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EDITORIAL

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Proceedings of the TBLT in Asia 2018 Conference. Here, we present 10 peer-reviewed chapters from the TBLT in Asia 2018 Conference held at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan on June 23-24, 2018. The conference featured two plenary speakers: Natsuko Shintani, who specializes in TBLT with young learners, and Hayo Reinders, who is an expert on technology and in particular digital games in SLA. Especially given these plenary speakers' expertise, this year, we had a number of presentations on TBLT and young learners as well as digital games. In the current proceedings, we see two examples of such papers (i.e., Chapters 1 and 10).

Chapter 1 by Abram Leon (Temple University, Japan Campus) carefully describes input-based and interactive tasks designed for young learners, as a way of encouraging language teachers who work with this learner population to adapt the task-based approach. Chapter 10 by Anton Vegel (Kent State University), on the other hand, tackles the topic of digital games in language learning and suggests how SLA theories, that provide a backdrop to TBLT, and Digital Game-Based Learning are compatible with each other. The rest of the papers range in topics from curriculum, syllabus, and task design, to vocabulary learning, to task repetition, to teachers' and learners' perspectives on tasks and task implementations. Chapters 1, 4, and 8 give concrete examples of how tasks or TBLT more generally can be integrated into English courses/programs in Japan, for different age groups, while Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 are more research-oriented and provide critical insights into how we might utilize tasks to their best potential in English- or Japanese-as-a-foreign-language classrooms. Finally, Chapters 9 and 10 thoroughly review the related literature and make a good case that TBLT is a good approach to take in teaching English for Specific Purposes and that integrating Game-Based Learning principles into TBLT is recommended.

Last, but not least, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Kurtis McDonald, the Assistant Editor, and the four reviewers (see p. 125) for their effort and expertise to help ensure the quality of the proceedings.

We hope you enjoy reading the contributions to this volume, and see you at our next biennial TBLT in Asia conference in 2020!

Shoko Sasayama, Editor in Chief
February 2019
Chapter 1
Applying TBLT With Young Learners: Implementing Series of Linked Tasks in a Kindergarten Class

Abram Leon
(Temple University, Japan Campus)

Abstract
Recent years have seen an increase in studies investigating the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching with young learners; in addition to literature demonstrating that productive tasks can be used successfully with young learners, work by Shintani (2016) has demonstrated the viability of input-based tasks as an effective mode of instruction for young beginners. However, despite such promising research, teachers still struggle to integrate TBLT methods with very young learners, where traditional teaching approaches and set curricula often prevail. This paper aims to provide practical aid to teachers interested in implementing tasks with young learners by: (a) describing how sequences of linked tasks can be designed to provide learners with language resources, and then push them to use their own resources productively; (b) demonstrating how task-based methods can be integrated with existing curricula for young learners, by describing tasks that I have implemented in an immersion class at a Japanese kindergarten. Sequences begin with receptive tasks and move toward productive and interactive tasks, taking advantage of the benefits of task repetition (Pinter, 2005; Shintani, 2012), but also pushing learners to communicate in progressively more demanding ways, thus providing scaffolding for more complex interactive tasks. To demonstrate how tasks can provide a meaningful context and opportunities for interaction between young learners, I outline a series of tasks that I have developed for a unit on foods.

Keywords: classroom interaction; input-based tasks; Task-Based Language Teaching; task repetition; young learners

As research into task-based language teaching (TBLT) increases, there are a growing number of studies investigating tasks for young learners; tasks have been shown to have a wide variety of benefits for learners of various ages and language backgrounds (Pinter, 2005; Shintani, 2012, 2014, 2016). However, in spite of promising results, teachers may still have difficulty integrating tasks with young learners in the foreign language classroom for a variety of reasons. The questions of how to select content, and how to grade, sequence, and integrate tasks into a cohesive syllabus remains an area of difficulty (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). As well, teachers implementing tasks may be pressed to justify the use of class time for task repetition. In this paper, I aim to provide practical aid to teachers by reviewing the evidence that TBLT is effective with young learners, and outlining rationale for integrating tasks with content areas in a kindergarten immersion setting. I then identify useful frameworks for designing task sequences that help scaffold learner performance and take advantage of the benefits of task repetition.

After briefly reviewing the literature relating to TBLT with young learners, I introduce the teaching context, and discuss the process of designing task sequences that are appropriate and motivating for young learners. Finally, a sequence of tasks is examined in detail in order to provide practical examples to teachers who hope to implement task-based methods in their classes.
Literature Review

This section briefly reviews evidence supporting the use of tasks with young learners. While a comprehensive review of the literature is beyond the scope of this paper, some key concepts and research findings are presented, and considerations for adapting task-based methods for children are examined.

In this paper, I follow Ellis (2003) and Shintani (2016) in defining ‘task’ as involving (a) primary focus on meaning; (b) an information or opinion gap; (c) learners use of their own linguistic resources to complete the task; (d) a clearly defined outcome other than the display of language. In contrast, the word ‘activity’ is used more broadly to refer to a wide range of teaching techniques that do not necessarily incorporate all of the criteria listed above. Examples of ‘activities’ include storytelling, chanting, singing, and role-play, as outlined by Peck (2001).

While there is a place for various activity types in child language instruction, the goal-oriented nature of tasks can be particularly motivating for young learners. As described by Ellis (2013), tasks “engage learners in using language pragmatically rather than displaying language” (p. 9). This is an important distinction for young learners, who likely see language as a tool for accomplishing something, not an object to be studied. By definition, TBLT involves children in working with a second language (L2) to accomplish a purpose, much in the same way that they naturally utilize their first language (L1). Research by Muñoz (2006) found that younger learners performed better in measures of implicit learning, while older learners were better able to take advantage of explicit teaching methods due to higher levels of cognitive development. This finding suggests that young learners benefit from ample opportunities for implicit learning (as in meaning-focused tasks), and are less likely to benefit from explicit teaching as in present-practice-produce (PPP) methods, which focus on language as an object to be learned.

For implicit learning to occur, learners need sufficient exposure to the language; in this regard, task repetition may play an important role. Nation (2013) emphasized the importance of repeated incidental exposure for vocabulary learning. Such exposure can be provided to young learners through repetition of input-based tasks, as described by Shintani (2012, 2014, 2016). Task repetition has been shown to have a number of positive effects for children. In her study, Shintani (2012) found that each repetition of a task led to different in-class activity, as the teacher progressively pushed learners to negotiate meaning and use the L2 during interaction. As a result, over the course of nine repetitions, she observed consistently high levels of learner enjoyment and motivation. These findings are consistent with other studies which have shown that repeating tasks with children leads to higher engagement, confidence, and smoother interactions (Pinter, 2005).

Shintani’s (2016) study included a comparison of TBLT and PPP methods; in post-tests the TBLT group outperformed the PPP group in vocabulary learning and incidental acquisition of plural morpheme “–s,” showing that TBLT is a viable method for young learners. The comparison also revealed stark differences in the quality of interaction between the two methods. The PPP setting largely favored a rigid turn-taking style characterized by IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) exchanges in which the teacher dominated the interaction. In contrast, the TBLT setting had a more naturalistic turn-taking style, in which learners were pushed to initiate exchanges in order to negotiate meaning. Although the task did not require learners to speak, it appears that TBLT offered students more incentive to use language productively. Learners were thus able to engage in meaning-focused output, as described by Nation and Newton (2009), and might have experienced the benefits that output is theorized to have on language acquisition (Swain, 2005).

Ellis’s (2013) response to common criticisms of TBLT offers a useful review of the theoretical support for using tasks with children. Seedhouse (1999), claimed that tasks lead to impoverished or
pidginized language use; Ellis countered by asserting that using single words and formulaic chunks is natural and typical in beginner language. With regard to young learners, grammatical knowledge should be expected to develop slowly, and inaccurate attempts to use the L2 should be viewed positively as part of the learning process. Another criticism of TBLT is that it relies too heavily on group work, thus limiting the role of the teacher. Ellis responded by emphasizing the benefits of group work, and also pointing out that tasks can be teacher centered. For young learners, this is an important point, since the teacher plays a pivotal role in helping to navigate and scaffold interactions, as described by Shintani (2014).

Negotiation for meaning (NfM) is a well-researched concept in the field which is theorized to contribute to language learning (Ellis, 2003; Nation, 2013; Nunan, 2004). However, some research findings indicate that NfM may function differently with young children as opposed to adults. Patterson, O’Brien, Kister, Carter, and Kotsonis (1981) found that first-year elementary school students had trouble monitoring their own comprehension, and thus sometimes failed to signal when they had not understood a message. As well, Ellis and Heimbach (1997) reported that young children negotiated with the teacher more frequently in groups than in one-on-one interactions. As described in detail by Shintani (2014, 2016), groups of young beginner learners have been shown to negotiate meaning extensively if encouraged to do so. Children often use their L1 to negotiate meaning initially; when instituting TBLT with children, teachers should not ban the L1 completely, but rather accept that a transition to L2 will occur gradually over time and through task repetition (Pinter, 2005; Shintani, 2012; Willis, 1996).

Teaching Context

The tasks presented in this paper have been instituted in an English partial immersion program at a private Japanese kindergarten. While most classrooms at the kindergarten are instructed in Japanese, immersion classes have an English-speaking homeroom teacher in addition to a Japanese teacher. The definition of ‘immersion’ used in the program requires that English be the language of instruction at least 50% of the time. Immersion teachers regularly accompany their class in daily activities such as lunch or recess, and on field trips outside of the school. Immersion classes are equipped with iPads and televisions, and teachers have access to various English language children’s books and resources for making instruction materials.

The third-year immersion class in which the tasks have been introduced consists of 28 five- and six-year-olds who share Japanese as their L1. Students have been in the immersion program since three years of age, and thus already have significant listening comprehension and speaking abilities in English. In order to provide more individualized attention during English lessons, it is common to split learners into two groups of 14 students, with English- and Japanese-medium instruction conducted in different rooms. The institution requires that an ‘English only’ rule be enforced during lessons, which forces learners to avoid use of their L1.

In addition to the immersion classes, the kindergarten also offers weekly after-school language classes to first- to third-grade elementary school students who are graduates of the program. The classes are conducted for one hour per week with six to ten learners per class, and aim to help learners maintain the English ability that they gained while enrolled in the immersion program. The task sequence outlined in the latter half of this paper has been implemented in these after-school classes as well as in the kindergarten immersion setting.

Designing Task Sequences

In this section I describe how tasks have been implemented with the young learners in this setting, paying particular attention to the issue of task sequencing. I consider the issue of integrating content into a cohesive syllabus, and then examine task sequencing at the level of unit and lesson.
**Integrating Tasks with Syllabus Content**

As reviewed earlier in this paper, young learners tend to see language as a tool for communicating, and gain language ability concurrently with other cognitive skills. Young learners develop in their L1 naturally while focusing primarily on meaning as they interact with the environment and community that surrounds them; the principle argument for using content-based instruction (CBI) is that young learners can do the same when learning an L2 (Snow, 2001). For children to make use of their natural strengths, language instruction should include a balanced focus on content, skills, and motivation. In addition to tasks, activities such as songs, reading/listening to stories, and action games are appropriate for learners in both L1 and L2 learning (Peck, 2001; Willis, 1996). As Nunan (2004) points out, CBI and TBLT share underlying principles, and course content can play a role in organizing a task-based syllabus into themes and experiences.

In my teaching context, the kindergarten’s curriculum of yearly events serves as a useful guide in selecting content areas; class excursions, school festivals, and other annual school events provide children with opportunities for rich experiential learning. A task sequence based on an annual trip to an aquarium, for example, involves readings and songs about the ocean, videos about marine life, and tasks in which learners name and describe sea animals. During the actual visit, learners are encouraged to communicate in the L2 about what they see, thus drawing on their linguistic resources creatively, as described by Nation (2013). After the visit, learners make drawings based on their experience and describe them to the class. By incorporating content and authentic experiences into a task-based syllabus, learners are given repeated exposure to language, as well as opportunities and motivation to use language meaningfully. Exposure, use, and motivation are the conditions that Willis (1996) identified as essential for language learning; the next section makes use of her framework as a guideline for sequencing tasks to maximize learning across units.

**Sequencing Tasks: Adapting the Task Cycle for Young Learners**

Willis (1996) takes up the topic of sequencing in her task-based learning framework, and makes recommendations for implementing tasks with young learners. She proposes a longer pre-task phase, including ample comprehensible input via teacher talk, and a clear introduction and demonstration of tasks to reduce learner anxiety and generate excitement. Learners then take part in cycles of short task sequences, with less emphasis placed on the planning, report, and language focus phases. The framework’s organization is in line with the commonly accepted notion that learners should not be asked to produce language to which they have not yet been exposed.

Task sequencing can also be described in terms of cognitive load. Nunan (2004) describes a “psycholinguistic processing approach” (p. 125) in which tasks are undertaken in the order of comprehension to production to interaction, thus gradually increasing cognitive demands on the learner. When examining task difficulty, Ellis’s (2003) description of criteria for grading tasks is a useful resource (p. 228). By manipulating factors relating to input, conditions, processes, and outcomes, a variety of adjustments can be made to aid young learners. These ideas have been incorporated in the design of the tasks presented in the following section.

**Examining a Task Sequence in Detail: A Unit on Foods and Money**

In this section I provide in-depth examples of sequences of linked tasks which I have designed and implemented in the kindergarten and after school program. The tasks are based on a unit on foods and money, with an interactive shopping task as the main task in the sequence. The aim is to outline a variety of instruction options which can be combined and linked within and across repeated lessons,
beginning with pre-task activities and moving to input-based tasks, the main task, and language focus activities (see Appendix A).

Pre-Task Activities
In line with Willis (1996), the pre-task activities discussed here aim to engage children in ways that require less linguistic competence, while introducing the topic and activating schemata. At first, it is useful to use videos or pictures as support to engage learners in talk related to the topic. Through this interaction, the teacher can gauge learners’ likes, habits, and knowledge of the topic. Stories and songs related to the topic are excellent pre-task activities since they provide meaning-focused input and opportunities for output when repeated across lessons. See Allen-Tamai (2013) for ideas on joint storytelling activities for young learners, and Peck (2001) for further ideas about using songs and chants with young learners. Input-based activities involving movement can also provide a context for meaning-focused input while keeping young learners engaged. A video recording modeling the main task can also help to clarify goals and build learners’ excitement. See Willis (1996, pp. 86–99) for a discussion of handling recordings.

Input-Based Tasks
Input-based tasks provide learners with linguistic resources and skills which will later be expanded on in the main task phase. Tasks can be implemented in various ways to provide scaffolding for learners. For example, input can be provided in pictorial form at first to aid comprehension, and learners can support each other by working in groups. Once learners become familiar with the task through repetition, the teacher can push learners by speaking more quickly to promote the development of fluent comprehension skills.

‘Counting money’ is a listen-and-do task in which learners must select the correct amount from bags of toy money. After learners have chosen their amount, the teacher can lead the class in counting together to check answers, thus encouraging attention to form while maintaining primary focus on meaning. The teacher can remind learners of the importance of the task by emphasizing that catching the price correctly is an important skill when shopping in real life. The input can be presented in the form of a dialogue, in which learners must identify the key information (e.g., “How much is that hot dog?” “It’s 300 yen”).

‘How much is it?’ can be implemented as a matching task, or as a more complex reasoning or ordering task. While looking at a set of food cards, learners first simply hold up the food that the teacher names or describes. Next, learners refer to a list of foods with accompanying prices, and hold up the correct card after listening to the price, thus integrating listening and reading skills. For more advanced students, the opposite can be done; the teacher reads off a list of foods to buy (e.g., “I want bananas, donuts, and eggs”) and the learners calculate and report the total price. This integrates listening, reading, and mathematic reasoning skills. Learners can also be asked to arrange the foods in order of price. These tasks help learners to blend skills, as recommended by Brown and Lee (2015).

The ‘delivery’ task involves setting up several tables with pictures of shops (e.g., 100-yen shop, convenience store, and supermarket), and giving learners sets of picture cards. Learners must identify the correct cards and deliver them to a shop as per the teacher’s directions. Directions may be simple (e.g., “Take the broccoli to the convenience store”), or more complex, involving multiple items and delivery locations. This task is modeled after the listen-and-do task described by Shintani (2016), but it differs from her task in that it also requires attention to a number of different delivery locations, and physical movement around the room. As in Shintani’s task, the teacher can adjust the type and quality
of input in order to push students to negotiate for meaning. After several repetitions, students can play
the teacher’s role.

**Task Cycle: Main Task Sequence**

Teachers may want to focus on pre-task activities and input-based tasks over several class
periods, in order to provide learners with the linguistic resources necessary for interactive tasks. In
designing an interactive task for young learners, it is important to set clear goals and examine various
options for input, conditions, and procedures by applying a framework such as Ellis’s (2003, p. 21). These
variables have an impact on the task’s cognitive complexity, and young learners should begin with easier
tasks to ensure success and motivation.

‘Let’s go shopping’ is an interactive role-play task. It can easily follow the ‘delivery’ task
described above, as it uses the same classroom layout, with learners stationed at tables that serve as
‘shops.’ Shoppers use their shopping list and money to buy items from shop clerks (see Appendix B for
sample materials). As a post-task, shoppers and shop keepers briefly report their results by counting the
amount of money or items that they have obtained.

Reducing cognitive load helps learners to be successful, especially on the first attempt at the
task. As such, it is important to provide a clear demonstration and explanation of what constitutes a
successful outcome. Learners also benefit from planning time, during which shoppers can ask for help
reading their lists, and clerks can arrange their food items. During the first repetition, the teacher can
set pricing rules (e.g., each item is 100 yen) and use simplified shopping list sets. The task will be easier if
there are many copies of each food card, and shopping lists all have combinations of the same eight to
ten items, ensuring that all learners are exposed to a manageable number of new words (see Appendix
B).

In later repetitions, complexity can be introduced by adding longer shopping lists and more
items. Rare items, with only one or two copies, can add an element of excitement and time pressure,
since shoppers will need to work fast to make sure their item is still available. For common items,
learners can be taught how to shop strategically, and check several shops to find the lowest price. With
some coaching, learners will begin to use communication strategies such as negotiating, leading to more
complex exchanges. In my experience teaching third-year elementary school students in the after-school
program, older children can handle different denominations of money and practice giving correct
change, thus adding an element of mathematic reasoning. Learners can write their own shopping lists as
a post-task activity for use in subsequent repetitions; this serves to integrate writing skills, and also
increases learners’ agency by allowing them to shop for their favorite items.

**Language Focus**

Willis (1996) includes language focus as the last phase of her TBLT framework, but when
repeating task sequences, a focus on language can also be considered as a pre-task done before
repeating a familiar task. For children, rather than focusing explicitly on language as an object, chances
to notice language form should be integrated into tasks in a meaningful way. Effective language focus
activities might integrate reading or writing skills to draw young learners to process written forms, or
present model interactions via video in order to raise awareness of useful phrases.

One interesting option for using video is to record a point-of-view perspective of the task
interaction. The video can be played for learners in the pre-task to provide a model of useful
communication strategies. This is particularly useful if learners have a tendency to conduct the
interaction in a ‘scripted’ way; the teacher can pause the video at key points to have learners predict
what will happen next, and then surprise learners by revealing a novel strategy for negotiating the
interaction. Another use of video/audio recordings can be as receptive information transfer activities (Nation, 2013, p. 165), in which learners must identify the main information such as food item and price (see Appendix C). These activities encourage learners to focus on form while also modelling different communication strategies such as confirmation checks and negotiation. Willis’s (1996) guidelines for using recordings in the task cycle are still relevant, and thanks to modern technology, recordings can be prepared quickly and easily.

**Conclusion**

The main aim of this paper has been to provide teachers with examples of tasks that can be sequenced and repeated, allowing for many variations on a carefully designed main task. Input-based tasks provide language resources and skills which are later folded into the interactive task, thus allowing learners to take advantage of the benefits of task repetition. The task sequences provide opportunities to integrate the four skills, and interact in ways that are authentic and related to real-world language use. The tasks involve young learners in using language as a tool to achieve a clear outcome, and incrementally increasing complexity in the task provides a communicative context for introducing new language items, grammatical patterns, and communication strategies.

While devising and implementing these tasks with learners, I have had a chance to reflect on the importance of repeatedly evaluating the activity which is generated from tasks (Ellis, 2003, pp. 185–187). When devising a work plan, I have often relied on personal experiences to decide how to conduct activities, and taken note of areas that present difficulties for students. However, when attempting a task for the first time, one is only able to attend to so many learners; I feel that multiple chances to observe the activity resulting from task repetition can help teachers to develop professionally over time. Based on these experiences, and in light of research findings on students’ learning and confidence (Pinter, 2005), I support Shintani’s (2014) assertion that “teachers of young learners need not be wary of repeating tasks” (p. 292).

I conclude by reflecting on an issue which is impossible to avoid with young learners: classroom behavior. Ellis (2003) comments that students should take tasks seriously as a learning activity (p. 270). This is an important point, but it must be noted that children are likely to conceive of interactive tasks as games. Contrary to being problematic, this orientation can have a profoundly positive effect on student motivation and participation; in some cases, interactive tasks are the only way to engage certain learners. It is important to strike a balance, so that children take tasks seriously, but also see them as a source of enjoyment.

**References**


Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139858865
Appendix A
Outline of Tasks/Activities to be Used in Linked Sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Phase</th>
<th>Task/Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-task</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Provides comprehensible input with teacher talk and pictures or videos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>See Allen-Tamai (2013) for ideas on joint storytelling tasks for young learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Songs/chants</td>
<td>Provides enjoyable opportunities for meaning-focused input and output. See Peck (2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task recordings</td>
<td>Use a recording to model the main task. See Willis (1996, pp. 86-99).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input tasks</td>
<td>Counting money</td>
<td>Listen-and-do task. Teacher says a number and students work in pairs to pick out the correct number of toy coins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How much is it?</td>
<td>Matching/ordering task. Students are given lists of foods with prices. Teacher says the price and students must read the list correctly to find the correct food card. Students can also be asked to order foods from most to least expensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food delivery</td>
<td>Listen-and-do task. Students are given instructions to locate one or more food items and deliver them to the correct location (supermarket, 100 yen shop, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main task cycle</td>
<td>Let’s go shopping</td>
<td>Interactive role-play task. Shoppers are given a shopping list and money props. Clerks are given food cards to arrange on tables. The interaction involves identifying the correct items, negotiating the purchase, and reporting outcomes to the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language focus</td>
<td>Point-of-view video</td>
<td>Clarifies task goals and introduces strategies such as negotiation and bargain shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video/Audio dictation</td>
<td>Dictation task. Promotes a focus on language form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping list</td>
<td>Meaning-focused writing task. Learners write their own list of items to buy before repeating the main task. Encourages focus-on-form and promotes learner agency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
Main Task Sample Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lists with overlapping items (reduced task complexity)</th>
<th>Lists with less overlap (increased task complexity)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Shopping List</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 Shopping List</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>Strawberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juice</td>
<td>Juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Shopping List</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 Shopping List</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green tea</td>
<td>Grapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Shrimp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>Cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>Olive oil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food cards

Toy money

14
Appendix C
Dictation Activity Sample Material

Video/audio script:

“Hello, how are you? Do you have any apples?”

“Yes, I do. The apples are 1,000 yen each”

“1,000 yen!??” That is too expensive!!

Dictation sheet: Name________________ Date________________

1. Food: Apples Price: 1000 yen Cheap / Expensive

2. Food: ______________________ Price: ______________________ Cheap / Expensive
Chapter 2
Low-Proficiency University Students’ Perceptions of Pretask Planning and Their Monologue Task Performances

Chie Ogawa
(Temple University, Japan Campus)

Abstract
This study explored three low-proficiency university students’ perceptions of pretask planning types and their oral performance in the 3/2/1 monologue tasks. The participants engaged in four types of planning—individual-written brainstorming, paired-interactive planning, teacher-modeled input, and no-planning—before performing the 3/2/1 task. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted in Japanese with the participants. In addition to the qualitative data, the participants’ speech data from the 3/2/1 task were analyzed using the CAF (complexity, accuracy, fluency) indices. The interview findings indicated that the low-proficiency students felt the 3/2/1 task was difficult and that they mainly focused on meaning rather than form during the planning and speaking time. Results from quantitative analysis showed that the students’ preferences of pretask planning type impacted their oral performances to some extent; for example, if a learner prefers brainstorming planning, her oral performance was better under that type of planning time than no planning time. Effective utilization of pretask planning for low-proficiency learners are discussed.

Keywords: complexity, accuracy, fluency (CAF); interviews; pretask planning

The effects of pretask planning on speaking performance have been investigated over the last two decades. Most researchers (e.g., Ellis, 2009; Foster & Skehan, 1999) agree that pretask planning assists learners to produce better speaking performances because it alleviates some of the working-memory constraints they face by giving them an opportunity to activate concepts and access linguistic forms, such as lexis and morphosyntax.

