

EXPLORING A TAILORED TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) MODEL FOR ENHANCING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN MATURE STUDENTS

Susana Adjei-Mensah

Valley View University, Ghana

E-mail: sadjei-mensah@vvu.edu.gh

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Abstract

Language teachers employ a range of approaches, both direct and indirect, to support effective language learning. Among these, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) stands out as a learner-centred, indirect method that fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and learner autonomy. Mature students in higher education, however, encounter distinctive challenges related to balancing multiple responsibilities, managing academic anxiety, addressing financial constraints, and overcoming limited language proficiency, often resulting from an extended gap in formal study. This paper proposes a tailored TBLT model comprising four components: constructivist principles, TBLT phases, cooperative learning principles, and contextually relevant teaching–learning activities. The model aims to enhance mature students’ language competence and bridge proficiency gaps with their younger peers through authentic tasks such as event planning, community debates, report writing, and formal email preparation. By drawing upon their professional and life experiences in these collaborative and authentic contexts, learners engage with real-world language use, leading to measurable improvements in linguistic performance. Implemented over a twelve-week intervention with 21 mature students at a private university, the model demonstrated significant gains in reading, writing, and speaking proficiency. The study thus presents an empirically validated framework integrating constructivist, task-based, and cooperative learning approaches to meet the specific needs of mature language learners.

Keywords: *constructivist learning; language proficiency; second language acquisition; student-centred approach; Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)*

1. Introduction

An instructional model is a framework that guides educators in planning, delivering, and evaluating teaching (Marzano, 2019). These models can be categorised into direct, teacher-centred approaches and indirect, student-centred approaches. Direct models, such as the lecture method and whole-class instruction, emphasize teacher authority and knowledge transmission. They involve clear, systematic delivery of content, with the teacher as the central figure and students as passive recipients (Slavin, 2018; Ornstein & Hunkins,

2017). While effective for conveying information, these models may limit student participation and critical thinking.

In contrast, indirect models prioritise student autonomy and active engagement. Approaches such as project-based learning, concept mapping, and flipped classrooms encourage exploration, collaboration, and problem-solving, thereby fostering critical thinking and deeper understanding (Guo et al., 2020; Tomashevskaya, 2024; Al-Samarraie, Shamsuddin, & Alzahrani, 2020). These models support student-centred learning by promoting hands-on experiences and interactive environments.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is also an indirect instructional model that emphasises the use of meaningful, real-world tasks to promote language learning. Unlike direct instructional models that focus primarily on linguistic forms and teacher-led explanations, TBLT engages students in practical language use through tasks that reflect real-life situations (Ahmad & Sutabri, 2024). This approach fosters communicative competence by immersing learners in authentic language activities, which encourages them to use the target language for practical purposes such as problem-solving and communication (Rahman, 2024).

One of the key advantages of TBLT is its ability to promote learner autonomy and contextualised language practice. By participating in tasks that mimic real-world interactions, students develop essential language skills in a relevant and engaging context, leading to improved fluency and confidence in using the language (Long, 2015). Additionally, TBLT supports the development of cognitive and communicative skills, which are crucial for effective language use (Hu, 2024)

Despite its benefits, TBLT presents some challenges. Implementing TBLT requires substantial teacher preparation to design and adapt tasks that meet diverse learner needs and proficiency levels (Gou, 2024). Managing a classroom with varying language abilities can be demanding, and achieving a balance between fluency and accuracy remains a challenge (Kim, 2024). Nevertheless, with appropriate training and support, TBLT can be a highly effective approach for creating dynamic and meaningful language learning experiences.

Universities and higher education institutions around the world employ diverse admission criteria for enrolling students into their programmes. While most undergraduate programs admit students based on high school grades or diplomas, others, including mature students, are admitted through alternative pathways. Mature-age students, who are typically older than traditional students, are admitted based on their life experience and are often required to take a mature entrance examination. This process is designed for individuals who may have taken a break from formal education and are now seeking to pursue higher education. Institutions have different protocols for admitting such students, which often include a combination of factors like relevant work experience, a minimum age requirement (usually 30 years or older), and any previous educational certifications. For example, in Ghana, the minimum age for mature students is 25 years, as stipulated by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) (www.gtec.edu.gh). These students are also referred to as adult learners, or non-traditional students or learners.

