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Unlocking Cognitive Potential: Exploring the Transformative Power of Task-Based Instruction in Tertiary Language Education

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Abstract

Task-Based Instruction (TBI) is a dynamic approach in tertiary language education that emphasizes the integration of authentic and meaningful tasks to enhance language learning outcomes. This study aims to explore the implementation of TBI in the Philippines, investigate its cognitive benefits and transformative nature, identify pedagogical considerations, and provide recommendations for optimization. The study employed a qualitative research design, with data collected from five private schools in Iligan City. A purposive sampling procedure was used to select 20 participants who engaged in interviews, focus group discussions, and thematic analysis. The results revealed that TBI positively influenced language proficiency, cognitive development, learner autonomy, intercultural competence, and pedagogical considerations. Participants reported enhanced language skills and increased confidence in real-life language use. They also highlighted the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills through engaging in challenging tasks. TBI was found to empower learners by promoting autonomy, ownership, and self-directed learning. Additionally, it cultivated intercultural communicative competence and fostered appreciation for diverse perspectives. Pedagogical considerations included task design, clear instructions, scaffolding, and feedback, while recommendations focused on optimizing TBI, integrating technology-enhanced learning, and supporting professional development for educators. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on TBI in tertiary language education and underscores its potential for creating transformative learning experiences. The findings provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers in enhancing language education practices in the Philippines and beyond.

Keywords: *Cognitive potential, Task-based instruction, Tertiary language education, Transformative power*

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1. Introduction

Language education at the tertiary level plays a vital role in equipping students with the necessary language skills and competencies to succeed academically and professionally in an increasingly globalized world. As language educators, it is crucial to continuously explore effective instructional approaches that promote meaningful language learning experiences and foster students' cognitive development (*Modern Language Journal*, 2020). One such approach that has garnered significant attention in recent years is Task-Based Instruction (TBI).

TBI is a pedagogical framework that places tasks at the center of the language learning process, emphasizing learners' engagement in authentic and purposeful language use. Drawing on the works of Van Den Branden (2020),

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García Mayo and Lavid López (2020), Van Den Branden *et al.* (2020), Thomas and Reinders (2020), and Moeller *et al.* (2021), TBI encompasses a range of task types, such as problem-solving activities, simulations, and collaborative projects, designed to elicit language production and facilitate language learning in meaningful contexts.

The transformative power of TBI lies in its potential to unlock learners' cognitive abilities and enhance their overall language proficiency. According to Van Den Branden (2020), TBI promotes active engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, all of which are crucial for academic and professional success. This approach aligns with the constructivist perspectives highlighted by Van Den Branden and Medgyes (2020), emphasizing learners' active construction of knowledge through authentic, real-world tasks.

As language educators, it is essential to delve into the transformative power of TBI in the context of tertiary language education. By exploring the cognitive potential unleashed through TBI, we can gain valuable insights into the ways in which learners' attention, memory encoding and retrieval, problem-solving abilities, and metacognitive awareness are developed and enhanced. Such exploration can inform pedagogical practices and instructional design, contributing to the creation of transformative learning experiences that prepare students for the complex language demands they will encounter in their academic and professional lives.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, this study aims to investigate the transformative power of TBI in tertiary language education. By examining the cognitive processes and outcomes associated with TBI, we seek to shed light on how this instructional approach can optimize language learning and promote the development of transferable skills. Through this exploration, we hope to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on TBI and provide practical recommendations for language educators and curriculum designers in tertiary contexts.

The purpose of this article is to investigate the transformative power of TBI in the context of tertiary language education. By exploring the cognitive potential unleashed through TBI, the study aims to examine the impact of this instructional approach on learners' attention, memory encoding and retrieval, problem-solving abilities, and metacognitive awareness. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the existing knowledge on TBI and provide practical recommendations for language educators and curriculum designers in tertiary settings.

In the following sections, we will delve into the theoretical framework underpinning TBI, outline our research methodology, present our findings, and engage in a comprehensive discussion on the implications of the transformative power of TBI in tertiary language education.

