

The Effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Enhancing Academic English Skills among Kurdish EFL Learners

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فعالية تدريس اللغة القائم على المهام في تعزيز مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية الأكاديمية بين

متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية للطلاب الأكراد

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving the academic English capabilities—especially in speaking, writing, listening, and reading—of Kurdish EFL learners at Salahaddin University. Adopting a mixed-techniques technique, the studies utilized structured questionnaires administered to 217 third-year EFL college students and 25 university teachers to explore both perceptions and implementation practices of TBLT. The findings monitor that while students typically view TBLT as interactive and contextually applicable, a considerable percentage display restricted understanding of its pedagogical standards. Instructors, however, expressed favorable attitudes in the direction of TBLT but identified tremendous challenges associated with academic clarity, peer collaboration, and institutional guide. The research highlights the pedagogical capability of TBLT in fostering learner autonomy, vital thinking, and engagement in instructional tasks. However, a hit integration requires targeted instructor training, curriculum alignment, and context-touchy model. These consequences carry implications for language educators, curriculum builders, and policymakers operating to reform EFL practices in aid-restricted academic settings. Keywords: Task Based Language Teaching, academic skills, EFL learners, learner autonomy, critical thinking.

الخلاصة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي فعالية تدريس اللغة القائم على المهام (TBLT) في تنمية المهارات الأكاديمية في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية من الطلبة الأكراد، مع التركيز على مهارات التحدث، والكتابة، والاستماع، والقراءة. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، وجمعت البيانات باستخدام استبيانين موجهين إلى ٢١٧ طالباً و ٢٥ مدرساً من جامعة صلاح الدين. أظهرت النتائج أن المتعلمين يجدون في هذا النهج تفاعلاً وارتباطاً بالواقع، إلا أن العديد منهم يعاني من ضعف في فهم أساليبه ومبادئه. كما أبدى المدرسون موقفاً إيجابياً تجاه تطبيقه، مع الإشارة إلى تحديات تتعلق بوضوح الإرشادات ونقص التدريب والدعم المؤسسي. توصي الدراسة بتوفير برامج تدريبية وتأهيلية، وتكييف المناهج وفقاً للواقع المحلي، بما يساهم في تعزيز فاعلية TBLT في البيئات التعليمية محدودة الموارد.

Section One

1.

Introduction

Changes to communication ability in English -language teaching (ELT) have created rapid interest in working

language teaching (TBLT), which is an attitude to complete the work of student -centered, the real life. It emphasizes the use of practical language through installed stages- pre-assignments, tasks and postal assignments- to promote flow, interaction and engagement. Researchers like Ahmed (2021) argue that this method develops communication ability by winding up to students in meaningful language activities. TBLT also acts as an extension of communication language teaching (CLT), and prioritizes relevance and authenticity in instructional contexts.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite growing interest in TBLT, its implementation in Kurdish EFL classrooms remains inconsistent. Although learners benefit from its interactive structure, many lack a robust draw close of its pedagogical foundations. Furthermore, instructors often stumble upon institutional obstacles, which includes inadequate training and curriculum constraints. This disconnect hinders the total consciousness of TBLT's benefits, which includes the development of educational English abilities like writing, important thinking, and research. The present study takes a look at addresses this hole through inspecting how TBLT is currently practiced and what contextual boundaries should be overcome.

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study investigates the use of TBLT in Kurdish EFL classrooms to enhance students' academic skills. It explores challenges in implementation and factors supporting effective integration. Additionally, it identifies which academic skills are most improved through TBLT and why.

