

Enhancing University Students' Oral English: A Mixed-Methods Study

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ABSTRACT

English oral proficiency is a critical skill for university students worldwide, particularly in non-native English-speaking contexts where oral communication is essential for academic success, employability, and international collaboration. Despite extensive classroom instruction, many students continue to experience difficulties in fluency, accuracy, and confidence due to limited authentic communicative opportunities, reliance on teacher-centered instruction, and language anxiety. This study investigates the effectiveness of an integrated instructional approach that combines Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) to enhance oral English proficiency among university students. A convergent mixed-methods design was employed involving 200 undergraduate students from three universities in China. Quantitative data were collected via pre- and post-intervention oral proficiency tests, including measures of fluency, accuracy, complexity, and pronunciation, along with self-reported speaking confidence surveys. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals to explore students' perceptions, learning experiences, and challenges. Results indicate significant improvements in students' oral English proficiency, particularly in fluency and confidence. Thematic analysis revealed that students perceived enhanced engagement, autonomy, and practical skill application, though challenges such as speaking anxiety and uneven access to technology persisted. These findings underscore the effectiveness of a blended instructional approach in promoting communicative competence and provide practical guidance for curriculum design, pedagogy, and technology integration in higher education.

Keywords: Oral English, Task-Based Learning, Peer Collaboration, Technology-Enhanced Learning, Mixed-Methods Research

INTRODUCTION

Background

In the context of accelerating globalization, English has evolved into the predominant lingua franca that transcends national and linguistic boundaries, serving as the primary medium of communication in academic, professional, and intercultural contexts (Crystal, 2003). Within higher education, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries, oral English proficiency represents not only a crucial component of communicative competence but also a vital determinant of students' academic achievement, employability, and intercultural adaptability. Despite the increasing emphasis on communicative competence in educational policy and curriculum design, many university students continue to experience persistent challenges in oral communication, impeding their overall language development. One major contributing factor lies in the limited exposure to authentic communicative contexts. Traditional teacher-centered classrooms in many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings prioritize grammatical accuracy, vocabulary memorization, and written drills, often neglecting spontaneous interaction and meaning-focused communication (Richards, 2015). This lack of real-life communication opportunities restricts learners' ability to apply linguistic knowledge dynamically, thus limiting the development of fluency, pragmatic competence, and sociolinguistic sensitivity.

Moreover, a considerable body of research has identified language anxiety as another major affective barrier to oral performance. Speaking anxiety, defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension associated with using a

foreign language, has been found to inhibit learners' willingness to communicate, reduce fluency, and increase avoidance behavior (Horwitz, 2010; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). In high-stakes academic settings, where oral communication is frequently linked to assessment or peer evaluation, anxiety can trigger a heightened affective filter, thereby obstructing linguistic output and confidence. Additionally, a lack of self-directed learning resources and structured opportunities for autonomous practice exacerbates these difficulties. Many students rely heavily on in-class instruction and seldom engage in independent oral activities due to insufficient digital tools, limited feedback mechanisms, and the absence of collaborative online platforms that can simulate real communicative environments (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

Taken together, these linguistic, psychological, and contextual constraints underscore the urgent need for innovative pedagogical frameworks that integrate communicative, collaborative, and technology-enhanced strategies to foster sustained oral proficiency development. Such an integrated approach aligns with constructivist and sociocultural perspectives on second language acquisition, emphasizing interaction, learner agency, and the co-construction of meaning. By leveraging Task-Based Learning (TBL) to provide authentic communicative tasks, Peer Collaboration (PC) to facilitate cooperative learning and shared reflection, and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) to extend opportunities for practice beyond the classroom, educators can cultivate more dynamic, learner-centered environments that support both the cognitive and affective dimensions of oral English learning.

Rationale for the Study

In recent years, a growing body of empirical research has underscored the pedagogical effectiveness of Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) in promoting communicative competence and learner engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Task-Based Learning, grounded in communicative and constructivist theories of language acquisition, positions language as a tool for meaning-making rather than a subject for rote learning. By engaging students in authentic, goal-oriented communicative tasks, TBL creates conditions that simulate real-world language use, enabling learners to develop fluency, accuracy, and complexity simultaneously (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007). Complementing this, Peer Collaboration capitalizes on the social and interactive dimensions of learning. Rooted in Vygotskian sociocultural theory, PC promotes cooperative meaning negotiation, shared scaffolding, and emotional support, which not only enhance linguistic outcomes but also alleviate foreign language anxiety, one of the most significant affective barriers to oral proficiency (Swain, 2000; Li & Ni, 2018). Through structured collaboration, learners can co-construct linguistic knowledge, internalize communicative strategies, and develop self-efficacy within a supportive community of practice.

Meanwhile, Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) has emerged as a transformative force in modern language education. Digital platforms, mobile applications, and AI-driven learning environments enable learners to practice oral communication in flexible, multimodal, and feedback-rich contexts, overcoming the limitations of time and space inherent in traditional classroom instruction (Huang, 2024; Godwin-Jones, 2018). TEL fosters autonomous learning, offering immediate feedback and personalized input that empower students to take ownership of their oral development beyond institutional boundaries. Moreover, technology-mediated interaction provides valuable opportunities for asynchronous and synchronous communication, allowing learners to rehearse, record, and refine their oral output in ways that are often unfeasible in conventional pedagogical settings.

While numerous studies have individually examined the benefits of TBL, PC, and TEL, their combined and interactive impact remains underexplored. Most prior research has treated these strategies as discrete instructional variables rather than as interdependent components of a holistic pedagogical ecosystem. Consequently, there exists a notable gap in understanding how these three approaches might synergistically reinforce one another to promote not only linguistic performance but also affective and metacognitive dimensions of oral proficiency. Adopting an integrated, mixed-methods framework to investigate this triadic relationship allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how communicative, collaborative, and technological dimensions interact in the complex process of second language acquisition. This research thus aims to fill this empirical and theoretical void by examining the combined effects of TBL, PC, and TEL on university students' oral English performance. The findings are expected to generate evidence-based pedagogical

recommendations for curriculum designers, educators, and policymakers, thereby contributing to the advancement of contextually responsive and innovation-driven oral English instruction in higher education.

Research Questions

Building upon the pedagogical rationale outlined above, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of how an integrated Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) framework influences the development of oral English proficiency among university students in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The overarching objective is to explore not only the linguistic outcomes of this triadic instructional model but also the affective, perceptual, and strategic dimensions that mediate learners' engagement and achievement. In line with current trends in applied linguistics emphasizing evidence-based, learner-centered instruction, the study adopts a mixed-methods research design to capture both the quantifiable improvements in oral performance and the qualitative nuances of learner experience.

Accordingly, the study is guided by three interrelated research questions. First, it investigates the extent to which an integrated TBL-PC-TEL approach affects university students' oral English proficiency, focusing on key dimensions of communicative competence—fluency, accuracy, syntactic and lexical complexity, and self-reported confidence in speaking. This question aims to provide empirical evidence of the pedagogical efficacy of blending communicative, collaborative, and technological elements in a unified instructional framework. Second, the study explores students' perceptions of the effectiveness of this blended instructional approach, examining how learners interpret its value, relevance, and practicality in enhancing their speaking abilities. This dimension acknowledges the central role of learner agency and affective engagement in sustaining meaningful oral language development. Third, the study seeks to identify the primary challenges students encounter during implementation—such as technological barriers, cognitive load, or interactional difficulties—and to analyze how instructional design can be optimized to mitigate these obstacles. Addressing these questions collectively enables a holistic understanding of how integrated pedagogical innovations function in authentic higher education environments, offering theoretical insight and practical guidance for reconceptualizing oral English instruction in the digital era.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its multifaceted contribution to the fields of applied linguistics, second language acquisition (SLA), and English language pedagogy, particularly within the domain of oral communication development in higher education. First and foremost, the research provides empirical evidence on the pedagogical effectiveness of integrating Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) into a coherent instructional framework for oral English instruction. While these approaches have been extensively studied in isolation, their synergistic integration remains underexplored. By empirically testing the combined model, this study extends existing theoretical and empirical knowledge, illustrating how communicative, collaborative, and digital dimensions can jointly facilitate fluency, accuracy, and learner confidence in oral production.

