

Task Based Learning: Effective Use to Enhance Learner Motivation and Engagement in the EFL Classroom

William BROOKS and Peter LUTES

要 旨

外国語としての英語 (EFL) を学ぶ非英語専攻者のモチベーションの低さは、教育者が直面する一般的な障害である。タスク・ベースド・ラーニング (TBL) は、第二言語習得の方法論として広く認知されている。TBL は、言語そのものの暗記学習ではなく、目標言語におけるタスクの完了を提唱している。その根拠は、生徒の教育的・職業的ニーズに直接合致した、より本格的な文脈の中で目標言語に没頭させることにある。

本論文では、TBL を活用することで、EFL の教室で学ぶ大学生のモチベーションや学習意欲にどのようなプラスの影響を与え、大幅に向上させることができるのかについて論じている。本論文では、主にビジネス英語の学生を対象に、TBL 演習に対する意見に関する実証的な調査結果を掲載している。

キーワード：CLT (コミュニケーション言語教育), EFL (外国語としての英語), ESL (第二言語としての英語), IRF (開始一応答一フィードバック), SLA (第二言語習得), TBS (タスク・ベースド・ラーニング)

1. Introduction

Motivating non-English majors in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university settings remains a persistent challenge for language educators. This paper explores the effective integration of Task-Based Learning (TBL) as strategies to address low motivation among students. TBL, grounded in the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), offers a promising avenue to engage learners actively. By examining the impact of TBL on motivation, we aim to shed light on its potential to create a dynamic and successful student-centered learning environment. In this paper, we propose that TBL, aligned with CLT principles, can significantly enhance the motivation and engagement of English or non-English majors in university-level EFL classrooms. Through an exploration of TBL's historical context, its connection to CLT, and the motivational factors at play, we aim to present a case for the adoption of TBL as an effective pedagogical approach.

Low motivation among non-English majors at universities learning EFL is a common issue facing language educators. With the shift in classroom practices to CLT, soliciting and developing active participation from students is considered to be more critical to creating and maintaining a successful student centered classroom. Motivation is widely recognized as important in the development of effective language learners (Gardner, 1982; Ellis, 1997; Alessi and Trollip, 2001; Keller and Suzuki, 2004, Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011; Boo et al., 2015) so curriculum development should focus on approaches that use CLT and develop autonomous learners. This paper discusses how the motivation of English and non-English majors at the university level can be positively influenced by utilizing TBL.

The prevalent challenge of low motivation among non-English majors in particular at universities learning EFL is a noteworthy concern for language educators. The evolution of classroom methodologies towards CLT underscores the increasing significance of actively involving and cultivating participation from students to establish and sustain a successful student-centered learning environment. By recognizing motivation as a pivotal factor in nurturing proficient language learners, EFL curriculum development necessitates an emphasis on strategies that integrate CLT principles and foster learner autonomy.

1.1 Task Based Learning and Communicative Language Teaching

The genesis of CLT occurred in the 1970s, gaining broader adoption in the 1980s as language educators re-evaluated pedagogical approaches in light of evolving insights into language, learning, and the dynamic roles of both learners and teachers (Nunan and Lamb, 2001). This transformative period marked a departure from conventional educational practices towards CLT, sparking ongoing innovations in language instruction. CLT fundamentally views language as a tool for conveying meaning, advocating for learners to engage in authentic communication and meaningful tasks or activities, thereby imbuing the language with personal significance (Nunan and Lamb). Consequently, CLT is centered on addressing learners' authentic communication needs, demanding active learner participation in both the learning process and the determination of learning priorities (Nunan and Lamb).

Typical CLT activities involve learners in communication, emphasizing information exchange and the negotiation of meaning. Within this framework, learners assume the roles of negotiators and interactors, while teachers function as facilitators, needs analysts, and counselors (Nunan and Lamb, 2001). This pedagogical methodology necessitates the development of new instructional materials, driven by the diverse needs of learners and the requirement for authentic materials. Specifically, in the context of TBL, tasks must align with the unique characteristics of language learners, prompting the creation of tailored materials that align with the objectives of the tasks and projects (Nunan and Lamb). Based on the above, the authors have noticed a significant change in cognitive learning and output among their students from various classes they applied CLT activities in. One example is arbitration through business English class activities, where students decide on the outcome of any given case study. The idea is to focus on their output and decision making as a group versus emphasizing a right or wrong answer or choice. By engaging students to arbitrate as a group, they enhance their language skills as they draw their consensus to each task.

2. Other Literature

2.1 Task Based Learning and Motivation

Currently, TBL stands as a widely embraced methodology in Second Language

Acquisition (SLA). This approach necessitates that students accomplish tasks in the target language, eschewing the traditional approach of focusing solely on studying the language itself. A TBL framework provides students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the target language within a context that mirrors real-life examples, distinguishing it from conventional classroom methodologies. Such an experiential approach establishes a direct link to the educational and professional requirements of the learners (Lutes, 2009).

