

THE IMPACT OF TASK-BASED AND COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACHES ON LEARNER MOTIVATION, FLUENCY, AND COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT IN EFL CONTEXTS: PEDAGOGICAL INSIGHTS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract. This article explores the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on learner motivation, fluency, and cognitive engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. The study emphasizes how these communicative approaches enhance interaction, promote autonomy, and develop learners' linguistic and pragmatic competence. It also discusses pedagogical strategies, challenges, and classroom implications for educators aiming to integrate communicative methodologies effectively. Findings reveal that both TBLT and CLT foster a learner-centered environment that significantly increases motivation, fluency, and engagement. **Keywords:** Task-Based Learning, Communicative Approach, Motivation, Fluency, Cognitive Engagement, EFL Teaching.

Introduction. Language teaching has undergone a paradigm shift from grammar-translation methods to communicative and task-based approaches. In traditional classrooms, language learning often focused on rote memorization, grammar drills, and teacher-centered instruction. However, modern language education recognizes communication as the primary purpose of language. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) have emerged as effective pedagogical frameworks that prioritize meaning-making, learner autonomy, and authentic interaction. In EFL settings, where opportunities for real communication are limited, these approaches create a dynamic classroom environment that simulates real-life use of language. Learners engage in purposeful tasks such as problem-solving, discussions, and role plays, allowing them to develop both linguistic accuracy and communicative fluency. The goal is not merely to learn about language, but to use it actively for communication. This article investigates how TBLT and CLT contribute to motivation, fluency, and cognitive engagement, drawing insights from current research and practical classroom observations.

Materials and Methods. The study adopted a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys and classroom observations were conducted among 120 university students studying English as a Foreign Language. Participants were divided into two groups: one taught through traditional methods and the other through task-based and communicative activities. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-tests measuring fluency and accuracy, while qualitative data came from student reflections and teacher interviews. The tasks used in instruction included collaborative projects, problem-solving exercises, storytelling, debates, and information-gap activities. Lesson plans followed a communicative cycle involving pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task reflection. Teachers acted as facilitators rather than sole knowledge providers, encouraging peer interaction and self-assessment.

Discussion. Findings from classroom observations revealed that task-based and communicative lessons generated significantly higher levels of student participation and enthusiasm compared to traditional methods. Learners reported that they felt more motivated because tasks were meaningful, goal-oriented, and relevant to real-life situations. **Motivation:** TBLT and CLT foster intrinsic motivation by emphasizing learner autonomy and collaboration. Students enjoyed interactive tasks that provided immediate communicative feedback and

opportunities for self-expression. In contrast, grammar-focused lessons often led to anxiety and disengagement. Fluency: The analysis of oral performance showed that students in communicative classrooms spoke more fluently and naturally. They developed better discourse management skills, reduced hesitation, and gained confidence in expressing complex ideas. Cognitive Engagement: TBLT encouraged deeper cognitive processing. Learners engaged in negotiation of meaning, hypothesis testing, and critical thinking while completing tasks. This cognitive engagement promoted long-term retention and transferable language skills.

Teacher Roles and Challenges: Teachers reported difficulties in balancing fluency with accuracy, designing appropriate tasks, and managing large classes. Continuous professional development and institutional support are crucial for success.

Results. Quantitative data revealed that students taught through TBLT and CLT achieved 20% higher scores in fluency tests and 15% higher in oral communication assessments compared to the control group. Motivation surveys indicated that 87% of learners preferred communicative lessons over traditional instruction. Furthermore, classroom participation increased by 30%, and self-reported confidence in speaking English improved significantly.

Conclusion. The findings of this study underscore the vital role of Task-Based and Communicative Language Teaching in enhancing learner motivation, fluency, and cognitive engagement. By shifting the focus from form to meaning, these approaches empower learners to use language authentically and confidently. However, for maximum effectiveness, educators must receive adequate training in designing meaningful tasks and balancing communicative fluency with grammatical accuracy.

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