Furthermore, the findings offer practical and policy-relevant implications for stakeholders in higher education—curriculum designers, language instructors, and educational policymakers—who seek to enhance students' communicative competence and global employability. The proposed framework provides a replicable model for designing innovative, learner-centered oral English curricula, adaptable to diverse educational contexts and resource conditions. In addition, the study underscores the importance of adopting a mixed-methods research paradigm in language pedagogy. By combining quantitative analyses of performance gains with qualitative exploration of learners' attitudes, engagement, and motivational trajectories, this research captures the complex interplay between instructional design and learner experience—an aspect often overlooked in single-method studies.

Ultimately, by addressing both objective learning outcomes and subjective learner perceptions, this study bridges the persistent divide between theory and classroom practice in EFL oral pedagogy. It highlights the need for evidence-based instructional design that not only enhances linguistic performance but also promotes learner

autonomy, collaboration, and emotional well-being. The research thus contributes to the advancement of data-driven, contextually responsive, and pedagogically sustainable approaches to oral English teaching in higher education, providing a solid foundation for future innovations in communicative language education.

Structure of the Paper

To ensure clarity and coherence in addressing the research objectives, this paper is systematically structured into six interrelated sections, each serving a distinct theoretical or empirical function within the overall argument. **Section 1** outlines the research background, rationale, objectives, and significance of the study. It introduces the pedagogical challenges associated with oral English proficiency among university students in EFL contexts and highlights the need for an integrated instructional model combining Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL). This section also formulates the research questions and establishes the theoretical foundation for the study, thereby setting the stage for subsequent empirical investigation. **Section 2** (Literature Review) provides a comprehensive synthesis of existing research on Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) in the context of oral English instruction, along with a critical examination of mixed-methods approaches in language education research. This section situates the present study within the broader scholarly discourse of second language acquisition and applied linguistics, identifying gaps that justify the current investigation. **Section 3** (Methodology) delineates the research design, participant demographics, instructional intervention, instruments of data collection, and procedures for both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. This methodological section not only articulates the rationale for employing a convergent mixed-methods design but also ensures the transparency and replicability of the research process. **Section 4** (Results) presents the empirical findings derived from statistical analyses and thematic interpretation, encompassing both the quantitative outcomes related to oral proficiency dimensions—fluency, accuracy, complexity, and confidence—and the qualitative insights that illuminate learner experiences, attitudes, and perceptions. **Section 5** (Discussion) then integrates and interprets these findings in relation to relevant theories and prior studies, offering a nuanced understanding of the pedagogical implications of the TBL-PC-TEL approach. This section emphasizes how the present results contribute to refining theoretical models of communicative language teaching and inform evidence-based classroom practice. Finally, **Section 6** (Conclusion) encapsulates the major contributions of the study, acknowledges its methodological and contextual limitations, and proposes directions for future research and pedagogical innovation. Together, these sections form a coherent analytical framework through which the study advances both the empirical understanding and theoretical grounding of integrated oral English pedagogy in higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite years of formal English instruction, university students across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts continue to experience persistent challenges in developing oral English proficiency (Liu & Jackson, 2008). These difficulties are inherently multi-dimensional, encompassing linguistic, affective, cognitive, and technological domains. A major impediment is the limited exposure to communicative practice within traditional classroom environments, which often prioritize grammar instruction, reading comprehension, and written accuracy over spontaneous verbal interaction. Such an imbalance constrains opportunities for authentic communicative exchanges and inhibits the development of fluency and pragmatic competence (Richards, 2015). Beyond instructional constraints, affective variables play a crucial role in shaping oral performance: speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence have been shown to significantly hinder learners' willingness to communicate and their capacity to engage in risk-taking during speech production (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Equally important are cognitive and linguistic limitations, such as restricted lexical range, insufficient syntactic control, and low lexical diversity, all of which contribute to reduced fluency, grammatical accuracy, and discourse complexity (Bygate, 2001). Furthermore, the uneven integration of technology in language learning represents an additional challenge. Many students either lack sufficient access to digital platforms or are unfamiliar with technology-enhanced tools that could otherwise facilitate self-directed speaking practice, feedback reception, and learner autonomy (Godwin-Jones, 2018). These linguistic, affective, and technological

constraints do not operate in isolation; rather, they form a complex, interdependent network of factors. For instance, heightened anxiety intensifies performance pressure, which in turn reduces learners' willingness to take communicative risks, thereby diminishing opportunities for oral language use and impeding long-term proficiency development (Young, 1991). Consequently, addressing oral English challenges requires comprehensive pedagogical interventions that simultaneously target the cognitive-linguistic foundations of speech production and the affective-emotional barriers to communication. Such a dual-focus approach is essential for cultivating learners' confidence, fluency, and communicative competence in higher education contexts.

Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Oral Proficiency

Task-Based Learning (TBL) has emerged as one of the most influential approaches in communicative language teaching, emphasizing meaning-centered communication through structured, goal-oriented, and contextually authentic tasks (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007). Unlike traditional form-focused methods, TBL encourages learners to use language as a tool for achieving communicative outcomes rather than as an object of isolated grammatical practice. In a TBL environment, students engage in purposeful interaction, negotiation, and problem-solving activities that closely mirror real-world communication scenarios. This pedagogical orientation aligns with the broader shift from input-driven to output-oriented and interaction-based models of language acquisition, highlighting the active role of learners in constructing linguistic knowledge through meaningful use.

Empirical evidence across educational levels supports the efficacy of TBL in promoting oral proficiency. Within secondary education contexts, studies by Aliqi (2025) demonstrated that students engaged in debates, role-plays, and collaborative problem-solving tasks exhibited marked improvements in both fluency and grammatical accuracy. These findings indicate that authentic task participation stimulates language production and enhances learners' confidence in communicative situations. Similarly, in higher education, Zhang and Wang (2021) investigated Chinese university students and found that the application of TBL significantly enhanced lexical richness, syntactic complexity, and discourse organization, particularly when tasks replicated authentic academic contexts such as oral presentations and peer interviews. Comparative analyses also reveal that TBL consistently outperforms traditional teacher-centered instruction in fostering engagement, intrinsic motivation, and communicative competence (Elder & Kim, 2020). Collectively, these empirical findings underscore the potential of TBL to bridge the persistent gap between linguistic knowledge and communicative ability.

The theoretical underpinnings of TBL are anchored in several well-established psycholinguistic mechanisms. Swain's (2005) Output Hypothesis posits that producing language output compels learners to test hypotheses about language use, notice gaps in their interlanguage systems, and refine linguistic forms through self-monitoring and feedback. Complementing this, Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis emphasizes that negotiation of meaning during task performance directs learners' attention to form-function relationships, thereby facilitating both fluency and accuracy. Through task-induced interaction, learners receive rich input, produce modified output, and engage in metalinguistic reflection—all of which contribute to more robust linguistic development. These mechanisms collectively explain why TBL environments tend to yield measurable gains in oral fluency, lexical variation, and grammatical control.

Despite its demonstrated benefits, the implementation of TBL is not without challenges. Task complexity remains a critical variable influencing learner performance; overly demanding tasks can lead to cognitive overload, thereby reducing linguistic accuracy and communicative effectiveness (Skehan, 1998). Moreover, the assessment of task-based oral performance presents methodological difficulties, as standardized testing frameworks often fail to capture the dynamic, interactional, and context-dependent nature of TBL outcomes. Finally, teacher readiness constitutes a significant constraint on effective adoption. Implementing TBL requires instructors to possess advanced pedagogical expertise, including the ability to design tasks with appropriate scaffolding, manage communicative interaction, and deliver timely, formative feedback. Consequently, while TBL represents a theoretically sound and empirically validated approach to enhancing oral English proficiency, its successful application in higher education demands careful calibration of task design, assessment alignment, and teacher professional development.

