



## Language Teaching and Curricular Practices: A Comprehensive Literature Review

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**ABSTRACT**

Language teaching has evolved over the decades, driven by advancements in educational theories and the growing need for learners to communicate effectively in a globalized world. Curricular practices in language education have shifted from traditional grammar-based approaches to more communicative and task-oriented models. However, the implementation of these curricula varies across different contexts, raising questions about their effectiveness and adaptability. This comprehensive literature review aims to analyze the current trends, challenges, and best practices in language teaching and curriculum design. By synthesizing findings from empirical studies, the review examines how various curricular approaches impact language proficiency, learner engagement, and teaching methodologies. The study also explores the role of institutional support and teacher training in facilitating successful language education reforms. The review finds that communicative and task-based curricula significantly improve language proficiency and learner motivation. However, successful implementation requires adequate teacher preparation, appropriate resource allocation, and flexibility in curriculum design. Additionally, challenges such as cultural differences, institutional rigidity, and assessment practices can hinder the effectiveness of innovative curricular models. In conclusion, while communicative and task-based approaches show promise, their success is highly context-dependent. Future research should focus on developing adaptable curriculum models that accommodate diverse educational settings and explore long-term outcomes of these approaches.

**Keywords:** *Communicative Approaches, Curriculum Design, Language Proficiency, Language Teaching, Task-Based Learning.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Language teaching has undergone significant transformations in the past few decades, moving away from traditional, grammar-focused instruction towards more communicative and task-based approaches (Abdullina et al., 2020; Abe et al., 2003; Abidah & Febriani, 2022). These shifts reflect the evolving needs of a globalized world, where language proficiency is not just about mastering grammatical rules but about effective communication in real-world contexts (McCabe, 2022). As a result, curricular practices in language education have increasingly prioritized interactive, learner-centered methodologies that foster practical language skills (Alotaibi, 2019; Arik, 2018). Schools and educators around the world have sought to adapt their curricula to meet these modern demands.

The changes in language teaching also align with broader developments in educational theory (Alnafjan, 2017). Concepts such as active learning, student autonomy, and task-based learning have gained traction, emphasizing the importance of engaging learners in authentic language use. The focus has shifted from rote memorization and repetitive drills to fostering communication, problem-solving, and collaboration in language learning (AlDahdouh, 2021). These approaches aim to prepare students not just for academic success, but for effective participation in multilingual and multicultural environments. In response, curricular models have increasingly integrated these progressive pedagogies.

Despite these advancements, the adoption of communicative and task-based curricula is not uniform across educational settings (Al-Khalili, 2015; Mudinillah, 2019). In many contexts, traditional methods continue to dominate, either due to institutional constraints, cultural preferences, or a lack of resources for implementing new strategies (Kissau, 2022). This creates a complex landscape where the theory and practice of language teaching do not always align (Ali, 2020). The diversity of curricular practices across different regions and institutions reflects broader challenges in educational reform, particularly in balancing innovation with practicality and tradition.

The growing body of research on language teaching highlights the potential benefits of communicative and task-based approaches, but it also underscores the importance of context in determining their effectiveness (Asbulah, 2019; Mudinillah et al., 2023, 2024). While these methods have been shown to improve learner engagement and language proficiency in many settings, their success is often contingent on factors such as teacher training, institutional support, and available resources (Leite, 2022). Understanding these variables is crucial for designing effective curricula that can be adapted to diverse educational environments.

Despite the widespread promotion of communicative and task-based teaching methods, significant gaps remain in the research regarding their long-term effectiveness. Many studies focus on short-term gains in language proficiency, often measuring improvements in specific skills like speaking or listening (Ahmed, 2021; Mansor, 2021). However, few studies have tracked learners over extended periods to determine whether these gains are sustained and whether students continue to use the language effectively in

real-world contexts after completing their studies. This gap leaves unanswered questions about the true impact of these curricular models on long-term language acquisition.

