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DEVELOPING SPEAKING COMPETENCE THROUGH TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has become one of the most influential approaches in contemporary foreign language education because of its emphasis on meaningful communication, learner engagement, and authentic language use. The present study investigates the role of Task-Based Language Teaching in developing learners' speaking competence in English language classrooms. The article analyzes the theoretical foundations of TBLT, examines its relationship with communicative competence, and evaluates its effectiveness in improving learners' oral communication skills.

The study is based on a comprehensive review of scientific literature related to communicative language teaching, second language acquisition, interaction theory, and task-based instruction. The research discusses the contributions of prominent scholars such as Prabhu, Nunan, Willis, Ellis, Skehan, Long, Krashen, and Richards to the development of task-based methodology.

The findings indicate that task-based instruction significantly improves learners' fluency, interactional competence, strategic competence, confidence, and communicative performance. Furthermore, task-based activities create learner-centered environments that encourage collaboration, negotiation of meaning, problem-solving, and authentic communication.

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The article concludes that Task-Based Language Teaching provides effective pedagogical conditions for the development of speaking competence and should be integrated into modern English language teaching practices.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching, speaking competence, communicative competence, foreign language teaching, communicative interaction, learner-centered learning, second language acquisition.

Introduction

The rapid development of globalization, international communication, and digital technologies has increased the importance of English language proficiency worldwide. In modern education, the primary goal of foreign language teaching is no longer limited to the acquisition of grammatical knowledge. Instead, it focuses on the development of communicative competence and learners' ability to use language effectively in authentic situations.

One of the major challenges in English language teaching is developing learners' speaking competence. Although students may possess knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, many struggle to communicate fluently and confidently in real-life contexts. Traditional language teaching methods often emphasize memorization, repetition, and grammatical accuracy, which may not provide sufficient opportunities for meaningful communication.

As a response to these limitations, Task-Based Language Teaching emerged as an innovative communicative approach that emphasizes the use of meaningful tasks as the central unit of instruction. TBLT encourages learners to use language for solving problems, exchanging information, expressing opinions, and completing real-world communicative tasks.

Task-Based Language Teaching is closely connected with Communicative Language Teaching because both approaches prioritize communication, learner interaction, and authentic language use. However, TBLT places particular

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emphasis on task completion and meaningful language use rather than explicit grammar instruction.

The theoretical foundations of TBLT are strongly influenced by second language acquisition theories, communicative competence models, and interaction-based approaches to learning. Scholars such as Long, Ellis, Skehan, Willis, and Nunan argue that meaningful tasks promote language acquisition because learners actively negotiate meaning and interact with others during communication.

This article aims to analyze the role of Task-Based Language Teaching in developing speaking competence and to examine the effectiveness of communicative tasks in modern English language classrooms.

Research Problem

Despite years of English language instruction, many learners still experience difficulties in oral communication. Traditional teacher-centered approaches often fail to provide learners with opportunities to participate actively in meaningful communication. As a result, students may develop passive grammatical knowledge but lack confidence and fluency in speaking.

Another problem is that classroom activities in many educational contexts remain artificial and disconnected from real-life communication. Learners frequently perform mechanical exercises without understanding how language functions in authentic interaction.

Therefore, there is a growing need for communicative and learner-centered approaches that promote active participation and authentic language use. Task-Based Language Teaching has been proposed as an effective solution to these challenges.

Research Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in developing learners' speaking competence in English language education.

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Research Objectives

1. To analyze the theoretical foundations of Task-Based Language Teaching;
2. To examine the relationship between TBLT and communicative competence;
3. To identify the role of communicative tasks in developing speaking skills;
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of task-based activities in English language classrooms;
5. To compare task-based instruction with traditional language teaching approaches.

Research Questions

1. How does Task-Based Language Teaching contribute to speaking competence development?
2. What are the major principles of TBLT?
3. Which task-based activities are most effective for improving speaking skills?
4. What advantages does TBLT provide compared to traditional methods?

Significance of the Study

The study contributes to the field of modern foreign language pedagogy by providing a theoretical and practical analysis of task-based instruction. The findings may be beneficial for English language teachers, curriculum developers, researchers, and students interested in communicative methodologies and speaking competence development.

Methods

The present study is based on qualitative and theoretical research methods. Scientific literature related to Task-Based Language Teaching, communicative competence, and second language acquisition was analyzed through comparative and descriptive approaches.

