



FROM PERCEPTION TO PRACTICE: A STUDY OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN GHANAIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Samuel Bruce Kpeglo¹ⁱ,

Ebenezer Giddi²,

Rita Akakpo-Ashiadey³,

Noah Kwadwo Tempong⁴ⁱ

¹St. Teresa's College of Education,

Hohoe, Ghana

orcid.org/0000-0002-7787-6049

²St. Francis' College of Education,

Hohoe, Ghana

³St. Teresa's College of Education,

Hohoe, Ghana

⁴St. Teresa's College of Education,

Hohoe, Ghana

Abstract:

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained considerable attention in second language pedagogy for its emphasis on meaningful communication and learner-centred instruction. Despite its growing prominence in language education, its implementation in teacher education contexts, particularly in developing countries, remains uneven. This study investigated English language tutors' perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching and the factors influencing its implementation in Ghanaian Colleges of Education. Using a mixed-methods research design, the study collected quantitative and qualitative data from English language tutors through a structured questionnaire that included both closed-ended and open-ended items. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were thematically analysed to provide deeper insights into tutors' views and experiences. The findings revealed that tutors generally hold positive perceptions of TBLT and recognize its potential to enhance communicative competence, promote learner engagement, and integrate the four language skills in meaningful classroom activities. However, the results also indicated a gap between tutors' favourable attitudes toward TBLT and their level of theoretical and practical knowledge of the approach. While some tutors reported implementing task-based activities in their classrooms, others expressed uncertainty about the principles and procedures that guide effective task-based instruction. Several contextual challenges

ⁱ Correspondence: email samuelbrucekpeglo@gmail.com

were also identified, including large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and insufficient professional training in TBLT. The study concludes that although English language tutors acknowledge the pedagogical value of TBLT, its effective implementation in Colleges of Education requires greater institutional support and sustained professional development. Strengthening tutors' knowledge and practical skills in task-based pedagogy will be essential for aligning classroom practices with communicative language teaching goals.

Keywords: task-based language teaching; perception, language classroom, colleges of education, language pedagogy

1. Introduction

This study is to examine teachers' views of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and the effect these beliefs have on their instructional methods in Ghanaian institutions of education. The subject was selected because it is tied to Ghana's new National Standard-Based Curriculum for Basic/Pre-tertiary Education (Ministry of Education, Ghana (MoE, 2019), which is now being implemented in all basic schools in the country. Practitioners' perceptions of TBLT often aid them in reflecting on their teaching approaches and increasing their appreciation for the value of reflection in ESL instruction (ESL). Recognizing teachers' opinions on TBLT is a first step toward evaluating and reflecting on TBLT's applicability to ESL education (Hui, 2004). In 2019, the Ministry of Education (MoE) released a new Standard-Based Curriculum for basic school teachers to adopt. The Curriculum Standards stress the importance of ESL teachers' responsibilities as mediators, facilitators, partners, consultants, and reflective practitioners in light of the theoretical components of TBLT (National Teaching Council, Ghana, 2017).

In a broader sense, the English language has long been regarded as the most prestigious language on the planet. It has since risen to become the most important and commonly spoken language on the planet. This prestige results in an increase in the number of English learners around the world every day, as its use ensures a safe future (Rahman, 2015). English language teaching has established itself as a distinct subject, with ever-increasing English language teaching approaches (Pishghadam, 2011). A greater proportion of the working class in developing countries like Ghana has poor English language skills because they rarely use the English language outside of the classroom. The content in a textbook may be presented in an unpleasant manner in the classroom, on the other hand. Such an environment makes it difficult to capture students' interest, sustain their attention, and encourage participation in book-based activities. As Allwright and Bailey (1991) write, "*Even if everything else appears to be in order, learners can switch off because they do not like the way content from their course is presented*" (p.162). As a result, students need a lot of help and exposure to the English language.

The TBLT technique combines real-world experiences into language training, as John Dewey (1859-1952) advocated in his experiential learning (Ellis, 2009; Hu, 2013). The

constructive theory of learning is the foundation of modern learning theories. The concept for TBLT originates from the Communicative Language Teaching initiative, which started in the 1980s. This methodology was created in response to the constraints of standard language education approaches based on the PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) paradigm and other considerations. Based on the behaviorist school of learning, the PPP method gives learners with chunks of language focused on abstract grammatical principles and rote acquisition of target language structures (Ellis, 2003; Long & Crookes, 1993). Once upon a time, it was thought that pupils could only become proficient in a language by memorizing and practicing its grammar on a regular basis. It was a mistake, since pupils who only grasped theoretical grammatical concepts were unable to communicate smoothly in the target language in real-life settings (Krashen, 1985; Prabhu, 1987; Willis & Willis, 2007; Ellis, 2003).

Ellis (2008) and Willis (1996) have proposed two variants of CLT since its introduction into language education: a weak version and a strong one. The former is based on the notion that the components of communication competence may be identified and taught in a systematic fashion (Murphy, 2003; Nunan, 2004). In this way, the weak variant of CLT follows the same premise as the prior approaches. On the other hand, the strong form of CLT is predicated on the premise that language is acquired through conversation. This reasoning leads us to the conclusion that TBLT is a robust type of CLT that places a premium on task (Littlewood, 2004; Nunan, 2005). As a consequence, TBLT is founded on the principle of communicative language instruction (Ellis, 2008; Long & Crookes, 1991; Candlin and Murphy, 1987). As a consequence, there has been a sea shift and rethinking of the role of task in learning, resulting in a strong interest in and fascination with engaging learners in the process of task-based learning, and therefore widespread acceptance of TBLT. According to Ellis (2008) and Willis (1996), the core tenets of TBLT include language's communicative role, social negotiation, and learners' engagement in task management circumstances, as well as a focus on meaning and functions (Nunan, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 1991). The technique needs its own syllabus to bring the TBLT concepts to life, including procedural and process syllabuses that result in meaning-focused activities and teacher-learner negotiation, respectively (Breen, 1987; Long & Crookes, 1991; Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Prabhu, 1987).