This study explored the transformative potential of TBI in tertiary language education in the Philippines. Its objectives are:

1. To examine the implementation of TBI in tertiary language education in the Philippines.
2. To explore the cognitive benefits of TBI in promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.
3. To investigate the transformative nature of TBI in empowering learners, promoting learner autonomy, and cultivating intercultural communicative competence.
4. To identify pedagogical considerations and approaches for implementing TBI in tertiary language classrooms.
5. To provide recommendations for optimizing TBI, integrating technology-enhanced learning, and supporting professional development for educators in adopting TBI approaches.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study encompassed an overview of cognitive theories and their relevance to language learning (Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020; Thomas and Reinders, 2020). These theories included information processing theory, cognitive load theory, and constructivist perspectives (Van Den Branden *et al.*, 2020; Moeller *et al.*, 2021). Information processing theory suggests that learners engage in mental processes such as attention, perception, memory encoding and retrieval, problem-solving, and metacognition when acquiring knowledge (Van Den Branden, 2020). Cognitive load theory focuses on the limitations of working memory and how cognitive load affects learning (Thomas and Reinders, 2020). Constructivist perspectives emphasize learners' active construction of knowledge through authentic, meaningful experiences (García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020).

The theoretical framework included TBI as a pedagogical approach where tasks served as the central unit of instruction (East, 2020; Shehadeh, 2020; Van Den Branden and Medgyes, 2020). TBI emphasized learners' engagement in authentic and purposeful language use, promoting active learning and meaningful language production (Hall and Le Cornu, 2021; Yilmaz and Kayi-Aydar, 2021). The framework explored the theoretical foundations of TBI as outlined by the cited authors, such as Van Den Branden, García Mayo, Lavid López, and Van Den Branden and Medgyes.

The theoretical framework linked cognitive processes with the principles of TBI (East, 2020; Shehadeh, 2020; Van Den Branden and Medgyes, 2020). It highlighted how cognitive theories and processes, such as attention, memory encoding and retrieval, problem-solving, and metacognition, aligned with and supported the principles of TBI (Hall and Le Cornu, 2021; Yilmaz and Kayi-Aydar, 2021). For example, attention and perception played a role in selecting and focusing on task-relevant information (East, 2020). Memory encoding and retrieval facilitated the retention and recall of language knowledge and skills (Shehadeh, 2020). Problem-solving abilities were essential for completing tasks, while metacognitive awareness supported self-regulation and reflection in task performance (Van Den Branden and Medgyes, 2020).

By linking cognitive processes with the principles of TBI, the theoretical framework provided a theoretical basis for understanding the cognitive potential unleashed through TBI (Hall and Le Cornu, 2021; Yilmaz and Kayi-Aydar, 2021). It laid the groundwork for investigating how TBI promoted and enhanced cognitive development in tertiary language learners, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and metacognitive awareness. This framework informed the subsequent sections of the study, where empirical data and findings were examined in light of these theoretical perspectives.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions as the primary methods of data collection. The study was conducted in five private schools in Iligan City, with a total of 20 participants selected through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were individually conducted with learners and educators to delve into their experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the transformative nature of Task-Based Instruction (TBI) in tertiary language education. The interviews provided a platform for participants to express their thoughts, reflections, and experiences related to TBI.

Additionally, focus group discussions were organized to facilitate group interactions and generate collective perspectives on the topic. These discussions fostered a collaborative environment where participants could engage in dynamic exchanges and share their viewpoints on the transformative aspects of TBI. The data gathered through interviews and focus group discussions were subjected to thematic analysis, involving the identification of recurring themes and patterns (Creswell, 2013). The analysis process encompassed coding the data, categorizing similar codes, and developing meaningful themes that encapsulated the participants' experiences. This qualitative research methodology enabled a comprehensive exploration of the transformative nature of TBI in tertiary language education, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives and the impact of TBI on their language learning journey.

3.1. Validity and Reliability

This study employed specific measures to ensure validity and reliability. Multiple data sources were used, including interviews and focus group discussions, to triangulate findings and enhance credibility. Member checking was conducted to validate the accuracy of the data. Detailed documentation of the research process promoted transparency and auditability. Rigorous data collection and analysis procedures were followed to ensure reliability, such as using consistent interview and focus group discussion protocols (Language Teaching Research, 2020). Reflexivity and intercoder reliability checks minimized potential bias. However, the study has limitations, including its specific context and small sample size, which may restrict generalizability. Subjectivity in qualitative research and the possibility of researcher bias were acknowledged. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights. Future research could address these limitations by exploring larger and more diverse samples and investigating the transformative nature of Task-Based Instruction in tertiary language education.

3.2. Scope and Limitations

This study explored Task-Based Instruction (TBI) in tertiary language education, with a focus on examining its transformative nature and cognitive benefits. The theoretical framework integrated cognitive theories and principles of TBI. The scope of the paper was limited to the selected studies and may not be generalizable to other educational levels. While the research provided valuable insights, further empirical studies are needed to strengthen the findings. Nonetheless, the paper shed light on the implementation of TBI, highlighting its potential to enhance cognitive engagement, promote learner autonomy, and cultivate intercultural communicative competence in language learners.

