Original Article

Burundian Teachers' Conceptualisations of Philosophy-Based Language Teaching Approach in Developing EFL Students' Speaking Skill.

Juvénal Ntakarutimana [1] & Prof. Ali Mohammad Fazilatfar, PhD[1]*

[1] Yazd University, P. O. Box: 8915818411, Iran.
* Author for Correspondence ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5692-737X; Email: juventakarutimana@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the EFL teachers' conceptualisations of the use of PBLT in EFL instruction. Thirteen EFL teachers selected from two higher education institutions in Burundi participated in the inquiry. The inquiry set out to assess participants' beliefs and attitudes towards three constructs, namely the use of philosophical questions in the EFL classroom, the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry, and the impact of PBLT in developing the EFL students' speaking skill. A background information questionnaire, a Likert scale questionnaire, and an online structured interview was used to collect data from participants. The findings revealed participants' positive views and attitudes towards the role of PBLT in EFL instruction. The use of philosophical questions in the EFL classroom as well as the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry in enhancing EFL students' productive and receptive skills were found to be highly favoured among participants. Furthermore, it was found that participants believe in the high potential of PBLT in developing the five components of speaking, namely fluency, accuracy, range, coherence, and content. Participants, however, showed a relatively diminished trust in PBLT when it comes to its role in enhancing the accuracy component, and this diminished trust may be attributed to the fact that accuracy relates much more to the linguistic form while PBLT puts greater focus on meaning.

INTRODUCTION

The language teaching profession has seen, since its inception, the going and coming of a number of language teaching approaches. Some approaches have been more famous than others though scholars in the profession also agree that no approach is without imperfections. Furthermore, some approaches are viewed as being more effective in developing specific skills than they are in enhancing others. Thus, the communicative language teaching (CLT) and the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approaches are seen to be more important in the development of the oral skills, while the genre-based pedagogy has its focus mainly put on the written texts (Graves & Carton, 2017). More recently, a new language teaching approach under the name of philosophy-based language teaching (PBLT) has appeared in the literature (Gholamhossein & Siamak, 2010; Shahini & Riazi, 2011; Dabbagh & Noshadi, 2016) and was found to help EFL learners develop not only speaking and writing skills but also thinking skills. The PBLT approach is based on the two main elements, namely the philosophical questions and the consideration of the classroom as a community of inquiry. It stems from the observation that whenever a philosophical question is encountered or raised in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) class, learners become automatically ready and motivated to actively take part in the discussions. Though the effectiveness of the PBLT in EFL classes has been evidenced in a couple of experimental studies (Gholamhossein & Siamak, 2010; Shahini & Riazi,

2011; Hemmati & Hoomanfard, 2014), no study aiming at inquiring what teachers think about it has been done to date. Therefore, the present study aims at inquiring teachers' conceptualisations of the approach and its effectiveness in helping EFL learners develop their speaking skills. For that purpose, teachers involved in EFL instruction from two higher education institutions in Burundi were investigated using a mixed methods research design.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PBLT Explained

Language teaching is done among practitioners, learners and teachers included, who are members of a social community whereby life is experienced in various aspects. In that perspective, a new idea in the ELT (English Language Teaching) literature was born proposing to include life issues in ELT classes. The point here was to move from a language-only to language-and-life teaching, and that move was proposed by Pishghadam (2011) under the concept of applied ELT. Consequently, a new theoretical approach to EFL classroom practices was needed. It is in that perspective that the PBLT, which "engages learners in dialogues using philosophical questions and answer activities to tackle the process of language learning in ELT classes", came as an application tool of Applied ELT in EFL contexts (Dabbagh & Noshadi, 2016, p. 1022). As was observed by Shahini and Riazi (2011), EFL learners become automatically ready and motivated to participate in classroom

discussions whenever a philosophical question is raised. According to Gholamhossein and Siamak (2010), philosophical questions are those that trigger a continuous inquiry into the meaning of the concepts that are part of our everyday lives. They add that philosophical questions do not have factual pre-determined answers; their answers are to be collectively discovered by learners who, going deep in their thoughts, engage in a search for the truth in their "community of inquiry". Needless to state, the EFL class is here considered a social community where life is to be experienced holistically through language and where language (English) is used as a thinking tool (Shahini & Riazi, 2011). This rather comprehensive view of EFL education is backed in Dabbagh and Noshadi (2016, p. 1023), who reporting studies by Dewey (1897), Freire (1998), Krishnamurti (1981), and Walters (1997), states that "the true function of education is to make people ready to face life challenges and be autonomous in seeking personal gain". It is worth mentioning that the word "philosophy", which is central to PBLT, is not the big "P" for complex philosophical questions as would be referred to in the Socratic or Platonic sense, but rather the little "p" intended to encourage ordinary EFL students to approach the world around them creatively and critically, by thinking deeply about it without blindly accepting what is taught or told to them (Shahini & Riazi, 2011).

