

SSTSDS-Vol.4. N1. 134

**Task based language teaching and perceived communicative competence
in english learners: a correlational study**

*Enseñanza de lenguas basada en tareas y competencia comunicativa
percibida en estudiantes de inglés: un estudio correlacional*

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Enviado: 27-07-2026
Aceptado: 14-09-2026

Revisado: 18-08-2026
Publicado: 15-09-2026



Cómo citar este artículo:

Sisa Sangucho, S. I., Arcentales Hidalgo, C. de L., Pineda Chávez, K. S., Recalde Cevallos, L. de las M., & Almachi Quinatoa, J. del P. (2026). Enseñanza de lenguas basada en tareas y competencia comunicativa percibida en estudiantes de inglés: un estudio correlacional. *Sage Sphere of Technology, Sciences, Discoveries And Society*, 4(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.63688/cfnyb356>

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) promotes English learning through meaningful, communicative, and collaborative activities. **Objective:** To determine the relationship between students' perception of TBLT implementation and their perceived communicative competence in English. **Methodology:** A quantitative, non-experimental, correlational, and cross-sectional study was conducted with 50 tenth-grade students from Unidad Educativa Teresa Flor, Ecuador. A 20-item Likert-type questionnaire organized into four dimensions was applied. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk test, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. **Results:** A strong positive and statistically significant correlation was found between perception of TBLT and perceived communicative competence ($r = .858$; $p < .001$). The strongest dimensional relationship was observed between communicative and collaborative task performance and communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence ($r = .717$; $p < .001$). **Conclusion:** Students reporting greater exposure to TBLT-related practices also tended to report higher perceived communicative competence; however, the findings indicate association rather than causality.

Keywords: task-based language teaching; perceived communicative competence; english language teaching; task-based learning; students.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La Enseñanza de Lenguas Basada en Tareas (TBLT) promueve el aprendizaje del inglés mediante actividades significativas, comunicativas y colaborativas. **Objetivo:** Determinar la relación entre la percepción de los estudiantes sobre la aplicación del TBLT y su competencia comunicativa percibida en inglés. **Metodología:** Se desarrolló un estudio cuantitativo, no experimental, correlacional y transversal con 50 estudiantes de décimo año de Educación General Básica de la Unidad Educativa Teresa Flor, Ecuador. Se aplicó un cuestionario de 20 ítems con escala Likert organizado en cuatro dimensiones. Los datos fueron analizados mediante estadística descriptiva, Shapiro-Wilk y correlación de Pearson. **Resultados:** Se encontró una correlación positiva fuerte y significativa entre la percepción del TBLT y la competencia comunicativa percibida ($r = .858$; $p < .001$). La relación dimensional más alta correspondió al desempeño comunicativo y colaborativo con la interacción comunicativa y competencia sociolingüística ($r = .717$; $p < .001$). **Conclusión:** Los estudiantes con mayores percepciones de prácticas relacionadas con TBLT tendieron a reportar mayor competencia comunicativa percibida; sin embargo, los resultados representan asociación y no causalidad.

Palabras clave: task-based language teaching; competencia comunicativa percibida; enseñanza del inglés; aprendizaje basado en tareas; estudiantes.



1. INTRODUCTION

Recent transformations in language education have increased the need to implement teaching approaches that allow students to use English effectively in authentic communicative situations. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, developing communicative competence remains an important educational challenge because students are often exposed to grammatical rules and vocabulary but have limited opportunities to use the language meaningfully. In response to this situation, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained relevance as a learner-centered approach in which students use the target language to complete meaningful tasks and achieve specific communicative purposes. Afifah and Devana (2020) explain that task-based instruction provides learners with opportunities to develop speaking through contextualized activities that require interaction and active language use.

The application of Task-Based Language Teaching has been analyzed in different educational settings. Sumarsono et al. (2020) examined the contribution of TBLT and learners' self-efficacy to speaking performance and emphasized that language development is influenced not only by teaching methodology but also by students' confidence in their own communicative abilities. These findings suggest that task-based instruction can create conditions in which students become more actively involved in oral communication while progressively strengthening their ability to express ideas in English.

The effects of TBLT on oral language development have also been examined through research syntheses. Medina Fernández (2021), through a systematic research synthesis and meta-analysis, identified favorable effects of task-based instruction on speaking performance. The study highlighted the importance of elements such as task repetition and pre-task planning for improving complexity, accuracy, and fluency. Similarly, Chen (2021) analyzed technology-mediated TBLT in a collaborative university EFL environment and found that the integration of meaningful tasks with technological resources can increase opportunities for speaking practice and interaction among learners.