Nunan (2004) argues that task-based learning promotes student-centered learning, assists learners in developing their unique characteristics, and promotes learner autonomy.

“The goal of task-based language instruction is to provide learners with a natural context for language usage. While learners are doing a task, they have several opportunities for interaction. Such interaction is thought to facilitate language acquisition as learners have to work to understand each other and to express their own meaning.” (Larsen-Freeman 2000:114)

According to Hashim (2006), language acquisition occurs most effectively when students are placed in a supportive environment and given opportunities to communicate in real-world situations. As a result, instructors have been instructed to abandon traditional teaching approaches in favor of communicative language instruction (Lochana and Deb, 2006), all the more so given that the new Ghanaian curriculum places a premium on task-based activities in real-world scenarios. As an ESL student, the Ghanaian student has limited experience utilizing English outside of the classroom. As a result, task-based English exercises enable him to develop his cognitive abilities. According to the revised curriculum, they must engage in creative/critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and communicative language use during their task activities. This study is founded on this premise and seeks to ascertain tutors' perspectives on the application of task-based language teaching pedagogy.

According to Ghana's new Standard-based Curriculum, the teacher should no longer be authoritative and should instead become a co-constructor of knowledge with students via TBLT (MoE, 2019). Teachers should be more concerned with the teaching process than with the learning results, with students learning how to learn rather than merely what to study, and with students developing creative rather than adaptive learning. The upgrading of the new Curriculum appears unavoidable, as current English education does not meet the needs of the Ghanaian child's economic and social development. The main purpose of this English curriculum reform is to move the focus away from grammar and vocabulary toward a more pragmatic skill development that is suited to students' interests, experiences, and cognitive capacities. Furthermore, the task-based approach will be used to promote students' authentic experience, practice, participation, collaboration, and communication in the learning process, as well as to develop comprehensive language skills, cultivate positive attitudes, proactive thinking, and audacious practice, improve cross-cultural awareness, and develop independent learning competency. Unfortunately, the task-based language teaching (TBLT) component of the new curriculum has yet to be adequately researched or experimentally demonstrated in terms of classroom practices in Ghana's institutions of education. However, the core role of ESL teachers as knowledge providers via grammatical translation has remained constant (Le & He, 2007; Wei, 2004; Zhang, 2007).

Most countries have employed CLT and task-based techniques to teach second and foreign languages to learners over the years. TBLT can be especially beneficial in second language learning situations such as Ghana, where most students have very limited outside of the classroom exposure to the English language (Jeon, 2005), especially at higher levels when students are being prepared for the job market. Task-based instruction, on the other hand, is not extensively used in Ghana as an educational approach to English language teaching, particularly at the college level. The educational culture of task-based learning/teaching got scant attention in the CoE classroom until recently, when the new standard-based curriculum was introduced into the teaching landscape. Furthermore, much of the research in the field of TBLT has focused on task definitions, task roles in second language acquisition (e.g. Ellis 2000; Skehan 1996), task

types (e.g. Skehan & Foster, 1997), task repetition, and task difficulty. There is, however, little discussion of how language teachers view task-based instruction and how it may be implemented to provide learners with on-the-job language. It suggests that instructors' opinions of language learning have received less attention, but language teachers' beliefs about the language teaching process have an evident impact on their professional activity. As a result, this study seeks to address a vacuum in the literature about the extent to which teachers adhere to traditional techniques to teaching English and the implementation of TBLT at colleges of education as mandated by the new curriculum instruction. The objectives of this study therefore, is to examine CoE English Language tutors' perception and application of Task-Based Language Teaching approaches in their classroom and further reveal the reasons for their choice or otherwise of task-based approaches in their ESL teaching in the colleges. Since the paper aims at investigating CoE English tutors' perceptions of TBLT and how these perceptions impact on their instruction, it is intended to address the following questions:

- 1) What are CoE English language tutors' perceptions of task-based language teaching pedagogy?
- 2) What are the tutors' views on implementing task-based language teaching pedagogy in CoE classroom?
- 3) What are the reasons for teachers' choosing or avoiding task-based language teaching implementation?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Task and Task-Based Language Teaching

Task, according to Willis (1986), is a goal-oriented activity in which learners utilize language to attain a real-world aim. In other words, learners use whatever resources they have in the target language to solve a problem, complete a puzzle, play a game, or share and compare their experiences. In recent years, task-based teaching has grown in popularity and has been proposed as a way forward in ELT. Tasks were regularly referred to as "*communicative activities*" throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Crookes, 1986). The word "*communicative activities*" was gradually phased out in favor of "tasks" (Bygate et al., 2001). Prabhu is regarded as the most influential figure in the task-based learning literature. His main goal has been to raise awareness about this strategy. A task, according to Prabhu (1987), is "*an activity in which learners were obliged to arrive at an outcome from provided knowledge by some process of thought, and in which teachers were able to manage and govern that process*" (p. 24). A task is a language learning activity that demands learners to perceive, modify, and generate target language while performing a specific task in real-life situations (Richards, 1986).

Nunan (2004) presents his own definition after reviewing key definitions from the TBL literature:

“A task is a piece of classroom work that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, produce, or interact in the target language while their attention is directed toward mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and where the goal is to convey meaning rather than simply express meaning.” Additionally, the work should be self-contained, capable of standing alone as a communication act with a beginning, middle, and finish.”

For all classroom activities that educate learners to create real-world consequences, this definition stresses task completion.

Long (1985) defines a task as a piece of labour done for oneself or for others, whether for free or for a monetary reward, according to his approach to task-based language training. Painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, driving a car and typing a letter are all examples of tasks that have long been cited. Others are weighing a patient, sorting letters, talking a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination, and assisting someone across a road. In other words, when individuals say "task," they are referring to the many activities they engage in in their everyday lives, including work, pleasure, and everything in between.

