

FOSTERING FLUENCY OVER FORM: IMPLEMENTING TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) TO REDUCE SPEAKING ANXIETY IN MARITIME EDUCATION

Elisa Rosiana ¹, Zahratun Nufus ², Niken Paramita ³

¹ Akademi Maritim Nusantara Banjarmasin

² STAI Rasyidiyah Khalidiyah (Rakha) Amuntai

³ Universitas Widya Gama Malang

[¹elisarosiana@amnus-bjm.ac.id](mailto:elisarosiana@amnus-bjm.ac.id)

[²zahratun918@gmail.com](mailto:zahratun918@gmail.com)

[³niken@widyagama.ac.id](mailto:niken@widyagama.ac.id)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of a personalized "My Idol" presentation task within a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework on the speaking confidence and oral fluency of maritime cadets. Operating within a highly regimented academy environment, these vocational learners frequently experience severe speaking paralysis. Using a qualitative case study design, this research examined cadets across port management and maritime transportation programs. Data were gathered through classroom observations, audio-visual recordings, and open-ended questionnaires during the instructional cycle. The findings reveal that the task successfully lowered the cadets' affective filters, mitigated speaking anxiety, and significantly accelerated spontaneous oral fluency. By decoupling basic communicative fluency from complex technical jargon through a high-familiarity topic, the intervention effectively disarmed the students' psychological defense mechanisms. Additionally, the integration of delayed feedback facilitated deep grammatical internalization during the post-task stage without interrupting the communicative flow. This study provides a clear pedagogical justification for a sequential, scaffolded paradigm in vocational language training, proving that psychological security and communicative intent must precede structural accuracy to ensure sustainable professional readiness.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching; speaking confidence; oral fluency; maritime cadets

In the contemporary era of globalized trade and rapid maritime development, effective oral English communication has firmly established itself as a critical safety, operational, and administrative prerequisite across the global seafaring landscape. Future maritime professionals, including shipboard seafarers, port administrators, and international logistics officers, operate in high-stakes environments where clear, rapid and accurate verbal exchanges are directly tied to environmental protection, structural efficiency, and the prevention of maritime disasters.

However, navigating English usage within this highly diverse sector is fraught with complex cultural and linguistic challenges that frequently impede student performance and hinder real-time professional coordination (Barus et al., 2024). Maritime training institutions have traditionally relied on a rigid, structuralist approach, prioritizing passive reading comprehension, rote memorization, and abstract grammar formulas over active, spontaneous speech production. This traditional framework creates a severe pedagogical mismatch, as it fails to prepare students for the fluid, unpredictable communicative demands of the maritime industry. To bridge this widening gap, modern maritime pedagogy must transition toward effective teaching strategies that directly address the core influencing factors of oral production, optimizing both learner engagement and authentic workplace readiness (Katuuk, 2024). Consequently, a robust body of contemporary literature underscores the urgent need to re-evaluate traditional pedagogical approaches and assessment mechanisms to better foster active speaking proficiency among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students who face demanding global industries upon graduation (Saptiany & Prabowo, 2024).

Despite the clear professional and economic incentives for mastering the language, Indonesian maritime cadets frequently experience severe speaking paralysis and communicative withdrawal within the classroom setting. This multi-layered barrier is deeply rooted in an intricate combination of complex linguistic hurdles and intense psychological blockages. On one hand, vocational learners are completely overwhelmed by the daunting complexity and cognitive load associated with specialized maritime English terminologies, which often cause them to experience sudden cognitive freezing and completely withdraw from classroom interaction (Abimanto & Mahendro, 2025). On the other hand, this linguistic struggle is heavily exacerbated by intense affective barriers, most notably debilitating speaking anxiety. When institutional instructional designs prioritize immediate grammatical accuracy and structural perfection over the active expression of meaning, students develop a persistent fear of negative evaluation, public failure, and peer judgment. The interplay between language anxiety and instructional task design serves as a critical determinant in second language acquisition, as an elevated affective filter can completely shut down a student's willingness to communicate and block long-term language retention (Nuaimi, 2024). This psychological paralysis is further magnified within the rigid, semi-military ecosystem of maritime academies, where the cultural emphasis on absolute precision and strict discipline often inadvertently breeds an overwhelming dread of making structural mistakes, causing cadets to choose defensive silence over active verbal practice.

To dissolve these deeply ingrained linguistic and psychological walls, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a highly effective instructional strategy to counter conventional classroom limitations and actively foster authentic speaking skills within modern English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Gunawan & Gunawan, 2025). By fundamentally shifting the central focus of the lesson from abstract, isolated linguistic forms to the natural completion of meaningful, goal-oriented tasks, TBLT encourages learners to utilize their existing language resources spontaneously and creatively. This meaning-centered approach has proven exceptionally successful in significantly improving speaking fluency among adult ESL learners, as it systematically liberates them from the heavy cognitive constraints of real-time grammatical self-editing and structural over-analysis (Hambardzumyan, 2025). Furthermore, implementing TBLT in higher education settings has been shown to significantly boost students' individual self-confidence and academic resilience, creating a supportive, collaborative environment where linguistic errors are treated as natural components of the developmental learning curve rather than operational failures (Lee, 2025). When classroom tasks are appropriately

sequenced, highly interactive, and personally relevant, they inherently enhance overall oral fluency by allowing learners to prioritize their communicative intent and message delivery over flawless structural perfection (Quynh, 2025).

The practical utility and adaptability of TBLT extend prominently into interdisciplinary and specialized professional domains, making it an ideal candidate for vocational language curriculum restructuring. Research indicates that the potential of task-based language learning is heavily amplified when integrated into interdisciplinary frameworks that mimic authentic real-world problem-solving and realistic industrial workflows (Radu, 2024). For ESP students who require practical, highly functional communication skills, a comprehensive examination of TBLT reveals that it significantly enhances oral proficiency by anchoring target language items directly to specific professional domains and situational communicative tasks (Rinantanti et al., 2024). In vocational education, this communicative model is highly prized for its unique capacity to deliver workplace-oriented speaking competencies, ensuring that graduating cadets can seamlessly transition from the academy to their future professional roles without experiencing professional culture shock (Mawaddah, 2025). Within maritime training specifically, recent pedagogical innovations have successfully explored blended task-based language teaching, capturing highly positive student voices from upgrading programs and demonstrating the immense flexibility of TBLT in modern, digitized maritime English curricula (Andiansyah et al., 2025).