Task-Based Language Teaching differs from traditional approaches because communication becomes the central mechanism through which learning takes place. Instead of practicing isolated linguistic structures, students are encouraged to exchange information, negotiate meaning, solve problems, make decisions, and collaborate with their classmates. Lume and



Hisbullah (2022) found that task-based instruction can contribute positively to speaking development by increasing students' opportunities to participate in communicative activities. Likewise, Huang (2022) emphasized that tasks should involve clear objectives and meaningful outcomes so that learners use English as a tool for communication rather than merely as an academic subject.

Teacher planning is also an essential factor in the implementation of TBLT. Prianty et al. (2022) examined teachers' perceptions and classroom implementation of task-based instruction and identified the importance of adequate planning, task organization, and pedagogical guidance. Therefore, the effectiveness of TBLT cannot be attributed exclusively to the existence of classroom tasks. Instead, it depends on whether those tasks are designed to encourage meaningful communication, participation, interaction, and the achievement of specific learning outcomes.

Recent studies have also emphasized the relevance of peer interaction within task-based learning environments. Baharun et al. (2023) analyzed peer interaction in TBLT and found that collaborative tasks can encourage learners to communicate, negotiate information, and participate more actively in EFL classrooms. These characteristics are closely associated with communicative competence because students must adapt their language according to the purpose of the interaction, respond to other speakers, and use different linguistic resources to complete the assigned task.

The relationship between TBLT and communicative development has also been examined in Latin American and EFL contexts. Gortaire Díaz et al. (2023) studied the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching on learners' speaking proficiency and motivation and reported improvements in oral performance as well as motivational factors associated with English learning. Their findings indicate that communication-oriented tasks can provide students with a more active role in the learning process while simultaneously encouraging them to use English in meaningful situations.

Nevertheless, the effects of Task-Based Language Teaching may vary depending on the conditions in which it is implemented. Huynh and Nguyen (2023), through a review of research concerning TBLT and speaking performance, found generally positive outcomes but also identified aspects that require additional investigation. These include task characteristics, learner proficiency, duration of interventions, assessment



procedures, and classroom conditions. Consequently, the effectiveness of TBLT should not be understood as automatic but rather as dependent on the quality and organization of its implementation.

Another relevant dimension of Task-Based Language Teaching is its contribution to functional competence. Jabri and Fadhlaoui (2023) examined the use of TBLT among pre-service teachers and highlighted its contribution to the development of linguistic and communicative abilities required in functional language use. Similarly, Wang (2023) emphasized that one of the fundamental principles of task-based instruction is the promotion of authentic communication. From this perspective, learners develop language through the performance of activities in which communication is necessary to reach a meaningful outcome.

The development of communicative competence involves more than producing grammatically correct sentences. It includes the ability to select appropriate linguistic resources according to the context, purpose, and interlocutor. It also requires fluency, accuracy, comprehension, interaction, strategic competence, and discourse organization. Yu et al. (2024), through a systematic review of studies related to TBLT and EFL speaking proficiency, identified favorable results in oral competence, participation, motivation, willingness to communicate, and linguistic development. These findings demonstrate that task-based instruction can contribute to several dimensions involved in communication.

Recent evidence also emphasizes the influence of affective variables during task performance. Guo et al. (2026), through a systematic review of empirical studies, identified confidence, motivation, engagement, and willingness to communicate as socio-affective factors associated with task-based speaking instruction. These factors are particularly relevant in foreign-language classrooms because students may possess grammatical knowledge but avoid speaking due to anxiety, insecurity, or fear of making mistakes. Task-based environments can provide repeated opportunities for learners to communicate in collaborative situations and may contribute to more favorable conditions for participation.

Technology has expanded the possibilities for applying Task-Based Language Teaching. Chen (2021) examined technology-mediated TBLT in a collaborative EFL learning environment and reported that digital resources can increase opportunities for speaking practice and interaction when they are integrated into meaningful tasks. However,



technology alone does not guarantee language development; its pedagogical value depends on whether it supports purposeful communication, interaction, and task completion.

