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The Effect of Task-Based Language Teaching on Students' Language Proficiency: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on students' English language proficiency across speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted using the SALSA framework (Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis) to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize evidence from 21 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025. The findings indicate that TBLT positively supports the development of all four language skills, with speaking emerging as the most frequently investigated and the skill showing the strongest improvement. Across the reviewed studies, commonly implemented tasks included role-plays, group discussions, presentations, collaborative writing, problem-solving activities, and authentic listening tasks that promoted meaningful communication and active learner engagement. The review further highlights that effective TBLT implementation depends on appropriate task design, teachers' ability to facilitate the pre-task, task-cycle, and post-task stages, and students' active participation throughout the learning process. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including teachers' limited pedagogical readiness to implement TBLT, unequal learner participation, and contextual classroom constraints. Unlike previous reviews that primarily examined individual language skills, this study provides a comprehensive synthesis of TBLT implementation across the four English language skills while identifying practical strategies and implementation challenges in EFL classrooms. These findings offer practical implications for English language teachers in designing authentic communicative tasks and implementing TBLT more effectively in diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: EFL instruction, English proficiency, language skills, systematic literature review, systematic literature review, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

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1. Introduction

English has become an essential language for global communication, education, technology, and international collaboration. Consequently, improving English language proficiency has become a major objective of English Language Teaching (ELT) in many countries, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. However, despite continuous curriculum reforms, many EFL learners continue to experience difficulties in developing communicative competence. Classroom instruction in many EFL settings still relies heavily on teacher-centred approaches that emphasize grammar explanation, vocabulary memorisation, and written exercises rather than meaningful communication. As a result, students often demonstrate adequate knowledge of language forms but encounter difficulties using English confidently and appropriately in real-life communication (Diaab, 2016). This situation has encouraged researchers and educators to seek instructional approaches that promote authentic language use and greater learner participation.

Traditional language teaching approaches commonly emphasize grammar instruction, vocabulary memorization, and teacher-centered learning activities. Although these approaches may help learners understand language structures, they often provide limited opportunities for students to use language in authentic communication situations. Previous studies have indicated that relying mainly on grammar-focused instruction may not sufficiently develop learners' ability to use English effectively in real-life contexts (Richards and Rodgers, 2011). Therefore, more communicative and learner-centered approaches are needed to improve students' language proficiency.

Language proficiency, especially in English, is essential for students to participate actively in global academic and professional settings. In today's increasingly interconnected world, English has become an important medium of communication used in education, technology, business, and international interactions (Christal, 2013). Therefore, students are expected not only to understand the language system but also to use English effectively in real-life communication situations. However, achieving adequate English proficiency remains a challenge in many English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) contexts. (Budiman et al., 2023). Many learners still encounter difficulties in mastering English because language learning involves not only understanding grammatical structures but also developing the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in different situations (Richards and Rodgers, 2011).

Language proficiency is often considered the result of continuous learning, motivation, and meaningful exposure to the target language. Learners with higher language proficiency generally demonstrate greater confidence and participation in learning activities. Motivation also plays a crucial role in determining learners' success because motivated students tend to

engage more actively in language learning tasks and activities. According to Andrade (2009), learners can improve their language abilities when they are actively involved in learning tasks that require them to use English meaningfully. Learning activities that are connected to real-life contexts can provide students with opportunities to become more involved in classroom interaction and create a more active learning environment. Such learning conditions can encourage students to develop language proficiency more naturally through active participation and communication (Oxford, 2006).

In the modern era, effective language use requires learners to develop four fundamental language skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening (Ali, 2022). These four skills are interconnected and cannot be developed independently because each skill contributes to the development of others. Students learning English as a foreign or second language need to master these skills to communicate effectively and understand language use in various contexts. Afandi, Jufrizal, and Narius (2013) explain that language skills support one another, meaning that learners cannot focus on only one language skill while neglecting the others. In addition, several language components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar also contribute significantly to developing overall language proficiency.

Despite the importance of mastering these language skills, many learners still struggle to achieve satisfactory English proficiency. One major reason for this challenge is the learning approaches commonly used in many EFL classrooms. Traditional teaching approaches often focus on teacher-centered instruction, grammar explanation, memorization of vocabulary, and repetitive language exercises (Richards & Rodgers, 2011). Although such approaches may help students understand language forms and structures, they often provide limited opportunities for learners to use language for meaningful communication purposes. Consequently, many learners can understand grammatical rules but experience difficulties when they need to use English in authentic communication situations (Diaab, 2016).