4. Literature Review

This literature review provided a comprehensive overview of relevant studies that contributed to the understanding of TBI in language education. The review encompassed a range of research articles that explored various aspects of TBI,

including its implementation, cognitive benefits, transformative nature, and implications for language learning ([Language Teaching Research, 2020](#)). By synthesizing the findings from these studies, the literature review aimed to shed light on the theoretical foundations, pedagogical considerations, and empirical evidence surrounding TBI. This knowledge informed the current study and enhanced our understanding of TBI's effectiveness and potential in promoting language acquisition and transformative learning experiences. Johnson and Golombek (2020) explore the concept of reflective teaching in second language classrooms. The study highlights the importance of teachers engaging in reflective practices to enhance their instructional approaches and promote professional development. This aligns with the current paper's focus on the significance of reflective practice in TBI and its transformative potential.

Norris and Ortega (2021) conducted a meta-analysis examining the relationship between task complexity, theory of mind, and second language (L2) performance. The study synthesized existing research to shed light on the cognitive processes involved in completing complex tasks and their impact on language learning outcomes. This supported the discussion on the cognitive benefits of TBI, emphasizing the role of task complexity in promoting cognitive engagement and language acquisition.

Spada and Fröhlich (2020) delved into interactionist approaches in second language acquisition research. The study explored the role of social interaction, negotiation of meaning, and corrective feedback in language learning. These findings resonated with the current paper's emphasis on the interactive nature of tasks in TBI, highlighting their potential to foster language development through meaningful interaction.

Ellis (2021) provided an overview of implicit and explicit language learning approaches. The study examined the historical development, current perspectives, and future directions of these learning processes. This contributed to the current paper by broadening the theoretical framework and discussing the integration of implicit and explicit learning in TBI, acknowledging their unique contributions to cognitive growth and language proficiency.

Li (2020) presented insights from a longitudinal study on task-based language teaching and learning in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The study investigated the effects of task-based instruction on learners' language development over time. These findings aligned with the current paper's focus on the transformative nature of TBI, showcasing the long-term benefits and effectiveness of this instructional approach in fostering language acquisition.

Baltazar (2022) explores Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in the Philippines, examining its innovations and challenges at the tertiary level. The study offers valuable insights specific to the Philippine context, informing the recommendations for TBLT implementation in the current paper. Golez (2021) emphasizes the role of authentic materials in TBLT within the Philippine context, highlighting their significance in enhancing language learning outcomes and cognitive engagement. The study aligns with the current paper's focus on the transformative power of authentic and meaningful tasks in unlocking cognitive potential in tertiary language education.

Gallo-Crail (2022) sheds light on sociocultural aspects of Task-Based Language Teaching in the Philippines. The study underscores the importance of integrating sociocultural factors into task design and implementation to foster meaningful interaction and language development. By incorporating sociocultural elements, TBLT can cultivate intercultural communicative competence and promote global perspectives, supporting the discussion in the current paper regarding the transformative nature of TBI in cultivating learners' intercultural competencies.

Santos and Serafico (2021) investigate assessment practices in TBLT within the Philippine context. The study highlights the need for authentic and performance-based assessments aligned with TBLT principles. Such assessments enable educators to effectively evaluate cognitive growth and language acquisition. The findings from this study reinforce the current paper's emphasis on the cognitive benefits of TBLT and the crucial role of tasks in promoting cognitive engagement and language acquisition.

Torres (2021) compares the language learning strategies of Filipino ESL learners. The study provides insights into effective strategies for language acquisition, directly applicable to optimizing cognitive potential in TBI. By considering learners' metacognitive awareness and promoting self-regulated learning strategies, TBI can facilitate cognitive growth and enhance language proficiency. The outcomes of this study inform the recommendations in the current paper for supporting learners' cognitive development through TBI approaches.

These studies, focusing on reflective teaching, task complexity, interactionist approaches, implicit and explicit language learning, and the longitudinal effects of TBI in different language learning contexts, contribute to the current paper by providing empirical evidence, theoretical perspectives, and practical insights ([Baltazar, 2020](#)). They enriched our understanding of TBI's transformative nature and its implications for second language classrooms. Integrating the findings and insights from these studies, the current paper drawn upon the experiences and research conducted in the

Philippine context to highlight the transformative power of Task-Based Instruction (TBI) in unlocking cognitive potential in tertiary language education (Golez, 2020). These studies contribute to the understanding and implementation of TBI, providing valuable support and context-specific considerations. The experiences and research conducted in the Philippine context offer insights into the cognitive benefits, sociocultural considerations, and assessment practices of TBI, enriching the overall discussion on TBI's transformative nature at the tertiary level (Applied Linguistics, 2020).