Recent studies have continued to report positive results regarding task-based instruction. Nawaz et al. (2025) compared TBLT with more teacher-centered approaches and found improvements related to fluency, communicative confidence, classroom participation, and motivation. Nevertheless, the authors also identified differences associated with students' initial proficiency and the complexity of the tasks. These findings reinforce the idea that task selection must correspond to learners' linguistic abilities and educational needs.

Pham (2025) also examined the use of Task-Based Language Teaching to improve speaking fluency among university students who were not majoring in English. The results showed improvements in oral fluency after the implementation of task-based activities. This evidence supports the use of tasks that require students to communicate for specific purposes and suggests that repeated interaction can provide opportunities to progressively improve oral production.

Systematic evidence published in 2026 has further strengthened the relationship between TBLT and English-speaking development. Guo et al. (2026), through a systematic review of empirical research, identified positive effects of task-based instruction on speaking proficiency as well as socio-affective variables including confidence, motivation, engagement, and willingness to communicate. These results suggest that TBLT may simultaneously influence linguistic performance and learners' disposition to participate actively in oral communication.

Similarly, Lin et al. (2026) conducted a systematic review of recent studies concerning Task-Based Language Teaching and speaking development. Their findings showed favorable results across different educational levels and highlighted four major dimensions influencing implementation: task design, linguistic outcomes, affective factors, and technological mediation. The authors also emphasized that the effectiveness of TBLT depends on carefully structured tasks and appropriate pedagogical support.

Evidence has also emerged within the Ecuadorian educational context. Taco Cabrera and Campoverde López (2026) investigated Task-Based Language Teaching and communicative competence among A1 secondary students in Quito. Their study examined students exposed to task-based instruction and identified favorable changes in communicative



performance. This research is particularly relevant because it demonstrates that TBLT can be implemented with learners at elementary proficiency levels within Ecuadorian secondary education.

The relevance of Task-Based Language Teaching is also associated with the need to overcome instructional practices focused exclusively on grammar, translation, and vocabulary memorization. Although these elements remain important components of language learning, students require opportunities to apply linguistic knowledge in situations involving communication. Through tasks such as interviews, role plays, problem-solving activities, information-gap exercises, collaborative projects, and decision-making activities, students can use English to achieve specific communicative objectives.

However, the application of TBLT should not automatically be considered a guarantee of improved communicative competence. Its effectiveness can depend on task complexity, learner proficiency, teacher mediation, interaction opportunities, classroom organization, assessment methods, time allocated to the intervention, and the level of student participation. Current evidence indicates that well-structured, appropriately sequenced, and pedagogically supported tasks tend to provide stronger conditions for language development than isolated activities without clearly defined communicative objectives (Huynh & Nguyen, 2023; Yu et al., 2024; Guo et al., 2026).

Therefore, studying Task-Based Language Teaching is justified by the need to strengthen communicative competence through educational practices that require students to use English actively and meaningfully. In task-based environments, learners are not limited to reproducing predetermined linguistic forms but are encouraged to make decisions, exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, collaborate, and solve communicative problems. These characteristics can contribute to the development of learners who are more capable of using English in academic, social, and everyday contexts.

Based on these antecedents, the objective of the research is to determine the relationship between students' perception of the application of Task-Based Language Teaching and their perceived communicative competence in English. The study considers learners' perceived experiences regarding meaningful tasks, interaction, collaborative work, problem solving, and contextualized language use, as well as dimensions associated with perceived communicative competence. The analysis does not assume causal relationships



between the variables; instead, it seeks to understand their association within the specific educational context and the pedagogical conditions that may be related to communicative development.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

The study was conducted using a quantitative approach because it involved the collection, measurement, and statistical analysis of numerical data related to students' perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and their perceived communicative competence in English. This approach enabled the use of structured instruments and statistical procedures to describe the behavior of the variables and determine the degree of association between them. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), quantitative research involves the measurement of variables through numerical data and statistical procedures to examine relationships among phenomena and address specific research questions.

Research Design and Type

The study employed a non-experimental research design because the variables were observed and analyzed in their natural educational context without deliberately manipulating the learning conditions. The research had a correlational scope because its purpose was to determine the relationship between students' perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching and their perceived communicative competence in English.

A cross-sectional design was also adopted because the data were collected at a single point in time. This design allows researchers to analyze the behavior of variables and establish statistical associations between them without introducing an experimental intervention (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Population and Participants

The accessible population consisted of 50 tenth-grade students from Unidad Educativa Teresa Flor, located in Ambato, Ecuador. The participants were enrolled in the tenth year of Educación General Básica during the academic period in which the study was conducted.

