HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) METHOD IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22172168

Abstract. This article examines the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in developing learners' communicative competence in a foreign language. TBLT is an approach that organizes language instruction around meaningful tasks that require learners to use the target language for communicative purposes. Unlike traditional approaches that often emphasize explicit grammar instruction and controlled practice, TBLT provides learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning, exchange information, solve problems, express opinions, and interact in realistic or semi-realistic situations. The article analyzes the theoretical foundations of TBLT, its relationship with communicative language teaching, and its potential contribution to learners' linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. The discussion highlights the importance of authentic tasks, learner interaction, meaningful communication, feedback, and appropriate task sequencing. The analysis suggests that TBLT can significantly contribute to the development of communicative competence when tasks are carefully designed according to learners' proficiency levels, learning objectives, and contextual needs.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching, TBLT, communicative competence, foreign language teaching, language learning, communication, interaction, authentic tasks, learner-centered teaching, language proficiency.

Introduction. The ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language has become one of the central objectives of contemporary language education. In an increasingly interconnected world, learners are expected not only to understand grammatical structures and memorize vocabulary but also to use language appropriately and effectively in real-life communicative situations.

Traditional language teaching approaches have often focused on grammar explanation, vocabulary memorization, translation, and controlled exercises. Although these practices can contribute to the development of linguistic knowledge, they may provide learners with insufficient opportunities to use language spontaneously and meaningfully. As a result, learners may demonstrate knowledge of grammatical rules but experience difficulties when communicating in authentic situations. Communicative Language Teaching contributed to a significant change in language education by emphasizing meaningful interaction and functional language use. Task-Based Language Teaching developed from this broader communicative tradition and placed communicative tasks at the center of the learning process. In TBLT, learners use the target language to achieve a particular outcome. A task may involve solving a problem, planning an event, exchanging information, making a decision, conducting an interview, discussing a topic, or completing a collaborative project. Language becomes a tool for accomplishing a meaningful purpose rather than merely an object of study.

The effectiveness of TBLT is particularly relevant to the development of communicative competence because successful communication requires more than grammatical accuracy. Learners need to know how to select appropriate language, organize discourse, respond to interlocutors, negotiate meaning, and compensate for gaps in their linguistic knowledge.

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The aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in developing learners' communicative competence and to identify the pedagogical conditions that contribute to successful implementation of the approach.

Analysis of literature. The theoretical foundations of TBLT are strongly associated with communicative approaches to second and foreign language acquisition. Long conceptualized task-based instruction as an approach in which tasks serve as the primary unit of pedagogical organization and provide opportunities for meaningful interaction.

Prabhu's work on the Communicational Teaching Project contributed significantly to the development of task-based approaches. His research demonstrated that learners can develop language competence through activities requiring them to use language to solve problems and understand information.

Ellis emphasizes that tasks should involve a primary focus on meaning, require learners to use their existing linguistic resources, and result in an identifiable communicative outcome. From this perspective, a task differs from a traditional language exercise because successful completion depends primarily on the communication of meaning.

Willis proposed a practical framework for task-based instruction consisting of three broad stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. This framework provides teachers with a systematic way to prepare learners for communication, facilitate task performance, and subsequently draw attention to relevant language forms.

Skehan argues that task design and task sequencing have a significant influence on learners' fluency, accuracy, and complexity. His work emphasizes the need to carefully balance these dimensions when designing task-based lessons.

Nunan describes task-based teaching as learner-centered and emphasizes the importance of connecting classroom activities with real-world language use. He argues that appropriately designed tasks can increase learner engagement and provide opportunities for authentic communication. The concept of communicative competence was initially developed by Hymes, who argued that language knowledge involves knowing not only what is grammatically possible but also what is socially and contextually appropriate.

Research methodology. The study employed a qualitative and analytical research methodology based on the examination and synthesis of theoretical and empirical literature related to TBLT and communicative competence.

The following research methods were used:

- analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature;
- comparative analysis of traditional and task-based language teaching;
- synthesis of research findings;
- analysis of task-based instructional principles;
- examination of communicative competence components;
- theoretical modeling of a TBLT lesson framework.

Research results and discussion. The analysis indicates that TBLT has considerable potential for developing communicative competence because it provides learners with opportunities to use language for meaningful purposes.