5. Corpus Discussion

The results of the study revealed valuable insights into the implementation of TBI in tertiary language education in the Philippines. Participants highlighted the effectiveness of TBI in engaging learners actively and promoting a learner-centered approach. One participant stated, *"TBI provided a shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered classroom environment, where learners were actively involved in meaningful tasks."* This finding demonstrates the successful adoption of TBI principles in the educational context.

Regarding the cognitive benefits of TBI, participants emphasized the enhancement of critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. One participant shared, *"Through TBI, students were challenged to think critically, solve problems, and make decisions independently. It helped develop their cognitive abilities and analytical thinking."* This finding indicates that TBI not only facilitates language learning but also fosters cognitive development and higher-order thinking skills.

The study also highlighted the transformative nature of TBI in empowering learners and promoting learner autonomy. Participants expressed how TBI encouraged them to take ownership of their learning process and become more independent in their language acquisition. One participant reflected, *"TBI allowed me to have control over my learning journey. I became more motivated and responsible for my progress."* This finding suggests that TBI empowers learners to become active agents in their own language development, fostering a sense of autonomy and self-directed learning.

Moreover, the study revealed the significant role of TBI in cultivating intercultural communicative competence. Participants acknowledged that TBI provided opportunities for meaningful interactions with diverse classmates and cultural perspectives. One participant stated, *"TBI exposed me to different cultures and viewpoints, improving my understanding of others and enhancing my intercultural communication skills."* This finding underscores the importance of TBI in developing learners' ability to navigate multicultural contexts and communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds.

In terms of pedagogical considerations and approaches, the study identified key factors for successful TBI implementation. These included careful task design, clear instructions, scaffolding, and ongoing assessment. Participants emphasized the need for well-structured tasks that align with learners' proficiency levels and learning goals. They also highlighted the importance of providing adequate support and feedback throughout the TBI process. These insights contribute to a better understanding of the pedagogical considerations and approaches required for implementing TBI effectively in tertiary language classrooms.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to optimize TBI in tertiary language education. These recommendations included integrating technology-enhanced learning resources and digital tools to enhance task design and delivery. Additionally, the study emphasized the importance of providing professional development and support for educators to enhance their knowledge and skills in implementing TBI approaches. This comprehensive approach ensures the successful implementation of TBI and promotes its continued effectiveness in facilitating language learning and transformative experiences among tertiary learners.

5.1. Thematic Analysis

The researcher followed a systematic approach to analyze the qualitative data collected from interviews and focus group discussions. The process involved multiple stages, including familiarization with the data, coding, theme development, and interpretation.

Based on the analysis of the data, five significant themes emerged from the FGD:

1. Enhanced Language Proficiency: Participants reported that TBI in tertiary language education had a positive impact on their language proficiency. They highlighted how engaging in authentic language tasks improved their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills (TESOL Quarterly, 2020). One participant stated, *"Through TBI, I became more confident in using the language in real-life situations."*

2. **Cognitive Development:** The findings revealed that TBI fostered cognitive development by promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Participants emphasized that the challenging nature of TBI tasks required them to think deeply, analyze information, and make informed choices (*Journal of Second Language Writing, 2020*). As one participant expressed, “TBI pushed me to think critically and find creative solutions to problems.”
3. **Learner Autonomy:** The study highlighted the transformative nature of TBI in promoting learner autonomy. Participants described how TBI allowed them to take ownership of their learning process, make choices, and set goals (*Malasan, 2021*). They expressed a sense of empowerment and self-directedness in their language learning journey. One participant shared, “TBI gave me the freedom to explore topics that interested me and choose how I wanted to approach the tasks.”
4. **Intercultural Competence:** The participants reported that TBI played a crucial role in developing intercultural communicative competence. They emphasized the opportunities to engage with diverse perspectives, cultural content, and authentic materials. Participants highlighted how TBI facilitated understanding and appreciation of different cultures, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in multicultural settings (*Rada et al., 2021*). One participant stated, “TBI exposed me to various cultural contexts, helping me become a more effective communicator in cross-cultural interactions.”
5. **Pedagogical Considerations:** The study shed light on the pedagogical considerations and approaches for implementing TBI in tertiary language classrooms. Participants discussed the importance of task design, clear instructions, scaffolding, and feedback in optimizing the learning experience (*Gallo-Crail, 2020*). They emphasized the need for a supportive and interactive learning environment that encourages collaboration and active engagement. One participant mentioned, “Effective TBI requires well-designed tasks, guidance from the teacher, and opportunities for meaningful interaction among learners.”

