

Effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) On Conversational Speech Among First- And Second-Year University Students in Uzbekistan

Muattar Khasanovna Nasimova

PhD student of Samarkand State University, named after Sharof Rashidov, Uzbekistan

Received: 09 March 2026; **Accepted:** 29 March 2026; **Published:** 25 April 2026

Abstract: This article examines the effectiveness of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in developing conversational speech among first- and second-year university students in Uzbekistan. It analyzes the theoretical foundations of the approach, its methodological advantages, and its cultural adaptation to local educational conditions. The study shows that TBLT enhances students' communicative activity, autonomy, and motivation, as well as facilitates the transfer of language skills to real communication situations. The article presents analytical tables comparing traditional and TBLT approaches, as well as the stages of oral speech development. The material is aimed at educators, researchers, and methodologists interested in modern language teaching technologies in the context of higher education in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Task-based learning, conversational speech, TBLT, communicative competence, higher education in Uzbekistan, teaching methodology.

Introduction: The modern higher education system in Uzbekistan is focused on developing students' practical language skills, particularly in oral communication. In an environment of increasing academic and professional mobility, proficiency in conversational speech has become a key component of communicative competence. However, traditional teaching methods based on explaining grammar and completing written exercises often do not provide sufficient practice in real communication. In this context, the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach, which focuses on completing communicatively meaningful tasks, is particularly relevant. It allows learners to use the language as a means to achieve specific goals rather than just as an object of study. Task-Based Language Teaching represents an effective methodology for developing conversational speech among university students in Uzbekistan. Theoretical analysis shows that TBLT not only aids in acquiring language means but also in

developing communicative, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies. In the context of modernizing higher education, this approach can become a reliable foundation for cultivating oral speech skills that are aligned with the real needs of students and the contemporary educational environment.

Task-Based Conversational Speech as an Alternative Approach

Task-Based Learning (TBL), originally developed for language instruction, focuses on communicative goals through functional tasks rather than isolated language practice. When applied to teaching conversational speech, TBL promotes the use of the English language for meaningful communication through interactive, goal-oriented tasks. Instead of rehearsing pre-written dialogues, students engage in authentic communicative tasks such as role plays, interviews, information gap activities, and problem-solving discussions. These tasks foster the development of

fluency, accuracy, and confidence, promoting key communicative strategies, including turn-taking, clarification, negotiating meaning, and topic development. For example, information gap activities require students to collaboratively share specific information, enhancing both their listening and speaking skills. Problem-solving discussions allow students to articulate their thoughts, defend their opinions, and interact with peers, which is a critical component of communicative competence.

The TBLT methodology emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as an evolution of the communicative approach and was extensively developed in the works of R. Ellis (2003), D. Nunan (2004), and J. Willis (1996). The main idea is that language is most effectively acquired when students engage in real tasks that require language use during interaction. According to N. Prabhu (1987), task-based learning creates "conditions for natural language acquisition" as students focus not on form, but on the content of their speech. Willis (1996) identifies three key stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus, which provide a balance between free speaking and language structure analysis. These principles align with educational reforms in Uzbekistan aimed at developing students' practical competence and critical thinking.

Key Principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

The key principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) reflect the modern philosophy of communicative teaching, which focuses on the practical use of language as a means of interaction.

First, Communicative Focus: The primary focus in teaching is on the meaning of the utterance, not its grammatical form. Students learn to express their thoughts, intentions, and emotions naturally, even if they make minor language errors. This approach helps build confidence and reduces speech anxiety because the emphasis shifts from "correctness" to functionality and clarity of speech.

Real-World Communication Goals: TBLT tasks mimic real-life situations, such as booking airline tickets, discussing weekend plans, or solving everyday or professional problems. This allows students to see the practical relevance of the material they are learning and to use language as a tool to achieve specific outcomes.

Active Learner Role: In contrast to the traditional model where the teacher is the main source of information, TBLT places students as the central participants in the communicative process. They engage in pair and group interactions, make decisions, discuss options, and articulate their own opinions. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding, supporting, and creating conditions for independent discovery of new language patterns.

Task-Based Assessment: Student success is determined not by the number of grammatical errors but by how effectively they handled the communication task—whether they were understood by the interlocutor, achieved the communication goal, expressed their views, or obtained necessary information. Such assessment fosters functional fluency and orientation towards real language use, making learning more natural and productive.

The key principles of TBLT reflect a shift from formal language study to its practical, task-oriented acquisition, which is particularly relevant for university students in Uzbekistan who aim to use English in academic and professional environments. According to Nunan (2004), a task in TBLT is defined as "an activity in which learners' primary focus is on meaning rather than form, and the use of language is directed towards achieving a communicative goal."