Communicative competence can be viewed as a combination of several interconnected abilities:

Component	Description	Contribution of TBLT
Grammatical competence	Knowledge and use of language forms	Learners use grammar in meaningful contexts

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Sociolinguistic competence	Appropriate language use according to context	Tasks can simulate social situations
Discourse competence	Ability to organize connected speech	Collaborative tasks require coherent communication
Strategic competence	Ability to overcome communication problems	Learners negotiate meaning and use communication strategies

Thus, task-based instruction can support a broader conception of language proficiency than grammar-focused instruction alone.

Development of speaking fluency. One of the most significant benefits of TBLT is its potential to increase opportunities for oral communication. In a traditional teacher-centered classroom, learners may have limited speaking time. In contrast, pair and group tasks distribute communicative responsibility among learners.

Examples of speaking tasks include:

- information-gap activities;
- role plays;
- problem-solving tasks;
- group discussions;
- interviews;
- decision-making activities;
- simulations;
- collaborative projects.

During these activities, learners need to formulate ideas, respond to others, ask questions, clarify information, and maintain interaction. Repeated opportunities for meaningful communication can contribute to increased fluency and confidence.

A common criticism of TBLT is that a strong focus on meaning may reduce learners' attention to grammatical accuracy. However, task-based instruction does not necessarily exclude grammar teaching.

A balanced approach can incorporate focus on form, in which the teacher draws learners' attention to relevant grammatical features when they become necessary during or after communication. For example, after a task involving discussion of past experiences, the teacher may analyze recurring problems with past-tense forms and provide focused practice.

This approach allows grammar to be connected with communicative use rather than taught exclusively as an isolated system. Negotiation of meaning is an important mechanism in task-based interaction. When learners do not understand each other, they may ask for clarification, repeat information, reformulate statements, or confirm meaning.

Examples include:

- "Could you explain that?"
- "Do you mean that...?"
- "Could you repeat the last part?"
- "So, you are saying that...?"

Such interaction can encourage learners to notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge and modify their language to communicate more effectively.

Development of strategic competence. Learners inevitably encounter situations in which they do not know a particular word or grammatical structure. TBLT encourages them to develop strategies for dealing with such problems.

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These strategies may include:

- paraphrasing;
- using synonyms;
- describing an unknown object;
- using gestures;
- asking for clarification;
- checking understanding;
- reformulating an idea.

TBLT can increase learner engagement because tasks generally have a clear purpose and outcome. Instead of completing exercises solely because they are part of a textbook, learners use language to accomplish a specific goal.

For example, students may need to reach an agreement, select the best option, solve a problem, or create a presentation.

Meaningful goals can increase learners' sense of participation and responsibility. However, the motivational effect of tasks depends on task relevance, difficulty, learner interests, and classroom conditions. Tasks that are too difficult may produce frustration, while tasks that are too easy may fail to provide sufficient challenge.

TBLT changes the traditional role of the teacher. Instead of controlling every stage of classroom interaction, the teacher becomes a facilitator, organizer, monitor, and language adviser.

The teacher is responsible for:

- selecting appropriate tasks;
- establishing clear instructions;
- preparing learners for the task;
- monitoring interaction;
- providing feedback;
- identifying common language problems;
- evaluating task outcomes.

Effective teacher intervention is important. Excessive correction during communication may reduce fluency and confidence, whereas insufficient feedback may limit opportunities for language development.

The quality of task design strongly influences the effectiveness of TBLT.

Effective tasks should generally:

1. have a clear communicative purpose;
2. require learners to exchange or process information;
3. encourage interaction;
4. have a meaningful outcome;
5. be appropriate for learners' proficiency level;
6. provide opportunities for language production;
7. connect with learners' needs and interests.

The effectiveness of TBLT depends largely on the quality of task design and implementation. Tasks should be meaningful, purposeful, appropriately challenging, and relevant to learners' communicative needs. A balanced approach should also provide opportunities for attention to linguistic form, particularly when recurring errors interfere with communication. The teacher plays an essential role as a facilitator, task designer, monitor, and provider of feedback. At the same time, learners become more active participants who are responsible for negotiating meaning, solving problems, exchanging information, and achieving communicative outcomes.

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Conclusion. Task-Based Language Teaching represents an effective approach for developing communicative competence because it places meaningful language use and interaction at the center of the learning process. Rather than treating language as a collection of grammatical structures and vocabulary items, TBLT encourages learners to use language as a tool for achieving communicative goals.

The analysis demonstrates that well-designed tasks can contribute to the development of speaking fluency, vocabulary, grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic awareness, interactional skills, and strategic competence.

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