Research indicates that mature students face distinct challenges in higher education. Andrade et al. (2024) highlight issues related to managing multiple roles, which include family, work and studies, while Perera and Thanthirige (2024) note that mature students face challenges such as fear of re-adapting to the learning environment and age-related stigma. Additionally, Dawborn-Gundlach and Margetts (2018) identify challenges such as academic anxiety, social dislocation, and unrealistic expectations among mature students in

Australia. These challenges underscore the necessity for an instructional approach tailored to their specific needs.

This paper proposes a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) model designed specifically for mature students. TBLT, as already indicated, is an instructional model that focuses on using meaningful tasks to facilitate language learning by engaging students in authentic language use. The rationale for developing a tailored TBLT model for mature students is rooted in the need to enhance their language proficiency, particularly in writing and reading. Research by Adjei-Mensah (2023) and Adjei-Mensah et al. (2022) suggests that a tailored approach can address the unique challenges faced by mature students and improve their language skills. The shift from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to TBLT emphasises task-based approaches that provide students with practical opportunities for language use relevant to their needs and interests (East, 2024). By incorporating a personalised TBLT model, this paper aims to make the language learning process more meaningful and effective for mature learners, ultimately enhancing their academic performance and engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Language Teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a prominent approach in language education, emphasising the use of meaningful tasks to promote language learning. TBLT is grounded in the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which prioritise real-life communication and the practical use of language. Central to TBLT is the notion that language learning is most effective when learners are engaged in tasks that require them to use the target language to achieve specific outcomes (Azmy & Nanda, 2024; Li, 2023; Duo, 2021).

2.2 Applications of TBLT

TBLT has been widely adopted in various educational contexts, demonstrating its flexibility and effectiveness across different age groups and proficiency levels. Research has shown that TBLT can enhance learners' communicative competence, fluency, and overall language proficiency (Azmy & Nanda, 2024; Rahman, 2024; Kim, 2024; Gou, 2024; Gregersen & Nielsen, 2022). This approach encourages active learning, where students are not merely passive recipients of information but active participants in the learning process (Xu & Fan, 2022; Ismail et al., 2023).

Various task types, such as information-gap, reasoning-gap, and opinion-gap activities, are employed in TBLT to create opportunities for meaningful interaction and authentic language use (Hu, 2024). These tasks are designed to simulate real-world scenarios, enabling learners to practice language skills in contexts that mirror everyday communication (Li, 2023).

2.3 TBLT and Mature Students

While TBLT has been extensively studied and implemented in general language teaching contexts, there is limited research focusing specifically on its application for mature students. Mature students, often defined as those who return to education after an extended period, bring unique experiences, motivations, and challenges to the learning environment (Adu-Yeboah & Forde, 2011). These learners typically have diverse multiple

responsibilities, such as work and family commitments, which can impact their learning process and outcomes (Dawborn-Gundlach & Margetts, 2018).

One key challenge mature students face is balancing their educational pursuits with other life responsibilities. This group of learners often requires flexible and adaptive learning approaches that cater to their specific needs and schedules (Perera & Thanthirige, 2024). Moreover, mature students may experience anxiety and self-doubt, particularly when re-engaging with academic writing and speaking (Harjali, 2019). These factors underscore the need for tailored instructional models that address the distinct characteristics and requirements of mature learners.

2.4 Gaps in Existing Models

Existing TBLT models, while effective in promoting language proficiency, may not fully address the unique needs of mature students. Traditional TBLT approaches often assume a level of language proficiency and cognitive readiness that may not align with the experiences of mature learners (Bialystok, 2021). For instance, mature students may benefit from additional scaffolding and support to build confidence and competence in language use (Damanhour, 2021).

Additionally, the existing literature highlights a gap in the integration of constructivist principles within TBLT models for mature students. Constructivist theory, which emphasises the active construction of knowledge through experiences and reflection, aligns well with the cognitive and experiential profiles of mature learners (Jumaah, 2024). Incorporating constructivist strategies, such as reflective journals, case studies, and group interactions, can enhance the effectiveness of TBLT for mature students by leveraging their prior knowledge and experiences (Venkadeswaran & Ramanathan, 2024).