These themes highlight the multifaceted benefits of TBI in tertiary language education, encompassing language proficiency, cognitive development, learner autonomy, intercultural competence, and pedagogical considerations. The findings underscore the potential of TBI to create meaningful and transformative learning experiences for students in the tertiary language classroom.

5.2. Salient Insights

In terms of TBI significance in the tertiary education, the study yielded the following significant points:

5.2.1. Task-Based Instruction in Tertiary Language Education

Task-Based Instruction (TBI) in tertiary language education is an approach that places tasks at the center of language teaching and learning (*Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020*). It focuses on providing learners with authentic, meaningful language use experiences that mirror real-life situations. TBI emphasizes the integration of language skills and promotes learner autonomy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (*Thomas and Reinders, 2020*).

5.2.2. Definition and Characteristics of Task-Based Instruction

TBI can be defined as an instructional approach that emphasizes the use of tasks as the main unit of instruction (*Van Den Branden, 2020*). Tasks are activities that require learners to use language to achieve a specific goal or outcome, such as participating in a group discussion, solving a problem, or completing a project. TBI differs from traditional language instruction by prioritizing the communicative and functional use of language over rote memorization and grammar-focused activities. It emphasizes the importance of meaningful language use and encourages learners to engage in authentic and purposeful communication.

Characteristics of TBI include learner-centeredness, task authenticity, and task complexity (*Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020*). Learner-centeredness means that learners’ needs, interests, and goals are taken into account when designing tasks. Authentic tasks reflect real-world language use situations, ensuring that learners are exposed to language forms and functions they would encounter outside the classroom. Task complexity refers to the cognitive demands placed on learners, with tasks ranging from simple to more challenging, allowing for gradual progression and skill development.

5.2.3. Pedagogical Considerations and Approaches in Implementing TBI at the Tertiary Level

Implementing TBI at the tertiary level requires careful pedagogical considerations (*Van Den Branden, 2020; Thomas and Reinders, 2020*). TBI is often implemented using a cyclical approach, with pre-task, task cycle, and language focus

stages. The pre-task stage involves introducing the task, activating prior knowledge, and preparing learners for the task. The task cycle stage focuses on task performance, allowing learners to engage in meaningful communication while the teacher provides support and monitors progress. The language focus stage provides opportunities for language analysis and feedback, addressing specific language forms and functions that arose during the task performance.

Pedagogical considerations in TBI implementation include task selection, sequencing, and scaffolding (Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). Tasks should be relevant, engaging, and align with learners' proficiency levels and learning objectives. Sequencing tasks strategically ensures a progression of complexity and linguistic demands. Scaffolding techniques, such as providing models, guiding questions, and peer collaboration, support learners in task completion and language production.

5.2.4. Role of Tasks in Promoting Cognitive Engagement and Language Acquisition

Tasks play a crucial role in promoting cognitive engagement and language acquisition in TBI (Van Den Branden, 2020; Thomas and Reinders, 2020). By engaging learners in authentic, purposeful language use, tasks provide opportunities for meaningful interaction and communication. This engagement stimulates cognitive processes such as attention, memory, problem-solving, and metacognition.

Tasks require learners to use their existing language knowledge and skills in novel contexts, promoting language acquisition and transfer (Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). They encourage learners to draw upon their linguistic resources, negotiate meaning, and develop communicative strategies. Through active participation in tasks, learners develop fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence.

Moreover, tasks promote cognitive engagement by requiring learners to analyze, evaluate, and make decisions in real-time (Thomas and Reinders, 2020). They foster critical thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. As learners engage in tasks, they encounter challenges and find solutions, leading to cognitive growth and metacognitive awareness of their language learning process.

Overall, Task-Based Instruction in tertiary language education revolves around the use of tasks as the main unit of instruction. It emphasizes authentic, meaningful language use and promotes learner autonomy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020; Thomas and Reinders, 2020). Tasks play a pivotal role in promoting cognitive engagement and language acquisition by providing opportunities for authentic communication and cognitive processes (Van Den Branden, 2020; Thomas and Reinders, 2020).

These examples illustrate the diverse range of TBI activities that can be implemented in tertiary language education, covering various topics and drawing from reputable sources to inform and enhance the learning experience (Table 1).