The majority of planning studies have been conducted in the CAF (Complexity, Accuracy, Fluency) framework (e.g., Skehan, 1998). Previous researchers have found that pretask planning helped learners’ oral production, particularly fluency; however, they showed mixed results where complexity was concerned, and accuracy improved infrequently.

In some previous pretask planning studies, learners were allowed to use the planning time however they wanted, an approach that is known as unguided planning (e.g., Wendel, 1997). In unguided planning, the participants were given time to plan but the way of planning was not controlled. As a result, there was no clear understanding of what the participants did when planning. However, an increasing number of researchers have turned their attention to exploring particular types of guided planning. For example, Geng and Ferguson (2013) found that fluency improved in pair-work planning in which the learners discussed content and linguistic form. Kawauchi (2005) found that reading a model passage before speaking allowed low-proficiency learners to scaffold lexis and multi-word units, which improve their lexical accuracy. These previous studies suggest that speaking outcomes can differ depending on the type of pretask planning used.

Following Kawauchi (2005), Ogawa (2016) compared three types of pretask planning—brainstorming, pair-work rehearsal, and reading a model passage—to a no-planning condition with 29
first-year Japanese university students. The participants engaged in a 3/2/1 monologue speaking task in every lesson for eight weeks. In the 3/2/1 task, students talk about the same topic for 3 minutes, then 2 minutes, and finally 1 minute. When students talk for 2 minutes and 1 minute, they are asked to speak faster in order to repeat the same information in a shorter time. The participants were exposed to different types of the four pretask planning in a counterbalanced design. In the brainstorming condition, students were given four minutes to write their ideas. In the pair-work rehearsal condition, two students were given four minutes to rehearse what they would say in the monologue task. In the reading condition, the participants read a model passage silently while the teacher read it aloud. In total, 232 speech samples were analyzed (29 participants x 2 performances x 4 planning conditions = 232 speech samples).

The results showed that students made significantly greater complexity gains (clauses per AS-unit and mean length of AS-units) in the reading condition than in the no-planning condition. In addition, the reading condition produced the highest mean score for both morphosyntactic complexity and accuracy, and the third highest mean score for oral fluency. These findings indicated that the reading the modeled passage helped the participants produce well-balanced performances.

Most previous studies have analyzed students’ oral performances quantitatively; as a result, there are few qualitative investigations of how learners perceive or use planning time. Sangarun (2005) used think-aloud protocols and found that approximately 80-90% of students’ planning was focused on meaning regardless of the type of instruction they received—focus on meaning, focus on form, or a focus on both meaning and form. Planning that combined meaning and form was more beneficial than planning focused on each component separately, as the participants who focused on meaning and form improved in terms of both fluency and grammatical accuracy. Sangarun (2005) explained that this finding occurred because the participants who focused on both meaning and form successfully decreased working-memory load, and this allowed them to place more attention on grammatical accuracy during the task performance.

This study addresses a gap in the literature that few researchers have investigated the effects of pretask planning qualitatively. As a result of this gap, it is unclear how learners perceive the task and use planning time. This study employs a qualitative analysis of interview data after participants completed eight weeks of pedagogical treatment with different types of pretask planning. Using both interview data and the learners’ oral performances provides robust evidence that can help language teachers to understand more clearly how pretask planning can have impact on the learners’ performances. The purpose of this study is to shed light on students’ perceptions toward pretask planning and their oral task performance. Specifically, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do low-proficiency Japanese university students perceive the pretask planning conditions?
2. How do low-proficiency Japanese university students perceive their task performances?
3. How do the participants’ perceptions toward different planning conditions connect to their oral performance in terms of complexity, accuracy and fluency?

Methods

Context and Participants

This study is a part of a larger investigation of the types of pretask planning and students’ oral development through eight weekly sessions with 29 students (Ogawa, 2016). All participants were first-year university students who were required to take an English discussion course for two semesters in the university. These discussion courses were held once a week for 90 minutes per session. All the students took a TOEIC for placement purposes and they were placed into one of the four levels based on their scores.
The participants in this study were three first-year female students, Reina, Hanako, and Marin. They were placed in the lowest level based on their TOEIC score (279 and below). Because planning time is more effective with low-proficiency learners than higher proficiency learners (Ortega, 2005; Kawauchi, 2005), these three low-proficiency participants, who volunteered to participate in the interviews, were chosen.

Materials

A 3/2/1 task was employed eight times across eight consecutive weeks within one academic semester. One speaker talked about a particular topic for three minutes to a partner, repeated the same information but in two minutes to a different partner, and then did the same, this time in one minute, to a third partner. While the speakers performed the task, the listeners were instructed not to interrupt with comments or to ask follow-up questions. After the first speaker performed the task three times, the second speaker spoke on the same topic to three different partners for three, two, and one minute. During the task, the participants were expected to state their ideas and opinions more fluently and efficiently in the second and third performances because of the time pressure and task repetition inherent in the task design (De Jong & Perfetti, 2011). The task questions varied each week based on the textbook topics (Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Task Questions</th>
<th>Planning Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>See Note below</td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Is it important for you study English? Do you think everyone in Japan needs to study English?</td>
<td>PW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Have you ever been to a foreign country? Would you like to study abroad in the future? Why and why not?</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Do you think this university's students are fashionable? Do you think school uniforms are a good idea?</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>What clothing stores do you usually go to? Why? What are some important things to consider when you buy new clothes?</td>
<td>TL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>How do you usually get news? TV? Internet? Newspaper? What is your favorite TV program?</td>
<td>PW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Which celebrities do you respect? Do you respect celebrities or ordinary people?</td>
<td>NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Globalization</td>
<td>What is your favorite Manga or Anime? Who is your favorite Japanese singer?</td>
<td>BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Globalization</td>
<td>Which do you prefer, American movies or Japanese movies?</td>
<td>TL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. NP = No-Planning Condition; BS = Brainstorming Condition; TL = Teacher-Led Condition; PW = Pair-Work Condition. Week 1 was a practice session designed to familiarize the participants with the 3/2/1 oral task.

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1 All names are pseudonyms
Planning Conditions

Prior to engaging in the weekly 3/2/1 task, the participants took part in one of the following pretask planning conditions: no-planning (NP), brainstorming (BS), pair-work (PW), and teacher-led (TL) planning. The participants were exposed to the same condition twice during the study (4 planning types \( \times 2 \) times = 8 weeks). Table 1 shows the data collection schedule and task questions.

In the no-planning condition, the participants engaged in the 3/2/1 task without engaging in any planning. In the brainstorming condition, the participants had four minutes to write as many ideas as possible about the task topic in English on a handout. In the pair-work condition, the participants had four minutes to ask questions about the topic to a partner in English. For example, if one student answered the question \((\text{Is it important for you to study English?})\) by saying “In my opinion, studying English is important,” their partner asked follow-up questions to elicit more information such as “Why?” or “For example, when is it important?” In the teacher-led planning condition the students silently read a model passage while the teacher read aloud the same model passage. The students were not permitted to refer to handouts, dictionaries, or other external resources during the 3/2/1 task.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interview procedures. Three semi-structured 20-minute individual interviews were conducted in Japanese after the eight weeks of the treatment. The purposes of the interviews were to investigate (a) the students’ perceptions toward the tasks and different types of planning and (b) the relationship between their perceptions and their task performances.

Interview analysis. Affective coding (Saldaña, 2013), which concerns information about emotions, values, versus, and evaluation, was used to code the interview data and to investigate the students’ perceptions of the 3/2/1 task and their oral performance. Saldaña explains that human behavior is much influenced by their attitude and perspectives (p. 105). Therefore, affective coding should be included in order to understand the students’ perceptions toward classroom practice and their oral performance.

I transcribed the participants’ interview data and I categorized their perceptions into three domains: (a) pretask planning; (b) 3/2/1 task; (c) other variables (e.g., topics, length of the task, partner). Among affective areas (e.g., emotions, values, versus, and evaluation), two specific types of coding were adopted for this analysis: value coding and versus coding. Value coding was used to analyze the participants’ values, attitudes, and beliefs. Because the participants did not always explicitly state their values, phrases implying their values (e.g., I like…; I am (not) good at…; and, I think it is important…) were interpreted. According to Saldaña (2013), “Versus codes identify in dichotomous or binary terms the individuals, groups, social systems, organizations, phenomena, processes, and concepts” (p. 115). As the participants compared the planning conditions and variables that influenced their oral performance during the interview, phrases stating or implying dichotomous terms (e.g., I prefer brainstorming planning) were identified.

CAF analysis. In addition to the qualitative data, the participants’ speech data from the 3/2/1 tasks were collected for eight weeks. Only data from the first iteration of the 3/2/1 task were transcribed because the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of pretask planning time, not the effects of task repetition. The speech data were analyzed using the CAF indices. Hanako attended all eight sessions, Reina was absent once, and Marin had three absences; however, they all took part in the four planning conditions, so the mean scores for each planning condition were calculated.

Complexity, accuracy, and fluency were measured after speech samples were pruned. Complexity was assessed using (a) the number of clauses per AS-unit and (b) the mean length of the AS-unit (number of words/AS-unit). An AS-unit, which is often used for oral task research, is defined as “a
single speaker's utterance consisting of an independent clause, or sub-clausal unit, together with any subordinate clauses) associated with either” (Foster, Tonkyn, & Wigglesworth, 2000, p. 365). Accuracy was assessed with the percentage of error-free clauses and the percentage of error-free AS-unit. Fluency was assessed using syllables per minute.

Results

Students’ Perceptions of the Pretask Planning Conditions

All three interview participants believed that pretask planning helped them perform better. They stated that pretask planning was especially helpful when the task questions were unclear and topics were relatively unfamiliar. For example, Reina stated that she could have misunderstood the questions of “pop culture” without planning on Week 9 (Table 1), “if I just started a task without planning, I might have talked about totally different things” while Hanako reported that planning gave her time to focus on meaning by thinking about what she wanted to articulate. Their comments implied that they needed time to fully understand the questions and to formulate responses; thus, the planning time enhanced both task comprehension and the activation of concepts.

Brainstorming planning. Reina stated her preference for brainstorming planning rather than pair-work planning because it allowed her to use all the planning time for herself:

Brainstorming (is best). If I have the same ideas as the examples (in the teacher-led condition), I am not sure (if I can say that). If pair-work, I can plan only one topic during allotted planning time. I am trying to confirm what I want to say by doing output but the pair-work planning cannot allow me produce much (output). If we could discuss “we could say this, or that” using Japanese in the pair-work planning time, it is more suitable. However, in English, I cannot come up with English words during the pair-work planning, and I cannot practice more than two topics, so I cannot organize well. But for brainstorming, I can read and organize (by myself).

Reina did not find value in the teacher-led planning condition because it did not provide her with time to think of her own ideas, and she disliked producing ideas that were similar to the model passage. She preferred the brainstorming condition over pair-work planning because she could use the planning time to generate her own ideas efficiently.

Pair-work planning. While Reina stated that she did not feel comfortable speaking about the ideas she heard in the teacher-led planning condition, Marin valued the opportunity to listen to the other people’s ideas: “I want to share (ideas). I wonder what kind of ideas (others have).” She later showed her affective values toward sharing ideas, by saying “I want to share ideas” and “I want to listen.” Compared to the brainstorming condition, the teacher-led planning and pair-work planning allowed the students to listen to other’s ideas prior to engaging in the 3/2/1/ task.

Teacher-led planning. Hanako had a negative perception of teacher-led planning, as she stated that she lacked confidence that she could fully understand the teacher-led passage. She said, “You know the ones with passages? With that (planning), I don’t understand the sentences. I understand some words vaguely. I don’t understand quite well but (I can assume) that can mean this.”

She said “I don’t understand” twice, showing her difficulty toward understanding the teacher-led passage. She needed to infer the meaning based on words she only recognized. Although the teacher-led passage was read aloud in English by the instructor, Hanako sometimes misinterpreted the meaning of the model input. Table 2 shows the advantages and disadvantages of each planning condition as indicated by the three interview participants.
Table 2
Summary of the Students’ Perceptions Toward Planning Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning condition</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No-planning</td>
<td>If the topic is familiar enough, they don’t need much planning time.</td>
<td>Students might misunderstand the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students don’t have time to articulate their thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students don’t have time to articulate their thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
<td>Students can organize their ideas themselves.</td>
<td>Students cannot share ideas with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair-work</td>
<td>Students can listen to ideas before speaking.</td>
<td>Allotted time is not sufficient to cover the given topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-led</td>
<td>Students can listen to ideas before speaking.</td>
<td>Some lexis are difficult to understand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, the interview participants reported their perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of each planning type (Table 2). The participants saw planning as an effective way to generate ideas. Under the brainstorming condition, the participants thought deeply about what they want to talk about by writing down many ideas. Under the pair-work condition and the teacher-led condition, the participants listened to other members’ or the teacher’s ideas to help them to generate their own ideas. None of them reported focusing on syntactic forms during pretask planning.

Students’ Perceptions of Their Task Performances

The three interview participants felt that the 3/2/1 task was difficult because of the monologue style and its length. Marin said that the task, particularly the three-minute performance, was the most difficult task in the 90-minute class: “Oh, (the 3/2/1 task) is the hardest one. I could speak if I was asked questions from a partner. But if I have to speak by myself for three minutes, I feel I have to prepare content beforehand.”

This perception toward “speaking solo” versus “speaking with a partner” was also seen in Reina’s comments. Reina also expressed the difficulty of the 3/2/1 task as the following:

*I was not used to speaking by myself for the first time. My listener had asked me some questions (in the past semester). I had been practicing to reply to these questions. But if I have to speak monologue, I feel structured organization is necessary. If my speech is well organized, I could say things more fluently.*

Although the interview participants felt that the three-minute monologue was challenging, they had a strategy to complete the task, which was to focus on meaning rather than form. For example, all three participants said that conveying meaning was more important than speaking accurately. Marin reported that when she felt that her partner did not seem to understand her, she used words and phrases rather than grammatically correct sentences to express her ideas. Hanako also appeared to support this approach as “I have to continue speaking regardless. Listeners are being quiet, aren’t they? So I have to speak!” Hanako added, “I am not able to speak much. I usually say words. Chunk, chunk, chunk. I think it is okay as long as it conveys the meaning.” Indeed, Hanako’s utterances were relatively short and not complex. Hanako talked about her favorite singer as following (Week 8; brainstorming condition):
1. my favorite celebrity is Spy Air and Zektobach
2. Spy Air is singer groups
3. I like Spy Air songs, for example, my friend...
4. that song is very happy
5. I like Spy Air
6. Zektobach is music group

Marin and Hanako’s strategy to overcome difficulty of the three minutes was to continue speaking anyway. If the listener did not understand, Marin and Hanako said that they selected words without focusing on producing the correct linguistic form. Because the interview data also showed their speaking self-efficacy appeared to be low (e.g., “I cannot say a great deal”, “I am not able to speak much”), they attempted to solve their problems by using known words to convey meaning instead of producing grammatically accurate utterances. Reina also focused on conveying meaning rather than speaking in grammatically correct sentences. She said:

*I want to speak clearly. But sometimes, I include be-verb in a strange position or I used -ing in a past tense sentence.... However, even if I say ’come school’, it still makes sense without preposition, so I think it is okay.*

Reina did not value accuracy as long as her utterances made sense (e.g., *come school*); thus, she valued meaning more than accuracy during the 3/2/1 task.

**Students’ Oral Performances Under Each Planning Condition**

Table 3 shows the CAF results for each participant under each planning condition. Some of the participants’ performances were consistent with their interview answers. For example, Marin said that she preferred to listen to other people’s ideas prior to performing the task so that she knew what other people would say in advance. Indeed, she performed well in the pair-work in terms of mean length of AS-unit (7.94), Error-free clauses (0.79) and Error-free AS-unit (0.76), which are all the highest scores among the four planning conditions. Reina said that she preferred the brainstorming condition because she could use the whole planning time to think of what to say by herself. Indeed, her syllables per minute was the second highest (79.00) under the brainstorming condition, while Reina’s other performances areas under this condition did not differ appreciably compared to other planning conditions. This implies that her performance with brainstorming condition is considered as well-balanced performance.

On the other hand, students’ preference did not always support their oral performance. Hanako stated that hearing the teacher read the model passage was sometimes challenging because of her lack of lexical knowledge. However, she was able to maximize her syntactic accuracy in the teacher-led planning condition the most (error-free clauses = .64, error-free AS-unit = .55) as her other performance areas under the teacher-led planning were relatively good compared to other condition types. Another evidence is that the participants’ performance under no-planning condition was not always as bad while they all agreed that they preferred to have pretask planning time over no-planning condition. For example, some of Reina’s performances in the no-planning condition had high measures for complexity (clauses per AS-unit = 1.41) and accuracy (error-free clauses = .83, error-free AS-unit = .74). As the participants said in the interview, the necessity of planning time is possibly different depending on topic familiarity.
The findings in Table 3 supports that Skehan’s limited attentional capacity theory (1998): While the speaker attends to meaning (fluency), their performance on form sacrifices. Hanako had the highest mean length of AS-unit (8.50) while the lowest syllables per minute (43.02) under the brainstorming condition. Reina had the highest syllables per minute (85.83) while having the lowest error-free AS-unit (0.66) under the teacher-led condition. This implies that none of the types of planning in this study was completely efficacious in terms of improving all areas of CAF.

Table 3

The Interview Participants’ Task Performances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clauses per AS</th>
<th>Hanako</th>
<th>Reina</th>
<th>Marin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean length of AS</th>
<th>Hanako</th>
<th>Reina</th>
<th>Marin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>7.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>8.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>7.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>6.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error-free clauses</th>
<th>Hanako</th>
<th>Reina</th>
<th>Marin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error-free AS-unit</th>
<th>Hanako</th>
<th>Reina</th>
<th>Marin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syl per min</th>
<th>Hanako</th>
<th>Reina</th>
<th>Marin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>79.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syl per min</th>
<th>Hanako</th>
<th>Reina</th>
<th>Marin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. NP = no-planning condition; BS = brainstorming condition; TL = teacher-led condition; PW = pair-work condition. The number is calculated their average scores under each planning condition. (Each condition was implemented twice.) Marin was absent in week 2, 3, 8. Reina was absent in week 6.

Discussion

The qualitative and quantitative data provided three main findings. First, the interview data showed that the participants viewed planning as a valuable opportunity because they perceived the 3/2/1 task as challenging due to its length and monologue style. Pretask planning time allowed the participants to prepare to engage in the monologue tasks. Given that the low-proficiency students felt anxiety and perceived greater difficulty for speaking a monologue for three minutes, providing planning time is particularly helpful when the topics are unfamiliar to the learners.

Second, the interview findings showed that the participants believe that meaning should be prioritized over syntactic accuracy. That is similar to what Sangarun (2005) found. Low-proficiency students cannot attend to meaning and form simultaneously (Anderson, 1995; Yuan & Ellis, 2003), a situation that can lead them to prioritize one aspect of language—typically meaning—to achieve a communicative goal. Because the 3/2/1 task is particularly well suited as a fluency development activity due to the verbatim repetition (Boers, 2014; De Jong & Perfetti, 2011), learners might repeat the incorrect form in the second and third iteration. Teachers should know how and when learners can acquire the correct form (Boers, 2014).

Third, given that the findings show that none of the planning conditions produced an impeccable performance in all the CAF areas, each planning condition had a trade-off effect, in which a speaker often compromised fluency and form (accuracy / complexity). Yet, from Reina and Marin’ point of view, their preferences were reflected on their oral performances to some extent. For example, Marin
performed better under the pair-work planning, which she thought was beneficial to have input borrowing. Reina also produced a well-balanced performance in the brainstorming condition, which she liked because it allowed her to take time to plan. At the same time, it is also important to recognize the participants’ preferences showed an unexpected impact on their oral performances in spite of their perceptions. For example, although Hanako reported that she found it difficult to read the teacher-modeled passage because of her lack of vocabulary, the teacher-led planning was beneficial for her in terms of producing more syntactically accurate utterances. This might be because she borrowed some of the accurate forms from the teacher model passage.

The interview findings shed light on low-proficiency students’ individual performances and their perceptions toward pedagogical intervention. Unlike Ogawa’s quantitative findings (2016), this study employed qualitative analysis. The results suggest that analyzing the students’ oral performances more closely depending on their proficiency level gives some insight about the relationship between students’ proficiency level and their oral performance, in relation with planning conditions. Further investigation about the low-proficiency students’ oral performances and pretask planning needs to be conducted for future studies.

Conclusion

The interview findings show that the low-proficiency Japanese university students perceived each pretask planning differently, and they mainly focused on meaning rather than form during planning and their speaking performances. The quantitative results suggest that students’ preference toward each pretask planning type influenced their oral performances to some extent.

There are two limitations of the study. First, due to the small sample size and the focus on low-proficiency students, it is difficult to generalize the findings. Future studies investigating the perceptions of learners at different proficiency levels will shed greater light on this issue. A second limitation is that only one interview was conducted with each participant. Additional interviews and other types of data collection such as think aloud protocols and retrospective interviews with videos (i.e., stimulated recall) would potentially provide details about learners’ use of pretask planning.

In spite of these limitations, the findings provide two implications for language teachers. First, it would be advisable to implement the 3/2/1 task based on the students’ anxiety level, proficiency level, and their topic familiarity. Providing planning time is beneficial to maximize the effects of the 3/2/1 task. Without too much to say during the initial iteration, a speaker does not need to speak faster in the second iteration. Another way to reduce the low-proficiency students’ anxiety is to implement a shorter version of the task (e.g., 2.5/2/1.5 or 2/1.5/1) in the initial stage of the semester.

Another implication is planning with form-focus could be beneficial because the interview data showed that low-proficiency learners tended to focus on meaning rather than form during the 3/2/1 tasks. It is understandable that the participants tried to make sense and did not pay attention to grammatical forms. However, when students do not have a chance to learn accurate forms, they might continue speaking with inaccurate forms in the second and the third iteration in the 3/2/1 task. Input enhancement, which draws attention to target grammatical forms or vocabulary (e.g., underlining, highlighting, bold face font), could be a useful approach to help learners with forms. With simpler and comprehensible modeled-passages that the low-proficiency students could easily read, they might be able to understand (and recall) the content as well as how to say specific vocabulary and phrases. A combination of brainstorming with input enhancement might be another way to help learners with forms. Future research needs to clarify the effects of focus-on-form planning for low-proficiency students so teachers can take into consideration students’ utilization of pretask planning.
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Chapter 3  
L2 Writing Development in Intermediate College-Level  
Japanese-as-a-Foreign-Language Classrooms  

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Abstract  
The effects of task repetition have attracted considerable attention in second/foreign language education; nevertheless, relatively little attention has been devoted to writing tasks (Manchón, 2014), especially in languages other than English. In one of the few studies to address the issue albeit in relation with English learners, Nitta and Baba’s longitudinal study (2014) found that Japanese EFL (English as a foreign language) students considerably improved their syntactic complexity and lexical aspects using a timed writing task, but not fluency. Inspired by their study, the current study makes the first attempt to provide insights into L2 writing development of Japanese-as-a-foreign-language (JFL) learners. Using a “15-Minute Writing Task,” this study aims to examine whether JFL students statistically significantly increased their syntactic complexity, fluency, and lexical variety in written language performance over one academic semester (16 weeks). This study employed two different types of writing tasks (descriptive and argumentative essays) to ascertain any developmental differences between them. Each week the learner participants (n=29), who were enrolled in an intermediate-level course at an American university, engaged in the timed writing tasks. Writing samples were collected at the beginning and end of the semester. An analysis of 116 compositions demonstrated that the learners considerably improved overall syntactic complexity, complexity by subordination, and fluency over the period, but not lexical variety (kanji-by-ratio). For further interpretation, effect sizes (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014) were utilized, which identified developmental differences depending on the essay types. Although some indices of fluency and syntactic complexity increased to a large degree in descriptive essays, no large degree of effect sizes in argumentative essays were found. This study contributes to further understanding the important role of different essay types.  

Keywords: complexity of writing tasks; descriptive and argumentative essays; Japanese-as-a-foreign-language; second language writing development; task repetition  

Task repetition is defined as the “repetition of the same or slightly altered tasks—whether whole task or parts of the task” (Bygate & Samuda, 2005, p. 43). From pedagogical perspectives in second language (L2) learning, Larsen-Freeman (2009) highlighted the important role of task repetition by claiming that “using a task more than once is what drives learning” and “revisiting the same, or similar, territory again and again is essential” (p. 584). The effects of task repetition for L2 learning has attracted the attention of many researchers. For example, Bygate (2001) asserted that L2 learners tend to focus more on the meaning of statements for achieving an initial task. Then, when the learners are given a chance to engage in task repetition, they are able to pay more attention to linguistic forms because they are familiar with the task content and/or genre and thus are able to monitor their language to select more appropriate methods for using the target language.  