Tasks, according to Willis (1998), are activities in which the target language is employed to attain a communicative goal. Nunan (2004), on the other hand, uses the term 'task' rather than 'activity.' "Tasks" are activities that are largely focused on meaning, according to Ellis (2003), whereas exercises are activities that are primarily focused on form. The task has been simplified to signify that meaning is primary in a task; there is an issue to solve; performance is outcome evaluated; and there is a real-world relationship. Task-based language training, according to Willis (1996), serves eight purposes: to instill confidence in learners to try out whatever language they know; to provide learners with the opportunity to engage in spontaneous interaction; and to provide learners with the opportunity to benefit from observing how others express similar meanings. The rest are to provide learners with opportunities to negotiate speaking turns; to encourage learners to use language purposefully and cooperatively; to require learners to participate in a full interaction, not just one-off sentences; to give learners chances to try out communication strategies; and to develop learners' confidence that they can achieve communicative competence.

Many academics have already incorporated the task-based approach into their teaching, with positive results in the majority of cases. We highlight a few of the researchers who have put their methods into practice and shared their findings. Lopez (2004) ran an experiment in two classes in a private school in the south of Brazil using task-based instructions rather than the presentation-practice-production (PPP) technique to teach English. He discovered that students who received task-based instructions (TBI) learnt English more efficiently because they used it to do things like access information, solve problems, and share personal experiences. Tanasarnsanee (2002) compares the 3Ps and task-based learning approaches to teaching Japanese. The findings suggest that

learners who learnt Japanese through task-based learning displayed stronger communicative ability in Japanese than those who studied using the 3Ps (present, practice, and production) method. Task-based language education, according to Ellis (2003), is a method of instruction that stresses language as a tool for communication rather than as a subject for study or manipulation. Ismaili (2018) conducted research at South East European University on the usefulness of task-based learning in increasing students' speaking skills in academic contexts (SEEU). He discovered that task-based teaching provides students with diversity and increases their learning by encouraging them to do task activities, which leads to improvement in their performance. Ahmed and Bidin (2016) also conducted a quasi-experimental study to assess the effectiveness of Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving the writing skills of EFL students enrolled in public Malaysian institutions' undergraduate programs. In their reflective journals, the clear majority of learners stated that TBLT was the most exciting and learner-centered strategy that allowed them to use their existing linguistic resources to function well in society.

2.2 Study Framework

The study is built on Nunan's (2004) differentiated task classification. According to Nunan (2004), a task is categorised into three (3) stages for its completion: pre-task stage, the task stage and the post-task stage. The basic purpose of a task is not only to communicate but to achieve a purpose and an outcome while focusing primarily on pragmatic meaning (Ellis, 2009). Figure 1 describes TBLT framework designed by Nunan (2004).

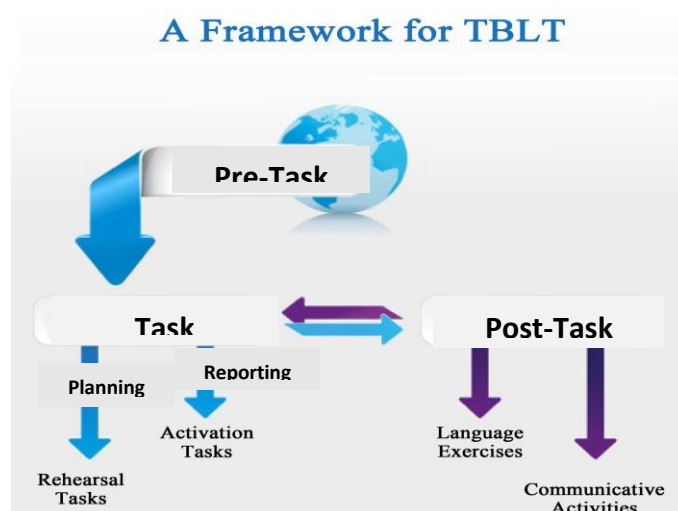


Figure 1: Framework for TBLT by Nunan (2004: p. 25)

2.3 Components of the task-based teaching

There are three core stages to the TBLT, as shown above, which provide three fundamental criteria for learning a language. First, the pre-tasking stage (which

encompasses both the subject and the action) helps students prepare for tasks that will help them learn. During this first stage, children are exposed to a variety of words and phrases, which aids their memory and helps them pick up on new ones. At the task stage, their language usage seems to have improved as a consequence of the extra time they have to think about what to say (Foster, Paper 12). When introducing a new concept or idea, teachers use a variety of methods to help students grasp its gist and the task's goals. In this phase, students may complete the assignment in whichever language they already know while also having the chance to improve their language skills with support from the instructor as they design their task reports. At the task stage, Nunan outlines the following three components of a task cycle:

- **Assignment:** Students work in couples, small groups, or on their own, using whatever language they know to accomplish the assignment.+
- **Proper planning:** Students make the most of their learning opportunities by carefully planning their reports.
- **Reporting:** This is the regular status of a task cycle. Students then share their results to the rest of the class in this stage.

The final stage of the task process is the post-task stage. This stage allows students to reflect on their work and encourages them to pay attention to form, particularly troublesome forms, which indicate when they have completed the assignment. Here, learners engage in language exercises and communicative activities to enable them to complete independent work and to reflect on their own performances. It is however important for teachers to be familiar with the types of tasks that will be provided to students before applying this strategy.

3. Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Design

In order to characterize the activities of a group of professionals in an organization, the research employed the embedded mixed methods approach in the form of a case study design. In this approach, a single data set is not adequate to analyze how a pedagogy such as TBL is applied in the classroom by teachers. One research topic is answered by a combination of data from both qualitative and quantitative sources in an online survey, which involves a variety of replies. This necessitates a secondary function for the open-ended data collection in order to secure accurate findings from the closed-ended items (Creswell, Plano Clark, et al., 2003).

