INTEGRATING TASK-BASED LEARNING AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TO DEVELOP ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Toshboyeva Sevinch Sultonmurod qizi
Science ID: MSR-0225-0009
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0092-0076
E-mail: toshboyevasevinch85@gmail.com

Abstract: Developing English communicative competence is one of the important objectives of modern higher education. However, university students may possess sufficient grammatical knowledge and vocabulary while experiencing difficulties in spontaneous speaking, expressing opinions, and participating in meaningful conversations. This article examines the pedagogical potential of integrating task-based learning and formative assessment in English language teaching at Uzbek universities. Particular attention is given to communicative tasks, continuous feedback, peer assessment, self-assessment, and learner reflection. The article argues that the combination of purposeful language use and systematic formative assessment can create a supportive learning environment in which students gradually improve speaking fluency, linguistic accuracy, interactional competence, and confidence. Practical recommendations for implementing these approaches in university English classrooms are also presented.

Keywords: communicative competence, task-based learning, formative assessment, English language teaching, speaking skills.

Introduction

In the contemporary educational environment, English language proficiency has become an important requirement for academic mobility, professional development, international cooperation, and access to scientific information. For university students, learning English involves not only acquiring grammatical rules and memorising vocabulary but also developing the ability to communicate effectively in different academic, social, and professional situations. Consequently, the development of communicative competence has become a significant objective of English language teaching in higher education. Despite the increasing attention given to communicative approaches, some students continue to experience difficulties when using English in real-life situations. They may understand grammatical structures and complete written exercises successfully but hesitate when expressing their opinions, participating in discussions, asking questions, or responding spontaneously. Such difficulties indicate that linguistic knowledge alone does not guarantee effective communication. Students need regular opportunities to

use English for meaningful purposes, interact with others, and receive constructive feedback on their performance.

Task-based learning provides opportunities to address these challenges by organising classroom activities around meaningful tasks with identifiable communicative outcomes. Instead of focusing exclusively on isolated language forms, students use English to solve problems, exchange information, make decisions, prepare presentations, and complete collaborative projects. These activities encourage learners to use language as a practical instrument of communication. Nevertheless, participation in communicative tasks does not automatically ensure effective learning. Students also need to understand their strengths, recognise areas requiring improvement, and identify strategies for further development. In this respect, formative assessment becomes an essential component of the learning process. Through teacher feedback, peer assessment, self-assessment, and classroom observation, students can monitor their progress and make purposeful improvements. The relevance of this article lies in examining how task-based learning and formative assessment can complement one another in Uzbek university English classrooms. The principal objective is to identify pedagogical principles and practical strategies for integrating these approaches to develop students' English communicative competence.

Theoretical Foundations of Communicative Language Teaching. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that emphasises the use of language for meaningful interaction. Its central principle is that learners should develop the ability to understand and produce language appropriately according to the communicative situation, rather than merely memorising linguistic rules. Communicative competence involves several interconnected dimensions. Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure. Sociolinguistic competence concerns the appropriate use of language in different social and cultural contexts. Discourse competence enables learners to organise ideas coherently and connect sentences into meaningful spoken or written texts. Strategic competence involves using clarification, paraphrasing, repetition, and other communication strategies when difficulties arise.

These dimensions are particularly important in higher education, where students are expected to participate in seminars, deliver presentations, discuss academic topics, and communicate with people from different linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, English lessons should provide opportunities for students to practise language in contexts that resemble their academic and professional needs. Richards (2006) emphasises the importance of communicative activities and meaningful language use in language teaching. From this perspective, the teacher's role extends beyond explaining grammatical rules. Teachers are also facilitators who organise interaction,

provide learning resources, encourage participation, and help learners develop their communicative abilities. In Uzbek universities, communicative language teaching can be implemented through pair work, group discussions, role-play, interviews, debates, and collaborative presentations. For example, students may simulate a job interview, discuss an educational problem, or prepare a presentation about a contemporary social issue. Such activities create situations in which language knowledge becomes directly connected with practical communication. However, the effectiveness of communicative teaching depends on appropriate task design, student participation, and the quality of instructional support. Activities should correspond to learners' proficiency levels and provide sufficient opportunities for both fluent expression and linguistic development.

Task-Based Learning as a Means of Developing Communicative Competence. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an instructional approach in which meaningful tasks serve as the central component of the learning process. According to Ellis (2003), task-based language teaching provides a framework for using language to achieve communicative goals while supporting the development of second-language proficiency. Unlike traditional exercises that concentrate primarily on practising predetermined grammatical structures, task-based activities require learners to use language to achieve a particular result. The primary objective may involve identifying differences between two pictures, organising an event, solving a problem, reaching a group decision, or presenting a proposed solution. Willis (1996) describes a task-based learning framework that includes three broad stages: pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task language focus. These stages can be adapted to university English courses.

During the post-task stage, students present their results, discuss their experiences, and examine useful language structures. The teacher highlights recurring errors and provides suggestions for improving future performance. For example, university students may be asked to design an affordable educational programme for schoolchildren. Working in small groups, they must discuss available resources, distribute responsibilities, compare alternatives, and present their final proposal in English. The task requires vocabulary development, logical argumentation, active listening, and collaborative decision-making.

Task-based learning is especially relevant to students who understand English but lack confidence in speaking. Repeated participation in purposeful activities can provide opportunities to practise spontaneous expression and learn how to maintain conversations. Research on task-based instruction in Uzbek EFL classrooms has also examined its potential contribution to speaking proficiency, learner motivation, and classroom participation (Mansurov, 2025).

In conclusion, task-based learning and formative assessment should be understood as complementary elements of an integrated pedagogical process. When students are given meaningful reasons to communicate and clear guidance on how to improve, English language learning can become more purposeful, interactive, and responsive to their educational needs.

REFERENCES

1. Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford University Press.
2. Harmer, J. (2015). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson.
3. Mansurov, O. F. (2025). Enhancing speaking skills through task-based learning in Uzbek EFL classrooms. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence*, 5(6), 384–389.
4. Nguyen, N. Q., & Nguyen, L. P. (2026). Formative assessment for knowledge cultivation in university EFL classrooms: A systematic review from higher education. *Language Testing in Asia, 16*, Article 22.