acquire a foreign language for religious purposes, in addition to Gardner and Lambert's integrative and instrumental classifications. Such education might be required [fard ayn] or voluntary [fard kifaya]. The needs, motivations, and attitudes of Japanese college students toward studying English were examined by Widdows and Voller (1991). They discovered that while speaking and listening skills development was of utmost importance to students, these demands were not adequately addressed in many college English courses.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The participants will be 50 intermediate level Iraqi students from a public school in Iraq. These students will be randomly assigned into two groups: the experimental group (25 students) and the control group (25 students). Select a representative sample of intermediate schools in Iraq. Randomly assign schools to experimental (TBLT) and control (traditional teaching) groups. Randomly select students from each group to participate in the study.

## **Data Collection**

The pretest and the attitudinal questionnaire were given to the subjects before the study started. At that point, the intervention process started. The TBLT software was used to teach English speaking to the individuals in the experimental group, whereas traditional methods were used to teach the identical material to the participants in the control group. At the end of the study, the attitudinal questionnaire and the post-test were also given.

## **Design of the Study**

The present investigation employed a quasi-experimental design, utilizing a single experimental group and a single control group. These cohorts were selected at random from an Iraqi public school. They were arbitrary and judgmental. The control group received instruction using the traditional approach employed by university EFL teachers, while the experimental group received instruction using the task-based program (TBP) created by the researcher. Pre- and post-tests were used to assess the speaking abilities and attitudes of the experimental and control groups regarding English.

Two male and one female EFL teachers taught the two portions of the experimental group, and two teachers, also male and female, taught the two sections of the control group. Every EFL teacher was certified to teach and held a BA in English literature and linguistics. Every teacher had worked as a teacher for at least ten years.

**Quantitative Approach:** Conduct a quasi-experimental study to measure the impact of TBLT on speaking skills by comparing the performance of students who receive TBLT instruction with a control group.

**Qualitative Approach:** Use qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to explore students' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with TBLT in developing speaking skills.

## **Variables in Research**

The subjects' mean scores on the speaking skill test and the means of their answers to the attitudinal questionnaire items comprise the two dependent variables of the study, whereas the instructional program is the independent variable.

## **Analytical Statistics**

The speaking skills exam and the attitude questionnaire were given as pre- and post-tests to help with the study topics. The difference in adjusted mean scores between the two groups was tested for statistical significance using covariance (ANCOVA, MANCOVA). Additionally, the corrected post scores were computed.

## **FINDINGS**

The students' total speaking abilities test scores based on the study's independent variables According to the teaching protocol, the researcher computed the means, standard deviations of the modified means, and standard error of the students' pre- and post-test results. Table 4.1 presents the findings.

**Table 4.1**

The teaching procedure's averages, standard deviations, adjusted means, and standard errors correspond to the students' scores on the pre- and post-tests.

	N	Pretest of Overall Speaking Test (Covariate)		Posttest of Overall Speaking Test			
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Adj. Mean.	Std. Error.
Control	25	4.646	1.50	5.080	1.45	5.861	0.18
Experimental	25	6.078	1.51	7.286	1.32	6.812	0.12

Table 4.1 demonstrates that variations in the adjusted means of the two groups, as determined by the teaching method, have been detected. The significance of these differences was determined using ANCOVA. Table 4.2 presents the findings.

**Table 4.2**

Findings of the ANCOVA on the Speaking Test's Overall Score Owing to the Instructional Method

	Sum of Squares	Degree Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial $\eta^2$
Source	119.355	1	119.355	337.465	0.000	79.0%
Overall Speaking Test (Covariate)	35.431	1	35.431	101.623	0.000	53.5%
Group	29.156	85	0.295	2.378		
Error	198.653	91				
Total	119.355	1	119.355	337.465	0.000	79.0%

As seen in Table 4.2, there is a statistically significant difference ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the two adjusted averages of the students' post-test scores, which is attributable to the teaching method and favors the experimental group members.

**The Students' Attitudes Towards English**

What attitude do Iraqi EFL learners holds towards the implantation of Task-based language teaching?

The researcher separated the results into two sections as follows to make it easier to convey the findings in relation to the question:

- a. The overall grade for students' attitudes about English based on the study's independent variables: The

researcher computed the means and standard deviations of the students' answers to the attitudinal questionnaire items before and after applying the TBLT program in order to gauge the students' attitudes about English. Additionally, the standard errors and post-adjusted means were computed. Table 4.3 displays the analysis's findings.

**Table 4.3**

The study's independent variables were used to calculate the means, standard deviations, and adjusted means and standard errors of the pre- and post-subjects' answers to the items on the attitude questionnaire.

