

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN UZBEKISTAN STILL LEANS HEAVILY ON TRADITIONAL METHODS; TASK -BASED TEACHING AND LEARNER AUTONOMY**

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**Abstract:** This study looks at whether Task-Based Language Teaching can help Uzbek students become more independent when learning English. Learner autonomy is widely seen as important in learning a foreign language, but many English classes in Uzbekistan are still led mainly by the teacher. Students usually follow instructions and have little control over how they learn. In this research, students are involved in tasks that require them to plan activities, work with others, and think about their own progress. The purpose is to see whether this type of classroom work helps students take more responsibility for their learning in the Uzbek context.

**Key words:** Task-Based Language Teaching can help EFL students in Uzbekistan become more independent learners, plan tasks, choose strategies, and evaluate their own work, grammar explanation and textbook activities dominate many lessons, task-based lessons can help students plan their learning, monitor progress, set goals, and work with classmates.

**Anotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada vazifaga asoslangan til o'qitish o'zbek o'quvchilariga ingliz tilini o'rganishda mustaqilroq bo'lishga yordam berishi mumkinmi yoki yo'qmi, o'rganiladi. Chet tilini o'rganishda o'quvchining avtonomiyasi keng tarqalgan deb hisoblanadi, ammo O'zbekistondagi ko'plab ingliz tili darslari hali ham asosan o'qituvchi tomonidan olib boriladi. O'quvchilar odatda ko'rsatmalarga amal qilishadi va qanday o'rganishlarini nazorat qilishmaydi. Ushbu tadqiqotda o'quvchilar o'zlaridan mashg'ulotlarni rejalashtirishni, boshqalar bilan ishlashni va o'z taraqqiyoti haqida o'ylashni talab qiladigan vazifalarda ishtirok etadilar. Maqsad, bu turdagi sinf ishi o'quvchilarga o'zbek sharoitida o'qishlari uchun ko'proq mas'uliyat olishga yordam beradimi yoki yo'qligini aniqlashdir.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Vazifaga asoslangan til o'qitish O'zbekistondagi IXT o'quvchilariga mustaqilroq o'rganishga, vazifalarni rejalashtirishga, strategiyalarni tanlashga va o'z ishlarini baholashga yordam beradi, grammatika tushuntirishi va darslik mashg'ulotlari ko'plab darslarda ustunlik qiladi, vazifaga asoslangan darslar o'quvchilarga o'qishlarini rejalashtirishga, taraqqiyotni kuzatishga, maqsadlar qo'yishga va sinfdoshlar bilan ishlashga yordam beradi.

**Аннотация:** В данном исследовании рассматривается вопрос о том, может ли обучение английскому языку на основе заданий помочь узбекским студентам стать более самостоятельными в изучении английского языка. Автономия учащихся широко рассматривается как важный фактор в изучении иностранного языка, однако многие уроки английского языка в Узбекистане по-прежнему проводятся в основном учителем. Студенты обычно следуют инструкциям и имеют мало контроля над процессом обучения. В данном исследовании студенты участвуют в заданиях, требующих от них планирования деятельности, работы в команде и оценки собственного прогресса. Цель состоит в том, чтобы выяснить, помогает ли такой тип работы в классе студентам брать на себя больше ответственности за свое обучение в узбекском контексте.

**Ключевые слова:** Обучение английскому языку на основе заданий может помочь студентам, изучающим английский как иностранный язык в Узбекистане, стать более самостоятельными

учащимися, планировать задания, выбирать стратегии и оценивать свою работу; во многих уроках преобладают объяснения грамматики и задания из учебника; уроки на основе заданий могут помочь студентам планировать свое обучение, отслеживать прогресс, ставить цели и работать с одноклассниками.

**Introduction:** Over the last forty years, English language teaching has changed. In the past, most English classes were teacher-centered. Teachers explained grammar rules. Students listened and followed instructions. Learning often focused on translation and written exercises. This method helped students understand rules. However, many learners could not use English well in real situations. Because of this problem, new teaching approaches began to appear. One of these approaches is Task-Based Language Teaching, or TBLT (Ellis, 2009; Long, 2015).