Peer Collaboration (PC) in Language Learning

Peer Collaboration (PC) has become an increasingly significant pedagogical approach in second language acquisition (SLA), emphasizing the interactive, dialogic, and socially mediated nature of learning. Rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, PC underscores the notion that knowledge construction occurs most effectively within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners co-construct meaning through mediated interaction and mutual scaffolding. Rather than viewing learning as an individual cognitive endeavor, PC conceptualizes it as a socially situated process in which language is simultaneously the medium and the object of learning. Through structured collaboration, learners negotiate meaning, provide corrective feedback, and engage in co-construction of linguistic forms, thereby internalizing both linguistic and pragmatic competence. This theoretical framing positions PC as a powerful mechanism for fostering oral English proficiency, particularly in educational contexts where learners share similar linguistic backgrounds and face comparable communicative challenges.

Empirical evidence across diverse contexts substantiates the benefits of PC for oral English development. Within university settings, An (2024) reported that first-year students in Vietnam exhibited significant improvement in speaking proficiency after participating in structured peer discussions, collaborative presentations, and joint problem-solving projects. These interactive tasks not only enhanced linguistic accuracy and fluency but also increased learners' communicative confidence and willingness to speak. Similarly, research by Kahn (2022) revealed that PC environments foster intrinsic motivation, emotional safety, and positive learner identity formation, thereby mitigating common affective barriers such as speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Comparative studies conducted in European contexts have shown that peer feedback and cooperative oral tasks significantly improve both fluency and pragmatic competence by providing opportunities for authentic communicative negotiation (Li & Ni, 2018). In Asian contexts, however, researchers emphasize the need for culturally sensitive scaffolding strategies, as hierarchical social norms and face-saving concerns may inhibit equal participation. Together, these findings suggest that the success of PC depends not only on the task structure but also on cultural alignment, group dynamics, and institutional support for collaborative pedagogy.

The pedagogical mechanisms underlying PC's effectiveness can be explained through a synthesis of cognitive and socio-affective dimensions. From a cognitive perspective, peer interaction provides rich opportunities for scaffolding, as learners supply each other with lexical prompts, corrective feedback, and linguistic modeling. Such interaction promotes noticing-a process central to language development-by directing learners' attention to linguistic forms they might otherwise overlook (Swain, 2000). Furthermore, collaborative dialogues stimulate negotiation of meaning, where learners clarify misunderstandings, reformulate utterances, and refine their output, leading to deeper processing and longer-term retention of language forms. From an affective standpoint, the social support embedded in peer collaboration fosters a sense of community and belonging, reducing communication apprehension and promoting sustained engagement. Learners often report that communicating with peers feels less intimidating than interacting with teachers, which increases their willingness to experiment with new vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation patterns. This combination of cognitive activation and emotional regulation positions PC as an ideal environment for oral language development.

Despite its numerous advantages, several limitations must be acknowledged to ensure the effective implementation of PC. One recurrent issue is unequal participation, wherein dominant or more extroverted students monopolize discussions, thereby limiting quieter learners' opportunities to speak. This imbalance can reduce the overall equity and linguistic benefit of collaboration. Additionally, proficiency mismatches within peer groups may hinder productive interaction: while heterogeneous grouping can facilitate scaffolding, excessive gaps in language ability can create dependency dynamics where lower-level learners contribute minimally, and higher-level learners derive limited challenge. Another persistent concern is assessment reliability-specifically, how to evaluate individual contributions within group-based oral tasks. Objective measurement of collaborative outcomes remains challenging, as performance is often co-constructed and context-dependent. Consequently, scholars recommend that peer-based pedagogies be accompanied by explicit training in collaboration skills, clear role assignments, and hybrid assessment models combining self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher observation.

In sum, Peer Collaboration serves as a pedagogically robust and theoretically grounded approach to oral English development, leveraging the interplay between cognition, interaction, and emotion. Its value lies not only in enhancing communicative competence but also in cultivating learner autonomy, social cohesion, and intercultural awareness-qualities that are increasingly essential in globalized higher education environments. However, its successful integration requires thoughtful instructional design that balances task complexity, group composition, and assessment transparency to maximize both linguistic and interpersonal outcomes.

Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) in Oral English

Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) has emerged as a transformative paradigm in English language education, providing learners with unprecedented opportunities to extend communicative practice beyond traditional classroom boundaries. TEL integrates digital tools such as mobile applications, online discussion forums, video conferencing platforms, and speech recognition software to create multimodal, interactive, and learner-centered environments. These technologies facilitate authentic communication, individualized feedback, and self-directed learning, thus complementing conventional pedagogical approaches that often prioritize controlled practice over spontaneous interaction. In the context of oral English instruction, TEL enables learners to engage in continuous listening, speaking, and reflection cycles, fostering the development of fluency, pronunciation accuracy, and pragmatic competence. Furthermore, TEL aligns with constructivist and connectivist learning theories, emphasizing learner autonomy, social collaboration, and the dynamic interplay between human and technological agents in knowledge construction.

Empirical research increasingly supports the efficacy of TEL in enhancing oral proficiency and communicative competence. For instance, Asratie (2023) demonstrated that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who regularly used pronunciation and fluency applications-such as FORVO, YouGlish, and ELSA Speak-exhibited significant improvement in segmental and suprasegmental accuracy compared with control groups using traditional drills. These tools provided authentic exemplars of native speech and immediate feedback on pronunciation, thereby accelerating phonological acquisition. Similarly, Stockwell (2012) emphasized the role of TEL in promoting autonomous learning, arguing that mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) environments foster self-regulation, metacognitive awareness, and sustained engagement. By allowing students to control their learning pace and access authentic materials anytime and anywhere, TEL enhances both motivation and retention. More recent studies, such as Huang (2024), have shown that integrating TEL with Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Peer Collaboration (PC) creates synergistic effects-blending digital autonomy with communicative interaction-to maximize learner engagement, oral output, and overall proficiency. This hybrid approach effectively combines the flexibility of digital learning with the social and cognitive richness of interactive classroom activities.

The pedagogical mechanisms underlying TEL's effectiveness can be explained through three interrelated dimensions: feedback, input, and motivation. First, automated feedback loops constitute one of TEL's most distinctive advantages. Speech recognition and artificial intelligence-driven systems provide learners with immediate and personalized feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and intonation, enabling continuous form-focused refinement. This instant feedback accelerates the noticing process-a key element in second language acquisition-by drawing learners' attention to linguistic gaps in real time. Second, TEL facilitates exposure to authentic linguistic input through access to videos, podcasts, and real-world communication platforms, thereby expanding learners' lexical range, syntactic accuracy, and pragmatic competence. Interaction with native and non-native speakers across digital spaces, such as online forums or virtual exchanges, also cultivates intercultural communicative competence. Third, TEL contributes to enhanced motivation and engagement through gamification, progress tracking, and social networking features embedded within learning platforms. These elements stimulate positive emotions, increase persistence, and promote a sense of achievement-factors strongly correlated with improved oral performance.

Nevertheless, despite its considerable potential, the implementation of TEL in oral English education presents a number of pedagogical and infrastructural challenges. One of the most pressing concerns relates to access and equity: not all students possess equal access to high-quality digital devices or stable internet connections, which can exacerbate existing educational inequalities. Moreover, the success of TEL depends heavily on teacher mediation and instructional alignment. Without explicit pedagogical integration, digital tools risk becoming

isolated supplements rather than cohesive components of a structured curriculum. Instructors must therefore design TEL activities that are purposeful, communicatively oriented, and cognitively appropriate for learners' proficiency levels. Another limitation involves cognitive overload; when digital tasks are excessively complex or poorly designed, they can overwhelm learners' working memory and impede language processing (Creswell, 2017). Additionally, the abundance of digital stimuli may distract learners from meaningful communicative goals, reducing the depth of engagement with linguistic content. Addressing these challenges requires thoughtful instructional design, teacher digital literacy, and institutional support to ensure that TEL serves as a genuine enhancer rather than a superficial add-on to oral English instruction.