2.5 Addressing the Gaps

The existing literature highlights several gaps in the application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for mature students. While TBLT has proven effective in various educational contexts, it often assumes a younger, more traditional learner profile. There is a notable absence of models tailored to address the unique needs of mature learners, as already indicated (balancing educational pursuits with personal responsibilities, diverse learning styles, and varying levels of prior knowledge and experience).

To address these challenges, this paper proposes a tailored TBLT model designed to better support mature students. This model introduces an additional preparatory phase preceding the traditional pre-task, task, and post-task phases. The preparatory phase aims to create a supportive learning environment to meet mature learners' psychological and emotional needs, foster rapport, and reduce anxiety. This approach ensures mature learners are motivated and prepared for the tasks ahead, which responds to the gap in current TBLT models that overlook the socio-emotional readiness of adult learners.

Furthermore, the pre-task phase includes clearly structured materials and explicit instructions to support learners who may struggle with academic re-entry or lack recent study habits. The task phase emphasises collaborative and real-life problem-solving tasks, designed to respect mature learners' experiential knowledge and promote engagement. Finally, the post-task phase integrates detailed feedback and reflection opportunities, which cater to mature students' need for guided self-assessment and peer learning. Activities such as role-playing, information-gap tasks, and problem-solving exercises are integrated to foster collaboration, critical thinking, and application of knowledge.

By addressing these specific needs and incorporating targeted activities, the proposed model aims to provide a more comprehensive and effective approach to language teaching for mature students. This tailored model seeks to bridge the gap in existing TBLT applications and offer a framework that better supports mature learners in their educational journey.

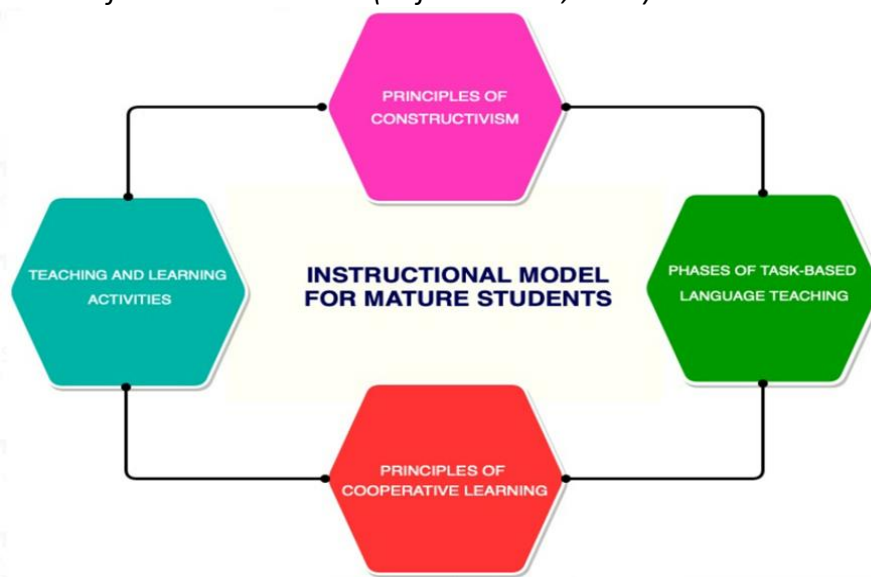
2.6 The Task-based Language Teaching Instructional Model for Mature Students

This model is designed to support the effective instruction of English as a second language to mature students, incorporating essential principles, strategies, activities, skills, and knowledge to foster their language proficiency. This instructional model is designed to enhance the language abilities of mature students, focusing on the four essential skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The model consists of four interconnected components (See Fig. 1) that work harmoniously to produce a comprehensive and cohesive approach, ultimately leading to significant improvements in students' overall language proficiency. The model's first component draws on constructivist principles (Oanh & Nhung, 2022), emphasising learner-centred and experiential learning. The second component incorporates task-based language teaching phases (Ellis, 2009), tailored to mature students' needs. The third component integrates cooperative learning principles (Johnson et al., 2024), fostering collaborative learning environments. The fourth component incorporates teaching and learning activities from Prabhu (1987), Richards (2005) and Norton (2018). Additionally, the model considers experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2020) to create a comprehensive approach. Each component is crucial in effectively teaching and learning L2 among mature students.

The proposed instructional model was piloted with 21 first-year mature undergraduate students at a private university in Ghana. The implementation took place over twelve weeks (one semester), allowing for practical observation of its effectiveness in enhancing language proficiency.

