



La enseñanza de lenguas basada en tareas y la competencia comunicativa en estudiantes de secundaria de nivel A1

Task-Based Language Teaching and Communicative Competence among A1 Secondary Students

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RESUMEN

La enseñanza de lenguas basada en tareas (TBLT, por sus siglas en inglés) prioriza el uso del lenguaje con un propósito mediante actividades que se asemejan a la comunicación real. Este estudio examinó los cambios en el desempeño comunicativo tras una intervención TBLT de seis semanas y exploró las percepciones de los estudiantes sobre el aprendizaje basado en tareas. Se empleó un diseño cuantitativo cuasiexperimental con 50 estudiantes de décimo grado de nivel A1 en un colegio público de Quito, Ecuador. Un curso intacto conformó el grupo experimental ($n = 25$) y otro el grupo de control ($n = 25$). El grupo experimental completó 12 sesiones de una hora que incluyeron juegos de roles, escucha guiada, discusiones, juegos de vocabulario, escritura, investigación colaborativa y tareas integradas; el grupo de control continuó con la instrucción regular. El desempeño se evaluó con una prueba de 10 ítems que incluía secciones de uso del inglés y comprensión auditiva, y el grupo experimental completó además una encuesta de percepción de 10 ítems. La media del grupo experimental aumentó de 4.52 ($DE = 1.02$) a 7.00 ($DE = 0.80$), mientras que la media del grupo de control disminuyó de 5.52 ($DE = 1.04$) a 5.32 ($DE = 1.22$). La diferencia entre grupos en la ganancia media fue de 2.68 puntos. Una prueba de Welch basada en la dispersión de los puntajes de cambio reportados indicó una diferencia significativa, $t(41.42) = 9.18$, $p < .001$, con un tamaño del efecto estandarizado grande (g de Hedges = 2.56). El acuerdo o acuerdo fuerte en los ítems de la encuesta osciló entre 80% y 100%. Los resultados respaldan la TBLT como un enfoque prometedor para la práctica comunicativa, aunque la no equivalencia inicial entre grupos, la evaluación limitada y la asignación no aleatoria exigen una interpretación cautelosa.



Palabras clave: enseñanza de lenguas basada en tareas, competencia comunicativa, inglés como lengua extranjera, estudiantes de nivel A1, educación secundaria

ABSTRACT

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) prioritizes purposeful language use through activities that resemble real communication. This study examined changes in communicative performance after a six-week TBLT intervention and explored students' perceptions of task-based learning. A quantitative quasi-experimental design involved 50 tenth-grade A1 learners at a public secondary school in Quito, Ecuador. One intact class formed the experimental group ($n = 25$), and another formed the control group ($n = 25$). The experimental group completed 12 one-hour sessions involving role-plays, guided listening, discussions, vocabulary games, writing, collaborative research, and integrated tasks; the control group continued regular instruction. Performance was assessed with a 10-item test comprising Use of English and listening sections, and the experimental group completed a 10-item perception survey. The experimental mean increased from 4.52 ($SD = 1.02$) to 7.00 ($SD = 0.80$), whereas the control mean decreased from 5.52 ($SD = 1.04$) to 5.32 ($SD = 1.22$). The between-group difference in mean gains was 2.68 points. A Welch test based on the reported change-score dispersions indicated a significant difference, $t(41.42) = 9.18$, $p < .001$, with a large standardized effect (Hedges' $g = 2.56$). Agreement or strong agreement across survey items ranged from 80% to 100%. The results support TBLT as a promising approach for communicative practice, while baseline nonequivalence, the narrow assessment, and nonrandom assignment require cautious interpretation.