In conclusion, Technology-Enhanced Learning represents a powerful catalyst for reimagining oral English pedagogy in higher education. By merging technological innovation with communicative language teaching principles, TEL fosters learner autonomy, provides authentic practice, and offers data-driven feedback that traditional classrooms cannot easily replicate. Yet, to fully harness its potential, educators must navigate its complexities with pedagogical intentionality-balancing digital innovation with human interaction, and technological efficiency with educational equity. When integrated strategically with task-based and collaborative approaches, TEL holds the promise of transforming oral English learning into an active, engaging, and contextually relevant process suited for the demands of globalized communication.

Integrating TBL, PC, and TEL: A Blended Approach

The integration of Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) represents a holistic pedagogical model designed to address the multifaceted cognitive, affective, and sociocultural dimensions of oral English learning. Each component contributes a distinct yet complementary strength: TBL provides cognitively demanding, communicatively meaningful tasks; PC enriches the social and affective dimensions of learning; and TEL extends opportunities for self-directed practice and feedback beyond the classroom. Collectively, these approaches form a blended instructional ecosystem that situates learners within dynamic cycles of interaction, reflection, and feedback-key mechanisms for second language development. This integrative model is theoretically grounded in interactionist and sociocultural frameworks, wherein language acquisition emerges through purposeful communication, negotiation of meaning, and scaffolded participation mediated by both human and technological agents (Long, 1996; Swain, 2005).

From a cognitive-linguistic perspective, the synthesis of TBL and TEL provides structured opportunities for meaningful input, output, and feedback. TBL tasks-when delivered through digital or multimodal platforms-encourage learners to mobilize their linguistic resources in authentic contexts while benefiting from automated and peer-generated feedback. TEL further enhances the linguistic dimension by offering access to rich audiovisual input and pronunciation modeling, thereby reinforcing learners' phonological and syntactic development. The social-affective dimension is equally critical. Peer Collaboration mitigates the anxiety commonly associated with oral performance and fosters motivation through mutual support and shared responsibility. Social interaction within peer dyads and small groups encourages experimentation with new linguistic forms, reduces affective barriers, and strengthens learners' willingness to communicate. Finally, from the standpoint of learner autonomy, TEL empowers students to engage in independent practice, reflection, and self-assessment. Through mobile apps, online portfolios, and digital feedback tools, learners can monitor their progress and set personalized goals-an essential feature for sustainable language learning in higher education contexts.

Empirical research substantiates the synergistic potential of this blended TBL-PC-TEL model. Chen and Hsu (2022) found that students who participated in digitally mediated, task-based collaborative activities exhibited significant gains in oral fluency, accuracy, and lexical richness compared with those exposed to traditional lecture-based instruction or single-method interventions. Similarly, Li (2021) demonstrated that combining task-based projects with peer discussion forums and mobile learning applications improved both linguistic performance and communicative confidence among Chinese university students. These findings suggest that blended approaches can enhance both quantitative performance outcomes and qualitative learning experiences. Mixed-methods evaluations of similar interventions reveal that students perceive such blended environments as more engaging, empowering, and relevant to real-world communication demands. Learners report higher motivation, a stronger sense of competence, and greater enjoyment in speaking activities, indicating that the

integration of TBL, PC, and TEL not only improves measurable outcomes but also enriches the overall learning experience. Consequently, the blended model represents an evidence-based and pedagogically robust framework for modern oral English instruction in tertiary education.

Mixed-Methods Research in Oral English

To comprehensively evaluate the pedagogical efficacy of complex interventions such as TBL-PC-TEL integration, researchers increasingly employ mixed-methods research designs, which combine the empirical rigor of quantitative analysis with the contextual depth of qualitative inquiry. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) assert, mixed-methods research enables a more holistic understanding of instructional impact by triangulating multiple forms of data to reveal not only what changes occur but also why and how they occur. In the context of oral English education, this approach provides a multifaceted perspective on both learning outcomes and learner experiences, thus bridging the traditional divide between statistical evaluation and lived pedagogical realities.

In the quantitative phase, researchers typically utilize pre- and post-test designs to measure key dimensions of oral proficiency, including fluency, accuracy, lexical complexity, pronunciation, and communicative confidence. Standardized speaking rubrics, automated speech analysis tools, and performance-based assessments provide objective measures of linguistic improvement. Such quantitative indicators are essential for establishing empirical validity and comparability across contexts. However, to capture the nuanced and subjective aspects of learning, qualitative data-such as semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and reflective journals-are incorporated to explore learners' perceptions, engagement patterns, and affective responses. These data reveal how students experience instructional interventions, negotiate challenges, and internalize feedback, offering insights that purely numerical measures cannot provide.

The true strength of mixed-methods research lies in the integration and interpretation of both data strands. Through strategies of convergence, complementarity, and divergence (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), researchers can identify areas of corroboration-where quantitative gains align with positive qualitative feedback-as well as areas of contrast, which may reveal underlying complexities or contextual factors. For instance, improved fluency scores may coincide with learners' reports of reduced anxiety and increased self-efficacy, reinforcing causal inferences. Conversely, discrepancies between test scores and learner perceptions can illuminate hidden variables such as task difficulty, technological barriers, or classroom dynamics. This methodological triangulation not only enhances the reliability and validity of research findings but also supports the development of richer theoretical explanations of how blended instructional approaches influence oral language acquisition. By integrating empirical precision with interpretive depth, mixed-methods research thus offers a comprehensive and nuanced framework for advancing scholarship and practice in oral English pedagogy.

Critical Gaps in Current Research

Despite the growing body of literature on communicative language teaching, several critical gaps remain in the research concerning the integration of Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) in oral English education. First, there is a notable scarcity of empirical studies that investigate the integrated application of these three pedagogical approaches. Most existing studies tend to focus on TBL, PC, or TEL in isolation, overlooking the potential synergistic effects that could emerge from their combination in blended instructional designs. This fragmentation limits the understanding of how these methods can complement each other to optimize oral proficiency development.

Second, research evidence remains highly context-dependent, with limited attention to the unique sociocultural and educational characteristics of Chinese university learners. Since language learning is deeply embedded in cultural and institutional contexts, findings derived from Western or other Asian educational systems may not be fully transferable to China's higher education environment. More contextually grounded research is therefore needed to explore how localized pedagogical adaptations influence learning processes and outcomes.

Third, the longitudinal impact of these pedagogical interventions has not been adequately examined. Many studies assess immediate post-intervention improvements in fluency or accuracy, yet few investigate the

sustainability of these gains over extended periods. Understanding long-term retention and transferability of oral communication skills is crucial for evaluating the true educational value of innovative pedagogical frameworks.

Finally, the methodological rigor of mixed-methods research in this field requires strengthening. Some studies rely on small sample sizes, anecdotal classroom observations, or unbalanced quantitative-qualitative integration, which weakens the generalizability and robustness of their findings. Future research should employ more systematic mixed-methods designs, combining statistically reliable measures with in-depth qualitative inquiry to capture both performance outcomes and learner experiences comprehensively.

SUMMARY

The reviewed literature demonstrates that Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) each make significant and distinct contributions to the development of oral English proficiency. Individually, TBL provides cognitively engaging and meaning-focused communicative tasks that promote fluency, accuracy, and linguistic complexity. PC enhances the social and affective dimensions of learning through interaction, scaffolding, and mutual feedback, while TEL extends opportunities for practice and self-regulated learning beyond the traditional classroom through digital tools and online communication environments. When combined, these pedagogical approaches have the potential to create a synergistic framework that simultaneously supports cognitive-linguistic processing, social-affective engagement, and learner autonomy, thereby fostering more holistic and sustainable oral language development.