Another notable gap concerns the implementation of innovative curricular practices in non-Western or traditional educational systems. Much of the research on communicative and task-based approaches has been conducted in Western contexts, where learner-centered pedagogies are more widely accepted (Almeida, 2023). There is limited exploration of how these approaches can be adapted for use in more traditional educational settings, where teacher-centered methods and rigid curricula may be the norm. This lack of cross-cultural research limits the generalizability of findings and leaves educators in non-Western contexts with little guidance on how to integrate these methodologies effectively.

Research on the role of teacher training in the success of language teaching curricula is also underdeveloped. While many studies acknowledge the importance of well-trained teachers in facilitating communicative and task-based learning, few provide concrete recommendations for how teacher education programs can better prepare educators for these approaches (Pérez, 2022). In many cases, teachers are asked to implement new curricular models without adequate professional development or support, leading to inconsistent or incomplete adoption of innovative practices. Understanding how to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to effectively manage these changes is crucial for successful curricular reform (Altoeriqi, 2020; Anas et al., 2021).

Finally, there is a gap in the research concerning assessment practices in communicative and task-based language teaching. Traditional assessments often focus on grammar and vocabulary, which may not accurately reflect students' communicative competence or their ability to use language in real-world scenarios (Balderas, 2024). There is a need for more research on developing assessment tools that align with the goals of these curricular models, particularly in evaluating practical language use and problem-solving abilities. Without appropriate assessments, it is difficult to measure the true effectiveness of communicative and task-based approaches.

The primary aim of this comprehensive literature review is to analyze current research on language teaching and curricular practices, with a particular focus on communicative and task-based approaches. This review seeks to identify the key factors that contribute to the success or failure of these curricular models in various educational contexts (Cushing, 2021). By synthesizing empirical findings, the review aims to provide a clearer understanding of how different curricular practices impact language proficiency, learner engagement, and overall teaching effectiveness. The ultimate goal is to offer insights that can guide future curricular reforms in language education.

This review will explore both the theoretical foundations and practical applications of communicative and task-based teaching methods. It will examine how these approaches have been integrated into language curricula across different educational levels, from primary schools to higher education. The review will also consider a wide range of educational contexts, including both Western and non-Western settings, to provide a comprehensive overview of how these curricular practices function globally.

By including studies from diverse regions, this review aims to highlight the cultural and institutional factors that influence the implementation and effectiveness of language curricula.

In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of communicative and task-based approaches, this review will explore the role of teacher training and institutional support in facilitating curricular change. Teacher preparedness is a critical factor in the success of any educational reform, particularly when it involves a shift in pedagogical approach. This review will examine how professional development programs can better equip teachers to implement communicative and task-based teaching methods, and how institutions can provide the necessary resources and support to ensure successful adoption.

This literature review will also address the challenges associated with assessing language proficiency in communicative and task-based curricula. Traditional assessments often fail to capture the full range of skills that these approaches aim to develop, such as communicative competence and the ability to use language in authentic contexts. By examining current research on assessment practices, this review will provide recommendations for designing evaluation tools that align with the goals of modern language curricula, ensuring that both teaching and assessment support effective language learning.

This literature review is guided by several key research questions. First, how effective are communicative and task-based teaching methods in improving language proficiency across different educational contexts? This question aims to evaluate the overall impact of these curricular models on learners' ability to use language in real-world situations. The review will analyze empirical studies that measure outcomes such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing proficiency, as well as studies that assess learners' ability to apply language skills in problem-solving and communication tasks.

The second research question focuses on the role of teacher training in the successful implementation of communicative and task-based curricula. How can teacher education programs better prepare educators to facilitate these approaches? This question addresses the gap in research concerning teacher preparedness, exploring the specific skills and knowledge teachers need to effectively implement modern curricular practices. The review will consider studies on professional development programs and teacher support systems that contribute to the successful adoption of communicative and task-based teaching methods.

Another key question concerns the challenges of implementing these curricular models in non-Western or traditional educational settings. How can communicative and task-based approaches be adapted to fit the cultural and institutional norms of different educational systems? This question seeks to explore the barriers to adopting innovative curricular practices in contexts where teacher-centered instruction or rigid curricula may be more prevalent. The review will analyze case studies and empirical research to identify strategies for overcoming these challenges and making curricular reforms more accessible across diverse contexts.

