



TEACHING LANGUAGES THROUGH TASKS IN A COMMUNICATIVE WAY

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Abstract: *Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a powerful methodological approach within the field of second language acquisition. Rooted in communicative language teaching principles, TBLT emphasizes the use of authentic tasks as central units of planning and instruction. This article explores the theoretical foundation, key characteristics, pedagogical benefits, and practical challenges of implementing TBLT in classroom settings. It also provides critical reflections on how TBLT contributes to learner-centered education by promoting fluency, accuracy, and interaction. The discussion integrates empirical research findings and theoretical perspectives to offer a comprehensive view of TBLT's methodological significance.*

Keywords: *Task-based language teaching, communicative approach, second language acquisition, language pedagogy, learner-centered instruction.*

The landscape of language pedagogy has evolved significantly over the past few decades, with a shift from form-focused instruction to meaning-centered approaches. Among these, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained prominence as an effective methodology grounded in the principles of communicative language teaching. Unlike traditional grammar-based methods, TBLT places real-world tasks at the core of the curriculum, emphasizing communication and learner engagement.

TBLT is rooted in the constructivist view of learning, which posits that



knowledge is constructed through interaction and active engagement with meaningful content. In this framework, learners develop linguistic competence as they attempt to complete tasks that simulate authentic language use. According to Ellis, tasks are defined as “activities that require learners to use language with an emphasis on meaning to attain an objective”¹. The methodological structure of TBLT typically includes three stages: the pre-task, the task cycle, and the post-task phase². In the pre-task phase, teachers introduce the topic and provide crucial input. The task cycle includes learners performing the task, usually in pairs or groups, promoting negotiation of meaning and interaction. Finally, the post-task step allows for feedback, reflection, and focus on form.

One of the major strengths of TBLT is its capacity to promote communicative competence, a term popularized by Canale and Swain, encompassing grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence³. Unlike decontextualized language drills, TBLT immerses learners in tasks that mimic real-life language use, such as planning a trip, conducting interviews, or solving problems collaboratively. These tasks foster meaningful communication, reduce learner anxiety, and enhance motivation⁴. Furthermore, empirical studies suggest that TBLT supports both fluency and accuracy. For example, research by Skehan and Foster demonstrated that learners engaging in task repetition improved their fluency without compromising grammatical correctness⁵.

This balance is achieved through the natural integration of form-focused feedback within communicative contexts. However, the implementation of TBLT is not without challenges. Teachers often face difficulties in designing authentic tasks, managing time effectively, and balancing attention to form and meaning. Moreover, TBLT demands a shift in the teacher’s role from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator of learning. This shift requires significant training and professional development⁶.



Cultural and institutional constraints also play a role in how TBLT is received. In educational systems that prioritize standardized testing and traditional grammar instruction, TBLT may be viewed as incompatible or impractical. Nevertheless, adaptive models of TBLT have been proposed to accommodate such constraints while preserving core principles⁷. Assessment in TBLT remains a debated topic. Traditional tests may not adequately measure the dynamic competencies developed through task performance. Consequently, alternative assessment forms such as portfolios, peer assessments, and performance-based evaluations are recommended to align with TBLT's objectives⁸. Despite these challenges, the benefits of TBLT are substantial. It fosters learner autonomy, critical thinking, and engagement through interactive and purposeful language use. As globalization continues to increase the demand for communicative competence in multiple languages, methodologies like TBLT become even more relevant and necessary.

In conclusion, Task-Based Language Teaching offers a robust methodological framework that aligns with contemporary views on language learning and teaching. By centering instruction around meaningful tasks, it bridges the gap between classroom activities and real-world language use. Although its implementation requires careful planning and adaptation, TBLT represents a promising direction for language educators aiming to cultivate communicative competence in diverse learning contexts.

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