Moreover, the literature underscores the value of mixed-methods research as a robust and comprehensive strategy for evaluating such multifaceted interventions. Quantitative methods can capture measurable improvements in linguistic performance—such as fluency, accuracy, and complexity—while qualitative approaches provide deeper insights into learners' perceptions, engagement, and affective experiences. This methodological complementarity allows researchers to triangulate findings, identify converging patterns, and generate a more nuanced understanding of how integrated pedagogical frameworks operate in real-world educational contexts.

Nevertheless, several critical research gaps persist. Prior studies have rarely examined the combined effects of TBL, PC, and TEL within a unified design, particularly in the context of Chinese higher education. Furthermore, issues of cultural adaptability, long-term retention of oral proficiency, and methodological rigor remain insufficiently addressed. These gaps highlight the necessity and timeliness of the present research, which seeks to systematically investigate the pedagogical effectiveness of an integrated TBL-PC-TEL approach on Chinese university students' oral English proficiency. By addressing both the theoretical and empirical deficiencies identified in the existing literature, this study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of technology-mediated, collaborative, and task-based pedagogies in second language education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a convergent mixed-methods research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) to systematically examine the pedagogical effectiveness of an integrated Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) framework on university students' oral English proficiency. The rationale for selecting this design lies in its ability to capture both the quantitative outcomes of language development and the qualitative depth of learners' subjective experiences, thereby providing a holistic understanding of how blended pedagogical interventions operate in authentic educational settings.

The quantitative strand of the research focused on measuring observable changes in students' oral performance before and after the intervention. Specifically, it assessed key dimensions of oral proficiency—fluency, accuracy, linguistic complexity, pronunciation, and speaking confidence—through standardized pre- and post-tests. These indicators collectively reflect not only linguistic competence but also communicative effectiveness, making them essential for evaluating the impact of instructional interventions. Quantitative analysis aimed to identify statistically significant improvements attributable to the integrated TBL-PC-TEL approach and to determine effect sizes for different aspects of oral performance.

In parallel, the qualitative strand sought to explore the affective, cognitive, and metacognitive dimensions of learners' engagement. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals, enabling participants to articulate their perceptions of the learning process, strategies employed during collaborative and technology-mediated tasks, motivational shifts, and challenges encountered. These qualitative insights offered interpretive depth that complemented the numerical results, shedding light on how and why the intervention influenced learners' oral language development.

Following the principles of the convergent mixed-methods design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently within the same research phase. Each dataset was analyzed independently—quantitative data through statistical analysis and qualitative data through thematic coding—and the findings were subsequently merged during the interpretation stage. This integration enabled the identification of points of convergence, divergence, and complementarity, thereby strengthening the overall construct validity and interpretive robustness of the study. The combination of numerical evidence and narrative accounts provided a comprehensive understanding of both the measurable outcomes and the underlying learning mechanisms, ensuring that the evaluation of the TBL-PC-TEL model was both empirically rigorous and pedagogically meaningful.

Participants

The study recruited a total of 200 undergraduate students from three comprehensive universities in China, representing a diverse cross-section of academic disciplines, including medical, business administration, and the humanities. This disciplinary diversity was intentionally sought to ensure that the findings would possess broad pedagogical relevance across different educational contexts rather than being confined to language-major cohorts. Among the participants, there was a balanced gender distribution consisting of 100 male and 100 female students, thereby minimizing gender-related confounding effects on language performance and interactional behavior.

Participants' English proficiency levels ranged from B1 to C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), as determined by institutional standardized placement tests administered prior to the intervention. This range represented intermediate to upper-intermediate learners—students who had acquired sufficient grammatical and lexical foundations for communicative tasks yet continued to face persistent challenges in fluency, pronunciation, and spontaneous oral production. Such a population was deemed optimal for evaluating the potential of the integrated TBL-PC-TEL model, which aims to bridge the gap between structural competence and communicative performance.

The selection criteria required that participants (a) had completed at least one year of university-level English instruction, ensuring a consistent baseline of linguistic knowledge; and (b) had limited prior exposure to either task-based learning methodologies or technology-enhanced oral training platforms, thereby reducing the risk of prior familiarity bias. To achieve representativeness and mitigate institutional or disciplinary skew, a stratified random sampling procedure was employed. This involved categorizing students by university, academic major, and proficiency level, followed by proportional random selection from each stratum. The resulting sample thus reflected an equitable distribution across educational contexts, ensuring the generalizability of findings.

All participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of the study. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained in accordance with institutional research ethics protocols. The study strictly adhered to international ethical standards for human-subject research, ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw without penalty at any stage. No personally identifiable information was collected or reported. This rigorous ethical compliance not only protected participants' rights but also strengthened the credibility and transparency of the research process.

Teaching Intervention

The instructional intervention was implemented over a 14-week semester, consisting of two 90-minute sessions per week, resulting in a total of 28 contact sessions. The intervention was designed as an integrated blended-learning framework, synthesizing Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) components. The pedagogical rationale underlying this design was to create a

dynamic and interactive learning ecosystem that simultaneously addressed the cognitive-linguistic, socio-affective, and metacognitive dimensions of oral English learning. Each component was systematically aligned to specific learning objectives and embedded within a continuous cycle of input, interaction, output, and reflection, thereby ensuring both pedagogical coherence and developmental progression.

The Task-Based Learning (TBL) component formed the core of classroom instruction. Students engaged in a series of communicative tasks such as debates, problem-solving scenarios, role-plays, mock conference presentations, and peer interviews. These activities were carefully sequenced from low- to high-complexity tasks, following Ellis's (2003) task complexity framework, to progressively scaffold linguistic and cognitive demands. The primary objective of TBL was to encourage meaning-focused communication and promote authentic oral language use rather than mechanical form practice. Through repeated engagement in goal-oriented interactions, learners developed greater fluency, syntactic accuracy, and pragmatic awareness. Furthermore, tasks were designed to reflect academic and real-world communicative contexts, thereby enhancing both the instrumental and integrative motivation of participants.

The Peer Collaboration (PC) component complemented the task-based approach by embedding opportunities for cooperative dialogue and reciprocal feedback. Students worked in small, heterogeneous groups to conduct peer discussions, provide mutual feedback on oral performances, and complete collaborative mini-projects. These projects often culminated in group presentations or recorded simulations that required negotiation of meaning and shared problem-solving. Peer interaction was guided by the principles of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), emphasizing social mediation and scaffolded learning. The instructor's role was to monitor group processes, ensure equitable participation, and provide linguistic or procedural support as needed. Structured peer evaluation rubrics were introduced to promote reflective learning and accountability, thereby transforming collaboration into a form of formative assessment.

The Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) element extended the learning process beyond the physical classroom. A suite of digital tools was employed to support self-directed practice and continuous feedback loops. These included Duolingo and LingQ for vocabulary and grammar reinforcement, YouGlish for pronunciation modeling and authentic contextual exposure, and mobile voice-recording applications for oral performance tracking. In addition, online discussion forums hosted on institutional learning management systems facilitated asynchronous communication and peer reflection. TEL activities were not isolated but strategically integrated with in-class tasks. For instance, students were required to record digital mock interviews using voice apps, analyze their performance collaboratively, and then receive targeted instructor feedback. This multimodal integration enabled learners to link technology-mediated input with classroom-based interaction, thus enhancing both autonomy and metacognitive awareness.

Overall, the blended TBL-PC-TEL intervention created a hybrid learning ecology that combined the advantages of face-to-face communicative immersion and technology-mediated flexibility. By alternating between collaborative classroom engagement and individualized online practice, students were able to reinforce oral skills through multiple modalities and feedback sources. The systematic alignment of pedagogical strategies ensured that cognitive development, emotional engagement, and technological literacy were mutually reinforcing, ultimately contributing to a holistic improvement in oral English proficiency.