Keywords: task-based language teaching, communicative competence, English as a foreign language, A1 learners, secondary education

INTRODUCTION

Communicative competence is a central goal of contemporary language education because learners need more than knowledge of isolated grammatical forms. They must select language that is accurate, meaningful, and appropriate for a particular purpose, interlocutor, and context. Hymes (1972) introduced communicative competence to challenge descriptions of language ability based exclusively on linguistic rules. Canale and Swain (1980) later organized the construct around grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic resources, while subsequent formulations emphasized discourse and pragmatic dimensions. This perspective has direct consequences for classroom practice: language



instruction should provide opportunities to interpret messages, negotiate meaning, sustain interaction, and solve communicative problems rather than limit learning to the reproduction of predetermined forms.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages describes A1 learners as able to understand and use familiar everyday expressions, introduce themselves, ask and answer basic personal questions, and interact when communication is slow and supported (Council of Europe, 2020). These descriptors connect linguistic knowledge with action. An A1 student may know elementary vocabulary and sentence patterns but still struggle to retrieve them during an exchange, follow a short spoken message, or adapt a response when the interlocutor does not understand. Communicative development at this level therefore depends on repeated opportunities to mobilize limited resources in manageable situations. The pedagogical priority is not premature complexity; it is the functional use of available language with increasing confidence, intelligibility, and responsiveness.

In many English-as-a-foreign-language settings, classroom practice remains shaped by explanation, controlled exercises, translation, and preparation for discrete-point tests. These procedures can support accuracy and explicit knowledge, yet they do not automatically generate the conditions needed for spontaneous communication. When students spend most of a lesson completing decontextualized items, they may perform well on familiar formats while remaining hesitant in listening and interaction. The challenge is especially visible in secondary education, where classes contain learners with different experiences, confidence levels, and access to English outside school. A practical methodology must therefore combine linguistic support with purposeful use, maintain curricular feasibility, and create a reason for students to listen, speak, read, or write.

Task-Based Language Teaching addresses this challenge by organizing instruction around tasks in which language serves the achievement of an outcome. A task typically requires learners to understand or convey meaning, make decisions, exchange information, or produce a result that can be evaluated in relation to a communicative goal (Nunan, 2004). Language forms remain important, but they are learned and refined within a sequence that begins with meaning. Willis and Willis (2007) explain that task-based instruction can include preparation, task performance, planning, reporting, and attention to language. This structure allows teachers to provide scaffolding without converting every interaction into a grammar exercise.



The distinction between a task and an exercise is pedagogically significant. An exercise usually directs attention toward producing a predetermined form correctly, whereas a task requires learners to use linguistic and nonlinguistic resources to accomplish a purpose. Asking students to conjugate verbs is an exercise; asking them to plan a weekend itinerary within a budget is a task because the outcome depends on exchanging information and reaching agreement. Both formats may appear in a lesson, but they perform different functions. Task-based instruction does not eliminate form-focused work. It places explanation, rehearsal, and corrective feedback in relation to a communicative need that learners have encountered or are preparing to address.

Skehan (1996, 1998) proposed that task design influences the balance among fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Demands related to time, familiarity, information load, and required reasoning can support one performance dimension while constraining another. For beginning learners, a task that contains too many unknown words or multiple simultaneous decisions may produce silence rather than communication. Careful sequencing is therefore essential. Familiar topics, visible models, planning time, repeated performance, and collaborative support can lower the cognitive burden while preserving a meaningful outcome. As learners gain control, the teacher can increase the number of options, extend the interaction, or require more precise language.

The communicative value of TBLT also derives from interaction. When learners collaborate on a role-play, information-gap activity, group investigation, or problem-solving task, they must attend to the contributions of others and make their own meaning understandable. Requests for clarification, confirmation checks, repetitions, and reformulations create conditions for noticing gaps in knowledge. The result is not simply more speaking time. Interaction connects comprehension and production, allowing learners to test hypotheses about language and receive evidence about whether a message has been understood. The teacher can then use observed difficulties to select feedback and language focus that respond to actual communicative needs.

Recent research has expanded TBLT into digital and multimodal environments. Belda-Medina (2021) found that task-based work in synchronous computer-mediated communication can support multimodal interaction and communicative competence. Technology may increase access to audio, visuals, collaborative documents, and authentic audiences, but the defining feature remains the task rather than the device. A digital activity becomes communicatively useful when learners exchange meaning to achieve an outcome; merely transferring a worksheet to a screen does not change its instructional



logic. This distinction is important for schools with limited infrastructure because effective tasks can be implemented through low-technology resources, face-to-face interaction, and locally meaningful scenarios.