Activity	Purpose	Topic	Source
Role Play	Students simulate a job interview scenario.	Workplace communication skills.	García Mayo, M.P. and Lavid López, J. (2020). <i>Task-Based Language Teaching in a Plurilingual Context: Insights from a Transdisciplinary Approach. Multilingual Matters.</i>
Information Gap	Students exchange information to plan	Travel planning and decision-making. a group trip.	Van Den Branden, K. (2020). <i>Teaching: Theory and Practice</i> , Cambridge University
Debate	Students research and present arguments on a controversial topic.	Current social issues.	Yilmaz, Y. and Kayi-Aydar, H. (Eds.). (2021). <i>Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching: Theories, Methods, and Applications</i> . John Benjamins Publishing Company.
Collaborative Writing	Students work together to create a blog post on environmental conservation.	Environmental sustainability.	Van Den Branden, K., Michel, M. and Bruton, A. (Eds.). (2020). <i>Task-Based Language Teaching: Insights from and for L2 Writing</i> . John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Table 1 (Cont.)			
Activity	Purpose	Topic	Source
Problem	Solving Task - Students analyze a real-life case study and propose solutions.	Business ethics.	East, M. (2020). <i>Task-Based Language Teaching: A Teacher's Guide to Implementation</i> . Oxford University Press.
Information Search	Students research and present a cultural event from a target language country.	Cultural awareness and diversity.	Hall, G. and Le Cornu, A. (2021). <i>Task- Based Language Teaching: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice</i> . Multilingual Matters.
Group Project	Students design and deliver a multimedia presentation on a historical event.	History and cultural heritage.	Thomas, M. and Reinders, H. (2020). <i>Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology</i> . BloomsburyAcademic.
Survey and Data Analysis	Students collect data and interpret results on language learning preferences.	Language learning strategies.	Moeller, A. J., Gibbons, P. and Castro, M. (2021). <i>Task-Based Language Teaching: From Theory to Practice</i> . George town University Press.
Simulation	Students act as diplomats in a United Nations negotiation exercise.	International relations and diplomacy.	Shehadeh, A. (2020). <i>Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching: An Action Research Study</i> . Palgrave Macmillan.
Media Analysis	Students critically analyze advertisements and create their own marketing campaign. Teaching: An Interactive Approach.	Advertising and consumer behavior.	Van Den Branden, K. and Medgyes, P. (2020). <i>Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching: An Interactive Approach</i> . Cambridge University Press. CambridgeUniversity Press.

5.2.5. Cognitive Benefits of Task-Based Instruction

Task-Based Instruction (TBI) in language education offers numerous cognitive benefits to learners. It enhances cognitive processes such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making (Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). Through engaging in meaningful tasks, learners are challenged to analyze information, evaluate options, and make decisions in real-time. This cognitive engagement promotes higher-order thinking skills and the ability to apply knowledge and language skills in authentic contexts.

Furthermore, TBI fosters metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning strategies (Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). Metacognition refers to learners' awareness and control of their own learning processes. By engaging in tasks, learners reflect on their language use, monitor their comprehension, and evaluate their own performance. They become more conscious of their strengths, weaknesses, and learning strategies, leading to more effective and autonomous language learning.

Moreover, TBI contributes to the development of cognitive flexibility and adaptability in language use (Thomas and Reinders, 2020). Tasks require learners to employ different language forms, functions, and registers depending on the communicative context. This flexibility in language use promotes cognitive flexibility, enabling learners to adjust their language production according to the task requirements and the interlocutors' needs. Learners become more adept at switching between different linguistic resources and adapting their language use to diverse situations.

Overall, Task-Based Instruction offers several cognitive benefits to learners. It enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills by providing opportunities for authentic language use in meaningful tasks (Van Den Branden, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). TBI fosters metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning

strategies, empowering learners to monitor and control their language learning processes. Additionally, TBI develops cognitive flexibility and adaptability, enabling learners to employ diverse language resources and adjust their language use based on communicative contexts (Thomas and Reinders, 2020).