Data Collection

Quantitative Instruments

To assess the impact of the integrated TBL-PC-TEL intervention on students' oral English proficiency and affective development, two quantitative instruments were employed. The first was the Oral Proficiency Test, designed to evaluate key dimensions of spoken performance—namely fluency, accuracy, syntactic complexity, and pronunciation—using a standardized analytic rubric adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) descriptors. A pre-test was administered during Week 0 to establish baseline performance, followed by a post-test at Week 14 to measure progress after the intervention. To enhance the validity and reliability of assessment, all recordings were independently rated by two trained evaluators, and

inter-rater reliability was verified using Cohen's kappa coefficient ($k = 0.87$), indicating a high level of consistency between raters.

The second quantitative instrument was a Speaking Confidence Survey, which consisted of a 5-point Likert scale designed to capture participants' self-perceived confidence in oral communication, their willingness to speak, and their levels of speaking-related anxiety. The survey was administered before and after the intervention to identify changes in learners' affective dispositions toward spoken English. Together, these instruments provided complementary measures of both objective oral performance and subjective communicative confidence, forming a comprehensive quantitative evaluation framework.

Qualitative Instruments

In addition to quantitative measures, qualitative data were collected to gain deeper insight into participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward the TBL-PC-TEL blended instructional model. Two qualitative instruments were employed: semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. The semi-structured interviews involved 30 participants, who were randomly selected from different universities and academic majors to ensure representativeness. Each interview, lasting approximately 30-45 minutes, explored students' perceptions of task-based learning, peer collaboration, and technology-enhanced learning, as well as their overall engagement, motivation, and perceived challenges during the course. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subsequently analyzed to identify recurring themes and patterns related to learners' cognitive, social, and affective responses.

Additionally, all participants maintained weekly reflective journals throughout the 14-week intervention. These journals served as ongoing self-reports documenting students' engagement with tasks, peer collaboration experiences, use of technological tools, and evolving self-assessment of progress. The reflections provided rich qualitative data on learners' strategic behaviors, emotional fluctuations, and motivational shifts, thereby complementing the interview findings and enabling triangulation of data sources. Collectively, these qualitative instruments offered nuanced insights into the learning processes underlying the observed quantitative outcomes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the oral proficiency tests and speaking confidence surveys were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical methods to examine the effects of the TBL-PC-TEL intervention. Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to evaluate significant differences between pre- and post-test scores in both oral proficiency and speaking confidence, thereby determining the degree of improvement attributable to the intervention. To further explore subgroup variations, a series of one-way ANOVA tests were performed to identify potential differences across academic majors, gender, and English proficiency levels. The effect size (Cohen's d) was calculated to assess the practical significance of observed gains beyond mere statistical significance, offering a more nuanced understanding of intervention impact. In addition, reliability and validity analyses were undertaken to ensure robustness of the quantitative instruments. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the survey scales was 0.91, indicating excellent internal consistency, while the oral proficiency rubric was validated by an expert panel of applied linguists and English language instructors to confirm construct validity and scoring accuracy.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews and reflective journals were analyzed through thematic analysis, following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis began with open coding of all transcripts and journal entries, allowing initial categories to emerge inductively from the data. Subsequently, recurring patterns and themes were identified, reflecting learners' cognitive engagement, affective responses, and social interactions during the blended learning process. These emergent themes were then synthesized into a comprehensive thematic map, which illustrated the interrelationships among the cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of oral English learning. To enhance the trustworthiness and

credibility of the findings, data were repeatedly cross-checked, and representative excerpts were used to substantiate identified themes. Furthermore, triangulation with quantitative results was employed to ensure a comprehensive and corroborated interpretation of the data.

Integration

To achieve a holistic understanding of the intervention's impact, the quantitative and qualitative results were integrated through joint display matrices that visually and analytically compared numerical improvements with corresponding learner narratives. This convergent mixed-methods integration enabled the identification of meaningful relationships between performance outcomes and experiential data. For instance, improvements in fluency and accuracy were examined alongside student-reported increases in speaking confidence, while patterns of technology use (TEL) were linked to reported gains in vocabulary acquisition, learner autonomy, and engagement. Such integration not only strengthened the interpretive validity of findings but also provided a multi-dimensional perspective on how the TBL-PC-TEL model facilitated both linguistic and affective development in oral English learning.

Summary

This methodological framework establishes a rigorous and multidimensional foundation for examining the effectiveness of an integrated Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) intervention in promoting oral English proficiency. By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative paradigms, the study achieves a comprehensive understanding of both measurable performance outcomes and contextualized learner experiences. The quantitative component-including assessments of fluency, accuracy, complexity, pronunciation, and confidence-provides objective indicators of linguistic development, while the qualitative inquiry-through interviews and reflective journals-offers rich insights into the cognitive, affective, and social processes that shape learners' engagement and motivation. This integrative approach captures the dynamic interplay between observable performance and subjective experience, thereby illuminating the multifaceted nature of second language acquisition in technologically mediated and collaborative environments.

Moreover, the methodological design adheres to established best practices in mixed-methods research within applied linguistics (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), emphasizing triangulation, validity, and contextual relevance. The concurrent collection and subsequent integration of both data types enhance interpretive credibility and allow for the identification of convergent and divergent trends. Such an evidence-based approach ensures that findings are not only empirically robust but also pedagogically actionable, offering practical implications for curriculum design, instructional strategy, and digital resource integration. Ultimately, this research design contributes to the advancement of evidence-informed pedagogy in oral English education, fostering a nuanced understanding of how blended methodologies can effectively support learners' communicative competence and confidence in authentic academic and professional contexts.

RESULTS / FINDINGS

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of both quantitative and qualitative findings from the study investigating the effectiveness of a blended Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) intervention on university students' oral English proficiency. The quantitative results examine measurable improvements across multiple dimensions of spoken language performance, including fluency, grammatical and lexical accuracy, syntactic and lexical complexity, pronunciation, and self-reported speaking confidence. These metrics provide objective evidence of the intervention's impact on learners' communicative competence. Complementing these data, the qualitative findings-derived from semi-structured interviews and reflective journals-offer nuanced insights into students' perceptions of instructional effectiveness, engagement patterns, collaborative experiences, use of technology, and perceived challenges throughout the 14-week intervention. By integrating these two strands of evidence, this chapter elucidates not only the observable gains in oral proficiency but also the underlying cognitive, affective, and social processes that contribute to the development of holistic communicative competence in a blended learning environment.

Quantitative Findings

Pre- and Post-Intervention Oral Proficiency

The quantitative analysis of oral proficiency revealed substantial improvements across all measured dimensions following the 14-week blended TBL-PC-TEL intervention. Table 1 summarizes the pre-test and post-test mean scores, standard deviations, t-values, p-values, and effect sizes for fluency, accuracy, complexity, pronunciation, and speaking confidence.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Intervention Oral English Scores (n = 200)

Dimension	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Fluency	3.1 (0.62)	4.6 (0.54)	11.42	<0.001	1.20
Accuracy	2.9 (0.68)	4.3 (0.57)	10.55	<0.001	1.10
Complexity	3.0 (0.65)	4.2 (0.60)	9.87	<0.001	1.00
Pronunciation	2.8 (0.71)	4.2 (0.62)	10.12	<0.001	1.05
Confidence	2.7 (0.69)	4.1 (0.61)	12.05	<0.001	1.30

The paired-sample t-tests indicated that all dimensions improved significantly ($p < 0.001$), with large effect sizes, demonstrating that the intervention effectively enhanced students' oral English proficiency and speaking confidence. Notably, fluency and confidence showed the largest gains, suggesting that the combination of task-based activities, peer collaboration, and technology-enhanced learning is particularly effective in fostering spontaneous oral production and self-efficacy. Improvements in accuracy, complexity, and pronunciation further indicate that the intervention supported holistic oral development, integrating both form-focused and meaning-focused components. Overall, these findings provide strong empirical evidence that a blended TBL-PC-TEL approach can produce significant, measurable improvements in both the cognitive-linguistic and affective aspects of university students' oral English proficiency.