In recent years, English Language Teaching (ELT) has experienced a significant shift from teacher-centred instruction toward more communicative and learner-centred approaches. This shift reflects the growing recognition that language learning should enable students to use English meaningfully in authentic communication rather than master grammatical forms (Nunan, 2004). Among these approaches, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has received increasing attention from researchers and practitioners because it encourages learners to accomplish meaningful tasks that resemble real-life communication (Ellis et al., 2019). Despite its growing popularity and positive findings across different educational contexts, implementing TBLT in EFL classrooms remains challenging. Teachers often experience difficulties in designing authentic tasks, managing classroom interaction, and adapting task-based activities to learners' different proficiency levels, while students may struggle with limited vocabulary, speaking anxiety, and low confidence during communicative tasks. These issues indicate that although TBLT is increasingly adopted in ELT, its successful implementation depends on how teachers and learners manage the task-based learning process.

Task-Based Language Teaching has become one of the most widely discussed and increasingly implemented approaches in ELT contexts because it focuses on meaningful communication and real-world language use. TBLT emphasizes the completion of authentic

tasks that encourage learners to use language naturally to achieve specific objectives (Nunan, 2004). Rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy, TBLT allows students to develop communicative competence through active engagement in meaningful learning activities (Ellis et al., 2019). According to Izadpanah (2010), TBLT should be understood as an approach rather than merely a teaching method because it involves broader principles regarding language learning and classroom interaction. Li (2023) also states that TBLT employs a "learning by doing" principle that combines communicative and formal learning practices. These theoretical perspectives consistently describe TBLT as a learner-centred approach that promotes language acquisition through meaningful communication. Building upon these theoretical principles, empirical studies conducted in various EFL contexts have reported improvements not only in students' language proficiency but also in their motivation, confidence, and classroom participation. However, the effectiveness of TBLT appears to vary depending on task design, teacher facilitation, and classroom conditions, indicating that successful implementation requires more than simply introducing communicative tasks.

The growing use of TBLT in ELT contexts reflects current trends in language education that prioritize learner participation and authentic communication (Ellis et al., 2019). Numerous studies have reported that TBLT can positively influence students' language performance by improving speaking fluency, writing quality, reading comprehension, and listening skills (Azizifard, 2024; Derakhshan, 2018; Demirel and Amer, 2017). In addition, TBLT has been found to increase students' motivation, self-confidence, interaction, and engagement during classroom activities (Panduwangi, 2021; Waluyo, 2019). Through tasks such as role-plays, discussions, problem-solving activities, presentations, and collaborative projects, learners are encouraged to use English while actively working toward meaningful objectives (Oxford, 2006). However, despite the increasing popularity and positive outcomes associated with TBLT, several problems and challenges continue to be identified in its implementation within ELT contexts. Teachers often experience difficulties in designing authentic tasks that suit learners' needs and align with curriculum objectives (Erlam and Tolosa, 2022). Some teachers may also lack sufficient knowledge and training regarding TBLT principles and implementation procedures (Nunan, 2004). Furthermore, students may encounter challenges such as low confidence, speaking anxiety, limited vocabulary knowledge, and varying language proficiency levels that affect their participation in task-based activities (Azizifard, 2024; Beding & Inthapthim, 2019). Classroom conditions, including large class sizes, limited resources, and insufficient instructional support, can also hinder effective implementation (Erlam & Tolosa, 2022).

These challenges indicate that although TBLT has demonstrated promising potential in improving language learning outcomes, its effectiveness may depend on several contextual factors related to learners, teachers, and educational environments. Therefore, understanding the implementation of TBLT and its impact on students' language proficiency becomes important. A comprehensive review of previous studies is needed to identify the effectiveness, implementation patterns, challenges, and research gaps regarding TBLT in English language learning contexts. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) aims to promote meaningful communication by encouraging learners to use language in authentic contexts and real-life situations (Ellis et al., 2019). Unlike traditional teaching approaches that mainly emphasize

memorization of grammatical rules and language structures, TBLT focuses on developing learners' ability to use language for communicative purposes. In this approach, language learning is viewed as an active process in which learners acquire language through meaningful interaction and participation in communicative activities. TBLT emphasizes that language is learned most effectively when students are actively engaged in using language rather than merely studying language forms. Therefore, students are encouraged to participate in activities that require them to express ideas, solve problems, exchange information, and negotiate meaning during classroom interactions.

