

A Comparative Analysis of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Enhancing EFL Learners Outcomes

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Abstract: EFL learners need to have enough knowledge of english ability outcomes. This study explores the role of two prominent teaching methodologies Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' outcomes. English is essential for Indonesian students to access global knowledge, making effective teaching methodologies crucial for language acquisition. The study aims to compare CLT and TBLT, focusing on their contributions to developing EFL learners' discourse competence, communicative ability, and overall proficiency. Using a qualitative library research approach, this study reviews existing literature on both methodologies, examining their theoretical frameworks and classroom applications. The discussion highlights how CLT fosters communicative competence through real-life communication and how TBLT enhances language skills through task-based interactions. Both methods promote active participation, with CLT focusing on oral communication and TBLT on task completion. The study concludes that integrating both approaches can offer a comprehensive framework for optimizing EFL teaching practices, leading to improved language proficiency in diverse learning contexts.

INTRODUCTION

English is utilized as a foreign language in Indonesia, and it is essential for Indonesian students to learn it in order to access knowledge and scientific information from other countries more easily. The concept of English as a second or foreign language refers to the use of English by individuals whose native languages differ from English. The educational framework for those acquiring English may be categorized as either English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Augusto-Navarro, 2015).

Some perceive the term "EFL" as suggesting that English holds a subordinate status, particularly in contexts where it serves as a lingua franca within a multilingual nation. This designation may also be misleading for certain learners who have already acquired proficiency in

multiple languages prior to studying English. Language functions as both a social construct and a cognitive skill. It is crucial for students to recognize this distinction when learning a foreign or second language, just as they do with their native tongue. The process of acquiring English as a foreign language differs significantly from that of learning one's mother tongue, especially since students typically have limited opportunities to use English in their daily lives. Learning involves the acquisition of knowledge about a subject or skill through study, experience, or instruction. This indicates that the learning activities undertaken by students are aimed at gaining experience and receiving guidance to enhance their understanding of various concepts.

This study aims to explore two methodologies that significantly contribute to improving the abilities of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The first methodology under consideration is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes interaction and communication as central components of language learning. CLT encourages learners to engage in real-life conversations, promoting fluency and comprehension through meaningful exchanges (Sato, 2016). The second methodology is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which focuses on the completion of specific tasks as a means to facilitate language acquisition. TBLT encourages learners to use the target language in practical contexts, thereby enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in various situations (Moore, 2018). Both methodologies play a crucial role in enhancing EFL learners' outcomes by fostering an environment where language skills can be developed through active participation and practical application.

In this study, a comparative analysis of CLT and TBLT will be conducted to examine their respective contributions to EFL education. By investigating the similarities and differences between these two approaches, the study seeks to elucidate how they complement each other in fostering language proficiency among learners. Additionally, the relationship between CLT and TBLT will be explored to understand how integrating elements of both methodologies can lead to more effective teaching practices. This examination will provide valuable insights into the best practices for enhancing EFL learners' abilities, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes in language acquisition.

EFL learners must develop their discourse competence through wider interactions. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasise meaningful communication, helping learners acquire the skills necessary to engage in real-world discourse. The principles of cohesion and coherence are fundamental in both approaches, ensuring that communication remains clear and effective in a variety of contexts, both formal and informal. In CLT, students are encouraged to interact in realistic situations, with a focus on fluency and meaningful exchanges, which inherently encourages the use of discourse markers and structures that enhance cohesion (Wei et al., 2018). On the other hand, TBLT centres on the completion of tasks that reflect authentic language use, providing students with opportunities to process extended discourse and develop strategies to manage coherence in their speech or writing.

Both methodologies advocate the importance of understanding temporal relationships, causality, contrast, and emphasis in communication. CLT's emphasis on communicative competence and TBLT's focus on task completion align with their goals of preparing students to process and produce coherent texts, both orally and in writing. By integrating these approaches, students build a wide variety of linguistic structures and discourse markers, enhancing their ability to formulate meaningful representations and maintain a clear flow of ideas. These foundational skills support their language development and prepare them to communicate effectively in a variety of real-world situations.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research approach, specifically library research, to conduct a

comprehensive comparison between two leading teaching methodologies in the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Both methodologies are widely recognised for their potential in improving EFL students' learning outcomes by encouraging meaningful language use in authentic contexts. The main purpose of this study is to explore how these two approaches contribute to the development of EFL learners' language proficiency, especially in terms of discourse competence, communicative ability and overall language proficiency. Through a systematic review of the existing literature, this research seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how CLT and TBLT are implemented in the classroom and their impact on student learning.