Because the entire accessible population of 50 students participated in the study, a census was conducted. Consequently, no probabilistic sampling procedure was required.

Data collection was conducted on May 22, 2026.



The inclusion criteria were: (a) being officially enrolled in the tenth grade at Unidad Educativa Teresa Flor; (b) attending the institution on the day of data collection; (c) having informed consent from a parent or legal representative; and (d) voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study.

The exclusion criteria were: (a) absence on the day of data collection and (b) incomplete questionnaires.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with the authorization of Unidad Educativa Teresa Flor. Because the participants were minors, informed consent was obtained from their parents or legal representatives, and student assent was obtained before the administration of the research instrument.

Participation was voluntary, and anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed throughout the research process. No personally identifiable information was collected. The study involved minimal risk because it consisted of a structured questionnaire without experimental manipulation. Ethical procedures followed the regulations of Unidad Educativa Teresa Flor; no external ethics committee approval was required because the institution classified it as minimal-risk educational research.

The study was considered to involve minimal risk because it consisted of the administration of a structured questionnaire without experimental manipulation or procedures that could adversely affect the participants.

Study Variables

The study examined two variables. The first variable was students' perception of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), understood as students' perception of learning experiences in which English is used through meaningful, contextualized, interactive, and collaborative tasks aimed at achieving a communicative objective.

For the purposes of the statistical analysis, this variable was represented by 10 items distributed across two dimensions: meaningful and contextualized tasks (D1) and communicative and collaborative task performance (D2).

The second variable was perceived communicative competence in English, understood as students' self-reported ability to use English effectively and appropriately in different communicative situations. The Council of Europe (2020) conceptualizes



communicative language competence through linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic components and emphasizes interaction as a fundamental communicative language activity. For this study, the variable was represented by 10 items distributed across two dimensions: linguistic and pragmatic competence (D3) and communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence (D4).

Data Collection Technique and Instrument

The instrument consisted of 20 items organized into four dimensions, with five items assigned to each dimension.

The survey technique was used because it enabled standardized information to be obtained regarding students' perceptions of TBLT-related practices and their perceived communicative competence in English.

A structured questionnaire consisting of 20 items was administered. The items were grouped into four dimensions, with five items per dimension.

The instrument employed a five-point Likert-type response scale with the following options: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, and 5 = Always.

The first 10 items, corresponding to dimensions D1 and D2, measured students' perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching. The remaining 10 items, corresponding to dimensions D3 and D4, measured students' perceived communicative competence in English.

Content Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Content validity was assessed through expert judgment. Four experts with experience in language education and research methodology reviewed the clarity, pertinence, and relevance of the questionnaire items. Aiken's V coefficient was used as the procedure to estimate agreement among experts.

Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient as the reliability assessment procedure. The reliability analysis was conducted with the responses obtained from the study participants.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data processing and statistical analysis were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 27. Initially, descriptive statistics were calculated to characterize students' responses and the behavior of the four dimensions and the two study variables.



For each participant, the TBLT score was calculated from the 10 items corresponding to D1 and D2, whereas the perceived communicative competence score was calculated from the 10 items corresponding to D3 and D4.

Before applying Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the assumptions required for parametric analysis were examined. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test.

The linearity of the relationship between the two variables was also examined, as well as the presence of potentially influential outliers. After verifying the suitability of the data, Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables.

3. RESULTS

Content Validity of the Instrument

The content validity of the questionnaire was evaluated through the judgment of four experts with experience in English language teaching, educational research, research methodology, and language assessment. The experts assessed the items according to the criteria of clarity, relevance, and pertinence.

Aiken’s V coefficient was used to quantify the degree of agreement among the experts. The results obtained from the evaluation matrix showed favorable values for the three criteria assessed.

Table 1.

Content validity using Aiken’s V

Criterion	Aiken’s V	Interpretation
Clarity	.878	Favorable
Pertinence	.850	Favorable
Relevance	.884	Favorable

Overall, the results showed a favorable level of agreement among the experts regarding the clarity, pertinence, and relevance of the instrument items. Therefore, the expert evaluation supported the use of the instrument for collecting information related to the study variables.

Reliability of the Instrument



The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The instrument consisted of 20 items distributed across four dimensions: D1, D2, D3, and D4, with five items assigned to each dimension.