How to Run a PBLT EFL Classroom

The procedure for applying the PBLT approach in the EFL classroom was proposed by Shahini and Riazi (2011) and goes as is indicated below.

A text, a source of input, is introduced to students for the first time. The latter read it and, after the reading, are asked to mention individually or in groups one or two philosophical questions triggered by the text they have just read. Each student is then invited to read his/her philosophical question loudly to the class, and the most interesting questions are selected by students themselves for oral discussions. In order for them to keep track of their original ideas, students are allowed to switch to their mother tongue. The role of the instructor is that of facilitating and guiding the discussions while making sure that students

remain on track. During the discussions, the instructor "takes some personal notes, writes down the main points raised and the important words used, and translates the L1 words used by students into L2" (Shahini & Riazi, 2011, p. 173). At the end of the oral discussions, the instructor outlines on the board the main points discussed and writes the words translated into L2. Finally, students are invited to write individually an essay on the major points discussed using the notes on the board if necessary. Their essays are checked by the instructor after the session, and feedback is provided to students before the start of the next session.

On the Effectiveness of PBLT in EFL Instruction

A number of studies, all experimental in their design, have been conducted to check the effectiveness of the PBLT approach in the EFL classroom. They include Gholamhossein and Siamak (2010), Shahini and Riazi (2011); Hemmati and Hoomanfard (2014); and findings from all of them proved the effectiveness of PBLT in EFL classroom valid. In the lines below, the three studies cited above are reviewed.

To start with, Gholamhossein and Siamak (2010) conducted an experimental study intended to test the hypothesis that EFL students taught using the PBLT approach would outperform those taught using traditional ESL instructional methodologies in their performance regarding the speaking skill and all its components. Participants in the study were 34 students from one of the major universities in Iran majoring in engineering, sciences, and humanities. They were taking EFL classes and were all found to be at the intermediate level in the language prior to the experiment. They were randomly assigned to the experimental group (N=17) and control group (N=17), the former undergoing the PBLT-driven EFL instruction while the latter was taught using conventional ESL instruction methodologies. The results revealed that students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group on speaking skill and all its related components (range, fluency, coherence, content), except for the accuracy component. The authors indicated that the lack of significant difference between the

experimental and control groups as far as accuracy is concerned could be explained by the fact that PBLT has a particular focus put on meaning while accuracy is mainly related to linguistic form.

The other study which set out to check the effectiveness of PBLT in EFL classrooms was conducted by Shahini and Riazi (2011). The authors, using the same participants as in Gholamhossein and Siamak (2010), tested in a pretest-posttest experimental design the effect of PBLT in developing EFL students' productive skills (speaking and writing) as well as their thinking skills. Their findings revealed that PBLT plays an important role in developing EFL students' productive skills by putting in place a favourable environment for discussion and negotiation. They also conclude that the environment set up through PBLT has the potential to enhance EFL students' motivation and positive attitudes towards the approach.

Finally, more recently, the study by Hemmati and Hoomanfard (2014), reported in Dabbagh and Noshadi (2016), shows that applying the PBLT approach in the EFL classroom can improve the students' speaking skill and their willingness to communicate. The authors of the same study concluded that the observed effectiveness of PBLT in improving the students' speaking skill and their willingness to speak is a sign that PBLT could be the alternative approach to the traditionally used IRF (Initiation-Response-Follow up) approach in teaching the speaking skill.