However, a critical micro-pedagogical gap persists within the existing maritime ESP literature that this paper seeks to systematically address. While macro-level TBLT frameworks and high-fidelity industrial simulations like the Teaching Factory are widely advocated to maximize industry readiness, they frequently overlook the immediate psychological needs and affective filters of lower-proficiency, highly anxious cadets. Forcing structurally paralyzed students into complex, technically dense maritime tasks too early often induces severe cognitive overload, ultimately reinforcing their communication barriers and worsening classroom silence. To prevent this, language learning must be anchored to highly accessible, personally meaningful production-oriented tasks to successfully cultivate sustainable English-speaking skills that build true baseline confidence before transitioning to technical jargon (Dewi et al., 2025). This study directly addresses this gap by investigating a novel, low-stakes TBLT intervention: the **"My Idol" presentation task**, implemented within the D3 Port Management and D4 Maritime Transportation programs at **Akademi Maritim Nusantara (AMNUS) Banjarmasin**. By leveraging high topic familiarity and intrinsic personal motivation, this task aims to disarm cadets' psychological defense mechanisms before introducing complex industry jargon. The explicit purpose of this paper is to investigate the extent to which implementing a personalized "My Idol" presentation task within a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework enhances the speaking confidence and oral fluency of Indonesian maritime cadets.

METHOD

To address the research objective effectively, this study employs a descriptive qualitative research design, specifically utilizing a qualitative case study approach. This approach is chosen for its capacity to explore complex phenomena within their natural context, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the subject under investigation. As noted by Supriyono (2024), a qualitative approach is essential for capturing the subjective meanings and intricate realities embedded within the research environment, which is fundamental for providing an accurate and detailed descriptive analysis.

In operationalizing this study, we follow the robust framework established by Taylor and Healy (2023), whose work on case study methodology provides a rigorous structure for the

systematic collection and analysis of empirical data. To ensure a methodical approach to data processing, the study adopts the *Qualitative Case Analysis* framework as outlined by Richstein (2026), which guides the essential phases of data reduction, coding, and categorization. Finally, the interpretation and synthesis of findings are conducted in accordance with the principles for presenting results in qualitative case studies, ensuring the validity and depth of the narrative as discussed by Richstein (2026).

This design is selected because it allows for an in-depth, holistic exploration of a contemporary pedagogical intervention within its real-life vocational context, focusing squarely on how the implementation of the "My Idol" presentation under a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework influences cadets' psychological and linguistic outcomes. Rather than manipulating variables in an artificial laboratory setting, this qualitative approach prioritizes capturing the authentic experiences, behavioral shifts, and nuanced expressions of speaking confidence and oral fluency as they naturally manifest within the maritime English classroom environment. By tracking the participants through the sequential phases of the task, the design ensures a comprehensive understanding of the operational dynamics of the TBLT intervention and its practical implications for specialized vocational training.

The subjects of this research were maritime cadets (*taruna*) enrolled at Akademi Maritim Nusantara (AMNUS) Banjarmasin, specifically within the vocational study programs of D3 Port Management and D4 Maritime Transportation. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select a specific class cohort of cadets who were actively undertaking the Maritime English course and demonstrated pronounced levels of speaking anxiety or grammar-heavy structural paralysis during initial academic sessions. The subjects of this research were 30 maritime cadets (*taruna*) enrolled at Akademi Maritim Nusantara (AMNUS) Banjarmasin, specifically within the vocational study programs of D3 Port Management and D4 Maritime Transportation. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select this cohort, as they were actively undertaking the Maritime English course and demonstrated pronounced levels of speaking anxiety or grammar-heavy structural paralysis during initial academic sessions.

This select group provided a rich and relevant pool of participants whose communicative struggles directly aligned with the core problem under investigation. Conducting the study within this highly disciplined, semi-military academy setting offered a unique institutional backdrop, allowing the researcher to observe how the introduction of a low-stakes, personalized speaking task could disrupt traditional classroom dynamics and cultivate individual communicative security.

The data sources for this investigation comprised both primary and secondary qualitative inputs to ensure a comprehensive triangulation of the findings. Primary data sources included real-time classroom observations of the cadets' verbal and non-verbal behaviors, audio-visual recordings of their "My Idol" presentation performances, and direct textual responses from post-task open-ended questionnaires. Secondary data sources included the researcher's detailed field notes and speaking rubrics evaluating confidence markers. Data collection was systematically over a period of 3 weeks, comprising 6 instructional sessions, across the three core stages of the TBLT framework. During the pre-task stage, data collection focused on documenting the initial engagement and baseline anxiety levels of the cadets as the task was introduced. In the main task cycle stage, the focus shifted to recording the actual presentations, capturing oral fluency indicators such as speech rate, hesitation pauses, and the cadets' capacity to maintain a communicative flow while discussing their chosen idols. Finally, during the language focus stage and the immediate post-intervention period, open-ended questionnaires were administered to

capture the cadets' self-perceptions, shifts in confidence, and reflective insights regarding their language learning experience.