Collaboration is another relevant condition. Cooperative project work can distribute responsibility, expose learners to multiple models, and create space for peer support (Zaafour & Salaberri-Ramiro, 2022). At the same time, group work does not guarantee equal participation. Confident students may dominate, while quieter learners contribute minimally or rely on peers. TBLT therefore requires explicit role allocation, individual accountability, and opportunities to rehearse before public performance. Pair rotation, time limits, response frames, and self- or peer-assessment can help make participation more balanced. The teacher's role changes from continuous controller to designer, observer, language adviser, and facilitator of reflection.

Critical perspectives also caution against treating TBLT as a universal script. Crookes and Ziegler (2021) argue that task design should attend to learners' identities, voices, and social realities. A seemingly authentic task may be irrelevant if it reproduces situations distant from students' lives or provides no meaningful choice. Contextualization is therefore more than adding a real-world label to an activity. It requires topics, roles, and outcomes that learners can understand and consider worthwhile. In secondary education, daily routines, community issues, school decisions, media use, future plans, and interpersonal situations offer accessible contexts for purposeful communication at elementary levels.

Assessing the effects of task-based instruction presents its own challenges. Communicative competence is multidimensional, and no short instrument captures every component. A multiple-choice test of grammar, vocabulary, and listening can provide comparable numerical evidence, but it does not directly measure spontaneous oral interaction, discourse management, or strategic competence. Conversely, a performance task can represent communication more authentically but requires clear scoring criteria and trained raters. Research should therefore align its claims with the actual instrument. If a test contains Use of English and listening items, results should be described as communicative performance indicators rather than as a complete measurement of communicative competence.

Quasi-experimental classroom research offers a practical way to compare pedagogical approaches when random assignment is not possible. Intact classes can receive different forms of instruction and complete common measures before and after



an intervention. However, pre-existing differences may affect results. Comparing only posttest means may confuse an intervention effect with baseline advantage, whereas comparing gain scores or adjusting for pretest performance addresses part of the problem. Even then, selection, teacher effects, maturation, test familiarity, and classroom conditions remain plausible influences. Transparent reporting of baseline data and limitations is therefore necessary for responsible interpretation.

Learner perceptions complement performance evidence by showing whether tasks are experienced as relevant, manageable, and transferable beyond the classroom. Motivation and satisfaction are not equivalent to achievement, but they affect participation and persistence. Students who regard a task as connected to daily life may be more willing to take risks, repeat language, and collaborate. Survey responses can also identify activities that require adjustment. A strong preference for interaction, varied tasks, or cross-linguistic support, for example, can guide future lesson design. Perception data are most informative when presented alongside, rather than in place of, observable performance outcomes.

Evidence from Latin American secondary classrooms remains important because institutional conditions may differ from those represented in higher education or intensive language programs. Large classes, restricted weekly hours, assessment demands, and limited exposure outside school shape what can be implemented. The present investigation examined a six-week sequence with 12 task-based sessions in two intact tenth-grade classes. The objective was to determine whether the TBLT group demonstrated greater improvement on a common English performance measure than a comparison group receiving regular instruction and to describe experimental-group perceptions of experience-based, authentic, interactive, and transferable tasks. The null hypothesis stated that mean score changes would not differ between groups; the alternative predicted a larger gain for the TBLT group.

METHODS

Approach and design

A quantitative quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with a nonequivalent comparison group was used. Two intact tenth-grade classes participated. One class received the task-based intervention and the other continued the school's regular English instruction. The design was appropriate for examining change under authentic school conditions where random reassignment was not feasible. Because the classes were



purposely assigned and differed at baseline, results are interpreted as evidence associated with the intervention rather than definitive proof of causality.

