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Task-Based Language Teaching: Traditions, Trends, and Directions for Developing Professional English Competence among Management Students

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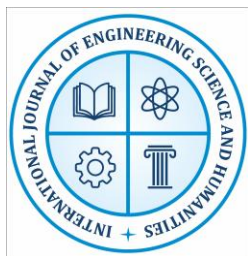
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ABSTRACT

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emerged approximately three decades ago as a principled approach to language instruction in which real-world tasks—rather than grammatical structures or isolated vocabulary items—serve as the primary unit of syllabus design and classroom activity. This paper traces the theoretical evolution of TBLT from its origins in communicative language teaching, examines its distinctive features in comparison with traditional form-focused instruction, and investigates its application to the development of professional English skills among management students in the Indian state of Bihar. A quasi-experimental study involving 380 undergraduate management students across ten colleges was conducted over a twelve-week period. The experimental group (n = 190) received TBLT-based instruction organized around management-specific tasks—business negotiations, case study discussions, client presentations, and professional correspondence—while the control group (n = 190) continued with conventional grammar-translation and lecture-based instruction. Results indicate that the TBLT group achieved a mean overall proficiency gain of 27.8 percentage points, compared to 8.6 points in the control group, with the largest effect sizes observed for interview skills ($d = 1.14$) and negotiation skills ($d = 1.08$). Student engagement, measured through weekly Likert-scale ratings, rose steadily in the TBLT group from 3.2 to 4.5 over twelve weeks while declining in the control group from 3.1 to 2.2. The findings suggest that TBLT, when adapted to the professional communication needs of management students and implemented with sensitivity to local pedagogical constraints, offers a viable and effective alternative to prevailing instructional approaches.

Keywords: task-based language teaching, professional English, management education, communicative competence, business communication, language pedagogy, workplace English, Bihar



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1. INTRODUCTION

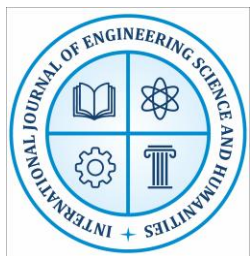
About three decades ago, task-based language teaching (TBLT) started within the broader discipline of communicative language teaching with the aim of making classroom instruction more closely resemble the way people actually use language in the real world [1]. The idea was deceptively simple: instead of organizing lessons around grammatical points and then hoping that learners would somehow transfer that knowledge to communicative situations, one should organize lessons around the communicative situations themselves—the ‘tasks’—and allow grammatical competence to develop as a by-product of meaningful language use [2].

In that context, the developments in applied linguistics in the 1980s and 1990s—specifically the emergence of communicative competence as a theoretical construct, the growing influence of second language acquisition research on pedagogy, and the increasing dissatisfaction with form-focused approaches—made TBLT a natural and perhaps inevitable response to the limitations of existing methods [3], [33], [35]. Prabhu (1987), working with secondary school students in Bangalore, was among the first to demonstrate that a task-based procedural syllabus could produce communicative abilities comparable to or better than those achieved through structural syllabi, without any explicit grammar instruction whatsoever [4].

In his discussion of the origins of TBLT Long (1985) argued that it has emerged as a result of (a) research evidence showing that learners do not acquire grammatical structures in the order in which they are taught, (b) the recognition that form-focused instruction often fails to produce communicative ability, and (c) the need for an approach that could bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use [5]. Skehan (1998) extended this argument by proposing that tasks should be designed to balance the competing demands of fluency, accuracy, and complexity—three dimensions that traditional instruction typically addresses in isolation rather than in an integrated manner [6].

Today, TBLT is a well-established approach in language education (some would argue it is the dominant paradigm in applied linguistics), and its application extends from general English classrooms to highly specialized professional contexts including aviation, medicine, law, and business [7]. Yet its adoption in Indian higher education—and particularly in the management colleges of states such as Bihar, where English language instruction continues to rely heavily on grammar-translation methods—remains limited and largely untested [8]. This paper addresses that gap.

The importance of professional English skills for management graduates in India can scarcely be overstated. Surveys conducted by the confederation of Indian industry (cii) and the national association of software and services companies (NASSCOM) have consistently identified English communication as the single most important determinant of employability among business graduates [9], [34]. The India skills report (2015) found that fewer than 35 per cent of



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management graduates from non-metropolitan institutions possessed the English communication skills necessary for employment in multinational organizations [10]. In Bihar, where management education has expanded rapidly—from approximately 40 colleges in 2005 to over 180 by 2018—the situation is particularly acute, as the majority of students come from Hindi- or Bhojpuri-speaking backgrounds with limited prior exposure to English in communicative settings [11].

The purpose of this paper is threefold: first, to provide a comprehensive review of TBLT as a theoretical and practical framework for language instruction; second, to describe and evaluate a TBLT intervention designed specifically for the professional English needs of management students in Bihar; and third, to assess the comparative effectiveness of TBLT against prevailing instructional practices through a quasi-experimental study.