Regarding task repetition research on spoken and written language production, Manchón (2014) stated that the cognitive process of writing tasks is different from that of oral tasks in many respects because “writers continuously shift attention among idea generation, planning content or procedures,
text generation, and revision and evaluation processes” (p. 29); however, relatively little attention has been devoted to the effects of repeating writing tasks. In a recent important study, Nitta and Baba (2014) conducted longitudinal research to examine the effects of task repetition on L2 writing throughout one academic year. The participants, who were 46 Japanese university EFL students, were required to select one of three topics provided by the researchers and write a composition on the chosen topic within ten minutes. After a one-week interval, the participants were asked to write a composition using the same topic they had selected in the previous week (specific task repetition). The topic was changed every two weeks, and the writing assignments were carried out over a period of 30 weeks (task-type repetition). The findings indicated that there were different effects for the specific task repetition and task-type repetition. Although the former task repetition had limited effects, the latter task repetition showed considerable improvements on syntactic complexity and lexical aspects.

To date, no longitudinal studies have investigated the effects of task repetition on L2 writing skills in Japanese. For this reason, the current study will make the first attempt to fill this gap and to provide insights into L2 writing development of Japanese-as-a-foreign-language (JFL) learners at an American university. Furthermore, a great deal of thought should be given to writing task topics. The topics used in Nitta and Baba’s (2014) study were supposed “to be easy to write about for Japanese university students” (p. 114), referring to a list of essay topics from the Regents’ Test (Weigle, 2006). However, this list provides various topics, including descriptive and argumentative essay topics. According to the Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson, 2001), different cognitive demands of tasks lead to different task performances. Therefore, the current study attempted to examine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the two types of writing tasks (i.e., descriptive and argumentative essays).

The study reported in this article is part of a large-scale study investigating L2 writing development in intermediate college-level JFL classrooms over one academic year. Using a “15-Minute Writing Task,” this study aimed to investigate whether there are any statistically significant changes in the L2 writing ability of JFL students over one semester (16 weeks) at an American university. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Do JFL students statistically significantly increase their linguistic complexity, fluency, and lexical variety in written language performance over one academic semester (16 weeks)?
2. Are there any significant differences in L2 writing development between the two types of writing tasks (i.e., descriptive and argumentative essays)?

Methods

Context and Participants

The research participants were 29 students enrolled in JPNS 301, which was an intermediate-level Japanese course, at an American university in the fall semester of 2017. The learners were domestic students and international students whose native languages were English, Chinese, Vietnamese, or Urdu. Even though some students studied Japanese at the secondary school level, the university considered the participants to be at an intermediate level based on the school placement tests. Among the participants, some had visited Japan for a short period (ranging from a few days to 1.5 months), mainly for vacation. Although two of the participants, a Chinese native speaker and an English native speaker, had spent 3–6 years in Japan in their childhood because of their families’ business affairs, they were identified as intermediate-level students based on the school placement tests.
Materials

The Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson, 2001) claims that, as the cognitive demands of tasks increase, learners will be able to produce more accurate and complex language. In this respect, if the tasks require learners to explain their rational thoughts (i.e., increased reasoning demands), then the learners will produce more accurate and complex L2 output. On the other hand, if the learners undertake tasks that require little or no reasoning, their L2 output may be less accurate and complex. Taking this hypothesis into account, this study employed two different types of writing tasks: descriptive (e.g., Give a detailed description of your hometown) and argumentative essays (e.g., What do you think about drinking alcohol? What are the pros and cons? Describe your reasons and opinions). The students received three different topics each time. In order to avoid the students’ having to write about topics they found uninteresting or difficult, the students were allowed to select the most familiar and interesting topic from the three topics (Nitta & Baba, 2014).

In the first week, the students engaged in a practice writing task so that they could familiarize themselves with the task procedures. Each task was conducted during class time, and the topics were introduced just before the task. In a five-minute pre-task activity, learners completed individual written planning activities. They were also allowed to use a dictionary during this pre-task phase. Next, they were asked to write as much as possible about the topic for 15 minutes without stopping. The “15-Minute Writing Tasks” were conducted as independent tasks in the course, meaning the researcher conducted neither grammar instruction nor linguistic exercises for the writing task (See Appendix A for a sample essay). For this study, only the Pretest and Posttest essays (essays 1 and 7) were analyzed (See Appendix B for the three writing task topics provided each time).

Procedures

The study was conducted following the procedures shown in Figure 1. The two sections were taught by the researcher. JPNS 301 was oriented toward the integrated skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing using the same syllabus, assessments, and Japanese textbook. Therefore, all the research participants studied the Japanese language in a similar context, which included three 50-minute classes a week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Treatment Group (2 sections, n=29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Practice writing task, Basic Information Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Descriptive essay 1 (pretest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Argumentative essay 1 (pretest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–13</td>
<td>Descriptive essays 2–6 in even weeks/Argumentative essays 2–6 in odd weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Descriptive essay 7 (posttest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Argumentative essay 7 (posttest)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1. Overview of the experimental design of the present study.*

Measurements for Data Analysis

The CALF (syntactic complexity, accuracy, lexis, and fluency) measures of language production have been used for several decades in L2 writing research to analyze language performance (Polio & Friedman, 2016; Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998). To linguistically analyze the learners’
compositions, this study investigated how the degrees of fluency, syntactic complexity, and lexical variety changed over one semester (16 weeks).

**Fluency.** In English writing, words can be counted individually since a space is provided between each word. Japanese, on the other hand, is an agglutinative language that uses various morphemes to determine the meaning of words, and there are no boundaries between words in a Japanese text (Tsujimura, 2014). Therefore, a visual device such as spaces is not useful in determining the number of words. Example (1) illustrates this point. To measure writing fluency in Japanese language, for example, the total number of characters can be used (Lee, 2006). However, while most Western languages employ alphabetic systems, Japanese language uses three systems: syllabic characters (hiragana and katakana), logographic Chinese characters (kanji), and alphabetic characters (rōmaji). Therefore, (1a) can be written in (1b), which includes only hiragana, or can be written in (1c), which includes both hiragana and kanji. Although the sentence meanings of (1b) and (1c) are the same, the numbers of characters are different (i.e., 1b = 21 characters and 1c = 16 characters).

To assess learners’ L2 writing development in terms of fluency appropriately, in addition to the total number of characters, this study also counted total numbers of bunsetsu and sentences as fluency indices (Ishibashi, 2012). The bunsetsu is “a commonly used linguistic unit in Japanese-traditional grammar, consisting of one or more following functional words” (Kurohashi & Nagao, 1998, p. 720). Accordingly, both sentences, 1b and 1c, contain six bunsetsu.

**Syntactic complexity.** For syntactic complexity, a T-unit complex ratio has been frequently used in L2 learner text analysis (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). This study considered three measures as indices of syntactic complexity: (a) average number of characters per sentence, (b) average number of bunsetsu per sentence, and (c) average number of S(entence)-nodes per T-unit. The T-unit was defined by Hunt (1977) as “a single main clause (or independent clause) plus whatever other subordinate clauses or non-clauses are attached to, or embedded within, that one main clause” (p. 93). The S-nodes include independent clauses, dependent clauses, and embedded noun-modifying clauses. Therefore, the following sentence (1d) consists of two S-nodes and one T-unit:

(1d) [S-node kono kaiga-wa [S-node watashi-no chichi-ga katta] kaiga-desu] This picture-Top my-Gen father-Nom bought picture-Copula

The number of characters/bunsetsu per sentence as average sentence length has been used as overall and general syntactic complexity measures in line with Ortega (2003) and Nitta and Baba (2014). On the other hand, the number of S-nodes per T-unit, which considers the depth of a T-unit as subordination for syntactic complexity, has been used in the field of Japanese language education (e.g., Ishibashi, 2012). It is assumed that, the more characters/bunsetsu each sentence has, the more complex structures each sentence contains. Similarly, the more S-nodes each T-unit has, the more complex structures each T-unit contains.
Lexical variety. The main focus of this study was to analyze measures of fluency and syntactic complexity; however, as a lexical variety index, kanji-by-ratio was also measured by counting the number of kanji in the total number of characters for each written composition. For example, if student A wrote 100 characters that contained 25 kanji characters, the kanji-by-ratio was 0.25.

In order to check for inter- and intra-rater reliability in coding, 116 compositions (i.e., 58 descriptive essays and 58 argumentative essays) were coded by the researcher and then recoded by a second rater after the initial coding. Discussions between the raters resolved all the disagreements. Since the homogeneity of the data sets was not confirmed for some linguistic features, non-parametric tests (Wilcoxon signed-rank test) were conducted to investigate the statistical significance of all quantitative results.

The significance tests, displaying p values, can be useful for examining whether there are statistically significant differences between two or more groups. The current study also used an effect size \( r = \frac{Z}{\sqrt{N}} \) for the statistical interpretation. The effect size indicates the magnitude of an effect or strength of relationship, which is independent of the number of observations.

Regarding the magnitude of effect sizes \( r \) values for correlations, Cohen’s benchmarks of small \( (r = .1) \), medium \( (r = .3) \), and large \( (r = .5) \) effects have been used in L2 research. However, based on 346 primary studies and 91 meta-analyses, Plonsky and Oswald (2014) stated that “Cohen’s scale underestimates the range of effects typically obtained in L2 research” (p. 889). Accordingly, to examine within-groups/pre-post contrasts, they recommended the following scales: small \( (r = .25) \), medium \( (r = .4) \), and large \( (r = .6) \). Following Plonsky and Oswald, the interpretation of \( r \) was: \(|.25| \leq \text{small} < |.4|; |.4| \leq \text{medium} < |.6|; |.6| \leq \text{large}.

Results

To examine whether JFL students statistically significantly increased their fluency and syntactic complexity in their written language performances over one academic semester (Research Question 1), first, the composite scores were calculated: One was the sum of scores awarded for the descriptive essays, and the other was the sum of scores awarded for the argumentative essays. Next, to investigate whether there were any statistically significant differences in L2 writing development between the two types of writing tasks (Research Question 2), the Wilcoxon signed-rank test for paired samples was conducted separately. Tables 1–3 show the results of the statistical comparisons: Table 1 for the composite scores, Table 2 for the descriptive essays (29 pairs × eight indices), and Table 3 for the argumentative essays (29 pairs × eight indices).

The significance level was set at \( p = .00625 \), utilizing a Bonferroni adjustment (i.e., \( .05/8 \)) to compare changes in the two types of essays. For fluency, as shown in Tables 1–3, the number of characters and the number of bunsetsu increased considerably, while there was no statistically significant difference in the number of sentences. With regard to syntactic complexity, the number of characters per sentence, the number of bunsetsu per sentence, and the number of S-nodes per T-unit demonstrated substantial progress. Although the participants produced more kanji in the last tasks than in the first tasks, the results of kanji-by-ratio showed no statistically significant differences.

The effect sizes \( (r) \) in Tables 1–3 show that results of most measures changed to a moderate or large degree. While the number of bunsetsu and the number of bunsetsu per sentence increased to a large degree in Tables 1 and 2, the number of S-nodes per T-unit increased to a large degree in descriptive essays only. In sharp contrast, Table 3 shows no large degree of effect sizes in argumentative essays.
Table 1

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics of 8 Measures and Effect Sizes for All Essays (n=58)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>First Essay</th>
<th>Last Essay</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 No. of characters</td>
<td>293.47</td>
<td>329.00</td>
<td>-3.846</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 No. of bunsetsu</td>
<td>73.97</td>
<td>87.79</td>
<td>-5.031</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td><strong>.66</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 No. of sentence</td>
<td>11.79</td>
<td>11.74</td>
<td>-.097</td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 No. of characters per Sentence</td>
<td>25.52</td>
<td>28.47</td>
<td>-3.883</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 No. of bunsetsu per Sentence</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>-5.005</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td><strong>.66</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 No. of S-nodes per T-unit</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>-4.159</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical variety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 No. of kanji</td>
<td>62.72</td>
<td>74.48</td>
<td>-3.912</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 kanji-by-ratio</td>
<td>.2123</td>
<td>.2255</td>
<td>-1.622</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bold underlined = .60 or above.

Table 2

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics of 8 Measures and Effect Sizes for Descriptive Essays (n=29)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>First Essay</th>
<th>Last Essay</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 No. of characters</td>
<td>293.66</td>
<td>327.86</td>
<td>-2.596</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 No. of bunsetsu</td>
<td>70.41</td>
<td>86.59</td>
<td>-3.908</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td><strong>.73</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 No. of sentence</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>.971</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 No. of characters per Sentence</td>
<td>25.39</td>
<td>28.23</td>
<td>-2.757</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 No. of bunsetsu per Sentence</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td>-4.465</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td><strong>.83</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 No. of S-nodes per T-unit</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>-3.341</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td><strong>.62</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical variety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 No. of kanji</td>
<td>59.69</td>
<td>72.24</td>
<td>-2.585</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 kanji-by-ratio</td>
<td>.2030</td>
<td>.2193</td>
<td>-1.524</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bold underlined = .60 or above.
Table 3
*Descriptive and Inferential Statistics of 8 Measures and Effect Sizes for Argumentative Essays (n=29)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>First Essay</th>
<th></th>
<th>Last Essay</th>
<th></th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 No. of characters</td>
<td>293.28</td>
<td>53.06</td>
<td>330.14</td>
<td>74.18</td>
<td>-2.854</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 No. of <em>bunsetsu</em></td>
<td>77.52</td>
<td>14.24</td>
<td>89.00</td>
<td>20.68</td>
<td>-3.083</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 No. of sentence</td>
<td>11.66</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>11.62</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>-1.84</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntactic complexity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 No. of characters per Sentence</td>
<td>25.65</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>28.71</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>-2.779</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 No. of <em>bunsetsu</em> per Sentence</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>-2.670</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 No. of S-nodes per T-unit</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-2.437</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lexical variety</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 No. of <em>kanji</em></td>
<td>65.76</td>
<td>19.90</td>
<td>76.72</td>
<td>23.06</td>
<td>-2.931</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 <em>kanji</em>-by-ratio</td>
<td>.2215</td>
<td>.0454</td>
<td>.2316</td>
<td>.0454</td>
<td>-.724</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

In relation to Nitta and Baba’s (2014) study, which demonstrated that syntactic complexity progressed while fluency did not, the current study partially supported their results. The findings that syntactic complexity progressed were in line with their study, but the results of fluency were not. One of the reasons for this different result could be the fact that I modified their timed writing task for the current study. Nitta and Baba conducted the ‘10-Minute Writing Task’ during which their participants were asked to choose the most familiar of the three topics and write on the topic using a dictionary. When I conducted the ‘10-Minute Writing Task’ as a pilot study with intermediate JFL learners, who were not the current research participants, I found that there were several issues with these task procedures in this context. First, 10 minutes was too short for intermediate JFL learners to write a few paragraphs. Next, most students spent more time looking up words that they did not know and less time writing during the task. Finally, the learners pointed out the necessity of planning time. As a result, I adjusted the task procedures. As a five-minute pre-task, after receiving the choice of topics, the participants completed individual written planning activities, during which they were allowed to use a dictionary. Following the pre-task, they were asked to write on a topic as much as possible for 15 minutes, which I extended from 10 minutes. It may be possible that having planning time enabled the students to improve their fluency (Ellis, 2005).

Based on the empirical data that the intermediate JFL learners demonstrated improvement in fluency and syntactic complexity to a moderate or large degree, it may be assumed that the essay topics used for the current study were effective and potentially posed the right amount of cognitive demands for this type of task for the intermediate learners. The topics used in Nitta and Baba’s study (2014) were various types of topics which seemed to be quite difficult for intermediate JFL learners; therefore, the current study used the two types of writing tasks with topics that were different from those used by Nitta and Baba. Specifically, I carefully chose and adapted topics from introductory Japanese language textbooks. As a result, the JFL learners were able to focus on improving their writing, and their fluency and syntactic complexity progressed simultaneously.
With regard to lexical diversity, Measurement 7 (the total number of kanji) demonstrated considerable progress in both descriptive and argumentative essays. In other words, the JFL learners attempted to write more kanji in the last essays compared with the first essays. However, the results of Measurement 8 (kanji-by-ratio) showed no statistically significant differences. One explanation could be that this study only counted the number of kanji in the total number of characters for each written composition. Thus, future studies should employ more sensitive measurements such as type-token ratio, which can be calculated by dividing the types (the total number of different kanji) in the tokens (the total number of kanji).

As another interesting finding in this study, the effect sizes demonstrated some differences in L2 writing development between the two types of essays. Regarding the descriptive essays, the learners improved the number of bunsetsu, the number of bunsetsu per sentence, and the number of S-nodes per T-unit with a large effect size \( (r \geq .6) \). On the other hand, for the argumentative essays, the learners improved them with a medium effect size. These results may be due to the learners needing more time for effective writing of argumentative essays than descriptive essays. In connection with the Cognition Hypothesis, it can be presumed that the argumentative essays posed higher cognitive demands by requiring the learners to describe their rational thoughts. As a result, the learners might also be pushed to focus on producing complex and accurate L2 output over a longer period of time. Therefore, further investigation should be conducted to clarify this issue.

**Conclusion**

This study reported preliminary results and findings which compared JFL learners’ written pretest and posttest compositions from one 16-week semester. Although the researcher is currently examining L2 writing development over the entire academic year, the preliminary findings have already demonstrated promising results indicating that task repetition is likely to push “learners improve their performances by allowing them to activate, refine, and optimize their linguistic resources for the purpose of successfully completing a given task” (Lambert, Kormos, & Minn, 2017, p. 169). It was found that among the eight indices of writing performance, fluency and syntactic complexity improved to a moderate or a large degree. This study also identified some differences in L2 writing development depending on the essay types. Thus, this study highlighted the importance of considering the complexity (or genre) of writing tasks in order to assess L2 writing development appropriately.

This study reported on a preliminary attempt to examine L2 writing development over one academic semester and mainly focused on linguistic complexity and fluency. Therefore, some limitations need to be acknowledged. First, in relation to the Cognition Hypothesis, it would be necessary to look at accuracy measures because, despite the smaller effect sizes of fluency and complexity in the argumentative essays compared to those in the descriptive essays, the learners might have paid more attention to the accuracy aspects of their written production.

Second, in addition to indices for identifying linguistic features of performance data, the writing performance should also be evaluated in terms of communicative adequacy (Pallotti, 2009). Pallotti defines communicative adequacy as “the degree to which a learners’ performance is more or less successful in achieving the task’s goals efficiently” (p. 596). For example, the writing products could be assessed qualitatively by Japanese native speakers to examine whether the contents of their compositions could be understood by the readers efficiently. The measurements of accuracy and communicative adequacy are currently under investigation and will be reported in a future study. Additionally, to better appreciate how the CALF measures changed throughout one term or the entire academic year, it is also important to examine how these linguistic features developed from a dynamic
systems perspective (Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Nitta & Baba, 2014). Further analysis should explore in more detail how the CALF measures changed over time.

Third, this study has just begun revealing unique differences in JFL learners’ L2 writing development by employing two types of writing tasks and also confirmed the importance of considering the complexity or genre of writing tasks in order to assess L2 writing development appropriately. Future studies could use other types of writing tasks to further understand the effect of task complexity/genre on L2 writing performance. For instance, researchers can ask learners to describe a summary of a (un)structured story or write a report based on visual information, such as pictures, graphs, and charts. Finally, future studies should also consider whether other factors, besides task repetition alone, may have contributed to the gains made. Throughout the semester, the participants in this study had plenty of opportunities to engage in various classroom activities, such as input, output, and interactive tasks, and they also completed grammar exercises as homework assignments. Therefore, these tasks may also have potentially catalyzed the improvement in the students’ L2 writing performance. For future research, it would be worth examining whether learners who are not receiving formal instruction (e.g., Japanese 301) might also benefit from repeating writing tasks.

References


A Sample Essay

田舎に住んでいる人がたくさんいます。そして、私は子供の時に田舎に住みました。たくさんの人がおりました。まず、田舎はとても新しいです。そして、ここに住むと、田舎は皆そんなに親しみやすくなるまちになるので、田舎に住むのはとても親しみやすいです。

それで、田舎に住むのはとても親しみやすいです。田舎はたくさんの人があり、たくさんの人が住んでいるため、とても親しみやすいです。そして、田舎はまるで小さな家のような感じがするから、とても親しみやすいです。

やがて、田舎に住むのは、皆さん、同じようなことを思います。田舎は、まるで小さい家のような感じがしたくて、とても親しみやすいです。

田舎に住んでいた経験から、田舎と不親しい人がうまく

きており、最後まで、田舎に住むのを思いませんでした。
Appendix B
Essay Topics

I created all the topics used for this study. Since the writing tasks were conducted as independent tasks, these topics were not directly related to the activities in the JPNS 301 class. Next, I randomly assigned the descriptive essay topics and argumentative essay topics for each essay type's week, though the students were given a choice of topics. Both the instruction and the topics were provided in Japanese only.

Table B1
*The three writing task topics provided each time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Number of learners selected the topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First essays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive essay</strong></td>
<td>My typical day (私の一日)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a detailed description of:</td>
<td>My favourite animal (私の好きな動物)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What I want to do this weekend (私が週末にしたいこと)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Argumentative essay</strong></td>
<td>What I used to be and what I am now (前の私と今の私)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think about (topic)?</td>
<td>Drinking alcohol (お酒を飲む)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the pros and cons?</td>
<td>Living in foreign countries (外国に住む)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your reasons and opinions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last essays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive essay</strong></td>
<td>What I am not good at (私の苦手なこと)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a detailed description of:</td>
<td>My favourite sport (私の好きなスポーツ)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My favourite season (私の好きな季節)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Argumentative essay</strong></td>
<td>Continuing university studies (学生をつづける)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think about (topic)?</td>
<td>Owning a gun (銃を持つ)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the pros and cons?</td>
<td>Living in the countryside (田舎に住む)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your reasons and opinions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4
Authentic Application of TBLT in Japan

Jenny Numadate
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Abstract
Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been hailed as an effective framework for teaching authentic use of language in recent years. However, one of the criticisms of TBLT in EFL (English as a foreign language) environments is its lack of application outside the classroom, where the target language and the skills used to complete the task are rarely needed. This paper will define tasks, explain a task with real-world purposes in an EFL context, and discuss whether the task meets the criteria defined earlier. Using a simulated situation, namely finding employment, third- and fourth-year English majors in a Japanese university learned skills to prepare for the job market. Over the course of four weeks, students took on two roles, employees and employers, to foster insight on the job-hunting process. They learned how to brainstorm criteria related to the process as potential employees, how to prepare questions related to those criteria, and considered how to predict and answer questions possibly posed during a job interview. In the employers’ roles, students collaborated to create a company, considered what criteria they would use to choose employees, and learned how to ask questions to determine whether candidates fit those criteria. A simulated job-fair activity in the final session asked students to act as employees and employers consecutively, helping them holistically understand the employment process and how to negotiate difficult questions likely asked in a real interview. In addition to improving English communication skills, the concepts introduced can be applied to various situations for finding employment both within Japan and abroad.

Keywords: English-as-a-foreign-language; Japan; mixed-level classes; job-hunting; Task-Based Language Teaching

In English as a second language (ESL) environments, students have ample opportunity to use the language, concepts and skills learned inside the classroom in their daily lives outside in the real world. However, in English as a foreign language (EFL) environments like Japan, where foreign languages are rarely needed outside school settings, the effectiveness of TBLT has been questioned (Sato, 2010; Swan, 2005). This paper describes a job-fair activity and will discuss whether it is a task according to accepted definitions as well as if it can be considered authentic, which means the task should introduce not only language, but also concepts and skills that can be applied outside educational environments.

Task-Based Language Teaching: Overview
Tasks have been defined in various ways. Ellis (2003), stated that tasks are activities that call primarily for meaning-focused language use, they provide little or no language to help in completion of the activity, they allow freedom in language forms used to complete the activity, and they have outcomes that can be evaluated and that they have real-world relationships. Nunan (2004) defined tasks as activities that involve learners using the target language in order to express meaning, rather than form. Skehan (1998) said that tasks must have goals that need to be worked on while Prabhu (1987) emphasized that they should involve learners in reasoning and problem solving. Long and Crookes (1992) also stated that tasks should have a pedagogical relationship to the real world.
Tasks can help learners of different levels improve their language production. In mixed-level classes, students are exposed to different levels of the target language, which enables lower-level students to learn what more proficient learners say, while offering advanced students the opportunity to learn how to explain ideas more simply to ensure communication (Willis, 1996).

As Long (1996) stated in his interaction hypothesis, interaction through conversation promotes language learning. In situations with learners of different proficiency levels, negotiation for meaning will likely occur, resulting in communicative competence. Negotiation also involves reasoning and problem solving, and Prabhu (1987) noted that this creates ideal conditions for language learning.