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive qualitative analysis model, which involves an ongoing, cyclical process of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification as in Günbayi (2023). First, all verbal data from the audio-visual recordings of the presentations and textual descriptions from field notes and questionnaires were meticulously transcribed and systematically organized. Through data reduction, the researcher filtered out irrelevant details and coded the remaining texts based on specific thematic nodes, such as behavioral markers of speaking confidence, shifts in oral fluency, reduction of affective filters, and cadet responses to delayed grammatical feedback. Next, data display was executed by arranging the coded excerpts into cohesive narrative structures that systematically traced the cadets' behavioral and linguistic evolution from the initial high-anxiety baseline to the post-presentation reflective stage. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were performed by comparing the displayed narratives against the established theoretical frameworks of TBLT, topic familiarity, and the affective filter hypothesis. This rigorous triangulation of observations, presentation performances, and participant self-reports ensured the validity, trustworthiness, and academic integrity of the qualitative findings.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the qualitative data collected throughout the instructional cycle reveals that the implementation of a personalized "My Idol" presentation within a TBLT framework yielded significant positive transformations in both the speaking confidence and oral fluency of the maritime cadets at Akademi Maritim Nusantara (AMNUS) Banjarmasin. The research findings directly address the primary research objective by demonstrating how shifting the pedagogical focus from rigid grammatical form to communicative meaning allows highly anxious vocational students to overcome their deeply ingrained speaking blockages. By tracing the participants' progression across the sequential phases of the task, the data offer clear evidence of a marked reduction in psychological barriers, a notable acceleration in spontaneous speech production, and a more robust internalization of language forms during the reflective stages of learning. Crucially, these scientific discoveries highlight a distinct developmental trajectory that departs from conventional vocational language outcomes, proving that psychological security and topic relevance are fundamental prerequisites for successful language acquisition in a specialized educational setting.

In the initial phase of the study, during the pre-task stage, the data captured a substantial shift in the cadets' affective states compared to their historical performance in traditional grammar-heavy lessons. Prior to the intervention, the cadets within the D3 Port Management and D4 Maritime Transportation programs consistently exhibited severe structural paralysis, characterized by a complete reluctance to initiate speech due to an overwhelming fear of making grammatical errors. However, when the "My Idol" presentation task was introduced, the descriptive field notes and initial observation checklists documented an immediate change in classroom dynamics. Instead of the typical defensive silence that characterizes an evaluation-heavy environment, the cadets demonstrated active engagement and curiosity. This initial alleviation of anxiety represents a key scientific finding, as it indicates that the mere restructuring of a task around a highly accessible and personal concept can immediately disarm the psychological defense mechanisms of anxious learners.

This reduction in baseline anxiety differs significantly from the findings of previous publications that investigate language difficulties in maritime education. For instance, recent

scholarship by Abimanto and Mahendro (2025) strongly emphasizes that the primary obstacle to oral production among Indonesian cadets is the daunting complexity and cognitive overload associated with specialized maritime English terminologies. While their study concludes that technical vocabulary density is the root cause of classroom silence, the findings of the current study reveal a different underlying mechanism. The data collected during this pre-task intervention demonstrates that when the cognitive load of technical jargon is completely removed and replaced with a high-familiarity topic, the cadets' communicative blockages are rapidly minimized. This suggests that the speaking paralysis observed in maritime academies is not merely a linguistic issue tied to technical terminology, but is fundamentally a pedagogical and psychological issue rooted in traditional instructional designs. By modifying the task structure, this framework directly engages the core influencing factors of second language acquisition, demonstrating that language anxiety is highly malleable and can be effectively mitigated through supportive, low-stakes task designs (Nuaimi, 2024). The psychological transition and the structural relationship between the regimented institutional background and the personalized TBLT intervention are visually mapped in the conceptual framework below.

Figures

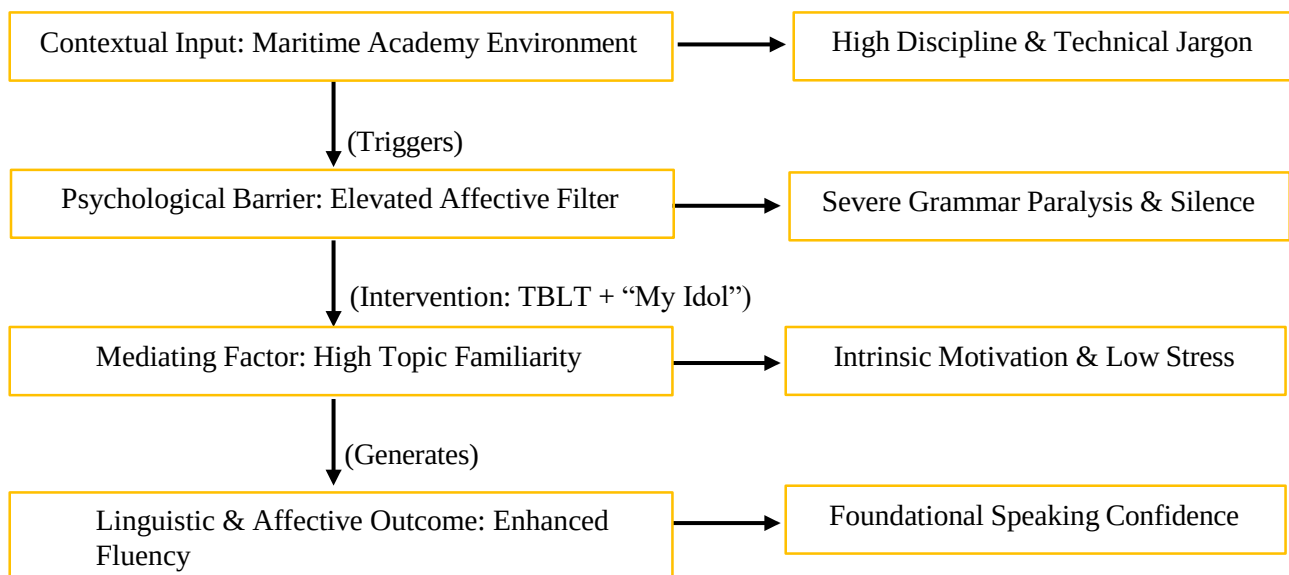


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of De-Freezing Effect in Maritime Cadets
(Source: Author's construct, 2026)

During the execution of the main task cycle, where the cadets delivered their presentations regarding their chosen idols, the primary data sources revealed a dramatic enhancement in oral fluency. Quantitative markers of qualitative fluency such as an accelerated speech rate, the expansion of continuous spoken utterances, and a sharp reduction in unnatural hesitation pauses all showed marked improvements. In typical classroom settings, these cadets average very short, fragmented sentences, often stopping mid-speech to mentally translate sentences or correct verb tenses. During the "My Idol" presentations, however, the audio-visual recordings captured a much smoother, continuous flow of speech. Cadets spoke for extended periods without experiencing the cognitive freezing that normally derails their communicative efforts. They used natural gestures,

maintained consistent eye contact with their peers, and successfully conveyed their admiration for their idols using their existing linguistic resources, showing a high willingness to communicate despite minor structural imperfections.