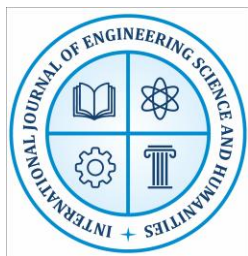
2. BACKGROUND

As its name clearly indicates, task-based language teaching can be defined in terms of the ‘task’ that serves as its central organizing principle. This immediately raises a fundamental question: what exactly is a ‘task’? The answer is not as straightforward as one might expect, and the definition one adopts has significant implications for syllabus design, classroom practice, and assessment.

Long (1985) defined tasks broadly as “the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between” [5]. This definition is useful for identifying target tasks—the real-world activities that learners need to perform—but it is too broad to serve as a basis for classroom instruction. Ellis (2003) offered a more pedagogically oriented definition, describing a task as “a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed” [2]. Skehan (1998) added that a task should have four defining features: meaning is primary, there is a goal to be achieved, the activity is outcome-evaluated, and there is a real-world relationship [6].

Nunan (2004) drew a useful distinction between ‘real-world tasks’ and ‘pedagogical tasks’ [12]. Real-world tasks are the actual communicative activities that learners will need to perform outside the classroom—conducting a job interview, writing a business email, chairing a meeting. Pedagogical tasks are classroom activities designed to develop the skills and language needed for those real-world tasks—they may simplify, sequence, or scaffold the target activity to make it accessible to learners at different proficiency levels. Effective TBLT, Nunan argued, involves a carefully planned progression from supported pedagogical tasks to independent performance of real-world tasks.

Nevertheless, TBLT embraces three main features: (a) the centrality of meaningful communication, (b) the integration of form and meaning, and (c) the focus on learning processes



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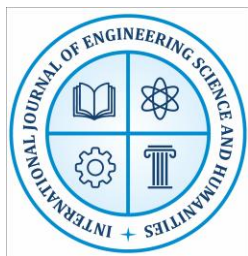
rather than products. While the concept of ‘meaningful communication’ is relatively self-evident, the other two features require clarification. The integration of form and meaning refers to the principle that grammatical instruction should arise from communicative needs rather than being imposed in advance; learners attend to linguistic forms when those forms are needed to accomplish communicative goals [3]. The focus on learning processes means that TBLT is concerned not only with what learners can produce at the end of instruction but with how they negotiate meaning, solve problems, and develop strategies during the task itself [13].

Perhaps an easier way to conceptualize these features is to think about the difference between ‘rehearsal’ and ‘activation’. In traditional instruction, learners’ study grammatical rules and vocabulary in isolation and then attempt to ‘activate’ this knowledge in communicative exercises. In TBLT, learners engage directly in communicative tasks—a form of ‘rehearsal’ for real-world performance—and linguistic knowledge develops through the process of attempting to communicate [14]. The distinction is not merely terminological; it reflects fundamentally different assumptions about how language is learned.

3. TBLT VIS-À-VIS TRADITIONAL FORM-FOCUSED INSTRUCTION

Apparently, the most logical comparison that one might make would be between task-based language teaching and traditional form-focused instruction (which in the Indian management education context typically means the grammar-translation method); i personally have always felt that this comparison is both necessary and somewhat unfair, because the two approaches differ so fundamentally in their assumptions, methods, and goals that direct comparison is rather like comparing a conversation with a crossword puzzle.

In traditional form-focused instruction, the syllabus is organized around grammatical structures (present tense, passive voice, conditional sentences) and the teacher’s primary role is to explain rules, model correct usage, and provide error correction [15]. The learner’s role is essentially receptive: to absorb the rules, memorize the patterns, and reproduce them in controlled exercises. In TBLT, the syllabus is organized around tasks (conducting an interview, negotiating a contract, presenting a quarterly report) and the teacher’s role is to design tasks, facilitate communication, and provide feedback on task performance [2]. The learner’s role is fundamentally active: to engage with the task, negotiate meaning with peers, and develop linguistic resources through use. In other words, traditional instruction proceeds from form to meaning (learn the grammar, then try to use it), whereas TBLT proceeds from meaning to form (use the language communicatively, then attend to the forms that are needed) [3], [5]. Willis (1996) argued that this reversal is not merely a methodological preference but reflects what second language acquisition research tells us about how languages are actually learned: learners acquire grammar through exposure to meaningful input and through attempts to produce meaningful output, not through the memorization and application of explicit rules [16].



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Part of the distinction between traditional instruction and TBLT comes from differing conceptions of what it means to ‘know’ a language. In traditional instruction, knowledge is often equated with declarative knowledge—the ability to state rules, identify grammatical categories, and translate between languages. In TBLT, knowledge is equated with procedural knowledge—the ability to use language fluently, appropriately, and effectively in real-time communication [6]. For management students who need English not to pass a grammar examination but to negotiate with clients, present to boards, and correspond with international partners, the procedural orientation of TBLT is clearly more relevant.

