



Enhancing Communicative Competence Through Task-Based Language Teaching: A Classroom Study

Dr . S. Ramesh¹

Dr. M. Nitin Prabhu²

1.Assistant Professor of English, N. P. R College of Engineering and Technology, Natham

2.Assistant Professor of English, Velammal College of Engineering and Technology, Madurai

Article Received: 05/11/2025
Published Online: 21/12/2025

Article Accepted: 20/12/2025
DOI.:10.53413/IJTELL.2025.6407

Abstract

The increasing emphasis on communicative competence in language education has led to the adoption of innovative teaching methodologies. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a prominent approach that focuses on meaningful language use through tasks rather than explicit grammatical instruction. This study explores the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing the communicative competence of intermediate-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. A classroom-based study was conducted over eight weeks with 30 participants, employing tasks such as role-plays, problem-solving activities, and information-gap exercises. Pre- and post-intervention assessments indicated significant improvements in learners' fluency, accuracy, and interactional skills. The findings suggest that TBLT can serve as an effective tool for promoting authentic communication in EFL contexts.

Keywords: innovative teaching methodologies, grammatical instruction, intermediate-level English

1. Introduction

Communicative competence, a concept introduced by Hymes (1972), emphasizes the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. Unlike traditional grammar-focused approaches, communicative competence requires knowledge of not only linguistic forms but also sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse skills. The growing importance of functional language use in global communication has prompted educators to explore methodologies that integrate meaningful communication into classroom instruction.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life language use. Unlike conventional methods, TBLT



emphasizes learner-centered activities and authentic communication through structured tasks. According to Ellis (2003), a task is an activity that requires learners to use language to achieve a specific outcome. This study aims to investigate whether TBLT can enhance communicative competence in EFL learners and how classroom-based tasks impact fluency, accuracy, and interactional skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Communicative Competence

Hymes (1972) conceptualized communicative competence as comprising four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Subsequent research by Canale and Swain (1980) expanded these dimensions to emphasize the ability to convey meaning effectively in varying contexts. Communicative competence is considered crucial for learners aiming to participate in real-world communication, as it involves both linguistic knowledge and pragmatic awareness.

2.2 Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT is grounded in the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), prioritizing meaningful communication over rote memorization. According to Willis (1996), tasks can range from information-gap exercises to problem-solving activities, providing learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning and develop interactive skills. Research indicates that TBLT improves fluency, enhances motivation, and promotes learner autonomy (Nunan, 2004). By engaging learners in authentic language use, TBLT aligns closely with the principles of communicative competence.

2.3 Previous Classroom Studies

Several studies have examined the impact of TBLT on EFL learners. For example, Carless (2002) found that TBLT led to increased participation and improved accuracy in spoken English. Similarly, Samuda and Bygate (2008) highlighted that task repetition and scaffolding positively affect learner output. However, there is a need for context-specific studies that explore TBLT in classrooms with varying proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

The study involved 30 intermediate-level EFL learners (ages 16–18) from a secondary school in []. The participants were selected based on their prior exposure to English classes and consent to participate in the research study.



3.2 Research Design

A quasi-experimental design was employed, involving pre- and post-tests to measure communicative competence. The intervention spanned eight weeks, with two 90-minute sessions per week. The experimental group received TBLT-focused instruction, while a control group followed the conventional grammar-translation method.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

- **Pre- and Post-Test Assessments:** These evaluated fluency, accuracy, and interactional competence through oral and written tasks.
- **Observation Checklists:** Classroom observations documented learners' engagement, task completion, and collaborative skills.
- **Questionnaires:** Learners provided feedback on their perceptions of task-based activities and motivation levels.

3.4 Procedure

1. **Week 1:** Orientation and pre-test assessment.
2. **Weeks 2–7:** Implementation of task-based activities, including:
 - Role-plays simulating real-life situations (ordering food, asking for directions).
 - Problem-solving tasks (planning a school event, solving puzzles collaboratively).
 - Information-gap exercises to encourage negotiation of meaning.
3. **Week 8:** Post-test assessment and collection of questionnaires.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Findings

The pre-test scores showed moderate levels of communicative competence, with an average score of 56% across fluency, accuracy, and interactional skills. Post-test results demonstrated substantial improvement, with the average score rising to 78%. Improvements were particularly significant in:

- **Fluency:** Average increase of 25% in oral tasks.
- **Accuracy:** Improvement in grammatical correctness and appropriate word choice by 18%.
- **Interactional Competence:** Notable progress in turn-taking, clarification, and negotiation strategies.