These oral fluency results align with and expand upon contemporary literature regarding TBLT implementations among adult learners. Previous studies, such as the work by Quynh (2025), have argued that task-based teaching is highly effective for enhancing speaking fluency because it allows learners to prioritize communicative meaning over abstract form. The findings of this research strongly corroborates this claim, demonstrating that when the maritime cadets were liberated from immediate grammatical evaluation, their communicative output expanded significantly. Furthermore, our findings reinforce the conclusions of Gunawan and Gunawan (2025), who identified task-based learning as a premier instructional strategy to foster active, spontaneous speaking skills in conventional EFL classrooms. However, a crucial point of divergence between our results and these general ESL publications lies in the intensity of the transformation within a specialized vocational context. While general adult ESL learners show steady improvement under TBLT, our maritime cadets exhibited an exceptionally dramatic "de-freezing" effect. Because these cadets operate within a highly disciplined, regimented, semi-military academy environment, the introduction of a fluid, meaning-centered TBLT task provided a psychological release that had a far more profound impact on their willingness to communicate than what is typically observed in standard, civilian educational settings.

The behavioral and psychological data analyzed from the post-task questionnaires further illuminated the power of the "Idol" factor in lowering the affective filter and fostering genuine speaking confidence. The cadets chose a wide array of figures to present, ranging from prominent international maritime captains and creative entrepreneurs to popular cultural figures and historical icons. The qualitative analysis of their written reflections revealed that this freedom of choice generated a high level of intrinsic motivation. Cadets reported that because they felt a deep personal connection to the topic, their desire to successfully share the story of their idol completely overshadowed their anxiety about making language mistakes. This psychological security enabled them to project their voices louder, speak with greater emotional resonance, and handle impromptu questions from the audience with unprecedented confidence, effectively navigating the intense cultural and linguistic challenges that typically disrupt global maritime education (Barus et al., 2024).

This finding presents an interesting contrast to the broader literature on TBLT for adult language learners. In a comprehensive study on adult ESL groups, Hambardzumyan (2025) noted that while TBLT consistently improves fluency, adult learners often experience persistent anxiety regarding their professional identity and peer judgment when performing communicative tasks. In contrast, our findings indicate that within the unique subculture of a maritime academy, the shared experience of participating in a personalized, creative task actually fostered peer solidarity rather than competitive anxiety. This unique shift underscores the importance of utilizing adaptive teaching strategies that align with the specific psychological characteristics of vocational students (Katuuk, 2024). Furthermore, our results expand upon the findings of Lee (2025), confirming that higher education students experience a massive surge in academic self-confidence when instructional units are organized around achievable, meaning-driven tasks rather than abstract grammatical drills. The "My Idol" presentation allowed anxious trainees to discover their authentic communicative voices without feeling vulnerable to harsh peer criticism, moving away from rigid military recitations toward expressive, authentic professional communication.

Another critical scientific finding emerged during the language focus stage of the intervention, which specifically addresses the sustainability of the cadets' speaking competencies and their relationship with grammatical accuracy. In traditional models, immediate error correction often breaks the student's communicative flow and reinforces speaking anxiety. In this study, the implementation of delayed feedback where the researcher took silent notes during the presentations and addressed recurring linguistic and grammatical patterns collectively at the very end of the session proved to be highly effective. The data showed that because the cadets were not interrupted during their presentations, their confidence remained completely intact. More importantly, the qualitative responses indicated that the cadets were highly receptive to the grammatical corrections offered during the final stage. Because they had already successfully completed the communicative task, their cognitive load was lightened, allowing them to reflect calmly on their structural errors without feeling attacked or demoralized.

This successful integration of delayed feedback provides an important contribution to the ongoing discourse surrounding vocational language pedagogy, particularly regarding the evaluation and assessment of oral proficiency among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students (Saptiany & Prabowo, 2024). Research by Rinantanti et al. (2024) emphasizes that a comprehensive examination of TBLT reveals its unique capability to augment the oral proficiency of higher education ESP students by connecting language items directly to active production. Additionally, Dewi et al. (2025) assert that anchoring language learning to concrete, production-oriented tasks is essential for fostering sustainable, long-term English-speaking skills among vocational cadets. The findings of the current study extend these perspectives by demonstrating that sustainability and workplace readiness cannot be achieved through fluency alone; rather, they require a balanced, scaffolded approach where fluency is established first through personalized meaning, and accuracy is subsequently integrated through reflective delayed feedback. Our data proves that cadets who mastered fluency through the "My Idol" task were far more capable of internalizing grammatical corrections during the language focus stage than cadets subjected to traditional, immediate error correction. This confirms that delayed feedback within a TBLT framework creates a sustainable linguistic foundation, allowing vocational students to retain and accurately apply grammatical structures long after the task is completed.

Finally, the findings of this study offer a significant point of contrast when compared to recent research advocating for advanced, high-fidelity industrial simulation methods in maritime education. A prominent study by Wibowo et al. (2025) highlights that integrating the Teaching Factory (TEFA) method in Maritime English yields highly positive perceptions among cadets and carries profound implications for modern maritime training by immersing students directly into simulated professional environments. While the value of the TEFA model for advanced vocational readiness is undeniable, the empirical evidence generated by our study reveals a critical pedagogical caveat that previous research has largely overlooked. For cadets who suffer from low initial proficiency and severe speaking anxiety, immediate exposure to high-stakes industrial simulations or complex technical workflows can be psychologically overwhelming, ultimately leading to cognitive shutdown and a reinforcement of their communication barriers.