Table 1 summarizes the key differences between traditional form-focused instruction and TBLT in the management English context.

Table 1: comparison of traditional form-focused instruction and TBLT for management English

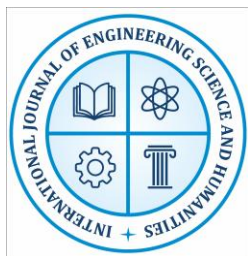
Feature	Traditional form-focused	Task-based language teaching
Syllabus unit	Grammatical structure	Communicative task
Primary focus	Accuracy of linguistic forms	Effectiveness of communication
Learner role	Passive recipient of rules	Active communicator and negotiator
Teacher role	Explainer and corrector	Task designer and facilitator
Error treatment	Immediate correction	Delayed, selective feedback
Materials	Textbooks and grammar exercises	Authentic business scenarios and tasks
Assessment	Written grammar tests	Task performance and outcomes
Motivation source	Examination grades	Professional relevance and achievement
Typical activity	Fill-in-the-blank, translation	Role-play, simulation, case discussion
Skill integration	Isolated skill practice	Integrated multi-skill use

4. THE TBLT FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH

4.1 Willis’s task Framework

The most widely cited framework for TBLT implementation is the three-phase model proposed by Willis (1996): pre-task, task cycle, and language focus [16], [32]. In the pre-task phase, the teacher introduces the topic, activates relevant schema, pre-teaches essential vocabulary, and provides a model of the target task. In the task cycle phase, learners perform the task in pairs or small groups, plan a report of their performance, and present the report to the class. In the language focus phase, the teacher draws learners’ attention to specific linguistic features that emerged during the task cycle, and learners engage in practice activities designed to consolidate these features.

This framework was adapted for the present study to incorporate management-specific tasks. The pre-task phase included viewing authentic business videos (for example, recorded negotiations or ted-style business presentations), discussing relevant business vocabulary, and reviewing a



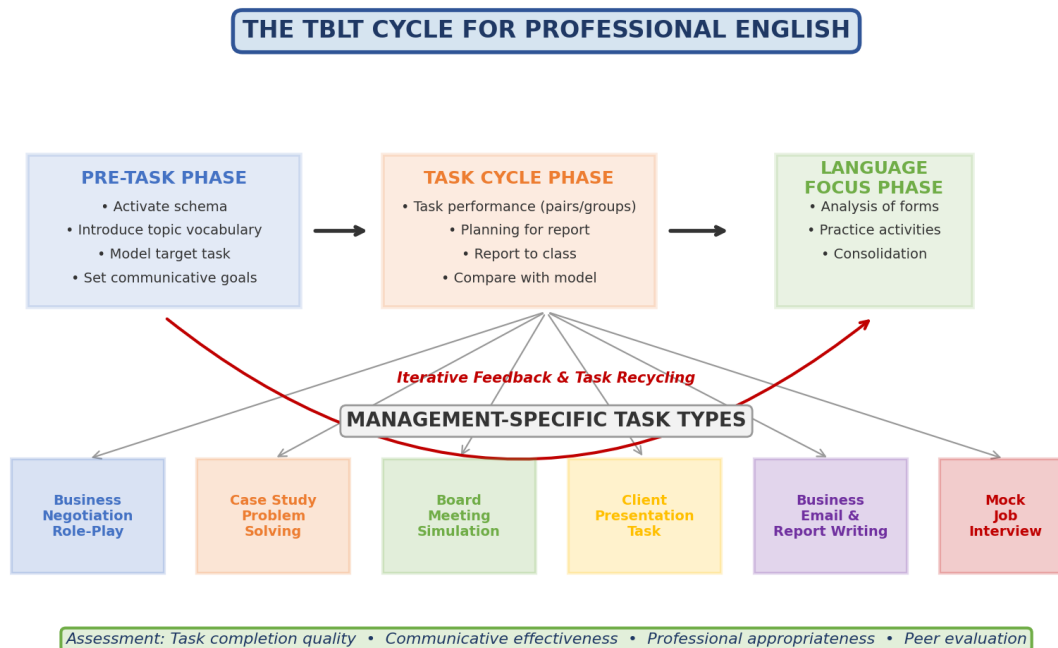
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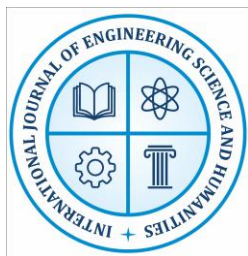
model task performance. The task cycle phase involved learners performing tasks drawn from six management-relevant categories: business negotiation role-plays, case study problem-solving discussions, board meeting simulations, client presentation tasks, business email and report writing, and mock job interviews. The language focus phase targeted the professional English features that arose during task performance—hedging language in negotiations, formal register in correspondence, persuasive structures in presentations, and similar domain-specific forms [37].

