

## TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN UZBEK EFL CONTEXTS

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**Abstract:** Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained recognition as an effective approach for developing communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This study investigates the impact of TBLT on Uzbek EFL learners' speaking fluency, listening comprehension, vocabulary usage, classroom participation, and confidence in communication. A total of 50 intermediate-level students from secondary schools and language centers in Tashkent participated in a six-week intervention involving structured TBLT activities such as role-plays, problem-solving tasks, collaborative storytelling, information-gap exercises, and opinion-exchange discussions.

Data were collected through pre- and post-intervention assessments, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal significant improvements in all assessed areas, with notable increases in students' confidence and active participation. Qualitative data indicate that learners found TBLT tasks engaging, meaningful, and motivating, providing opportunities for authentic language use and peer collaboration. The study concludes that TBLT is an effective, learner-centered approach that enhances communicative competence by fostering practical language use, learner autonomy, and socio-cognitive skills in Uzbek EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), communicative competence, EFL, Uzbek learners, speaking fluency, listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, classroom participation, learner-centered approach, collaborative learning

### Introduction

In recent years, communicative competence has become a central goal in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, emphasizing learners' ability to use language effectively in real-life contexts rather than merely mastering grammatical rules. Traditional approaches to language teaching, which often focus on rote memorization and explicit grammar instruction, have shown limitations in developing students' practical communication skills. In this regard, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a learner-centered pedagogical approach that prioritizes meaningful language use through tasks that reflect authentic communicative situations (1,2).

TBLT encourages students to engage in problem-solving, information-sharing, decision-making, and collaborative activities that mirror real-life language use. By completing purposeful tasks, learners develop fluency, accuracy, and confidence while interacting in English, making the learning process more engaging and relevant (3,4). Research has demonstrated that task-based approaches can significantly improve learners' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, as well as their overall communicative competence (5).

In the context of Uzbekistan, EFL classrooms often face challenges such as large class sizes, limited exposure to English outside the classroom, and traditional teacher-centered methodologies. Integrating TBLT into these contexts offers the potential to foster active participation, increase motivation, and

enhance students' ability to use English communicatively in authentic situations. Furthermore, task-based approaches align well with contemporary educational goals that emphasize critical thinking, collaboration, and learner autonomy.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Task-Based Language Teaching can be employed as a tool to enhance communicative competence among Uzbek EFL learners. Specifically, it aims to identify effective task types, evaluate their impact on students' language performance, and provide practical recommendations for EFL teachers seeking to implement TBLT in Uzbek classroom contexts.

### **Main part**

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to investigate the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing communicative competence among Uzbek EFL learners. The research was conducted at two educational institutions in Tashkent, including a secondary school and a language learning center. A total of 50 intermediate-level EFL students, aged between 15 and 20, participated in the study. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure similar English proficiency levels and prior exposure to English instruction. The study utilized a variety of task types aligned with the principles of TBLT. These included information-gap tasks designed to promote exchange of missing information between peers, such as completing charts, maps, or schedules; problem-solving tasks requiring students to collaborate in finding solutions to real-life scenarios, such as planning a school event or designing a travel itinerary; role-plays simulating everyday social or academic interactions, such as ordering at a restaurant, asking for directions, or conducting a mock interview; opinion-exchange discussions, including structured debates and discussions on academic, social, or cultural topics, encouraging students to express and justify their viewpoints; and collaborative storytelling, where small groups worked together to create and narrate stories, focusing on vocabulary expansion, grammatical accuracy, and fluency. Teachers acted as facilitators, providing clear instructions, scaffolding language use when necessary, and monitoring students' interaction while allowing autonomy in task completion. Pre- and post-intervention assessments were used to measure students' communicative competence across speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

The study was conducted over a six-week period. In the first week, a pre-test was administered to establish baseline levels of communicative competence. During weeks two to five, students engaged in structured TBLT activities both in-class and as guided homework assignments. Each task was designed to reflect authentic language use relevant to students' daily experiences and academic needs. Teachers encouraged collaborative work, peer feedback, and active participation, ensuring that learners had multiple opportunities to use English meaningfully. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-intervention assessments and surveys measuring students' self-reported confidence, participation, and language performance. Qualitative data were obtained from classroom observations, teacher notes, and semi-structured interviews with a subset of 12 volunteer students to gain insights into their perceptions, challenges, and attitudes toward TBLT. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired t-tests to evaluate significant improvements in communicative competence, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data to identify recurring patterns in students' engagement, task effectiveness, and perceived benefits of TBLT. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how TBLT can be effectively implemented in Uzbek EFL classrooms to foster active participation, collaboration, and practical language use, thereby enhancing students' overall communicative competence.