Figure 1

Instructional model for mature students (Adjei-Mensah, 2022)



2.7 Constructivism Principles

Constructivism is a learning theory based on the principle that learners actively construct their own understanding and knowledge through experiential learning and

reflective practices. Unlike traditional educational approaches that view learners as passive receivers of information, constructivist principles see learners as active participants in their educational journey. They engage with new material by integrating it with their pre-existing cognitive frameworks and life experiences to build new knowledge (Bramley & Xu, 2023; Nadeem & Eddy, 2020). This approach is particularly relevant for mature students, who bring a wealth of personal and professional experiences to the learning environment. By leveraging these experiences, mature learners can forge meaningful connections with new content, enhancing the learning process and ensuring that the new knowledge is deeply integrated and applicable (Harjali, 2019).

Constructivist theory, rooted in the idea that knowledge is constructed through experiences and reflection, aligns well with the learning needs of mature students (Halid, 2024; Jumaah, 2024; Venkadeswaran & Ramanathan, 2024). Mature students, with their rich backgrounds of prior experiences, benefit from a learning approach that engages them in real-life, applied learning experiences. Activities such as reflective journals, case studies, and group interactions enable these learners to build new knowledge upon their existing mental frameworks. This constructivist approach not only fosters creativity, confidence, and leadership skills but also promotes meaningful and authentic activities that enhance problem-solving abilities (Mueller, 2012). By applying constructivist principles, educators can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that caters to the unique needs and experiences of mature students, leading to improved learning outcomes. Such engagements, according to Ruwaidah et al. (2025), create a sense of security and emotional support.

2.8 Four Phases of TBLT

Central to the model is Task-Based Learning and Teaching (TBLT), which typically consists of three phases: pre-task, task, and post-task (Ellis, 2019). However, this adapted model includes a fourth phase, the preparatory phase, which precedes the pre-task phase. This initial phase focuses on creating a conducive learning environment, arranging seating in groups, and scheduling classes at optimal times to meet students' basic psychological needs (Maslow, 1943). The lecturer arrives early to interact with students, identify their needs, and motivate them for the task ahead, allowing time for discussion of social and academic issues and setting personal goals. (Ambrose et al., 2010).

The task phase is where students perform the task, plan their presentation, and present their work orally or in writing, with options for time allotment, input data, and access to relevant information (Bhandari, 2020). Students are encouraged to take risks, use vocabulary freely, and communicate in groups, guided by principles of adult learning (Loeng, 2020), effective teaching (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010), experiential learning (Anggreni, 2020), and non-defensive learning (Khalid, 2015). The task phase incorporates strategies such as focus-on-form, information exchange, planning, and task solutions (Rodríguez-Peñarroja, 2022) and considers students' existing language repertoire and experience (Bialystok, 2019). The teacher observes and provides guidance when needed, and students are allowed to share their thoughts and ideas freely, promoting a respectful and supportive learning environment (Mat & Jamaludin, 2024)

The post-task phase involves providing feedback on the completed task, analysing and discussing the language used during the task phase (Nunan, 2022). This phase applies the "consolidate" principle of effective teaching (Fernandez et al., 2024), where constructive feedback enables students to enhance their work. The lesson is also summarised, allowing students to correct mistakes made during the presentation stage (Jonida et al., 2022; Lin,

2007; 2020). Students use self and peer evaluation to assess their performance, fostering a reflective and collaborative learning environment (Boud & Bearman, 2024). If time is limited, students can work outside class to complete corrections and report back in the next lesson, promoting autonomous learning and accountability (Rupinis et al., 2024)

2.9 Principles of Collaborative Learning

Another crucial element of this model is the principles of collaborative learning, which prioritise student-centred instruction over teacher-centred approaches (Johnson et al., 2024). By engaging in group or paired activities, students can learn from one another and benefit from their peers' knowledge and skills (Gillies, 2023). During lessons, students are seated in pairs or groups, facing each other rather than the teacher, to facilitate peer-to-peer learning (Ibarra-Sáiz et al., 2020). This arrangement enables students to share knowledge and skills, which is particularly essential for mature students at university, who bring diverse experiences and perspectives to the learning environment (Hanson, 2020).