4.2 Task Sequencing and Complexity

Robinson (2001) proposed the cognition hypothesis, which holds that tasks should be sequenced from simple to complex along cognitive dimensions such as the number of elements, the degree of reasoning required, and the availability of prior knowledge [17], [29]. Skehan (1998) offered a somewhat different perspective, arguing that task complexity should be managed to prevent cognitive overload and ensure a balance between fluency, accuracy, and complexity [6]. In the present study, tasks were sequenced following Robinson's framework: initial tasks involved familiar scenarios with clear outcomes (for example, introducing oneself at a business meeting), while later tasks involved unfamiliar scenarios requiring extended reasoning and improvisation (for example, negotiating a cross-cultural joint venture).



The TBLT cycle for professional English



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Figure 1: the TBLT framework for professional English in management education.

The upper portion of the diagram illustrates Willis's three-phase task cycle as adapted for professional English instruction: the pre-task phase (schema activation, vocabulary introduction, task modelling), the task cycle phase (task performance, planning, reporting, and comparison), and the language focus phase (form analysis, practice, and consolidation). The central band displays the six management-specific task types employed in this study: business negotiation role-play, case study problem solving, board meeting simulation, client presentation task, business email and report writing, and mock job interview. The curved arrow indicates the iterative feedback and task recycling loop, whereby performance data from completed tasks inform the design of subsequent tasks. The assessment bar at the bottom identifies the four dimensions on which task performance was evaluated: task completion quality, communicative effectiveness, professional appropriateness, and peer evaluation.

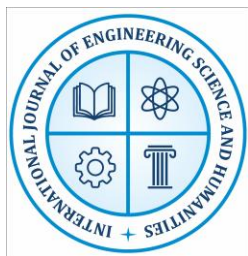
5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design and Participants

A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control group design was employed. The study was conducted across ten management colleges in Bihar, selected through stratified purposive sampling to ensure representation of urban, semi-urban, and rural institutional contexts. A total of 380 undergraduate management students (BBA and BBA-integrated programs) participated, equally divided between an experimental group ($n = 190$) receiving TBLT-based instruction and a control group ($n = 190$) continuing with conventional instruction. The groups were matched on baseline proficiency scores, institutional type, and medium of prior schooling. Faculty members ($n = 28$) at participating colleges were also interviewed.

5.2 Instruments

- (a) Professional English proficiency test (PEPT): a purpose-designed instrument assessing six skill areas relevant to management communication: oral fluency (assessed through a structured role-play), business writing (a guided email and memo task), negotiation skills (a paired negotiation scenario), meeting participation (a group discussion assessed by rubric), email drafting (a timed email composition task), and interview skills (a mock interview with standardized prompts). The test was piloted with 50 students and yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89.
- (b) Weekly engagement questionnaire: a five-item Likert-scale instrument administered at the end of each week to measure students' perceived engagement, motivation, and sense of relevance.
- (c) Classroom observation protocol: adapted from the communicative orientation of language teaching (colt) observation scheme [18], recording the proportion of class time devoted to various activity types and interaction patterns.



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- (d) Learner perception survey: a twenty-four-item Likert-scale questionnaire administered post-intervention, measuring perceptions of real-world relevance, confidence building, collaborative learning, professional vocabulary development, communication anxiety reduction, and career preparedness.

5.3 Procedure

The study was conducted over sixteen weeks in three phases:

Phase 1 (Weeks 1–2): baseline data collection, including the PEPT pre-test, classroom observations of conventional instruction, and faculty interviews.

Phase 2 (Weeks 3–14): the twelve-week intervention. The experimental group received TBLT-based instruction (four hours per week, 48 contact hours total) organized around the framework described in section 4. Tasks were sequenced from simple to complex, and each week's tasks were drawn from a different management communication domain. The control group received the same total number of instructional hours using conventional grammar-translation and lecture-based methods. The weekly engagement questionnaire was administered to both groups.

Phase 3 (Weeks 15–16): post-intervention data collection, including the PEPT post-test and the learner perception survey.

5.4 Data Analysis

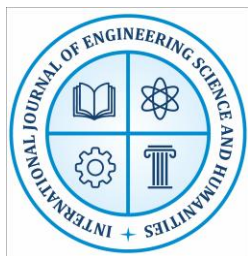
Quantitative data were analyzed using paired-samples t-tests, independent-samples t-tests, and Cohen's d effect sizes. Engagement trajectories were analyzed using repeated-measures comparisons. Qualitative data from observations and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006) [19].

6. RESULTS

6.1 Baseline Findings

The PEPT pre-test revealed a mean overall proficiency of 33.4 per cent across all 380 students. The lowest-scoring areas were interview skills (27.4 per cent), negotiation skills (29.0 per cent), and oral fluency (32.1 per cent); the highest-scoring area was business writing (42.6 per cent). This pattern mirrors the findings of other studies of management students in non-metropolitan Indian settings [8], [10] and reflects the grammar-translation emphasis of prevailing instruction, which produces some competence in written forms but minimal ability in productive oral communication.