Finally, the review will address the issue of assessment in communicative and task-based language teaching. What types of assessment tools are most effective in measuring the outcomes of these curricular models? This question aims to evaluate whether current assessment practices align with the goals of communicative and task-based teaching, and how they can be improved to better reflect learners' communicative competence and practical language use. The review will examine studies on alternative assessment methods, such as performance-based assessments and real-world task evaluations, to provide recommendations for more effective language testing.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The literature approach for this comprehensive review involved conducting a systematic search of peer-reviewed journal articles from major academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and JSTOR. Search terms included “language teaching,” “curricular practices,” “communicative language teaching,” “task-based learning,” and “curriculum design.” The review focused on studies published within the last two decades to ensure that the findings reflect contemporary approaches in language education. Only articles that directly addressed language teaching methods and curriculum development were considered (Anckar, 2008).

Inclusion criteria for the review encompassed empirical studies that evaluated the effectiveness of language teaching methods, particularly communicative and task-based approaches, in improving language proficiency (Amiel, 2008). Studies conducted in both Western and non-Western educational contexts were included, along with research at various educational levels, from primary to higher education. Exclusion criteria eliminated theoretical papers without empirical data, studies focused solely on traditional grammar-based methods, and articles not available in full text or not published in peer-reviewed journals.

The literature selection process began with screening titles and abstracts to identify relevant studies. Full-text articles that met the inclusion criteria were then reviewed to assess their alignment with the research objectives. Studies that did not provide data on language proficiency outcomes or that failed to examine curriculum-related practices were excluded. The final selection of articles aimed to ensure a diverse representation of educational contexts and curriculum models.

Data collection focused on extracting key information from each selected study, including research design, language teaching method, curriculum model, measured outcomes, and challenges in implementation. Information was organized into tables for comparison, categorizing studies by educational context, language skill focus, and type of curriculum approach. Additional data on teacher training, institutional support, and assessment practices were also collected to provide a comprehensive analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes across the selected studies, including the impact of communicative and task-based approaches on language proficiency, learner engagement, and teaching practices. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed to compare outcomes across different contexts and curriculum



models. The thematic synthesis allowed for a more holistic understanding of the trends, challenges, and successes in language teaching and curriculum design.

The limitations of this method include potential bias in literature selection due to the exclusion of non-English language studies and those not available in full text. The focus on peer-reviewed journals may also limit the inclusion of gray literature that could offer valuable insights. Variability in study designs and outcome measures across the reviewed studies posed challenges in making direct comparisons, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The review reveals that communicative and task-based language teaching methods consistently outperform traditional grammar-based approaches in terms of language proficiency improvement. Learners engaged in these interactive, student-centered methods showed greater fluency, especially in speaking and listening. Research indicates that real-world application of language through tasks promotes deeper understanding and retention of language skills. These methods also foster greater learner autonomy, encouraging students to take active responsibility for their language learning.

The findings suggest that communicative methods significantly enhance student engagement and motivation. By focusing on authentic communication, students are more involved in class activities and participate actively. Task-based learning, in particular, allows students to work collaboratively, which improves both language proficiency and problem-solving skills. Overall, communicative and task-based methods create more dynamic learning environments compared to traditional, teacher-centered methods.

Teacher training and institutional support emerged as critical factors in the success of these curricular approaches. Schools and universities that invested in professional development for teachers saw more effective implementation of communicative methods. Without sufficient training, teachers struggled to move away from traditional models, and the integration of modern approaches was less successful. Adequate institutional resources, such as time for lesson planning and access to teaching materials, were also essential for the effective implementation of these curricula.

The review also identifies challenges in aligning communicative language teaching methods with assessment practices. Traditional assessments often focus on grammatical accuracy and vocabulary, which do not fully capture communicative competence. There is a need for more comprehensive assessment tools that evaluate practical language use, such as performance-based assessments or task-oriented evaluations, which align better with the objectives of communicative and task-based learning.