Effective collaborative learning is built on six essential principles (Johnson et al., 2024). First, positive interdependence ensures that group members rely on each other to achieve shared goals (Gillies, 2023). Second, individual accountability requires each student to take responsibility for their contribution to the group's work and demonstrate their knowledge through individual assessments (Ibarra-Sáiz et al., 2020). Third, face-to-face promotive interaction fosters communication and social skills through group discussions and activities (Johnson et al., 2024). Fourth, developing appropriate collaborative skills such as trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication, and conflict management is crucial (Gillies, 2023). Fifth, group processing involves regular reflection and evaluation of the group's process to improve effectiveness (Hanson, 2020). Finally, forming heterogeneous groups that capitalise on individual differences and strengths ensures a diverse and inclusive learning environment (Johnson et al., 2024).

The principles of collaborative learning are particularly beneficial for adult or mature learners, who bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the learning environment (Rose et al., 2023; Hanson, 2020). By promoting positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, and appropriate collaborative skills, adult learners can leverage their diverse perspectives and strengths to achieve shared goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Gillies, 2023). Group processing and heterogeneous groups also enable adult learners to reflect on their learning, identify areas for improvement, and develop a sense of community and belonging (Wlodkowski, 2017; Ibarra-Sáiz et al., 2020). Moreover, collaborative learning accommodates different learning styles and preferences, which is essential for adult learners who may have varied educational backgrounds and learning needs (King, 2017; Johnson et al., 2024). By fostering a collaborative and inclusive learning environment, educators can support the unique needs and goals of adult learners, leading to increased motivation, engagement, and academic success (Rose et al., 2022; Hanson & Florestano, 2020).

2.10 The Teaching and Learning Activities

The teaching and learning activities component of the model encompasses a range of strategies to facilitate effective instruction and learning for mature students. They involve tasks that promote collaborative learning, critical thinking, and effective communication, which foster effective language acquisition. Cooperative learning approaches, such as group work, are utilised to promote collaborative learning (Johnson et al., 2024). Various activities

are employed, including jigsaw reading, voting, think-pair-share, role-playing, information-gap tasks, problem-solving exercises, task-completion activities, opinion-sharing exercises, team-building exercises, and class-building exercises (Willis & Willis, 2016). Jigsaw activities facilitate comprehension of larger texts, allowing mature students to engage deeply with content and collaborate effectively with peers, drawing on their diverse experiences (Calkins & Rivnay, 2022; Suwartono & Romdona, 2024). Voting activities encourage mature learners to take a stance on various topics, fostering critical thinking and providing a platform for diverse viewpoints (Payne, 2021). Think-pair-share activities help reduce anxiety and promote active participation, creating a supportive environment where mature students can reflect on their ideas and engage in dialogue. Role-playing activities enable mature students to assume different roles and perspectives, enhancing their ability to understand complex scenarios and apply knowledge in practical contexts.

Additionally, information-gap tasks and problem-solving exercises are essential for mature students, as they encourage active engagement and critical thinking, aligning with their prior knowledge and real-life experiences. Task-completion activities and opinion-sharing exercises support collaborative learning by leveraging mature students' diverse backgrounds, thus enriching the learning process. Team-building and class-building exercises strengthen social interactions and foster a sense of community, which is crucial for mature students who may benefit from enhanced peer support from their interactions (Topping et al., 2017; Bourgeois, 2011).

3. Research Method

This paper presents a conceptual instructional model tailored to the needs of mature language learners, grounded in constructivist theory, cooperative learning principles, and the phases of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). The model was informed by classroom experience and pilot implementation with mature students, as well as insights from earlier studies conducted by the author (Adjei-Mensah, 2022)

The model was piloted with 21 first-year mature students enrolled in an Academic Writing course at a private university in Ghana. The pilot was conducted over one semester and aimed to develop students' academic language proficiency, including reading, writing, and speaking, within the structure of the proposed TBLT model.

Although this paper does not present a full empirical analysis of the pilot, the implementation informed the development and refinement of the model. One sample lesson is described in the section "*Model Implementation and Reflections*" to illustrate how the model was operationalised in practice.

To assess the model's effectiveness, a combination of pre- and post-tests, student feedback, and classroom observation was used. Results from the pilot studies showed a significant improvement in students' language proficiency, particularly in writing and reading (Adjei-Mensah, 2022), bringing their performance on par with non-mature students in the same course. Student feedback highlighted increased confidence, appreciation for the cooperative learning approach, and comfort within the supportive learning environment (Adjei-Mensah, 2024).