Researchers have long recognized and emphasized the significance of relevance as a fundamental motivator in curriculum design, and the positive impact it has on motivation (Alessi and Trollip, 2001; Keller and Suzuki, 2004, Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011; Boo et al., 2015). The significance of motivation as a contributing factor to the success and improvement of EFL learners should not be underestimated and has, accordingly, been widely recognized as of importance in foreign language learning (Dornyei and Csizer, 1998; Guilloteaux and Dornyei, 2008; Melendy, 2008; Wu and Wu, 2008). Inadequate motivation is often cited as a reason for language learning setbacks (Brown, 1987). Two distinct types of motivation have been proposed: integrative motivation, characterized by positive attitudes towards the target language; and instrumental motivation, focusing on the potential usefulness of proficiency in the target language (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). The concept of an affective filter (Dulay et al., 1982) suggests that low motivation may hinder effective processing of the language environment, leading to a negative impact on input.

Conversely, integrative motivation has demonstrated a positive correlation with language learning success (Gardner, 1985). Svanes (1987) determined that students' background is directly linked to the type of motivation they exhibit. Therefore, it is crucial to examine motivational factors within the context of the Japanese educational setting. The Kubo (1997) scale, which considers cultural aspects, has been employed to assess the motivation of EFL university students. According to this scale, Japanese university students may exhibit distinct language learning motivation factors (Kimura et al., 2001). Given the crucial role of motivation, it is imperative to adopt a teaching approach or methodology that actively addresses this aspect. TBL activities align with the fundamental principles of CLT, placing a special emphasis on authentic and meaningful materials and activities in language instruction (Ellis, 2015). This alignment makes TBL

a particularly appealing approach for fostering motivation in language learning.

2.2 Tasks

As TBL emphasizes the utilization of genuine language, learners are required to engage in meaningful tasks within the target language. According to Willis (1998), a task is described as:

A goal-oriented activity with a clear purpose. Doing a communication task involves achieving an outcome and creating a final product that can be appreciated by others. Examples include compiling a list of reasons, features, or things that need completion under particular circumstances; comparing two pictures and/or texts to find the differences; and solving a problem or designing a brochure.

Ellis (2015) also defines tasks as activities that prioritize meaning, as opposed to “exercises” that concentrate on form. He further argues that TBL should position language as a communication tool rather than a subject to be studied. While Ellis allows that TBL can just be a task, he recommends that a three phase structure be considered:

1. Pre-task, where the activity is framed, planning is conducted, and a similar task may be modeled
2. Doing the task, where there is time pressure to complete it, and
3. Post-task, where the task is reported on, learners self-reflect, and the task may be repeated

The four essential components for consideration during the design of a TBL task are:

1. TBL requires authentic language
2. TBL requires effective teamwork and meaningful tasks
3. TBL requires objective results
4. TBL requires honest reflection and repetition when necessary

2.3 Choosing meaningful tasks

The utilization of authentic language in TBL instruction requires the facilitator to balance between modeling language and providing a structured conversation that students will only emulate. Additionally, it is crucial to differentiate between English

as a Second Language (ESL) for learners and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for learners when evaluating the suitability of TBL activities (Ellis, 2015). Many textbooks and online TBL activities often lack specificity regarding the type of student for whom the task is appropriate.

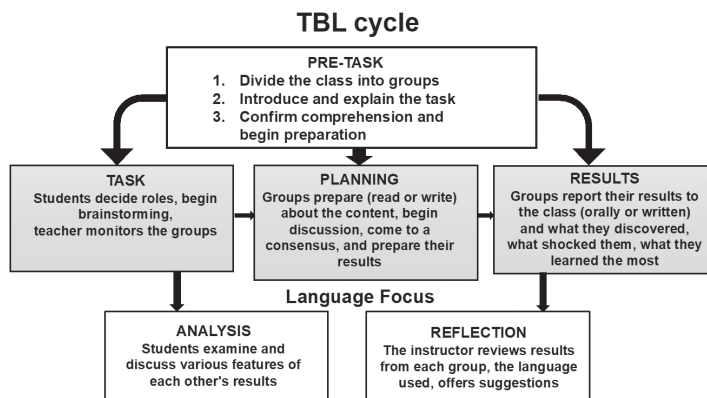
Certain common TBL tasks, like role plays set in scenarios such as a real estate agent and home buyer, or a furniture store salesperson and a customer, may resonate more realistically and meaningfully with ESL students than with EFL students. Consequently, these types of TBL exercises, while valuable and meaningful in ESL contexts, may not be as pertinent or necessary for typical university students in EFL countries such as Japan. Recognizing this distinction, students often view such scenarios and role plays as a fallback to contrived modeled conversations reminiscent of audio-lingualism. Hence, there is a requirement for meaningful tasks tailored to the learners, and the design should take cultural factors into account. Specifically, Japanese university students exhibit higher motivation when participating in graded in-class language activities, particularly with immediate feedback, leading to improved performance in assignments (Azra, et al., 2005; Vannieuwenhuysen, 2008).

In a TBL activity, leveraging immediate feedback loop during the pre-task phase while scaffolding can be advantageous. Scaffolding was described by Bruner (1983) as the kind of help or assistance from the teacher or facilitator to guide learners into activities that are too complex. TBL facilitates targeted scaffolding, thus rapidly diminishing the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) structure and fostering learner autonomy (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Therefore, activity design should actively guide language learners, providing additional initial scaffolding to offer necessary support and gather input on class content. The development of instrumental motivation and the facilitation of learner self-regulation and independence are essential through the pedagogy to encourage learner engagement and ensure a smooth transition of responsibility or handover to the learner (van Lier, 1986). While the theoretical foundations of TBL are intriguing, let's now turn our attention to practical examples where TBL has demonstrated tangible benefits in boosting student motivation and participation.