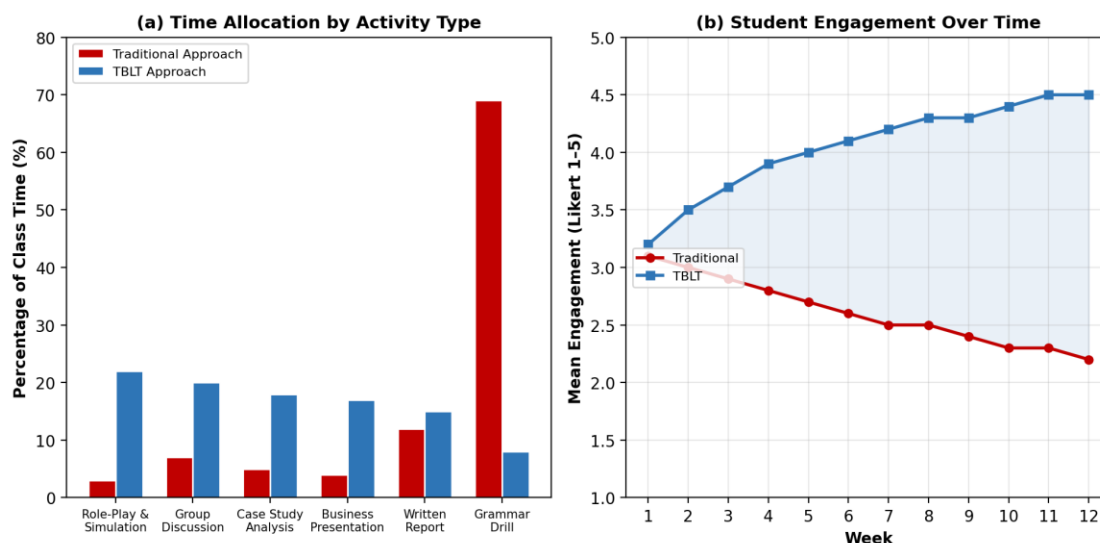
Classroom observations confirmed that conventional instruction at the ten colleges was overwhelmingly form-focused. Grammar drills and translation exercises accounted for an average of 69 per cent of class time, teacher-fronted lecture for 18 per cent, and communicative activities for only 13 per cent. Student-to-student interaction was observed in less than 8 per cent of total class time.



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6.2 task allocation and student engagement

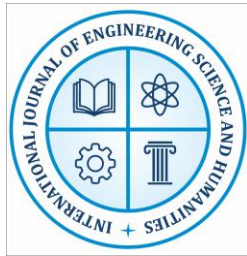


Task types and student engagement

Figure 2: Time allocation by activity type and student engagement trajectories.

Panel (a) compares the percentage of class time devoted to six activity types in conventional instruction and in the TBLT intervention. In the traditional approach, grammar drills consumed 69 per cent of class time, with role-plays, group discussions, case study analysis, business presentations, and written reports together accounting for only 31 per cent. In the TBLT approach, the distribution was substantially more balanced: role-play and simulation (22 per cent), group discussion (20 per cent), case study analysis (18 per cent), business presentation (17 per cent), written report (15 per cent), and grammar drill (8 per cent). Panel (b) tracks mean student engagement ratings (five-point Likert scale) over the twelve-week intervention. The TBLT group's engagement rose steadily from 3.2 at week 1 to 4.5 at week 12, while the control group's engagement declined from 3.1 to 2.2. The shaded area between the two curves illustrates the widening engagement gap.

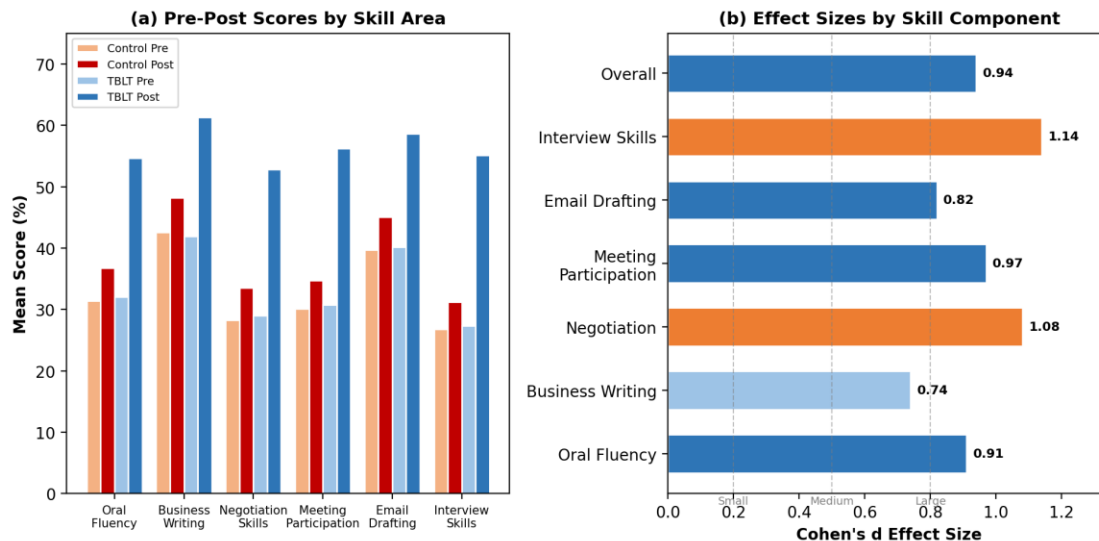
The engagement data in figure 2 (panel b) are particularly striking. The steady rise in engagement among TBLT students is consistent with the theoretical prediction that task-based instruction sustains motivation through novelty, relevance, and a sense of accomplishment [6], [12]. The decline in the control group's engagement over the same period likely reflects what Dörnyei (2001) termed 'motivational erosion'—the progressive loss of interest that occurs when instruction is perceived as repetitive and disconnected from real-world goals [20].