Our findings demonstrate that a personalized, non-technical TBLT task like the "My Idol" presentation serves as a necessary, scientifically distinct prerequisite phase that must occur before cadets are introduced to advanced experiential models like TEFA or workplace-oriented speaking tasks (Mawaddah, 2025). While Wibowo et al. (2025) focus on the macro-alignment of training with industry environments, our study illuminates the micro-pedagogical necessity of preparing the learner's psychological and linguistic foundations. The data shows that by first building a solid

baseline of oral fluency and speaking confidence through a low-stakes, personally motivating topic, cadets become significantly more resilient and linguistically capable of handling subsequent technical challenges. This foundational agility aligns closely with the principles of interdisciplinary task-based learning, which thrives when students possess the core communicative stamina to tackle complex, simulated problem-solving (Radu, 2024). Furthermore, the clearly structured, phase-based nature of this intervention demonstrates excellent compatibility with modern, digitized curriculum delivery, matching recent findings where blended task-based language teaching generated highly enthusiastic and positive responses among maritime students (Andiansyah et al., 2025). This discovered sequence of instructional delivery constitutes the core scientific novelty of this paper, providing empirical verification that vocational language training must be carefully scaffolded, moving from personalized fluency to technical mastery, in order to guarantee sustainable academic and professional success for highly anxious maritime trainees.

DISCUSSION

The primary scientific contribution of this study lies in its empirical validation of a personalized pedagogical intervention designed to break the systemic speaking paralysis common in specialized vocational education. To summarize the main scientific findings, the implementation of the "My Idol" presentation within a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework successfully lowered the maritime cadets' affective filters, accelerated their oral fluency, and cultivated a robust baseline of speaking confidence. This intervention effectively demonstrated that when the immediate pressure of grammatical perfection and technical vocabulary overload is strategically removed, highly anxious learners can unlock their latent communicative potential. These results directly answer the original research objective outlined in the introduction, proving that a non-technical, personalized task can serve as a powerful pedagogical bridge to transition cadets from anxious silence to active verbal engagement. By demonstrating that psychological security and communicative intent must precede structural accuracy, this study redefines the optimal instructional sequence for language acquisition within a rigid, semi-military vocational context. It directly aligns with the broader academic call to innovate pedagogical approaches and assessment mechanisms to support active speaking proficiency among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students facing demanding global industries upon graduation (Saptiany & Prabowo, 2024).

The scientific interpretation of why the "My Idol" task achieved such profound transformations can be explained through the integration of cognitive load theory and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. In a traditional, grammar-heavy maritime classroom, cadets face a dual cognitive burden: they must simultaneously process abstract grammatical structures and manage the psychological fear of public failure. By shifting the pedagogical focus to a highly familiar and personally meaningful topic like an idol, the cognitive load associated with information retrieval is drastically minimized. Cadets do not have to struggle to understand the core subject matter because they are speaking about a figure they already know and admire. This high topic familiarity allows them to allocate their limited cognitive and attentional resources away from self-monitoring and toward speech delivery and spontaneous sentence formulation. Consequently, their affective filters are significantly lowered, reducing speaking anxiety and transforming the classroom from an intimidating evaluative space into a supportive, meaning-centered communicative environment. This process highlights that language anxiety is a highly malleable variable directly governed by instructional task design; when a task shifts the evaluative focus away from linguistic flaws and toward authentic personal expression, the learner's affective

filter drops, enabling active second language acquisition (Nuaimi, 2024).

To deeply understand this psychological shift, one must examine the unique institutional subculture of a maritime academy like Akademi Maritim Nusantara (AMNUS) Banjarmasin. Cadets operate within a highly regimented environment where hierarchy, discipline, and absolute precision are enforced daily. While this rigid structure is essential for training future seafarers and port administrators who must operate under strict safety codes, it inadvertently establishes a classroom atmosphere where mistakes are viewed as operational failures. When this mindset is transferred to language learning, it breeds extreme hyper-vigilance and vocal constriction. The "My Idol" presentation acts as a psychological solvent in this specific context. By introducing a topic that is fundamentally human, emotional, and personal, the task temporarily suspends the rigid military power dynamics of the classroom. Cadets are no longer performing a dry institutional drill; they are sharing an authentic piece of their internal motivations. This humanization of the instructional space allows them to shed their defensive reticence, facilitating a profound "de-freezing" effect that standard, impersonal language topics fail to trigger. It provides a practical demonstration of how modern maritime pedagogy must transition toward effective teaching strategies that directly address the core influencing factors of oral production, optimizing both learner engagement and authentic workplace readiness (Katuuk, 2024).

These findings strongly correspond to and expand upon broader contemporary language acquisition literature regarding the impact of task design on oral proficiency. The observed surge in the cadets' speech rate and the continuity of their spoken utterances align closely with the work of Quynh (2025), who asserted that task-based teaching inherently enhances speaking fluency by allowing learners to prioritize communicative meaning over structural form. Similarly, the dramatic reduction in hesitation pauses and the increase in cadets' willingness to communicate corroborate the findings of Yolanda et al. (2025), who identified a strong positive correlation between the implementation of TBLT and the acceleration of English-speaking fluency. Furthermore, the capacity of this framework to generate active oral production reinforces the analytical perspective that task-based pedagogical approaches are uniquely suited to augment the English-speaking proficiency of students preparing for specialized industries (Rinantanti et.al, 2024). When learners are driven by a concrete communicative goal, their linguistic output becomes more integrated and natural, allowing them to stretch their existing interlanguage capabilities to their absolute maximum. This confirms that TBLT stands as a premier instructional strategy to counter conventional classroom limitations and actively foster authentic speaking skills within modern EFL classrooms (Gunawan & Gunawan, 2025).