The independent variable was participation in the six-week TBLT sequence. The dependent outcome was the score on a 10-point English performance test. A secondary descriptive outcome consisted of experimental-group responses to a perception survey. The primary analysis compared mean change from pretest to posttest between groups, which was more informative than a posttest-only comparison because the control group began with a higher mean.

Context and participants

The research was conducted at a public secondary school in Quito, Ecuador. The accessible population included students enrolled in upper basic education. Fifty tenth-grade learners from two existing classes participated through purposive non-probability sampling. The experimental class included 25 students (13 boys and 12 girls), and the control class included 25 students (10 boys and 15 girls). Diagnostic classifications placed all participants at A1 or A1+ proficiency. Institutional authorization, student assent, and informed permission from legal representatives were obtained before data collection.

Table 1

Participant characteristics by group

Characteristic	Experimental group	Control group	Total
Sample size	25	25	50
Boys	13 (52%)	10 (40%)	23 (46%)
Girls	12 (48%)	15 (60%)	27 (54%)
Grade	Tenth	Tenth	Tenth
Initial proficiency	A1-A1+	A1-A1+	A1-A1+
Instructional condition	12 TBLT sessions	Regular instruction	-

Note. Percentages were calculated within groups, except total percentages, which used N = 50.

Instruments

The performance measure was a 10-item multiple-choice test scored from 0 to 10. Five items assessed Use of English through grammar and vocabulary decisions, and five assessed listening comprehension. Items presented brief contexts and required selection of an appropriate response. The same structure was used before and after the intervention to support score comparability. Although the assessment was presented as an indicator of



communicative development, its format did not directly capture spontaneous speaking, extended writing, discourse management, or interactional strategies; conclusions were therefore limited to the measured performance domains.

The experimental group also completed a 10-item perception survey using four ordered response categories: disagree, partially agree, agree, and strongly agree. Items addressed experiential learning, task variety, relevance to daily life, storytelling and dramatization, challenge beyond previously studied language, relationships between the first and target languages, word order and formation, interaction, sociolinguistic use, and application inside and outside the classroom. Responses were summarized as counts and percentages. The combined proportion of agree and strongly agree represented positive endorsement.

Instructional intervention

The intervention lasted six weeks, with two one-hour sessions per week, for a total of 12 hours. Tasks were sequenced from supported introductions and listening activities toward integrated production and reflection. Each pair of sessions combined preparation, task performance, feedback, and attention to language. Students frequently worked in pairs or small groups, and the teacher provided models, vocabulary support, monitoring, and post-task feedback. The comparison group followed the regular curriculum without the planned TBLT sequence.

Table 2

Structure of the six-week TBLT intervention

Sessions	Primary focus	Illustrative tasks	Communicative outcome
1-2	Orientation and interaction	Introductions; interest sharing; task brainstorming	Exchange personal information and ideas
3-4	Listening and speaking	Guided listening; role-play; speed conversations	Understand and sustain short exchanges
5-6	Vocabulary and strategies	Memory/Taboo games; restricted role-play; discussion	Retrieve vocabulary and repair messages
7-8	Written communication	Creative writing; authentic reading; peer correction	Produce and revise coherent short texts
9-10	Integrated skills	Group research; debate; extended role-play	Coordinate information and present a position
11-12	Assessment and reflection	Final task; self-assessment; peer assessment; feedback	Integrate skills and identify next steps



Note. Each session lasted approximately 60 minutes; two sessions were conducted per week.

Procedure

Both groups first completed the common diagnostic test under equivalent classroom conditions. Baseline results were summarized by group and proficiency band. The experimental group then participated in the 12-session intervention during December and January, while the control group received regular lessons. At the end of the sixth week, both classes completed the posttest using the same scoring scale. The experimental class subsequently responded to the perception survey.

During task-based lessons, the teacher introduced the communicative goal, activated relevant knowledge, and supplied only the language support needed to begin. Students completed the task collaboratively or individually, depending on its purpose. Feedback addressed successful meaning transmission, recurrent errors, vocabulary gaps, and strategies for clarification. Later sessions recycled language from earlier tasks and increased the demand for integration across listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores, frequencies, and percentages. Diagnostic proficiency bands were compared to characterize baseline composition. For each group, mean change was calculated as posttest minus pretest. Because the available change-score summaries indicated unequal dispersions, an independent-samples Welch *t* test compared mean gains. The significance level was $\alpha = .05$. A 95% confidence interval was calculated for the difference in gains.

