DEVELOPING BUSINESS ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS AMONG ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDENTS THROUGH TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Introduction

English has become an essential means of communication in contemporary business and entrepreneurship. As business activities increasingly involve international cooperation, digital communication, global markets, and multicultural professional environments, university students preparing for careers in entrepreneurship need more than general English proficiency. They need to be able to use English to perform specific communicative activities, including presenting business ideas, negotiating with partners, communicating with customers, participating in meetings, describing products and services, and persuading potential investors. Therefore, Business English instruction for entrepreneurship students should provide opportunities for learners to develop language through meaningful professional communication rather than focusing exclusively on grammatical knowledge and vocabulary.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers a potentially effective approach to addressing this need. TBLT places meaningful tasks at the centre of language

learning and encourages students to use the target language to achieve communicative outcomes. Moore (2018) explains that TBLT developed from communicative language teaching and is characterized by an experiential orientation in which learners develop language through meaningful action and task completion. This principle is particularly relevant to entrepreneurship education because entrepreneurial activities themselves involve purposeful tasks, problem-solving, interaction, decision-making, negotiation, and presentation.

The relevance of TBLT to Business English is supported by empirical research. Mahan (2019), for example, investigated the implementation of TBLT with 81 university business students in Bangkok over a 16-week semester. The study found that students exposed to TBLT demonstrated better overall performance than their previous performance under traditional instruction, with particularly significant improvement in speaking. Similarly, Xie (2022) investigated Business English learning needs among 145 English-major students in China and found strong demand for productive skills, particularly speaking, as well as business cases, business knowledge, and simulation tasks. Based on these needs, the study developed a task-based approach for Business English instruction.

These findings suggest that task-based instruction may be particularly appropriate for students who need English for professional purposes. However, entrepreneurship students represent a more specific group whose communicative needs extend beyond general business communication. They need to communicate entrepreneurial ideas, identify opportunities, pitch products, negotiate, persuade, and interact with different stakeholders. This creates a need for research examining how TBLT can be specifically adapted to the development of Business English communication competence among entrepreneurship students.

Rationale for the Study

Business English is commonly situated within English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where instruction is expected to respond to learners' particular academic and professional needs. For entrepreneurship students, these needs are closely connected with communication. An entrepreneur may have a strong business idea but still need to explain that idea clearly to a customer, partner, employee, or investor. Consequently, Business English instruction should not only teach specialized terminology but should also help learners develop the ability to use language strategically and interactively.

TBLT can provide this type of learning environment because students use English while attempting to accomplish meaningful outcomes. For example, rather than simply learning vocabulary related to marketing, students could be required to design a marketing campaign and present it to their classmates. Instead of studying expressions for negotiation independently, they could participate in a simulated negotiation between two companies. Rather than completing isolated speaking exercises, students could develop a business idea and deliver an investor pitch.

Such activities connect linguistic knowledge with entrepreneurial practice. They also provide repeated opportunities for students to communicate, receive feedback, modify their language, and perform similar tasks with increasing complexity.

Research on TBLT generally provides encouraging evidence for speaking development. Medina Fernández (2021) conducted a systematic research synthesis and meta-analysis of TBLT interventions and reported a medium-to-large overall effect on oral production. The study also identified task repetition and pre-task planning as potentially important factors in developing complexity, accuracy, and fluency. A further review by Huynh and Nguyen (2023), which examined 25 studies on TBLT and EFL speaking, found that task-based instruction had positive effects on general speaking performance as well as dimensions such as complexity, accuracy,

and fluency. The authors also identified the need for further research comparing different task-design and implementation approaches.

More recent evidence continues to support the relevance of TBLT for speaking development. A 2026 systematic review by Lin, Mohamad, and Yunus examined empirical studies published between 2021 and 2025 and reported that well-designed TBLT interventions can support speaking fluency, accuracy, and complexity. The review also highlighted the importance of task sequencing, planning, reflection, and appropriate task complexity.

Research Problem and Gap

Although existing research provides evidence that TBLT can contribute to language and speaking development, an important area remains insufficiently explored: the application of task-based instruction specifically to Business English for entrepreneurship students.

Previous research has examined TBLT with general EFL learners and business students. For example, Mahan's (2019) research focused on university business students, while Xie's (2022) study examined Business English needs among English-major students. However, entrepreneurship students have distinctive communication needs because their future professional activities involve not only conventional workplace communication but also entrepreneurial activities such as pitching, negotiation, networking, persuasion, customer discovery, and business development.