3. TBL use in the classroom

3.1 TBL Cycle

The authors have extensive experience in developing and utilizing TBL activities and have found them to not only enhance vocabulary, communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, but also improve learner motivation. Ontesol (n.d.) states that because TBL focuses on real-world scenarios instead of one-way lecture and grammar tasks, it enhances comprehension through interactive exercises that empower learners by boosting their confidence as ESL learners. Meanwhile, Begliomini (2023) argues that “TBL typically follows a clear task sequence to facilitate language acquisition and progression, where tasks are scaffolded in a way that allows learners to build upon their existing knowledge and skills” (n.p.). TBL often includes pre-task activities to engage prior knowledge, task performance activities to complete the main task, and post-task activities for feedback. Having a structured approach like this assists learners to gradually develop their language proficiency while ensuring a systematic progression (Begliomini). Figure 1 illustrates how a typical TBL cycle and language focus may take place for any given project.



**Figure 1: The TBL cycle. Adapted from Author (2024).
The Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University (June 2022)**

The TBL cycle, which includes pre-task, task, planning and result stages, in addition to analysis and reflection, depicts how a group consensus may be drawn and reported. The groups begin by brainstorming a given task, deciding roles among members, reading or writing about the task content for comprehension, and discussing and collaborating

to come up with their final consensus. The groups then report their results either orally or in written context to other groups or in front of the class, emphasizing on what they discovered, learned, and what surprised or shocked them the most compared to their original impression(s) of what they thought the results would be before carrying out their research or task(s). Only after groups examine, compare and discuss their results should the instructor offer suggestions on language usage or grammatical mistakes, while keeping in mind that the main goal is to have students express themselves using their SLA opposed to overcorrecting them on grammar or word choice.

The purpose of these types of TBL exercises is for students to discuss real-world issues or situations, such as planning a university festival, reporting on a business situation, or considering financial risk. Students submerge themselves in the tasks and work as a team to reach a logical and comprehensible consensus. To reinforce this, instructors should emphasize peer review and ensure that all pair or group members conduct equal amounts of research and provide equivalent input and output to achieve their group's consensus. Surahbi (2023) argues that group peer review ensures skill enhancement, accountability, team cohesion, fair and unbiased assessment, identification of blind spots, motivation, and recognition of achieving task goals. Group members realize a more comprehensive evaluation compared to only the supervisor's perspective (Surahbi, 2023). Nevertheless, the authors strongly suggest that instructors actively monitor students' input during brainstorming and discussion stages to ensure the above.

After thorough arbitration and analysis of data is carried out, as noted under language focus of the TBL cycle in Figure 1, instructors should review each group's consensus without spotlighting a "correct answer" or "correct language." Throughout this strategy, the instructor serves as a facilitator rather than a content expert to ensure that students make full use of their acquired SLA and the prompts s/he provided before beginning each task. Ellis and Shintani (2014) agree that TBL "aims to develop learners' communicative competence by engaging them in meaning-focused communication through the performance of tasks" (p. 135), suggesting that instructors emphasize language learning that comes about as a natural result (Van den Branden et al., 2009).

3.3 Key Concepts of TBL in Business English courses

Where TBL exercises are used, the authors suggest:

1. Preparing and scaffolding the students for task projects they need to do, e.g. sales presentations where they plan the launch of a new product/service, etc.,
2. Focusing on the successful outcomes of each task, not on grammatical correction
3. Ensuring group members solve tasks by themselves
4. Recycling and consolidating language, expressions, peer review, and feedback
5. Designing tasks that are multifaceted with different roles (e.g. 1st role as a salesperson, 2nd as the customer, interviewer, interviewee, telephone caller, receiver, etc.)

3.3.1 Examples of TBL exercises for business English classes

1. Job interview simulation:

For this exercise, instructors are advised to divide students into pairs or groups, and let them decide what their company is and what candidate they're looking for.

- a. One person acts as the H&R representative, while the other is the interviewee
- b. For interviewers, have them prepare standardized questions such as: "Why did you choose our company?" "What unique features do you think you bring to our company?" "What do you hope to accomplish within the next year, five years, etc., and why?"
- c. For interviewees, questions may include: "From your web page, I noticed your company is expanding in X, Y, Z areas. What are your plans for the next five/10 years?" "What role might I play in the ABC department?" "What tasks would I be responsible for?" "Is there a chance to work overseas?" "Where might I be positioned for the next five or 10 years?"
- d. Evaluating, responding, and quick-thinking skills are developed through TBL roleplay.

2. Business Networking (e.g. at a conference, welcome party, etc.):

- a. Provide flash cards with details of various business roles and company names, the relevant types of products or services among other basic information, and what they are looking for in a business partnership or affiliation, etc.
- b. Make sure each student has different information on their role cards but include

an ideal "match" with details so that two parties can find their ideal match, e.g. a restaurant chain owner looking to expand domestically or overseas, and a food supplier for local or overseas restaurants; an IT software manufacturer looking to expand overseas, and a company in need of the latest IT software programming to run their new operations, etc.