The standardized between-group effect was expressed as Hedges' *g*, using the pooled standard deviation of the reported change scores and the small-sample correction. Survey responses were analyzed descriptively. Positive endorsement was the sum of agree and strongly agree. No inferential claims were based on perception data. Calculations were reconstructed from the reported group summaries; raw participant-level covariance was unavailable, so paired within-group effect estimates were not calculated.

Ethical considerations

Participation was voluntary. Students and their legal representatives received information about the purpose, activities, confidentiality protections, and right to withdraw without academic consequences. Data were analyzed in aggregate, and no participant names were included in the manuscript. The intervention was designed as low-risk classroom practice, and both groups continued to receive English instruction.



Feedback emphasized learning progress rather than public comparison of individual scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Baseline profile

The diagnostic proficiency distribution was similar at the categorical level. In the experimental group, 16 students (64%) were classified at A1 and 9 (36%) at A1+. In the control group, 14 students (56%) were classified at A1 and 11 (44%) at A1+. Both classes therefore consisted entirely of beginning learners, with a slightly larger proportion of A1+ students in the control group. This pattern supported the use of familiar topics, visual or lexical scaffolding, rehearsal, and short outcomes during the early task cycle.

Table 3

Diagnostic proficiency distribution

Level	Experimental n (%)	Control n (%)	Total n (%)
A1	16 (64%)	14 (56%)	30 (60%)
A1+	9 (36%)	11 (44%)	20 (40%)
Total	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	50 (100%)

Note. Proficiency bands were assigned from the initial diagnostic assessment.

Performance change

The experimental group began with a mean of 4.52 (SD = 1.02), compared with 5.52 (SD = 1.04) in the control group. A descriptive Welch comparison of pretest means showed that this one-point baseline difference was statistically meaningful, $t(47.98) = -3.43$, $p = .001$. The groups were therefore not equivalent before instruction, and a posttest-only comparison would have been misleading. After the intervention, the experimental mean reached 7.00 (SD = 0.80), whereas the control mean was 5.32 (SD = 1.22). The direction of the group difference reversed.

Within the experimental group, the mean increase was 2.48 points, and the observed score range shifted from 3-6 to 6-8. The control group changed by -0.20 points, with the same 4-7 range at both measurements. The reduction in the experimental standard deviation from 1.02 to 0.80 suggests that gains were accompanied by somewhat greater concentration around the mean. In contrast, control-group dispersion increased from 1.04 to 1.22. These descriptive patterns are compatible with broad improvement in the task-based class rather than progress restricted to a small number of high-performing students.



Table 4

Pretest and posttest descriptive statistics

Group	Measurement	n	Min.	Max.	M	SD	Mean change
Experimental	Pretest	25	3	6	4.52	1.02	
Experimental	Posttest	25	6	8	7.00	0.80	+2.48
Control	Pretest	25	4	7	5.52	1.04	
Control	Posttest	25	4	7	5.32	1.22	-0.20

Note. Scores ranged from 0 to 10. Mean change = posttest M - pretest M.

The difference between group gains was 2.68 points. Using the reported change-score standard deviations (0.80 for the experimental group and 1.22 for the control group), the Welch test yielded $t(41.42) = 9.18$, $p < .001$. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in gains was [2.09, 3.27]. Hedges' g was 2.56, indicating a very large standardized difference. The null hypothesis of equal mean change was rejected. This analysis accounts for unequal variance and uses the gain difference directly.

Table 5

Between-group comparison of change scores

Statistic	Value
Experimental mean change	+2.48
Control mean change	-0.20
Difference in mean changes	2.68
Welch t (df)	9.18 (41.42)
Two-tailed p	$< .001$
95% CI for difference	[2.09, 3.27]
Hedges' g	2.56

Note. The comparison used $n = 25$ per group and the reported dispersions of change scores.