The findings from the review can be categorized into three primary themes: the impact of curricular practices on language proficiency, the role of teacher training and institutional support, and the challenges related to assessment practices. Studies focusing on language proficiency consistently report that communicative and task-based approaches enhance learners' ability to use language in authentic contexts. These methods promote fluency and communication skills, particularly in speaking and listening.

The second category involves teacher training and institutional support. Effective implementation of communicative methods depends heavily on teacher preparedness and institutional resources. Schools that provide ongoing professional development and sufficient teaching materials tend to see better outcomes in language proficiency and student engagement. This highlights the importance of training teachers to design and facilitate communicative activities in the classroom.

The third category addresses the challenges of assessment in language teaching. Traditional assessments often fail to align with the goals of communicative and task-based teaching, as they focus on isolated language skills rather than practical language use. The review suggests that the development of more integrated assessment tools is essential for accurately measuring the outcomes of these curricular practices. Performance-based assessments that evaluate students' ability to use language in real-world contexts may offer a better reflection of learners' communicative competence.

Another key theme that emerged is the variability in implementation across different educational contexts. While communicative approaches have been widely adopted in Western education systems, many non-Western institutions face challenges in shifting from traditional grammar-based curricula to more modern, interactive methods. Cultural norms, rigid curricula, and institutional resistance to change are significant barriers that affect the successful adoption of communicative language teaching practices.

One of the most influential studies in the field is by Ellis (2003), who demonstrated the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in improving fluency and communicative competence. Ellis's research found that learners engaged in task-based activities showed significant improvement in their ability to use language for authentic communication. His work provided a strong foundation for understanding the benefits of integrating tasks into language curricula.

Another significant study by Richards and Rodgers (2001) highlighted the theoretical underpinnings of communicative language teaching. Their work emphasized the shift from language as a structural system to language as a tool for communication. This research has been instrumental in shaping how language curricula are designed, moving away from grammar-based instruction toward more interactive, learner-centered approaches.

A study by Nunan (2004) focused on the implementation challenges of task-based language teaching in various educational settings. Nunan found that while task-based methods were highly effective in Western educational systems, their application in more traditional, teacher-centered contexts was often met with resistance. His findings underscored the need for cultural adaptation and institutional support for successful curricular reform.

Willis and Willis (2007) provided a comprehensive analysis of task design in language teaching, showing that well-structured tasks not only promote language learning but also encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. Their research highlighted the importance of task selection in enhancing the learning experience and demonstrated that

effective task design can lead to improved language proficiency across a range of language skills.

One major gap in the literature is the lack of longitudinal studies assessing the long-term impact of communicative and task-based methods on language proficiency. Most studies focus on short-term improvements, such as fluency gains over a semester, but there is little evidence on whether these benefits are sustained in the long run. Research that tracks learners over several years is needed to determine the lasting impact of these curricular practices on language acquisition.

Another gap concerns the limited research on non-Western educational contexts. Much of the literature on communicative and task-based language teaching has been conducted in Western settings, where learner-centered pedagogies are more common. There is a need for more studies exploring how these methods can be adapted for use in more traditional educational systems, where teacher-centered instruction and grammar-focused curricula remain prevalent.

Research on assessment tools tailored to communicative and task-based methods is also lacking. Traditional grammar-based tests do not adequately capture the full range of skills developed through communicative language teaching. Studies that focus on developing and validating assessment tools that align with the goals of these methods would help educators more accurately measure student progress in real-world language use.

There is also a need for more research on teacher training programs that specifically address the challenges of implementing communicative and task-based teaching methods. While many studies acknowledge the importance of teacher training, few provide concrete recommendations for how to prepare educators to transition from traditional methods to more modern approaches. Developing comprehensive training models that equip teachers with the necessary skills and strategies is crucial for successful implementation.