The literature study approach used in this research involves a detailed analysis of relevant academic sources, including books, peer-reviewed articles, and previous research relating to CLT and TBLT. By reviewing these sources, the research aims to uncover the underlying principles and theoretical frameworks of both methodologies, as well as the pedagogical strategies employed. The focus is on the practical application of these methods in EFL classrooms, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each. CLT, which emphasises interactive communication and fluency, is contrasted with TBLT, which centres on task completion as a means of promoting language acquisition (Qasserras, 2023). Through this comparison, this research will illustrate how each approach addresses key elements in language learning, such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar proficiency, and discourse organisation.

By evaluating the different features of CLT and TBLT, this research will explore the potential benefits of integrating elements of both methodologies to optimise English language teaching. The research aims to provide valuable insights for language teachers, by offering evidence-based recommendations on how to effectively combine CLT and TBLT in their teaching practice. By combining the interactive and communicative nature of CLT with the task-focused and outcome-orientated framework of TBLT, teachers can enhance their students' ability to engage in meaningful communication and develop their language skills in a more holistic way. Ultimately, this research endeavours to contribute to the ongoing discourse on EFL pedagogy, offering practical suggestions for improving English language teaching and learning in diverse educational contexts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The significant role of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in enhancing efl learner

The CLT approach has prioritized real-life communication as a means of developing language competencies in authentic contexts, which plays a key role in enhancing EFL learner outcomes. By engaging students in communication tasks and activities, CLT allows learners to refine their ability to transmit and interpret messages, thus improving their communicative competence. This approach emphasizes oral communication and active engagement, helping students develop greater fluency and precision in language use. As students practice the language in meaningful contexts, their overall language proficiency improves significantly (Wei et al., 2018). Studies supporting CLT principles show that fostering an interactive learning environment, where students actively participate in real-life communication scenarios, enhances their ability to engage meaningfully with the language, as opposed to traditional "chalk and talk" methods.

Furthermore, CLT's integration of communicative language activities is directly aligned with its core objective to provide meaningful and practical language learning experiences. By utilizing experimental research designs, such as pre-test and post-test control groups, evidence has shown that communicative language activities positively impact learners' communicative competence over time. These results underscore the effectiveness of CLT-based approaches in enhancing both language proficiency and communicative competence. Through active, task-based engagement,

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learners are better prepared to use the language authentically, which supports the broader goal of improving EFL outcomes. These findings emphasize the importance of CLT in transforming language education, highlighting its potential to significantly enhance learners' communicative abilities in both academic and real-world settings.

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach offers numerous benefits for both teachers and learners, fostering effective language learning environments. However, there are potential challenges that may act as disadvantages within these educational settings. A significant obstacle can be a lack of language proficiency among teachers. Some educators may struggle to answer detailed questions related to the target language, sociolinguistics, or cultural aspects that arise during classroom interactions. The CLT approach encourages the use of relevant teaching materials and resources from real-life communities and societies (Sasstos, 2020). However, the variety of available materials can be overwhelming, which means that even well-prepared lessons might overlook certain questions or challenges.

One of the other significant advantages of the CLT approach is the interaction between teachers, students, and peers. In the CLT approach, the relationships between both peers and teachers are significantly enhanced and highly valued. This approach allows both teachers and students to transition from traditional teaching and learning beliefs to a more innovative teaching and learning model. For example, educators have advocated that today's students prefer using technology-assisted materials and tools for language learning, such as social media platforms and internet chat groups (Sato, 2016). To meet the needs of these students, such visual and interpersonal communicative tools must be created and employed.

Additionally, the CLT approach often increases the overall teaching and learning interests of students. Unlike traditional methods where students are primarily listeners in lectures, CLT encourages active participation. When students are allowed to engage in real-life stories and exercises, it can enhance their interests beyond the classroom environment. The related stories, exercises, problem-based materials, and case studies are closely connected to daily activities, making learning more relevant. In this context, students become the protagonists rather than passive audiences. Furthermore, these activities do not only apply to the classroom but also enable students to transfer classroom experiences into real-world applications and the workplace after completing lessons.

While the CLT approach has been widely adopted in many language classrooms, particularly in countries like the United States, it faces resistance from international students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Many of these students, especially those from Eastern societies, often believe that traditional teaching methods are the most effective for language learning. As a result, they may focus primarily on memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules. Traditionally, for many students, learning a new language has involved rote memorization and intensive reading after each class session. Consequently, a significant number of students may be reluctant to fully embrace the CLT approach due to their entrenched views on language learning techniques. The demands of standardized examination requirements can also impact the implementation of the CLT approach (Wei et al., 2018). For instance, in the United States, secondary school students are often required to take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) as part of their university admission process. Similar entrance exams are prevalent in many other countries and educational systems, such as A-Levels and the General Certificate of Education (GCE). Notably, many of these assessments do not evaluate oral language proficiency, which may lead learners to show little interest in engaging in additional communicative training.