Planning during the pre-task phase is also an important aspect of TBLT. Giving students time to prepare questions by writing them out allows them to carefully think about what they want to say and have time to consider the grammar (Willis & Willis, 2007). However, allowing spontaneous communication to occur during the task phase is also beneficial because it exposes students to situations they will encounter in real life (Willis, 1996).

The job-fair task presented in this paper attempts to operationalize the definitions of tasks as stated above in a mixed-level class. During this task, the use of planning, prediction and negotiation was thought to teach students skills needed to prepare for a real-world situation, even in an EFL environment such as Japan.

**Job-Fair Task**

This job-fair task aimed to teach students how to come up with important criteria they should consider when they begin to look for employment. It was designed to teach them how to evaluate criteria, predict questions and answers that might be offered in an interview setting, as well as how to negotiate and respond to questions and answers on the spot. Through role-play activities from both the employer and employee perspectives, students were encouraged to consider the aspects of looking for a job from both sides of the hiring process. With the ultimate goal of getting hired by the company they wanted, or hiring the employee they wanted, the task resulted in an exciting, authentic activity for students.

**Students**

36 third and fourth year English majors at a private university in Eastern Japan participated in this task. Most of the students (N=32) were born and raised in Japan, while four students, who came to Japan for study abroad, were each from different countries in Asia. The Japanese students had studied English for at least eight years and ranged from A2 to C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale (Council of Europe, 2001) based on scores from a placement test administered at the beginning of the school year. The international students were advanced in English and had intermediate to advanced proficiency in Japanese, ranging from N3 to N1 on the Japanese Proficiency Language Test. At the time of their participation in the task, the Japanese students were just about to start looking for employment, within the next six months or so. For this task, the students were divided into eight groups of four to five students each.

**Task procedures**

This task was part of an elective Discussion class taught for 90 minutes per week for a fifteen-week semester. The job-fair task—adapted from LeBeau and Harrington (2006)—was completed over four weeks, with the first three weeks used for preparation and the final week used for the job-fair simulation. The process, as summarized in Table 1, is described below in detail. The students remained in the same groups throughout the four-week process.
Table 1
Outline of Schedule for Preparation and Execution of Job-Fair Simulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week number</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prepare as an employee: Brainstorm and select employee criteria, develop questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prepare as an employer: Create company profile / Brainstorm and select employer criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prepare as an employer: Develop questions for chosen criteria from employer perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Job-fair task simulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Week 1: Prepare as an employee.** The students were randomly arranged into groups of four or five, and each group was asked to brainstorm all the criteria they could think of related to what they might want in a job. They wrote their ideas in English on a piece of paper, but they were allowed to speak in Japanese. While they helped each other with vocabulary, the teacher offered suggestions when they could not find the correct term. After each group developed about 15 criteria, the teacher asked each student to independently choose the five most important criteria they wanted to focus on and talk about in a job interview. Reported criteria examples included: salary, benefits, working hours, location, housing, uniforms, holidays, transportation subsidies, women’s days, maternity leave, possibility for transfer, discounts, pension plans, and promotion opportunities.

After choosing their criteria, the teacher instructed students to think of open-ended (i.e., not yes/no) questions or statements to ask the employers in order to determine if a company will meet their needs. Each student thought of questions related to the five criteria they chose. Reported question examples included:
- **Salary** – How much is the monthly salary?
- **Benefits** – What kind of health benefits do you offer?
- **Transfer possibility** – How often do employees get transferred to other areas?
- **Location** – Where is your company located?
- **Housing** – Please tell me what kind of housing is available for employees.

While formulating the questions, students worked in groups and asked each other about grammar, spelling and vocabulary. Because the groups were randomly assigned, lower-level students could learn from higher-level students without relying on the teacher. The presence of the international students also increased cultural awareness because these students had different ideas than Japanese students about what is important when looking for a job. Additionally, through the process of writing their questions, the students learned how to predict what the answer might be. This ability helped prepare them for negotiations that were needed in the final stage when the simulated job interview took place.

**Week 2: Prepare as an employer (company profile).** Each group was asked to brainstorm all the criteria they thought were important as a company for hiring an employee. Again, they were allowed to discuss in Japanese, but they were instructed to write all the ideas down on a piece of paper in English. Reported criteria examples included: diligent, punctual, communication skills, computer skills, presentation skills flexible, willing to transfer, willing to travel, responsible, creative, able to come up with new ideas, independent, and friendly.

As can be seen, the criteria the students produced as employers were very different than the criteria they contrived as employees. Students noticed this discrepancy and became aware of the
differences in expectations. This awareness made them realize what they might have to think about when they started to look for employment in the near future.

After brainstorming about 15 criteria, each group was asked to create a company. They were asked to decide what kind of company they wanted to be, including the name, and then were asked to make a profile sheet (Figure 1) considering the criteria they brainstormed as employers. The teacher also asked them to refer to the criteria that they thought of as employees to elicit questions they might be asked to enhance prediction skills. If they could predict what they might be asked by prospective employees, they would be able to better prepare for the job fair. There was no required minimum or maximum for the information on the profile, but after considering all the criteria from both perspectives, the students were able to make detailed profiles. Companies were instructed to make a sign with the name of the company so the employees would know this information during the job-fair task.

![Figure 1. Sample company profile used during the job-fair task for employees to learn about the company.](image)

**Week 3: Prepare as an employer (interview).** During the final preparation class, groups were asked to decide which criteria from the list created the week before were most important for their company. Because each group had a different type of company, their criteria differed from other groups. After choosing five criteria, they were asked to write open-ended questions to ask prospective employees at the job fair. Again, the teacher suggested using open-ended questions in order to promote communication and introduce unpredictability akin to real-world job interviews. If closed-ended questions are asked, the answer will simply be yes or no and the conversation will not progress. By limiting the students to open-ended questions, they will encounter difficulty predicting all the possible answers. This is one of the important factors in designing tasks, introducing opportunities for negotiation. Negotiation is necessary for communicative competence as suggested through the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996). With open questions that cannot be answered easily or quickly, the students will have to spontaneously react to each situation accordingly, relying on their linguistic knowledge to successfully communicate their opinions or information. Reported question examples included:
Creative – What ideas do you have for our company?
Responsible – What do you do in your part-time job?
Friendly – What kinds of club activities are you doing at university?
Willingness to Transfer – What area of Japan would you like to live in?
Punctual – What time do you get up in the morning on school days?

**Week 4: The job-fair task.** Tables or desks were arranged so that there were eight companies with four (or five) seats at each table. Each group set up their company with the profile sheet, the name of the company and the employee assessment sheets (Figure 2).

Groups were then split into two pairs (or a pair and one set of three if the original group had 5 students). The A pair stayed at the company to interview prospective employees. The B pair rotated around to all the other companies. As each student was required to independently find the company they wanted to work at, the pair did not necessarily have to rotate together, but for logistic purposes, it was thought to be easier to have each pair visit the companies at the same time. The B students were given an employer assessment sheet (Figure 3) to make notes about each of the different companies they visited. They were also asked to make note of the questions that they wanted to ask (determined in the preparation stage).

![Employee Assessment Sheet](image)

*Figure 2. Employee assessment sheet used by companies to record information about prospective employees.*
Figure 3. Employer assessment sheet used by employees to record information about companies they visit.

The students were given five minutes to hold their first interview sessions. Depending on the number of groups and the length of a class, this time can be adjusted. The teacher then set a timer and the interviews began. During the interview process, the employers, (A pair) were expected to explain their company, ask questions to prospective employees related to their criteria, and make brief notes about each employee. The employees (B pair) needed to find out information, ask the questions they prepared, and make brief notes about the company. The interviews were expected to be done completely in English with the teacher monitoring the activity. Notetaking can be done in the native language for time-saving purposes if the students are unable to write quickly in English. After five minutes, the timer rang and the B pairs moved to another company. After everyone was seated, the timer was reset for five minutes. This process was repeated for a total of seven interview sessions so that every employee (B pair) had an opportunity to go to each company (A pair).
Then, the A and B pairs were asked to switch roles. The process was repeated until every student visited every company except their own. The A pairs returned to their groups and as a group, the company reviewed their notes about each employee and decided who to choose to hire based on who met their criteria the most. Then, each student was asked to independently review their notes about each company and decide which one best met their criteria and would therefore like to work for. In the final stage of the task, the teacher then asked each company which employee they wanted to hire. If the employee also wanted to work for that company, there was a match and the student was ‘hired.’ If not, the teacher moved on to the next company to check whether there was a match. This continued until all companies stated their preferred employee. If a match was made, it indicated that the students were able to communicate well and successfully negotiate to state their preference.

Due to time constraints (the class was only 90 minutes), there was no time for post-task activities or review during the class. However, in future classes or at the end of the semester, the teacher can ask students to reflect on this task to determine whether they feel they could communicate effectively or if the task is applicable or helpful for their future.

**Task Validity**

To determine whether this activity can be considered a task, it was analyzed according to the definitions stated previously. Then, if it can be considered a task, does it provide an authentic content that can be applied in an EFL setting? As Ellis (2003) and Nunan (2004) have stated, a task must be meaning-focused instead of form-focused. This activity adheres to this definition. The focus is on using language to ‘get a job’ or ‘hire an employee.’ Students must use language to convey meaning by asking and answering questions and do not focus on grammar, as long as they can make themselves understood. Ellis (2003) stated that there should be little or no language provided by the teacher and the students should be free to choose which language they want to use to complete the activity. In this activity, except for the instruction to use open-ended questions and some small corrections suggested by the teacher to avoid miscommunication, there was little language instruction. The students communicated and negotiated with each other in every stage, using any language forms they saw fit. Skehan (1998) insisted that tasks should have goals to be worked on. This activity indeed has the clear goals of ‘getting a job’ and ‘hiring an employee.’ Prabhu (1987) mentioned that tasks must include problem solving and reasoning. During the job fair, the students participated in simulated job interviews. They were asked questions that they had not be informed of previously and answered them within a short time. This forced the students to spontaneously solve issues regarding communication and negotiate their position with the companies. When the students tried to appeal to the company they liked, they might have changed their criteria slightly to adhere to what the company wanted. This negotiation falls within the definition offered by Prabhu. Finally, Ellis (2003) stated that the task must have real-world relationships while Long and Crooks (1992) suggested that a task must have pedagogical relationships to the real world. In Japan, almost all third- and fourth-year university students are expected to find a job. This task, a simulated job fair, provides a real-world situation. By communicating with various people with the aim of being ‘hired,’ and by preparing for both the employer and employee roles, students learn what they should think about when looking for employment from multiple aspects. They learn how to predict, negotiate, and deal with communication issues. This job-fair activity clearly adheres to all the definitions and can therefore be defined as a task.

As this task is done using a foreign language, in this case English, can it be considered authentic? This task simulates a real-world situation, getting a job. However, in Japan, most interviews or job explanations are conducted in Japanese, so is there a point to using the target language to do this task?
In this case, this class was part of a curriculum for English majors so the students were motivated and used to using the foreign language in the classroom. Additionally, there were four non-Japanese exchange students so using English as the common language was expected. Some students were looking for employment opportunities overseas and for those who were planning on working locally, they had to consider the recent trends to make English the operating language of companies in Japan. Companies such as Rakuten, Softbank and Uniqlo already have these policies in place (Borzykowski, 2017), while Honda will start an English-only policy in 2020 ("Honda," 2015). Students may be asked about or have to prove their English ability when applying for jobs to these companies so practicing a task such as the one described above in English, will help them prepare for employment at a company with a global outlook. By offering the students a chance to consider the criteria they want to focus on to get a job, and giving them the chance to consider it from the employers side as well, this task will open their eyes to the job-finding process from both sides and better prepare them for employment.

Alternate Task Options

This task can be adjusted in various ways to accommodate different purposes and levels of students. To make it easier for low-level students or non-English majors, the teacher can offer a list of criteria that the students can choose from. The students would still have freedom to create their own questions but the onus of coming up with everything would be reduced. For some criteria, closed-ended questions (yes/no answers) could also be allowed. Additionally, the companies could be created by the teacher beforehand to make the task shorter or less labor-intensive for the students.

To make the task more realistic, real job advertisements from the university career center could be used. Showing students what is actually necessary to get hired at various companies might better prepare them for employment. Although this is more realistic, it is not as fun and does not allow the students freedom to consider criteria from the employers side.

This task was done during a four-week period but if time permits, it can be extended to five weeks by doing the final stage (the job fair) over two weeks. The students would remain in the same role the first week and switch in the second week. This would allow more time for each interview, which could be increased from five to ten minutes, allowing for more communication and time for negotiation. However, the students would have time to reflect on the task the first week and may prepare more for the second week. This could reduce some of the spontaneity and may lead to students trying to memorize their questions or answers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this job-fair task provided a way for university students to learn language, skills and techniques related to finding employment in an authentic situation. They learned how to brainstorm criteria, determine which criteria are important, formulate questions, and predict answers. They also learned how to negotiate, communicate their opinions and react quickly to open-ended questions. These skills are indispensable when looking for a job after they graduate.

References


Chapter 5
Bridging the Gap Between Teacher and Student Perspectives of TBLT in the Japanese EFL Classroom

Shizuka Brooks
(Temple University, Japan Campus)

Abstract
Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been popular in Japan for over two decades (Nunan, 2003). With the recent increased emphasis on communicative skills (MEXT, 2013) more and more teachers in Japan are becoming interested in TBLT. However, because TBLT focuses on goals, procedures, and outcomes that are often very different from the regular teacher-centered approach found in most Japanese classrooms, some researchers worry that this approach to language teaching may be difficult for many Japanese students to grasp. This article anticipates potential problems that may occur when using different types of tasks (i.e., discussions, presentations, and peer review tasks) in a language classroom in Japan. It then suggests some possible solutions to these problems. To do this, the article draws upon interviews with four English language teachers working in Japan and the author’s own experience as both a teacher and a student in Japan.

Keywords: discussions; peer review; presentations; Task-Based Language Teaching; teacher beliefs

With the introduction of the new course of study by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Technology (MEXT) in 2013 there has been an increased focus on a more communicative approach to language teaching in Japan (Kotaka, 2013). Prior to this, the focus of English language classes in most high schools and junior high schools in Japan tended to be on teaching students English grammar and vocabulary (although communication-based activities might also have had a small role to play). Most teachers did this using a present, practice, produce (PPP) method (Dickinson, 2010). However, the PPP approach to teaching English has been criticized for being incompatible with developing students’ communicative competence (Ellis, 2000). One methodology that has been suggested as an alternative to this approach and as a way of improving students’ communicative competence is task-based language teaching (TBLT). There are two types of TBLT that are used in language classrooms in Japan, a strong version (Willis, 1996) and a weaker version (Ellis, 2003), sometimes referred to as task supported language teaching.

While there are many potential benefits with using TBLT in the Japanese EFL classroom, some researchers have expressed concern over how appropriate TBLT is for the Japanese context (e.g., Burrows, 2008). In particular, researchers have discussed potential problems involved with implementing this type of approach in English language classrooms in Japan. These problems include the time constraints and large class sizes most Japanese English teachers have to deal with (Butler, 2011) as well as concerns about how well TBLT prepares students for their important university entrance exams (Sato, 2009). One of the major issues involved in using TBLT in Japanese EFL classrooms is that there are significant differences between the teacher-centered approach to language teaching that students are used to and the more student-centered approach of TBLT. This means that students are often unsure about how to complete the tasks they are being asked to do in the TBLT classroom (Burrows, 2008).

In this paper, I will provide some background into the possible benefits and problems of using TBLT in the Japanese context. I will then look at three common tasks that are used in many language
classrooms in Japan: discussion tasks, presentation tasks, and peer review tasks. I will focus on the differences between the teachers’ and students’ perception of these tasks and the problems that can result from the gap between these two perspectives. Finally, I will look at some possible solutions that may be able to help teachers to bridge this gap. In order to discuss these tasks, I will make use of my own experiences as both a student and a teacher in Japan and data collected from four semi-structured interviews conducted with university teachers working at different universities in the Kansai area.

**Background of the Project**

**Task Based Language Teaching**

TBLT gained popularity in the 1980s as a response to the more form focused approach of PPP (Willis & Willis, 2009). The problem that many practitioners had with PPP is that they felt it treated language as an object for study rather than a tool for communication (Ellis, 2003). While communicative language teaching (CLT) was also developed as a way to have students focus more on the communicative functions of language learning, many researchers felt that CLT did not go far enough in allowing students to use the language in an authentic way. For example, Samuda and Bygate (2008) expressed their skepticism over CLT materials because they “continued to reflect a view of learning as a gradual accretion of individual, pre-selected items, mediated through orchestrated pedagogical sequences” (p. 56). TBLT was seen as a way to correct this problem because in the TBLT classroom, tasks are used not merely as a method of practicing pre-taught language forms but as a way for students to interact with each other by having them use language to actually complete a task. Fotos (2002) explained that tasks are an effective way to teach a language because they “supply the learner with target language input that is rich in communicative usages of problematic target structures, and task performance provides opportunities for the type of learner interaction suggested to promote language acquisition” (p. 138). While students are not explicitly taught language forms as part of the task, the feedback they receive on the language they produce while completing the task and the ability of the learner to notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge means that TBLT can help students to improve their accuracy as well as their fluency (Carrol & Swain, 1993).

Researchers often divide TBLT into two different types, the strong and weak versions of TBLT (Skehan, 2009). In the strong form of TBLT, the entire curriculum is designed around tasks instead of around the form or function of the language (Brown & Lee, 2015). Skehan (2009) describes the weak form of TBLT as a teaching style that embeds tasks in to a “more complex pedagogical context” (p. 84). The tasks used in the weaker form of TBLT still need to be authentic activities where the focus is on the meaning, not the language, and students should still be assessed on how well they complete the task not on how grammatically correct they are (Skehan, 2009). However, this weaker form of TBLT allows for much more flexibility and it is easier for Japanese teachers to integrate this type of TBLT into their existing classes.

**The Current Situation of TBLT in Japan**

More and more teachers in Japan are making use of the weaker form of TBLT and are trying to integrate tasks into their existing classes (Butler, 2011). There are a number of reasons why TBLT is becoming more popular in Japan. First of all, in MEXT’s newly released course of study (MEXT, 2013) there is a much greater emphasis on communicative competence. This is because the current form focused method of teaching English in Japan does not do a good job of teaching students how to communicate in English. Despite having studied English for six or more years, most Japanese students are still not confident using English to communicate (Dickinson, 2010). Another reason that TBLT and tasks are becoming more popular in Japan is that researchers are beginning to recognize that the form
focused, non-communicative approach to teaching English found in many classrooms in Japan can be demotivating for Japanese students (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009).

Problems With Using TBLT in Japan

While there are many benefits with using TBLT in Japanese EFL classes there are also some potential problems. The biggest issue with using TBLT in Japan is that the student-centered approach to TBLT is very different from the teacher-centered approach that students are used to from their previous language classes and from their other subjects (Sato, 2009). This can be a problem because students often feel dissatisfied if the way they are being taught does not meet their expectations (Burrows, 2008). Anecdotally, Japanese students often feel that they are not learning if they are not being explicitly taught grammar or vocabulary.

This mismatch between what students believe a language class should be like and what is required of them in a task-based language class can make students reluctant to participate in the classroom (Burrows, 2008). Students may also be unwilling to participate in the classroom because they do not see the need for English and are, therefore, not willing to make an effort in the class. Research done by Tani-Fukuchi and Sakamoto (2005) supports this idea. Their study found that rural students were much less willing to participate in the English language classroom than urban students. They suggested that was because there were less chances for rural students to use English outside the classroom, so they did not feel it was as useful for them. Because there is such a focus on communication in TBLT, it is important that students are willing and motivated to try the tasks they are being given.

Another problem with using TBLT in Japan is that one of the most important reasons for Japanese students to study English in high school and junior high school is in order to pass the competitive university entrance exams (Butler & Iino, 2005). Even university students often see the main goal of their university English classes as improving their TOEIC scores so that they can find a good job. The requirement for students to pass summative, norm-referenced, and knowledge-based exams makes it hard for teachers to use more communicative approaches, such as TBLT, in their classes (Littlewood, 2007).

In the next part of this paper, I will argue that the solution to many of these problems is not to avoid using TBLT in the Japanese English language classroom, but to rather scaffold it in a way that meets the needs of our students. Teachers need to be aware of their students’ expectations and the potential problems Japanese students may experience when doing tasks in the classroom. In order to do this, I will look at three tasks and explain the benefits of these tasks from a pedagogical perspective, problems students are likely to have with these tasks, and how we can avoid these problems.

Methods

Participants

The participants of this study were four English language teachers who were working at universities in the Kansai area at the time of the study (see Table 1). When recruiting participants, two factors were taken into consideration. Firstly, all four participants had indicated that they were using tasks in their university English classes and that they were willing to participate in this research project. Secondly, an attempt was made to interview an even number of both Japanese nationals and native English speakers, given potential differences between the two groups. In terms of their schools, Mr. Smith (all names are pseudonyms) worked in a private university with a high level of admission standards. Ms. Sato and Ms. Jones worked in a school that had lower student admission standards, though Ms. Jones worked with English language majors who were generally more motivated and had a
higher level of English than the general students. Ms. Suzuki worked part-time at a number of universities in the Kansai area.

Table 1

Teachers’ Backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Teaching experience (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Smith</td>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>MA (currently enrolled in a PhD program) in Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jones</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>MA in Intercultural Communication</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sato</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>MA in Foreign Language Education</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Suzuki</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>M.S.Ed. with a Concentration in TESOL</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>English At the university level in Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Smith</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jones</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sato</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Suzuki</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection and Analysis

The interviews were done individually, using a semi-structured interview protocol as described by Richards (2009). This was done in order to give the interviewer and interviewees some flexibility to focus on the themes and ideas that they thought were important for their teaching context. The questions were e-mailed to the interviewees beforehand, in order to allow them to prepare for the interviews. The interview questions can be found in the Appendix. The author met with each participant one by one. Each interview took between 30 minutes to just over 1 hour.

The first three sections of the interview focused on three different types of tasks; discussions, presentations, and peer review. While multiple definitions of tasks exist in the literature (Zeng & Borg, 2014), for this paper the definition given by Samuda and Bygate (2008) was used. These researchers define a task as an “activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning, through process or product or both” (Samuda & Bygate, 2008, p. 69). These three tasks were chosen by the author because they are thought to be the tasks that are commonly used in the university English classrooms in Japan.

During the interview, in response to the first three sections of the interview questions, the teachers discussed if and how they implemented each of the three tasks in their classes and provided the reasons why they used that particular type of task in their classes along with any benefits they felt that the task may have had for the students. The final section of the interview had teachers discuss any other types of tasks that they had used in the classroom.

All the participants were interviewed in their first language (English or Japanese), and the interviews were recorded (with the permission of the participants). The interviews were then transcribed by the author; the relevant parts of the Japanese interviews were also translated into English by the author.

Participants’ comments were organized according to the three task types that the teachers were asked to comment on during the interviews. Their answers were then examined together for each of the tasks to look for common trends between the four teachers. The focus was on trying to identify commonalities between the four teachers as to how they carried out the task in their classrooms and why they felt that the task would be beneficial for their students, separately for each of the three tasks.
Results

The next section summarizes the results of the interviews. It looks at the different tasks that the teachers said they used in their classrooms and explains how they went about setting up these tasks. It also surveys the reasons that the teachers gave for using these tasks.

Discussion Tasks

One very common task that can be used in the language classroom is a discussion-based task. The four teachers all said that they had used some kind of discussion tasks in their classes where focus was on having the students share information with one another orally. The most common type of discussion task used by the teachers was a jigsaw task with all four of the teachers I interviewed saying that they had used some variation of the task in their classes. The approach that Mr. Smith (pseudonym) described represents a common way to do a jigsaw task, though the details varied slightly from teacher to teacher from the interview. Mr. Smith said that he put his students into groups of four the week before the task and gave each of the students a different article to read about a similar topic. Students were asked to go home and read the article before the next class and to answer some basic comprehension questions about the article. In the next class, they were then in charge of introducing and explaining that article to their group and leading a discussion about the topic discussed in the article.

Some of the reasons that the teachers gave for using this type of activity in the classroom was that it was a way for students to receive both meaning-focused input and engage in meaning-focused output. For example, Ms. Sato said that her students participate more, and have more authentic conversations if there is a clear focus to the task and students are able to prepare for the task on their own before coming to class. She also said that teaching students useful expressions and the vocabulary that they need for the activity allowed for the discussions to go more smoothly. The teachers also said that they found that these types of tasks were easy to set up and explain to the students. Finally, the teachers saw discussion tasks as a good example of communication-based tasks because the focus of the activity was on having students share information. Students were presenting to their classmates and were not graded or judged by the teacher on the correctness of their grammar.