However, a critical divergence emerges when comparing these results to existing publications that focus exclusively on linguistic difficulties within maritime education. Recent scholarship by Abimanto and Mahendro (2025) emphasizes that the primary barrier to oral communication among Indonesian cadets is the deep structural challenge and conceptual complexity of specialized maritime English terminologies. While their study attributes classroom silence to a lack of technical vocabulary mastery, the empirical data from this intervention upends that assumption. The current study demonstrates that when technical jargon is temporarily bypassed in favor of a low-stakes, high-familiarity topic, the cadets' speaking paralysis disappears. This proves that the underlying cause of cadet silence is not an inherent inability to grasp maritime terminology, as previously reported, but rather a psychological defense mechanism triggered by a rigid instructional design that demands technical and grammatical perfection simultaneously. By decoupling fluency from technical density, this research offers a more nuanced, psychologically

grounded interpretation of learner anxiety in vocational institutions, suggesting that the perceived linguistic incompetence of cadets is often a byproduct of pedagogical pathology rather than an absolute cognitive limitation. It shows that navigating English usage within this highly diverse sector is fraught with complex cultural and linguistic challenges that require nuanced pedagogical interventions (Barus et al., 2024).

This pedagogical insight carries massive implications for the design of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabi across vocational fields. Historically, ESP courses rush into technical nomenclatures under the assumption that immediate exposure to industry jargon maximizes workplace readiness. However, our findings suggest that this practice builds a fragile linguistic foundation. If a cadet lacks the foundational confidence to manipulate basic sentence structures due to severe speaking anxiety, forcing them to articulate dense technical terms only solidifies their communication barriers. The success of the "My Idol" presentation demonstrates the validity of a scaffolded approach to ESP instruction, where general communicative fluency and psychological security are treated as mandatory prerequisites. By allowing cadets to first master the physical and psychological mechanics of public speaking through a low-stakes, familiar topic, they develop an internal resilience that can later be leveraged when they are introduced to high-stakes, technically dense maritime vocabulary. This approach significantly enhances oral proficiency by anchoring target language items directly to specific personal and professional domains, fulfilling a critical need identified in comprehensive examinations of TBLT for higher education ESP students (Rinantanti et al., 2024).

The success of the language focus stage through the utilization of delayed feedback also provides vital insights into the sustainability of vocational language skills. In traditional Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) models, immediate error correction frequently interrupts the learner's communicative flow, heightening anxiety and causing structural paralysis. In contrast, the delayed feedback mechanism used in this study allowed cadets to complete their tasks with their confidence completely intact, while ensuring they remained highly receptive to grammatical refinements at the end of the instructional cycle. This scientific interpretation aligns with the principles articulated by Hambardzumyan (2025), who noted that TBLT significantly improves fluency among adult ESL learners by separating the production phase from the corrective editing phase. Yet, within the specific subculture of a maritime academy, our results showed an even more intense transformation; the shared experience of presenting a personal idol fostered peer solidarity and collaborative engagement, neutralizing the competitive anxiety often reported in standard adult ESL cohorts. Because the cadets felt safe from immediate public penalty, their minds were cognitively open to absorbing structural corrections during the final phase of the lesson, leading to deeper grammatical internalization. This proves that higher education students experience a massive surge in academic self-confidence when instructional units are organized around achievable, meaning-driven tasks rather than abstract grammatical drills (Lee, 2025).

This capacity for deep, unthreatened reflection explains why the linguistic gains observed in this study possess long-term viability. When grammar is taught as a reactive tool to refine an idea that a student has already successfully expressed, it ceases to be an abstract obstacle and becomes a valuable instrument for clarity. This mechanism directly supports the arguments put forward by Dewi et al. (2025), who assert that anchoring language learning to concrete, production-oriented activities is essential for fostering sustainable, long-term English-speaking competencies among vocational cadets. Sustainability in this context means that the language skills

do not decay once the academic semester concludes. Because the TBLT framework encourages cadets to engage in deep cognitive processing negotiating meaning, adjusting their vocabulary, and reflecting on delayed feedback the language structures are transferred from short-term working memory into long-term procedural memory. This ensures that the communicative agility developed during the "My Idol" task survives as a permanent professional asset that cadets can carry forward into their future maritime careers, mitigating the risk of temporary skill decay.

Furthermore, this study establishes a balanced, scaffolded paradigm that bridges the gap between foundational language fluency and long-term professional readiness. Progressive vocational education models, such as the integration of the Teaching Factory (TEFA) method in Maritime English, have been widely praised for drawing highly positive cadet perceptions and aligning academic training with real-world industry workflows (Wibowo et al., 2025). However, the pedagogical significance of the current study lies in its identification of a critical prerequisite phase that macro-level simulation models like TEFA overlook. For highly anxious trainees with low initial proficiency, immediate exposure to high-fidelity, technical simulations can lead to cognitive shutdown. As argued by Mawaddah (2025), vocational education must prioritize workplace-oriented speaking tasks, but these tasks must be carefully scaffolded to prevent psychological overload. The "My Idol" presentation serves as this precise micro-pedagogical anchor. By establishing psychological security and basic oral fluency through a personalized task first, educators can build the foundational resilience and linguistic flexibility that cadets need before they can successfully navigate the high-pressure, technically dense communicative demands of the global maritime industry.