The Present Study

All studies on PBLT conducted so far as reviewed in the above section have been done with the aim to test, using experimental research design, the effect of the approach implementation on EFL learners' performance with little, if any, importance accorded to what teachers think of the approach. Given that teachers play an important role in conceiving and implementing classroom events (Borg, 2006), and that their conceptualisations of teaching theory exert a formative influence on their instructional practices (Gümüşok & Daloğlu, 2018), it is of importance for researchers to start investigating teachers' views and belief systems regarding that most

recently introduced teaching approach. Furthermore, while previously conducted studies on PBLT are done mainly in the Iranian EFL context, studies on how the approach is conceived of in other EFL contexts are needed given that any language pedagogy has to take into account the particularity of the context (Kumaravadivelu, 2005). Therefore, the present study sets out to contribute to bridging the gap by investigating conceptualisations by teachers from a different EFL context of the PBLT approach and its effectiveness in developing the students' speaking skills. The following research questions guided the investigation:

- What beliefs and attitudes do EFL teachers attach to the use of philosophical questions in the EFL classroom?
- Are the EFL teachers in favour of the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry or not?
- How do the EFL teachers appraise the impact of PBLT in developing EFL students' speaking skills?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants in the present study were teachers (N=13; Male = 9; Female = 4) involved in ELT selected from two higher institutions in Burundi, namely the University of Burundi and the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* (Higher Teacher College). They include three PhD holders, nine Master holders, and one Bachelor holder in the following specialisations: linguistics (4), ELT (3), sociolinguistics (1), applied linguistics (2), literature (2), and research and evaluation (1). The least experienced had two years of experience, while the most experienced had been teaching EFL for thirty-seven years.

Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

Instruments used to collect data included a background information questionnaire, a Likert scale questionnaire, and a structured online interview. The background information questionnaire and the Likert scale questionnaire were designed using Google Forms and submitted

to participants through their e-mail addresses, and one of the researchers using the same Google Forms platform collected responses from participants. In the background information questionnaire, participants were required to provide data concerning their professional affiliation, their gender, their professional experience, their academic degree, and their specialisation.

The Likert scale questionnaire was a self-reported instrument with statements evaluated on the five-point scale ranging from one to five, with one representing 'never or almost never true of me' and five standing for 'always or almost always true of me'. The questionnaire comprised 16 items (see *Table 3*) intended to measure participants' conceptualisations of the use of philosophical questions in the EFL classroom, the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry, and the role of PBLT in developing the EFL students' speaking skill.

As for the reliability of this research instrument, a reliability analysis through SPSS was performed on the perceived task value scale comprising sixteen items. The results showed that the questionnaire was highly reliable with Cronbach's alpha, $\alpha = 0.91$.

Table 1: Results of the reliability analysis for the Likert scale questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	No. of Items
.917	.924	16

As far as the structured online interview is concerned, it consisted of seven statements assessing participants' beliefs about the same three categories assessed in the Likert scale questionnaire as illustrated in *Table 1* and were designed for the sake of increased data reliability. Two participants selected from the sample, a PhD holder and a Masters took part in the interview. The seven statements were presented in the same sequence to both participants. The first and second statements were designed to assess respectively whether participants believe or not in the idea that philosophical questions can help boost EFL students' productive and receptive skills and whether they are for or against the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry. To the two statements, participants were asked to react by choosing one of the 'true' or 'false' or 'other' (with a requirement to be specific) answer options with a comment on the selected answer. The remaining five statements of the interview were meant to measure participants' appraisal of the role of PBLT in developing the five components of speaking, namely fluency, accuracy, range, coherence, and content. The participants' reaction options were 'yes', 'no' and 'I am not sure'. The online interview was conducted in a synchronic text-only fashion via the WhatsApp social media platform given that it was the convenient way and medium to access participants as is supported by

Salmons (2012, p. 12): "The researcher may decide to conduct interviews online because it is a convenient way to meet participants... Technology may be selected by the researcher based on preferred kinds of data…or by the participant based on the familiarity, availability, or access."

Note that the language used in designing all the research instruments and collecting data was English.

Data Analysis

A mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods were applied to analyse data in this study. The sixteen items contained in the Likert scale questionnaire were grouped into three main categories depending on what constructs they were intended to assess. Thus, the first seven items were meant to assess teachers' beliefs (favourable or unfavourable) about the use of philosophical questions in the EFL classroom (**PQ in EFL**). Items eight through eleven aimed to evaluate whether teachers are or not in favour of the idea of the EFL classroom being used as a community of inquiry (**CCI**). Finally, items twelve through sixteen were intended to assess participants' thoughts (favourable or not) about the impact of PBLT in developing the EFL students' speaking skill components (PBLT vs SSC) that include fluency, accuracy, range, coherence, and

content. The distribution of items across the three categories is illustrated in *Table 2*. Participants' mean responses in each item category will be computed and inferences will be drawn from them that will account for the participants' conceptualisations of the use of PBLT in EFL in general and its use in developing the EFL students' speaking skills in particular.