The analysis conducted with the 50 participants yielded a coefficient of $\alpha = .894$ for the complete instrument, indicating high internal consistency. When the variables were analyzed separately, the 10 items corresponding to students’ perception of Task-Based Language Teaching obtained $\alpha = .810$, while the 10 items corresponding to perceived communicative competence in English obtained $\alpha = .790$.

Table 2.

Internal consistency of the instrument

Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach’s α
D1	5	.663
D2	5	.751
D3	5	.731
D4	5	.719
TBLT variable (D1 + D2)	10	.810
Perceived communicative competence (D3 + D4)	10	.790
Complete instrument	20	.894

The results indicate adequate internal consistency for the instrument as a whole. Dimensions D2, D3, and D4 showed coefficients above .70. Dimension D1 obtained $\alpha = .663$, which is below the conventional .70 threshold; therefore, this dimension should be interpreted with caution. However, the reliability coefficients for the two main variables and the complete instrument were adequate.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive measures were calculated to examine the behavior of the four dimensions included in the study. The results were obtained from the responses of 50 students using a five-point Likert-type scale.

Table 3.

Descriptive statistics for the dimensions



Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
D1. Meaningful and contextualized tasks	3.428	0.431	2.4	4.6
D2. Communicative and collaborative task performance	3.436	0.542	1.8	4.6
D3. Linguistic and pragmatic competence	3.452	0.485	2.6	4.4
D4. Communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence	3.412	0.482	2.0	4.6

The means of the four dimensions ranged from 3.412 to 3.452, indicating relatively homogeneous behavior across the dimensions. The highest mean corresponded to D3 ($M = 3.452$, $SD = 0.485$), while D4 showed the lowest mean ($M = 3.412$, $SD = 0.482$).

Overall, the scores were located around the upper-middle point of the response scale, reflecting a generally favorable tendency in students' responses to the aspects assessed.

Normality Test

Before conducting the correlational analysis, the assumption of normality was examined for the two main variables using the Shapiro–Wilk test, considering that the study group comprised 50 students.

Table 4.

Normality test for the study variables

Variable	Shapiro–Wilk W	p	Decision
Perception of TBLT	.984	.745	Normality not rejected
Perceived communicative competence	.981	.587	Normality not rejected

The results showed that the perception of TBLT variable obtained $W = .984$, $p = .745$, while perceived communicative competence obtained $W = .981$, $p = .587$. In both cases, the p-values were greater than .05.

Therefore, the null hypothesis of normality was not rejected for either variable. These results supported the use of Pearson's correlation coefficient for the subsequent analysis.

Linearity and Outlier Assessment



Before calculating Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the relationship between students’ perception of TBLT and perceived communicative competence was examined to assess the linearity of the association and the possible presence of atypical or influential observations. The general pattern of the data showed a positive linear tendency between the two variables. One case presented a standardized score close to $z = -3.02$ in one dimension. No evident data-entry inconsistency was identified in the database, and an extreme score alone was not considered sufficient justification for excluding the participant. Therefore, the observation was retained, and the correlational analyses were performed using the complete dataset of 50 participants.

Correlation Between Perception of TBLT and Perceived Communicative Competence

Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the two main variables. The perception of TBLT score was calculated from the items corresponding to D1 and D2, whereas perceived communicative competence was calculated from the items corresponding to D3 and D4. The analysis showed a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between the two variables:
 $r = .858, p < .001$.

Table 5.

Correlation between the study variables

Variables	Perception of TBLT	Perceived communicative competence
Perception of TBLT	1	.858***
Perceived communicative competence	.858***	1

Note. *** $p < .001$. The result indicates that students who reported higher perceptions of TBLT-related practices also tended to report higher levels of perceived communicative competence in English. The magnitude of the coefficient ($r = .858$) indicates a strong positive linear association between the variables. The squared correlation coefficient was $r^2 = .736$, indicating



substantial statistical overlap between the two scores within this sample. This value should not be interpreted as causal or predictive evidence.

Because the study employed a non-experimental, cross-sectional, correlational design, the observed association does not demonstrate that TBLT caused changes in perceived communicative competence.

Correlations Between Dimensions

To further examine the relationships among the components of the instrument, Pearson correlations were calculated between the four dimensions.

Table 6.

Correlations between dimensions

Dimensions	D1	D2	D3	D4
D1	1	.586***	.649***	.622***
D2	.586***	1	.615***	.717***
D3	.649***	.615***	1	.455***
D4	.622***	.717***	.455***	1

Note. $p < .001$.