3.1 Model Implementation and Reflections

To illustrate the practical application of the tailored TBLT model, a detailed account of one lesson provides valuable insights. This lesson, focused on the use of punctuation in writing, was conducted over two hours and exemplifies the model's phases in action.

Lesson Overview:

- **Duration:** 2 hours
- **Topic:** Punctuation
- **Expected Outcome:** Students will be able to effectively use punctuation marks in narrative writing.

Preparatory Phase

In this phase, the lecturer prepared the learning environment by arranging chairs and tables to facilitate group work and interaction. Arriving early, the lecturer engaged in informal conversations with students to check on their well-being and address any challenges they had faced, particularly with registration. This initial engagement aimed to create a supportive atmosphere conducive to learning (Zajda, 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2012; Maslow, 1943).

Pre-Task Phase

Students were provided with a printed text containing various punctuation marks. This activity was designed to introduce them to punctuation usage and serve as a foundation for the subsequent tasks. The pre-task phase lasted 30 minutes, allowing students to familiarise themselves with the concept before moving on to practical application (Willis, 2016; Nair, 2018).

Task Cycle

- **Task:** Students were tasked with writing their own stories, which they then shared with a partner. They were asked to write a story about an incident that helped them grow up. They compared the punctuation used in each other's stories, sorted the most commonly used punctuation marks from the least used, and ordered them accordingly. This task involved active engagement with the material and collaboration with peers. The task phase lasted for 20 minutes.
- **Planning:** Students planned how to report their findings to the class, which took 10 minutes.
- **Reporting:** One student from each pair presented their work to the class. This reporting phase lasted for 20 minutes and allowed for peer-to-peer learning and feedback.

Post-Task Phase:

- **Analysis:** The lecturer provided feedback on the students' reports, addressing any errors and discussing language needs. This analysis lasted for 40 minutes and was crucial for reinforcing the correct usage of punctuation marks.
- **Practice:** Students then revised their stories with a focus on correct punctuation, reinforcing the lesson's objectives and promoting independent practice.

This lesson demonstrates how the tailored TBLT model's phases, thus, preparatory, pre-task, task, and post-task, can be effectively implemented in a real classroom setting. By integrating these phases, the lesson aimed to enhance students' understanding of punctuation through collaborative activities and practical application, thus addressing the specific needs of mature students and supporting their learning outcomes.

While this lesson is one among several implemented during the pilot, it illustrates the model's flexibility and learner-centred design. Observations throughout the piloting process

suggested increased student engagement, confidence, and autonomy, which are core outcomes the model was designed to support. Although this paper does not present a full dataset from the implementation, the reflective insights shared here underscore the model's practical relevance for mature learners in similar educational settings.

4. Discussion

4.1 Benefits

The tailored Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) model offers several potential benefits, particularly in enhancing language proficiency among mature students. The successful piloting of the model with 21 mature students demonstrates its practical relevance and potential for broader application among mature learners in similar educational contexts.

This model specifically addresses the unique language needs of mature learners, significantly improving their writing, reading, and speaking skills. This is essential for students who may have been away from formal education for an extended period (Adjei-Mensah, 2023; Adjei-Mensah et al., 2022). By focusing on meaningful tasks and real-world applications, the model increases motivation and engagement. Mature students often find more relevance and enjoyment in tasks that mirror real-life situations, thus making the learning process more effective (Willis & Willis, 2007).

Moreover, the model encourages autonomy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills by involving students in active, student-centred learning experiences. This aligns well with the preferences of mature learners, who often value independent learning and practical problem-solving (Hoidn & Reusser, 2020). Additionally, the model accommodates diverse learning styles and experiences, leveraging the rich backgrounds of mature students. By integrating personal and professional experiences into the learning process, the tailored TBLT model enhances understanding and retention (Harjali, 2019; Mueller, 2012).