Within TBLT, tasks are designed as meaning-focused activities in which students use the target language to achieve specific communicative goals rather than concentrating solely on linguistic forms (Nunan, 2004). A task can involve various classroom activities such as role-playing, information-gap activities, problem-solving tasks, discussions, presentations, decision-making activities, and collaborative projects. Such activities are intended to create opportunities for learners to interact naturally and use language in situations similar to those they may encounter outside the classroom. Through these activities, students not only develop their linguistic knowledge but also improve their ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in different social contexts. Furthermore, TBLT recognizes learners as active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Students are expected to take responsibility for completing tasks and interacting with others while teachers function as facilitators who provide support and guidance during learning activities. This learner-centered orientation allows students to become more involved in classroom learning and develop greater confidence in using the target language. In addition, collaborative learning experiences within task-based activities can promote interaction among learners, improve critical thinking abilities, and encourage the development of problem-solving skills (Oxford, 2006).

Panduwangi (2021) suggests that applying TBLT involves three main stages: pre-task, during-task, and post-task, which include preparing motivating activities, tasks that require communicative use of language, and language analysis and reflection on tasks. The results of TBLT showed significant improvement in students' speaking skills, both in accuracy and fluency. Similar research by Chen and Wang (2019) suggests that TBLT involves students engaging in pre-task, during-task, and post-task stages to bridge cultural or language gaps. It improves language competence, communication, critical thinking, and cultural understanding. TBLT also helps students understand what they read more deeply by encouraging them to analyze, give opinions, and interpret texts. This process also helps them learn about different cultures and think more critically. Although previous studies have consistently reported the positive effects of TBLT, most of them have examined only one language skill or a particular classroom context. Consequently, existing findings remain fragmented and do not provide a comprehensive understanding of how TBLT influences students' overall English language proficiency. Furthermore, previous studies have primarily focused on learning outcomes, with limited attention given to synthesising how the stages of TBLT implementation, teachers' roles, learner engagement, and classroom challenges contribute to successful implementation across different EFL contexts. Therefore, a comprehensive systematic literature review is needed to

integrate these findings and provide broader pedagogical insights into the implementation of TBLT in English language teaching.

This study aims to synthesize findings from prior research on TBLT's impact on students' English proficiency, focusing on all four language skills. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with the SALSA framework, the study identifies effective practices, challenges, and gaps in the current literature to offer insights for improving English language instruction. The study assesses how each stage in the TBLT approach—pre-task, task cycle, and language focus—contributes to developing students' language skills. It also examines how student engagement and teacher skills can help make Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) work. The study also finds gaps in the research on TBLT and suggests ways that future research and teaching can fill them. The findings of this research will help improve the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Through this study, the findings are expected to provide practical guidance for English language teachers in designing authentic communicative tasks, implementing the pre-task, task-cycle, and post-task stages effectively, encouraging active learner participation, and addressing common challenges encountered during TBLT implementation. In addition, this review offers evidence-based recommendations for teacher educators, curriculum developers, and future researchers to support the wider adoption of TBLT in diverse EFL contexts.

2. Method

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) approach using the SALSA framework to systematically review and synthesize previous research findings on applying task-based language teaching (TBLT) in English language learning. Elliott et al. (2017) explained that a systematic review is a research method that systematically and transparently gathers, appraises, and synthesizes evidence to provide a comprehensive summary for clinical Practice or health policy decision-making. At the same time, Mengist, Soromessa, and Legese (2020) described a systematic, structured, and transparent literature review method that aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of a specific topic based on existing scientific evidence.

To guide the review process, this study adopted the SALSA framework (Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis), a narrative literature review approach that combined information from diverse sources without relying on statistical meta-analysis (Bayanova et al., 2022). SALSA helped researchers systematically organize the literature review process through four main stages. Using the SLR method with the SALSA approach was important because it could provide a comprehensive and objective overview of previous research results, helping researchers identify patterns, trends, and gaps still not revealed in the existing literature (Mengist et al., 2020).

The first stage, search, involved developing a structured strategy, including selecting keywords, search terms, and relevant databases (Aromataris & Pearson, 2014). The researcher searched for relevant scientific journal articles through several academic databases, including Google Scholar, Garuda, and CrossRef, using keywords such as "Task-Based Language Teaching" (TBLT), language skills, TBLT in EFL classrooms, and the Effect of TBLT on students' proficiency.

The second stage, Appraisal, was conducted after the initial data collection. In this stage, search results were screened using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and duplicates were removed to ensure data quality (Wright et al., 2007). According to Aromataris and Pearson (2014), inclusion and exclusion criteria are crucial in systematic reviews to ensure the relevance of studies, align findings with research objectives, minimize bias, and enhance the validity of findings. The inclusion criteria for the search were (1). relevance of the topic Task based language teaching implemantion in English language learning context; (2) rticles published in the last 10 years (2015-2025); (3) studies examining at least one of the four language skills, namely speaking, writing, reading, or listening; (4) empirical studies using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method design; (5) peer-reviewed journal articles; and (6) articles published in reputable and indexed academic journals such as Google schoolar, Garuda, SINTA-accredited journals, or journals indexed in recognized academic databases.

