

## DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH THROUGH TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT)

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**Abstract.** Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is widely recognized as an effective learner-centered approach that develops communicative competence through meaningful, real-world tasks. This study investigates the impact of TBLT on university students' communicative competence in English, focusing on speaking fluency, interaction skills, and learners' confidence. An experimental research design was employed with a control group receiving traditional instruction and an experimental group receiving task-based instruction over a defined instructional period. Data were collected through pre- and post-speaking assessments, observation checklists, and learner questionnaires. The results indicate that students instructed through TBLT demonstrated noticeable improvement in fluency, interactional strategies (turn-taking, clarification requests, and negotiation of meaning), and willingness to communicate. The study concludes that TBLT creates a supportive environment for authentic language use and recommends its systematic integration into higher education English courses.

**Keywords:** task-based language teaching, communicative competence, speaking skills, interaction, higher education, willingness to communicate.

**Annotatsiya.** Vazifaga asoslangan til o'qitish (TBLT) – bu o'quvchiga yo'naltirilgan samarali yondashuv bo'lib, mazmunli va real hayotiy vazifalar orqali kommunikativ kompetensiyani rivojlantiradi. Ushbu tadqiqot TBLT ning universitet talabalari ingliz tilidagi kommunikativ kompetensiyasiga ta'sirini o'rganadi, ayniqsa nutq ravonligi, muloqot ko'nikmalari va o'quvchilarning ishonchi jihatidan. Tadqiqotda eksperimental dizayn qo'llanilib, nazorat guruhi an'anaviy ta'lim olgan, eksperimental guruh esa belgilangan o'quv davri davomida vazifaga asoslangan ta'lim olgan. Ma'lumotlar oldindan va keyinroq o'tkazilgan nutq baholashlar, kuzatuv ro'yxatlari va o'quvchi so'rovnomalari orqali to'plandi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, TBLT orqali ta'lim olgan talabalar nutq ravonligi, muloqot strategiyalari (navbat bilan gaplashish, tushuntirish so'rash va ma'no kelishuvini amalga oshirish) va muloqot qilish istagida sezilarli yaxshilanishga erishgan. Tadqiqot shuni ta'kidlaydiki, TBLT tilni haqiqiy kontekstlarda qo'llash uchun qo'llab-quvvatlovchi muhit yaratadi va oliy ta'limdagi ingliz tili kurslariga tizimli integratsiyasini tavsiya qiladi

**Kalit so'zlar:** vazifaga asoslangan o'qitish, kommunikativ kompetensiya, nutq ko'nikmalari, muloqot, oliy ta'lim, muloqot qilish istagi.

**Аннотация.** Обучение английскому языку на основе задач (TBLT) широко признано как эффективный ученико-ориентированный подход, который развивает коммуникативную компетенцию через значимые, реальные задачи. В данном исследовании изучается влияние TBLT на коммуникативную компетенцию студентов университета в английском языке, с акцентом на беглость речи, навыки взаимодействия и уверенность учащихся. Была использована экспериментальная исследовательская модель: контрольная группа получала традиционное обучение, а экспериментальная группа проходила обучение на основе задач в течение определённого учебного периода. Данные собирались с помощью предварительных и последующих оценок устной речи, наблюдательных чек-листов и опросников для учащихся. Результаты показывают, что студенты, обучавшиеся по TBLT, продемонстрировали заметное улучшение беглости речи, стратегий взаимодействия (очередность речи, запросы разъяснений и согласование значения) и готовности к общению. Исследование делает вывод, что TBLT создаёт поддерживающую среду для аутентичного использования языка и рекомендует его систематическую интеграцию в курсы английского языка в высших учебных заведениях

**Ключевые слова:** обучение на основе задач, коммуникативная компетенция, навыки устной речи, взаимодействие высшее образование, готовность к общению.

**Introduction.** In contemporary English language education, the goal has shifted from merely teaching grammar and vocabulary to developing learners' ability to use language effectively in real communication. This ability is usually described as communicative competence, which includes grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. In many learning contexts, however, classroom instruction still relies heavily on teacher-centered explanations and textbook-based drills. While these methods may improve knowledge about language, they often provide limited opportunities for meaningful interaction and spontaneous language use. One of the major challenges faced by English learners, especially at the university level, is the gap between knowing English and using English. Students may perform well on written tests but struggle to participate in discussions, express opinions, or respond quickly in real communication. This gap becomes even more problematic because graduates are expected to communicate professionally and confidently in academic and workplace settings.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is considered a solution to these issues because it organizes teaching around tasks that require students to use language with a clear purpose. In TBLT, learners engage in activities such as planning, negotiating, solving problems, and making decisions—similar to real-life communication. Instead of studying language only as a system, learners use it as a tool to achieve goals. This approach aligns with communicative teaching principles and supports active learning.