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

To elicit data for the predetermined questions, a survey was adapted from Jeon and Hahn's (2006) Teacher Questionnaire, which assessed EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT in terms of task sense and TBLT concepts, attitudes toward TBLT implementation, and reasons for teachers' choosing or avoiding TBLT (see Appendix). The adapted questionnaire was then processed on google form for online responses. It was categorized

into two sections; the first section contains twenty-four items used to answer the first two research questions while the second section was open-ended items used to seek participants' reasons for choosing or avoiding task-based language teaching pedagogy.

3.3 Participants

The study sampled thirty (30) English language tutors across ten (10) out of the forty-six (46) public colleges of education in Ghana. Justification for choosing this category of participants was that they were the very tutors teaching English in the colleges for a period spanning from 5 to 25 years. These are seasoned tutors with required minimum qualification of researched masters; thus, Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) and Master of Arts and Education degrees, who have varied teaching experiences spanning from five (5) years and above. The choice of these colleges was necessitated by the fact that all of them are affiliate colleges of the University of Cape Coast with the same course structure and design.

3.4 Data Analysis Plan

According to Creswell's (2005) preliminary estimate of a survey sample size, the online questionnaire sheets were delivered to 30 instructors randomly selected from 10 of the 46 public Colleges of Education in the country. A significant limitation of the survey is that a lower proportion of pre-sampled individuals often respond to questions (Liao, 2004). Out of the 30 questionnaire copies provided, a total of 27 individuals answered (16 men and 11 females), indicating a 90% retrieval rate. The survey data were entered into a computerized database after being coded and classified. The data analysis procedure included the use of a Likert-type scale as well as open-ended item analysis. In the case of tutors' understandings of the task and TBLT, as well as their perspectives on TBLT execution, the 5-point Likert-type scale varied from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The open-ended questions were grouped and coded according to the instructors' response rates to determine why they selected or avoided TBLT. SPSS version 16.0 for Windows was used to analyze the gathered data.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Tutor Qualification

Seeking tutors' views and knowledge on a particular pedagogy primarily calls for a background check on their professional qualification. The bio-data on how the participants fair in terms of qualification on the job revealed that there has not been any PhD holder in the English Language teaching community in the colleges of education across the ten (10) sample CoEs. What it means is that, currently, for every 30 English language tutors randomly selected from the colleges, a PhD holder is hard to find. This is not to mean that they are not running the programme. Possibly, they graduate and leave the college system for other pastures that might seem greener. However, majority of these tutors possess the minimum qualification of a researched Masters to be able to

fit into the college system. This information is further illustrated in figure 2 below for more visual impression.

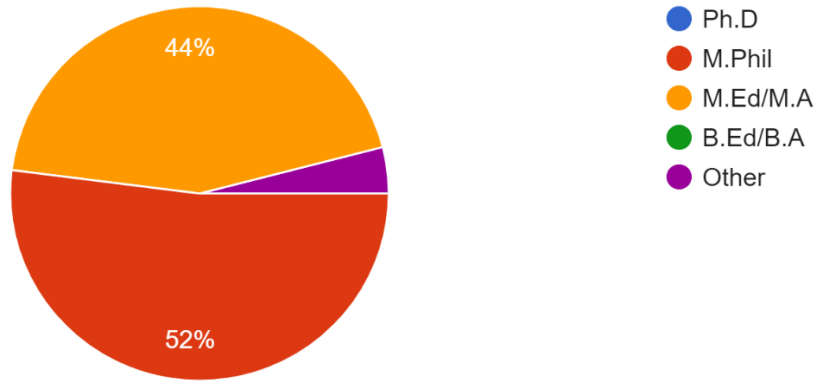


Figure 2: Tutor Qualification in CoE English/Language Department

Research Question 1: What are CoE English language tutors’ perceptions of task-based language teaching pedagogy?

Table 1: CoE English Language Tutors’ Perception of TBLT (n – 27)

		Frequency (%)							M	SD	Ranking
		SD	D	N	A	SA					
		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)					
1.	TBLT agrees with communicative language teaching principles.	1 (3.7)	0 (00)	1 (3.7)	11 (40.7)	14 (51.8)	4.011	.7434	4 th		
2.	I am familiar with the theories of TBLT.	1 (3.7)	5 (18.5)	6 (22.3)	11 (40.7)	4 (14.8)	2.594	1.154	10 th		
3.	I am familiar with the practice and methodologies of TBLT.	0 (00)	2 (7.4)	9 (33.4)	12 (44.5)	4 (14.8)	2.612	1.043	9 th		
4.	I believe that tasks should have a primary focus on meaning.	0 (00)	0 (00)	1 (3.7)	15 (55.5)	11 (40.7)	4.027	.7222	2 nd		
5.	TBLT includes pre-task, task implementation, and post-task.	0 (00)	0 (00)	4 (14.8)	12 (44.5)	11 (40.7)	3.913	.8318	6 th		
6.	TBL should make use of authentic material	0 (00)	1 (3.7)	2 (7.4)	13 (48.2)	11 (40.7)	3.972	.7872	7 th		
7.	Teamwork is essential to the successful implementation of TBLT.	0 (00)	0 (00)	3 (11.1)	13 (48.2)	11 (40.7)	3.974	.7804	5 th		
8.	I favour a mixture of TBLT approach with other teaching approaches.	0 (00)	0 (00)	2 (7.4)	16 (59.2)	9 (33.4)	4.024	.7011	3 rd		
9.	TBLT provides students with more opportunities to use English.	0 (00)	0 (00)	3 (11.1)	11 (40.7)	13 (48.2)	3.971	.7881	8 th		
10.	TBLT can transform the learning process to be more meaningful.	0 (00)	0 (00)	1 (3.7)	12 (44.5)	14 (51.8)	4.046	.6116	1 st		

Table 1 shows that English language tutors in Ghanaian Colleges of Education generally hold positive perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Most of the mean scores are above the neutral benchmark of 3.0, indicating overall agreement with core TBLT principles. Tutors strongly believe that TBLT can transform learning into a more meaningful process (highest ranked item, $M = 4.046$) and that tasks should primarily focus on meaning rather than form ($M = 4.027$). They also agree that TBLT aligns with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles and provides learners with increased opportunities to use English in authentic contexts. However, the table also reveals a notable gap between positive attitudes and actual knowledge. Items relating to tutors' familiarity with TBLT theories ($M = 2.594$) and practical methodologies ($M = 2.612$) recorded the lowest mean scores, suggesting limited conceptual and procedural understanding of the approach. Despite this limitation, tutors largely support collaborative elements of TBLT, such as teamwork and the use of authentic materials. Overall, Table 1 suggests that while tutors are favorably disposed toward TBLT and recognize its pedagogical value, there is a clear need for capacity-building and professional development to strengthen their theoretical and practical competence in implementing TBLT effectively in CoE classrooms

Research Question 2: What are the views of CoE tutors in implementing Task-based language teaching pedagogy?