The exclusion criteria included: (1) non-peer-reviewed publications; (2) conceptual papers without empirical findings; (3) conference proceedings and unpublished manuscripts; (4) studies not written in English; and (5) studies unrelated to TBLT implementation or language skill development. To maintain the quality and trustworthiness of the selected studies, additional quality assessment indicators were applied during the appraisal stage. These indicators included the clarity of research objectives, appropriateness of research design, adequacy of participant information, transparency of data collection procedures, consistency between findings and conclusions, and relevance to the objectives of this review. Articles that did not sufficiently meet these indicators were excluded from the final analysis process. After the screening process, 21 studies met all inclusion criteria and were considered eligible for further review. The selected articles were categorized according to author, year, participants, research method, educational context, and targeted language skills to facilitate the synthesis process. To ensure consistency during data extraction, a structured data extraction form was used to record essential information from each selected study.

The third stage, Synthesis, involved identifying themes and organizing findings from the selected studies. Mulrow (1994) explained that synthesis is necessary to combine evidence from different studies into a meaningful interpretation. This process involved narrative and thematic analysis by categorizing articles according to research focus, educational setting, language skills, TBLT stages, learner participation, and teacher involvement. Similar findings across studies were grouped, while differences and inconsistencies among studies were also identified and analyzed.

The final stage, Analysis, involved critically examining the synthesized findings to identify patterns, trends, and research gaps within the existing literature. The analysis focused on examining how different stages of TBLT implementation contributed to language development, how teacher expertise and learner engagement influenced learning outcomes, and how different task types affected language skill improvement.

To ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the review findings, methodological triangulation was applied by integrating findings from studies employing different research approaches, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies. Triangulation was also supported by comparing findings across multiple educational contexts, participants, and

learning settings. Furthermore, the use of multiple databases and systematic screening procedures reduced selection bias and enhanced the credibility of the synthesized findings. This process strengthened the dependability and trustworthiness of the review by ensuring that conclusions were drawn from diverse and consistent evidence sources. Finally, the analysis also considered practical implications for English language teaching and provided recommendations for future research directions (Wright et al., 2007).

3. Findings and Discussion

The synthesis and analysis stage in this systematic literature review (SLR) focused on identifying patterns, trends, and research gaps from the 21 articles that met the inclusion criteria. The articles were analyzed based on their research focus, educational context, targeted language skills, emphasized TBLT stages, and the roles of student engagement and teacher proficiency. The main research results indicate that task-based teaching (TBLT) has been widely recognized for its positive impact on enhancing students' language proficiency, particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL). English speaking skills are dominant. A review of 21 selected articles revealed that the application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has consistently demonstrated positive effectiveness in developing various language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Table 1 presents the overview of the 21 studies reviewed, including the authors, year, participants, methods, targeted language skills, and main findings.

Table 1. Summary of 21 reviewed studies on TBLT and language skills

No	Author and year	Participants	Methods	Language skill	Main Findings
1	DILAN ÖKCÜ (2015)	50 EFL students, Turkish	Quantitative	Reading and Vocabulary	Improved reading comprehension and vocabulary
2	Ahmeed et al., (2016)	30 International students from different countries, including Malaysia	Mix-Method	Writing	Improved writing skill (collaborative writing)
3	Yegani et al., (2017)	90 students at the participatory culture house, science and technology Quarter, English language institute, Iranian	Quantitative	Speaking	Improved speaking ability
4	Gabriel Albino (2017)	22 Learners High School in Luanda, Angola, at PUNIV-Cazenga	Qualitative	Speaking	Enhanced speaking fluency
5	Demirel et al., (2017)	80 students at Cyprus Universities, Turkey	Quantitative (Quasi-	Reading	Improved reading comprehension