5.2.6. Transformative Nature of Task-Based Instruction

It can be deduced that TBI is totally beneficial in terms of the following:

1. Empowering learners through authentic and meaningful language tasks: TBI empowers learners by providing them with authentic and meaningful language tasks (East, 2020; Shehadeh, 2020). Engaging in real-life tasks, such as role-plays, problem-solving activities, or project-based assignments, allows learners to apply language skills in meaningful contexts. This empowers learners to take ownership of their learning as they see the immediate relevance and purpose of the language they are acquiring (East, 2020). Through TBI, learners become active participants in the learning process, gaining confidence and motivation to use the language outside the classroom (Shehadeh, 2020).
2. Promoting learner autonomy and ownership of the language learning process: TBI promotes learner autonomy and encourages learners to take responsibility for their language learning (Van Den Branden and Medgyes, 2020). By engaging in tasks that require decision-making, problem-solving, and self-assessment, learners develop metacognitive and self-regulatory skills (Van Den Branden and Medgyes, 2020). They become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, set their own learning goals, and monitor their progress. This autonomy fosters a sense of ownership and control over the language learning process, leading to more meaningful and sustainable language development (Hall and Le Cornu, 2021).
3. Cultivating intercultural communicative competence and global perspectives: TBI cultivates intercultural communicative competence and promotes the development of global perspectives (García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020; Yilmaz and Kayi-Aydar, 2021). Tasks often involve collaboration and interaction with peers from different cultural backgrounds, fostering an understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives (García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). Through TBI, learners engage in authentic communicative tasks that require them to navigate cultural differences and adapt their language use accordingly. This cultivates intercultural sensitivity and the ability to communicate effectively in multicultural contexts (Yilmaz and Kayi-Aydar, 2021). TBI also encourages learners to explore global issues, fostering a broader awareness of the world and promoting global citizenship.

Overall, Task-Based Instruction has a transformative nature that empowers learners, promotes learner autonomy, and cultivates intercultural communicative competence (East, 2020; Shehadeh, 2020; Van Den Branden and Medgyes, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020; Hall and Le Cornu, 2021; Yilmaz and Kayi-Aydar, 2021). By engaging in authentic and meaningful language tasks, learners develop a sense of ownership and motivation in their language learning journey. They also develop the necessary skills to communicate effectively in multicultural settings and gain a global perspective on language use and cultural diversity.

5.2.7. Research Findings and Empirical Evidence

Review of empirical studies on the cognitive effects of TBI in tertiary language education: Several empirical studies have examined the cognitive effects of TBI in tertiary language education (Moeller, Gibbons, & Castro, 2021). These studies have consistently shown positive outcomes in terms of enhanced cognitive processes, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making (Moeller *et al.*, 2021). Learners engaged in TBI demonstrate improved analytical skills, the ability to evaluate information, and the capacity to make informed decisions in real-life situations (Moeller *et al.*, 2021). These findings highlight the cognitive benefits of TBI and its potential to foster cognitive growth in language learners.

Examination of transformative experiences reported by learners in TBI settings: Qualitative research exploring learners' experiences in TBI settings has revealed transformative experiences (Van Den Branden, 2020; Shehadeh, 2020). Learners report a sense of empowerment and increased confidence in their language abilities as they engage in authentic and meaningful tasks (Van Den Branden, 2020). They also describe a shift in their perspectives, where they develop a deeper understanding of different cultures, gain intercultural competence, and expand their global awareness (Shehadeh, 2020). These transformative experiences indicate that TBI has the potential to shape learners' attitudes, beliefs, and identities as language users.

5.2.8. Discussion of the Strengths and Limitations of Existing Research

While research on the cognitive effects and transformative nature of TBI in tertiary language education has provided valuable insights, there are certain strengths and limitations to consider. One strength is the growing body of empirical

studies that consistently demonstrate the cognitive benefits of TBI (Moeller *et al.*, 2021). These studies employ various research designs, including quantitative and qualitative methods, providing a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive effects of TBI. However, some limitations include a relatively limited number of longitudinal studies and variations in task design and implementation across studies. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of TBI on cognitive development and to establish more standardized approaches to task design and implementation.

Overall, empirical studies have consistently shown the cognitive benefits of TBI in tertiary language education, including enhanced critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills (Moeller *et al.*, 2021). Learners in TBI settings also report transformative experiences, such as increased empowerment, confidence, intercultural competence, and global awareness (Van Den Branden, 2020; Shehadeh, 2020). However, further research is needed to address limitations and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the cognitive effects and transformative nature of TBI in tertiary language education.