- c. Redistribute the cards (or pass out a new set) and repeat the exercise.

3. Customer Service (sales, troubleshooting):

- a. Divide students into pairs or groups.
- b. Prompt students with useful phrases from both sides. Complaint role: "We received the order for XYZ product(s) the other day but the quantity (or product order or model number) was wrong", etc. Troubleshooting role: "I see Mr./Ms. ?? We're very sorry about this inconvenience. We will look into it immediately and get back to you as soon as possible."
- c. Have students brainstorm a list of further complaints or problems. Have one act as the client and the other as the customer service agent.
- d. Have students switch roles. At the end of the task, have them discuss methods that were successful and those that could or should be improved upon.
- e. Have students change groups and repeat the exercise.

4. Telephone Roleplay (a variety of tasks):

- a. Break students into pairs and get them to prepare small conversations or dialogues, e.g. scheduling a meeting; placing an order; making a complaint about a product or service; asking each other about new products or services; scheduling a business trip to meet a client; making a reservation for a conference, hotel, or restaurant, etc.
- b. Prompt students with example phrases and inform them about telephone etiquette.
- c. Have students sit back-to-back or place dividers between them so that they cannot see each other. This is important as it will force them to use their ESL and SLA skills more because they will not be able to see each other's facial expressions and gestures, and only have their vocabulary and verbal expressions to rely on when giving and receiving information.
- d. Have students switch partners several times, repeating the conversations and/or

Task Based Learning

creating new ones.

5. Case studies (setting up an overseas company or factory):

- Provide a case study about e.g. expanding one's company overseas as a joint venture, franchise, or M & A, and explain to the students about the economic, financial, and country risk(s) factors of doing so in the country of their choice.
- Break students into groups of three or six (depending on class size) and have them decide their roles. Prompt them on the information provided and give them the remaining class time to discuss and brainstorm.
- In the same or following class, have students finish arbitrating and present their group consensus. Instructors should remember that there is not always a correct answer, so assess students on their performance and thought process opposed to grammar, vocabulary, or a "correct answer".
- Switch groups and repeat the exercise if desired or necessary.

Figure 2 shows a business case study example that is practical, fun, and easy for undergraduate or active business adult learners:

Bedrock Business Expansion Case Study	
<p>Bedrock is a small city in the Midwest of the US with a population of 150,000 people. It has an excellent education system, is a safe place to raise a family, and boasts several entertainment venues including movie theaters, malls, an amusement park, city parks and citizens center for concerts, etc. Its population has been growing in recent years and was recently rated one of the nicer small US towns to live in a national poll.</p> <p>1) Recently, the local Bedrock City government has been making great effort to solicit companies to start operations in the area and help develop the town, increase employment, and acquire tax money. The government is offering tax free on profits for the first three years after the factory has been built, but the company must pay an annual 5% on their profits after that.</p> <p>2) ABC Company, Inc., which makes IT products, is considering building a factory and office in the town. They would provide future employment for 100 to 150 people in their factory and offices and tax revenue would be roughly \$40,000,000. The company would pay good wages to employees and offer good benefits for them. It is an ideal corporation to come to the area. There is no labor union now so that is advantageous for the company. It hopes to acquire a 3% growth year on year and will provide valuable skills to all employees.</p> <p>3) Citizens for Bedrock (CFB) is a civil group which includes many housewives, volunteers and elderly members. They meet once a month to discuss various aspects of the city, including festivals, events, volunteer activities, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts' activities, city clean up, health events for the elderly, etc. They also post suggestions and opinions to the city mayor's office about problems and ideas to improve the city.</p> <p>ABC Corp. Inc. must choose one of the following locations based to build their company and office based on what is best for it while taking into consideration the needs of the government and citizens. The government must also take into consideration the requests and needs of its taxpaying citizens and the company.</p> <p>There are three places in or around the city that the government is offering ABC company to look at to build its factory and office:</p> <p>a) The first location is in the city downtown area.</p> <p>Good points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an old warehouse that could be reformed or rebuilt into a factory and office area. Access to and from the company for employees, customers and delivery is excellent. The company could also publicize itself easily in this area. <p>Bad points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental fees would be rather high Air and noise pollution in the city would increase Space to expand the factory would be limited in the future <p>b) The second area is a large plot of land near a river on the outskirts of the city.</p> <p>Good points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This location could allow the company to ship goods and receive resources using the river The company would not have to worry about noise or air pollution as much Rent in the area would be cheaper than downtown the company could expand its size in the future 	<p>Bad points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The company would have to pay high start-up costs as there are no access roads to this land area now. The company would ask the government to build an access road and clear the trees in the area to build on, but the government would ask the company to pay for the access road and clearing of the trees by itself, or at least pay half of the costs. The company could incur damage costs in case the river overflows due to heavy rains <p>c) The third area is on the outskirts of town in the countryside but near an elementary and junior school.</p> <p>Good points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent in the area would be cheaper than downtown the company could expand its size in the future There are access roads to the area so no need to build them, only clear the area for buildings <p>Bad points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air and noise pollution in the area would increase which would be bad for the children attending schools Transportation and shipping costs will increase slightly as the company will be further away from the city. This might also require employees to have cars to get to the company <p style="text-align: center;">Student TASK:</p> <p>Break into three groups, two members representing each of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the local Bedrock City government, ABC Company, Inc. Citizens for Bedrock (CFB). <p>You are members of your planning committee(s) representing your group and you must decide which location would be the best for the company based on what is best for you.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work in pairs and discuss the three options and rank them in order of suitability. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each location. Meet as a group and decide which is the best location for ABC Company, Inc. based on your needs

Figure 2: Bedrock Business Expansion Case study. Adapted from Author (2020)

6. Surveys (creating questionnaires, conducting research):

Surveys are useful for looking at the language and reaching a consensus.