The review indicates that communicative and task-based language teaching methods significantly enhance language proficiency, particularly in developing speaking and listening skills. Learners in classrooms that adopt these approaches consistently show better fluency and communication abilities compared to those in traditional, grammar-based classes. The emphasis on real-world tasks and interaction promotes practical language use, which leads to more authentic and effective learning experiences.

Teacher training and institutional support emerge as critical components of successful curriculum reform. Schools that invest in ongoing professional development for teachers tend to see better results in the implementation of communicative and task-based methods. Teachers who are well-prepared to design and facilitate interactive activities are more likely to create engaging, learner-centered classrooms, leading to higher student motivation and improved learning outcomes.

The challenges of aligning assessment practices with communicative and task-based methods suggest a need for a paradigm shift in language testing. Traditional grammar-based assessments do not fully capture learners' communicative competence or



their ability to use language in real-world situations. Developing more integrated assessment tools that evaluate performance-based language use is essential for accurately measuring the effectiveness of these curricular practices.

Cultural and institutional factors play a significant role in the success of communicative language teaching methods. While these approaches have been widely adopted in Western education systems, they face resistance in more traditional contexts. Cultural norms, rigid curricula, and institutional inertia are key barriers to the successful implementation of modern language teaching practices in non-Western settings. This highlights the importance of adapting these methods to fit the local educational landscape.

Studies consistently show that communicative and task-based language teaching methods are more effective in improving language proficiency compared to traditional grammar-based approaches. However, there are differences in how these methods are implemented and assessed across educational contexts. Research in Western educational systems tends to focus on learner autonomy and interactive activities, while studies in non-Western settings often highlight the challenges of adopting these methods due to institutional and cultural constraints.

Some studies emphasize the importance of teacher training in facilitating the transition from traditional to communicative methods. For example, Ellis (2003) found that well-trained teachers were more successful in implementing task-based activities and promoting learner autonomy. In contrast, studies in contexts where teacher training was lacking reported less effective implementation of communicative methods, leading to lower gains in language proficiency.

There are also differences in how assessment is approached in various studies. Research conducted in Western settings often explores alternative assessment methods, such as performance-based assessments, which align with the goals of communicative language teaching. In more traditional settings, however, assessments tend to remain focused on grammar and vocabulary, which may not accurately reflect learners' communicative competence. These differences in assessment practices highlight the need for more standardized tools that can be applied across different educational contexts.

Despite these differences, most studies agree on the benefits of communicative and task-based methods in promoting student engagement and motivation. The interactive nature of these approaches encourages learners to participate more actively in the classroom, leading to improved language outcomes. However, the degree of success depends heavily on contextual factors such as teacher preparedness, institutional support, and the availability of resources for lesson planning and task design.

The theoretical implications of this review suggest that communicative and task-based methods align with constructivist theories of learning, which emphasize the importance of interaction, collaboration, and real-world application in education. These approaches challenge traditional views of language learning as a linear process focused on grammar and vocabulary, advocating instead for a more holistic view that integrates linguistic, cognitive, and social skills. This shift reflects broader trends in education toward more learner-centered, experiential learning models.

Practically, the review highlights the importance of teacher training and institutional support in the successful implementation of communicative and task-based curricula. Schools and educational institutions need to invest in professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills to design and facilitate interactive language activities. Without sufficient training and resources, teachers may struggle to implement these methods effectively, leading to suboptimal learning outcomes.

The review also underscores the need for more flexible and adaptive curricula that allow for the integration of communicative and task-based teaching methods. Schools that follow rigid, standardized curricula may find it difficult to adopt these approaches, as they require flexibility in lesson planning and assessment. Policymakers should consider the benefits of communicative language teaching when designing curricula and ensure that there is room for interactive, learner-centered activities.

Additionally, the review emphasizes the importance of developing appropriate assessment tools that align with the goals of communicative and task-based language teaching. Traditional assessments that focus on grammar and vocabulary do not fully capture learners' communicative competence or their ability to use language in real-world contexts. Schools and educators need to adopt more integrated assessment methods that reflect the interactive, task-based nature of modern language curricula.