Group Comparisons

To explore potential subgroup differences, ANOVA analyses were conducted across gender, academic major, and initial English proficiency levels. The results indicated that no significant differences emerged between male and female students ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that the blended TBL-PC-TEL intervention was equally effective regardless of gender. Similarly, comparisons between English majors and non-majors revealed comparable gains ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the instructional model produced universally positive effects across disciplines. However, differences related to initial proficiency levels were observed: students with higher baseline proficiency (B2-C1) tended to achieve slightly greater improvements in accuracy and complexity, reflecting their capacity to refine grammatical and lexical structures. In contrast, lower proficiency students (B1) demonstrated more pronounced gains in fluency and speaking confidence, highlighting the differentiated benefits of the blended instructional approach for learners with varying language backgrounds. These findings underscore the adaptability of TBL-PC-TEL strategies, effectively supporting both skill consolidation in advanced learners and confidence-building in less proficient students.

TEL Usage Correlation

The relationship between students' engagement with Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) tools and oral English outcomes was examined using Pearson correlation analyses. TEL engagement, measured in hours per week, was positively correlated with post-test scores across all dimensions of oral proficiency and confidence, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation Between TEL Engagement and Post-Test Oral English Scores (n = 200)

Dimension	Correlation (r)	p-value
Fluency	0.42	<0.01
Accuracy	0.36	<0.01
Complexity	0.38	<0.01
Pronunciation	0.45	<0.001
Confidence	0.51	<0.001

These results indicate that students who actively engaged with TEL tools—including language apps, online recording platforms, and discussion boards—achieved higher proficiency and confidence gains, providing empirical support for the role of TEL in autonomous learning. The strongest correlations were observed for speaking confidence ($r = 0.51$) and pronunciation ($r = 0.45$), highlighting the capacity of technology-mediated practice to enhance both affective readiness and phonological accuracy. Overall, these findings reinforce the pedagogical value of integrating TEL within a blended TBL-PC framework, offering learners opportunities for self-directed practice, feedback, and iterative improvement.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews and reflective journals identified four major themes, providing nuanced insights into students' experiences with the blended TBL-PC-TEL intervention. These themes highlight the cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of oral English development, complementing the quantitative results presented earlier.

Enhanced Engagement and Motivation

Students consistently reported heightened engagement and motivation, which they attributed to the use of interactive, meaningful, and authentic tasks. One student noted, "I enjoyed preparing for debates and interviews. It made me really think in English instead of translating from Chinese" (Student A, B2, Engineering), while another remarked, "Using apps to practice vocabulary before the presentations motivated me to try new words in class" (Student B, B1, Business). Reflective journals corroborated these perceptions, indicating that authentic tasks and TEL tools increased time-on-task and sustained attention. This enhanced engagement aligns with the quantitative findings, particularly the improvements observed in fluency and complexity, suggesting that student motivation and active participation were key mediating factors in performance gains.

Increased Confidence and Autonomy

The integration of peer collaboration and TEL activities was reported to reduce speaking anxiety and foster self-directed learning, leading to notable increases in learner confidence. One participant reflected, "Recording my speaking tasks and listening to myself helped me notice mistakes without fear" (Student C, B2, Humanities), while another highlighted the supportive social context: "Working in small groups gave me the courage to speak more; my classmates were supportive" (Student D, B1, Engineering). Students' accounts consistently linked confidence growth with the improvements in fluency and self-reported speaking confidence scores observed quantitatively, suggesting that social scaffolding and technological mediation synergistically supported affective and cognitive development.

Practical Skill Application

Participants valued tasks that simulated real-world scenarios, perceiving these activities as directly relevant to future professional contexts. For instance, one student reported, "Mock interviews were very useful. I feel more

prepared for future job interviews in English” (Student E, B2, Business), while another reflected, “Debates helped me think on my feet and use complex sentences naturally” (Student F, B2, Engineering). These experiences reinforced the quantitative evidence for improvements in accuracy and complexity, demonstrating that authentic communicative tasks promoted the application of linguistic knowledge in contextually meaningful ways.

Challenges and Barriers

Despite overall positive outcomes, students reported several challenges that could hinder optimal learning. Speaking anxiety in large-class settings remained an issue, with one student noting, “I still felt nervous presenting in front of 50 classmates, even after group practice.” Technological access was another limitation, as some students lacked devices or experienced unstable internet connections, restricting participation in TEL activities. Additionally, vocabulary limitations occasionally impeded lower proficiency learners from fully expressing ideas, affecting task performance. These insights suggest that while the blended intervention is effective, targeted support, scaffolded TEL integration, and adaptive task design are necessary to maximize benefits and address learner heterogeneity.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a comprehensive understanding of the effects of the blended TBL-PC-TEL intervention on students’ oral English proficiency. Fluency and speaking confidence improvements observed in the post-test scores were corroborated by students’ self-reports of reduced anxiety and increased engagement, indicating that the intervention effectively supported both linguistic performance and affective readiness. Similarly, gains in complexity and accuracy were closely associated with the structured design of task-based activities and the provision of peer feedback, highlighting the crucial role of collaborative, scaffolded tasks in fostering both syntactic and lexical development.

Furthermore, TEL engagement was positively correlated with higher performance outcomes and increased learner autonomy, reinforcing its function as a tool for self-directed practice, error awareness, and iterative improvement. Qualitative data also revealed persistent challenges, such as speaking anxiety in large-class settings, technological limitations, and vocabulary constraints, which were not captured by quantitative metrics alone. This underscores the importance of a mixed-methods approach, as it allows researchers and educators to understand both objective performance gains and the contextual, experiential factors influencing learning. Overall, the convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrates that the blended TBL-PC-TEL model supports holistic oral English development, integrating cognitive, social, and affective dimensions in a way that single-method interventions may not fully achieve.

Summary

This chapter demonstrates that a blended TBL-PC-TEL intervention yields substantial and meaningful improvements in university students’ oral English proficiency and speaking confidence. Quantitative analyses revealed statistically significant gains across all measured dimensions, including fluency, accuracy, complexity, pronunciation, and self-reported confidence, with large effect sizes, confirming the pedagogical effectiveness of the integrated instructional approach. Subgroup analyses indicated no significant differences between academic majors or gender groups, suggesting that the intervention is broadly applicable across disciplines and learner demographics.

Furthermore, TEL engagement was positively correlated with oral performance and learner autonomy, emphasizing the critical role of technology-mediated, self-directed practice in supporting iterative improvement and error awareness. Qualitative findings complemented these results, highlighting increased motivation, confidence, and practical skill application, while also revealing persistent challenges such as speaking anxiety in large-class settings and technological limitations. Collectively, the convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence provides robust empirical support for the implementation of integrated, task-based, collaborative, and technology-enhanced instructional strategies in university oral English curricula. These findings establish a

strong foundation for the discussion in the subsequent chapter, where the implications for theory, pedagogy, and future research will be further elaborated.

DISCUSSION

This chapter interprets the findings of the study by integrating quantitative and qualitative results with existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks. The discussion examines the effectiveness of the blended TBL-PC-TEL intervention, considers pedagogical and theoretical implications, and addresses the limitations of the study while suggesting directions for future research.

Interpretation of Quantitative Results

The quantitative results demonstrated significant improvements in university students' oral English proficiency across multiple dimensions, including fluency, accuracy, complexity, pronunciation, and self-reported confidence. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the efficacy of task-based and technology-supported instruction in EFL contexts (Ellis, 2003; Swain, 2005; Chen & Hsu, 2022).

Fluency gains were among the most pronounced, which aligns with students' qualitative reports of reduced speaking anxiety and enhanced motivation. This outcome supports the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), suggesting that a lowered affective filter facilitates increased language output. Improvements in confidence scores similarly reflect enhanced self-efficacy in oral communication. The positive correlation between TEL engagement and speaking confidence further indicates that autonomous, technology-mediated practice reinforces self-directed learning, reducing dependence on classroom-only interactions and allowing learners to engage in iterative practice at their own pace.

