

# Exploring a Task-Based Learning Framework for Enhancing Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) Skills in the English Language Classroom

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**Abstract**— *The four macro-skills of English language learning Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) are traditionally taught in isolation, a practice that limits learners' capacity to use language communicatively and adaptively. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), grounded in the premise that language is best acquired through meaning-focused, outcome-oriented activity rather than explicit rule presentation, offers a pedagogically robust alternative. This paper synthesises the theoretical foundations of TBLT (Prabhu, 1987; Long, 1985; Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996; Nunan, 2004) and proposes an integrated Task-Based Learning (TBL) framework designed specifically to develop LSRW skills in a coordinated, mutually reinforcing manner within the English language classroom. The framework operationalises three cyclical phases pre-task, task cycle, and post-task/language focus and maps each phase onto specific receptive and productive skill demands, supported by a skill-integration matrix and a set of classroom-ready task typologies (information-gap, opinion-gap, reasoning-gap, and problem-solving tasks). The paper further discusses pedagogical implications for lesson design, learner autonomy, and formative assessment, and critically examines implementation challenges such as large class sizes, assessment-driven curricula, teacher preparedness, and learners' first-language reliance. It concludes by outlining a research agenda for empirically validating the proposed framework across diverse classroom contexts. The paper is conceptual in nature, synthesising existing empirical and theoretical literature; no new primary data were collected.*



**Keywords**— *Task-Based Language Teaching, LSRW skills, integrated skills instruction, English language classroom, communicative competence, task design*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English is frequently equated with competence in its four interdependent macro-skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. In most secondary and tertiary classrooms, however, these skills continue to be taught as discrete units, each assigned its own period, textbook section, and assessment rubric. This segmentation contradicts the way language is used outside the classroom, where listening feeds into speaking, reading informs writing, and all four skills operate simultaneously and interdependently in real communicative exchanges (Oxford, 2001). The persistence of a skills-isolated model has been linked to learners who can pass grammar-based

examinations yet struggle to sustain a conversation, follow authentic spoken discourse, or produce coherent extended writing (Richards, 2006).

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emerged as a response to the limitations of both grammar-translation and narrowly structural communicative approaches. Rather than treating language forms as the primary syllabus content, TBLT organises instruction around tasks goal-oriented activities in which language is the vehicle for achieving a non-linguistic outcome (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 1996). Because a well-designed task typically requires learners to listen or read for information, negotiate meaning orally, and often report findings in speech or writing, TBLT is structurally

well suited to integrating LSRW skills rather than treating them as separate strands. Despite this theoretical affordance, much of the published TBLT literature addresses speaking and, to a lesser extent, writing, with comparatively less attention paid to a framework that explicitly and systematically integrates all four skills within a single task cycle.

This paper addresses that gap by proposing a Task-Based Learning framework purpose-built for the coordinated development of LSRW skills. The specific objectives of the paper are to: (a) synthesise the theoretical and empirical foundations of TBLT relevant to skills integration; (b) propose a classroom-applicable framework that maps LSRW demands onto the pre-task, task cycle, and language focus phases of a task-based lesson; (c) illustrate the framework with task typologies and a skill-integration matrix; and (d) critically discuss the pedagogical implications, implementation challenges, and directions for future empirical research.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 LSRW Skills and the Case for Integration

Listening and reading are conventionally classified as receptive skills, while speaking and writing are productive skills; however, all four are cognitively and communicatively interdependent (Hinkel, 2006). Listening provides learners with comprehensible input and models of pronunciation, intonation, and discourse organisation that subsequently inform speaking. Reading exposes learners to lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical patterns that feed into writing. Speaking and writing, in turn, allow learners to consolidate and actively use language encountered receptively. Oxford (2001) argues that skill-integrated instruction more closely mirrors authentic language use and offers repeated, varied exposure to the same content across modalities, which supports retention. Meta-analytic and classroom-based studies of integrated-skills instruction report improvements in learner motivation and communicative fluency relative to skills-isolated instruction, although effect sizes vary considerably by context and task design (Hinkel, 2006; Richards, 2006).

### 2.2 Theoretical Foundations of Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT's theoretical roots lie in Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, and Swain's Output Hypothesis, which collectively argue that acquisition is driven by exposure to comprehensible input, negotiation of meaning during interaction, and the pushed production of output (Long, 1985). Prabhu's (1987) Bangalore Communicational Teaching Project was among the first

large-scale implementations of a task-based syllabus, demonstrating that a focus on meaning through procedural tasks could support grammatical development without explicit form-focused instruction. Skehan (1998) subsequently proposed a cognitive-processing account of task performance, identifying the trade-off between fluency, accuracy, and complexity as central to task design and sequencing. Ellis (2003) offered a widely cited definition of a task as a workplan requiring learners to process language pragmatically to achieve an outcome, with a clearly defined communicative purpose and a primary focus on meaning rather than form.