- a. Show students examples on how to create a questionnaire using Likert Scale, single-questions, multiple-choice questions, and short-written answers.
- b. Show them how to upload their results to Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, Survey Monkey, etc.
- c. Break students into groups and allow them to brainstorm topics (e.g. social issues, business project(s)) and have them decide their roles and research duties.
- d. Have students carry out their survey(s) in class or over the week.
- e. Have students assimilate their data and construct their PowerPoint presentations in or by the next class.
- f. At the end of class or by the next, students present their results. Make sure they point out what surprised them, shocked them, enlightened them, etc. about the results. Teach them phrases such as “Most of us originally thought that...”, “We were shocked to learn that...”, “We initially believed that...but found out that...”, etc.
- g. Allow ample Q & A and peer group evaluations and/or provide instructor evaluations and suggestions on factors such as word usage, presentation skills (eye contact, gestures, etc.), fielding questions, etc.

7. Presentations about a company:

Presentations are an excellent way for students to research about companies and develop business English language and research skills which will be helpful for their future job hunting and employment.

- a. Break students into groups. Have them choose a company, their roles (who will present on what section), and allow them time to brainstorm and research.
- b. The authors suggest students research and present on e.g.: the background, the history of products and/or services, the growth of the company, the financial information (the number of employees, overseas branches, sales, profits, etc. which they should explain using graphs or tables), and the future goals and direction the company is headed (what area(s) it intends to expand into, consolidate, downsize, etc.). Finally, each group offers a consensus (solution(s), direction(s), advice, etc.) from their perspective as an “outsourced consulting company.” This will help

them develop critical thinking skills which should benefit them for job hunting and their future careers.

- c. Assess groups on their eye contact, gestures, visuals, pronunciation, vocabulary, intonation, content, Q & A, etc. Peer group evaluations on the aforementioned criteria are also encouraged.

3.3.2 Examples of TBL exercises for writing classes

Simple topic-based teamwork writing essays may include social, political, economic or cultural issues. Each student writes a portion of the essay. Peer review is highly encouraged.

- a. Have students write about a school project as a group—e.g. as members of their school festival planning committee—plan which event(s) they want, when, where, why, how, and their potential outcomes, including budget costs for outsourced event support companies, etc.
- b. Have students write a mini-grad thesis on a topic of their choice. Each member writes a section, e.g. the abstract and introduction, literature review, chapter 1, 2, 3, methods, results and analysis, conclusion, references, appendix (graphs, tables), etc. The group submits their final draft and presents it to the rest of the class.
- c. Have students write about a social or business topic. They should brainstorm ideas, and break up their roles—company background, product/service launch times, target customer(s), pricing, after-sales service, warranties, other customer services, etc. The group submits their final draft and presents it to the rest of the class.

Other correlated TBL writing exercises that students can do in pairs or groups:

- a. Write an essay about an unforgettable experience in their lives.
- b. Write an essay about the best or worst school day they ever experienced.
- c. Write an essay about teaching others something they are good at doing.
- d. Write an essay about an embarrassing event that happened to them.
- e. Write an essay about their future dream(s), goals(s), careers.
- f. Write an essay about how they predict the world will be in 10, 50, 100 years.
- g. Write an essay about traveling around the world and what they saw or did.

Other suggested correlated TBL essays for writing classes:

- a. A description of a person, place or event.
- b. A comparative/contrast essay of students' university with another, or their hometowns, hobbies, part-time jobs, etc. Be sure they include the pros and cons of each.
- c. A cause/effect essay about smoking in public, lack of sleep, exercise, etc.
- d. A process essay about how to make or do something, i.e. conduct a class, study more effectively, make a food item, play an instrument, drive a car, etc.
- e. A narrative essay about their first day of class or work, how to handle stress, fear, embarrassment, troubleshooting, etc.

Encourage strict peer review and provide instructor feedback.

3.3.3 TBL exercises for conversation classes:

- a. Have students read about a social, political, economic, or cultural issue.
- b. Break them into groups depending on the class size.
- c. Write key words and phrases on the board from the reading exercise(s) and questions for them to brainstorm.
- d. Give them a time limit and change group members and/or add in other topics.
- e. Have them make presentations in pairs or groups about a social, political, economic, or cultural issue of their choice.

Additional TBL exercises for conversation classes:

- a. Have students create a video or short movie.
- b. Have students create an original board or video game that includes the game rules, how to play the game, evaluate it, etc.
- c. Act out a TV program (including news, weather, commercial(s), and a guest host segment).
- d. Act out a play (Disney movie, Grimm Brothers story, part of an action movie, etc.).