			Experimental)		
6	Lap et al., (2017)	69 students from the Mekong Delta of Vietnam.	Quantitative	Reading	Positive impact on reading skills
7	Tarang et al., (2018)	40 Iranian intermediate EFL learners.	Quantitative	Listening	Improved listening comprehension using authentic audio
8	Prasetyaningrum (2018)	22 students of agriculture at the University of Brawijaya, Indonesia	Quantitative	Reading	Improved reading comprehension in field-specific texts
9	Derakhshan (2018)	61 first- and second-year students majoring in English Literature at Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran.	Quantitative (Quasi-Experimental)	Writing	Improved writing performance and structure
10	González et al (2019)	26 seventh grades at Columbia-European.	Qualitative	Writing	Enhanced writing skills via reflective and collaborative tasks
11	Syahrial et al (2019)	Tenth-grade students of SMAN 3 Bengkulu, Indonesia	Quantitative	Listening	Improved listening comprehension
12	Kruthangka (2019)	60 students, Pratomsuksa, one grade 1 at School A in the second semester of the academic year 2019, Thailand	Quantitative	Speaking and listening	Improvements in speaking and listening
13	Septiyana (2019)	Islamic Economics Department of IAIN Metro, Indonesia	Qualitative	Speaking	Material design improved speaking practice
14	Beding et al., (2019)	36 Freshmen Majoring in English and Education at the university's course: English for Communication, Thailand	Mix-method	Speaking	Positive effects on speaking skill
15	Waluyo (2019)	30 students Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM).	Quantitative	Speaking	Reduced speaking anxiety, increased participation

16	Ramamuruthy (2019)	30 students Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM).	Quantitative	Speaking	Reduced speaking anxiety, increased participation
17	Nget et al., (2020)	78 ninth-grade students from Rohal High School, Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia.	Mix-method	Speaking	Improved speaking skills among ninth graders
18	Sabil (2020)	50 students SMAN 1 Amali, Indonesia	Quantitative	Speaking	Improved speaking proficiency
19	Panduwangi (2021)	Six classes of semester one students of non-English majors at a private college in Bogor, Indonesia	Quantitative (Quasi-Experimental)	Speaking	Positive effect on speaking proficiency
20	Milon (2023)	Two English teachers and ten students from the private university in Bangladesh.	Quantitative	Speaking	TBLT supported fluency in tertiary speaking classes
21	Azizifard (2024)	25 students of the 2nd-year architectural engineering students at Cihan University-Erbil.	Quantitative	Speaking	TBLT improved speaking fluency and reduced anxiety

As shown in Table 1, that of the 21 articles found, speaking was the most frequently researched skill in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Most researchers also pointed out that applying common TBLT patterns supported its effectiveness, like role-plays, group discussions, presentations, and reflective writing assignments using three primary stages: pre-task, task cycle, and post-task. These are examples of contextualized and authentic task forms. Then, for the task to be completed successfully, group interaction, student reflection, and teacher feedback become crucial elements. In addition to the teacher's role in designing the task, adjusting the curriculum, and creating a sportive and student-centred classroom atmosphere. From these articles, in general, the implementation of TBLT is found to increase students' learning motivation and self-confidence (Anjum et al., 2019; Azizifard, 2024; Panduwangi, 2021; Waluyo, 2019).

Most of the articles used quantitative approaches, such as experiments and quasi-experiments, to measure the improvement of speaking and writing skills (Ahmed & Bidin, 2016; Azizifard, 2024; Derakhshan & Prof, 2018; Panduwangi, 2021). Some studies employed pre-tests and post-tests to assess changes following the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Demirel & Amer, 2017; Lap & Trang, 2017; Panduwangi, 2021). Thus, of the 21 articles analyzed, most studies were conducted in secondary schools and colleges in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. The quantitative approach was the most used, with a total of n = 17, although some studies also employed mixed methods (n = 3) and qualitative methods (n = 2). The primary focus of the research was the effect of task-based

language learning (TBLT) on speaking skills. Other skills, such as reading, listening, and writing, were also studied, albeit in smaller numbers.

3.1. Impact of TBLT on different language skills

3.1.1. Speaking (Dominant)

Among the 21 reviewed studies, 12 investigated the effects of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on speaking skills, making speaking the most frequently examined language skill. The reviewed studies consistently showed that TBLT improved learners' speaking fluency, confidence, and willingness to communicate while reducing speaking anxiety. These improvements occurred because students used English to accomplish meaningful communicative tasks rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy.

Azizifard (2024) reported that students who participated in task-based speaking activities demonstrated better speaking performance through authentic communication. Similarly, Panduwangi (2021) found that collaborative speaking tasks increased students' classroom participation by encouraging them to exchange ideas and negotiate meaning with their peers. Beding and Inthapthim (2019) also observed that meaningful interaction during task completion enhanced learners' confidence and oral communication skills. Furthermore, Viji (2019) highlighted that role-play activities, such as ordering food, conducting business transactions, and engaging in everyday conversations, enabled students to practise English in authentic contexts and develop greater communicative fluency.

The reviewed studies suggest several practical implications for English language teachers. Before the task begins, teachers should introduce the communicative objective, explain the task procedures, and provide key vocabulary or useful expressions to support students' participation. During task implementation, teachers should organise students into pairs or small groups, monitor classroom interaction, and provide support only when necessary without interrupting communication. After the task, teachers should facilitate reflection and provide feedback on common language problems while encouraging students to evaluate their own speaking performance. These classroom practices enable students to communicate more confidently and develop speaking skills through meaningful interaction, which is the central principle of TBLT.