Table 2: Distribution of items across categories

Item categories	Items
PQ in EFL	1,2,3,4,5,6,7
CCI	8,9,10,11
PBLT vs SSC	12,13,14,15,16

Later, data from the online structured interview were analysed qualitatively. Participants' conceptualisations of the same three constructs of the Likert scale instrument, namely the PQ in EFL, CCI, and PBLT vs SSC (see *Table 2*), as assessed through the seven statements in the interview were qualitatively analysed and the results checked to see if they corroborate those from the Likert scale questionnaire or not.

RESULTS

Questionnaire Results

Table 3: Participants' mean scores on the Likert scale questionnaire

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Dev
1	I am/would be willing to encourage ordinary EFL students to think critically and creatively about the world surrounding them.	4.31	.751
2	I am in favour of the use of questions that trigger or cultivate the EFL students' thinking about and inquiring into the meaning of concepts that are central to the everyday happenings of their surrounding world.	4.31	.751
3	I believe that raising challenging questions on concepts that are central to our everyday lives has the potential to engage EFL students in a search for meaning and to enhance their understanding of various concepts.	4.62	.506
4	I agree that EFL students should be encouraged to go deep in thinking about the subjects they are presented with and not blindly accept or memorise whatever is filled into their minds.	4.69	.480
5	I believe that raising challenging questions that are central to all walks of our lives has the potential of making EFL students motivated and actively participate in classroom discussions.	4.31	1.032
6	I believe that discussions in EFL classes should not be restricted to limited areas of knowledge, but rather be inclusive by considering the realities of the world where the EFL student operates and will operate as a member of the social community.	4.54	.660
7	I think that raising challenging questions that are central to our everyday lives can encourage EFL students to inquire into questions which most people all over the world take for granted but which most of us are from time to time wondering about.	4.31	.855
8	I believe that when a question such as "What is success?" is raised in the EFL classroom there should be no pre-established answer to it, and that students should rather collectively, in their discussions, work toward a mediated understanding as an answer to the question.	3.92	1.188
9	I think that EFL classroom should be considered as a community of inquiry	4.23	.832

| No.	Items	Mean	Std. Dev
	where questions central to our everyday lives are raised and discussed in English.		
10	I believe that the role of the instructor in the EFL classroom is that of guiding students in their discussions and helping them keep on the track.	4.69	.480
11	I think that, in order to help EFL students keep track of their original ideas in their discussions, a minimal use of their native language should be allowed in case of need.	3.92	1.256
12	I believe that encouraging EFL students to raise and discuss questions that are central to their everyday lives can help them develop their fluency in speech production.	4.38	.961
13	I am for the idea that discussing challenging questions on concepts related to our everyday lives can help EFL students develop accuracy in speech production.	4.23	.832
14	I believe that raising questions that trigger EFL students' inquiry into concepts central to the daily happenings of their surrounding community will help them develop ideas in a range of knowledge areas.	4.46	.660
15	I believe that encouraging EFL students to raise and discuss questions on concepts that are central to their lives can enhance their ability to organise ideas coherently.	4.62	.506
16	I believe that raising and discussing questions that prompt EFL students to inquire into the meaning of concepts related to various walks of life can help them produce speech with enriched content.	4.54	.519
	Overall mean	4.380	
	Minimum	3.923	
	Maximum	4.692	
	Variance	0.56	

The data in *Table 3* represent the mean scores by the thirteen participants on the sixteen statements assessing their conceptualisations of the three constructs regarding PBLT in EFL instruction, namely the PQ in EFL, the CCI, and the PBLT vs SSC (see *Table 2*). Before representing the data for the three constructs, it is worth pointing out that participants showed a high overall mean score (mean = 4.38) as far as their beliefs about the use of PBLT in EFL instruction are concerned as is illustrated in *Table 3*. It can be noticed, however, that participants' mean scores on the two items, namely items 8 and 11 (see *Table 3*), are relatively low. The possible reasons for this low performance on the two items are discussed later in this study.

Below are represented the data reflecting participants' conceptualisations of the use of PQ in EFL instruction, the EFL CCI and the PBLT vs SSC.

Participants' Conceptualisations of PQ in EFL Instruction

Data in *Figure 1* reflect the participants' mean scores on items 1 through 7 that are intended to assess their beliefs and attitudes on the use of PQ in the EFL classroom. As can be seen from the illustrated data, the scores (all of them being above 4) reflects participants' highly positive views regarding the use of PQ in EFL instruction.