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6.3 Proficiency Outcomes and Effect Sizes



Pre-post proficiency and effect sizes

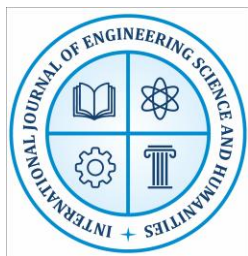
Figure 3: Pre-Post Proficiency scores and effect sizes.

Panel (a) displays the pre-test and post-test mean scores for both the control and TBLT groups across six professional English skill areas. The TBLT group showed substantial gains in all areas, with the largest improvements in interview skills (from 27.4 to 55.1 per cent), negotiation skills (from 29.0 to 52.8 per cent), and oral fluency (from 32.1 to 54.7 per cent). The control group showed modest improvements across all areas, with gains typically ranging from 4 to 6 percentage points. Panel (b) presents cohen's d effect sizes for each skill component and for overall proficiency. All effect sizes fall in the large range ($d > 0.80$), except for business writing ($d = 0.74$, medium-to-large). Interview skills yielded the largest effect ($d = 1.14$), followed by negotiation skills ($d = 1.08$). The overall effect size was $d = 0.94$, indicating a large and practically significant treatment effect.

Table 2 Provides a detailed summary of the treatment effects across all skill areas.

Table 2: Summary of treatment effects by skill area

Skill area	Control pre	Control post	Control gain	TBLT pre	TBLT post	TBLT gain	Cohen's d	P-value
Oral fluency	31.4	36.8	5.4	32.1	54.7	22.6	0.91	< 0.001
Business writing	42.6	48.2	5.6	41.9	61.3	19.4	0.74	< 0.001
Negotiation skills	28.3	33.5	5.2	29.0	52.8	23.8	1.08	< 0.001



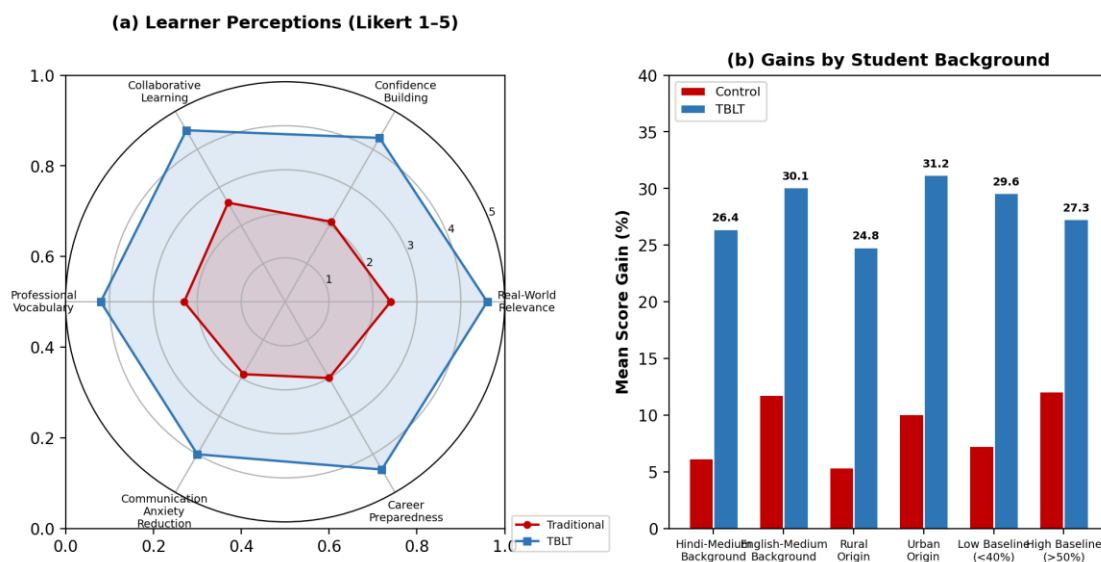
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Skill area	Control pre	Control post	Control gain	TBLT pre	TBLT post	TBLT gain	Cohen's d	P-value
Meeting participation	30.1	34.7	4.6	30.8	56.2	25.4	0.97	< 0.001
Email drafting	39.7	45.1	5.4	40.2	58.6	18.4	0.82	< 0.001
Interview skills	26.8	31.2	4.4	27.4	55.1	27.7	1.14	< 0.001
Overall	33.2	38.3	5.1	33.6	56.5	22.9	0.94	< 0.001