The current study aims to:

1. Assessing the effectiveness of implementing the Task-Based Language Teaching approach in improving and enhancing the students' proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading, which are critical for academic success.
2. Exploring how TBLT influences student engagement and motivation to participate in academic tasks in EFL classrooms and whether the task-based approach fosters a more active learning environment.
3. Finding out how task-based activities contribute to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in Kurdish EFL students and being able to improve their ability to think critically and apply language in academic contexts.
4. Identifying potential challenges and barriers faced by college instructors and students in implementing TBLT in EFL classrooms.
5. Offering practical recommendations for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers on how to effectively implement TBLT in EFL classes.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the above aims the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. The implementation of a task-based approach (TBA) in English language teaching will significantly improve students' language proficiency, especially in terms of academic skills compared to traditional grammar-focused teaching methods.
2. Task-based language teaching creates a greater learner motivation and engagement to learn EL due to the interactive and dynamic nature of authentic tasks, as compared to conventional teaching methods.
3. The implementation of task-based activities promotes higher levels of student collaboration and peer interaction, mapping the way to better communication skills and a more interactive learning environment.
4. University instructors who are applied and follow the principles of task-based language teaching will demonstrate higher levels of pedagogical effectiveness and student satisfaction compared to those who depend on traditional teaching methods.

1.4 Limits of the Study The study is confined to third-year English language students and instructors at Salahaddin University's Colleges of Education and Basic Education during the 2024-2025 academic year.

1.5 Definitions of Basic Terms

1. Task Candlin (2001) views tasks as varying in complexity, language demand, and context, requiring flexible completion based on learners' needs.

Ellis (2003) defines a task as a language-use plan focused on achieving content-based outcomes through pragmatic processing.

2. Task-Based Approach Egele (2019) describes TBLT as part of Communicative Language Teaching, aimed at engaging learners in purposeful target language use. Nunan (2004) explains that tasks are central to TBLT, involving meaningful interaction and communication with a clear, standalone outcome.

3. Academic Skills Munawar (2023) highlights that academic competencies, in contrast to life skills, are advanced thru formal schooling to assist educational and profession success. These include analyzing, writing, studies, and hassle-solving, crucial for navigating higher education and professional growth.

Section Two

2. Theoretical Background The theoretical basis for working language teaching (TBLT) emphasizes the improvement of communication ability through authentic interaction and involvement in real obligations. Inherently in the ideas of communication language teaching, TBLT encourages beginners to use the language meaningfully instead of focusing fully. Over time, the approach has increased to handle extensive directive goals, along with promoting students and promoting significant investigation. Scholars like Long (2015) and Willis & Willis (2007) highlight the adaptability of TBLT to various educational and cultural contexts. This adaptability enables instructors to tailor tasks to meet learners' specific needs and proficiencies. As a dynamic framework, TBLT supports not only linguistic development but also essential academic and cognitive skills.

2.1 Literature Review

The frame of literature on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) highlights its robust potential to enhance newbies' fluency, accuracy, and communicative self-belief by way of engaging them in tasks that reflect actual-life verbal exchange. Through genuine, meaningful interplay, students expand realistic language talents that enlarge beyond rote memorization. Scholars which include Ellis (2003) and Long (2015) attest to TBLT's effectiveness in aligning language education with actual-international communicative needs, at the same time as Nunan (2004) and Willis (2007) emphasize its position in selling critical thinking, collaboration, and learner autonomy—capabilities especially precious in educational contexts. Carles (2007) and Butler (2011) identify major obstacles including cultural resistance, limited institutional resources and inadequate teacher education. These practical questions emphasize the need for culturally responsible adaptation and strong institutional support. Despite such obstacles, literature strongly supports the academic value of TBLT, given that its successful integration depends on the flexible, reference sensitive approaches that adjust the needs and systemic obstacles to the learner.

2.2 The Role of Task-Based Language Approach in Language Teaching The TBLT approach is seen as a structured and goal-driven method that enhances language learning through practical and communicative tasks (Long, 2015; Fang, 2022). It emphasizes needs analysis and early teacher involvement to tailor tasks to authentic learner needs (Long, 2015). Skehan (1998) highlights its real-world focus, supporting vocabulary and writing through input-output tasks (Duong et al., 2021; Frijns & Branden, 2021; Milarisa, 2019). Sholeh (2022) and Rudd (2019) note its ability to foster interaction and revitalize university-level English learning. Ellis (2021) stresses the need for a comprehensive curriculum, while Ellis and Li (2019) distinguish task types, and Ellis and Zhu (2019) show the value of pre-task instruction.