Figure 1: Representation of participants' conceptualisations of the use of philosophical questions in EFL classroom
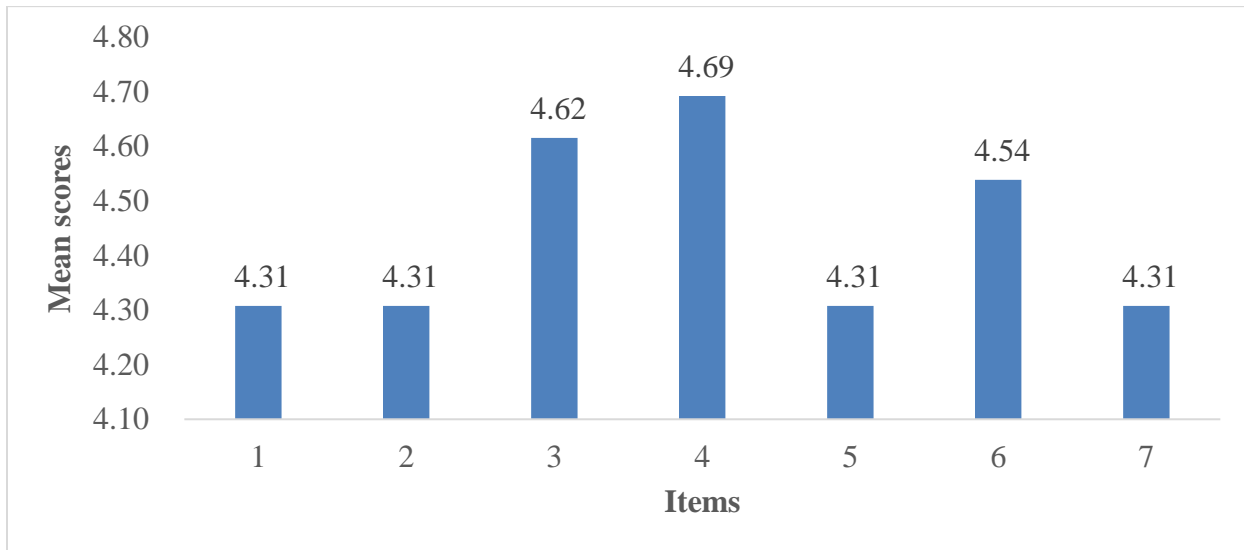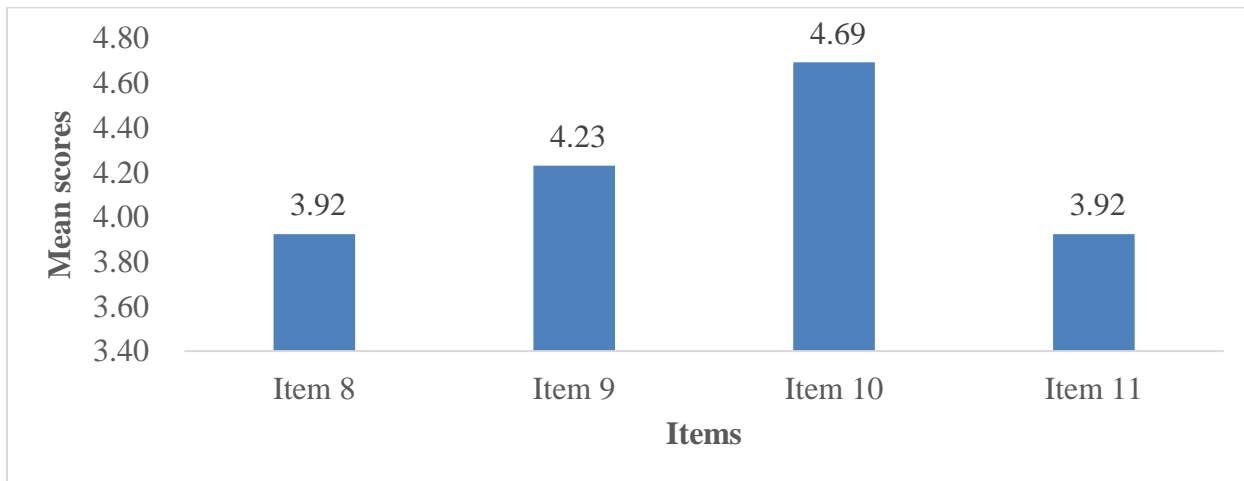

Participants' Conceptualisations of CCI in EFL Instruction

The data illustrated in *Figure 2* reflect the participants' mean scores on items 8 through 11 that are intended to assess what they think of the consideration of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry.