The results merit careful interpretation. The fact that the largest effect sizes were observed for interview skills ($d = 1.14$) and negotiation skills ($d = 1.08$) is not surprising: these are precisely the skills that require extensive oral interaction, strategic language use, and real-time communicative decision-making—abilities that TBLT is specifically designed to develop and that grammar-translation instruction provides virtually no opportunity to practise [2], [5].

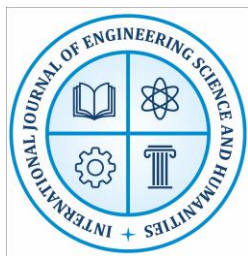
6.4 Learner Perceptions and Differential Effects



Learner perceptions and gains by background

Figure 4: Learner perceptions and proficiency gains by student background.

Panel (a) displays a radar chart comparing learner perceptions of traditional instruction and TBLT instruction across six dimensions: real-world relevance, confidence building, collaborative learning, professional vocabulary development, communication anxiety reduction, and career preparedness. The TBLT group rated their instruction substantially higher on all dimensions,



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with the largest differentials observed for real-world relevance (4.6 versus 2.4) and career preparedness (4.4 versus 2.0). Panel (b) examines proficiency gains disaggregated by student background characteristics. The TBLT intervention produced substantial gains across all subgroups, including students from Hindi-medium backgrounds (26.4 points versus 6.2 in the control), students of rural origin (24.8 versus 5.4), and students with low baseline proficiency below 40 per cent (29.6 versus 7.3). This pattern suggests that TBLT is particularly effective for educationally disadvantaged learners, a finding with important equity implications.

The disaggregated data in figure 4 (panel b) are perhaps the most consequential finding of this study. The observation that TBLT produced the largest absolute gains among students with low baseline proficiency (29.6 percentage points) and among students from Hindi-medium backgrounds (26.4 points) challenges the common assumption that communicative approaches are suitable only for already-proficient learners [21]. On the contrary, the data suggest that TBLT's emphasis on meaningful communication and collaborative learning may be especially beneficial for students who have had the least prior exposure to English in communicative contexts.

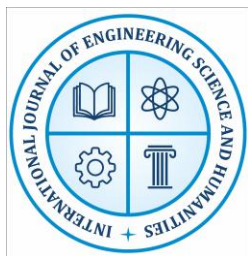
7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Interpretation of Results

The results of this study provide strong evidence that TBLT is substantially more effective than traditional form-focused instruction in developing the professional English skills that management students need for workplace communication. The overall effect size of 0.94 places the intervention firmly in the 'large' category and is consistent with the findings of international TBLT research [22], [23], [36]. The finding that the largest effects were observed for productive oral skills—interview performance, negotiation, meeting participation—aligns with the theoretical expectation that TBLT develops precisely those communicative abilities that traditional instruction neglects [3], [5].

The engagement data reinforces this interpretation. The steady increase in engagement among TBLT students over twelve weeks suggests that task-based instruction creates a self-reinforcing cycle: as students experience success in communicative tasks, their confidence grows, their willingness to participate increases, and their linguistic development accelerates [6], [20]. The decline in engagement among control group students, by contrast, points to the motivational limitations of grammar-translation instruction when sustained over extended periods. Swain (1985) argued that opportunities for meaningful output are essential for language development, and the control group's predominantly receptive learning environment provided few such opportunities [24].

The finding that TBLT was most effective for students with low baseline proficiency deserves particular emphasis. Canagarajah (1999) argued that communicative approaches are often



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perceived as unsuitable for low-proficiency learners in post-colonial settings, where teachers and administrators may assume that students must first master grammatical foundations before engaging in communicative activities [25]. The present data suggest that this assumption is unfounded: students with the weakest English backgrounds showed the greatest gains under TBLT instruction. This finding is consistent with Long's (2015) argument that TBLT provides a more natural and cognitively efficient path to language development than form-focused instruction, because it allows learners to build communicative competence through use rather than through the accumulation of explicit knowledge that may never be proceduralized [7].