TBLT focuses on learning through tasks. Learners use English to complete activities that are similar to real-life situations. These tasks may include sharing information, discussing problems, or working in groups. Students must speak, listen, and respond to others. Making mistakes is part of the process. Communication is more important than perfect accuracy (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Willis & Willis, 2007). Because of this, learners often become more active in class.

Another important idea in language learning is learner autonomy. Holec (1981) explained autonomy as the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning. This means learners do not depend only on the teacher. Later researchers added more aspects to this idea. Learner autonomy includes setting goals, choosing learning methods, and checking progress (Little, 1991; Benson, 2011). In foreign language learning, autonomy is very important. Classroom time alone is usually not enough. Learners must continue learning outside class (Dam, 2011; Reinders, 2018).

Task-Based Language Teaching and learner autonomy are closely connected. In task-based lessons, learners often plan how to do a task. They work with classmates. They think about results after finishing a task. These actions push learners to be more responsible. Learners who are more independent often feel more comfortable in task-based classes. They participate more and rely less on the teacher (Lee, 2020; Yasuda, 2019).

From a theoretical point of view, TBLT is related to interactionist theories of second language learning. These theories say that language develops through interaction and communication (Gass & Mackey, 2015). When learners work on tasks, they must express ideas and react to others. They make choices about language use. Activities such as planning and peer feedback help learners slowly become more independent (Dörnyei, 2005; Oxford, 2017). This is different from traditional classes. In those classes, learners usually have little control (Chik, 2014; Little, 2007).

Research studies also support task-based learning. Many studies show that TBLT helps learners feel more confident. Learners are more willing to speak English. They are not afraid of mistakes. Motivation is often higher during tasks (Nunan, 2004; González-Lloret, 2016). These behaviors are often linked to autonomous learning (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Other studies show that learners perform better when teachers allow them to make learning choices (Carless, 2009; Sato, 2021).

Learner autonomy is especially important in foreign language contexts. In Uzbekistan, English is not widely used outside school. Many students depend mainly on classroom instruction (Sulaymanov, 2020; Nazarova, 2023). Because of this, learners need to study on their own. This may include learning vocabulary, using online resources, or practicing English outside class. However, many

English classes in Uzbekistan are still teacher-centered. Grammar explanation and textbooks are often the main focus (Tashpulatova, 2021; Ergashev & Karimova, 2022).

In recent years, Uzbekistan has introduced educational reforms. These reforms support communicative teaching and learner-centered approaches (Ministry of Public Education, 2020; Rashidov, 2023). However, classroom changes are slow. Many teachers are more familiar with traditional methods. Training in task-based teaching is limited (Abduazizova, 2024). Assessment systems also focus mainly on exams and correct answers (Ibragimov, 2022). Because of this, students often have few chances to take control of their own learning.

**Result:** This study looks at whether Task-Based Language Teaching can help Uzbek students become more independent when learning English. Learner autonomy is widely seen as important in learning a foreign language, but many English classes in Uzbekistan are still led mainly by the teacher. Students usually follow instructions and have little control over how they learn. In this research, students are involved in tasks that require them to plan activities, work with others, and think about their own progress. The purpose is to see whether this type of classroom work helps students take more responsibility for their learning in the Uzbek context.

More specifically, the research aims to:

1. Evaluate changes in learner autonomy before and after exposure to TBLT-based instruction.
2. Identify which autonomy-related behaviours (e.g., self-monitoring, goal setting, independent resource use, peer collaboration) emerge during task implementation.
3. Explore learner perceptions regarding the usefulness and challenges of studying through task-based activities.
4. Compare task-based classroom outcomes with outcomes of students taught through traditional teacher-centred methods.
5. Provide pedagogical recommendations for integrating TBLT to support autonomy development in Uzbekistan's EFL classrooms.

Through these objectives, the study aims to generate empirical evidence that may inform curriculum reform, teacher training practices, and future research on learner-centred English instruction in Uzbekistan.