Figure 2: Representation of participants' conceptualisations of the use of a classroom as a community of inquiry

Participants' Conceptualisations of the Impact of PBLT in Developing the SSC

In *Figure 3*, we represent data illustrating participants' mean scores on the items assessing their conceptualisations of the impact of PBLT in enhancing the EFL students' speaking skills. Five items, namely items 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 are involved and are designed to assess the fluency, accuracy, range, coherence, and content components of the speaking skill, respectively. As is shown by the data in *Figure 3*, participants scored high (more than 4 out of 5) in all the speaking skill components with the accuracy

component showing the relatively lowest score while the coherence component was scored the highest.

Figure 3: Representation of participants' conceptualisations of the impact of PBLT in developing the EFL students' speaking skill
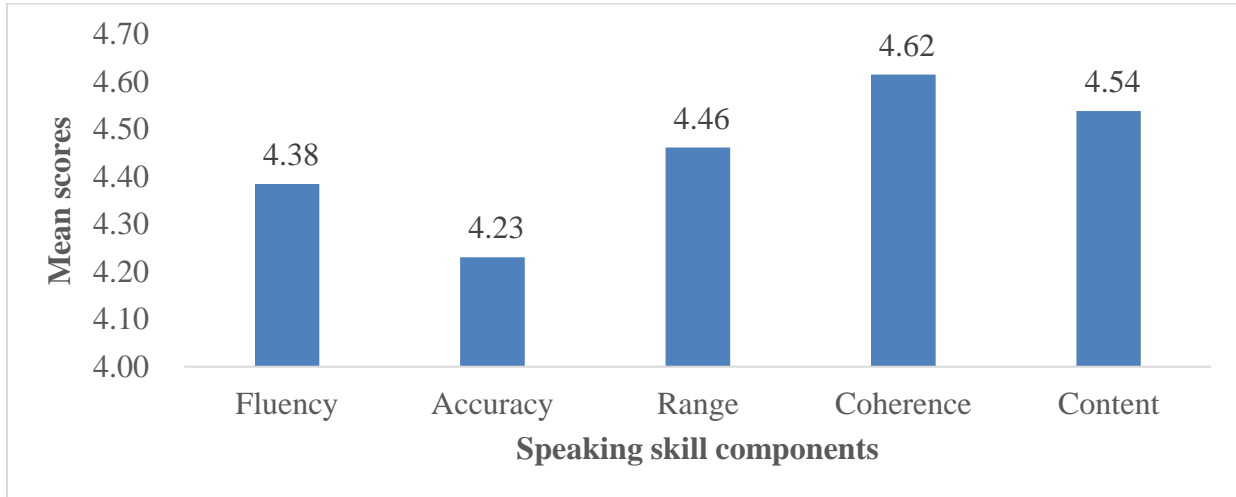
Finally, *Figure 4* shows the comparison of participants' scores after assessing their conceptualisation of the three constructs, namely the use of PQ in the EFL classroom, the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry, and the use of PBLT to enhance the students' speaking skill.

Figure 4: Comparison of participants' scores on the use of PQ in EFL, use of CCI, and PBLT vs SSC
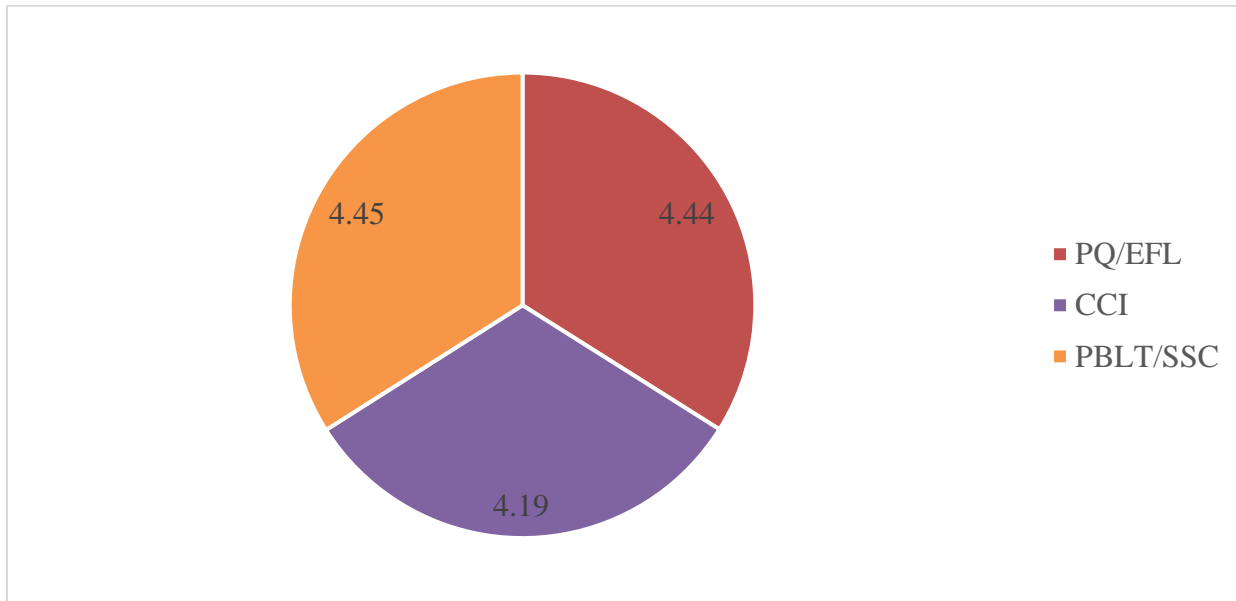
Data from the Interview