To contextualize this within the broader framework of vocational training alignment, one must acknowledge that workplace readiness is not merely about replicating physical environments, but about replicating psychological endurance. In an actual port or onboard a commercial vessel, a maritime professional must communicate clearly under immense stress, where background noise, fatigue, and crisis situations test their limits. If an academy trains a cadet using methods that induce anxiety within the classroom, that cadet will inevitably fail when subjected to the far greater stresses of the maritime industry. The "My Idol" presentation, by operating within a TBLT structure, teaches cadets how to maintain a communicative flow despite underlying stress. It encourages them to use circumlocution, gestures, and strategic pauses to ensure their message is delivered. This strategic competence is the true definition of fluency, and it represents the exact skill set required to survive in an unpredictable international workspace. Therefore, the micro-level task explored in this research does not compete with macro-level models like TEFA; rather, it serves as the essential psychological gateway that makes advanced industrial simulations viable and successful for the modern vocational learner. The potential of task-based language learning is heavily amplified when integrated into interdisciplinary frameworks that mimic authentic real-world problem-solving and realistic industrial workflows (Radu, 2024).

The integration of personalized, high-familiarity topics also introduces a crucial dimension to the discussions surrounding modern ESP curriculum delivery. While physical classrooms provide the traditional space for these interactive oral presentations, the highly structured, phase-based nature of this TBLT intervention demonstrates excellent compatibility with digitized or blended training architectures. Within maritime education, recent innovations have successfully explored blended task-based language teaching, capturing highly positive student voices from upgrading programs and demonstrating the immense flexibility of TBLT in modern maritime

English curricula (Andiansyah et al., 2025). By shifting the pre-task preparation and baseline vocabulary building onto digital platforms, instructors can optimize face-to-face classroom time exclusively for the execution of the main task cycle and the delivery of interactive delayed feedback. This hybrid delivery capability reinforces the practical value of the current study, proving that personalized TBLT interventions can easily scale to meet the shifting technological demands of modern vocational academies without losing their psychological or linguistic efficacy.

When analyzing the broader cross-cultural implications of these findings, the "My Idol" presentation framework addresses a significant gap in how communicative competence is assessed and developed in non-Western educational contexts. In many Southeast Asian educational environments, including Indonesia, language learning is historically rooted in teacher-centered traditions that treat the instructor as an absolute authority and the student as a passive recipient. This cultural backdrop often intensifies the anxiety associated with oral language production, as students feel exposed to immediate hierarchical correction. The personalized TBLT framework disrupts this restrictive dynamic by redistributing classroom agency back to the learners. When a cadet presents their idol, they assume the role of an expert sharing unique personal knowledge, effectively shifting the classroom hierarchy and allowing for a more equitable, communicative exchange. This socio-cultural re-balancing is an essential component of the "de-freezing" effect, proving that a task's thematic content can actively reshape the social architecture of the vocational classroom to maximize oral output.

Furthermore, the empirical evidence generated by this study highlights the necessity of transforming institutional assessment practices in vocational language programs. Standardized language tests in maritime education frequently utilize discrete-point testing methods that focus on isolated grammar items or technical vocabulary matching. While these assessments are easy to administer, they fail to measure a cadet's actual operational capacity to communicate under real-world conditions, often reinforcing the very grammar paralysis that hinders oral production. By proving that cadets can achieve functional, continuous communication despite ongoing structural errors, this study advocates for a shift toward performance-based, task-centered assessment methods. Evaluating a student's success based on task completion and message comprehensibility aligns language testing with the actual performance standards of the international maritime industry, where the ultimate measure of communication is whether an operational message is successfully delivered and understood.

Ultimately, this study establishes a balanced, sequential paradigm that effectively resolves the historic tension between fluency and accuracy in professional language training. Educators in specialized vocational institutions must recognize that building linguistic confidence is an emotional and cognitive journey that cannot be bypassed through the forced memorization of technical terminology. The scientific evaluation of the data gathered throughout this investigation confirms that the pedagogical sequence implemented here offers a revolutionary corrective to the traditional systemic flaws of vocational language training. By moving away from an instructional model that penalizes errors instantly, and moving toward a framework that celebrates the successful conveyance of meaning, this study demonstrates how to successfully liberate anxious maritime cadets from their self-imposed silence. By validating the "My Idol" presentation as a scientifically sound tool for confidence building, this research provides an empirical roadmap for transforming highly anxious vocational trainees into articulate, resilient, and globally competent

professionals capable of commanding the complex communicative landscapes of the international maritime domain.

CONCLUSION

The empirical investigation into the implementation of the personalized "My Idol" presentation within a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework provides a definitive resolution to the systemic problem of speaking paralysis among vocational maritime cadets. The research findings at Akademi Maritim Nusantara (AMNUS) Banjarmasin confirm that anchoring oral language tasks to high-familiarity, emotionally resonant topics successfully lowers the learners' affective filters, minimizes real-time cognitive load, and substantially accelerates oral fluency. By tracing the cadets' progress across the structural phases of the task, this study demonstrates that when the immediate pressure of grammatical perfection is lifted, cadets in the D3 Port Management and D4 Maritime Transportation programs experience a profound "de-freezing" effect, transforming them from hesitant, silent observers into active, confident communicators.

The most significant academic proposition advanced by this paper is that **linguistic fluency and structural accuracy are sequentially dependent, not mutually exclusive**. This insight directly advances the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) pedagogy from its current state of knowledge. While traditional vocational language literature frequently attributes student silence to an absolute deficit in technical vocabulary or inherent structural incompetence, this study provides a clear scientific justification for an alternative view: classroom silence in highly disciplined, regimented institutions is primarily an affective defense mechanism triggered by anxiety-inducing instructional designs. By demonstrating that technical jargon can be bypassed initially to establish a psychological baseline of communicative security, this work reshapes how educators diagnose and treat language learning blockages in professional training environments. The practical implications of these findings offer direct, actionable guidance for curriculum designers, language instructors, and academic administrators within vocational education:

- **Psychological Scaffolding:** Micro-level personalized tasks like the "My Idol" presentation must be integrated into ESP syllabi as mandatory prerequisite units. Building baseline communication confidence and strategic competence must happen before students are exposed to high-stress, high-fidelity industrial simulation frameworks such as the Teaching Factory (TEFA).
- **Assessment Reform:** Evaluation mechanisms in vocational language programs should transition toward performance-based, task-centered criteria that reward the successful conveyance of meaning and procedural flow rather than punishing minor grammatical deviations during active production.
- **Syllabus Re-sequencing:** Grammatical accuracy should be repositioned within the lesson architecture to take place during a reflective, delayed feedback stage, ensuring that structural corrections refine existing ideas rather than blocking initial speech creation.

