



The Effectiveness Of Task-Based Learning In Teaching English

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning in teaching English to students of non-linguistic specialties. Particular attention is given to the development of speaking accuracy, fluency, complexity, motivation, engagement, and learner autonomy. The study highlights the practical value of task-based instruction in preparing students for academic and professional communication.

KEYWORDS: Task-Based Learning, Task-Based Language Teaching, English language teaching, non-linguistic specialties, speaking skills, communicative competence, fluency, accuracy, language complexity.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary educational realities require students in non-linguistic fields of study to have a confident command of English as a tool for professional and academic communication. Increasing integration into the global community, participation in international conferences, access to academic sources, the need to write publications, and correspondence with foreign colleagues all create a demand for effective and practice-oriented English language instruction in higher education.

Materials And Methods

However, traditional teaching methods, particularly the PPP model (Presentation–Practice–Production), are often insufficiently effective in developing students' ability to use language in authentic communicative situations. This approach, which focuses primarily on grammatical accuracy and reproductive exercises, may restrict learners' communicative potential [5, pp. 133–137; 1, p. 3]. This issue is particularly significant when English is expected to function as a tool for solving tasks related to students' future professional activities.

In this context, Task-Based Learning (TBL), which is based on the principle of learning a language through the completion of communicatively meaningful tasks, is of particular interest. TBL encourages students to use English not merely to master individual linguistic structures but to achieve specific goals while completing tasks that resemble real-life professional or everyday communication [1, pp. 9–10; 4, p. 69; 6, pp. 12–14]. This approach makes the learning process more dynamic, motivating, and outcome-oriented.

Unlike traditional approaches, TBL places greater emphasis on the meaning and content of communication rather than exclusively on linguistic form. This allows students to develop fluency, sustain interaction in the target language, and express complex ideas appropriately within a given context [1, p. 6; 6, pp. 135–136]. Therefore, TBL may serve as an important

component in modernizing English language courses for students in non-linguistic disciplines [4, p. 58].

The present study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning in teaching English to students of non-linguistic specializations. Littlewood describes language-learning activities as existing along a continuum from a strong focus on linguistic form to authentic communication focused primarily on meaning [2, pp. 321–322]. The analysis focused on such indicators as the development of oral language performance in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity, as well as changes in students' learning motivation and level of engagement in the educational process [2, p. 324].

The study involved a sample of 60 second-year students from non-linguistic faculties whose English proficiency level was pre-intermediate or above. All participants were divided into two groups of 30 students each. The control group was taught according to the traditional PPP model, whereas the experimental group received instruction based on TBL principles. Both groups studied the same thematic unit, "Professional Communication in English," which made it possible to compare the results under comparable instructional conditions.

During the eight-week instructional cycle, the control group followed the explanation–practice–application format. The teacher introduced lexical and grammatical material, provided exercises for consolidation, and then asked students to complete dialogues or written tasks. In contrast, the experimental group was given tasks based on real or simulated communicative situations, such as preparing a product presentation, participating in discussions related to their professional field, developing a project followed by an oral presentation, and discussing professional problems with a partner. Particular attention was paid to planning, information searching, group interaction, and the independent presentation of results. The teacher acted as a facilitator, guiding students without imposing rigid linguistic frameworks.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the approach, a combination of methods was employed, including oral testing before and after the instructional cycle, questionnaires measuring motivation and interest, classroom observation of student participation, and focus-group interviews conducted after completion of the course. The analysis of oral performance focused on three parameters: accuracy, defined as the correct use of grammatical structures; fluency, measured by the number of words produced per minute; and complexity, reflected in the use of more sophisticated lexical and syntactic structures.

The results demonstrated a considerable advantage for the experimental group. Accuracy increased by 12% among students taught through TBL, compared with 5% in the control group. Fluency improved by 28% in the experimental group, compared with 10% in the control group, while speech complexity increased by 15% among TBL students and by only 6% among students receiving traditional instruction.

The questionnaire results also revealed a substantial increase in motivation among students in the experimental group. At the beginning of the instructional cycle, the average score on a five-point Likert scale was 3.1, whereas by the end of the course it had increased to 4.5. In the control group, the increase was less pronounced, from 3.2 to 3.7. Students in the TBL group reported that they enjoyed collaborative forms of learning, found the tasks engaging, and recognized the practical value of the activities they completed. Many participants emphasized that, for the first

time, they had begun to perceive English not merely as an academic subject but as a genuine tool for communication and professional development.

In addition, participants in the experimental group expressed greater confidence in their ability to use English in their future careers, indicating the development of a willingness to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom. Classroom observations also produced positive findings. A high level of engagement was recorded in the TBL group: students actively discussed tasks, asked questions, worked in pairs, and independently formulated and expressed their ideas. In the control group, the level of interaction was considerably lower. Participation in discussions was largely limited to answering the teacher's questions, while most tasks were completed individually.

Results And Discussion

Thus, it can be argued that Task-Based Learning contributes not only to the development of language skills but also to the improvement of the classroom learning environment and to greater learner autonomy and initiative. The findings are consistent with the results of other studies in the field of TBL. Numerous studies of communicative language teaching emphasize the advantages of tasks with meaningful communicative purposes over the mechanical repetition of grammatical structures.

It is particularly important that TBL corresponds to contemporary educational trends that emphasize the development of twenty-first-century competencies, including critical thinking, teamwork, initiative, and responsibility [1, pp. 9–10; 6, pp. 12–14]. These qualities are closely connected with the task-completion format characteristic of TBL and contribute to the development of transferable academic and professional skills [6, pp. 148–151].

However, when implementing Task-Based Learning in higher education, several potential challenges should also be taken into consideration. First, the successful implementation of TBL requires a high level of teacher preparation. Instructors need to be able to select tasks that are appropriate to students' proficiency levels and professional specializations, manage classroom time effectively, provide constructive feedback, and motivate students to participate actively.

Second, TBL generally requires more extensive preparation and planning than traditional teaching methods. Designing tasks, selecting appropriate materials, and developing assessment criteria require considerable time and methodological expertise. Third, not all students are immediately prepared for a high degree of learner autonomy, particularly if they are accustomed to traditional teacher-centered approaches. Therefore, a gradual transition may be necessary, combining elements of TBL and PPP, especially during the initial stages of a course. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, TBL represents a powerful tool for improving the effectiveness of English language teaching in higher education. Its use contributes not only to the development of language skills but also to the enhancement of metacognitive and social skills, learner independence, and critical thinking [1, p. 117]. The approach is particularly valuable for students who are expected to use English in their future professional activities, including participation in international projects, internships abroad, and communication with foreign partners [6, pp. 12–14]. It is through the completion of practical tasks that reflect authentic professional contexts that genuine language competence can be developed, which is essential in an increasingly globalized world.

Conclusion

Thus, the study demonstrated that Task-Based Learning is an effective approach to teaching English to students in non-linguistic fields of study. It contributes not only to improvements in key dimensions of oral performance but also to substantial increases in students' motivation, engagement, and confidence. This approach makes the learning process more meaningful, engaging, and closely connected with future professional contexts.

For the successful integration of TBL into higher education, it is recommended that professional development courses be provided for teachers, methodological guidelines and task collections be developed for different academic specializations, and further empirical research be conducted to identify the most effective formats and strategies for implementing this approach.

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