The online structured interview consisted of seven statements distributed into two main questions. The first question comprised two statements (S1 and S2), namely (S1) the use of philosophical questions in EFL classroom can help enhance the EFL students' receptive and productive skills; and (S2) EFL classroom can be more effective if it is considered as a community of inquiry where participants engage in discussions to arrive at collective discoveries. The two participants (Part) involved in the interview were to react to either statement by 'true' (T), 'false' (F), or 'other' (O) (with specifications); they were further asked to provide a comment on their selected answer. Participants' reactions to S1 and S2 are reproduced in *Table 4*.

Table 4: Participants' reactions on the use of philosophical questions in the EFL classroom and the use of EFL classroom as a community of inquiry

		Reactions			
		T	F	O	Comments
Part 1	S1	✔	✗	✗	I believe that such questions do enhance learners' receptive and productive skills in a sense that, being meaning-based questions, they allow them to develop their cognitive skills and pragmatic abilities that are at the essence of language learning.
	S2	✔	✗	✗	Discussions on topics of interest in EFL classrooms (both learner-learner and teacher-learner interactions) are of great importance. Not only do they encourage learners to be active participants in the learning process, but also such classroom practices allow them to develop language fluency.
Part 2	S1	✔	✗	✗	The meaning of concepts is well grasped if one is drawing from his/her immediate environment, and once the meaning is already grappled, one finds it easy to express fluently (productively).
	S2	✔	✗	✗	Classroom practices that are on the participants' everyday life topics constitute a fertile background where words are about "real-life experiences". From this interactive discussion, participants' different experiences enrich the language storage capabilities of each participant. The new concepts then are reappropriated for future use and reference.

The second question in the interview was made of five statements that are intended to assess participants' reactions on whether the use of philosophical questions can enhance the five components of the speaking skill, namely fluency, accuracy, range, coherence, and content. Therefore, each statement was directed to one component of the speaking skill. The answer options were 'yes' (Y), 'no' (N), and 'I am not sure' (NS). Participants' reactions to the statements are displayed in *Table 5*.

Table 5: Participants' reactions on whether philosophical questions can enhance the five components of speaking

	Fluency			Accuracy			Range			Coherence			Content		
	Y	N	NS	Y	N	NS	Y	N	NS	Y	N	NS	Y	N	NS
Part 1	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗
Part 2	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗	✔	✗	✗

As can be seen from *Table 5,* both participants think that the use of PQ can enhance the EFL students' speaking skills in all its components.

DISCUSSION

The data collected in this study are related to the EFL teachers' conceptualisations of the use of the PBLT approach in EFL instruction. Teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards three main constructs were measured: the use of PQ in the EFL classroom, the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry, and the impact of PBLT in developing speaking skills.