The applications and extensions of this research framework are expansive. The personalized, meaning-centered TBLT syntax validated in this study can be seamlessly adapted to other highly rigid or semi-military vocational contexts such as aviation training, military academy language courses, and emergency medical communication modules where performance anxiety frequently creates cognitive boundaries for language learners. Furthermore, future longitudinal research is highly recommended to track how effectively the speaking confidence cultivated through low-stakes personal tasks is retained when cadets transition into actual maritime workplaces or undergo professional sea trials.

Reflecting this need for scalable pedagogical expansion, an action research project is currently underway to digitize this three-stage TBLT syntax. This ongoing initiative focuses on embedding personalized, interactive speaking modules into a modern, cloud-based Learning Management System (LMS) optimized for vocational courses. By translating these face-to-face confidence-building strategies into virtual instructional environments, the project aims to ensure that sustainable, anxiety-reduced language acquisition remains accessible and effective for the evolving digital landscape of global vocational education.

REFERENCES

- Abimanto, D., & Mahendro, I. (2025). *Understanding The Challenges of Maritime English Terminologies Among Indonesian Cadets*. Jurnal Sains Dan Teknologi Maritim, 25(2), 263–274. <https://doi.org/10.33556/jstm.v25i2.467>
- Andiansyah, M., Yuliasri, I., Widhiyanto, W., & Wahyuni, S. (2025). *Blended Task-Based Language Teaching in Maritime English: Voices of Indonesian Seafarer Upgrading Program Students*. Language Teaching Research Quarterly, 49, 151–169. <https://doi.org/10.32038/ltrq.2025.49.08>
- Barus, I. R. G., Simanjuntak, R. R., Siahaan, R. Y., Toko, G. P., & Resmayasari, I. (2024). *Cultural And Linguistic Challenges In Global Maritime Education (Navigating English Usage)*. Meteor STIP Marunda, 17(1), 121–130. <https://doi.org/10.36101/msm.v17i1.358>
- Dewi, I. S., Fatimah, F., Fauziningrum, E., Kritandani, W., & Sani, A. (2025). *Anchoring Task-Based Learning To Foster Cadets' Sustainable English-Speaking Skills*. Edulite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture, 10(2), 254–254. <https://doi.org/10.30659/e.10.2.254-270>
- Gunawan, I. D., & Gunawan, I. D. (2025). *Task-Based Learning as An Instructional Strategy To Foster Speaking Skills In EFL Classrooms*. Prominent, 8(2), 110–120. <https://doi.org/10.24176/pro.v8i2.15077>
- Günbayi, İ. (2023). *Data analysis in qualitative research*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7763207>
- Hambardzumyan, G. (2025). *The Effectiveness of Task-Based Learning for Improving Speaking Fluency Among Adult ESL Learners*. European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies. <https://doi.org/10.37745/ejells.2013/vol13n391112>
- Katuuk, N. N. C. (2024). *Enhancing Communication Skills in Maritime English: Effective Teaching Strategies and Key Influencing Factors*. Pubmedia Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.47134/jpbi.v2i2.1196>
- Lee, S.-E. (2025). *Investigating Self-Confidence through the Implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching in the Context of Higher Education*. International Journal of English Language Education, 13(2), 81–81. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijelev.v13i2.23061>
- Mawaddah, A. N. (2025). *Task-based language teaching for workplace-oriented speaking in vocational education: a qualitative case study*. International Journal of Research on English Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 6(2), 72–83. <https://doi.org/10.30863/ijretal.v6i2.11106>
- Nuaimi, H. A. (2024). *Anxiety And Task-Based Language Teaching In Second Language Acquisition*. <https://doi.org/10.62583/rseltl.v2i4.56>
- Quynh, N. V. (2025). *Enhancing Fluency in Speaking through Task-Based Teaching and Learning*. Journal of Ecohumanism, 3(8). <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i8.5728>
- Radu, B. (2024). *The Potential Of Task-Based Language Learning (TBL) In An Interdisciplinary Context*. Acta et Commentationes: Științe Ale Educației, 35(1), 127–135.

- <https://doi.org/10.36120/2587-3636.v35i1.127-135>
- Richstein, K.-H. (2026). *Qualitative Case Analysis*. 61–140. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-13969-6_3
- Rinantanti, Y., Nemo, M. L., Asrifan, A., & Limbong, S. (2024). *Oral Proficiency in Higher Education: A Comprehensive Examination of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for ESP Students*. *Al-Ishlah*, 16(2). <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.4813>
- Saptiany, S. G., & Prabowo, B. A. (2024). *Speaking Proficiency Among English Specific Purpose Students: A Literature Review On Assessment And Pedagogical Approaches*. *LITERACY: International Scientific Journals of Social, Education, Humanities*, 3(1), 36–48. <https://doi.org/10.56910/literacy.v3i1.1392>
- Supriyono, S. (2024). *Research methodology: qualitative approach*. STAI DIPONOGORO TULUNGAGUNG-Universitas Islam Blitar. <https://doi.org/10.13140/rg.2.2.26723.57121>
- Taylor, L., & Healy, G. (2023). *Case Study Methodology*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781036233679.n34>
- Wibowo, A. H., Gupron, A. K., & Dewi, R. F. (2025). *Integrating Teaching Factory Method in Maritime English: Cadets' Perceptions and Implications for Maritime Training*. *Script Journal*, 10(1), 46–67. <https://doi.org/10.24903/sj.v10i1.1998>
- Yolanda, R., Ratnasari, W., Saputra, M. A., & Putriani, Z. (2025). *The Effect Of Task-Based Learning On Students' English-Speaking Fluency*. <https://doi.org/10.65431/jrell.v1i2.24>