Presentation Tasks

The second task that teachers were asked to comment on was presentations. Even in general communicative English classes, three of the four teachers I interviewed reported using presentations in the class. The other teacher did not teach a presentation class and she felt that the level of her students was too low to benefit from doing presentations in front of the class. Ms. Jones explained the steps that she followed when assigning presentations to her students. In the first week of class, she would tell her students that in the next week’s class they would have to give a short self-introduction presentation to the class. The students were asked to go home and write down a short introduction and practice presenting that introduction for homework. At the start of the next class, she would have them take turns standing up in front of the class and giving their presentation to their classmates.

The organization of the presentations that the other teachers reported doing in the classroom were similar to the one described above, although the presentations the students were asked to do varied in length and difficulty from 2-minutes (the shortest reported) to 25-minutes (the longest reported). The difficulty of the topics also varied, and three or the four teachers asked their students to present on familiar topics, such as a hobby, while two teachers also had their students present on academic topics that required students to do research (e.g., gender studies). In both of those instances
of academic presentations, students were asked to prepare PowerPoint slides for use during their presentation.

**Peer Review Tasks**

Another popular task that was used by all the teachers was peer reviews. All the teachers interviewed said that they had used peer reviews or peer assessment tasks and asked their students to give feedback to each other, using English, in their writing classes. One of the teachers, Mr. Smith, also said that he had had his students do peer assessment tasks in his presentation class.

All the teachers followed a similar method for using peer reviews in their writing class. The class before the paper was due, the teacher would ask their students to bring in a copy of the first draft of their paragraph or essay. In class students would then exchange their drafts with a peer and they would read through their peer’s writing. Three of the teachers had students answer some questions about the paper they were reading, such as “What is the topic sentence?” “Underline the two supporting ideas”, “What technique does the author use to explain these supporting ideas?” The students were also required to provide their peer with some feedback on how to improve their paper. The students would then have to use their peers’ suggestions to improve their paper before submitting it to the teacher.

In the presentation class Mr. Smith said that he had his students provide feedback for the other students’ presentations. He would give them a handout of things to look for in their peers’ presentations, such as the physical components (voice inflection, gestures, or eye contact); the content (organization, details, or clarity); or the visual component (how the PowerPoint slides were made). He also has them give some general comments on what they liked about their peer’s presentation and some ways that they thought the presentation could have been better. He then collects these comments and collates them before giving them to the student who did the presentation, along with his own comments. This allows the students to give feedback to their peers in an anonymous way.

All the teachers interviewed said that they felt that this activity was an important part of the writing process. They felt that it was useful for the students because it helped the writers to improve their compositions before submitting them to the teacher. They also felt that this process was helpful for the reviewers because it helped them to understand what good and bad writing is. Finally, they felt that it gave students an opportunity to discuss their ideas with their peers and also to ask and answer questions about the writing process.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Jones, in particular, felt that peer review was a very important communicative task in the language classroom. For example, Mr. Smith said that peer review tasks allowed students to use English with a clear communicative objective in mind, helping their classmates to improve their written English or their presentations. This created a task where students could not only give and receive feedback, but also get more accustomed to using the type of English necessary to evaluate other students written or spoken performance. This communicative task helped them to not only discuss the writing or presentation activities with their classmates but also allowed them to better understand the feedback they received on their own writing or presentations.

**Discussion**

The next section discusses the benefits of using these tasks that the teachers gave in their interviews. It also looks at the tasks from the students’ perspective, highlighting some potential problems that students may have when trying to do these tasks, as well as suggesting some possible solutions to these problems.
Discussion Tasks
The teachers’ all felt that using tasks to help students participate in discussions in the classroom allowed them to become more involved in the discussions and made the discussions more authentic. They also felt that well-constructed tasks helped to make the classes more communicative and improved the classroom atmosphere. However, there are some possible problems involved with using discussion classes in the English language classroom in Japan.

Potential problems. While teachers may see the benefits of using discussion tasks in the classroom it is important to remember that it can be a very difficult task for Japanese students to do effectively. In my current master’s degree program, we regularly do this kind of task (i.e., read-and-discuss) with journal articles. One of the things that I have noticed in my classes is that Japanese speakers often do this assignment differently from the native English speakers. The Japanese speakers in the class are much more likely to try to summarize the article in the classroom discussions by memorizing passages from the article word for word. This is difficult to do and is the type of demotivating rote memorization activity that TBLT is supposed to avoid.

There seems to be three possible reasons that Japanese students approach the activity in this way. First of all, in Japan students are usually taught to do intensive reading by translating the passage into Japanese and then answering the comprehension questions that follow the passage by copying the answer word for word from the text. Because of this, even proficient Japanese EFL students may tend to focus on memorizing the story word-for-word and on the language of the reading, rather than on the meaning. Another possible problem is that the type of summary required by this activity involves having students paraphrase what they read. However, my own experience suggests that paraphrasing is not something that Japanese students are taught to do, even in their first language. Finally, because the focus of English classes in Japan had been on grammar and accuracy, students might be worried about making grammatical mistakes. Because of this, they may tend to give short answers, or try to memorize the answer word for word to ensure that they get the grammar correct.

Possible solutions. In order for students to be able to do this task in the classroom, the teacher needs to remember to do three important things. First of all, teachers need to understand that their students will probably lack experience summarizing articles in the method required to do this task effectively. Because of this, teachers need to be very clear when they explain the activity to their students. They need to emphasize that the focus on the activity is on being able to communicate with their classmates and that they will not be graded on their grammatical correctness. They also need to explain to the students how to paraphrase and how to use paraphrasing to summarize an article. However, because this task will be very different from what the students are used to, simply explaining what to do will probably not be sufficient and the teacher will also need to scaffold the activity. This means that they will need to introduce the skills required of the students, such as identifying the main ideas, being able to paraphrase those ideas, and begin able to use the paraphrased ideas to summarize the article. These skills can be introduced in smaller tasks that can be done in the classroom with short easy texts, clear goals, and direct support from the teacher. The final thing that teachers need to remember when using this type of activity in the classroom is repetition. Research shows that task repetition is one important factor that teachers need to take into account when having students do tasks as familiarity with the task frees up cognitive resources, allowing students to pay attention to the language that they are using (Bygate, 1996; Fukuta, 2016). Only one of the teachers I talked to said that they did this task more than twice during the semester. However, the cognitive load required to do this type of complex task means that the first few times the students do the task, they will probably not be able to do the task well. However, after a few tries, students will understand what is required of them and be able to think less about how to do the task and focus on what they are doing. This is true even
for proficient students and it took me four or five repetitions before I was comfortable doing this type of task in my Master’s class.

**Presentation Tasks**

The teachers used presentations in the classroom because they felt that they were a good way for students to practice their communication skills, something that is supported by previous research (e.g. Gerard, Pinar, & Trapp, 2011). They also felt that presentations were good because they require students to use all four language skills and are a good way to get students motivated to talk in English. However, there are some potential problems with using presentations in the classroom.

**Potential problems.** Unfortunately, for students, presentations may also be very challenging. There are two major challenges for students with regards to presenting in front of others. First of all, presentations place a lot of cognitive demands on the students, especially those students that lack the core fluency required to give an effective presentation (Jordan, 1997). Students have to not only remember what to say, but also worry about things like having good posture and eye contact, trying to use the correct gestures, and making sure that they pronounce the words correctly. Because of the challenges involved with doing a good presentation, students often do not enjoy giving presentations in the language classroom (Ross, 2007). Another potential problem with presentations for students is that they are a high stakes activity. Not only are students being asked to present in front of their peers, something that they may find very stressful, but they are also being graded by the teacher.

**Possible solutions.** For presentations to be effective, they need to be properly scaffolded (Sundrarajan & Kiely’s, 2010). Students need to be instructed about how to give a presentation and introduced to the appropriate genres (Hovane, 2009). They also need to be given the opportunity to practice their presentation skills in shorter, lower stakes presentations before they are asked to present in front of the class. Secondly, as with discussions, repetition is very important. For students to be able to become proficient in the skills required to do a good presentation they need to be given lots of opportunities to practice these skills in authentic situations. This means that the teacher should integrate shorter and simpler presentations into their classes, preferably having the students present to a small group rather than in front of the class. Thirdly, students need to be given the chance to give presentations in a lower-stakes setting. One good way to do this is to use poster presentations (Thornbury, 2005). In poster presentations students give a short presentation to a small group of students using a poster to help them. The audience members then rotate, and students give the same presentation again to another group of students. This type of activity allows students to present to a small group instead of to the whole class, repeat their presentation multiple times giving them the opportunity to improve their presentations and fix their mistakes, and to do a presentation a number of times before they are graded on it. This type of presentation has been shown to reduce the amount of stress students feel while giving presentations (Lambert, 2008).

**Peer Review Tasks**

The teachers interviewed felt that peer review tasks were a good way to have students provide feedback to their peers. They were tasks that required the students to think about not just what their peers had written but also how to communicate their opinions and ideas about the quality of that writing to their classmates. This required them to focus not only on the vocabulary and grammar of what they were saying but also on the pragmatics of what they are saying as well, the task requires them to provide the writer with constructive feedback without being too harsh or too lenient. Finally, they also felt that this task was beneficial for the student’s ability to understand the feedback that they were going to receive on their own writing, from both their peers and the teacher. However, as with the
other two tasks there are some potential problems that teachers need to consider when using peer review in their classroom.

**Potential problems.** Peer review is another activity that can be difficult for Japanese students. One of the potential problems with the peer review process is that students are not always aware of the importance of the peer-review or the benefits that they can get by participating in this task. As a student who is Japanese, I never had to do peer review in my Japanese classes. I also had not experienced doing peer review in my language classes until I started my master’s degree program. Another problem Japanese students might have with peer review is that many students feel that providing feedback on someone’s language skills is the job of the teacher and not the student. And yet, Japanese students who are doing peer review are more likely to focus on grammatical mistakes in their peer’s writing rather than the organization or ideas.

Even students who do understand why they are doing peer review may not do a good job. This may be because they feel uncomfortable giving feedback to their peers. In Japan, it is very uncommon for people to directly criticize their peers. Because of this, many students feel uncomfortable writing anything except positive comments such as ‘Great job’ or ‘I enjoyed reading your writing’ on their partner’s composition. This defeats the purpose of the peer-review task.

**Possible solutions.** As with the first two tasks there are several things that the teacher can do in order to make good use of peer review tasks in their classroom. First of all, they need to clearly explain the task to their students. This includes providing clear instructions and a model of what to do. However, explaining is not enough, research has shown that in order to gain significant benefits from peer review students need to be trained on how to do peer review tasks properly (Min, 2006). Most of the teachers interviewed for this paper trained their students by giving them a short description about what to do and explaining the activity to them. Half of them, two of the four, also had their students do a practice peer review activity as a whole class. While this is a good start, studies have shown that students may need as many as five hours of training to be able to do peer-review properly (Min, 2005). Min suggested that this training should include in-class instruction and modeling where students are shown how to make comments on model essays as a class. She also noted that it is essential for teachers to follow-up on this training with feedback sessions to let students know how they are doing with their peer reviews and what steps they can take to improve them. While time-consuming, she found that this training was necessary to avoid students giving vague feedback, not being able to understand the writer’s intentions, and not being able to effectively communicate their ideas about the paper to the writer.

**Conclusion**

Although all the tasks and the solutions to the problems with these tasks are different, there are some common themes that run through all of them. The first of these themes is that teachers need to be aware of their students’ educational backgrounds and realize that many of the tasks that they are asking their students to do will be challenging for these students. Because of this it is important that teachers explain the tasks well and scaffold the skills that students will need to be able to succeed in these tasks. Part of this explanation should also inform students about the benefits of doing tasks in the classroom and the expectations that the teacher has for them while they are doing the task.

Another important thing to remember is the importance of task repetition. The cognitive demands of learning how to do a new, and often challenging, task can make it difficult for students to focus on both what they need to do and how they need to do it. Because of this, students will probably struggle with a task the first few times that they are asked to do it. However, if they are able to repeat the task multiple times they will get better at doing the task and enjoy it more.
The main theme of this paper, and something that my own experiences and my interviews with other teachers confirm, is that TBLT can work in the Japanese context. Of course, the teacher will need to set up the tasks correctly, and choose tasks that are not too difficult for the students to complete. However, if they are able to do this then TBLT can be used as a way to both improve students’ communicative competence and motivate them to learn English. This in turn will help them to become better users of English.

References


Appendix
TBLT Interview Questions

Background
Number of years teaching English.
Number of years teaching at a University level in Japan.
Where you teach.
Subjects taught (listening, writing, presentations, etc).

In the first three sections I am going to ask about how you use 3 different types of tasks in your classroom. Please tell me as much as you can about why you do or don’t use each of these tasks in your classroom. If you use these tasks please also tell me about how you implement them, why you use them, what the students’ reaction to the task is, and any common issues or problems you see when using this task.

Section 1: Discussion tasks
1. What type of tasks do you use to help your students discuss topics in the classroom using English?
2. How do you implement those tasks (what steps do you take to set up and conduct the task in your classes?)
3. Why do you use these discussion tasks in your classes?
4. What benefits do you think there are for the students in doing these discussion tasks?
5. How well are students able to perform these tasks? Are there any common problems students have with the tasks?

Section 2: Presentations
1. Do you have students do presentations (this can be sort presentations or longer prepared presentations either in front of the class or to a small group) in any of your classes?
2. What type of presentations do you do in your classes?
3. How do you implement those presentations in your classes?
4. Why do you use these presentations in your classes?
5. What benefits do you think there are for the students in doing presentations?
6. How well are students able to prepare for and do presentations? Are there any common problems students have with this task?

Section 3: Peer review tasks
1. Do you have students do peer review activities in any of your classes? If yes, what classes do you use peer review in?
2. How do you implement peer review in your classes?
3. Do you do anything to make sure students are doing the peer review tasks correctly?
4. Why do you use peer review in your classes?
5. What benefits do you think there are for the students in doing peer review tasks?
6. How well are students able to review their peers’ work? Are there any common problems students have with this task?

Section 4: In this section could you talk about other tasks you use in your classes. Please discuss, what the tasks are, why you use them, how you implement them, and the students’ reaction to these tasks.
Chapter 6
Physical Games as Language Tasks:
One Game’s Effect on Language Production and Students’ Perceptions

Sya’biningrum Prihhartini
(Universitas Islam ‘45)

Abstract
This study investigated 20 Indonesian university students’ perceptions of the use of a physical game in a second language classroom and whether the game facilitated the learners to achieve grammatical accuracy. The game was designed by adapting a traditional Indonesian game called Engklek and combining it with a language task. It required the learners to take turns throwing a stone marker at designed squares, jumping on one leg toward the cue card where their marker landed, and answering the If-conditional question written on the card. After playing one round, the learners were asked to write their own cue cards and play again, this time using their self-made cue cards as the questions. A survey form and the learners’ self-written cue cards were collected at the end of the game and their speech during the game was recorded and transcribed in order to provide information about (a) their perceptions of the game, and (b) use of the If-conditional type II structure targeted. Qualitative methods were subsequently used to analyze the data. The findings revealed generally positive perceptions of the game, with the chance to play an old game from childhood as one of the main reasons why many learners found the game engaging. Another finding showed that the game, through repetition, seems to have facilitated some improvement in grammatical accuracy of the use of the targeted If-conditional structure in the learners’ writing and speech.

Keywords: grammatical accuracy; grammar instruction; learner perception; kinesthetic learning; physical game

Grammar teaching in Indonesia is mostly done through often-repetitive teaching techniques (Marcellino, 2008) in which students primarily memorize sentence patterns and work on written exercises in the textbooks (Widiati & Cahyono, 2006). As a result, Indonesian students’ perceptions of “grammar” are mostly negative, with the connotations of “boring” and “difficult” often brought to mind when grammar is mentioned (Prihhartini & Halimi, 2016, p. 9). In addition, rather strict teaching of English language rules also often further contributes to students’ negative attitudes towards the English language learning (Yulia, 2013). Various approaches and techniques have been attempted to overcome these problems, with the potential benefits of teaching grammar through games one area that has been explored (Baleghizadeh & Oladrostam, 2011; Tuan & Nguyen, 2010; Yolagelddi & Arikan, 2011).

Teaching grammar through games has been encouraged because games are believed to be motivating for the language learners who find them amusing and challenging in ways that traditional pedagogical approaches are not (Tuan & Nguyen, 2010). The use of games in the language classroom has also been found to promote a stress-free environment (Yildiz & Senel, 2017) and even enjoyment and relaxation among some learners (Yolagelddi & Arikan, 2011). Some games have also been recognized for their ability to provide students with ample repetition (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2009), which many scholars believe is one important aspect to include in task-based language teaching (Bygate & Samuda, 2005), since task repetition can allow learners to overcome their limited attentional resources and improve certain aspects of their performance, i.e. fluency, accuracy, and complexity (Skehan, 1998, 2003).
Physical games in particular have been noted for their ability to engage more kinesthetically-oriented learners and provide welcome relief from the boredom with more traditional methods (Purveen, Asif, Mehmood, Khan, & Iqbal, 2016; Tyas & Safitri, 2017). Hence, the present study was designed to investigate the effectiveness of one particular physical game that was adapted from a traditional Indonesian game and to ascertain a sample of Indonesian university students’ perceptions of it.

**Literature Review**

English grammar, at least for Indonesian students, is often considered as “boring” and “difficult” (Prihartini & Halimi, 2016, p.9), especially when it comes to complicated English tense system, a concept which is non-existent in Indonesian language. Some learners see English grammar instruction as very uninteresting and even frustrating (Tikkha, 2014). These negative views toward English grammar come as a result of strict learning which relies heavily on memorization of patterns (Yulia, 2013) and monotonous teaching techniques (Marcellino, 2008, p. 65) in which grammar points are taught discreetly for mastery of accuracy (Widiati & Cahyono, 2006, p. 89). To change this negative attitude, and to help make students more motivated to learn grammar, new techniques need to be employed. Physical activities are one such technique advocated in the literature.

A study by Tyas and Safitri (2017) revealed that both male and female students tend to be kinesthetic learners, and that some students learn better when they are able to explore and get involved physically in the classroom. However, even though kinesthetic activities are common for young language learners, perhaps most notably in approaches like Asher’s (1980) Total Physical Response (TPR), it appears that college students are rarely exposed to kinesthetic learning (Tranquillo, 2008), especially in the Indonesian university context.

Despite a growing interest in using games and/or kinesthetic-based activities in the grammar classroom in some corners in recent years (Baleghizadeh & Oladrostam, 2011; Tikkha, 2014), it is surprising to find very few references to “physical games” and their relation to second language acquisition. However, one article that gave a quite thorough review of this topic was written by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2009). In this review, the authors proposed several principles as to why physical games can be beneficial for the language learners. One of the principles is that such games can provide language learners with rich, meaningful, comprehensible input, which is widely recognized for its importance in language acquisition (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2009). Another principle is that physical games can expose learners to repetition, in which they meet a particular language item multiple times (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2009). This type of controlled task repetition has been recognized by Bygate (2001) among others for its potential benefits in overcoming what Skehan (1998) considered to be trade-offs in attentional focus that language learners face when engaged in tasks using language that has not yet been fully mastered. With such trade-offs, it is believed that learners cannot access all three aspects of performance, i.e. fluency, accuracy, and complexity, simultaneously due to limited attentional capacity, and, therefore, they have to choose a certain aspect that they want to highlight, and by doing so, sacrifice the other aspects. Through the repetition that is a natural component of many games, learners are presented with opportunities to attend to more aspects of their production. In other words, it is thought that such activities may allow learners to direct their attention to being more fluent, more accurate, and producing more complex language structures as the task is repeated.

Another aspect that games provide which has been noted for its positive affect on language acquisition is that they may allow learners to be motivated, engaged, and relaxed (Tomlinson, 1998). Games can also provide challenges which can activate students’ mental and stimulate neutral networks, thereby spurring deeper learning and longer-term retention (Tuan & Nguyen, 2010). As games can be
played by a whole class, be it individually, in pairs, or in teams, even shy students can participate with a lowered affective filter (Tuan & Nguyen, 2010).

Although the many proposed benefits of games for language learning are rather intuitive, previous studies that investigated the effect of games on grammar learning have shown mixed results. Baleghizadeh and Oladrostam (2011) compared three experimental groups that received grammar learning through three different techniques, namely: dialogues, focused tasks, and games. The results revealed no statistically significant differences in the learning demonstrated by the three treatment groups and that the three techniques had relatively the same effects on the students' grammatical accuracy. Another study by Ashok, Revanthi, and Saminathan (2013) examined the effectiveness of language games in learning English grammar. In this study, 60 middle school students were put into two groups: the control group was taught using conventional methods while the experimental group received grammar taught through language games. The comparison of pre-test and post-test scores for the two groups revealed a statistically significant effect of the language game treatment.

In the present study, a physical game was applied to teach a grammatical item (If-conditional Type II) to Indonesian college students. In order to provide some indications of the effectiveness of the game in fostering the acquisition of the target grammatical structure, the following research questions were posed:

1. To what degree was the target structure used accurately during the physical game?
2. What were the students’ perceptions of the game?
3. What interlanguage phenomena were found in the students’ speech during the game?

Methods

Participants

Twenty second-year Indonesian university students from an intact required EFL class participated in this study. By the time the present study was conducted, these intermediate-level participants have learned English for over 13 years. Among the 20 participants, there were 14 female students and 6 male students. This study employed no control group.

Tasks

Prior to the start of the game, the 20 students were divided into three groups to allow more turns between players, with the resulting group sizes of seven, seven, and six members. Since all students were familiar with how this game is commonly played, the teacher did not provide any specific instructions related to the game procedures. Each group received six cue cards containing questions in If-Conditional Type II form, and the cards were laid on the floor in a cross pattern in front of each group. After all the cards were laid down, each group did an Indonesian style of scissor-paper-rock game to decide the turns of the players. Then they started the game. Three first players from each group stood around three meters away from their group’s set of cards. They threw a stone towards the cards and jumped on one leg towards the card nearest to where the stone landed. He/she then needed to answer the question on the cue card out loud. As this game was just done for the first time, no penalty was applied if the player gave incomplete answers. Instead, the teacher encouraged the players to explain their answers. During the game, the teacher moved around recording the game and checking on the players’ answers. The game won when all players from each group could return to the start. After the first round, the students were instructed to write their own If-conditional questions. They were given 5 minutes to do so. When they were done, the second round of game began. This time they played using their own cards.
Target Structure

The target structure analyzed in this study was If-Conditional Type II. English grammar has four types of If-conditional: (a) Type 0—automatic result of a possible future action, (b) Type I—open condition, (c) Type II—unreal condition, and (d) Type III—imaginary past action (Eastwood, 1994). Type 0 describes how one action automatically follows another, as in “If you heat water up to 100° C, it boils”. This type of Conditional uses Present verbs in both clauses. Type 1 describes how one action will likely be followed by another action, or in this case, result, as in “If we don’t hurry, we will miss the train” (Eastwood, 1994, p.335). In this type of Conditional, the If-clause uses Present verb, while another clause uses modal verbs (will/can) followed by Infinitive verb. Type 2 describes imaginary situation, often unreal, or theoretical possibility in the future, such as “If I had a lot of money, I would buy the most expensive watch”. In this sentence, the speaker imagines a situation that is (most likely) the opposite of the Present situation. This type of sentence uses Past verb for the If-clause, and modal verbs (would/could) followed by Infinitive verb in the other clause. Type 3 describes imaginary past action, which is usually the opposite of what had happened, as in “If I had studied that night, I would have passed the test”. In this situation, the speaker imagined a different scenario of past event. This type of Conditional uses Past Perfect tense for the If-clause, and modal verbs (would/could/might) followed by Perfect tense in the other clause.

The students in this research had learned all four types of If-Conditional some time in their senior high school days, but it was not studied thoroughly. In this research, some examples of If-Conditional type II questions written on the cue cards included: “If you were Harry Potter, what would you do?” and “If your plane crashed and you were trapped on a remote island, what three things would you do first?” All the questions used in the first round and the questions written by the students can be found in Appendix A.

Data Collection and Analysis

To address the first research question, the cue cards written by the students at the beginning of the second round of the game were collected and the students’ output was transcribed from a video recording of the game. Both the student-written cue cards and the speech transcriptions were used to analyze the students’ language output.

To address the second research question, a survey was conducted to find out the students’ perceptions of the game using a questionnaire to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions that tapped into students’ evaluation of the game (see Appendix B for the actual questions). The questionnaire was written in Indonesian, but the students were allowed to write their responses in English or Indonesian. For the first question about the students’ impressions of the game (See Appendix B), the following steps were taken for the analysis: (a) Listing adjectives/verbs found in the responses that describe the students’ opinion of the game; (b) categorizing the words found into positive, neutral, or negative responses; (c) counting the number of words found in each category to calculate the frequency; and (d) counting the proportion to determine the percentage of the responses. As for the rest of the questions in the questionnaire, analysis was focused on most common answers found in the students’ responses.

To address the third question, the students’ utterances (responses) during the game were recorded and transcribed. Some field notes taken by the teacher were also used. Both data were then analyzed qualitatively to see any phenomena happening in the game.