Table 2: Tutors' Views on Implementing TBLT in CoE ESL Classroom (n = 27)

		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	M	SD	Ranking
		SD	D	N	A	SA			
1.	I prefer to use lecturing as teaching method compared to TBLT methods of teaching English Language.	11 (40.7)	10 (37)	3 (11.1)	1 (3.7)	2 (7.4)	1.354	1.646	12 th
2.	By using TBLT, I am sure students will enjoy my English class.	0 (00)	1 (3.7)	2 (7.4)	14 (51.8)	10 (37)	3.971	.9681	8 th
3.	TBLT offers students an opportunity for natural learning inside the class.	0 (00)	0 (00)	2 (7.4)	13 (48.2)	12 (44.5)	4.024	.7011	4 th
4.	I prefer TBLT because it is compatible with the learner-centered educational philosophy.	0 (00)	0 (00)	2 (7.4)	12 (44.5)	13 (48.2)	4.024	.7011	4 th
5.	TBLT allows students to use English language for communication.	0 (00)	0 (00)	2 (7.4)	12 (44.5)	13 (48.2)	4.024	.7011	4 th
6.	TBLT involves the use of the four language modes of listening, speaking reading and writing.	0 (00)	0 (00)	0 (00)	10 (37)	17 (63)	4.102	.6005	1 st

7.	I have interest in implementing TBLT in the classroom	0 (00)	0 (00)	3 (11.1)	12 (44.5)	12 (44.5)	3.971	9681	8 th
8.	TBLT provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote use of English.	0 (00)	0 (00)	1 (3.7)	16 (59.3)	10 (37)	4.046	.6116	2 nd
9.	TBLT pursues the development of integrated skills.	0 (00)	0 (00)	2 (7.4)	13 (48.2)	12 (44.5)	4.024	.7011	4 th
10.	TBLT needs more preparation time than other approaches.	1 (3.7)	1 (3.7)	7 (26)	11 (40.7)	7 (26)	3.453	1.003	10 th
11.	TBLT is proper for controlling classroom arrangements.	1 (3.7)	5 (18.5)	8 (29.6)	10 (37)	3 (11.1)	2.411	1.297	11 th
12.	TBLT materials should be meaningful and purposeful based on real-world.	0 (00)	0 (00)	1 (3.7)	12 (44.5)	14 (51.8)	4.046	.6116	2 nd

Table 2 shows that English language tutors in Ghanaian Colleges of Education generally hold positive views about implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in ESL classrooms. The highest-ranked items indicate strong agreement that TBLT integrates the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and creates a relaxed classroom atmosphere that promotes English use, suggesting tutors see it as pedagogically sound and learner-friendly. Tutors also strongly agree that TBLT materials should be meaningful, purposeful, and grounded in real-world contexts, aligning well with the goals of the standard-based curriculum. Most respondents believe TBLT supports learner-centred education, encourages natural language learning, and provides opportunities for authentic communication, reflecting a broad endorsement of its instructional value. Importantly, a clear majority prefer TBLT over traditional lecturing, while very few tutors favour lecturing as the dominant method, indicating a shift away from teacher-centred practices. However, the table also highlights some practical concerns. Tutors moderately agree that TBLT requires more preparation time and express relatively weaker confidence in its effectiveness for classroom control, suggesting implementation challenges, especially in large classes. Overall, Table 2 suggests that while tutors are highly receptive to TBLT, successful implementation may depend on addressing workload, preparation time, and classroom management constraints

Research Question 3: What are the reasons for teachers' choosing or avoiding task-based language teaching implementation?

Table 3: Reasons for Tutors’ Choosing TBLT Implementation (No: = 16)

No:	Reason	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	TBLT aids in the academic advancement of students.	9	56.3
2	TBLT enhances learners' ability to engage.	14	87.5
3	TBLT fosters intrinsic motivation in learners.	9	56.3
4	TBLT fosters collaboration in the classroom.	12	75
5	TBLT is suitable for work in small groups.	7	43.8

Table 3 shows that tutors who adopt Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) do so largely because of its strong learner-centered benefits. The most frequently cited reason is that TBLT enhances learners’ ability to engage (87.5%), indicating that tutors perceive tasks as effective in promoting active participation and interaction in the classroom. This is followed by the view that TBLT fosters collaboration (75%), highlighting its suitability for cooperative learning and group work. More than half of the tutors also believe that TBLT aids students’ academic advancement (56.3%) and promotes intrinsic motivation (56.3%), suggesting that tasks are seen as both pedagogically effective and motivating for learners. However, fewer tutors (43.8%) identified suitability for small-group work as a reason, implying that while collaboration is valued, class size and grouping logistics may still pose challenges.