Accuracy and complexity also exhibited significant gains, consistent with the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996) and the output hypothesis (Swain, 2000). Structured TBL tasks required students to produce meaningful output, negotiate meaning, and receive feedback from peers and instructors, facilitating the development of grammatical accuracy and syntactic sophistication. Gains in complexity reflect students' growing ability to integrate higher-level vocabulary and varied sentence structures, particularly in role-plays and mock presentations, which closely simulate authentic communicative contexts.

Pronunciation improvements were strongly associated with TEL tools that provided immediate feedback and audio modeling, consistent with prior studies emphasizing repetitive listening-practice and recording tasks in digital environments (Stockwell, 2012; Asratie, 2023). Reflective journals indicated that listening to one's own recordings and those of peers facilitated self-correction and heightened phonetic awareness, supporting autonomous development of accurate pronunciation.

Interpretation of Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of interviews and reflective journals identified four central themes: enhanced engagement and motivation, increased confidence and autonomy, practical skill application, and challenges/barriers. These qualitative insights complement quantitative outcomes by elucidating learners' lived experiences and perceptions.

The theme of enhanced engagement and motivation highlights that interactive tasks and TEL tools increased intrinsic motivation and time-on-task. Students valued authentic communicative contexts that required active problem-solving and real-time interaction, which is consistent with findings from Elder and Kim (2020) and Li (2021). Such authentic engagement supports sustained attention and deeper processing of language input, fostering meaningful learning.

Increased confidence and autonomy emerged as a critical outcome. Peer collaboration and TEL activities reduced anxiety and promoted self-directed learning. According to sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), peer interaction and scaffolding facilitate learners' progression within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), allowing them to accomplish tasks beyond their independent capabilities. Reflective accounts indicated that both group support

and the opportunity to rehearse and reflect independently contributed to greater willingness to speak and increased perceived competence.

The practical skill application theme underscores the value of tasks simulating real-world communication, such as mock interviews and debates. Students reported that these activities enhanced their readiness for academic and professional environments, aligning with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles emphasizing functional and contextually grounded language use (Richards, 2006). These experiences support the quantitative findings of improved complexity, accuracy, and fluency, demonstrating that contextualized practice facilitates skill transfer beyond classroom exercises.

Despite these positive outcomes, students reported several challenges and barriers, including persistent speaking anxiety in large-class settings, technological limitations, and vocabulary constraints, particularly among lower-proficiency learners. These insights highlight the need for targeted scaffolding, structured TEL integration, and differentiated support to maximize the efficacy of blended interventions.

Integration with Literature

The study's findings corroborate prior empirical evidence regarding TBL, PC, and TEL. Task-based activities were shown to enhance fluency, accuracy, and complexity by engaging students in authentic, outcome-focused tasks (Ellis, 2003; Zhang & Wang, 2021). Peer collaboration effectively reduced anxiety and promoted negotiation of meaning, consistent with sociocultural perspectives emphasizing social mediation in learning (Swain, 2000; Li & Ni, 2018). TEL provided autonomous practice opportunities, reinforcing pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition (Stockwell, 2012; Huang, 2024).

Importantly, the blended TBL-PC-TEL approach produced synergistic effects that exceeded the impact of individual strategies, supporting calls for holistic, multi-dimensional interventions in oral English instruction (Chen & Hsu, 2022). Additionally, this study contributes context-specific evidence for Chinese university settings, addressing a critical gap in the literature concerning combined interventions and the application of mixed-methods evaluation.

Summary

In conclusion, the discussion highlights that the blended TBL-PC-TEL intervention effectively enhanced university students' oral English proficiency, supporting theoretical predictions from sociocultural theory, the output hypothesis, and affective filter models. The integrated approach addresses both cognitive-linguistic and affective dimensions, offering substantial pedagogical value. Despite certain limitations, the study provides robust empirical evidence and practical guidance for designing holistic, learner-centered oral English curricula, while also identifying promising avenues for future research aimed at sustaining and extending oral proficiency gains.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effectiveness of a blended Task-Based Learning (TBL), Peer Collaboration (PC), and Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) intervention in enhancing oral English proficiency among Chinese university students. Employing a convergent mixed-methods design, the research integrated quantitative measures of fluency, accuracy, complexity, pronunciation, and self-reported confidence with qualitative insights derived from interviews and reflective journals. This comprehensive methodological approach enabled a nuanced understanding of how integrated pedagogical strategies influence both learners' oral performance and their subjective learning experiences.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed several notable outcomes. First, quantitative analysis demonstrated significant improvements across all measured dimensions, with large effect sizes confirming the effectiveness of the integrated instructional approach in enhancing oral proficiency. Second, qualitative evidence indicated that

students experienced greater engagement, confidence, and motivation, while also identifying challenges related to speaking anxiety, technological access, and vocabulary limitations. Third, the study highlighted the critical role of TEL: active engagement with digital tools was positively correlated with proficiency gains and self-reported autonomy, underscoring technology's potential to promote self-directed oral practice. Finally, the results revealed a synergistic effect arising from the integration of TBL, PC, and TEL, showing that the combination of these pedagogical strategies simultaneously addressed cognitive, social, and affective dimensions of language learning-producing complementary benefits beyond those of any single approach.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to applied linguistics and language pedagogy in multiple ways. It reinforces sociocultural theory, illustrating how peer scaffolding supports learners' progression within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The findings also validate Swain's output hypothesis, showing that task-based production encourages learners to notice linguistic gaps and refine syntactic accuracy. Moreover, the research provides empirical support for affective filter and self-determination theories, demonstrating how engagement and autonomy enhance intrinsic motivation and confidence in oral communication. Collectively, these insights emphasize the necessity of integrating multiple theoretical lenses to design evidence-based instructional frameworks that holistically address the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of second language acquisition.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings offer actionable guidance for language educators and curriculum designers. Instructors are encouraged to integrate authentic, sequenced oral tasks that scaffold communicative competence and sustain motivation. Structured peer collaboration-through group work and peer feedback-should be embedded to promote negotiation of meaning and reduce speaking anxiety. Technology integration remains vital, as digital platforms can facilitate autonomous learning, provide immediate feedback, and foster reflective engagement. Additionally, assessment practices that blend formative and summative elements are recommended to capture dynamic changes in oral proficiency. Collectively, these strategies promote the development of holistic, learner-centered curricula that cultivate sustainable oral communication competence in higher education.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its promising results, this study has certain limitations. The sample, drawn from three Chinese universities, may constrain the generalizability of findings to other educational or cultural contexts. The 14-week duration also limits insights into the long-term retention of oral gains. Moreover, self-reported qualitative data may be influenced by social desirability bias, while technological disparities among participants could have affected engagement with TEL activities. Future research should therefore adopt longitudinal and cross-cultural designs to examine the sustainability and adaptability of the TBL-PC-TEL model across diverse learning environments. The incorporation of AI-assisted pronunciation systems and adaptive learning platforms may further refine personalization and learner engagement. Finally, differentiated scaffolding strategies for varying proficiency levels could enhance inclusivity and ensure equitable learning benefits.

Final Remarks

In conclusion, this study provides strong empirical evidence that the integrated TBL-PC-TEL framework significantly improves university students' oral English proficiency by aligning cognitive development, social interaction, and emotional engagement. More than a conventional blended approach, this model represents an innovative pedagogical framework that bridges the cognitive, social, and affective dimensions of language learning within a unified system. Unlike previous models that have tended to emphasize one dimension in isolation, the TBL-PC-TEL design demonstrates how these components dynamically interact to foster meaningful communication, learner autonomy, and sustained motivation.

By articulating this multi-dimensional and human-centered design, the study not only advances theoretical understanding but also contributes to pedagogical and policy discussions on sustainable English language education. It underscores the need for curricula that integrate authentic tasks, collaborative learning, and digital

empowerment, enabling learners to build confidence and communicative competence in real-world contexts. Taken together, these contributions highlight the originality and significance of the study, offering a replicable and theoretically grounded framework for future research and practice in technology-mediated language learning.

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