Learner behavior is significantly influenced by the practice of the CLT approach within classroom settings. Unlike students from Western cultures, learners from Eastern backgrounds may

exhibit lower motivation levels even when placed in the same classroom environment. For example, East Asian students often adopt a more passive learning style due to their cultural upbringing. In many cases, they may avoid challenging their peers or teachers out of respect for authority figures, even if they recognize mistakes being made. Thus, based on these behavioral tendencies, the CLT approach may encounter limitations when applied to certain groups of learners due to their social and cultural contexts. Classroom size and student enrollment numbers can greatly affect the effectiveness of the CLT approach. In some instances, language courses may have more than 50 students in a large lecture hall setting. Such large classes can hinder opportunities for interaction and communication among students since they tend to create a silent and focused atmosphere (Sasstos, 2020). Additionally, teachers may find it challenging to address individual student needs or provide personalized feedback due to the high number of learners in attendance.

2. Teacher and learner roles in task-based language teaching

The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach is a dynamic teaching method that uses tasks as the primary tools for structuring language instruction, offering significant benefits for enhancing EFL learner outcomes. Similar to the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), TBLT emphasizes the importance of engaging learners in real communication activities, recognizing that using language to complete meaningful tasks can significantly boost language acquisition. This approach not only focuses on the acquisition of language knowledge but also helps learners develop essential skills through the execution of varied tasks (Moore, 2018). Teachers in a TBLT framework serve as both instructors and guides, while students take on active roles as participants in their own learning process, engaging in collaborative activities that promote authentic communication.

TBLT enhances EFL learner outcomes by providing opportunities for students to use the target language in practical, real-world situations. As learners collaborate in pairs or small groups to complete tasks, they observe how language is used in authentic communication, focusing both on the content of their interactions and the forms used to convey meaning. This active engagement helps learners refine their communicative competence, particularly as they adapt to using the language in diverse contexts. Additionally, TBLT encourages students to produce and articulate ideas even when their linguistic resources are incomplete, fostering skills like making educated guesses, asking for clarification, and working collaboratively with peers (Van Den Branden, 2016). Ultimately, TBLT creates a supportive environment where learners can actively explore and experiment with the target language, improving both their fluency and their ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations.

Task-based language teaching provides many benefits to aid foreign language learning. It offers the opportunity for 'natural' learning within the classroom context, emphasizing meaning over form while still allowing for the teaching of form. TBLT provides learners with abundant input in the target language and is intrinsically motivating. It aligns with a learner-focused educational philosophy but also allows for teacher input and guidance. Furthermore, TBLT contributes to the improvement of communicative fluency while not disregarding accuracy. Additionally, it can be effectively combined with more traditional teaching approaches.

In the context of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in foreign language classrooms, the language teacher assumes three essential roles: selecting and sequencing tasks, preparing learners for these tasks, and raising learners' awareness of language use. In the first role, it is crucial for the teacher to actively choose, adapt, and design tasks that align with the specific needs, expectations, interests, and proficiency levels of the learners. This careful selection ensures that tasks are relevant and engaging for students (Izadpanah, 2010). For the second role, it is important for teachers to provide adequate training before tasks are assigned.

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This preparation may involve introducing the topic, clarifying task instructions, helping students learn or recall useful vocabulary and phrases, and offering a preview of the task process to facilitate successful completion. Regarding the third role, teachers should employ a variety of techniques focused on language form. This includes activities that draw attention to language use before tasks begin, analyzing relevant texts, guiding exposure to similar tasks, and utilizing highlighted materials to enhance understanding.

On the learner's side, students engaged in TBLT also take on three significant roles: participating in groups, monitoring their own learning, and being risk-takers and innovators. In their role as group participants, learners work collaboratively in pairs or small groups to complete tasks. This collaborative approach may require some adjustment for those who are more accustomed to traditional whole-class or individual work settings. As monitors, learners use tasks as tools to aid their learning process. Classroom activities should be structured to allow students to observe how language functions in communication. They need to pay attention not only to the content of their task work but also to the forms in which these messages are conveyed. In their role as risk-takers and innovators, many tasks will challenge learners to create and articulate messages even when they lack complete linguistic resources or prior experience (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011). This aspect is central to TBLT and it encourages learners to develop skills such as making educated guesses based on linguistic and contextual clues, and collaborating with peers for support.