### 2.3 Task-Based Frameworks and Skills Integration

Willis (1996) formalised a three-phase task-based lesson framework pre-task, task cycle (task, planning, report), and language focus (analysis and practice) that remains the most widely adopted structural model for classroom implementation. Nunan (2004) proposed a related pedagogical framework comprising schema-building, controlled practice, authentic listening/reading, focus on linguistic elements, provision of freer practice, and introduction of the pedagogical task, explicitly sequencing input-based (listening/reading) activity before output-based (speaking/writing) production. Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2001) further examined how task characteristics (e.g., planning time, task structure, familiarity of information) affect the language produced, providing an empirical basis for calibrating task difficulty to integrate multiple skills without overwhelming learners. Collectively, this body of work establishes that (i) tasks can be designed to require sequential or simultaneous use of more than one skill, and (ii) the three-phase lesson structure provides natural points at which receptive and productive skills can be deliberately paired.

While these frameworks provide the theoretical scaffolding for skills integration, few published models translate them into a classroom-ready structure that explicitly specifies which LSRW skill (or combination of skills) is foregrounded at each phase of the task cycle. The framework proposed in Section 4 addresses this gap.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING THE PROPOSED MODEL

The proposed framework draws on three converging theoretical strands. First, Long's (1985) Interaction Hypothesis provides the rationale for embedding listening and speaking within negotiated, information-gap tasks. Second, Swain's Output Hypothesis justifies the inclusion of a structured reporting or writing stage that pushes learners beyond comprehension toward accurate and coherent production. Third, Willis's (1996) three-phase

lesson structure supplies the organisational scaffold pre-task, task cycle, and language focus onto which the four skills are mapped. A fourth, complementary strand is Vygotskian sociocultural theory, which frames the collaborative, dialogic nature of many tasks (pair and group work) as the mechanism through which learners co-construct language within their Zone of Proximal Development (Lantolf, 2000). Together, these strands support a model in which LSRW skills are not sequenced as separate lesson segments but are functionally embedded within a single, coherent task cycle.

#### IV. PROPOSED TASK-BASED LEARNING FRAMEWORK FOR LSRW SKILLS

The proposed framework, termed the Integrated LSRW Task-Based (IL-TB) framework, adapts Willis's (1996) three-phase structure into four operational stages, each of which foregrounds a primary skill while requiring at least one supporting skill, so that all four macro-skills are exercised within a single task cycle rather than across separate lessons.

##### 4.1 Stage 1 — Schema Activation (Listening/Reading-led)

The lesson opens with a short authentic or semi-authentic input text (audio recording, video clip, or short passage) related to the task theme. Learners complete a light-processing activity (prediction, gist question, or graphic organiser) that activates prior knowledge and pre-teaches essential vocabulary. The primary skill exercised is listening or reading; speaking is used minimally, for brief pair-checking of predictions.

##### 4.2 Stage 2 — Task Cycle: Information Exchange (Listening–Speaking-led)

| Stage                            | Primary Skill(s)     | Supporting Skill(s) | Illustrative Task Type                                         |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Schema Activation             | Listening / Reading  | Speaking (brief)    | Prediction task; gist listening/reading with graphic organiser |
| 2. Information Exchange          | Listening & Speaking | —                   | Information-gap; opinion-gap; problem-solving task             |
| 3. Reporting & Reading Extension | Speaking / Reading   | Listening           | Group report-back; jigsaw reading comparison                   |
| 4. Language Focus & Writing      | Writing              | Reading (models)    | Guided summary; reflective paragraph; email/report writing     |

##### 4.6 Task Typologies Supporting the Framework

- Information-gap tasks: each learner holds partial information and must communicate orally to complete a shared record, chart, or map (listening + speaking).

Learners undertake the core communicative task, typically an information-gap, opinion-gap, reasoning-gap, or problem-solving task (Prabhu, 1987) in pairs or small groups. This stage requires sustained listening to a partner's input and reciprocal spoken production to close the information gap, negotiate meaning, or reach a joint decision. The teacher monitors without correcting, noting recurrent language difficulties for the subsequent language-focus stage.

##### 4.3 Stage 3 — Reporting and Reading Extension (Speaking/Reading-led)

Groups report their task outcomes to the class or to another group, either orally or by exchanging written notes that other groups must read and respond to. Where feasible, the teacher introduces a short related authentic text for learners to compare against their own task outcomes, reinforcing reading skill alongside oral reporting.

##### 4.4 Stage 4 — Language Focus and Writing Consolidation (Writing-led)

Drawing on language difficulties observed during monitoring, the teacher leads a brief, inductive focus-on-form segment. Learners then complete a writing task that requires them to reformulate, extend, or reflect on the spoken task outcome (e.g., a summary report, an email, a short argumentative paragraph). This final stage pushes learners from oral fluency toward written accuracy and coherence, consolidating the language generated across the earlier stages.