4.2 Challenges

However, implementing this tailored TBLT model also presents several challenges. Extensive preparation is required from teachers to adapt and prepare tasks, which can be particularly demanding in resource-constrained environments (Long, 2015). Furthermore, managing diverse proficiency levels within a classroom poses significant challenges. Ensuring that all students are adequately supported and challenged necessitates careful planning and execution (Nunan, 2004). Another challenge is balancing the focus between language forms and meaningful communication and fluency. Teachers must navigate this balance carefully to ensure comprehensive language development (Pica, 2005). Additionally, there may be resistance from both teachers and students who are accustomed to traditional instructional methods. Transitioning to a task-based approach requires a change in mindset and teaching strategies, which can be difficult to implement (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

4.3 Comparison with Traditional Models

When comparing this tailored TBLT model with existing approaches, it is evident that it stands in contrast to traditional direct instructional methods. While traditional methods focus on knowledge transmission and passive learning, the TBLT model emphasises meaningful tasks and real-world applications. This shift towards active, student-centred learning proves to be more effective for mature students, who benefit significantly from practical and relevant learning experiences (Ellis, 2019). The tailored TBLT model also aligns

well with constructivist principles and adult learning theories, making it particularly effective for mature students. Traditional methods often fail to engage mature learners, whereas the TBLT model leverages their existing knowledge and experiences, facilitating better learning outcomes (Bramley & Xu, 2023; Nadeem & Eddy, 2020; Harjali, 2019).

4.4 Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of the tailored TBLT model are significant. By embodying constructivist principles, the model encourages learners to construct knowledge through experiential learning and reflective practices. This approach is crucial for mature students, who benefit from integrating new knowledge with their existing cognitive frameworks (Gupta, 2011; Mueller, 2012). Additionally, the model aligns with adult learning theories, emphasising the importance of practical, relevant learning experiences for mature students. This alignment ensures that the learning process is meaningful and applicable, leading to enhanced engagement and retention (Uddin, 2023; Merriam & Bierema, 2013). The tailored model also contributes to the broader TBLT framework by providing insights into its application and effectiveness in diverse educational contexts. This contribution is valuable for further research and practice in language teaching, particularly for mature learners (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015).

In conclusion, the tailored TBLT model offers a promising approach to language teaching for mature students, addressing their unique needs and leveraging their rich life experiences to enhance learning outcomes. Despite the challenges in implementation, the potential benefits make it a valuable instructional model worthy of further exploration and application.

4. Conclusion

This paper introduces a tailored Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) model designed specifically to address the needs of mature language learners. The model integrates four interconnected components to create a comprehensive and cohesive approach to language instruction. The first component is rooted in constructivist principles (Bramley & Xu, 2023), which emphasise learner-centred and experiential learning to ensure that mature students engage deeply with new material. This theoretical foundation allows learners to build new knowledge based on their existing cognitive frameworks and life experiences. Secondly, it incorporates TBLT phases (Ellis, 2019), adapted to accommodate the unique characteristics and learning needs of mature students. Thirdly, the model integrates cooperative learning principles (Johnson et al., 2024), fostering a collaborative learning environment that enhances peer interactions and mutual support for enhanced learning outcomes. Lastly, it incorporates modern activities and methodologies (Calkins & Rivnay, 2022; Suwartono & Romdona, 2024), as well as considerations for experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2020) to create a holistic and effective approach, ensuring the practical application of language skills in varied contexts.

The tailored TBLT model contributes meaningfully to the field of language teaching by addressing limitations in traditional task-based approaches, particularly for mature learners. By enhancing engagement, fostering motivation, and aligning with the cognitive and experiential realities of older students, the model supports improved proficiency in key language skills.

Educators working with mature learners can adapt this model by incorporating a preparatory phase that builds rapport and addresses learners' emotional and academic

readiness. Lessons should include collaborative tasks, real-world language use, and clear feedback mechanisms to support learner autonomy and confidence. Additionally, creating a classroom environment that encourages peer interaction and reflection can be particularly beneficial for students returning to formal education after a gap.

Looking ahead, further research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact of the model and assess its effectiveness in varied educational contexts. Future studies could investigate how contextual factors such as program structure, institutional support, or learner background affect the model's adaptability and outcomes.

In conclusion, while this paper is primarily conceptual, the tailored TBLT model offers practical, research-informed strategies that educators can use to improve language instruction for mature students. Its flexible, student-centred framework makes it a promising approach for addressing the diverse needs of adult learners in higher education and beyond. Importantly, the successful piloting of the model demonstrates its practical relevance and highlights its potential for broader application among mature learners in similar educational contexts.

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