Student perceptions

Perceptions were highly favorable across all 10 items. Positive endorsement ranged from 80% to 100%. Every student agreed or strongly agreed that varied tasks improved learning, that L1-L2 similarities could support linguistic competence, that word-order and word-formation activities supported discourse competence, that interaction enhanced sociolinguistic competence, and that tasks encouraged language use inside and outside the classroom. The lowest endorsement, although still substantial, concerned storytelling



or dramatization from real life: 80% agreed or strongly agreed, 16% partially agreed, and 4% disagreed.

Table 6

Experimental-group responses to the perception survey

Survey indicator	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Positive endorsement
Experience-based learning	0%	8%	36%	56%	92%
Experiential learning opportunities	0%	4%	28%	68%	96%
Variety of tasks	0%	0%	24%	76%	100%
Connection with daily life	0%	4%	24%	72%	96%
Storytelling and dramatization	4%	16%	28%	52%	80%
Challenge beyond studied language	0%	8%	40%	52%	92%
Support from L1-L2 similarities	0%	0%	20%	80%	100%
Word order and formation	0%	0%	12%	88%	100%
Interaction and expression of ideas	0%	0%	40%	60%	100%
Use inside and outside class	0%	0%	32%	68%	100%

Note. Positive endorsement = agree plus strongly agree; n = 25 for every item.

The performance pattern supports the pedagogical rationale of TBLT. Students repeatedly used English to introduce themselves, respond to spoken input, negotiate roles, retrieve vocabulary, discuss issues, write and revise short texts, and integrate skills in collaborative products. These activities created reasons to process language for meaning while preserving opportunities for explicit support and feedback. The finding aligns with Nunan's (2004) view of tasks as vehicles for purposeful language use and with Willis and Willis's (2007) emphasis on a cycle that connects preparation, performance, reporting, and language focus.

The magnitude of the gain difference should nevertheless be interpreted in relation to the assessment. The test contained only 10 multiple-choice items, divided equally between Use of English and listening comprehension. Improvement can therefore be claimed for performance on those domains, but not for every component of communicative competence. The intervention included oral, written, discourse, and



interactional tasks, yet no analytic speaking rubric, extended writing measure, or observation scale generated comparable outcome scores. The article consequently avoids equating a short test score with the full construct described by Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980).

Baseline nonequivalence is another important consideration. The control group began one point higher, a difference that was statistically significant. After six weeks, the experimental group finished 1.68 points higher. Comparing change scores addressed the direction and magnitude of improvement, but nonrandom assignment means that unmeasured differences may still have influenced responsiveness. For example, class climate, attendance, familiarity with collaborative work, or teacher expectations could interact with the intervention. A future study should use random assignment where feasible or apply analysis of covariance to participant-level posttest scores while controlling for baseline performance.

The favorable survey responses clarify why the intervention may have sustained participation. Learners valued task variety, connections to daily experience, interaction, structural language work, and application beyond the classroom. This combination is consistent with a balanced conception of TBLT: meaningful tasks did not exclude attention to grammar, vocabulary, word order, or cross-linguistic comparison. Instead, students perceived these supports as useful when connected to an outcome. Skehan's (1998) account of task demands helps explain the importance of such support for A1 learners, who need manageable cognitive and linguistic loads to remain engaged in communication.

The strongest survey endorsement occurred for activities involving variation, interaction, language structure, and transfer across contexts. These preferences have practical implications. Teachers can design a coherent sequence in which learners first encounter a model, plan language, perform a brief task, receive feedback, and repeat or extend the task. Repetition should alter a meaningful condition rather than merely reproduce an identical exercise. A role-play can change interlocutor, location, constraint, or purpose; a listening task can lead to a decision; a short text can become input for a peer exchange. Such progression increases retrieval while maintaining a communicative reason for using language.

Storytelling and dramatization received the lowest positive endorsement at 80%, and one learner disagreed. This result does not imply that these activities were ineffective, but it suggests variability in comfort with public performance or open-ended production.