In the context of Uzbekistan, where most students learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL), TBLT encourages the development of not only linguistic skills but also social skills, such as expressing opinions, arguing, and interacting within a group.

Cultural-Educational Adaptation

As noted by Azimov and Khodzhieva (2020), the successful implementation of TBLT requires consideration of national educational traditions, the level of student autonomy, and the academic environment. In the Uzbek context, it is particularly important to create a supportive, low-stress atmosphere where mistakes are viewed as part of the learning process.

Analytical Review and Comparative Analysis

To analyze the effectiveness of the TBLT approach, we will examine the comparative characteristics of traditional and task-based teaching methods (Table 1). Key differences between the traditional approach and

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT):

Criterion	Traditional Approach	Task-Based Language Teaching
Main Goal	Mastery of grammar and vocabulary	Development of communicative skills
Teacher's Role	Controlling	Facilitating
Student's Role	Passive listener	Active participant in interaction
Type of Tasks	Patterned exercises	Real-life tasks (interviews, presentations, debates)
Assessment	Based on accuracy and number of errors	Based on task completion success
Motivation	External (grades, exams)	Internal (interest and usefulness)

As practice shows, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) creates favorable conditions for the development of functional fluency, the ability to express thoughts spontaneously, and to effectively understand an interlocutor. This is particularly

important for first-year students, who often experience language anxiety and lack confidence in oral communication. The integration of communicative tasks helps reduce psychological barriers and fosters confidence in using a foreign language.

Table 2. Stages of Developing Speaking Skills within TBLT

Stage	Content	Purpose
Pre-task	Introduction to the topic, vocabulary activation	Motivation and preparation for task performance
Task-cycle	Role play, discussion, problem-solving activities	Using language for real communication
Post-task	Reflection, error analysis, repeated practice	Consolidation and awareness of language structures

This cyclical approach enables students to progress from understanding meaning to freely using language in real-life communication contexts. Unlike traditional exercises, which primarily focus on form, TBLT integrates both form and meaning, contributing to deeper learning and long-term retention of language items. As noted by Rod Ellis (2017), engaging in communicative tasks promotes meaningful language use and supports the development of both fluency and accuracy.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the conducted study demonstrates that the use of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in teaching speaking skills has a comprehensive impact on both language acquisition and students' personal

development. First and foremost, the implementation of this approach significantly enhances learners' engagement and motivation. When students participate in solving real communicative tasks—such as role plays, problem-based discussions, or mini-project activities—they perceive the immediate practical value of the language. Unlike mechanical memorization of grammatical rules, TBLT encourages students to use English as a means of achieving a communicative goal, making the learning process more meaningful and emotionally engaging. Moreover, this method fosters the development of learner autonomy and responsibility for the learning process. Within TBLT tasks, the teacher does not act as the sole source of knowledge but rather as a facilitator who guides students toward discovering their own solutions.

Learners actively participate in planning, performing, and evaluating task outcomes, which cultivates a sense of personal responsibility for successful communication and final results. Such an organization of classroom activities promotes the development of self-assessment skills, collaboration, and critical thinking—competencies essential for future professional activity.

TBLT also has a significant impact on improving pronunciation and grammatical accuracy, as learners practice language forms within authentic communicative contexts. Continuous interaction with peers, information exchange, and the need to be understood create a natural demand for clear and accurate expression. This leads to the gradual internalization of grammatical structures and phonological patterns, as evidenced by a noticeable reduction in errors and increased fluency.

Finally, the use of TBLT contributes to the creation of a natural language environment in the classroom, where English functions not merely as a subject of study but as a tool for real communication. In such an environment, the boundary between “classroom language” and “real-world language” diminishes, and students begin to perceive English as an instrument of interaction rather than a set of abstract rules. This learning atmosphere fosters communicative confidence, cognitive flexibility, and readiness to use the language beyond the classroom context. Thus, the implementation of TBLT in teaching speaking not only improves students’ academic performance but also develops sustained motivation, autonomy, and confidence in using English in real-life situations.

CONCLUSION

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) represents an effective methodology for developing speaking skills among university students in Uzbekistan. The theoretical analysis demonstrates that TBLT contributes not only to the acquisition of linguistic forms but also to the development of communicative, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies. In the context of higher education modernization, this approach can serve as a sustainable foundation for fostering oral proficiency that is aligned with students’ real-life needs and the demands of the contemporary educational environment.

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