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The Role of Task-Based Language Teaching in Enhancing Communicative Competence through Authentic Texts

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Abstract. Communicative competence is a fundamental goal of second language acquisition, encompassing linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. However, traditional language instruction often fails to provide sufficient opportunities for meaningful communication. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as an effective pedagogical approach that promotes language learning through the completion of meaningful tasks. This study investigates the role of TBLT in enhancing students' communicative competence through the use of authentic texts. Employing a quasi-experimental design, the study involved 26 intermediate-level EFL university students who participated in a six-week instructional intervention based on authentic-text-driven tasks. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test communicative competence assessments and classroom observations. The findings indicate significant improvement in students' fluency, interactional ability, and pragmatic use of language. The study concludes that TBLT, when combined with authentic texts, significantly enhances communicative competence in EFL contexts.

Keywords: *Task-Based Language Teaching, communicative competence, authentic texts, EFL, SLA*

Introduction. Communicative competence refers to the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in real-life communication. According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. In second language acquisition (SLA), achieving communicative competence is considered the ultimate goal of language learning.

However, many EFL classrooms still rely on traditional, form-focused instruction, which emphasizes grammar accuracy over meaningful communication. As a result, learners often struggle to use language fluently and appropriately in real communicative situations.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers a solution to this problem. TBLT is an approach in which learners acquire language by completing meaningful tasks that reflect real-world language use (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007). Authentic texts—such as news articles, dialogues, advertisements, and social media posts—play a crucial role in providing meaningful input for task design.





This study explores how TBLT, supported by authentic texts, enhances communicative competence in EFL learners.

The objectives are:

1. To examine the impact of TBLT on communicative competence development;
2. To analyze the role of authentic texts in task performance;
3. To evaluate changes in learners' fluency, interaction, and language use.

Methods.

Research Design. This study employed a **quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design** with qualitative classroom observation.

Participants

The participants were **26 intermediate-level (B1–B2) EFL university students** aged 18–22 enrolled in an English communication course.

Instructional Procedure. A **six-week TBLT-based intervention** was conducted using authentic texts. Each unit followed the task cycle:

1. Pre-task (input and vocabulary activation)
2. Task cycle (pair/group task completion)
3. Post-task (reflection and language focus)

Types of authentic texts used:

- News articles
- Online reviews
- Short interviews
- Social media posts
- Advertisements

Example Task:

Authentic Text: Online product review about smartphones

Task:

- Identify opinions and arguments in the review
- Compare positive and negative evaluations
- Discuss which smartphone is better in groups
- Present group decision with justification

Data Collection

1. **Communicative Competence Test (Pre/Post)**
 - Speaking tasks
 - Interaction role-plays
 - Fluency and appropriateness scoring
2. **Observation Checklist**
 - Interaction frequency
 - Fluency development
 - Task engagement

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.





Results

Communicative Competence Test Results

Test Stage	Mean Score (out of 30)	Performance Description
Pre-test	15.2	Limited fluency, hesitations, grammar-focused output
Post-test	24.8	Improved fluency, interaction, and communicative appropriateness

Classroom Observation Findings

The following improvements were observed:

- Increased student talk time during tasks
- Improved ability to negotiate meaning
- More spontaneous and fluent speech
- Better use of functional language (agreeing, disagreeing, suggesting)

Example of Improvement

Pre-task response:

- “I think this phone good.”

Post-task response:

- “I think this smartphone is better because it has a longer battery life and better camera quality.”

Discussion. The findings indicate that Task-Based Language Teaching significantly enhances communicative competence when combined with authentic texts.

TBLT creates opportunities for meaningful interaction, allowing learners to use language for real communicative purposes rather than mechanical practice. Authentic texts provide contextualized input that reflects real-world language use.

The improvement in post-test scores suggests that learners developed better fluency, interactional ability, and functional language use.

Pedagogical Implications

Teachers should:

- Integrate authentic texts into task design
- Use pair and group tasks to encourage interaction
- Focus on meaning before form
- Provide feedback on communicative effectiveness

Conclusion. This study examined the role of Task-Based Language Teaching in enhancing communicative competence through authentic texts. The findings show that TBLT significantly improves learners’ communicative performance by promoting interaction, fluency, and meaningful language use.

The study concludes that integrating authentic texts into task-based instruction is an effective approach for developing communicative competence in EFL contexts. Future research should include larger samples and statistical significance testing.

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