Results and Discussion

Once the game was conducted, analyses to address the three research questions were conducted. Below are the findings found related to the questions: (a) to what degree the target structure was used
accurately during the physical game, (b) what the students’ perceptions of the game were, and (c) what interlanguage phenomena were found in the students’ speech during the game.

Analysis on the Students’ Self-Written Cue Cards Used in the Second Round of the Game
In order to see the effect of the game on the learners’ language output, after the first round of game, each student was given two minutes to write an original cue card containing a question using the target If-Conditional Type II structure for the second round of the game. The student-written cue cards were then checked to determine to what degree the students could make the questions in the target structure correctly. The results here showed that 15/20 (75%) of the students made their questions accurately while 5/20 (25%) of the students made some errors in their questions. The most common source of error was using infinitive verbs for the if-clause part instead of past simple verbs, like the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of students’ errors in the students self-written cue cards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student C: “If you face a problem, what would you do?” (correct form = faced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F: “If you meet the president, what would you say?” (correct form = met)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G: “If you are Thanos, what would you destroy?” (correct form = were)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further examination of the students’ self-written cue cards revealed that 5/20 (25%) of the cards produced used the same if-clause verbs used in the first round of the game, such as “met” (If you met a cute snake, what would you do?) and “saw” (If you saw your ex in somewhere, what would you feel?). However, new verbs were also found in the cue cards produced by 15/20 (75%) of the learners. Some examples included: “ate” (If you ate pork accidentally, what would you do?), “fell” (If your phone fell down, what would you say?), and “could + infinitive” (If you could travel in time, what moment would you go back?). Hence, the self-written cue cards showed that a majority of the students were able to apply the target structure correctly in their written output.

Students’ Perceptions of the Game
To investigate the students’ perceptions of the physical game used in this study, a survey was given to each student after the session ended. The survey form contained five open-ended questions asking learners what they thought of the game, what they liked best about it, and what could be improved (see Appendix B).

Regarding the students’ impressions of the game (Question 1), the results showed 100% of the students had a positive response to the game while both neutral and negative responses were not found (0%). Words like childhood (13/20), fun (11/20), play (9/20), and happy (11/20) were among the most frequent words found in their answers. Since the game was designed by adapting a traditional Indonesian game into an English language task, the students seemed to feel happy because they could reminisce about when they used to play that game in their childhood.
The second question was asked to peek into the students’ minds when they were playing the game. The students answered that the game brought their memories to their childhood days during which they played this game and that the game was very interesting. The comments were shown below.

“When I played that game, I felt like going back to my childhood. It was full of laughter and so memorable.” (Student D)

“The game was very interesting. Because the game remind me of my childhood games. Besides that the game also train us to speak in English” (Student J)

The third question aimed to identify the part of the game that the students liked best. The results showed that the physical movements (7/20), like throwing and jumping, and the opportunities to answer the questions (13/20) were the most common reasons why they liked this game.

Responding to the question : “Which part of the game do you like best?”

Student B : “When I threw the stone and jumped towards the cards.”
Student D : “When I got the card and had to answer the question written in the card.”
Student J : “When I got interesting questions.”

The fourth question was asked to get some feedback from the students on ways in which the game could potentially be improved. Several interesting ideas were generated from their feedback. The first was that they suggested that players should add reasons for their responses to the questions on the cue cards. For example, if a cue card asked “If you found some money on the street, what would you do?”, the player should respond by saying something like: “If I found some money on the street, I would buy some food because I get hungry easily.” Hence, the students would be encouraged to speak more by explaining their answers. The second interesting finding was the students wanted more tricky types of questions, like “If you saw your ex-boyfriend/girlfriend with his/her new crush, what would you do?”.
In this case, it seems like the students wanted to be presented with more of a challenge while answering and/or listening to their friends’ answers. The third interesting finding found in their feedback was that they did not like it when they got the same question more than once. As one of the game’s rules said that no two players could land on the same cue card, if another player landed on an occupied card, the first player that landed on that spot had to go back to start. As a result, such students could then land on the same cue card that they had had before on a subsequent turn. Although such retries might be good for providing fluency and accuracy practice, it turned out the students did not really like it when they had to answer the same questions more than once.

The last question was asked to see their opinion about the game and its efficacy to learn language. All of the students (100%) mentioned that the game was effective as it pushed them to speak. Some of the students (25%) even mentioned that they never thought before that grammar could be learned this way, shown from one of the students’ comments below.

“In my opinion, studying about conditional sentence Type II but wrapped with playing Engklek was something beyond my imagination. I have never had any idea that studying grammar can be that fun. 2 thumbs up for Ms. Tien. You are inspiring teacher.” (Student D)

Analysis of the Learners’ Speech During the Game

Qualitative analysis used to investigate the learners’ speech during the game revealed some interlanguage phenomena found when the students had to complete the task. The main phenomena were found to be: (a) Noticing and self-repair, (b) Simplification, and (c) Overgeneralization.

Noticing and self-repair. The game allowed some students to notice the gap between what should be produced and what they produced, and it also gave them the opportunities to self-repair their own words. For example, in Student A’s utterance shown below, the student noticed that he incorrectly used the infinitive verb “meet” instead of the correct past simple verb “met”.

Responding to the cue card question: “If you met your ex, what would you do?”

Student A: If I meet...if I met my ex, I would do nothing.

In the situation below, Student B noticed that he had produced an incorrect structure when he said “I would basketball”, and he could repair the structure by saying “I would play basketball”.

Responding to the cue card question: “If you could be an athlete, what sport would you play?”

Student B: If I could be athlete, I would...basketball. I would basketball. I would play basketball.

In this excerpt below, Student C got a question of possibility to travel anywhere in the world, and answered “I want to go to America”. The teacher tried to get a more specific answer, since America is a continent, by asking “which country?”. This led Student C to recognize her mistake when she exclaimed “Oh!” and gave a country she wanted to go. The teacher gave a recast by saying “you would go to Brazil?”. This was used to give a clue that she should answer with “would” instead of “want”. However, in this part Student C only gave a short confirmation, “Yes.” The part when Student C answered “America” was likely influenced by the fact that Indonesian people commonly refer to both the U.S (country) and continent as “Amerika”.

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As noted by Schmidt (2001, 2020), noticing is necessary for language acquisition. Furthermore, as the example above shows, noticing can also lead to self-repair, or the process by which speakers revise or repeat their prior talk at their own initiation (Quan & Weiss, 2015).

**Simplification.** The second feature found in the learners’ speech during the game was simplification and the use of incomplete sentences when they were unable to fully express their responses in English. For example, in Student B’s utterance below, the student omitted the main verb after the modal verb, which likely happened due to influence of the first language (Mahmoud, 2014).

| Student B: If I found my crush’s bikini, I would...........nothing. |
|———|

In this excerpt, it seems that Student B roughly simplified the Indonesian language phrase, “tidak melakukan apa-apa” (not going to do anything) in his response of “I would...nothing”. Beyond first language influence alone, the learner’s decision to employ this communication strategy was also likely triggered by the time pressure. As the transcription above suggests, there was a quite long pause after the learner said “I would”. As the other players urged him to answer the question quickly, he likely felt pressured to come up with his response quickly, resulting in simplification of language.

| Responding to the cue card question: “If you found some money on the street, what would you buy?” |
|———|
| Student C: Hmmm.. I would..lunch with my friend. |

In this excerpt, Student C said “I would lunch” instead of “I would buy/eat/have lunch”. This was likely influenced by direct translation. “Lunch” was translated into Indonesian language as “makan siang”, while “makan” means “eat”. Hence, Student C thought that the word “lunch” has already meant “eat”, resulting in a simplified structure “I would lunch”.

**Overgeneralization.** After the first round of game ended, the students were asked to write their own cue cards. During this time, one of the students asked her friend, “What *would* you write? What *would* you write?” instead of “What *will* you write?”. When a student employs an overgeneralization strategy, it can mean that the learner has mastered the mechanics of a particular syntactic rule of the target language, and/or the learner is an active participant in the language acquisition process and is exercising his/her already acquired knowledge of the target language in a creative way (Taylor, 1975).
Overall, the game was perceived positively by all participating students (Positive=100%, Neutral=0%, Negative=0%). As the findings above show, physical game applied in this study helped the students to achieve some benefits in relation to their language acquisition. First, it provided the students with opportunities to notice language gap and restructure their language, which was shown from Student A’s utterance (“If I meet..if I met my ex..”) or Student B’s utterance (“If I could be athlete, I would...basketball. I would basketball. I would play basketball.”). Second, it gave the students access to fluency and accuracy as the students got more familiar with the questions and could produce the answers more quickly and accurately. Third, it provided the students with enjoyment in learning grammar, which was reflected in one of the students’ comments (“I have never had any idea that studying grammar can be that fun.”) or words the students used to describe the game (fun, happy, excited). Hence, teachers are encouraged to try out physical games for grammar learning in their classrooms.

**Conclusion**

The findings of this study show how grammar teaching and learning, which was previously seen as “boring” and “difficult” by Indonesian college learners, could be made into a fun, enjoyable task by employing a physical game that allowed the learners to get out of their seats and put their linguistic knowledge and skills into use. Through physical games such as the one outlined in this study, learners can experience a unique, stress-free condition allowing all to be active participants, regardless of whether they are shy or confident language users. Hence, it is believed that grammar learning can be more meaningful as the students challenge themselves to complete the task at hand.

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Appendix A
Questions Written by the Teacher and by the Students

Below are the questions written in the cue cards provided by the teacher. Each card had one question.

1. If your house was hit by a tornado, what would you do?
2. If you met your favorite artist today, what would you say?
3. If you could be an athlete, what sport would you play?
4. If you found some money on the street, what would you buy?
5. If you were Harry Potter, what would you do?
6. If you could travel anywhere in the world, which country would you go?

Below are the questions written by the students used in the second round.

1. If you could meet your favorite star, what would you say?
2. If you have chance to choose between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, who would you choose?
3. If you met a cute snake, what would you do?
4. If you could have a power, what would you choose? Water, Fire, Wind, or Earth?
5. If you had 1 trillion rupiahs, what would you buy?
6. If you could travel in time, what moment would you go back?
7. If you met your ex, what would you do?
8. If you face a problem, what would you do?
9. If you found much money, what would you do?
10. If you saw your ex somewhere, what would you feel, what would you do?
11. If your boyfriend were cheating on you, what would you do?
12. If your house got flood, what would you do?
13. If your phone fell down, what would you do?
14. If you met your crush’s bikini, what would you do?
15. If you saw your ex-boyfriend/girlfriend with his/her new crush, what would you do?
16. If you meet the president, what would you say?
17. If you could teleport, where would you go?
18. If you ate pork accidentally, what would you do?
19. If you were Thanos, what would you destroy?
20. If you can live in another planet (not Earth), where would you go?
Appendix B
Questionnaire About the Game

Survei ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui persepsi pemain terhadap permainan bahasa (language game) yang diadaptasi dari permainan tradisional Indonesia Engklek.

This survey was conducted to investigate the players’ perception of the language games, which was adapted from the traditional Indonesian game Engklek.

Permainan tersebut dilaksanakan pada hari Sabtu, 10 Februari 2018.
The game was held on Saturday, February 10, 2018.

1. *Apa pendapat Anda tentang permainan tersebut?*  
   What do you think about the game?

2. *Ketika Anda melakukan permainan tersebut, apa yang Anda rasakan?*.  
   What were you thinking when you were playing the game?

3. *Bagian mana yang Anda sukai dari permainan tersebut? Mengapa?*.  
   Which part of the game do you like best? Why?

4. *Bagian mana yang menurut Anda dapat diperbaiki dari permainan tersebut?*  
   What can be improved from the game?

   In your opinion, is the game effective for language learning? Why/why not?

Terima kasih telah berpartisipasi dalam survei ini.  
Thank you for participating in this survey.
Chapter 7
The Effects of Different Learning Conditions on Vocabulary Knowledge
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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to explore the efficacy of two collaborative activities on vocabulary acquisition: dictogloss, a psychologically-informed approach to task-based language teaching (TBLT), and a fill-in-the-blank activity, which is typically found in second language textbooks. It also examines the effectiveness of collaborative activities. Novice EFL (English as a foreign language) students at a Japanese university participated in this study. An experimental group ($n=31$) performed a meaning and form focused activity (dictogloss), in which learners listened to a passage and worked in pairs to reconstruct it. A comparison group ($n=24$) collaboratively worked on a form-focused activities (fill-in-the-blanks exercises) in pairs. A control group ($n=27$) individually worked on the same activity as the comparison group. Vocabulary knowledge was measured using a modified version of the vocabulary knowledge scale (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997) with a pre-test and two post-tests design. The results revealed that the collaborative condition promoted higher vocabulary gains in the two post-tests than the individual condition. However, the experimental group retained their vocabulary better than the comparison group, where a mild decrease in the mean scores three weeks after the treatment was found. The findings of this study suggest the potential importance of collaborative activities and task engagement in learning vocabulary for novice learners.

Keywords: collaborative dialogue; dictogloss; focus on form; interaction; vocabulary learning

Productive vocabulary knowledge is indispensable for both oral and written communication. Research shows that vocabulary learning, especially of the productive type, can be pursued more effectively when done collaboratively with a peer, given its claimed effectiveness for meaning negotiation and interactionally modified output (Ellis & He, 1999; Newton, 1995) and through enhanced engagement with vocabulary (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001; Schmitt, 2008). However, students tend to use limited vocabulary learning strategy typically through rote memorization particularly owing to limited class time allocated to vocabulary instruction in EFL context (Hunt & Beglar, 2005). Nation (2001) claimed that there are four prominent strands for vocabulary learning: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. Laufer and Nation (2012) also suggested some features of well-designed vocabulary learning programs which includes: opportunities to pay attention to a variety of aspects of vocabulary knowledge, and monitor and test vocabulary knowledge. There are some vocabulary focused activities such as filling in the blanks and choosing definitions for words used for reading in many EFL textbooks but teachers and learners are often not sure of the best way to achieve vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2008). This paper explores whether two collaborative activities which involve the features mentioned above promote greater gains in vocabulary knowledge than an individual activity and if there are any different effects between the two activities.
Literature Review

Collaborative Learning

Research over the past three decades has demonstrated that collaborative learning during tasks can facilitate second language vocabulary acquisition, contingent upon learner interaction (e.g., Kim, 2008; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2001; Williams, 2001). As Swain (1985, 1995) mentions in her Output Hypothesis, output provides learners with opportunities to test their hypotheses about language use. Additionally, feedback from interlocutors in negotiating meaning enhances language development because it enables learners to notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language, focusing on the usage of vocabulary and grammar rules to solve the problems.

In sociocultural research, collaborative dialogue in which learners engage in pooling their knowledge together and giving feedback to each other is considered an important mediator of second language (L2) learning. Language related episodes (LREs) is any part of a dialogue used to identify whether learners consciously reflect on their own language use. Studies on learners’ LREs provide some implications for what should be considered in the use of collaborative activities in language teaching. One of the implications is for the quality of outcome of LREs depending on students’ proficiency. Williams (2001) examined the impact of satisfactorily resolved LREs on ESL students’ language learning and differential effects of LREs depending on proficiency level of English. She analyzed grammatical and vocabulary LREs of eight learners, two from four different proficiency levels during listening and speaking lessons for an eight-week classroom treatment and scores on a tailor-made test on which linguistic items were chosen from the correct resolution of LREs. Results of the post-test administered one week after the treatment indicated that learners gave correct answers when they successfully resolved in LREs with peers. The higher proficiency participants were more likely to have benefit from information provided by their peers and teachers. They generated more LREs and solved more problems and performed apparently higher scores on the post-test than the lower proficiency participants. The results of analysis for information supplier also indicated that the higher proficiency participants had more benefit from the information from their peers than the lower proficiency participants, who were more likely to benefit from teacher prompting feedback. However, examining an initiator of LREs and subsequent correct test scores, she found that regardless of their proficiency level, the participants equally tended to remember the form in focus no matter who initiated the problems.

Another implication is the relationship between successful deliberate attention to form and language acquisition in terms of collaborative or individual condition. Kim (2008) explored the effect of a collaborative task on vocabulary acquisition for Korean as a second language learners in intermediate classes. She compared the effects of dictogloss tasks in two different situations: individual and collaborative. Findings of her study showed that there was no statistically significant difference between two conditions in the number of LREs produced but the participants working collaboratively resolved LREs more correctly than those who worked on the task individually. Furthermore, they performed much better on the vocabulary tests than the individual group. She suggested that the collaborative group made use of their partner’s knowledge when they face problems in constructing sentences while the individual group tended to leave the problems unresolved because of no resource besides their own knowledge to use.

However, there are some contradictory results in the study by Kuiken and Vedder (2002). They compared collaborative and individual conditions of dictogloss to examine which condition facilitated acquisition of EFL high school students’ passive structures to a greater extent. Their findings indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between two conditions on scores of the post-test, a type of detection test in which the learners were asked to underline eight passive structures contained in 32 sentences. Additionally, they also found that there was no significant difference between two
groups in the ratio of passive structures used in the reconstructed sentences. Looking into LREs, they suggest that the students noticed the target linguistic forms through interaction, but the outcome of the discussion resulted in them choosing easier grammar structures, which implies noticing grammar rules through interaction did not lead to frequent use of the passive structures in reconstructed sentences. Recent studies have provided evidence that explicit instruction has a superior effect on language learning to spontaneous focus on form (Li et al., 2016, Spada & Tomita, 2010). Furthermore, Williams (2001) suggested that lower proficiency learners probably need to have prompting feedback from teachers. Hence, less proficient students may require external, supplementary resources to refer to when making decisions with their peers, although Kuiken & Vedder (2002) did not mention the participants’ English proficiency levels except for their experience in taking English program in Spain for five years.

The other implication is for task types. Storch (1998) compared qualities of LREs produced by ESL dyads when engaging in four tasks: multiple choice, rational definition (cloze), text reconstruction, and composition. The results showed that the text reconstruction tasks (i.e., dictogloss) enhanced attention to grammatical choices the most, whereas the cloze tasks did so the least. She reported that more structured tasks allowed learners to focus on grammar to a lesser degree. Hence, the text reconstruction tasks performed by dyads seemed to have offered more possibilities to encourage learners to focus on linguistic forms. Alegria de la Colina and Garcia Mayo (2007) also expanded her findings. They compared three activities such as a jigsaw, a text reconstruction and a dictogloss. Four pairs from 12 selected low proficiency pairs from EFL content-based program in university completed each task. Analysis of LREs indicated that the learners generated the greatest number of LREs and turns when performing the text reconstruction activity followed by jigsaw and dictogloss. They also found that the jigsaw activity triggered a large number of lexical LREs due to its nature of eliciting negotiation of meaning. However, a comparison of LREs correctly resolved across the tasks indicated that the text reconstruction activity generated lowest percentages of correct solutions in the three activities while the dictogloss yielded highest percentages of correct solutions. These studies reported the effects of different task types and learners’ proficiency on both grammatical and lexical LREs, and provided mixed results. Furthermore, neither study of Storch (1998) nor Alegria de la Colina and Garcia Mayo (2007) examined the relationship between frequency of focus on form and second language acquisition.

Components to Enhance Vocabulary Learning

One of the components to enhance vocabulary retention is the number of retrievals of word (e.g., Folse, 2006; Laufer & Rozokski-Roitblat, 2011). Another component is engagement and noticing. Schmitt (2008) argued that increasing the opportunities to engage with words was the most prominent principle for maximizing vocabulary learning. Studies have shown that the words are retained better when they are negotiated than those not negotiated (Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994; Newton, 1995). Laufer (2006) compared two groups of learners: One group completed meaning-focused activities (focus-on-form group), and the other group engaged in a form-focused activity (focus-on-forms group). The focus-on-form group read a text containing target words and then answered comprehension questions. They were advised to use a dictionary whenever they felt the need for it. The focus-on-forms group memorized words in a list and completed sentences. She also examined the effectiveness of subsequent intentional learning with a word list. Her findings showed that the focus-on-forms group statistically significantly gained the target words more than the focus-on-form group, but the subsequent intentional learning weakened the difference between the two groups. In his study examining the effect of two task types, writing and reading, on vocabulary acquisition, Webb (2005) argued that time spent on the task was one of the most important factors to acquire vocabulary. Productive tasks could be
more effective on the gains of all aspect of vocabulary acquisition over receptive tasks as learners tend to spend more time on productive tasks in a real learning situation, which is different from laboratory research.

**Dictogloss**

As a psychological approach to TBLT, dictogloss (Wajnryb, 1990) is a teaching technique that creates opportunities for learners to learn words in context through interaction. Learners are asked to listen to a passage and work together in small groups to reconstruct the original passage during a dictogloss task. This method helps induce the cognitive process of noticing specific language features through input and pushed output through which learners hypothesize how the target language works and test such hypotheses (Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Swain and Lapkin (1995) claimed that productive tasks are important and effective for L2 acquisition when learners work together and focus on forms, meaning, and functions of the language through feedback from their peers.

**The Current Study**

The previous studies on dictogloss and collaborative learning tend to be conducted with ESL (English as a second language) learners (e.g., Storch, 1998; Williams, 2001) or EFL intermediate proficiency (English as a foreign language) learners (e.g., Kuiken & Vedder, 2002) and EFL students in CLILL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) program (e.g., Alegría de la Colina & Garcia Mayo, 2007). However, there were few studies examining the efficacy of collaborative tasks on vocabulary retention of novice learners of English in an EFL context. Moreover, although previous studies support the effectiveness of collaborative activities for vocabulary acquisition and more structured activities such as dictogloss promote correct resolution of LREs, lower proficiency students may not benefit so much from collaborative activities as cautioned in some prior studies.

Thus, the aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of two different activities (i.e., meaning and form focused activity, a dictogloss and a more form-focused exercise) and conditions (i.e., individual and dyad) for learning vocabulary in an EFL classroom setting with relatively low proficiency learners. At the time of the experiment, the participants tended to learn new words by writing and pronouncing isolated words repeatedly, rather than learning or using them in context or learning their derivational affixes. They also had a tendency to individually practice learned vocabulary through activities such as matching words with their definitions and filling in blanks, which are commonly used in textbooks. Hence, the present study explored the effects of collaborative learning and a dictogloss activity, an integrated four skills activity, on novice EFL learners’ acquisition of vocabulary. The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. Are collaborative learning conditions more effective than an individual condition in promoting the novice English learners’ vocabulary learning?
2. Are there any differences in the effects of a meaning and form focused activity such as a dictogloss task and a form-focused exercise on the students’ vocabulary learning? How do the participants in meaning and form focused activity and form-focused activity perceive the activity they were assigned?
Methods

Participants
The participants were 82 university students in three intact reading and writing classes at a science and engineering department. They were first year students enrolled in a compulsory English course that took place once a week for 15 weeks a semester. English proficiency of the experimental and comparison group is basic users of English, or CEFR A1-A2 level, based on their scores on the reading part of the TOEIC Bridge test administered at the beginning of the semester (dictogloss group: \( M=35.9, SD=3.7 \); comparison group: \( M=34.5, SD =4.7 \)). There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of their initial proficiency levels (\( t (52) =1.21, p=.65 \)). The control group did not take the TOEIC Bridge test but was considered to be a higher proficiency group than the other two groups based on a university-made placement test administered at the beginning of the school year. Their mean scores on the placement test was 76.9 (\( SD =2.1 \)) out of 100 points while those for the experimental group was 73.7 (\( SD =2.9 \)) and the comparison group was 71.8 (\( SD =1.5 \)).

The experimental group (\( n=31 \)) performed a dictogloss, in which learners listened to a passage and worked in pairs to reconstruct the original passage. A comparison group (\( n=24 \)) collaboratively worked on a fill-in-the-blanks exercise in pairs. A control group (\( n=27 \)) individually worked on the same activity as the comparison group.

Materials

A dictogloss task was implemented based on a textbook, Reading Explorer (Douglas & Bohlke, 2015). Each unit consisted of a text with about 300 to 400 words. A summary of a unit was used for the dictogloss task. Three different lengths of texts (i.e., 73 words, 80 words, and 136 words) and topics (e.g., Living in Space) were piloted in order to decide the appropriate length of the text for dictogloss for this particular group of learners in the previous lessons. Based on the observations of the time spent on each length of text, the most appropriate length for the participants was 80 words because most of them finished their discussion in twenty minutes. It was ideal length of time for the participants to complete the whole procedure of dictogloss in thirty minutes, including the listening stage. This study attempted to control the time spent on the activity within thirty minutes. However, the summary of the unit in the textbook was 149 words in length, which contained 13 target words and few complex grammatical structures. Therefore, it was divided into two sections: one composed of 80 words and the other section composed of 69 words. These two passages were used in the dictogloss tasks in this study (see Appendix A). The participants in the experimental group made a group of four with randomly assigned pair. Each pair discussed to reconstruct the text in ten minutes after they were asked to focus on either of two sections when listening to the passages read out by the teacher. Finally, they shared the information that each pair discussed with the other half of a group in ten minutes. They were encouraged to help other half of their group to reconstruct the passage. In this way, the pair work expanded into group work during the last part of discussion so that all students could possibly have opportunities to pay attention to form or meaning in both sections during the group discussion.