3.1.2. Writing

Three reviewed studies demonstrated that TBLT positively contributed to students' writing performance by improving the organization of ideas, coherence, and the use of more complex language structures. Rather than completing isolated grammar exercises, students engaged in meaningful writing tasks that required them to communicate ideas for authentic purposes. These findings indicate that TBLT supports writing development by integrating language use with collaborative learning and problem-solving.

Derakhshan (2018) found that collaborative writing activities enabled students to organize their ideas more effectively and produce more coherent texts. Ahmed and Bidin (2016) reported that task-based writing encouraged learners to use more varied sentence structures because learners focused on completing communicative tasks rather than simply practicing grammar

rules. Similarly, González and Pinzón (2019) showed that collaborative writing and written reflection improved students' writing quality by allowing them to exchange ideas, revise drafts, and reflect on their language use throughout the writing process.

The reviewed studies suggest several practical implications for classroom implementation. Teachers should begin by introducing a meaningful writing task that reflects real-life communication, such as writing a report, reflection, or problem-solving response. Students can then work in pairs or small groups to discuss ideas, organize information, and prepare a writing plan before producing their individual or collaborative texts. During the writing process, teachers should monitor students' progress, provide guidance when necessary, and encourage peer discussion rather than giving direct answers. After completing the task, teachers should facilitate peer feedback and class discussion to help students revise their writing and improve both content organization and language accuracy. These findings suggest that meaningful writing tasks combined with collaborative learning can effectively support students' writing development in EFL classrooms.

3.1.3. Reading

Three reviewed studies reported that TBLT positively influenced students' reading comprehension by engaging them in meaningful tasks that required interpretation, discussion, and problem-solving. Instead of reading texts solely to answer comprehension questions, students actively constructed meaning by collaborating with peers and applying information from the texts to complete communicative tasks. These findings suggest that TBLT promotes not only reading comprehension but also learners' critical thinking and active participation in the reading process.

Demirel and Amer (2017) found that problem-solving activities based on reading texts improved students' comprehension because learners were required to analyse information before making decisions. Prasetyaningrum (2018) reported that group discussions encouraged students to share interpretations and clarify their understanding of the text collaboratively. Similarly, Lap and Trang (2017) demonstrated that summarising reading passages and presenting the main ideas helped students identify important information and organise their understanding more effectively. Ökcü (2015) also showed that task-based reading activities enhanced students' critical thinking by requiring them to interpret information, justify their opinions, and communicate their ideas to classmates.

The reviewed studies provide several practical implications for English language teachers. Rather than asking students to answer comprehension questions individually, teachers can design reading lessons around meaningful tasks that require collaboration and communication. For example, after reading a text, students may work in groups to identify the main ideas, solve problems related to the reading topic, prepare summaries, or present their interpretations to the class. During these activities, teachers should facilitate discussion, encourage learners to support their ideas with evidence from the text, and provide guidance when necessary. After the task is completed, teachers can lead a class reflection to discuss different interpretations and provide feedback on students' comprehension strategies. These practices encourage

students to become active readers who construct meaning collaboratively while improving both reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

3.1.4. Listening

Only two of the reviewed studies examined the implementation of TBLT in listening instruction. Although fewer studies focused on this skill, both consistently reported that TBLT improved students' listening comprehension by engaging them in meaningful tasks with authentic, contextualised audio materials. Rather than listening to identify isolated words or answer factual questions, students were encouraged to process spoken information to accomplish communicative tasks. This finding suggests that TBLT supports listening development by placing learners in situations where they actively interpret spoken language to achieve specific learning goals.

Hawara et al. (2019) found that task-based listening activities improved students' listening comprehension through authentic audio materials and interactive classroom activities. Students were required to identify key information from spoken texts and use the information to complete meaningful tasks, enabling them to understand spoken English in realistic contexts. Likewise, Ostad et al. (2018) reported that contextual listening tasks, such as sequencing legal case documents based on information from audio recordings, encouraged learners to listen attentively, identify important details, and collaborate with their peers to complete the assigned task. These findings indicate that authentic listening tasks provide learners with opportunities to develop comprehension skills while simultaneously promoting classroom interaction.

The reviewed studies also offer practical implications for English language teachers. Before the listening activity, teachers should introduce the topic, explain the task objectives, and activate students' background knowledge to help them anticipate the audio's content. During the listening task, students should be encouraged to complete meaningful activities, such as identifying key information, sequencing events, or solving simple problems based on what they hear, either individually or in pairs. After the task, teachers can facilitate classroom discussion, clarify misunderstandings, and provide feedback on both listening strategies and task performance. These classroom practices encourage students to become active listeners who process spoken language to communicate meaningfully rather than merely answer comprehension questions.