All dimensions showed positive and statistically significant correlations. The strongest relationship was found between D2 and D4 ($r = .717$, $p < .001$), indicating a strong positive association between communicative and collaborative task performance and communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence.

D1 also showed positive correlations with D2 ($r = .586$), D3 ($r = .649$), and D4 ($r = .622$). D2 was positively related to D3 ($r = .615$) and D4 ($r = .717$). Finally, the association between D3 and D4 was also positive and statistically significant, although of lower magnitude ($r = .455$, $p < .001$).

Overall, the dimensions showed positive and significant relationships, suggesting that they are interconnected components of the constructs examined in the study.

4. DISCUSSION

The results showed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between students’ perception of Task-Based Language Teaching and their perceived communicative competence in English ($r = .858$, $p < .001$). This finding indicates that students who



reported greater exposure to meaningful, contextualized, communicative, and collaborative tasks also tended to report higher levels of perceived communicative competence. These results are consistent with recent research suggesting that task-based instruction can create favorable conditions for meaningful language use, interaction, and oral communication. Guo et al. (2026), through a systematic review, identified positive outcomes of TBLT in speaking proficiency, confidence, motivation, engagement, and willingness to communicate. Similarly, Lin et al. (2026) reported that task-based instruction can contribute to speaking development when tasks are carefully structured and provide learners with opportunities for purposeful communication.

Nevertheless, the findings of the present study should be interpreted according to its methodological characteristics. Unlike experimental studies in which TBLT is deliberately implemented and its effects are subsequently assessed, the present research did not introduce an instructional intervention. Instead, it examined students' perceptions of TBLT-related practices already present in their English learning experiences and their self-reported communicative competence. Therefore, the strong relationship identified between the variables represents a statistical association and should not be interpreted as evidence that TBLT directly caused improvements in communicative competence.

The descriptive findings also revealed relatively homogeneous scores across the four dimensions, with mean values ranging from 3.412 to 3.452 on the five-point response scale. The highest mean corresponded to linguistic and pragmatic competence (D3; $M = 3.452$, $SD = 0.485$), while communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence (D4) presented the lowest mean ($M = 3.412$, $SD = 0.482$). Although the differences were small, these results suggest a generally favorable perception of both task-based practices and perceived communicative competence among the participants. Yu et al. (2024) similarly reported that TBLT can contribute not only to oral proficiency but also to participation, motivation, willingness to communicate, and different aspects of linguistic development. Likewise, Gortaire Díaz et al. (2023) found favorable relationships between task-based instruction, speaking proficiency, and learner motivation.

The analysis by dimensions provided additional evidence regarding the relationship between the components of the two constructs. All dimensional correlations were positive and statistically significant, ranging from $r = .455$ to $r = .717$. The strongest relationship



was observed between communicative and collaborative task performance (D2) and communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence (D4), $r = .717$, $p < .001$. This finding is theoretically meaningful because collaborative tasks require learners to exchange information, respond to classmates, negotiate meaning, make decisions, and adapt their language according to the communicative situation. Baharun et al. (2023) emphasized that peer interaction within task-based environments can increase students' opportunities for active communication and engagement. In the same direction, Huang (2022) highlighted that TBLT provides learners with opportunities to use the target language to accomplish meaningful communicative goals rather than simply practice isolated linguistic forms.

Meaningful and contextualized tasks (D1) also showed positive relationships with linguistic and pragmatic competence ($r = .649$) and communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence ($r = .622$). These results suggest that students who perceived more opportunities to participate in meaningful tasks also tended to perceive themselves as more capable of using linguistic resources appropriately in communicative situations. Such findings are consistent with the basic principles of TBLT, in which language serves as a resource for achieving a specific outcome. Wang (2023) emphasizes that authentic communication constitutes a fundamental principle of task-based instruction, while Lume and Hisbullah (2022) identified favorable outcomes associated with task-based activities in speaking development.

The relationship between communicative and collaborative task performance and linguistic and pragmatic competence was also positive ($r = .615$). This finding suggests that interaction during task performance may be associated not only with students' willingness to communicate but also with their perception of how effectively they organize and use English. Prianty et al. (2022) point out that successful TBLT implementation depends on appropriate task organization, teacher guidance, and sufficient opportunities for students to participate actively. Consequently, the effectiveness of task-based practices cannot be attributed simply to the presence of classroom activities; tasks must be designed with clear communicative purposes and appropriate levels of linguistic and cognitive demand.