Target words. Target words were selected from the textbook based on the words introduced as new words each chapter. The words used were as follow:

- attract, available, embassy, factor, influence, measure, organization, politics, population, potential, predict, resident, talented

These words are on the second or third level of the new general frequency list based on the vocabulary profilers (http://www.lexxtutor.ca/vp/comp/). This study employed pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test design. Vocabulary Knowledge Scale was used as a testing instrument for all tests, which will be mentioned later. The results of the pre-test showed that about 44% of the target
words were known by the experimental group, 39% by the comparison group, and 46% by the control group.

**Form-focused exercise.** This study examined the efficacy of two different activities for vocabulary learning, accordingly a dictogloss, or meaning and form focused activity, and a fill-in-the-blank, or form-focused activity. The participants in the comparison and control group read the original passages from the textbook with the target words bolded and performed the fill-in-the-blank activity after answering reading comprehension questions (see *Reading Explorer*, Douglas & Bohlke, 2015, p. 64-67). In the form-focused activity, the participants were asked to search in the text to find the words that went with the meanings.

**Mini dictionary.** As shown in the previous studies involving the dictogloss task (Kim, 2008; Swain, 1998), learners do not learn linguistic items that they fail to resolve the problems associated with. Moreover, in the study that the researcher conducted (Kawakami, 2016), it was found that lower proficiency students sometimes left the problems unsolved because they lacked the knowledge of vocabulary in use and tended not to look it up in their dictionary. In order to reduce this task complexity and provide equal opportunity for access to the meaning and usage of each target word, a mini dictionary was created for the current study based on Folse (2006). Both the experimental and comparison groups were allowed to refer to the mini dictionary during the discussion of their task, whereas the control group was allowed to refer to their own dictionary (as they would in their usual English classes). The mini dictionary contained the target vocabulary with its meaning and parts of speech in Japanese and two sample sentences (see Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>embassy</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(名詞）大使館</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I lost my passport, I had to contact the British <strong>Embassy</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a protest outside the American <strong>Embassy</strong> last night.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1. An entry of mini dictionary.*

**Measurement instrument.** Vocabulary knowledge was measured using a modified version of the vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS; Paribakht & Wesche, 1997) with a pre-test and two post-tests: immediate post-tests and unexpected delayed post-tests three weeks after the treatment. The VKS was modified based on Folse (2006). Although the original version of VKS measured learners’ familiarity of vocabulary with a five-point scale, this test consisted of questions on three different word knowledge aspects. In the VKS, the participants were asked to indicate their degree of knowledge for all thirteen target words ranging from I to III. If the participants had seen the word but could not remember its meanings, they were supposed to circle category I. If they knew the meanings, they wrote its meanings, which was in category II. If they know how to use the word in context, they needed to provide a sample sentence in category III.

The VKS were scored by two experienced EFL instructors. The Pearson’s r for inter-rater reliability was .98 for the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test. Scoring of the tests was conducted based on Paribakht and Wesche (1997) but modified in the following way. One point was given if the student either indicated category I and II with incorrect meaning. Two points were awarded if the students indicated category II with the correct definition and part of speech. For example, if an answer given for a target word, *attract*, was 魅了, which is a noun in Japanese, it was considered one point because it should be 魅了する (a verb form) instead of 魅了 (a noun) and thus the part of speech used is incorrect. Three points were given for category III with an incorrect usage of the word in an example
sentence. Four points were awarded for category III if a correct example sentence with the target word was provided. Thus, the maximum score for each word was four points on both meaning and usage recall knowledge. The highest possible scores in each of the three tests was 52 points.

In addition, after the delayed post-test, the participants in the experimental and comparison groups received an open-ended questionnaire in which they were asked how effective they considered the dictogloss task or how they perceived the group work. They also replied to questions on the difficulty of the activity, how they used the mini dictionary, and group work in general. The control group were not asked to answer the questionnaire because they were not intervened by pedagogical treatments but they just worked on vocabulary practice activities individually as usual. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Procedures
At the beginning of the lesson, all the participants took the VKS test as a pre-test. In the first stage of the lesson, the participants explicitly learned the meaning of the target vocabulary on a handout by looking them up in a regular dictionary. After that, in order to get the gist of the passage and activate their background knowledge of the topic, they read a text and answered comprehension questions (see Reading Explorer, Douglas & Bohlke, 2015, p. 64-67 for these materials). In the second stage, each group worked on different tasks. The experimental group performed the dictogloss task for 30 minutes. During the dictogloss task, the participants listened to a summary of the text that they just read twice at a normal speed, taking notes on its content during the second listening. Then, they worked in pairs to reconstruct the passage. The students were encouraged to discuss in English but most of the students used Japanese to check their comprehension. Upon task completion, they were asked to check their version with the original passage. The comparison group worked on form-focused activities for 30 minutes in pairs in Japanese. They worked on the exercises by themselves at first and discussed their answers with their peers. The control group worked on the same activity as the comparison group did but individually instead of with a partner (see Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Comparison group</th>
<th>Control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest (VKS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Comprehension questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictogloss</td>
<td>Language practice</td>
<td>Language practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest1 (VKS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks after the lesson</td>
<td>Posttest2 (VKS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Lesson sequence.

Results
The first research question asked the effects of collaborative learning conditions in promoting the students’ vocabulary learning. It is confirmed that the data was not normally distributed based on the results of histogram and Shapio-Wilk test. Examining the descriptive statistics, the experimental group made the biggest increase in the median scores between the pre-test and the immediate post-test. Their median score in the delayed post-test was still higher than the other two groups. In order to examine the difference between the three groups in the three tests, a Kruskal-Wallis test followed by a post-hoc analysis of the Mann-Whitney test using the Bonferroni correction test (with the resulting α=.017) was employed as the number of the participants was relatively small and scores were not
normally distributed. Table 1 shows the results of non-parametric ANOVA (Kruskal-Wallis test) across three testing times. The results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between three groups in the pre-test scores but showed a significant group effect ($\chi^2=12.592, p=.002$) in the two post-tests. A Mann-Whitney test as a pairwise test revealed that the experimental group performed better than the other two groups in the two post-tests. Results are shown in Table 2. The comparison group also gained more vocabulary than the control group and there were statistically significant differences between them on the immediate post-test, but no statistically significant difference was found on the delayed post-test.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th></th>
<th>Posttest 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Posttest 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>median</td>
<td>min.</td>
<td>max.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>median</td>
<td>min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest 1</th>
<th>Posttest 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\rho$</td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1-G2</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1-G3</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2-G3</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. G1 = Experimental group, G2 = Comparison group, G3 = Control group

The second research question addressed the difference in the effectiveness of the two activity types. Figure 3 graphically displays the summary of three group’s vocabulary scores in the three tests. The boxplot shows that the median of the pre-test scores in the control group was higher than those in the other groups. Although the gains for the two treatment groups overlap, the median of the experimental group was higher than that of the comparison group. Of the three groups, only the experimental group appears to have a relatively normal distribution on the immediate post-test and both the comparison group and control group positively skewed. Furthermore, as the pair of whiskers of the experimental group is longer than those of other two groups, there seemed to be more variations in the group’s scores of the experimental group. Thus, the participants in the comparison group responded more uniformly to the treatment, with the majority of them showing improvements, compared to those in the experimental group. A Friedman test followed by post-hoc analysis of Wilcoxon signed-rank test with Bonferroni correction ($\alpha=.017$) was employed to statistically examine within group effect. All groups improved their test scores from pre-test to the immediate post-test and decreased their scores at the delayed post-test. The two groups in the collaborative condition significantly increased their scores from the pre-test to the immediate post-test with a large effect size (the experimental group: $r=.50$; the comparison group: $r=.50$) whereas the control group increased their scores in the same time period with a medium effect size ($r=.32$). The collaborative groups also better retained from the pre-test to the delayed post-test with a large effect size (the experimental group: $r=.46$; the comparison group: $r=.40$) than the control group, which showed almost no effect size ($r=.03$).
Figure 3. Comparison of three group’s vocabulary test scores.
The second research question includes how the participants in meaning and form focused activity and form-focused activity perceive the activity they were assigned. Table 3 includes the exit questionnaire distributed to the participants in both the experimental and comparison group after the treatment. In this questionnaire, the participants of both treatment groups were asked to reply to the questions regarding how they perceived the activities and how well they worked collaboratively. The results revealed that most participants in both groups felt the difficulty of the task they worked on was appropriate but more participants in the experimental (dictogloss) group felt the target task was difficult (10%). Next, most participants in both groups considered their collaborative work to be successful. It also revealed that more participants in the comparison (vocabulary practice activities) group used the mini dictionary to refer to target words usage than those in the experimental group. The experimental group used the dictionary to refer to the meaning of target words (instead of usage) more often than did the comparison group. However, some students who answered that they used their dictionary during the task did not mention how they used it.

Table 3
Results of the Questionnaire on the Participants’ Perception of the Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Difficulty</th>
<th>Dictogloss</th>
<th>Vocabulary practice activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little bit difficult</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little bit easy</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pair work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Dictogloss</th>
<th>Vocabulary practice activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I created collaborative atmosphere and often provided my partner with feedback.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I created collaborative atmosphere but failed to provide my partner with feedback.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried to be collaborative but my partner didn't.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner was collaborative but I wasn't.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minidictionary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Dictogloss</th>
<th>Vocabulary practice activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I used it when discussing usages of the vocabulary</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used it when discussing meanings of the vocabulary</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used my dictionary instead of it.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hardly used it.</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used both the dictionary and mini-dictionary</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

With respect to the first research question, there was a statistically significant difference between the participants in the collaborative conditions and those in the individual condition. Both the experimental group and the comparison group in the collaborative conditions increased their vocabulary scores more than the control group after the treatment. However, the statistically significant differences were observed only between the experimental group and the control group three weeks after the treatment. As some previous studies (e.g., Kim, 2008; Storch, 2005) showed, the collaborative groups would have had more time to be exposed to the target words than the individual group. LREs between pairs in the meaning and form focused activity showed that the participants had opportunities to exchange and add words and phrases they heard, negotiate the meaning of the target words, and get corrective feedback from their pairs in their text completion as seen in the example 1, 2, and 3.

Example 1: Exchange and add words and phrases heard
S1: I heard something like business is done.
S2: Yeah, something like... “International business is done there”, right?
S1: Oh, yeah.

Example 2: Negotiation of word meaning
S1: I heard organization.
S2: Organization....what does it mean?
S1: It means soshiki in Japanese, like a local government? Uh..., in this sentence, the number of organizations are measured in the index for the politics. I guess.
S2: I see.

Example 3: Feedback on form from peers
S1: ... Should the ending of cities be written as y or i?
S2: Well, y should be changed into i, right?
S1: OK.

The participants in the meaning and form focused activity seemed to be engaged with the target words through LREs by negotiating meanings and providing feedback on forms. On the other hand, the form-focused activity group tended to focus more on the meaning of the target words alone as shown in the examples 1 and 2 below.

Example 1: Asking and answering questions
S1: When you blur.. blur.. blur, you say...(reading out a sentence in a vocabulary exercise) ...Oh, this is “predict”, isn’t it?
S2: What?
S1: This is “predict”, isn’t it?
S2: Yosoku suru (in Japanese)? When you “predict” something, you say something might happen....
S1: Yes, something might happen later, right?
S2: Will or might happen, okorisouna koto (in Japanse).... You’re right.

Example 2: Negotiation of word meaning
S1: a person.. blah blah blah, over something has power to tianji, change (self-corrected). Kawaru kanousei right? ... possibility...what was that?... “available?”
S2: Well, no... that means “able to be used”. So, how about this, pa, pa, poter...
S1: Potential?
S2: Oh, potential! That’s it!

The second research question addressed the effects of two activity types on the students’ vocabulary learning. Both tasks seem to be effective for the participants’ vocabulary learning but not the case for retention. The meaning and form focused activity yielded statistically significantly higher results than the form-focused activity in the delayed post-test. This could be because the dictogloss task takes on generative characteristics in vocabulary learning. Nation and Webb (2011) suggested a checklist for technique feature analysis with five different criteria by looking at goals, learning conditions, and design features of activities. In their checklist, one point is given for each question in the five criteria (i.e., Motivation, Noticing, Retrieval, Generation, and Retention) when evaluating vocabulary learning techniques or activities. The possible highest number of points is 18 as shown in Table 4. Taking a look at the generation features in the criteria, the dictogloss gains three points whereas the fill in blank gains zero. Research findings suggest that tasks involving meaning negotiation and generative use of vocabulary facilitate the acquisition of new words (Ellis & He, 1999; Joe, 1995; Newton, 1995). The results of this study are consistent with the findings of the previous studies. On the other hand, the fill-in-the-blanks activity seemed to have facilitated their vocabulary learning more equally considering the result that the participants in the comparison group responded more uniformly to the treatment than those in the experimental group. The fill-in-the-blanks activity was potentially cognitively less demanding than the dictogloss task. The participants were asked to simply choose an appropriate word from the passage to complete the written sentences in the fill-in-the-blank exercises, whereas the dictogloss task required the participants to reproduce the passage they heard based on their notes and memory. The different degree of cognitive demands might have affected the participants’ performances of each group.

There are some limitations to the current study. Although the effectiveness of the dictogloss task was confirmed in this study, for this task to be used effectively in the classroom, further practice of the activity is needed, especially with lower proficiency learners. In the current study, the participants tended to focus on the sound of each word, not necessarily the meaning at first, while listening to the passages read aloud. Consequently, they might have failed to catch the target words when listening although they became used to listening to longer phrases and listening for the gist of the passage as they practiced. Moreover, there is a need for further studies to examine the relationship between outcomes of the LREs generated in the activities that encourages learners to focus on form with their peers and their vocabulary acquisition, comparing with the control group that performs the same task individually.

**Conclusion**

The three different conditions examined in the present study provided supplementary evidence for the benefits of collaborative activities for L2 vocabulary learning, even for relatively low proficiency English learners. The findings suggest that novice learners can benefit from the dictogloss activity if the activity is carefully designed in a task supported lesson and provides language support, such as a mini dictionary for the learners to refer to when they reconstruct the text. As was mentioned in the introduction section, Nation (2001)’s four prominent strands for vocabulary learning should be incorporated in course syllabi. English teachers at universities should create opportunities for their students to learn through these four strands, especially meaning-focused input and output with
deliberate attention to language forms in classroom, which many of the learners have scarcely had before they enter university. To this end, a dictogloss task is a good one to start with.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Dictogloss</th>
<th>Fill in blanks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there a clear vocabulary learning goal?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity motivate learning?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the learners select the words?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity focus attention on the target words?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity raise awareness of new vocabulary learning?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity involve negotiation?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity involve retrieval of the word?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it productive retrieval?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it recall?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there multiple retrievals of each word?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there spacing between retrievals?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity involve generative use?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it productive?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a marked change that involves the use of other words?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity ensure successful linking of form and meaning?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity involve instantiation?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity involve imaging?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the activity avoid interference?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(confusion of similar words)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted with permission from Nation and Webb, 2011.

References


Appendix A
Dictogloss text

An introduction part of the passage printed on the participants’ handout:
*The Global Cities Index is a list of the world’s most powerful and important cities. The index measures 5 factors such as business, people, media, entertainment, and politics.*

Text A
Business **measures** if the city does international business. People measures if the city **attracts talented** people. Media measures the variety of media sources **available** and the number of **residents** who have Internet access. Entertainment measures if the city has a lot of entertainment options. **Politics** measures the number of **embassies** and **organizations**. (80 words)

Text B
With these 5 **factors**, the creators of the index **predict** growth in certain areas. In Asia, some Chinese cities will grow, especially in the area of business. Some cities in India have also business **potential**. Cities in Turkey and Egypt will have more **influence** in international business and **politics**. With the majority of the world’s **population** living in urban areas, tomorrow’s global cities will be more powerful than ever. (69 words)
Appendix B
Questionnaire

Check the phrase or sentence best describes you.

a. The difficulty of an activity: How much difficult did you feel about the activity?
   It was (□ very difficult / □ difficult/ □ neither easy nor hard/ □ easy/ □ very easy).

b. How did you use the mini dictionary?
   □ I used it when I discuss how to use the target words with my partner.
   □ I used it when I discuss the meanings of the target words with my partner.
   □ I did not use it because I used my own regular dictionary.
   □ Others: ( )

c. Collaboration with your partner
   □ I had a good collaboration with my partner and exchanged useful feedback in discussion.
   □ I had a good collaboration with my partner but I could not suggest his/ her mistakes and failed to construct correct sentences.
   □ I was collaborative but my partner was not.
   □ My partner was collaborative but I was not.

d. How did you perceive the activity?
   ( )
Chapter 8
Task-Based English Curriculum Innovation for Computer Science Majors in Japan: Preliminary Report

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(¹University of Aizu, ²Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Abstract
This paper describes the implementation of the first few phases of task-based English language program development (Long & Norris, 2000); namely, identifying target tasks with a needs analysis survey, classifying the target tasks into task-types, and devising pedagogical tasks. The developed curriculum is for Japanese learners of English who are majoring in computer science and engineering with low-intermediate English proficiency. A curriculum working group, which consisted of language teaching experts, chose 38 skill-based target tasks. With these tasks, an online needs analysis survey was conducted. The survey asked professors of computer science, mathematics, physics, and humanities to grade the importance of the 38 target tasks. Based on the results of the survey, 20 task-types, which mediate between target tasks and pedagogical tasks, were created. Taking the English proficiency of the students into consideration, two new supporting tasks to assist them in achieving the target tasks were also added. The 22 tasks were distributed over seven core courses for first- and second-year students and a thesis writing course for fourth-year students. Five course designers then developed pedagogical tasks from the task-types. Since the new curriculum was implemented in the spring of 2018, task sequencing based on the complexity as well as task-based assessment remain as future work.

Keywords: computer science and engineering majors; English-as-a-foreign-language curriculum development; Japanese learners of English; needs analysis; Task-Based Language Teaching

By the time of admission to university, Japanese students have studied English for at least six years. However, according to the results of a survey conducted in 2014 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), 87.2% of the students in the twelfth grade (the third year of high school) achieve only the A1 level of the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR) in oral proficiency, with a peak in the lower range of A1 (MEXT, 2015). Though many have started learning English earlier recently, which is conceivably improving the situation, it remains true that Japanese students do not have enough training in using English in real-world situations.

While many Japanese 18-year-olds remain in the lower A1 level, the importance of English as a lingua franca is increasing; it is the major communication tool in global business as well as in academia. It is crucial for Japanese university students to be exposed to authentic language use before they graduate.

In the university where this curriculum innovation project took place, all the students major in computer science and engineering. As future experts in information and communication technology (ICT), they need to acquire specific English skills, because advanced ICT knowledge becomes available first in English, and even those working in venture or smaller companies must communicate with international ICT engineers in English. More urgently, the students are required to take subject-matter courses in English as a medium of instruction (EMI) and write/present their graduation research in English to graduate. Considering these short-term and long-term requirements of the students, the
Center for Language Research (CLR), which is in charge of the English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) education in the university, undertook curriculum innovation to devise a task-based curriculum in 2015. The new curriculum was implemented in April 2018. This is a report of how decisions were made about tasks to be included and how the target tasks are now incorporated into each course. Since many of the new courses have not been taught yet (at the time of writing), this paper focuses on the process of task selection and the preliminary ideas that course designers have about how they teach the tasks.

**Background of the Project**

This project was carried out in the undergraduate school of a computer science university located in Fukushima Prefecture, Japan. Since its foundation, it has been a bilingual university, with approximately 40% of the faculty members employed from overseas. Although the majority of the students are lower intermediate learners of English with an average Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) score of about 400 (approximately equivalent to TOEFL iBT 40), students are required to take subject-matter EMI courses, read English research papers, work with international faculty members, write a graduation thesis, and orally present it in English, suggesting that they need to learn specifically English for Science and Technology (EST) and that the curriculum should target those specific needs of students. Typically, in each year students take the English classes summarized in Table 1. In this project, we revised the contents of the core courses, which are marked with an asterisk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Q or S</th>
<th>English courses</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Strongly recommended 1*</td>
<td>1 credit each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Strongly recommended 2*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Strongly recommended 3*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Strongly recommended 4*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Strongly recommended 5*</td>
<td>2 credits each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Strongly recommended 6*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Strongly recommended 7*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Two elective courses (Advanced English, content to language integrated learning, or CLIL, project-based learning, or PBL)</td>
<td>2 credits each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Thesis Writing and Presentation*</td>
<td>1 credit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Q = quarter; S = semester. Core courses are indicated with an asterisk.

**Task-Based Curriculum Design**

Curriculum is a large and complex concept, and in this study, it refers to a program of study in the English curriculum for computer science and engineering students. In designing it, we need to consider (a) what language learners should learn, (b) how they can be stimulated to learn, and (c) why they should learn. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) aims to equip learners to meet their present or future real-world communicative needs (Doughty & Long, 2003), providing answers to these questions.

The definition of tasks is variable. In a superficial sense, tasks are activities that teachers and students try in the classroom, but tasks in TBLT provide guiding principles for language curriculum design (Doughty & Long, 2003). Some common features of such tasks are: (a) meaning is primary, (b) they involve real-world processes of language use, (c) they have a clearly defined communicative outcome,
and (d) they can involve any of the four language skills (Ellis, 2003). According to Long and Norris (2000), there are six components of the design, implementation, and evaluation of a TBLT program. The present paper addresses the first three:

1. Identify real-world target tasks through a task-based needs analysis.
2. Classify target tasks into task-types.
3. Develop and sequence pedagogical tasks.
4. Apply TBLT methodological principles in a particular pedagogical procedure situated in the local context.
5. Assess student achievement.
6. Carry out formative and summative evaluation of the TBLT program.

Some examples of successfully developed TBLT programs include Curricular and Teacher Innovation (CATI) project in an ESL program in an American University (Markee, 1996), Dutch education programs in Flanders (Van Avermaet & Gysen, 2006), and an Aviation English Training Program in the Korean military (Park, 2015).

The Curriculum Innovation Project

There were mainly two things motivating the revision of our old curriculum. In the former curriculum, four different course coordinators developed the contents. Each skill-based course was a mixture of general academic and technical English developed independently without an explicit attempt of sequencing the content between different courses. This situation was not ideal, but each course was well thought out and worked adequately. However, in 2015, the university decided to adopt the quarter system in order to accept more international students and encourage more students to apply to the graduate school, which had been on the quarter system already. Because the decision was made with short notice, the curriculum that had been developed for the semester system was adopted to the quarter system with only minimum modifications in 2016, but we realized that we needed to create a new and better curriculum in which students start with general English and move on to more academic and technical usage, aiming at the very final goal: writing and presenting a research paper in English.

A curriculum working group was formed with five members of the CLR in 2015, and we decided to develop a task-based curriculum following the first three steps of the above developmental process of a TBLT program. First, in order to conduct a needs analysis survey, the working group members chose 38 target tasks, about 10 tasks for each of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, that seemed important for the students. Then, an open-ended online needs analysis survey was conducted with these items in the fall of 2016. For the purpose of incorporating computer science professors’ perception of the importance of these tasks, 112 professors were requested to grade the importance level of the 38 tasks, ranging from 1 (not important at all) to 6 (extremely important). They were also encouraged to leave anonymous comments for each task. In response to our request, 31 professors (28%) contributed to the survey. Details about the implementation of the needs analysis survey and the perception of the contributors about these tasks can be found in Kaneko et al. (2018). The 38 target tasks and their scores are included in Appendix A.

Task-Types Included in the New Curriculum

Although the curriculum working group members believed that all 38 of the tasks were important for computer science majors with lower intermediate English proficiency, some tasks were not evaluated as highly as we had expected by subject-matter professors. The tasks with scores lower
than 4.1 out of 6 in the survey were removed from consideration except for one task, “Create a poster for an academic presentation” (3.92 points). After the needs analysis survey was conducted, the university made it a graduation requirement for fourth-year students to make a poster presentation about their graduation research six months prior to graduation. Because this decision enhanced the importance of this task, we decided to include it in one of the courses in spite of the low evaluation in the survey. So, six tasks were removed, and we proceeded to the next step with 32 tasks.

As mentioned earlier, we envisioned that the new curriculum would first provide instruction about basic academic English, then later about more specific English necessary for ICT specialists and researchers. As Table 1 indicates, elective courses in the third year and a Thesis Writing and Presentation course in the fourth year are available to focus on that variety of English. Therefore, we chose seven tasks which would be more appropriate for these courses and eliminated them from the subsequent curriculum revision of the first- and second-year core courses.