4. Methodology

The authors wanted to ascertain the satisfaction and practicality levels of their TBL exercises, so they conducted a survey with 43 business English students from Aichi

University, Nagoya campus. The survey consisting of 10 questions including: “Did you enjoy doing the case study TBL exercises in class?”, “Did you think the case studies were helpful and practical?”, and “Would you like to do more TBL pair or group case studies in the future?” The questions included short yes/no answers, multiple choice, and short answers. Respondents were primarily second to fourth year Aichi university undergraduate English Faculty business majors between the ages of 19 and 24. Most were from the Tokai area (Aichi, Gifu, Mie) of Japan, and the survey was conducted on July 19, 2023. All answers were accumulated using Microsoft Forms, with written short answers consolidated, analyzed and summarized according to similarity.

5. Results and analysis

The survey data revealed several interesting facts that helped the authors gain further insight into which TBL exercises students found useful, practical and enjoyable. Respondents were initially asked the question “Do you enjoy doing TBL exercises” (Figure 3), for which 26 respondents (60%) answered “yes”, 12 respondents (28%) replied “it depends on the exercise” and five respondents (12%) answered “no”. Based on this, it is clear that the majority of respondents not only found the TBL exercised enjoyable, but wanted to challenge them more instead of only receiving routine lecture and note taking lectures from their instructors.

In regard to the question “Did you think the overall case studies performed in class

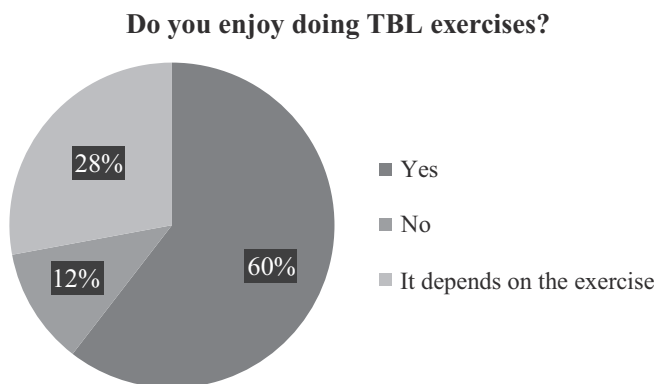


Figure 3: Enjoyment of TBL exercises

were helpful and practical” (Figure 4), 23 respondents (53%) noted “very helpful and practical”, 13 (30%) answered “helpful and practical”, and nine (21%) replied “somewhat helpful and practical”. Based on these results, we can assume that the respondents not only enjoyed doing TBL exercises, but found them helpful in preparing them for future job hunting and their careers. In particular, the respondents noted they favored the business overseas expansion case study which asked them to decide in groups which country among three choices they would like to set up operations in and in what fashion (franchise, joint venture, merger-acquisition or direct foreign investment), and to take into consideration each country’s economic, financial, and country risks based on information provided by the instructor.

Did you think the overall case studies were useful and practical?

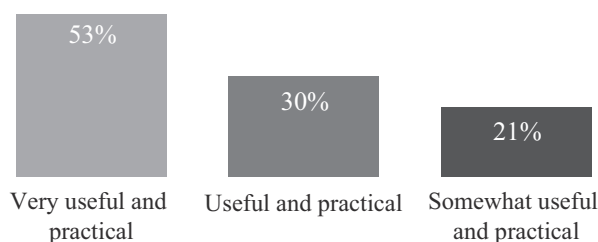


Figure 4: Case studies: practicality and usefulness

Two more specific questions posed were: “Did you find the management TBL exercises useful and practical?” (Figure 5), and “Did you find the marketing TBL exercises useful and practical?” (Figure 6). For management TBL exercises, 20 respondents (47%) noted “very helpful and practical”, 16 (37%) noted “useful and practical”, and seven (16%) responded “somewhat useful and practical”. In particular, respondents noted the TBL exercise, which requested them to design their own business, specify their product or service line(s), target customers, and future sales and profit speculations as the most beneficial. Students gave feedback in pairs and groups to each other before presenting their results to the class.

For the marketing TBL exercises, 22 respondents (51%) noted “very useful and practical”, 15 (35%) answered “useful and practical”, and five (14%) replied “somewhat useful and practical”. In particular, respondents favored the construction of their own

Did you find the management TBL exercises useful and practical?

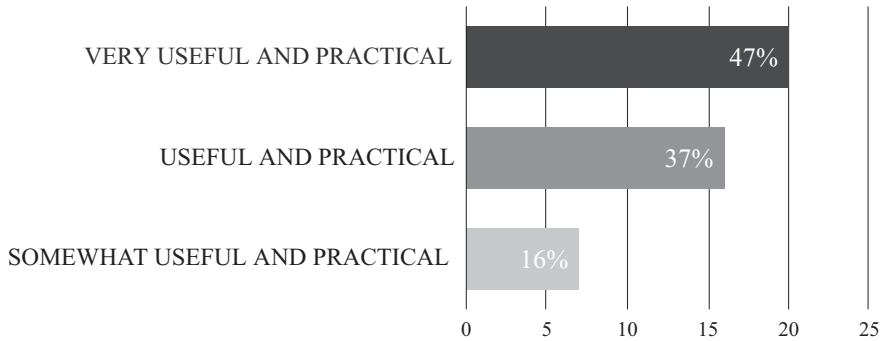


Figure 5: Management exercises: practicality and usefulness

Did you find the marketing TBL exercises useful and practical?