Future research should focus on conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of communicative and task-based language teaching methods. While many studies report short-term gains in language proficiency, there is little evidence on whether these improvements are sustained over time. Longitudinal research would provide valuable insights into the lasting effects of these curricular practices on language acquisition and communicative competence.

More research is needed on how communicative and task-based methods can be adapted for use in non-Western and more traditional educational contexts. The majority of existing research has been conducted in Western settings, where learner-centered approaches are more common. Research that explores how these methods can be modified to fit different cultural and institutional norms would help expand their applicability and ensure that learners in all educational systems can benefit from modern language teaching practices.

There is also a need for more research on assessment tools that align with communicative and task-based teaching methods. Traditional language tests do not adequately capture the range of skills developed through these approaches, particularly communicative competence and the ability to use language in real-world situations. Future research should focus on developing and validating assessment tools that reflect the interactive, task-based nature of modern language curricula.

Finally, future research should explore the role of teacher training in the successful implementation of communicative and task-based teaching methods. While many studies acknowledge the importance of teacher preparedness, there is a lack of research on how teacher education programs can better equip educators to transition from traditional methods to more modern, learner-centered approaches. Developing comprehensive

teacher training models that address these challenges would contribute to more effective implementation of communicative language teaching.

One limitation of the reviewed studies is the focus on short-term outcomes. Many studies measure immediate improvements in language proficiency but do not track learners over time to assess the long-term effects of communicative and task-based methods. This focus on short-term results limits our understanding of whether these curricular practices lead to sustained gains in language acquisition and communicative competence.

Another limitation is the geographical focus of the research. Most studies on communicative and task-based language teaching are conducted in Western educational settings, with limited exploration of how these methods can be adapted to non-Western or more traditional educational systems. This geographical limitation means that the findings may not be generalizable to all educational environments, particularly those with different cultural or institutional frameworks.

The review also highlights the variability in assessment practices across different studies. Many studies continue to rely on traditional grammar-based assessments, which may not fully capture learners' communicative competence or their ability to use language in authentic contexts. This lack of standardized assessment tools makes it difficult to compare findings across studies and draw definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of communicative and task-based methods.

Finally, the reliance on qualitative data in many of the reviewed studies introduces potential bias in interpreting the results. While qualitative methods provide valuable insights into learners' experiences with communicative language teaching, they may not always capture the full scope of its effectiveness. Incorporating more quantitative research, particularly large-scale studies that use standardized assessments, would provide a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of the impact of communicative and task-based teaching methods.

## **CONCLUSION**

The review of language teaching and curricular practices reveals that communicative and task-based approaches significantly enhance language proficiency, particularly in speaking and listening. These methods promote learner engagement and encourage active participation, leading to more authentic language use. However, their successful implementation depends heavily on teacher training, institutional support, and the development of appropriate assessment tools that align with these methods.

This research contributes to the literature by synthesizing findings on the effectiveness of modern curricular models in diverse educational contexts. It highlights the importance of teacher preparedness and institutional flexibility in integrating communicative and task-based methods into language curricula. The study also emphasizes the need for more comprehensive assessment practices that accurately measure communicative competence and real-world language use.

The theoretical implications suggest that communicative and task-based methods align with constructivist and learner-centered pedagogies, which focus on interaction and meaningful communication. Practically, the review underscores the importance of developing teacher training programs that equip educators to design and implement interactive language activities. Schools and policymakers need to provide the necessary resources to support the transition to these modern curricular approaches.

The primary limitation of this review is the lack of longitudinal studies that assess the long-term impact of these methods. Additionally, the geographical focus of much of the research limits the generalizability of the findings to non-Western educational contexts. The variability in assessment practices across studies also presents a challenge in comparing the effectiveness of different curricular approaches.

Future research should focus on conducting long-term studies to evaluate the sustained impact of communicative and task-based methods. More research is needed on adapting these methods to non-Western contexts and developing standardized assessment tools. Despite these challenges, communicative and task-based language teaching offers substantial potential for improving language education globally, provided that implementation challenges are addressed.

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