3.2. TBLT implementation stages

3.2.1. Pre-task stage

The reviewed studies consistently identified the pre-task stage as an essential foundation for successful TBLT implementation, as it prepares students linguistically and cognitively before the main task. At this stage, teachers introduce the topic, explain the communicative objectives, provide task instructions, and familiarise students with key vocabulary and useful expressions to support task completion. This preparation enables learners to understand the task requirements and participate more confidently during classroom interaction.

Azizifard (2024) reported that introducing the topic and relevant language before the main task helped students understand the communicative context and increased their readiness to participate. Similarly, Panduwangi (2021) found that students became more actively involved when teachers provided clear task instructions and introduced the language forms required to complete the task. Nunan (2005) also emphasised that the pre-task stage establishes the foundation for successful communication by activating learners' prior knowledge and preparing them for meaningful language use. Likewise, Erlam and Tolosa (2022) argued that adequate preparation at this stage reduces students' anxiety and improves their understanding of the task's communicative purpose.

The reviewed studies suggest several practical implications for English language teachers. Before asking students to perform the main task, teachers should activate learners' background knowledge using pictures, short videos, simple questions, or real-life situations related to the lesson topic. Teachers should then introduce essential vocabulary, useful expressions, and clear task instructions without spending excessive time explaining grammatical rules. For example, before conducting a role-play about ordering food, teachers may introduce common expressions for making requests, asking for recommendations, and responding politely. Such preparation enables students to focus on communicating meaning during the task rather than worrying about unfamiliar vocabulary or unclear instructions.

3.2.2. Task-cycle stage

The task-cycle stage is fundamental to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), facilitating opportunities for learners to utilize English in meaningful communicative tasks. Studies reviewed demonstrate that students engage in tasks requiring them to exchange information, solve problems, negotiate meanings, and achieve shared objectives, prioritizing natural communication over grammatical accuracy. Chen and Wang (2019) noted improvements in communicative competence through meaningful interaction, while Azizifard (2024) highlighted role-play activities that fostered speaking fluency in authentic contexts. Collaborative speaking tasks, as reported by Panduwangi (2021), increased student confidence and participation, and Beding and Inthapthim (2019) found similar benefits for oral communication skills.

In writing instruction, researchers such as Derakhshan (2018) and González and Pinzón (2019) illustrated enhancements in idea organization and writing quality through collaborative and reflective writing tasks. In reading, studies by Demirel and Amer (2017) and others indicated that discussion and summarization tasks bolster reading comprehension and critical thinking. Moreover, authentic listening tasks improved listening skills, as shown by Hawara et al. (2019).

Effective implementation of TBLT relies on teachers acting as facilitators, organizing students into groups for authentic tasks reflecting real-life scenarios. Teachers should monitor interactions, support when needed, and encourage independent negotiation of meaning, postponing grammatical corrections until after task completion to maintain fluency and foster active participation.

3.2.3. Post-task stage

The reviewed studies underscore the significance of the post-task stage in language learning as a critical moment for students to reflect on their performance and enhance language accuracy following communicative tasks. While the task-cycle emphasizes fluency and communication, the post-task phase enables learners to evaluate their language usage, pinpoint areas for improvement, and solidify new knowledge through reflection and feedback. Chen and Wang (2019) found that post-task reflection bolstered students' metalinguistic awareness by prompting them to analyze their language during task completion. Similarly, Septiyana (2019) observed that reflection activities and language revision significantly enhanced grammatical accuracy post-communicative tasks. Ellis (2018) noted that this stage allows teachers to concentrate on language forms without disrupting communication during tasks, while Long (2014) highlighted the role of delayed feedback in helping learners identify gaps in their language skills while adhering to the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). The studies recommend that teachers conclude lessons by facilitating reflection and offering constructive feedback. This can involve discussions on encountered challenges, evaluations of communication strategies, and revisions of spoken or written work informed by teacher and peer feedback. Teachers should also address common grammatical, lexical, or pronunciation errors identified during tasks, fostering an environment where students collaboratively improve their language forms. This reflective approach bridges communicative practice and language accuracy, equipping learners for future communicative endeavors.

3.3. Teacher's role and learner engagement

The reviewed studies consistently highlighted that the successful implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) depends not only on well-designed communicative tasks but also on the active roles of teachers and learners throughout the learning process. While teachers are responsible for designing meaningful learning experiences and facilitating classroom interaction, students are expected to participate actively by using English to accomplish communicative tasks. This balance between teacher guidance and learner participation is one of the key characteristics that distinguishes TBLT from more traditional teacher-centred approaches.