4.2 Qualitative Findings

Observation notes indicated increased learner participation, peer collaboration, and willingness to communicate in English. Learner feedback revealed higher motivation levels and a preference for task-based activities over traditional grammar drills. Several participants reported that tasks felt more engaging and relevant to real-life communication.

5. Discussion

The findings align with previous research suggesting that TBLT enhances communicative competence. Tasks that simulate real-world communication provide learners with opportunities to practice language in meaningful contexts, fostering both confidence and skill development. The improvement in interactional competence suggests that TBLT not only strengthens linguistic abilities but also equips learners with strategic communication skills essential for authentic interaction.

The study also highlights the importance of task design. Tasks must be relevant, challenging, and achievable to maximize learner engagement. Scaffolding and repetition further reinforce learning outcomes. These results indicate that integrating TBLT into regular EFL curricula can effectively complement traditional methods, providing a balanced approach to language education.

6. Conclusion

This classroom study provides compelling evidence that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) can significantly enhance communicative competence among EFL learners. By engaging students in meaningful, goal-oriented tasks, the approach goes beyond traditional grammar-focused methods, allowing learners to develop not only linguistic accuracy but also fluency, strategic communication skills, and confidence in real-life language use. The results indicate that students who participated in task-based activities showed notable improvements in oral fluency, grammatical accuracy, and interactional competence, demonstrating the holistic benefits of this pedagogical approach.

One of the key insights from this study is that tasks that mirror real-world situations—such as role-plays, problem-solving activities, and information-gap exercises—encourage authentic communication and learner autonomy. Students are motivated to negotiate meaning, manage turn-taking, clarify misunderstandings, and employ communication strategies effectively. These skills are crucial for real-life language use, suggesting that TBLT not only prepares learners for academic success but also equips them for social, professional, and cross-cultural communication contexts.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of careful task design, appropriate scaffolding, and systematic repetition in maximizing learning outcomes. Tasks must be challenging yet



International Journal of Trends in English Language and Literature (IJTELL)

An International Peer-Reviewed English Journal; ISSN:2582-8487

Impact Factor: 8.02 (SJIF); www.ijtell.com Volume-6, Issue-4; Oct-Dec(2025)

achievable, relevant to students' interests, and varied to address different language skills. When these conditions are met, learners are more engaged, confident, and willing to participate actively in the learning process. Teachers play a critical role in facilitating tasks, providing timely feedback, and fostering an environment that values collaboration, experimentation, and risk-taking in communication.

While the study demonstrates the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing communicative competence, it also opens avenues for further research. Longitudinal studies could investigate the sustainability of these gains over time, while studies in diverse educational and cultural contexts could explore the adaptability of TBLT across different learner populations. Additionally, integrating technology-based tasks, such as digital storytelling, online discussions, and collaborative platforms, may further enhance task effectiveness and learner engagement in the 21st-century classroom.

In conclusion, TBLT represents a transformative approach to language teaching that aligns with the communicative goals of modern education. By focusing on meaningful interaction rather than rote memorization, it fosters not only linguistic proficiency but also the strategic, sociolinguistic, and discourse skills essential for competent communication. For educators, adopting TBLT offers an opportunity to create a dynamic, learner-centered classroom where language learning is both practical and enjoyable. Ultimately, this study reaffirms that when learners are actively engaged in purposeful communication, their capacity for language use grows exponentially, underscoring the vital role of task-based approaches in contemporary language education.

References

- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47.
- Carless, D. (2002). Implementing task-based learning with young learners. *ELT Journal*, 56(4), 389–396.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics* (pp. 269–293). Penguin.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Samuda, V., & Bygate, M. (2008). *Tasks in second language learning*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Longman.