**Results**

The implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Uzbek EFL classrooms resulted in notable improvements in students’ communicative competence, including speaking fluency, listening comprehension, vocabulary usage, and overall engagement. Pre-intervention assessments indicated that only 30% of students demonstrated confidence in speaking tasks, and 35% actively participated in classroom discussions. By the end of the six-week intervention, post-assessment results revealed significant increases in these areas. Students were more willing to participate in group discussions, complete collaborative tasks, and engage in role-plays and problem-solving activities. Observational data highlighted a noticeable reduction in language anxiety, as students became more comfortable expressing themselves in English and interacting with peers.

The quantitative results are summarized in the following table:

Skill Area	Pre-Intervention Score (%)	Post-Intervention Score (%)	Improvement (%)
Speaking Fluency	32	78	46
Listening Comprehension	40	82	42
Vocabulary Usage	38	80	42
Participation in Classroom Tasks	35	85	50
Confidence in Communication	30	80	50

The table illustrates that all assessed skill areas showed considerable improvement. Speaking fluency and confidence in communication experienced the most significant gains, indicating that TBLT activities such as role-plays, opinion-exchange discussions, and collaborative storytelling were highly effective in promoting authentic language use. Vocabulary usage and listening comprehension also improved significantly, reflecting the benefits of task-based exercises that integrate listening, reading, and interaction simultaneously.

Qualitative data from classroom observations and student interviews supported these findings. Students reported that engaging in meaningful tasks increased their motivation to participate, allowed for practical use of language, and fostered peer collaboration. Many students noted that working on tasks that mirrored real-life situations, such as planning events or solving everyday problems, made learning English more relevant and enjoyable. Teachers observed that students were more confident in initiating conversations, providing explanations, and negotiating meaning during group activities.

Overall, the results indicate that the implementation of TBLT in Uzbek EFL classrooms effectively enhances communicative competence by combining skill practice with authentic and meaningful language use, promoting active participation, and fostering learner autonomy.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) significantly enhances communicative competence among Uzbek EFL learners. Quantitative data from pre- and post-intervention assessments demonstrated substantial improvements in speaking fluency, listening comprehension, vocabulary usage, classroom participation, and overall confidence in communication. The most notable gains were observed in students' confidence and active participation, suggesting that task-based activities provide authentic opportunities for meaningful interaction, which is central to communicative language learning.

Qualitative data from classroom observations and student interviews support these results. Students reported higher motivation, increased engagement, and a greater willingness to take risks in using English. The authentic nature of TBLT tasks, such as role-plays, problem-solving, collaborative storytelling, and opinion-exchange discussions, allowed learners to apply language in real-life contexts, which made the learning experience both practical and enjoyable. These findings align with prior research emphasizing the role of TBLT in promoting learner-centered environments that foster autonomy, collaboration, and meaningful language use (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007; Nunan, 2004).

The study also highlights the importance of structured implementation. Effective TBLT requires careful task selection, teacher facilitation, and clear instructions to ensure that students remain focused on communication objectives while practicing language skills. Tasks that balance complexity and familiarity proved particularly effective in maintaining student interest and maximizing learning outcomes. Furthermore, peer collaboration and feedback during tasks enhanced not only linguistic skills but also socio-cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving and negotiation of meaning, which are critical components of communicative competence.

In conclusion, the results suggest that TBLT is a practical and effective approach for enhancing communicative competence in Uzbek EFL classrooms. By engaging students in purposeful, authentic, and collaborative tasks, TBLT fosters both linguistic proficiency and confidence, ultimately contributing to more meaningful and effective English language learning.

## **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing communicative competence among Uzbek EFL learners. The implementation of TBLT activities, including role-plays, problem-solving tasks, collaborative storytelling, information-gap exercises, and opinion-exchange discussions, significantly improved students' speaking fluency, listening comprehension, vocabulary usage, classroom participation, and confidence in communication.

The findings emphasize the importance of structured and purposeful task selection, teacher facilitation, and opportunities for peer collaboration to maximize learning outcomes. By engaging learners in authentic, meaningful, and collaborative language use, TBLT promotes learner autonomy, reduces language anxiety, and enhances both linguistic and socio-cognitive skills.

Overall, TBLT provides a learner-centered and communicative approach that effectively bridges the gap between theoretical language knowledge and practical language use. The study concludes that

integrating TBLT into Uzbek EFL classrooms can significantly contribute to more effective, engaging, and meaningful English language learning experiences.

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