Some A1 learners may experience anxiety when required to invent language, remember a sequence, and perform before peers simultaneously. Teachers can reduce the demand through role cards, rehearsal time, smaller audiences, optional recording, or shared scripts that gradually become less controlled. Differentiation protects the communicative purpose while providing multiple routes to participation.

The intervention also illustrates how low-technology classroom tasks can support communicative development. Although digital platforms can enrich task-based learning, the essential mechanisms in this sequence were purposeful outcomes, peer exchange, retrieval, feedback, and recycling. Guided listening, speed conversations, vocabulary games, group research, debates, and peer correction can be adapted to available resources. This flexibility is relevant in contexts where connectivity or individual device access is uneven. As Belda-Medina (2021) indicates, multimodality can enhance interaction, but pedagogy determines whether tools serve communication.

Collaboration requires deliberate management. Group research and extended role-play can promote shared problem solving, yet teachers need to prevent unequal participation. Assigning roles such as facilitator, recorder, reporter, and language monitor can distribute responsibility. Individual preparation before group work gives quieter learners language to contribute. Self- and peer-assessment can focus attention on message clarity, responsiveness, use of target expressions, and support for partners rather than on error counts alone. These practices are consistent with cooperative task design and can make the classroom more inclusive (Zaafour & Salaberri-Ramiro, 2022).

The study has several limitations. The sample was small, purposive, and drawn from one school. The intact groups differed at baseline, and the intervention was conducted over only six weeks. The test was brief and did not directly measure oral fluency, extended writing, interaction, or strategic competence. Change-score standard deviations were available only as group summaries, preventing verification of participant-level calculations and paired covariance. The survey was administered only to the experimental group and may reflect novelty or social desirability. No delayed posttest examined retention, and teacher-interview or classroom-observation results were not reported in a form suitable for analysis.

Future research should combine a longer intervention with a validated communicative assessment. A speaking task scored by at least two trained raters, a listening measure with adequate item coverage, and a brief written performance would better represent the construct. Repeated or delayed testing could distinguish immediate



improvement from retention. Mixed-methods designs could include structured observations, learner interviews, task artifacts, and teacher reflections. Multilevel or covariance-based analyses would be appropriate when intact classes are compared. These improvements would allow researchers to determine not only whether scores change, but which task features support fluency, accuracy, complexity, interaction, and transfer.

CONCLUSIONS

The six-week TBLT intervention was associated with a substantial improvement in the measured English performance of tenth-grade A1 learners. The experimental mean rose from 4.52 to 7.00, whereas the control mean changed from 5.52 to 5.32. The 2.68-point difference in mean gains was statistically significant, and the standardized effect was very large. This pattern supports rejection of the null hypothesis of equal change and identifies TBLT as a promising approach within the studied classroom conditions.

The result is pedagogically meaningful because the intervention organized practice around outcomes rather than isolated repetition. Learners used language in introductions, role-plays, listening tasks, discussions, vocabulary games, writing, research, debate, and reflection. Preparation and feedback remained part of the sequence, demonstrating that task-based teaching can integrate attention to form with communicative use. The strongest interpretation is that a coherent package of tasks, scaffolding, collaboration, and feedback supported improvement on Use of English and listening items.

Students evaluated the experience favorably. Between 80% and 100% agreed or strongly agreed with every survey statement, and unanimous positive endorsement was recorded for task variety, L1-L2 support, word-order and word-formation work, interaction, and language use across contexts. These perceptions suggest that beginning learners can value both authentic communication and explicit linguistic support when the two are connected through purposeful activity.

The findings should not be generalized without caution. The groups were not randomly assigned and differed at baseline, the sample came from one school, and the outcome test represented only a narrow portion of communicative competence. No delayed measure established retention. Future implementations should add validated speaking and writing tasks, use trained raters, collect participant-level data, and incorporate longer follow-up. Within these boundaries, TBLT offers a feasible, student-centered framework for expanding meaningful English use in secondary classrooms.



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