3. The relationship between Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing EFL Learner outcomes

The relationship between Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing EFL learner outcomes lies in their shared focus on real-world communication and the promotion of active language use. Both methodologies emphasize the significance of engaging learners in authentic communicative activities that mirror real-life interactions. In CLT, the central focus is on developing communicative competence through oral communication and interaction. By prioritizing meaning over form, CLT encourages students to use language in practical, meaningful contexts, which fosters fluency and enhances overall language proficiency. Similarly, TBLT shares these principles but distinguishes itself by using tasks as the primary means of structuring language instruction. Tasks, as central components of TBLT, not only promote communication but also encourage learners to use the language for specific purposes, such as problem-solving or completing projects (Derakhshan et al., 2016). In this way, both CLT and TBLT contribute significantly to improving learners' ability to communicate effectively in the target language, while also providing opportunities for students to engage deeply with the language in various contexts.

One of the key similarities between CLT and TBLT is their emphasis on learner-centered instruction and the active involvement of students in their own learning process. In both approaches, learners take on more active roles, moving beyond passive reception of information. In CLT, students engage in communicative activities where they practice real-life conversations, negotiate meaning, and work collaboratively with peers. This active engagement is essential for building the fluency and accuracy required for effective communication in the target language. Similarly, in TBLT, learners participate in tasks that require collaboration, critical thinking, and language use in authentic contexts. Tasks such as group discussions, problem-solving, or project-based activities allow students to develop both linguistic and cognitive skills. These tasks promote the use of language for meaningful communication, thereby enhancing learners' communicative competence in practical situations (Chitprarop, 2024). Thus, both approaches recognize that

learners' active participation is crucial in developing language proficiency and preparing them for real-world use of the language.

Furthermore, CLT and TBLT share an understanding that language learning should not be confined to grammar rules or vocabulary acquisition in isolation but should integrate language use with real communication needs. Both methods seek to create learning environments that simulate real-life situations in which students can develop their language skills. CLT focuses on engaging students in authentic communication by incorporating real-world tasks such as role-plays, discussions, and debates. These activities allow learners to refine their ability to interpret, produce, and negotiate meaning in the target language. TBLT, similarly, emphasizes the importance of task-based interaction in real contexts. Through structured tasks that mimic real-life challenges, TBLT allows learners to experience language in action, fostering problem-solving skills and enhancing their ability to use the language in dynamic, unpredictable settings. Both approaches, therefore, aim to enhance the learners' communicative competence by creating immersive, interactive learning experiences that reflect real-world demands.

While CLT and TBLT share many principles, they also offer complementary strengths in enhancing EFL learner outcomes. CLT's broad focus on communication and interaction provides a strong foundation for improving learners' overall fluency and ability to navigate diverse communicative situations. However, TBLT's task-based approach further refines this process by providing structured opportunities for learners to use the language to accomplish specific objectives, encouraging them to engage with the language in a more focused, goal-oriented manner. The incorporation of tasks in TBLT ensures that learners apply language skills in practical, real-world contexts, which supports the development of both fluency and accuracy. Moreover, TBLT's emphasis on learner autonomy where students monitor their progress, collaborate with peers, and take responsibility for their learning complements the communicative focus of CLT. Together, CLT and TBLT offer a comprehensive framework for enhancing EFL outcomes by promoting communicative competence, encouraging active learning, and ensuring that learners can effectively use the target language in both academic and real-world settings.

CONCLUSION

Both Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) play crucial roles in enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner outcomes, yet each brings unique strengths to language instruction. CLT focuses on real-life communication and interaction, emphasizing fluency and communicative competence through meaningful, student-centered activities. This approach enhances learners' language proficiency by engaging them in practical conversations and tasks that mimic real-world scenarios. TBLT, while aligning with the core principles of CLT, introduces a structured framework where tasks serve as the central medium for language learning, encouraging students to solve problems or complete projects, thus further refining both fluency and accuracy. The active participation required by both approaches fosters a learner-centered environment, with students playing key roles in their learning process. Moreover, both CLT and TBLT prioritize real-world application, ensuring learners can use language in dynamic, unpredictable settings. By combining the communicative focus of CLT with the task-oriented structure of TBLT, these approaches together provide a comprehensive framework for improving EFL outcomes, promoting active learning, and equipping learners with the skills needed for effective communication in both academic and real-world contexts.

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