Table 4: Reasons for Tutors’ Avoiding TBLT Implementation (No: = 11)

No:	Reason	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Students are unaccustomed to task-based instruction.	2	18.2
2	Textbooks do not provide appropriate materials for employing TBLT.	2	18.2
3	A large class size makes task-based techniques impractical.	6	54.5
6	I am unfamiliar with /have very little knowledge of task-based education.	3	27.3

Table 4 presents the reasons why some CoE English language tutors avoid implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). The dominant constraint is large class size, cited by over half of the respondents (54.5%), indicating that overcrowded classrooms make it difficult to manage tasks, monitor group work, and support learners effectively. This suggests that contextual and structural factors significantly limit TBLT adoption. Additionally, limited tutor knowledge of TBLT accounts for 27.3% of the responses, highlighting a skills and training gap that affects tutors’ confidence in using the pedagogy. Two other factors—students’ unfamiliarity with task-based instruction and the lack of suitable TBLT materials in textbooks—were each mentioned by 18.2% of tutors, suggesting these are secondary but still relevant concerns. Overall, Table 4 indicates that avoidance of TBLT is driven more by practical and institutional challenges than by negative attitudes toward the pedagogy itself, underscoring the need for

professional development, curriculum-aligned materials, and improved classroom conditions to support effective TBLT implementation

5. Discussion

This study examined English language tutors' perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), their views on its implementation in Colleges of Education (CoEs) in Ghana, and the reasons influencing their adoption or avoidance of the approach. Because the study employed a mixed methods design, the discussion integrates both the quantitative results from the Likert-scale survey items and the qualitative insights derived from the open-ended responses. The integrated interpretation provides a more understanding of tutors' attitudes toward TBLT and the contextual factors influencing its implementation in Ghanaian teacher education institutions.

5.1 Tutors' Perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching

The quantitative findings indicate that tutors generally hold favourable perceptions of TBLT. Most items measuring perception recorded mean scores above the neutral benchmark of 3.0, suggesting overall agreement with the core principles of the pedagogy. In particular, the highest-ranked item showed that tutors strongly believe that TBLT can transform the learning process into a more meaningful one ($M = 4.046$). This positive perception was reinforced by qualitative responses in which tutors emphasized the practical and communicative value of tasks in language learning. One participant noted: *"When students perform tasks that relate to real-life situations, they become more confident in speaking English and are able to connect classroom learning with everyday communication."*

This observation supports the fundamental premise of TBLT, which emphasizes meaningful communication and real-world language use as essential components of language acquisition (Ellis, 2017). It also aligns with the argument that task-based instruction facilitates experiential learning and encourages learners to use language as a tool for achieving communicative purposes (Willis & Willis, 2007). Similarly, a large majority of respondents agreed that tasks should primarily focus on meaning rather than form ($M = 4.027$). This reflects a conceptual alignment with communicative language teaching (CLT), which prioritizes meaning-focused interaction in the language classroom. Qualitative comments from tutors reinforced this perspective. One respondent stated: *"In task-based lessons, students are less worried about grammatical accuracy and more interested in expressing their ideas. This helps them speak more freely."* Such views demonstrate that tutors recognize the communicative benefits of TBLT. According to recent research, task-based activities promote negotiation of meaning, interaction, and collaborative problem solving, which are key processes in second language acquisition (Long, 2015; Ellis et al., 2020).

However, despite these favourable attitudes, the quantitative data revealed a notable gap between tutors' positive perceptions and their actual familiarity with TBLT theory and methodology. The items measuring tutors' familiarity with TBLT theories (M

= 2.594) and implementation strategies ($M = 2.612$) recorded the lowest mean scores in Table 1. This suggests that while tutors appreciate the pedagogical value of TBLT, many lack a deep understanding of its theoretical foundations and classroom procedures. The qualitative responses confirmed this gap. Some tutors openly acknowledged limited training in task-based instruction. One participant commented: *"I know that task-based teaching is useful for communication, but honestly I have not received enough training on how to design and assess tasks effectively."* Another tutor similarly explained: *"We hear about TBLT in workshops and curriculum discussions, but many of us still rely on traditional methods because we are not fully confident in applying the approach."* These comments suggest that professional development opportunities related to TBLT may not be sufficiently available or comprehensive for tutors in the Colleges of Education. This finding is consistent with earlier studies indicating that teachers' beliefs about innovative pedagogies often develop more rapidly than their procedural knowledge of how to implement them (East, 2021; Carless & Watanabe, 2021). Without adequate training, educators may appreciate the theoretical advantages of an approach but still struggle to translate it into classroom practice.

5.2 Tutors' Views on Implementing TBLT in the Classroom

The quantitative results in Table 2 further demonstrate that tutors hold generally positive views about implementing TBLT in ESL classrooms. The highest-ranked item indicated strong agreement that TBLT involves the integration of the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing ($M = 4.102$). This perception was echoed in several qualitative responses. For instance, one tutor stated: *"Task-based activities naturally combine reading, speaking, and writing. Students read instructions, discuss ideas, and present their outcomes."* Another tutor similarly explained: *"Unlike traditional lessons that focus mainly on grammar exercises, tasks encourage learners to use multiple skills at the same time."* These responses reflect the integrated-skill orientation of TBLT, which allows learners to engage with language in authentic communicative contexts rather than practicing isolated linguistic forms (Ellis et al., 2020). Integrated language use is particularly important in second-language environments where learners have limited opportunities to practice English outside the classroom.

The findings also show that tutors believe TBLT creates a relaxed and supportive classroom atmosphere that encourages language use ($M = 4.046$). Qualitative responses provided further insight into this perception. One tutor remarked: *"Students feel less intimidated during task activities because they are working in groups rather than answering questions individually in front of the whole class."* Another participant added: *"Group tasks make students more willing to participate because they are sharing ideas rather than competing with each other."* These comments highlight the collaborative nature of task-based learning. Previous research has shown that cooperative learning environments promote learner engagement, reduce anxiety, and increase opportunities for meaningful interaction (Ellis, Skehan, Li, Shintani, & Lambert, 2020).