5.2.9. Implications for Tertiary Language Education

Recommendations for implementing and optimizing TBI in tertiary language classrooms: To effectively implement and optimize TBI in tertiary language classrooms, several recommendations can be considered (Hall and Le Cornu, 2021). First, it is important to provide clear guidance and training to educators on the principles and strategies of TBI. Educators should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to design and implement task-based lessons effectively (Hall and Le Cornu, 2021). Additionally, promoting collaboration and peer interaction within tasks can enhance the learning experience. This can be achieved through group work, pair activities, and project-based tasks that foster meaningful communication and cooperation among learners (Van Den Branden, 2020). Furthermore, integrating authentic materials and real-world contexts into tasks can create a more engaging and relevant learning environment (Moeller *et al.*, 2021). Overall, careful planning, learner-centeredness, and alignment with curricular goals are essential for successful implementation of TBI in tertiary language classrooms.

5.2.10. Integrating TBI with Technology-enhanced Learning and Digital Resources

The integration of TBI with technology-enhanced learning and digital resources offers exciting possibilities in tertiary language education (Thomas and Reinders, 2020). Technology can enhance task design and implementation, providing learners with access to authentic materials, multimedia resources, and online communication platforms (Thomas and Reinders, 2020). Virtual collaboration tools, mobile apps, and online learning platforms can facilitate interactive and engaging task-based activities, promoting communication and collaboration among learners (Thomas and Reinders, 2020). Additionally, technology can support the collection and analysis of learner performance data, allowing educators to provide timely feedback and monitor learners' progress (Thomas and Reinders, 2020). Integrating TBI with technology-enhanced learning can enhance the authenticity and effectiveness of tasks in tertiary language classrooms.

Professional development and support for educators in adopting TBI approaches: Professional development and support for educators are crucial in promoting the successful adoption of TBI approaches in tertiary language education (García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). Institutions should provide opportunities for ongoing professional development, including workshops, seminars, and collaborative communities of practice (García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). These initiatives can help educators develop a deeper understanding of TBI principles, refine their instructional practices, and share experiences with colleagues (García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). Additionally, mentorship programs and peer observations can provide educators with guidance and feedback as they implement TBI in their classrooms (García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). By investing in the professional development and support of educators, institutions can ensure the successful implementation of TBI and create a positive impact on tertiary language education.

Overall, the implications of Task-Based Instruction (TBI) for tertiary language education involve recommendations for implementing and optimizing TBI in classrooms, integrating TBI with technology-enhanced learning, and providing professional development and support for educators (Hall and Le Cornu, 2021; Thomas and Reinders, 2020; García Mayo and Lavid López, 2020). By following these recommendations, tertiary institutions can create an environment that promotes effective TBI practices, engages learners, and fosters their language development and cognitive growth.

6. Conclusion

All in all, Task-Based Instruction (TBI) holds significant potential in unlocking learners' cognitive potential and promoting transformative learning experiences in tertiary language education. By engaging learners in authentic and meaningful tasks, TBI enhances critical thinking, fosters metacognitive awareness, and develops cognitive flexibility. It empowers learners, promotes learner autonomy, and cultivates intercultural communicative competence. The findings highlight

the importance of implementing TBI in tertiary language education to facilitate cognitive growth and holistic development. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies, standardizing task design and implementation approaches, integrating technology-enhanced learning, and providing teacher professional development and support. Advancements in TBI at the tertiary level can be achieved through collaborative research, sharing of best practices, and ongoing professional development initiatives for educators. Indeed, TBI plays a vital role in unlocking learners' cognitive potential, promoting transformative learning experiences, and shaping the future of tertiary language education.

7. Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several implications and recommendations can be made for the implementation of Task-Based Instruction (TBI) in tertiary language education.

First, it is essential to provide comprehensive training and professional development opportunities for language educators to familiarize themselves with TBI principles, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. This will enable them to effectively design and implement TBI activities that promote meaningful language learning experiences.

Second, integrating technology-enhanced learning and digital resources can enhance the effectiveness of TBI. Educators should explore the use of various technological tools and platforms to create authentic and interactive tasks that engage learners and facilitate language acquisition.

Third, fostering collaboration and peer interaction is crucial in TBI. Educators should create a supportive learning environment where students can engage in meaningful communication, collaborate on tasks, and provide feedback to one another. This will enhance their language skills and promote social and cognitive development.

Fourth, incorporating authentic materials and real-world contexts in TBI activities is essential to develop learners' language proficiency and cultural competence. Educators should seek diverse and culturally relevant materials that reflect the interests and backgrounds of their students.

Lastly, ongoing assessment and feedback are integral components of TBI. Educators should implement formative and summative assessments aligned with the objectives of TBI, providing timely feedback to guide learners' progress and inform instructional decisions.

By heeding and implementing these implications and recommendations, teachers, students and stakeholders can optimize the benefits of TBI and create an engaging and transformative learning environment for tertiary language education.

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