Group	N	Pretest of Overall Speaking Test (Covariate)		Posttest of Overall Attitude Test			
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Adj. Mean.	Std. Error.
Control	25	2.325	0.20	2.551	0.28	2.927	0.09
Experimental	25	2.492	0.21	4.121	0.48	3.988	0.07
Tital	50	2.408	0.22	3.336	0.85	3.124	0.06

Table 4.3 demonstrates that there is a difference between the post-adjusted means of the students' answers based on the method of instruction. To determine the significance of the observed difference, the researcher employed ANCOVA. Table 4.4 presents the findings.

**Table 4.4**

Outcomes of the ANCOVA on the Overall Attitude Questionnaire Score Affected by the Instructional Method

Source	Sum of Squares	Degree Freedom	Mean Square	F	Significance	Partial $\mu^2$
Overall Attitudes (Covariate)	2.222	1	2.222	2.675	0.000	20.2%
Group	39.841	1	39.841	387.423	0.000	80.8%
Error	8.867	86	0.275			
Total	71.763	90				

Table 4.4 demonstrates that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of the students in the experimental group between the adjusted means of the post-test replies at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The magnitude effect (80.8) shows that the educational program had a good overall impact on the students' views toward English. b. Using the independent variables from the study, the researcher computed the means, the standard deviation of the adjusted means, and the standard error of the students' pre- and post-responses to the questionnaire dimensions. Table 4.5 presents the findings.

**Table 4.5**

The study's independent variables were used to calculate the means, standard deviations, standard errors, and adjusted means of the pre- and post-subjects' responses to the questionnaire dimensions.

Dimension	Group	N	Pretest of Overall Speaking Test (Covariate)		Posttest of Overall Speaking Test			
			Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Adj. Mean.	Std. Error.
Developmental Orientation	Control	25	2.2635	0.38	2.468	0.37	2.463	0.11
	Experimental	25	2.924	0.37	4.211	0.52	4.182	0.09
	Total	50	2.593	0.37	3.339	0.98	3.322	0.07
Integrative Orientation	Control	25	2.342	0.19	2.521	0.31	2.584	0.12
	Experimental	25	2.468	0.31	3.702	0.54	3.692	0.09
	Total		2.405	0.28	3.111	0.73	3.138	0.08
Instrumental Orientation	Control	25	2.302	0.21	2.581	0.43	2.672	0.10
	Experimental	25	2.621	0.29	4.265	0.53	4.186	0.08
	Total		2.461	0.30	3.423	0.97	3.429	0.05
Travel Orientation	Control	25	2.341	0.37	2.651	0.68	2.711	0.13
	Experimental	25	2.581	0.60	4.099	0.65	3.976	0.10
	Total		2.461	0.52	3.375	0.97	3.343	0.08

Table 4.5 shows that variations in the adjusted means of the post-student responses based on the teaching methodology have been noticed. To determine which model is better suited, ANCOVA or MANCOVA, the researcher looked at intra-class linear correlation between the questionnaire's dimensions. The significance of the association between each dimension of the attitudinal questionnaire was also determined by the researcher using the Bartlett's test. Table 4.6 presents the findings.

**Table 4.6**

The teaching procedure's intraclass linear correlation between the dimensions of the attitude questionnaire and the Bartlett's test results

Pearson Correlation	Developmental Orientation	Integrative Orientation	Instrumental Orientation	Travel Orientation
Developmental Orientation	1			
Integrative Orientation	0.84	1		
Instrumental Orientation	0.90	0.88	1	
Travel Orientation	0.86	0.84	0.94	1
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Likelihood Ratio	Approximate Chi 2	Degree freedom	Significance
	0.000	104.231	10	0.000

Table 4.6 demonstrates that, on the dimensions determined by the teaching technique, there is a significant percentage ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the elements of the identity matrix and the components of the residual matrix. Due to this circumstance, the researcher was forced to utilize the MANCOVA; Table 4.7 displays the outcomes.

**Table 4.7**

The MANCOVA Results on the Attitudinal Questionnaire Dimensions in Relation to the Teaching Procedure

Effect	MANCOVA Test	Value	F	Hypothesis degree freedom	Error degree freedom	Significance	Partial $\mu^2$
Developmental Orientation (Covariate)	Wilks' Lambda	0.821	4.492	4	81	0.002	18.2%
Integrative Orientation (Covariate)	Wilks' Lambda	0.899	2.521	4	81	0.049	11.1%
Instrumental Orientation (Covariate)	Wilks' Lambda	0.708	8.510	4	81	0.000	29.7%
Travel Orientation (Covariate)	Wilks' Lambda	0.936	1.561	4		0.190	7.0%
Group	Hotelling's Trace	6.121	121.384	4	81	0.000	0.611%