In addition, the majority of tutors indicated a preference for TBLT over traditional lecture-based teaching. Quantitatively, most respondents disagreed with the statement that lecturing is preferable to TBLT. This suggests a shift in pedagogical orientation toward learner-centred approaches, particularly in the context of Ghana's standards-based curriculum. Qualitative responses provided further evidence of this shift. One tutor commented: *"Lecture method does not give students enough opportunity to practise English. Task-based lessons make them active participants."* This view aligns with the learner-centred philosophy underlying Ghana's educational reforms, which emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative learning (Ministry of Education, 2019). According to contemporary scholarship, TBLT supports these educational goals by positioning learners as active constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients of information (Ellis et al., 2020; East, 2021).

Despite these positive views, the data also reveal practical concerns regarding the implementation of TBLT. Tutors moderately agreed that task-based instruction requires more preparation time than traditional methods ($M = 3.453$). This concern was frequently mentioned in the qualitative responses. One participant explained: *"Designing meaningful tasks and organizing group activities takes more time than preparing a normal lecture."* Another tutor added: *"Sometimes the workload is heavy, so it becomes easier to fall back on the lecture method."* This challenge has been widely documented in the literature. Designing effective tasks often requires careful planning, appropriate materials, and clear assessment strategies (Ellis et al., 2020). Teachers who are unfamiliar with these processes may perceive TBLT as time-consuming or demanding.

5.3 Reasons for Choosing or Avoiding TBLT

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings also sheds light on the factors influencing tutors' decisions to adopt or avoid TBLT. The quantitative data in Table 3 indicate that tutors who implement TBLT do so primarily because of its perceived benefits for learner engagement and collaboration. The most frequently cited reason was that TBLT enhances students' ability to engage actively in the learning process (87.5%). Qualitative responses strongly supported this finding. One tutor observed: *"Students participate more actively during task-based lessons because they are solving problems or completing meaningful activities."* Another participant noted: *"Tasks make learners curious and motivated to communicate because they have a clear purpose."* These comments reflect the motivational benefits of TBLT. Studies have shown that task-based activities increase learner autonomy, motivation, and willingness to communicate in the target language (East, 2021; Ellis et al., 2020).

Tutors also indicated that TBLT fosters collaboration and teamwork in the classroom (75%). A respondent explained: *"Group tasks help students learn from each other and share ideas, which improves their understanding of the language."* Collaborative learning has been identified as a key feature of TBLT because tasks often require learners to negotiate meaning and jointly construct solutions (Long, 2015). Such interactions promote deeper processing of language and facilitate language development.

However, the study also identified several factors that discourage some tutors from implementing TBLT. The most prominent challenge reported in Table 4 was large class size (54.5%). Tutors explained that managing task-based activities in overcrowded classrooms can be difficult. One participant commented: *“When the class is very large, it becomes difficult to monitor group work and ensure that every student participates.”* Another tutor added: *“Sometimes there are too many students to organize effective tasks, so it is easier to teach using lecture.”* Large class size has long been recognized as a major barrier to implementing communicative and task-based approaches in many educational contexts (Carless & Watanabe, 2021). Teachers may struggle to provide adequate feedback, monitor group interactions, and maintain classroom discipline during task activities.

Another challenge identified in both the quantitative and qualitative data is tutors’ limited knowledge of TBLT. As previously noted, some tutors reported insufficient training in task-based instruction. One respondent stated: *“We need more workshops or professional development programmes to help us understand how to design and assess tasks.”* This finding reinforces the earlier observation that positive attitudes alone are not sufficient for effective pedagogical change. Teachers require both conceptual understanding and practical training in order to implement innovative approaches successfully (East, 2021). A smaller number of tutors also mentioned the lack of appropriate instructional materials in textbooks as a barrier to TBLT implementation. One tutor explained: *“Most textbooks still emphasize grammar exercises rather than task-based activities.”* This suggests that curricular materials may not always align with the pedagogical goals of the standards-based curriculum. Research has shown that successful implementation of TBLT often depends on the availability of suitable teaching resources and institutional support (Ellis et al., 2020).

Overall, the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a consistent pattern: tutors in Ghanaian Colleges of Education generally support the principles of TBLT and recognize its potential to enhance communicative language learning. However, practical constraints—including limited training, large class sizes, and insufficient instructional materials—continue to affect its implementation. The findings therefore highlight an important gap between policy and practice. While the standard-based curriculum promotes learner-centred pedagogies such as TBLT, successful implementation requires sustained professional development, adequate resources, and supportive classroom conditions.

6. Conclusion and Classroom Implications

This study examined English language tutors’ perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), their views on its implementation, and the reasons influencing their adoption or avoidance of the approach in Ghanaian Colleges of Education. Using a mixed methods research design that integrated quantitative survey data with qualitative responses from tutors, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how teacher educators perceive and apply TBLT within the context of Ghana’s standards-

based curriculum. The findings demonstrate that English language tutors in the Colleges of Education hold generally positive perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching. The quantitative results revealed strong agreement with several core principles of the pedagogy, including the view that tasks should focus primarily on meaning, that TBLT integrates the four language skills, and that it can transform classroom learning into a more meaningful and communicative process. These perceptions were reinforced by qualitative responses in which tutors described task-based activities as engaging, collaborative, and relevant to real-life communication. Such perspectives suggest that tutors recognize the pedagogical value of TBLT and its potential to enhance communicative competence among learners.

However, the study also revealed a notable discrepancy between tutors' favourable attitudes toward TBLT and their level of theoretical and practical knowledge of the approach. While most tutors expressed strong support for the communicative and learner-centred principles of TBLT, a significant number acknowledged limited familiarity with the theories, procedures, and assessment practices associated with task-based instruction. This gap indicates that positive attitudes alone do not necessarily translate into effective classroom implementation. Instead, successful adoption of TBLT requires both conceptual understanding and practical competence in designing, facilitating, and evaluating task-based learning activities. Furthermore, the findings highlight the influence of contextual and institutional factors on tutors' pedagogical choices. Tutors who reported implementing TBLT cited several benefits, including increased learner engagement, enhanced collaboration among students, and improved opportunities for authentic language use. These advantages reflect the central objectives of the communicative language teaching tradition and align closely with the goals of Ghana's standards-based curriculum, which emphasizes learner-centred instruction, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. At the same time, several challenges were identified as barriers to effective implementation of TBLT in the Colleges of Education. Among these, large class size emerged as the most significant constraint. Tutors explained that managing group work, monitoring task performance, and providing individualized feedback become increasingly difficult in overcrowded classrooms. In addition, some tutors reported limited access to instructional materials specifically designed for task-based teaching, while others noted that the preparation and organization of task-based lessons require considerable time and effort. These challenges highlight the structural realities of many educational settings in developing contexts, where limited resources and high student-teacher ratios may complicate the adoption of innovative pedagogies.