Wen et al. (2021) and Lei (2022) find TBLT reduces anxiety and boosts grammar and motivation, even in Mandarin learning. TBLT is also valuable in ESP, enhancing professionalism (Liu, 2022), and it fosters critical thinking and learner confidence (Schmidt, 1990; Widanta, 2017; Widanta, 2018; 2020; Somawati et al., 2018).

2.3 Previous related studies Research on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in EFL settings has progressed from foundational theories to practical applications. Nunan (1989) established TBLT's link to communicative teaching, focusing on meaning-driven tasks. Ellis (2003) highlighted task design's role in promoting authentic interaction for language acquisition. Willis and Willis (2007) emphasized learner autonomy and structured task cycles. Later studies, such as González-Lloret and Ortega (2014), incorporated technology to enhance engagement. Recent research by Ahmed (2021) addressed TBLT's effectiveness in Kurdish EFL contexts, noting both benefits and cultural challenges. Together, these works illustrate TBLT's dynamic development in language pedagogy.

Section Three

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants The study involved 217 randomly selected third-year EFL students and 25 instructors from Salahaddin University's Colleges of Education and Basic Education. Table 1: Description of the Participants

Group	Male	Female	Total
Students	100	117	217
Instructors	7	18	25

3.2 Instruments Two structured questionnaires were used: a 14-item Likert-scale questionnaire for students measuring attitudes toward TBLT and its effect on academic skills, and a 65-item questionnaire for instructors assessing five domains—teaching methodology, collaboration, implementation factors, academic development, and task complexity.

1. Student Questionnaire (14 Likert-scale items)

2. Instructor Questionnaire (65 Likert-scale items across five domains)

3.4 Validity and Reliability Both instruments achieved strong internal consistency (Students' Questionnaire: $\alpha = 0.879$; Instructors' Questionnaire: $\alpha = 0.888$).

Section Four

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Student Questionnaire Descriptive analysis showed positive attitudes toward TBLT's impact on writing and critical thinking, though many students struggled with understanding its principles. Despite these insights, the study lacks inferential analysis (e.g., t-tests or ANOVA) to determine significant differences by gender or academic department—an area for further research. Table 2: Learners' Attitudes toward the Methods of Teaching TBLT

Skill	Effective/Very Effective (%)	No Idea (%)	Not Effective (%)
Listening	46.1	23.8	14.6
Reading	47.0	26.2	7.7
Speaking	43.8	23.8	13.1
Writing	45.4	22.3	13.1
Confidence	56.9 (Agree)	23.8	3.8 (Disagree)
Critical Thinking	76.9 (Some or Great Extent)	10.8	7.7 (None)

4.2 Instructor Questionnaire Instructors generally supported TBLT across all domains. They endorsed its role in promoting interactive teaching and academic skill development, while noting challenges like limited resources and vague peer collaboration frameworks. While findings are descriptive, further analysis comparing instructor responses by department or experience level could enhance the depth of interpretation.

Table 3: Summary of Instructor Questionnaire Domain Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability.

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Teaching Method	4.14	0.18	0.652	Clear, multimodal, student-centered
Collaboration	3.91	0.23	0.806	Structured peer support
Implementation Factors	4.01	0.26	0.735	Responsive feedback valued
Academic Skills	4.00	0.24	0.767	Reflection, feedback emphasized
Task Complexity	3.53	0.25	0.793	Diverse views ambiguity

4.3 Conclusion The hypotheses outlined in this study are partially supported by the findings. Descriptive results affirm the enhancement of academic skills, particularly in writing and speaking, aligning with the first hypothesis. Increased student engagement, as reported through questionnaire data, supports the second hypothesis. Instructor feedback confirmed heightened collaboration among students, substantiating the third hypothesis. However, the fourth hypothesis—predicting greater pedagogical effectiveness among TBLT-using instructors—cannot be conclusively validated due to the absence of comparative data with traditional methods. Overall, the study reveals that both students and instructors view TBLT as a valuable tool in advancing academic English proficiency. Yet, its efficacy is closely tied to institutional readiness, professional development, and contextual adaptation. To solidify TBLT's place in Kurdish EFL education, future research should incorporate

inferential statistical tests and comparative analysis with other teaching approaches. Such steps will better elucidate TBLT's distinctive contributions and limitations in academic language development.

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