

College of Education for Humanities
Department of English

Lecture Five

**Second Language Acquisition - Task-Based Learning &
Communicative Competence**

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➤ **Task-Based Learning**

Task-Based Learning-definition

Task-based learning involves creating activities and tasks that require learners to interact with each other, usually in small groups or pairs, to exchange information or solve problems.

What does this approach assume?

Despite fears that learners will simply learn each other's "mistake

Task-based learning is based on the assumption that learners improve their ability, especially their fluency, by using the L2 in an activity that focuses on getting meaning across and has a clear goal.

This is achieved by creating different types of tasks and activities in which learners have to interact with each other, usually in small groups or pairs, to exchange information or solve problems.

An example of a task that could be used to promote L2 fluency is

- “Describe a way to get from A to B so that your partner can draw the way on a map”
- or “plan a shopping trip with your partner by making a shopping list”

These tasks require learners to use the L2 to convey meaning to their partner and achieve a clear goal, which promotes the development of communicative competence in the L2.

Communicative Competence

Communicative competence-definition

It is the general ability to use language accurately, appropriately and flexibly.

Components of communicative competence:

- Grammatical competence,
- Sociolinguistic competence,
- Strategic competence

Grammatical competence

Involves the accurate use of words and structures. However, concentration only on grammatical competence, will not provide the learner with the ability to interpret or produce L2 expressions appropriately.

For instance, someone can use perfect grammar but still make sentences that are not meaningful or do not convey their intended message.

Sociolinguistic competence

It is the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts. It includes knowing what to say and when to say it.

For example, saying "Can I have some water?" would be more appropriate in a formal setting while "Give me some water!" could be acceptable in a casual context.

Thus, sociolinguistic competence requires an understanding of the cultural context of the language being learned

Strategic competence

This is the ability to organise a message effectively and to overcome potential communication problems via strategies.

- In L2 use, learners experience moments when there is a gap between communicative intent and their ability to express that intent.

- Some learners may just stop talking, whereas others will try to express themselves using a communication strategy.

For example, a Dutch L1 speaker wanted to refer to een hoefijzer in English but didn't know the English word. So, she used a communication strategy with vocabulary she already knew, saying the things that horses wear under their feet, the iron things and the listener understood immediately what she meant (horseshoes).