The results show that there is a statistically significant effect ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) attributed to the task-based program. ANCOVA. was performed to determine the impact of the study's factors on each dimension independently. Table 4.8 presents the findings

**Table 4.8**

ANCOVA's Findings on the Attitude Dimensions Questionnaire According to the Teaching Procedure

Dependent Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	Degree Freedom	Mean Square	F	Significance	Partial $\mu^2$
Developmental Orientation	Developmental (Covariate)	2.654	1	2.654	16.251	0.000	16.3%
	Integrative Orientation (Covariate)	0.112	1	0.112	0.671	0.410	0.8%
	Covariate Instrumental Orientation	0.211	1	0.211	1.268	0.268	1.6%
	Travel Orientation (Covariate)	0.151	1	0.151	0.874	0.351	1.1%
	Group	65.021	1	65.021	394.121	0.000	83%
	Error	13.651	85	0.175			
	Total	108.214	91				
Integrative Orientation	Developmental (Covariate)	0.015	1	0.015	0.085	0.788	0.11%
	Integrative Orientation (Covariate)	1.755	1	1.755	9.824	0.003	10.8%
	Instrumental Orientation (Covariate)	0.004	1	0.004	0.018	0.921	0.0%
	Travel Orientation (Covariate)	0.050	1	0.050	0.284	0.610	0.31%
	Group	26.121	1	26.121	142.891	0.000	63.5%
	Error	15.274	85	0.184			
	Total	54.021	91				
Instrumental Orientation	Developmental (Covariate)	0.025	1	0.025	0.182	0.712	0.23%
	Integrative Orientation (Covariate)	0.368	1	0.368	2.624	0.131	3.3%

	Instrumental Orientation (Covariate)	3.251	1	3.251	25.014	0.000	22.1%
	Travel Orientation (Covariate)	0.024	1	0.024	0.169	0.698	0.26%
	Group	45.321	1	45.321	329.514	0.000	81.7%
	Error	12.421	85	0.151			
	Total	86.325	91				
Travel Orientation	Developmental (Covariate)	0.097	1	0.097	0.386	0.528	0.5%
	Integrative Orientation (Covariate)	0.161	1	0.161	0.642	0.412	0.7%
	Instrumental Orientation (Covariate)	1.201	1	1.201	4.769	0.031	5.5%
	Travel Orientation (Covariate)	0.802	1	0.802	3.214	0.099	4.1%
	Group	38.021	1	38.021	149.247	0.000	65.5%
	Error	22.147	85	0.268			
	Total	88.145	91				

Table 4.8 demonstrates that the adjusted means of the post-students' responses to the questionnaire dimensions based on the teaching process differ significantly ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in favor of the experimental group. The dimensions of the questionnaire pertaining to students' attitudes toward English were positively impacted by TBLT, as evidenced by the size effect for each teaching procedure (83% for the developmental orientation, 63.5% for the integrative orientation, 81.7% for the instrumental orientation, and 65.5% for the travel orientation).

## DISCUSSION

Due to the teaching method, there is a statistically significant difference ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in favor of the experimental group between the two adjusted means of the students' scores. The fact that the TBLT program focused more on participant fluency than the individual learners' linguistic competency may help to explain the results. The tasks are essential to the learning process in task-based learning. The approach is predicated on the idea that when students' attention is directed toward the job at hand rather than the language they are using, they can learn more efficiently. It takes extensive language exposure and unrestricted engagement with language users to learn to speak and understand the language automatically in a wide range of contexts. Additionally, TBLT gives teachers the chance to help students become better communicators, facilitate encounters with native speakers, and practice creating oral representations as soon as they understand a concept well enough. The main characteristic of task-based framework, like any other communicative focused

activities, is that it advances the learner from fluency to accuracy as opposed to the conventional approach, which moves the student from accuracy to fluency. The environment in TBLT class is welcoming, cooperative, and non-threatening.

Additionally, researchers who stressed the benefit of TBLT in enhancing speaking abilities concur with these findings. Lever and Willis (2004) noted that after relatively short courses, learners were able to utilize their new foreign language with fair levels of efficiency in real-world circumstances, and they progressed far more quickly with TBLT. While completing the exercises, learners engage in specific types of language use and mental processing that are beneficial for acquisition, according to Ellis (2000), Nunan (2006), and Willis (1996). A communicative aim is another way that learners utilize the language in TBLT (Cathcard, 1988; Bygate, 1996; Skehan and Foster, 1997; Birjandi and Ahangari, 2008).

Due to the teaching methodology, there is a statistically significant difference ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the adjusted means of the mean scores on the attitudinal questionnaire for Iraqi EFL students that favors the experimental group.