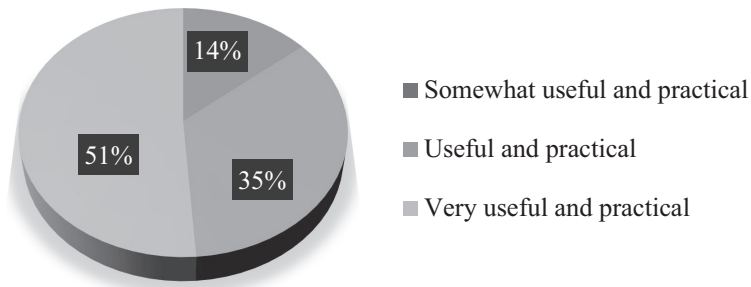


Figure 6: Marketing exercises: practicality and usefulness

business marketing campaign as the most beneficial. They were asked to include the style of advertisement, logo, and media (newspaper, magazine, television, SNS, etc.) they intended to promote their business with. Students gave feedback in pairs and groups in addition to presenting their campaigns to the class.

Based on these results, the authors discovered that respondents not only enjoyed a variety of TBL exercises, but also noted the pair and groupwork exercises from the management and marketing sections of the course to be the most enjoyable and useful in preparing them for job hunting and their future careers.

Finally, respondents were asked “Did you find the listening and pairwork TBL

exercises from the textbook useful and practical?” (Figure 7). 17 (40%) responded “very useful and practical”, 13 (30%) answered “useful and practical”, 12 (28%) replied “somewhat useful and practical”, and only one (2%) stated “neither useful nor practical.” Based on these results, we can see that respondents found pairwork TBL exercises, which included scheduling appointments, ordering products, trouble shooting, and telephone conversation among others, to be enjoyable and helpful for their future job hunting and careers.

Did you find the listening and pairwork exercises from the textbook helpful and practical?

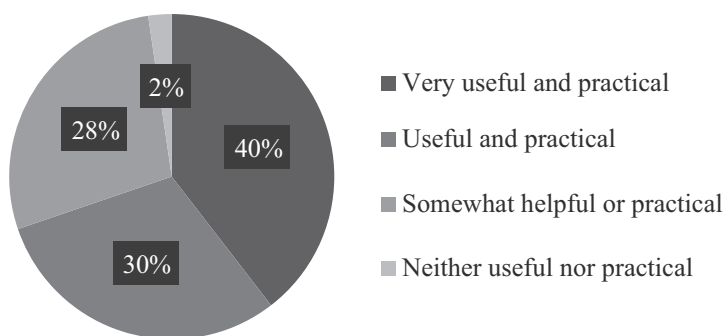


Figure 7: Listening and pairwork exercises: practicality and usefulness

The following are other case studies respondents noted they would like to challenge:

- Create posters and plan a trip as a consultant
- Correct mistakes in documents
- Make a schedule for filmmaking
- Create English and Japanese resumes
- Practice ways of making phone calls using polite language
- Correct inappropriate advertisements
- Discuss in groups about something they can use in the future, e.g. new AI software, driverless car, etc.
- More management and marketing exercises
- Imagine themselves as employees of an international company and try to come up with innovative ways of marketing a product or service
- Imagine themselves as employees of a consulting firm that advises struggling companies on how to improve their business operations. Each group member must

create one possible idea of improvement, and the group discusses which method(s) is/are the best.

- Preparation or reports requesting improvements to existing products

One important point the authors advise instructors to do is to constantly move around their classrooms to observe pair or group discussions and encourage students who do not participate enough to try harder while requesting loquacious students to encourage them to speak out more. When several less talkative students were asked why they do not contribute more to their group discussions, some noted a lack of confidence in their English ability and the fact that they were not accustomed to discussion or debate in high school. Nevertheless, as the TBL exercises progressed throughout the course, the authors noticed that the majority of the less talkative students became more relaxed and proactive as time went on. Peer encouragement also helped motivate them to participate more. Despite that consistent observation among instructors is imperative to monitor group member participation, the authors emphasize that it is equally important not to over correct students' grammar or word choice while brainstorming or discussing in groups. Rather, instructors should encourage and complement students during the discussion phase of each TBL exercise.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the survey confirm the positive perception of Task-Based Learning (TBL) exercises among students, highlighting their effectiveness in facilitating comprehension of subject matter compared to traditional lecture format. TBL activities immerse learners in real-world business scenarios, engaging them in processes such as brainstorming, research, data organization, and presentation, thereby enriching their educational experiences.

The transformative potential of TBL extends beyond theory to practical application as evidenced by empirical examples and scholarly discussions. Its implementation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms fosters student-centric environments conducive to heightened motivation, autonomy, and readiness for practical language application. The careful selection of tasks bearing academic and professional significance

is paramount, complemented by scaffolding in both activities and pedagogical approaches. Central to the efficacy of TBL activities lies the empowerment of students, facilitating pathways toward self-directed learning.