Despite these challenges, the overall findings of this study suggest that the prospects for integrating TBLT more fully into English language instruction in Ghanaian Colleges of Education are promising. The generally favourable perceptions of tutors indicate a readiness within the teacher education community to embrace more communicative and learner-centred approaches to language teaching. With appropriate institutional support and professional development opportunities, tutors may be better

positioned to translate these positive attitudes into effective classroom practices. The findings of this study therefore carry some important implications for classroom practice, teacher education, and educational policy.

First, there is a clear need for sustained professional development programmes that focus specifically on task-based language teaching. Although many tutors recognize the pedagogical benefits of TBLT, the study indicates that their knowledge of its theoretical foundations and implementation strategies remains limited. Training workshops, seminars, and in-service programmes should therefore be organized to equip tutors with the necessary skills to design meaningful tasks, facilitate learner interaction, and assess task performance effectively. Such professional development initiatives should emphasize practical classroom applications, including the design of pre-task, task-cycle, and post-task activities, as well as strategies for evaluating learners' communicative performance.

Second, teacher education programmes in the Colleges of Education should incorporate more explicit training in task-based pedagogy within their curriculum. Since these institutions are responsible for preparing pre-service teachers for Ghana's basic education system, it is essential that student-teachers themselves experience and understand task-based learning during their training. When tutors model the use of tasks in their own classrooms, pre-service teachers are more likely to adopt similar approaches in their future teaching. This modelling effect can help ensure that the principles of communicative and task-based instruction are effectively transferred from teacher education institutions to basic school classrooms.

Third, institutional support is necessary to address structural constraints that hinder the implementation of TBLT. Educational authorities and college administrators should consider strategies for improving classroom conditions that facilitate interactive and collaborative learning. Although reducing class size may not always be immediately feasible, tutors can be supported with practical strategies for managing large classes during task-based activities. These strategies may include structured group work, peer evaluation, rotating leadership roles within groups, and the use of technology or digital platforms to facilitate communication and collaboration.

Again, there is a need for the development and provision of instructional materials that align with the principles of task-based language teaching. Many tutors indicated that existing textbooks often emphasize grammar-based exercises rather than communicative tasks. Curriculum developers and textbook authors should therefore incorporate more authentic and meaningful task-based activities that reflect real-world communication contexts. Such materials can provide tutors with practical models of how tasks can be structured and implemented in the classroom. Finally, assessment practices in English language education should be aligned with the communicative objectives of TBLT. Traditional assessment methods that focus primarily on grammatical accuracy and written examinations may discourage tutors from fully adopting task-based approaches. To support the effective implementation of TBLT, assessment systems should recognize and evaluate learners' ability to use language communicatively in meaningful contexts.

This may include performance-based assessments such as presentations, group projects, problem-solving tasks, and oral interactions.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight both the potential and the challenges of implementing task-based language teaching in Ghanaian Colleges of Education. While tutors demonstrate strong support for the communicative and learner-centred principles of TBLT, practical constraints such as limited training, large class sizes, and insufficient teaching resources continue to affect its widespread adoption. Addressing these challenges through targeted professional development, curriculum reform, and institutional support will be essential for ensuring that TBLT becomes an effective and sustainable component of English language pedagogy in teacher education institutions. By strengthening tutors' capacity to implement task-based instruction, Colleges of Education can play a critical role in preparing future teachers who are capable of promoting communicative competence and meaningful language learning in Ghana's basic schools.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study.

About the Author(s)

Samuel Bruce Kpeglo is a lecturer in the Department of Languages; and the head of Academic Planning & Quality Assurance Unit of St. Teresa's College of Education, Hohoe, Ghana, with considerable teaching experience in English Language pedagogy. His research interests are in language learning strategies, classroom discourse and communicative language teaching. He is a member of the West African Association of Commonwealth Literature & Language Studies (WAACLALS), a member of the Linguistics Association of Ghana (LAG) and a member of the International Association of Transformative Educators.

Ebenezer Giddi is a lecturer in the Department of Languages at St. Francis' College of Education, Hohoe, Ghana. He is actively involved in the training of pre-service teachers, with a focus on English language education and classroom communication. His academic interests include language pedagogy, classroom discourse, multilingual education, and teacher professional development. Through his teaching and scholarly engagement, he is committed to promoting effective language use and inclusive pedagogical practices within Ghana's multilingual educational context.

Rita Akakpo-Ashiadey is an English language educator and academic who serves as a tutor in the Department of Languages at St. Teresa's College of Education. She holds a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in English Language and specializes in the teaching of English language and communication skills to student-teachers. At the college, she contributes to the training and professional development of prospective teachers, equipping them with effective language and literacy skills for classroom practice. As a member of the Languages Department, she participates in teaching, mentoring, and academic activities that support the preparation of competent teachers for Ghana's basic education sector.

Noah Kwadwo Tempong is a lecturer in the Department of Languages at St. Teresa's College of Education, Ghana, with long-standing teaching experience in ESL classrooms. He specializes in methods of teaching English, discourse analysis, and curriculum studies in English. His research interests include classroom discourse, learner participation, language pedagogy, and teacher education, with particular focus on improving oral communication and interaction in ESL contexts. Mr. Tempong has contributed to academic research and professional development activities aimed at enhancing the quality of English language teaching in Ghanaian basic and tertiary institutions.

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