Several studies found that teachers play an important role in planning authentic tasks that reflect learners' real-life communication needs. Waluyo (2019) reported that teachers need sufficient pedagogical knowledge to design tasks that encourage meaningful interaction rather than mechanical language practice. Similarly, Panduwangi (2021) found that teachers should provide clear instructions, organise collaborative activities, and facilitate interaction to help students complete communicative tasks effectively. Nunan (2005) also emphasised that teachers act primarily as facilitators who support learners before, during, and after task completion, rather than controlling every stage of classroom communication. Ellis (2018) further argued that teachers should provide appropriate scaffolding and delayed corrective feedback to maintain students' communicative fluency while gradually improving language accuracy.

Learner engagement was also identified as an essential factor influencing the effectiveness of TBLT. The reviewed studies showed that students became more actively involved when they were required to solve problems, exchange ideas, and collaborate with their peers to complete meaningful tasks. Anjum et al. (2019) reported that active participation in communicative tasks increased students' confidence and encouraged them to use English more frequently in classroom interaction. Rather than passive recipients of knowledge, learners became active participants who constructed their understanding through discussion, negotiation, and collaboration.

These findings provide several practical implications for English language teachers. Teachers should design tasks that are relevant to students' daily lives and language proficiency while ensuring that every learner has opportunities to participate actively during classroom activities. During task implementation, teachers should monitor group interaction, encourage less active students to contribute, and provide support only when communication breaks down. Instead of correcting every language error immediately, teachers should observe students' performance and provide feedback after task completion to maintain the flow of communication. By combining meaningful task design with active learner participation and appropriate teacher facilitation, TBLT creates a learner-centred classroom that promotes communicative competence, confidence, and collaborative learning.

3.4. Challenges in implementing TBLT

Of the 21 articles reviewed, the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach is noted to significantly enhance English language skills—speaking, writing, reading, and listening—among students. However, its classroom implementation faces substantial challenges. A key issue is the limited pedagogical competence among teachers, many of whom lack training to create authentic tasks that meet students' communicative needs and to execute the three TBLT stages (pre-task, task cycle, and post-task). Consequently, teachers, especially in contexts like Indonesia, often revert to traditional, teacher-centered methods that align more closely with curriculum demands, as supported by previous studies.

Students also encounter challenges, including low self-confidence and restricted vocabulary, particularly in speaking and writing. Resource shortages, such as a lack of contextual materials and technology, further complicate the creation of a practical language learning environment. Assessment practices remain another hurdle; traditional methods focusing on grammar and vocabulary conflict with TBLT's emphasis on effective communication. Researchers advocate for adapting assessment strategies to prioritize students' language performance.

The habitual reliance on teacher-centered instruction hampers the adjustment process necessary for TBLT to thrive. Student diversity in abilities and learning styles can create imbalances during task implementation, often leaving some students passive participants. Additionally, environmental factors, such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom in countries like Turkey, impact the quality of language learning. Specific difficulties also arise in reading and listening skills, particularly for non-language majors.

In conclusion, while TBLT shows promise for improving English language learning, challenges persist, necessitating enhanced teacher training, resource availability, assessment system reform, and a transformation in classroom culture to facilitate its effective implementation.

4. Conclusion

This systematic literature review synthesizes findings from 21 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025, focusing on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and its effects on students' English language proficiency across speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Results consistently show that TBLT is an effective learner-centered approach that facilitates meaningful language use through authentic communicative tasks. Speaking was identified as the most positively impacted skill, while writing, reading, and listening also showed beneficial effects. Commonly used methods included role-plays, group discussions, collaborative writing, and authentic listening tasks, which enhanced learner engagement.

The review emphasizes that successful TBLT relies on effective task design, teachers' pedagogical readiness, and active learner participation throughout the task phases. While positive learning outcomes were noted, challenges such as teachers' limited experience with task design, unequal student participation, limited resources, and misaligned assessment practices were identified. Effective TBLT requires well-prepared teachers and context-sensitive task planning to maximize meaningful language use.

This review contributes significantly to TBLT literature by examining all four language skills through the SALSA framework, revealing patterns, challenges, and practical implications. Pedagogically, it recommends that teachers create authentic communicative tasks, support collaborative learning, provide scaffolding, and incorporate reflective feedback to enhance students' communicative competence. Future research is suggested to explore TBLT in less studied language skills like reading and listening, the integration of digital task designs, and the influence of various educational contexts on TBLT effectiveness in EFL classrooms.

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