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The research draws upon the works of major scholars including Prabhu (1987), Nunan (2004), Willis (1996), Ellis (2003), Skehan (1998), Long (1985), Krashen (1982), and Richards and Rodgers (2001).

The following methodological principles of Task-Based Language Teaching were examined:

- meaningful communication;
- learner-centered instruction;
- authentic language use;
- problem-solving tasks;
- information-gap activities;
- collaborative interaction;
- fluency-oriented instruction;
- negotiation of meaning.

In addition, communicative classroom activities such as role plays, interviews, discussions, projects, debates, storytelling, and problem-solving tasks were analyzed in relation to speaking competence development.

Literature Review

Task-Based Language Teaching developed as part of the broader communicative movement in language teaching. The roots of TBLT can be traced to communicative approaches that emphasized language use rather than the memorization of grammatical structures.

Prabhu (1987) was among the first scholars to argue that language is acquired most effectively when learners focus on solving meaningful tasks rather than studying language forms explicitly. His Bangalore Project demonstrated that students could successfully acquire language through task completion and problem-solving activities.

Long (1985) emphasized the importance of interaction and negotiation of meaning in second language acquisition. According to Long's Interaction

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Hypothesis, communication difficulties encourage learners to modify their language and interact more actively, which promotes acquisition.

Nunan (2004) defined a task as a classroom activity in which learners use language communicatively to achieve a meaningful outcome. He argued that tasks should reflect authentic language use and encourage learners to focus on meaning rather than form.

Willis (1996) proposed a widely accepted framework for Task-Based Language Teaching consisting of three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. This framework allows learners to prepare for communication, complete meaningful tasks, and analyze language forms after communication.

Ellis (2003) viewed tasks as activities that require learners to use language pragmatically in order to achieve specific communicative goals. He argued that task-based instruction creates natural opportunities for language acquisition.

Skehan (1998) emphasized the relationship between cognitive processing and language performance. According to Skehan, tasks encourage learners to balance fluency, accuracy, and complexity during communication.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis also supports task-based instruction because meaningful communication provides learners with comprehensible input necessary for language acquisition.

Researchers such as Richards and Rodgers (2001) highlight that Task-Based Language Teaching represents a natural evolution of Communicative Language Teaching because it focuses on communication as both the goal and the means of language learning.

Recent studies demonstrate that task-based instruction improves learners' speaking fluency, confidence, motivation, interactional skills, and communicative competence. Collaborative tasks also promote critical thinking, creativity, and social interaction.

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Results

The analysis of scientific literature indicates that Task-Based Language Teaching significantly contributes to the development of speaking competence.

One of the major findings is that communicative tasks increase learners' oral fluency. Because students are required to communicate in order to complete tasks, they develop the ability to produce spontaneous speech and respond naturally in interaction.

The findings also show that task-based activities improve learners' communicative confidence. Through repeated participation in communicative tasks, students gradually overcome anxiety and fear of making mistakes.

Another important result is the development of interactional competence. During tasks, learners negotiate meaning, ask questions, clarify information, and cooperate with peers. Such interaction develops conversational skills necessary for real-life communication.

Task-based instruction also increases learner motivation because tasks are meaningful and connected with real-life communication. Learners become more active and motivated during classroom interaction.

Overall, the findings confirm that Task-Based Language Teaching creates effective conditions for improving speaking competence and communicative performance.

Discussion

The study demonstrates that Task-Based Language Teaching is an effective communicative approach for developing speaking skills. Unlike traditional grammar-based methods, TBLT focuses on meaningful communication and learner interaction. Task-based activities encourage learners to use language naturally while solving problems and completing communicative tasks. This process improves fluency, confidence, and interactional competence. The findings also support communicative and interaction-based theories of language learning,

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which emphasize that language develops through meaningful communication and authentic interaction. However, some challenges such as large class sizes and limited classroom time may affect the implementation of task-based activities.

Analysis

The analysis indicates that Task-Based Language Teaching helps learners improve speaking fluency, communicative confidence, and collaborative learning skills. Learners become more independent and active participants in communication. Task-based instruction also increases motivation because students focus on completing meaningful tasks rather than memorizing grammatical rules. Overall, the analysis confirms that TBLT creates favorable conditions for authentic language use and speaking competence development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Task-Based Language Teaching significantly contributes to the development of speaking competence in English language education. Meaningful tasks and communicative interaction help learners improve fluency, confidence, and communicative abilities. Therefore, task-based activities should be widely integrated into modern English language classrooms to prepare learners for real-life communication.

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