Furthermore, recent reviews have indicated that future TBLT research should examine how particular task characteristics and instructional designs influence language outcomes. This suggests that simply establishing that TBLT is effective is no longer sufficient. Research should also investigate which tasks are useful, how they should be sequenced, what communication competencies they develop, and how they can be integrated into specialized Business English courses.

The proposed study addresses this gap by examining TBLT within an entrepreneurship-focused Business English context. Rather than treating Business English and entrepreneurship as separate areas, the study will integrate entrepreneurial activities with language-learning tasks.

Aim of the Study

The main aim of the proposed study is to investigate the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in developing Business English communication skills among entrepreneurship students.

The study will focus particularly on students' ability to communicate orally in business-related situations and will investigate whether participation in structured entrepreneurial tasks contributes to improvements in their communication performance.

Research Objectives

The study will pursue four main objectives:

To examine the effect of TBLT on the Business English communication skills of entrepreneurship students.

To identify changes in students' oral communication performance following participation in task-based entrepreneurial activities.

To investigate students' perceptions of learning Business English through entrepreneurial tasks.

To develop recommendations for integrating TBLT into Business English courses designed for entrepreneurship students.

Research Questions

The study will address the following questions:

To what extent does Task-Based Language Teaching improve the Business English communication skills of entrepreneurship students?

Which aspects of Business English oral communication demonstrate the greatest improvement following task-based instruction?

How do entrepreneurship students perceive the use of entrepreneurial tasks in learning Business English?

How can TBLT be effectively integrated into Business English instruction for entrepreneurship students?

Proposed Methodology

A mixed-methods approach would be appropriate for the proposed study because it would provide both measurable evidence of language development and qualitative information about students' learning experiences.

The quantitative component could employ a pre-test and post-test design. Students would complete an oral Business English task before the intervention and a comparable task after the intervention. Their performance could be assessed using an analytic speaking rubric covering fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, interaction, coherence, and the ability to communicate business ideas.

The intervention would consist of a sequence of entrepreneurial tasks. Possible tasks could include identifying a business opportunity, interviewing potential customers, developing a product or service, participating in a business meeting, negotiating with another company, preparing a marketing proposal, and delivering a business pitch. The tasks would be sequenced from relatively simple communicative activities toward more complex entrepreneurial communication.

For example, students could begin by discussing potential business problems and opportunities. They could then conduct simulated customer interviews and use the information obtained to develop a product or service. Subsequently, students could prepare a marketing strategy, negotiate with another group, and finally present their business idea to a simulated panel of investors.

The qualitative component could involve questionnaires, interviews, reflective journals, or classroom observations. These instruments would allow the researcher to investigate students' perceptions of the relevance of the tasks, their confidence in using Business English, the difficulties they experienced, and the activities they considered most useful.

Expected Contribution

The proposed study is expected to make contributions to both Business English education and entrepreneurship education. From a language-teaching perspective, it could provide evidence about the usefulness of TBLT for developing specialized oral communication skills. From an entrepreneurship perspective, it could demonstrate how English instruction can be integrated with authentic entrepreneurial activities.

The study may also contribute to curriculum development by proposing a Task-Based Entrepreneurial Business English Framework. Such a framework could connect specific entrepreneurial communication needs with appropriate language tasks, instructional procedures, and assessment criteria.

For example, the framework could organize learning around five major areas of entrepreneurial communication: business pitching, negotiation, customer communication, professional interaction, and business presentation. Each area could be associated with specific tasks and language outcomes.

Conclusion

The development of Business English communication skills is particularly important for entrepreneurship students because their future professional activities require them to communicate ideas, negotiate, persuade, collaborate, and interact with diverse stakeholders. Traditional language instruction may provide important linguistic knowledge, but students also need opportunities to apply this knowledge in meaningful professional situations.

Task-Based Language Teaching offers a promising approach because it places meaningful communication and purposeful action at the centre of learning. Existing empirical research has reported positive effects of TBLT on speaking performance, while research specifically concerned with Business English has demonstrated students' need for practical communication, business cases, and simulation activitiesNevertheless, further research is needed to determine how TBLT can be adapted specifically for entrepreneurship students and how entrepreneurial tasks can contribute to the development of Business English communication competence. The proposed study addresses this need by combining task-based language pedagogy with authentic entrepreneurial communication.

The research therefore has the potential to move beyond the general question of whether TBLT “works” and instead investigate how task-based entrepreneurial activities can be designed and implemented to develop the Business English communication competence required by future entrepreneurs.

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