Within language education, TBL exercises offer many advantages, fostering pragmatic and engaging language acquisition. They foreground real-world relevance by simulating authentic language contexts, thereby nurturing practical language competencies vital for immediate application. Additionally, TBL cultivates communication skills by encouraging verbal articulation and comprehension within diverse contexts, while enhancing overall communicative proficiency. Contextual learning is further promoted through situating language tasks within specific scenarios, bolstering comprehension and retention of linguistic elements.

TBL activities prioritize active problem-solving and goal achievement over rote memorization, thereby enhancing student motivation and intrinsic meaning in the learning process. Encouraging autonomy and critical thinking, it prompts learners to employ language creatively, and critically nurturing self-directed learning tendencies. TBL offers a diverse array of activities, encompassing role-playing and problem-solving tasks, and accommodates various learning styles and preferences. It underscores the integration of multiple language skills, emphasizing their interconnectedness in effective communication. Finally, TBL tasks facilitate natural feedback mechanisms, enabling learners to rectify errors and refine language usage.

Ultimately, TBL can equip learners with transferable language skills applicable beyond the classroom, enhancing the practical relevance of language acquisition to daily life and future career prospects. Its emphasis on communication skills, practical language use, and real-world experience underscores its potential as a dynamic and learner-centered approach to language learning.

References

- Alessi, S. M., and Trollip, S. R. (2001). *Multimedia for learning: methods and development (3rd ed.)* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Azra, J., Bruno, V., Jules, and B. Vannieuwenhuysse, B. (2005). The Immediate Method. JALT 2004

- Conference Proceedings. <https://jaltpublications.org/archive/proceedings/2004/E100.pdf>
- Begliomini, R. (July 10, 2023). Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Project-Based Learning (PBL) Differences. *Europass Teacher Academy*. <https://www.teacheracademy.eu/blog/tbl-vs-pbl/>
- Boo, Z., Dornyei, Z., and Ryan, S. (2015). L2 motivation research 2005–2014: understanding a publication surge and a changing landscape. *System*, 55, 145–157. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2015.10.006
- Brown, D. (1987). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Bruner, J. (1983). *Child's talk: Learning to use language*. New York: Norton.
- Dornyei, Z. (2003). Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. *Lang. Learn.* 53, 3–32. doi: 10.1111/1467-9922.53222
- Dornyei, Z. and Csizer, K. (1998). Ten Commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research*, 2(3), 205–229.
- Dornyei, Z., and Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.), Harlow: Pearson.
- Dulay, H., Burt, M., and Krashen, S. (1982). *Language 2*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 46.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2015). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. and Shintani, N. (2014). *Exploring Language Pedagogy through Second Language Acquisition Research*. New York, NY: Routledge. 135.
- Gardner, R. (1982). Language attitudes and language learning. In E. Bouchard Ryan & H. Giles (Eds.), *Attitudes towards language variation* (pp. 132–147). London, UK: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R. and Lambert, W. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers.
- Gardner, R. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitude and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Guilloteaux, M. J., and Dornyei, Z. (2008). Motivating language learners: A classroom oriented investigation of the effects of motivational strategies on student motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42(1), 55–77.
- Ho, Pham Vu Phi, Hyuen, Do Thi. (June, 2020). Impact of Task-based vs. Presentation-practice-production Instructional Methods on Students' Productivity Skills. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University*. Vol. 55 No. 3. DOI: 10.35741/issn.0258-2724.55.3.50
- Keller, J., and Suzuki, K. (2004). Learner motivation and E-learning design: A multinationally validated process. *Journal of Educational Media*, 29(3), 229–239.
- Kimura, Y., Nakata, Y., and Okumura, T. (2001). Language learning motivation of EFL learners in Japan - A cross-sectional analysis of various learning milieus. *JALT Journal*, 23(1), 47–68.
- Kubo, N. (1997). Motivation of university students in their study of English. *Japanese Journal of Educational Psychology*, 45, 449–455.
- Lantolf, J. P., and Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and genesis of second language development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lutes, P. (2009). Task Based Learning and Motivator for Science Majors at Japanese Universities. *Journal of Higher Education and Research, Kagawa University* (6), 41–48.

- Melendy, G. (2008). Motivating writers: The power of choice. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 10(3), 187–198.
http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/September_08_gm.php
- Nunan, D. and Lamb, C. (2001). Managing the learning process. In D. Hall & A. Hewing (Eds.), *Innovation in language teaching*. (pp. 27–45). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Svanes, B. (1987). Motivation and Cultural Distance in Second-Language Acquisition. *Language Learning*, 37, 341–358.
- Van den Branden, K., Bygate, M., Norris, J. (January 1, 2009). *Task-based language teaching: a reader*. John Benjamins Publishing Company; Amsterdam. Vol. 1; pp. 1–13.
- van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, autonomy, and authenticity*. London: Longman.
- Vannieuwenhuysse, B. (2008). *The pragmatics of conversation: Break the barrier of silence*. Paper presented at 8th Immediate Method Autumn Workshop, Kobe, Japan.
- Willis, J. (1998). Task-based learning: What kind of adventure? *The Language Teacher*. July 1998.
<http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/98/jul/willis.html>
- Wu, W., and Wu, P. (2008). Creating an authentic EFL learning environment to enhance student motivation to study English. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 10(4), 211–226. www.asian-efl-journal.com/December_2008_EBook.pdf