**Aim of the Study.** This study aims to explore the effectiveness of TBLT in developing university learners' communicative competence in English.

**Literature analysis.** The literature on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) highlights its strong theoretical and pedagogical foundations in communicative language teaching. Scholars such as Rod Ellis and Michael H. Long emphasize that TBLT promotes meaningful interaction and facilitates second language acquisition through authentic task engagement. Additionally, David Nunan and Jane Willis underline the importance of structured task cycles in developing learners' fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence. Overall, these studies confirm that TBLT is an effective learner-centered approach that bridges the gap between language knowledge and real-life communication.

**Research methodology.** The study used an experimental design comparing two groups: Experimental group: taught through Task-Based Language Teaching; Control group: taught through traditional teacher-centered instruction; Participants were 3rd-year students of the Narpay Faculty of Foreign Languages at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages.

A total of 40 students participated: 20 students in the experimental group; 20 students in the control group.

Students' initial proficiency levels were checked using a pre-speaking assessment to ensure comparability.

To develop communicative competence, tasks were designed to be realistic and purposeful, for example: Information-gap tasks: each student has different information; they must communicate to complete the whole picture; Problem-solving tasks: students discuss solutions to a real-life issue (e.g., organizing an event, handling a complaint); Decision-making tasks: students choose among options and justify their decisions; Role-play tasks: students practice communication in social or professional situations (interviews, meetings, travel scenarios).

The control group studied the same general topics but followed traditional instruction: explanation + controlled practice + homework.

**Results and discussion.** The experimental group received instruction based on the task cycle, which typically includes:

1. Pre-task phase: introduction of topic, activation of prior knowledge, key vocabulary support
2. Task phase: students complete the communicative task in pairs or groups
3. Planning & report phase: students prepare to report task outcomes; groups present or share
4. Language focus phase: teacher provides feedback, highlights useful language, corrects errors, and practices form

#### Data Collection Tools:

1. Pre- and post-speaking assessments: to measure improvements in fluency, accuracy, and coherence
2. Observation checklist: to record interaction strategies (turn-taking, asking questions, responding naturally)
3. Learner questionnaire: to measure confidence, motivation, and willingness to communicate

#### Data Analysis:

Speaking performance was analyzed using a rubric assessing: Fluency (flow of speech, speed, pauses); Accuracy (grammar and vocabulary control); Interaction (responses, questions, clarification strategies); Coherence (logical organization of ideas).

1) Improvement in Speaking Fluency. Post-assessment results showed that students in the experimental group spoke more smoothly, used fewer long pauses, and maintained communication even when they lacked vocabulary. Many learners began to use communication strategies such as paraphrasing and using simpler words.

2) Development of Interaction Skills. Observations indicated that TBLT learners improved in: Turn-taking: responding appropriately and keeping conversations active; Clarification requests: "Could you repeat?", "Do you mean...?" Negotiation of meaning: asking follow-up questions, confirming understanding; Active listening: reacting and responding naturally (not memorized answers).

3) Increased Confidence and Willingness to Communicate. Questionnaire responses suggested that students felt more comfortable speaking English in class. They reported reduced fear of making mistakes because tasks focused on meaning and goal completion rather than perfect grammar.

In contrast, the control group showed smaller progress in speaking and remained more dependent on teacher guidance.

The results support the idea that TBLT is effective for developing communicative competence because it creates conditions for authentic communication. Students are required to speak not to “perform” language but to achieve an outcome, such as solving a problem or making a decision. This functional use of language naturally promotes fluency and interaction. A key strength of TBLT is that it increases meaningful input and output. Learners actively produce language, receive peer feedback, and adjust their speech in real-time—processes essential for communicative development. Moreover, the collaborative nature of tasks provides a supportive environment that reduces anxiety and increases participation.

However, TBLT implementation may face challenges such as time constraints, mixed-ability classes, and limited teacher experience in designing tasks. Effective teacher facilitation is necessary to balance communication with language accuracy.

**Conclusion.** The study concludes that Task-Based Language Teaching significantly improves university learners’ communicative competence in English. It enhances speaking fluency, interaction skills, and confidence by providing authentic opportunities for purposeful communication. Therefore, TBLT should be systematically integrated into English language teaching programs in higher education.

**Limitations:** The study involved a limited number of participants (40 students). The instructional period was relatively short; long-term effects were not measured. Speaking assessments may include subjective judgment despite using rubrics.

**Recommendations:** Teachers should receive training in designing and facilitating communicative tasks. Tasks should be adapted to learners’ proficiency levels to ensure equal participation. Future studies should examine long-term effects of TBLT and its role in other skills (writing, listening).

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