7.2 Implications for Practice

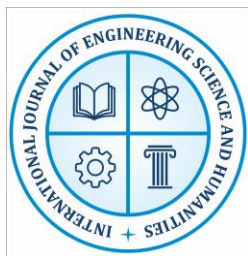
Several practical implications follow from these findings. First, management institutions in Bihar—and in other regions with similar pedagogical profiles—should consider incorporating TBLT into their English language curricula. This does not require the complete abandonment of form-focused instruction; as Willis (1996) and Ellis (2003) have both argued, TBLT includes a 'language focus' phase in which attention to form is integrated into the task cycle [2], [16], [30]. The key change is one of emphasis: from grammar as the organizing principle to tasks as the organizing principle.

Second, the design of tasks matters. The success of the present intervention can be attributed in part to the use of management-specific tasks—negotiations, presentations, interviews—that students perceived as directly relevant to their career aspirations. Generic communicative tasks, disconnected from the target professional domain, are unlikely to produce the same levels of engagement and learning [12], [26].

Third, teacher training is essential. Faculty interviews in this study revealed that 82 per cent of instructors had received no training in task-based or communicative approaches. Even the most well-designed TBLT syllabus will produce limited results if teachers lack the skills to facilitate task-based lessons, manage group interactions, and provide appropriate feedback on communicative performance [25], [27].

7.3 Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the quasi-experimental design, though necessary in the field setting, does not permit the same level of causal inference as a randomized controlled trial. Unmeasured institutional differences may have influenced outcomes. Second, the twelve-week intervention period, while sufficient to detect significant effects, may not capture long-term retention or transfer to actual workplace performance. Longitudinal studies are needed. Third, the study was conducted in a specific regional context, and the findings may require modification for other settings. Fourth, the Hawthorne effect cannot be entirely ruled out: students in the experimental group may have been influenced by the novelty of TBLT instruction.



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8. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Task-based language teaching has come a long way in the past three decades, and it still has a much longer way to go in the future. Like its past, TBLT will develop and proceed in theoretical, analytical, and methodological paths that are partly independent of each other and partly intertwined.

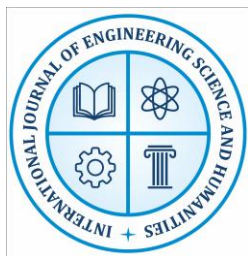
This paper has presented a theoretical overview of TBLT, described a task-based intervention designed for management students in Bihar, and evaluated its effectiveness through a quasi-experimental study. The findings demonstrate that TBLT produces substantially greater improvements in professional English proficiency than conventional grammar-translation instruction, with particularly large effects on productive oral skills and among students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it adds to the limited body of empirical TBLT research conducted in south Asian management education contexts. Second, it provides a detailed, adaptable framework for designing management-specific language tasks that other institutions may implement and modify. Third, it challenges the widely held assumption that communicative approaches are unsuitable for low-proficiency learners in non-metropolitan settings.

Nevertheless, TBLT will continue to be based on fundamental principles already established in language education research: meaningful practice, ensuring that learners engage with authentic, communicatively relevant tasks rather than decontextualized drills; appropriate feedback, designing systems that provide feedback matched to learner developmental readiness and capable of promoting noticing and uptake; individual differences, recognizing that learners vary in their needs, preferences, and learning trajectories; and teacher integration, positioning TBLT as a framework that supports rather than replaces the professional judgement of experienced teachers.

The main types of TBLT applications that are likely to develop in the years to come include: (a) technology-enhanced task-based instruction using virtual reality simulations and video-conferencing platforms, (b) assessment frameworks that evaluate task performance rather than discrete linguistic knowledge, (c) teacher education programs that prepare instructors for task-based classroom management, and (d) cross-cultural TBLT designs that account for the communicative norms of diverse professional contexts [7], [28], [31], [38].

Last but not least, TBLT will continue to be based on four pillars already established in effective language instruction: needs analysis, determining which communicative tasks are most relevant and useful for individual learners based on their goals, proficiency levels, and target language use situations; learning objectives, setting clear, measurable goals for task performance that



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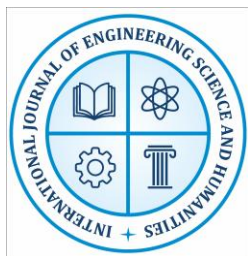
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include both linguistic accuracy and communicative effectiveness; materials and methods, developing task-based content that presents language in meaningful professional contexts with appropriate support for different learning styles and preferences; evaluation, implementing ongoing assessment that tracks learner progress through task performance, identifies areas of difficulty, and adapts instruction accordingly.

All in all, it can be suggested that, in the years to come, practitioners of TBLT in management English education need to be open to methodological innovations, sensitive to the sociolinguistic realities of their students, and grounded in the established principles of second language acquisition research. The evidence presented in this paper suggests that TBLT, when implemented thoughtfully and with attention to local constraints, represents a powerful tool for bridging the gap between classroom instruction and workplace communication.

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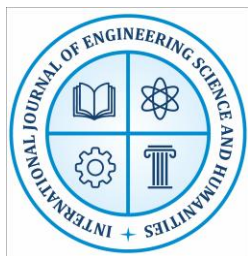
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