This outcome makes sense because the experimental group's students were instructed in the speaking content in an orderly manner when it came to practicing, presenting, and assessing it. The researcher believes that the experimental group students' attitudes toward English were greatly improved by the program's design. For instance, breaking the work up into three phases—pre, during, and post—and assigning distinct tasks for each one seem to help students become more motivated to learn the language and to change their negative perceptions of it.

Furthermore, a better context for igniting the students' learning processes and inspiring them to participate in class activities—which would have ultimately changed their attitudes toward English—could have been provided by the use of tasks, student discussions, planning exercises like brainstorming, and report presentations.

Undoubtedly, improved performance results in improved attitudes. According to Widdowson (1990), TBLT would improve students' attitudes and increase their motivation to participate in these activities.

Table 4.8 demonstrated that TBLT had a considerable impact on every aspect of the students' opinions regarding English. The results shown in this table suggest that TBLT is a successful teaching method that may improve students' attitudes toward the language. Prior to the start of the instructional program, the majority of students said they were not interested in the culture of English native speakers, that they did not enjoy traveling to English-speaking nations, and that they did not think their fluency in the language would help them land a job. However, after the TBLT program was put into place, the students' opinions completely changed.

The majority of them strongly agreed or agreed that learning English could improve their chances of landing a job in the future. They also expressed interest in reading about the cultures of English-speaking people and wanting to visit English-speaking nations to improve their language skills.

Researchers who highlighted how TBLT's varied activities can motivate students and alter their attitudes toward English as a foreign language also corroborate these findings. According to Bugler and Hunt (2002), TBLT increased the students' motivation to learn English because they perceived the experience as fulfilling, inherently fascinating, and advantageous from an educational standpoint. According to Lopes (2004), students who followed TBLT instructions were able to acquire English more successfully because they were able to apply it for task completion, information retrieval, problem solving, and conversation about their own experiences.

According to Lochana and Deb (2006), students benefited from TBLT in terms of both motivation and proficiency. According to Suxiang (2007), TBLT could promote students' potential for learning English and gradually increase their interest in the language.

Tables 4.4–4.8 demonstrate that the teaching method in favor of the experimental group resulted in a statistically significant difference between the two adjusted averages of the post-student replies on the attitudinal questionnaire at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

The explanation for this outcome is that the control group's students received traditional instruction without engaging in any tasks or activities. Rather, they were just responding to questions posed by the teacher, which were typically contained in the book. However, the experimental group's pupils had to actively participate in negotiating the assigned tasks and activities, which meant that they needed to communicate more (Labov, 1972; Milroy, 1987).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study's results led us to the conclusion that task-based language instruction (TBLT) enhances students' speaking abilities and shapes their perceptions of the language. It is evident that when classroom practice was structured and real, as it is in TBLT, the students' speaking abilities developed more. Under traditional teaching conditions, the pupils performed better. This is because students must actively participate in all of the tasks and activities that make up TBLT. Teachers can play a variety of roles in TBLT assignments. The following job functions for teachers were identified by Nunan (1989) and Richards and Rodgers (2001): selector/sequencer of tasks, preparer of learners for task, pre-task consciousness raiser concerning form, guide, nurturer, strategy-instructor, and support provider.

The same texts are used for Iraqi and English instruction. Iraqi students get knowledge about Western culture, but they do not acquire self-knowledge. Authentic Iraqi texts that meet the requirements and interests of Iraqi students should thus be created by teachers and added to the existing curriculum. The study's findings demonstrate that, in spite of the critique that the pupils might not be eager to communicate openly, students' complexity, fluency, and correctness have greatly increased as a result of TBLT. This could be explained by the teachers' careful planning of the assignments in accordance with the three stages of the tasks.

Iraqi EFL students typically struggle with their English language education, and the majority of them fail the English matriculation test. The absence of exposure to real English may be partly to blame for this. This lack of exposure to real-world English may be addressed by TBLT, which provides students with opportunities to practice their language skills in a stress-free classroom environment while utilizing a variety of exercises related to real-world responsibilities. Students get additional time through TBLT methods to talk with other students or the teacher about the task issue using their personal experiences.

The new curriculum, which is presently being implemented in Iraqi schools, aims to raise the performance levels of students in the four areas of language learning: language, culture, and literature appreciation; social interaction; and information access. Since English is a language of communication, the English advisory group recognized the need to include the concept of social interaction in the new curriculum. The goal of the social interaction domain is to help students communicate both orally and in writing with English-speaking people in any location and in any language (Ministry of Education, 2002).

The study's findings demonstrate how TBLT enhances students' spoken social interactions. This finding supports the theory that Total Behavior Based Language Training (TBLT) is among the best instructional strategies for improving students' ability to speak English fluently and accurately.

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