Participants' reactions on both data collection instruments, the Likert scale questionnaire and the interview, revealed their positive views and attitudes towards the use of PBLT in EFL instruction in general. As an answer to the first research question on the use of PQ in EFL classrooms, participants' beliefs and attitudes were found to favour the use of PQ in EFL instruction. This can be seen when considering their high mean scores (all scored above 4) illustrated in *Figure 1*. That participants' high performance on the Likert scale instrument as regard to the use of PQ in EFL instruction corroborated the answers by the two participants in the interview when the latter were asked to say whether, in their view, the use of PQ can enhance EFL students' receptive and productive skills. Both participants admitted to viewing the use of PQ as an effective means to enhance EFL instruction, and their reasons were that they (PQ) have the potential to allow students to easily acquire pragmatic abilities and internalise the meaning of concepts from their immediate environment, the whole allowing them to express fluently in English (See *Table 4*). These findings suggest EFL teachers' positive beliefs and attitudes regarding the use of PQ in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, the findings are in line with the conclusions arrived at by Gholamhossein and Siamak (2010), Shahini and Riazi (2011), and Hemmati and Hoomanfard (2014), who used EFL students in their experimental studies.

The other construct investigated in this study is the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry. The second research question in the present study intended to inquire about EFL teachers' conceptualisation of the construct. Participants' mean scores on the items related to this question (see *Table 2*) show that they are in favour of the use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry, and the reactions of the two participants in the interview reveal the same. Though, *Figure 2* shows participants' relative low performance on items 8 and 11 (see also *Table 3)*. Item 8 was intended to assess what participants think on the statement that there should not be a pre-established answer to questions such as 'What is success?' and that student should rather discuss such questions to ultimately arrive at a collective answer. The possible reason for the low score on this statement is that participants in the present study might rather value the role of a teacher as having some knowledge ahead of that of students, which can help him/her to effectively guide students in their discussions. In other words, participants seem to suggest that considering a classroom as a community of inquiry does not necessarily mean that the teacher leaves the class astray. This is supported by Dabbagh and Noshadi (2016, pp. 1025-1026) when they state that "the teacher must always be available for learners' reinforcement or follow-up process on the progression of life skills both inside and outside of an ELT classroom". Statement for item 11 relates to the use of the learner's mother tongue in the EFL classroom where PBLT is being applied.

The participants' relative low score on the statement reveals that the learner's mother tongue, though supported and needed in PBLT, should not be frequently used. It can be argued that the statement could receive even lower scores in instances where PBLT is applied with learners who do not share the same mother tongue or where teachers do not necessarily speak the learners' mother tongue (s). The use of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry is also backed by data from the interview. The two participants in the interview stated that the EFL classroom used as a community of inquiry could enrich teacher-students and student-student interactions with those interactions resulting in the reappropriation of concept meaning for future use (see *Table 4*). Those findings match the point by Shahini and Riazi (2011, p. 171) that the EFL classroom is considered as a social community where "students work together to complete a philosophical task"

and where language (English) becomes a tool that each member uses to think.

As for the third and final research question, it intended to investigate EFL teachers' conceptualisations of the impact of PBLT in developing the EFL speaking skill in its five components, namely fluency, accuracy, range, coherence, and content. The data show participants' high performance on the five components with the accuracy components displaying relatively lower performance (See *Figure 3*). Therefore, the EFL teachers investigated appear to be in favour of the use of PBLT as an effective means to enhance EFL students' speaking skills in all its components. Their apparent diminished trust in the PBLT approach when it comes to developing the accuracy component can be explained by the reason already predicted in Gholamhossein and Siamak (2010) that accuracy is much concerned with the linguistic form while PBLT put much focus on meaning. The finding regarding the positive influence of PBLT in developing the EFL students' speaking skills is also found in data from the interview. Reactions from both participants in the interview (see *Table 5*) show their trust in the use of PBLT to enhance the five components of EFL students' speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate EFL teachers' conceptualisations of the impact of PBLT in developing the EFL students' speaking skills.

Three constructs, namely the use of philosophical questions in the EFL classroom, the consideration of the EFL classroom as a community of inquiry, and the impact of PBLT in enhancing the four components of the speaking were presented to the EFL teachers from two higher education institutions in Burundi. Participants' views and attitudes towards those constructs were assessed. The findings from the Likert scale questionnaire and the interview data revealed that EFL teachers are in favour of the implementation of PBLT in enhancing EFL students' productive and receptive skills in general and their speaking skills in particular. The findings in the present study corroborate those in the previous ones with

experimental design, which used EFL students as participants.

The present study was designed to serve as a contribution to the literature on the recently introduced theory of PBLT through an investigation of EFL teachers and in a different EFL context (Burundi), while previous studies were experimental in design and were all conducted in the Iranian EFL context. Future experimental and non-experimental studies investigating the use of PBLT in the same Burundian EFL context or other EFL contexts would be of a great contribution, for they would help determine whether their findings are in line with those in the previous studies or not.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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