##### 4.5 Skill-Integration Matrix

Table 1 summarises the primary and supporting skills engaged at each stage of the IL-TB framework, together with an illustrative classroom task type.

- Opinion-gap tasks: learners express and justify personal preferences or judgements on a given issue, requiring listening for counter-arguments and speaking to respond (listening + speaking + informal reasoning).

- Reasoning-gap tasks: learners derive new information from given information through inference or logical reasoning (e.g., solving a puzzle from clues), integrating reading/listening comprehension with spoken justification.
- Problem-solving and decision-making tasks: groups read/listen to a scenario and negotiate a joint decision, then produce a written recommendation or report (all four skills in sequence).

Across all typologies, task difficulty can be graded along the dimensions identified by Skehan (1998) and Robinson (2001): the amount of planning time, the familiarity and structure of information, and the number of task elements allowing the same IL-TB structure to be scaled from lower-proficiency to advanced classrooms.

## V. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Adopting the IL-TB framework has several implications for lesson planning, materials design, and classroom management. First, lesson planning shifts from a single-skill objective (e.g., 'students will practise the present perfect') to an outcome-based objective (e.g., 'students will negotiate and report a joint travel itinerary'), with language points identified inductively from what the task actually generates rather than pre-selected. Second, materials design requires the deliberate pairing of input texts (for listening/reading) with output tasks (for speaking/writing) around a shared theme, rather than treating a textbook's listening, speaking, reading, and writing sections as independent units. Third, the teacher's role shifts from presenter/controller to facilitator and monitor during the task cycle, intervening minimally during Stage 2 to preserve the communicative focus, and taking a more directive role only during the language-focus stage. Fourth, the framework naturally supports formative, task-based assessment for example, using task outcome, fluency, and the accuracy of the final written product as converging evidence of learning rather than relying solely on discrete-skill tests administered separately.

The framework also has implications for learner autonomy: because Stage 2 requires learners to sustain communication without teacher mediation, and Stage 4 requires independent written consolidation, learners are positioned as active users rather than passive recipients of language, which is consistent with self-determination accounts of L2 motivation (Ellis, 2003).

## VI. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Several practical constraints may limit the framework's implementation, particularly in large-class or examination-driven contexts typical of many South and Southeast Asian secondary and higher-education settings.

- Class size: Information-gap and problem-solving tasks depend on active pair/group interaction; classes exceeding forty to fifty learners strain monitoring capacity and increase off-task first-language use.
- Assessment misalignment: Where high-stakes examinations privilege discrete grammar and reading-comprehension items, teachers may deprioritise integrated task-based lessons in favour of exam-focused drilling.
- Teacher preparedness: Facilitating an unscripted task cycle, and identifying language points inductively from learner output, demands a level of linguistic and pedagogical confidence that pre-service training does not always provide.
- Learner L1 reliance: In low-proficiency or monolingual classrooms, learners may default to the first language during the negotiation-heavy Stage 2 unless task design and monitoring actively discourage this.
- Time constraints: A full four-stage cycle requires more class time than a single-skill lesson, which can be difficult to accommodate within fixed-period timetables.

These constraints do not invalidate the framework but indicate that successful adoption is likely to require accompanying institutional support: teacher professional development in task facilitation, revision of assessment instruments to credit task-based performance, and flexible scheduling that allows extended lesson blocks.

## VII. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As a conceptual paper, this work stops short of empirical validation, and this is offered as the primary avenue for subsequent research. Quasi-experimental classroom studies comparing the IL-TB framework against skills-isolated instruction, using pre/post measures across all four LSRW domains, would establish whether the framework yields the integration benefits it is designed to produce. Longitudinal studies could examine whether gains in integrated task-based classrooms are sustained over an academic year and transfer to standardised proficiency measures. Further research might also investigate teacher cognition and training needs for task facilitation, the framework's

adaptability to online and blended delivery, and its performance across proficiency bands (CEFR A2–C1) and first-language backgrounds. Mixed-methods designs combining task-performance analysis (fluency, accuracy, complexity measures per Skehan, 1998) with learner and teacher perception data would offer the most complete picture of the framework's classroom viability.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper has synthesised the theoretical foundations of Task-Based Language Teaching and proposed an Integrated LSRW Task-Based (IL-TB) framework that deliberately maps listening, speaking, reading, and writing onto a coherent four-stage task cycle: schema activation, information exchange, reporting and reading extension, and language focus with writing consolidation. Grounded in interaction, output, and sociocultural theories of second language acquisition, the framework offers English language teachers a structured yet flexible model for moving beyond skills-isolated instruction toward a more authentic, communicatively integrated classroom practice. While implementation challenges particularly class size, assessment misalignment, and teacher preparedness- are non-trivial, they are addressable through targeted institutional support. The framework is offered as a starting point for empirical validation across diverse classroom contexts, with the ultimate aim of equipping learners to use English as an integrated communicative resource rather than as four disconnected examination subjects.

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