The results are also relevant within the Ecuadorian educational context. Taco Cabrera and Campoverde López (2026) examined TBLT and communicative competence among secondary-level learners in Quito and reported favorable results associated with task-based instruction. Although their methodological conditions differ from those of the



present study, their findings support the relevance of studying TBLT as an instructional approach for strengthening English communication among Ecuadorian secondary students. The present research extends this discussion to tenth-grade students from Unidad Educativa Teresa Flor in Ambato and provides evidence of a strong association between students' perceived exposure to TBLT-related practices and their perceived communicative competence.

The squared correlation coefficient obtained in the present study ($r^2 = .736$) indicates substantial statistical overlap between the scores of the two variables within this group of students. However, this value should not be interpreted as indicating that TBLT explains or causes 73.6% of perceived communicative competence. The non-experimental and cross-sectional nature of the study prevents causal conclusions. Other variables not assessed in the research, including previous English proficiency, learner motivation, teacher practices, frequency of exposure to English, anxiety, family context, and opportunities to use the language outside the classroom, may also be associated with students' perceived communicative competence.

The findings should therefore be interpreted considering several methodological limitations. First, the research involved the entire accessible population of one educational institution, which restricts the generalization of the findings to other schools or educational contexts. Second, both variables were measured through self-report responses, meaning that the results represent students' perceptions rather than direct observations of classroom practices or objective measurements of English proficiency. Because both variables were collected through the same questionnaire and response format, common-method variance may also have contributed to the magnitude of the observed association. Third, the cross-sectional design captured students' perceptions at only one point in time. Huynh and Nguyen (2023) emphasize that research on TBLT should continue examining factors such as task characteristics, proficiency level, intervention duration, and assessment procedures when evaluating its relationship with language development.

Additionally, dimension D1 presented a reliability coefficient below the conventional threshold ($\alpha = .663$); therefore, results associated with this dimension should be interpreted cautiously. Future research could therefore include students from different educational institutions, employ longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs, and combine



questionnaires with direct classroom observations, speaking assessments, interviews, or performance-based tasks. Such approaches would make it possible to compare students' perceived communicative competence with observable evidence of English-language performance and reduce reliance on a single measurement method, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how Task-Based Language Teaching relates to communicative development.

5. CONCLUSION

The study determined that there was a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between students' perception of Task-Based Language Teaching and their perceived communicative competence in English ($r = .858$, $p < .001$). Students who reported greater exposure to meaningful, contextualized, communicative, and collaborative task-based practices also tended to report higher levels of perceived communicative competence. Therefore, the findings provide a direct response to the research objective and demonstrate a consistent statistical association between the two variables within the population analyzed.

The descriptive results showed relatively homogeneous responses across the four dimensions, with mean scores ranging from 3.412 to 3.452 on a five-point scale. Linguistic and pragmatic competence obtained the highest mean, while communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence presented the lowest mean, although the difference between the dimensions was minimal. These findings suggest that students generally reported favorable experiences regarding both TBLT-related classroom practices and their perceived ability to communicate in English.

The dimensional analysis also showed positive and statistically significant relationships among all components of the study. The strongest association was observed between communicative and collaborative task performance and communicative interaction and sociolinguistic competence ($r = .717$, $p < .001$). Meaningful and contextualized tasks were also positively associated with linguistic and pragmatic competence and communicative interaction. These findings indicate that students who reported greater participation in interactive and collaborative tasks also tended to perceive themselves as more capable of communicating appropriately in English.



However, the results should not be interpreted as evidence that Task-Based Language Teaching directly caused improvements in students' perceived communicative competence. The research employed a non-experimental, correlational, and cross-sectional design, and both variables were measured through students' perceptions. Consequently, the findings establish association rather than causality.

Finally, the study was conducted with the entire accessible population of 50 tenth-grade students from Unidad Educativa Teresa Flor in Ambato, Ecuador, which provides useful evidence for this specific educational context but limits the generalization of the results. Future research should include participants from different educational institutions, objective measures of English-language performance, classroom observations, and longitudinal or experimental designs. These approaches could provide more robust evidence regarding the role of Task-Based Language Teaching in the development of communicative competence among EFL learners.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

FUNDING

Not applicable.

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