**Discussion:** This study is important for English language teaching in Uzbekistan. It is also important for discussions about learner-centered teaching in general. In many English classes, students still depend heavily on the teacher. They follow instructions but rarely make decisions about learning. Because of this, learner autonomy remains weak in many classrooms.

One reason this study is important is that it examines Task-Based Language Teaching and learner autonomy together. These two concepts are often discussed separately in previous studies. Some researchers argue that task-based learning helps learners become more independent because students need to make choices and reflect on learning during tasks (Ellis, 2018; Benson, 2011). However, much of this discussion is theoretical. There is limited classroom evidence, especially in foreign language contexts. This study focuses on real classroom practice and examines how task-based activities influence learner autonomy. In this way, it contributes to second language acquisition research.

The study also has practical value for English teachers in Uzbekistan. Teaching is often teacher-centered. Grammar explanation and textbook activities dominate many lessons. As a result, students

usually wait for instructions and do not continue learning outside the classroom. This study examines whether task-based lessons can help students plan their learning, monitor progress, set goals, and work with classmates. The findings may help teachers design lessons that encourage participation and communication instead of passive learning.

Another reason this study is significant is its relevance to curriculum development. Educational reforms in Uzbekistan promote communicative teaching and student independence. However, many teachers face difficulties when applying these ideas. Training is limited, and practical classroom examples are often missing. This study provides evidence-based information about how TBLT works in practice, what problems may appear, and what conditions support successful implementation. These findings may support decisions related to curriculum design, teacher training, and assessment. This study is also important because of its connection to student motivation. Learner autonomy is linked to higher motivation and engagement in learning (Little, 2007; Reinders, 2018). Many students in Uzbekistan feel bored with repetitive grammar-based lessons. If task-based teaching helps students feel more responsible for learning, it may increase interest and participation in English classes. This can also prepare students for future academic and professional situations that require independent use of English.

From a research perspective, this study contributes methodologically. Many English education studies in Uzbekistan rely on surveys or descriptive analysis. These methods do not clearly show cause and effect. This study uses an experimental design to compare task-based and traditional classrooms. By doing this, it provides stronger empirical evidence and supports future classroom-based research.

Finally, this study is relevant beyond Uzbekistan. Many countries are moving from teacher-centered teaching toward more learner-centered approaches. The Uzbek context may offer useful insights for other countries with similar educational backgrounds. Overall, this study contributes to theory, classroom practice, and learner autonomy development.

**Conclusion:** This study looks at how Task-Based Language Teaching can help EFL students in Uzbekistan become more independent learners. The focus of the study is intentionally limited. The main idea is to see whether learning through tasks helps students make their own learning decisions. This includes how they plan tasks, choose strategies, and evaluate their own work. The study examines how task-based learning and learner autonomy work together in a real classroom.

The research is carried out in Uzbekistan with undergraduate students studying English at the university level. The study does not aim to represent the whole education system in the country. Instead, it focuses only on higher education settings. The participants are students who have already completed basic English courses. This is done to make sure that they have enough language ability to take part in task-based activities. Teachers and school administrators are not included as main sources of data.

The study uses a pre-test and post-test design. There are two groups. One group is taught using task-based instruction, while the other group follows traditional teacher-led lessons. Data are collected through learner autonomy questionnaires, classroom observation forms, and short student reflections. The study does not examine long-term development of autonomy after the semester ends. It also does not focus on psychological factors such as personality or long-term motivation.

The focus of the study is limited to classroom learning. Activities outside the classroom are not measured in detail. Digital learning autonomy is also not examined. Only short self-reported comments about home learning are considered. Task-Based Language Teaching is applied through

activities such as problem-solving tasks, role-plays, and group work. Other teaching approaches, such as CLIL or project-based learning, are not included in this study.

In short, this study has a clear and narrow aim. It seeks to find out whether structured task-based instruction can improve observable learner autonomy among university EFL students in Uzbekistan during one academic period.

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