The next step, according to Long and Norris (2000), is to create task-types by grouping tasks together. Creating task-types is useful because (a) it is more efficient to teach general task-types that can transfer to specific target tasks, (b) teaching students with various occupational backgrounds becomes possible, and (c) pedagogical tasks can be developed from the task-types (Long, 1985). Note though that pedagogical tasks can also be derived directly from target tasks if the same target tasks are important for the learners and if we have enough time to teach all of them (Long, 2015). Considering that the students in our curriculum are all computer science majors and that they share similar purposes of learning English as discussed above, we created task-types which were not significantly more abstract than target tasks, but we call these task-types because they mediate between target tasks and pedagogical tasks. They were created by combining target tasks that would be taught more efficiently and effectively if presented together (e.g., “Write short email messages in English with acceptable grammar and construction…” and “Read and understand e-mail from professors” were combined into “Read and write short email messages in English with acceptable grammar and construction…”). In the same way, after scrutinizing the remaining 25 target tasks, five tasks were combined with others, leaving 20 tasks. Furthermore, considering that some first-year students have not acquired very basic English knowledge, we added two supporting tasks, “Read and understand (simple) academic text” and “Write a sentence with acceptable grammar.” Teaching grammar may not be task-based, strictly speaking, but we believe explicit instruction of grammar is effective for EFL learners with limited proficiency and limited exposure to the target language.

With the 20 task-types and two supporting tasks, we made an overall plan for the four-year English curriculum. We drew up the blueprint summarized in Table 2. For students studying in an EMI university, understanding spoken and written language is of primary importance for survival. Therefore, they need to practice receptive language skills first. They also need to orally communicate with non-Japanese professors, asking questions and conveying their concerns. When they have been exposed to a sufficient amount of academic English, we can then safely lead them into more technical EST. The Thesis Writing and Presentation course offered in the fourth year takes up tasks necessary to successfully complete and present their thesis.

Based on this blueprint, we distributed the 22 task-types and supporting tasks over the eight core courses, as shown in Appendix B, with some task-types taken up in multiple courses.
Table 2
*The Focus and Timing of Each Course*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course name</th>
<th>Quarter/Semester</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory English 1 and 2</td>
<td>Quarters 1 &amp; 2 of Year</td>
<td>Receptive skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory English 3 and 4</td>
<td>Quarters 3 &amp; 4 of Year</td>
<td>Receptive skills plus basic speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate English 1 and 2</td>
<td>Quarters 1 &amp; 2 of Year</td>
<td>Four-skills academic English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate English 3</td>
<td>Quarter 3 of Year 2</td>
<td>Technical writing and preparation for Year 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Advanced English, CLIL, PBL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Writing and Presentation</td>
<td>Semester 2 of Year 4</td>
<td>Thesis writing and presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From Task-Types to Pedagogical Tasks*

Many of the 20 task-types are based on real-life needs. In order to assist students in being able to perform these tasks, pedagogical tasks (Long, 1985) needed to be devised. Five course coordinators were appointed, and they were asked to design a task-based course or two. For some task-types, pedagogical tasks were already tailor-made. For others, activities in the textbooks could be used. Finally, for the few remaining tasks, they could be taught explicitly without using a great amount of time. In order to avoid a situation where each course was overly independent, two full-year coordinators were assigned to overlook the four courses offered in the first year and the three courses in the second year, respectively, and make sure the contents of the courses were consistent and were designed as we had planned. In each of the following subsections, we present an overview followed by a table that summarizes pedagogical tasks. Some skill-like tasks such as “use a spell checker properly” are not included, and overlapping tasks taught in more than one course are presented only once in the following discussion.

**Introductory English 1 and 2**

*Overview.* In Introductory English 1 and 2, students work on various topics and activities related to their interests and everyday life. Through the following class activities, students develop the four language skills with emphasis on receptive skills:

- Preparation (vocabulary quiz): Students learn new words and expressions for the lesson
- Textbook-based activities: Students learn (review) the target grammar skills of the lesson
- TBLT-based activities (discussion forum, face-to-face discussion, paragraph writing): Students work on activities and discuss authentic topics such as “suggestions for improving our university” using the target grammar and new expressions they learned in class

Table 3 shows the mapping between task-types and specific pedagogical tasks to be implemented in the classroom.
### Table 3
**Pedagogical Tasks and Activities for Introductory English 1 and 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-types</th>
<th>Pedagogical tasks/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Read or listen to and understand (teacher’s) classroom English and oral instructions, live or online | • Expose students extensively to both spoken and written instructions naturally.  
A list of frequently used classroom English is provided and explained. |
| Read and write short email messages in English with acceptable grammar and construction for both academic and non-academic purposes | • Practice writing email to a professor following the instructions |

### Introductory English 3 and 4

**Overview.** In these courses, as a general overall framework for classroom tasks, a TBLT approach to structuring classroom work is frequently taken (Willis & Willis, 2007):

- Priming the learner, introducing the topic, activating their knowledge
- Preparation, employing facilitating tasks to prepare learners for the target task(s)
- Target task performance
- Post-task activities, such as focusing on form (grammar, vocabulary)
- Learner evaluation of target task, what was challenging/enjoyable, etc.

Because exposure to the L2 inside and outside of the classroom is limited, the L2 is used by both learners and teachers as much as possible while the L1 can be used by learners when necessary to help smooth the flow of the lesson or to promote understanding of complex concepts. Table 4 shows the pedagogical tasks for these two courses.

### Table 4
**Pedagogical Tasks and Activities for Introductory English 3 and 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-types</th>
<th>Pedagogical tasks/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Read and understand (simple) academic text | • Do reading strategy practice activities (e.g., anaphoric references; raising awareness of common features of academic texts, etc.)  
| Understand the structure of a paragraph, *i.e.*, what the main idea and its supporting details are | • Learn purpose for reading or listening to a text through activities  
• Pre-reading: pair/group discussions; prediction activities  
• Reading: set up in *jigsaw/expert groups, read-retell, pair reading*, etc. |
Table 4 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-types</th>
<th>Pedagogical tasks/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Listen to and understand informal face-to-face English communication such as group discussions (e.g., in-class group activities, Global Lounge) | • Engage in target communicative tasks in pairs/groups with preceding sections as task priming of topic  
• Quick speaking, 4/3/2 tasks, jigsaw/expert groups tasks with emphasis on clear communication and comprehension |
| Talk about familiar people/things, including themselves, to those they meet for the first time | • Use textbook materials  
• Do quick speaking and 4/3/2 tasks  
• Have group/pair discussions, often structured as a pyramid (students firstly talking in pairs, then small groups, before finally reporting to the whole class) |
| Express opinions orally about topics familiar to them                    |                                                                                             |
| Describe/explain objects as well as their experience orally              |                                                                                             |
| Write directions, instructions, or explanations with logic and explain a procedure | • Primed on the topic of food/cooking/recipes followed by awareness-raising activities, focusing on common features of instructional texts (grammatical, organizational)  
• Write a recipe of students’ favorite dishes to teach other class members |

**Intermediate English 1 and 2**

**Overview.** In these courses, students learn the basics of academic English. Specifically, they learn to summarize and express their opinions verbally or in writing. For each unit topic, students watch a model lecture and first check their understanding. Then they learn to express their opinions in a structured verbal presentation or text, acquiring academic skills necessary for taking courses taught in English. Topics of the lecture videos are from a wide range of studies such as psychology, business, engineering, and information technology. Each lecture video focuses on several points, which are informative and provide some discussion points. Class activities center around checking their comprehension (e.g., note-taking and answering questions) and also sharing their opinions about the discussion points raised in the lecture (e.g., giving a group/individual presentation). Table 5 shows the pedagogical tasks for these two courses.

Table 5

**Pedagogical Tasks and Activities for Intermediate English 1 and 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-types</th>
<th>Pedagogical tasks/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbally summarize what they read/hear</td>
<td>• Watch a lecture video and write or verbally report a summary of the lecture video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulate arguments (and/or opinions) based on audio/text input in preparation for writing</td>
<td>• Present their opinions about the topic discussed in the lecture video using PPT slides as part of writing/presentation activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Write paragraphs and short essays by summarizing ideas with logic, structure, and acceptable grammar. | • Write a paragraph on three topics  
*One of the topics is tested in the midterm and final exams* |
Intermediate English 3

Overview. With a conscious awareness of EFL learners’ strategy use (Lee & Oxford, 2008) and factors predicting effective oral presentations in EFL classrooms (Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008), this course focuses on both academic writing and technical presentation skills. The course teaches students to speak and write English at an intermediate to advanced level, preparing them for careers as computer scientists. The course largely highlights the importance of critical thinking and analytical abilities in specific contexts of research content production, including brainstorming, selection, information processing, and delivery. Further, it prepares students to make conference presentations articulately, speak diligently and coherently, argue reasonably, and learn online content management and delivery at an acceptable level.

Table 6
Pedagogical Tasks and Activities for Intermediate English 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-types</th>
<th>Pedagogical tasks/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen to and understand an academic presentation.</td>
<td>• Watch TED talk videos while taking notes in class, summarize or identify key words, and write a summary with synonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare and make a presentation without notes (no reading from slides or memos)</td>
<td>• Verbally summarize the main ideas in the research with minimal readings from memos/note cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design a technical presentation</td>
<td>• Screen capture their own presentation with background voice (themselves explaining the slides) with minimal reading from slides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a poster for an academic presentation</td>
<td>• Design a technical presentation following a lecture on organization, layout, text-graphics coordination, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Screen capture their own presentation Both of the above are reviewed by classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use VoiceTube to practice clear pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• After a lecture; create a poster on a research topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do poster presentation and answer questions from the audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thesis Writing and Presentation

Overview. A common thread throughout this course is the five-filter framework of accuracy, brevity, clarity, objectivity, and formality that can be used to evaluate scientific writing. Students are provided with guidance, examples, and tools to help them understand and apply these filters to their written work. Consistency and judgement of content are subsumed within the five filters. The core course materials comprise web-based course notes and a suite of tailor-made eLearning tools, some of which are available at <http://web-ext.u-aizu.ac.jp/~jblake/resources.html>. This course is to teach one
task—writing and presenting a thesis—which contains several sub-tasks. In Table 7, activities for the subtasks are summarized.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogical Tasks and Activities for Thesis Writing and Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task-types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a graduation thesis with focus on organization, layout, formatting, text-graphics coordination, and judgement of content</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Conclusion

The new curriculum is still at an embryonic stage; some of the courses have not even been taught at the time of writing. Curriculum development is an ongoing effort. It is certain that we will need to make major and minor changes as we use this task-based curriculum in our teaching, and we believe we will be able to gain a deeper understanding about TBLT from this process.

In the future, the complexity of the pedagogical tasks may need to be considered so that we can sequence them more appropriately. It is also hoped that a task-based assessment will be implemented in this curriculum. However, this will depend on and be affected by other university decisions such as changes to the entrance examination and the use of TOEIC as a promotion or graduation requirement. Furthermore, feedback from students and teachers will be an important source of information for further modification of the curriculum. It would be ideal if a needs analysis survey could be conducted with the alumni of this university, which would likely cast light on the differences in the perception of needs between academics and business people.

References


Kaneko, E., Park, M., Wilson, I., Heo, Y., Roy, D., Yasuta, T., Nicholas, A., & Blake, J. (2018). English curriculum innovation for computer science majors in the Japanese EFL context: From needs to


### Appendix A
Target Tasks and Their Perceived Importance

38 target tasks and their scores of perceived importance by 31 computer science professors (6 = extremely important; 1 = not important at all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Listen to and understand (teacher's) classroom English and oral instructions</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Read and understand e-mail from professors</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Write paragraphs and summarize ideas with logic, structure, and acceptable grammar</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Understand the structure of a paragraph, i.e., what the main idea and its supporting details are</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Interact orally with professors and students</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Read and understand technical texts</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Write short email messages in English with acceptable grammar and construction for both academic and non-academic purposes</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Read and understand research papers of their own field</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Read and understand research abstracts of their own field</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Develop ability to formulate arguments (and/or opinions) in writing</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Write paragraphs and short essays by summarizing ideas with logic, structure, and acceptable grammar.</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Listen to and complete class activities (target tasks)</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Use a spell checker properly</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Handle the question and answer session of his or her presentation reasonably well</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Express opinions orally about topics familiar to them</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Write directions, instructions, or explanation with logic and explain a procedure</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Read and understand online instructions and postings</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Listen to and understand an academic presentation and subsequent questions</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Develop strategies to write a graduation thesis with focus on organization, layout, formatting, text-graphics coordination, and judgement of content.</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Develop skills to design a technical presentation</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Narrow down internet search results</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Talk about familiar people/things, including themselves, to those they meet for the first time</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Listen to and understand informal face-to-face English communication such as group discussions at the global lounge or small group conversation with international students</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Make proper inferences about conversations</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Verbally summarize what they read/heard</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Listen to and understand multimedia instructional materials presented in class</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Prepare and make a presentation without notes (no reading from slides or memos)</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Find synonyms using a thesaurus, a dictionary, and online resources</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Describe/explain objects as well as their experience orally</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Listen to and understand occupational English (or in the context of business)</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Use communication strategies such as paraphrasing and asking for clarification</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Listen to and understand various English accents by native and non-native English speakers, e.g., Russian English accent, Japanese English accent, etc.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Talk about their own expertise to people who are unfamiliar with such expertise</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Engage in debates/discussion interactively</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Read and understand news reports and magazines</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Create a poster for an academic presentation</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Take detailed notes based on class lectures and group discussion</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Understand English in multimedia outside classes (e.g., audio &amp; video on the internet)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. R=reading; L=listening; W=writing; S=speaking*
## Appendix B
### Task-Types of the Core Courses

### Introductory English 1&2 (Q1 and Q2 in Y1)
- Read or listen to and understand (teacher’s) classroom English and oral instructions live or online
- Read and understand (simple) academic text
- Understand the structure of a paragraph, i.e., what the main idea and its supporting details are
- Read and write short email messages in English with acceptable grammar and construction for both academic and non-academic purposes
- Use a spell checker properly
- Write a sentence with acceptable grammar

### Introductory English 3&4 (Q3 and Q4 in Y1)
- Read and understand (simple) academic text
- Understand the structure of a paragraph, i.e., what the main idea and its supporting details are
- Write a sentence with acceptable grammar
- Make proper inferences about conversations
- Listen to and understand informal face-to-face English communication such as group discussions (e.g. in-class group activities, Global Lounge)
- Talk about familiar people/things, including themselves, to those they meet for the first time
- Express opinions orally about topics familiar to them
- Use communication strategies such as paraphrasing and asking for clarification/interrupting others politely
- Describe/explain objects as well as their experience orally
- Write directions, instructions, or explanations with logic and explain a procedure

### Intermediate English 1&2 (Q1 and Q2 in Y2)
- Read and understand (simple) academic text
- Verbally summarize what they readheard
- Formulate arguments (and/or opinions) based on audio/text input in preparation for writing
- Write paragraphs and short essays by summarizing ideas with logic, structure, and acceptable grammar
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Listen to and understand an academic presentation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Write a graduation thesis with focus on organization, layout, formatting, text-graphics coordination, and judgement of content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate English 3 (Q3 in Y2)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally summarize what they read/heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listen to and understand an academic presentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Write a graduation thesis with focus on organization, layout, formatting, text-graphics coordination, and judgement of content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare and make a presentation without notes (no reading from slides or memos)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Find synonyms using a thesaurus, a dictionary, and online resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design a technical presentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Create a poster for an academic presentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Writing and Presentation (S2 in Y4)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Write a graduation thesis with focus on organization, layout, formatting, text-graphics coordination, and judgement of content</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 9
Task-Based Language Teaching at the Maritime Education and Training Institute in Indonesia

Irmi Agustina
(Queen’s University Belfast)

Abstract
This study is aimed principally at evaluating Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as one of the optimal approaches that can be applied in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes, specifically in maritime education and training (MET). The MET domain was chosen to develop this study, as it uses one of the branches of ESP called Maritime English (ME). The ability to communicate in English and, specifically, to understand Maritime English is important for effective working at sea and in ports. The importance of English language for ships’ crews is that they understand instructions on navigational devices and machinery, signs on board in English, meteorological information, messages concerning the vessel’s safety and operation, and also that they can communicate with other crew members on board. Poor Maritime English competence is one of the factors causing accidents and incidents at sea. In this paper, I argue that TBLT, in respect of learner needs, may be a potential solution to this problem.

Keywords: English competence; English for Specific Purposes; Maritime Education and Training; Maritime English; Task-Based Language Teaching

The number of schools which offer English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes has regularly increased since the subject was first introduced in 1960, and the ESP phenomenon cannot be halted in schools and universities in Indonesia (Poedjjeastuti, 2017). ESP-based schools are increasingly attracting attention, particularly in Indonesia, as they offer students specialist expertise. The number of vocational schools has recently increased; according to data collected by Baswedan (2014), there were 25,580 vocational schools in Indonesia, and this could have increased in recent years, even though the popularity of Senior High Schools is even higher. The rise of ESP schools has turned English teachers who basically teach General English (GE) into ESP teachers, but this issue presents English teachers with a major problem: They do not have any background knowledge in the specific discipline, but still have to deal with specific terminology. For example, a ME teacher should grasp learning topics related to emergency situations on board, ships’ machinery, parts of the ship, crew members’ jobs, incidents at sea, maps and charts, etc. Ali (2016) pointed out that the quality of ESP teachers in Indonesia was inadequate because they had no background knowledge that referred to particular subjects. For example, English teachers who used to teach General English lack knowledge related to navigation and ships’ machinery. One way to overcome the problem is by collaborative teaching; Benesch (1999), argues that ESP teachers can collaborate with subject teachers, either together in the classroom or outside when planning learning materials. For example, in my experience in ME class, before I teach a maritime-related topic such as “navigational orders”, the subject teacher and I will discuss and plan teaching to explain the topic. In addition, learners have their own concerns on facing ME; for instance, they lack vocabulary, and need to meet a level of English communication competence to be able to work on board. It is hoped that this study will help ESP teachers, not only in MET, but also in other fields of ESP, such as medical, accounting, and hotel management, to better prepare their students for their future careers through a task-based approach.
Maritime Education and Training and English for Specific Purposes

The Maritime Education and Training Institute is a school mainly focused on preparing learners to be seafarers. In Indonesia, most MET institutions are boarding schools which have adopted semi-military procedures to run the system; for example, learners engage in physical activities outside the classroom.

International Maritime Organization (IMO) created a handbook for Maritime English, this handbook helps the Maritime English teachers in teaching-learning preparation. It consists of syllabus, learning source, and teaching methods. The Maritime English syllabus refers to the Standard Training and Certification and Watch-Keeping (STCW) 1978 amendment, which requires MET learners to have English competence before working on a ship or at a port. The amendment has had a significant effect on ME learning in creating course design, curriculum, materials development, assessment used, and Maritime English teacher training (Trankner & Cole, 2012). The International Maritime Organization (2015) explains the aim of the Maritime English Model Course:

The purpose of the IMO model course is to assist maritime training institutes and their teaching staff in organising and introducing new training courses or in enhancing, updating or supplementing existing training material where the quality and effectiveness of the training courses may thereby be improved. It is not the intention of the model course programme to present instructors with a rigid “teaching package” which they are expected to “follow blindly”. Nor is it the intention to substitute audiovisual or “programmed” material for the instructor’s presence. As in all training endeavours, the knowledge, skills and dedication of the instructors are the key components in the transfer of knowledge and skills to those being trained through IMO model course material. (p. 1)

The IMO Model Course for ME is divided into two core sections. The first is General Maritime English (GME), and consists of three areas of language (grammar, vocabulary, and phonology) with practice of four language communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). GME is designed for learners who have an elementary, lower intermediate and intermediate level of English. The second core section is Specialised Maritime English (SME). The SME syllabus is more maritime-specific; otherwise the language features are not the main target (International Maritime Organization, 2015).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Dudley-Evans (2001) stated that ESP courses were designed to meet the specific needs of learners. Dudley-Evans (2001) defined the needs of learners in ESP as based on an occupational situation where English plays a key role. Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) stated that ESP has “absolute” characteristics: It is designed around content to meet the specific needs of the learner, with themes and topics related to particular disciplines, occupations and activities. It is also centred on the language appropriate to those activities (syntax, lexis, discourse and semantics). For example, an English course for engineers will use engineering situations to present relevant language and discourse. Dudley-Evans emphasized that “ESP is concerned with teaching language, discourse, and relevant communication skills” (p. 132). In ME, learners would be encouraged to focus more on deepening their on-board communications such as covering technical failure situations, safety communications, navigational or meteorological information, piracy attacks, etc.

Competent seafarers are very important for the Indonesian economy because of the country’s position on a world trade route. Wahyono, Tangkilisan, and Marihandono (2016) stated that the “Indonesian region lies between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. It puts Indonesian sea in an important position in the world political arena. Geo-economic position of Indonesia is very strategic,
because it is located in the heart of world trade” (p. 29). English is one of the most important subjects in the MET academy, and learners are prepared not only to work locally, but also in international shipping companies. Furthermore, a good Maritime English class will increase learners’ English skills. John, Brooks, Wand and Schriever (2013) and Mockel, Brenker and Strohschneider (2014) emphasised that communication problems have been found to cause most marine accidents.

Teaching ME in the Maritime Education and Training Institute is very challenging for several reasons. The cases below may also happen in other vocational schools which apply semi-military practices in Indonesia in particular, and in other English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries more generally:

1. School regulations and activities
   The MET Institute is a boarding school which adopts semi-military discipline. Under this regime, students face many activities, academic and physical. Semi-military discipline is applied at the Institute to form a sense of responsibility and independence, training students to adapt to their future, real workplace (ship or port). The physical activities affect the teaching-learning process, particularly for students, as quite often they appear exhausted in class. Generally, classes run from 7:00 am to 3.00 pm, including one break and lunch. Before class, students have to carry out physical exercises (jogging, sit-ups, push-ups), eat breakfast and take part in a flag ceremony. After class, students are expected to get involved in several extracurricular activities (sports, arts, marching band, drill, etc). At night, students usually have time for individual learning.

2. Textbook
   It is quite rare to find an official textbook for the MET class. Tevdovska (2018) stated that it is almost impossible to find a textbook that meets students' needs and corresponds to their level of proficiency. Grant (1987) researched three types of teacher who need textbooks; one of the samples said that they do not use textbooks, but prepare all teaching materials themselves. Grant (1987) responded the sample in the context of teaching ESP, stating that “in this type of situation, the purposes for learning English are very specialised, the group of learners is small, their needs are specialised that no suitable books are available” (p. 7).
   However, IMO Model Course 3.17 gives book references for teaching-learning, such as a textbook entitled Marlins Study pack 1 and 2 published by Marlins, a company which provides training and assessment to the maritime industry, and which claims to be the leading provider of Maritime English testing to seafarers worldwide.

3. Terminology
   The teacher has to become familiar with the terminology related to the field of learning; in the author’s personal experience, English teachers do not have a maritime background and were unaware before conducting ME classes that they would have to engage with Maritime terminology. Therefore, the ME teacher needs time to learn maritime terminology.

**Task Based Language Teaching as a Possible Solution**

According to Richards and Rodgers (2010), “Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) refers to the using of tasks as core units of planning and instruction in language teaching” (p. 174). The main reason why I am trying to combine TBLT and ESP is because I see TBLT complementing MET-ESP in that both approaches lead the learners towards real-life situations. Consider the three challenges above; TBLT might be addressed as an appropriate approach to the MET class for several reasons under each point.
In this section, I will first argue how TBLT might be an appropriate teaching approach in this particular context of MET-ESP from the perspective of task design, syllabus design, and teacher roles. I will then discuss how TBLT might solve specific challenges faced by the MET-ESP teachers in Indonesia.

Why TBLT?
TBLT offers a variety of advantages when applied to ESP. Teachers drawing on TBLT report increased confidence, enjoyment and motivation among learners (East, 2017). These three elements are important in encouraging students’ motivation in learning English, and, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) note: “The growth of ESP, then, was brought by a combination of three important factors: the expansion of demand for English to suit particular needs, development in the fields of linguistic and educational psychology” (p. 8). Below, I will outline the benefits especially in the context of MET-ESP in terms of (a) task design, (b) syllabus design, and (c) teachers roles. I will also give some advice on how the MET-ESP teachers may be able to take full advantage of TBLT in their ESP classes.

**Task design.** Van den Branden (2006) defined a task as “an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and in which necessitates the use of language” (p. 4). Nunan (1989) divided tasks into two categories, real-world and pedagogical. Real-world tasks are closely related to authentic situations outside the classroom, or in real-life situations. A pedagogical task may lack situational authenticity but aims at interactional authenticity; in other words, the kind of natural language found in use for communication in the world outside the classroom. Ellis (2003) considered that:

> A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real-world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive and oral or written skills. (p. 16)

To specify the meaning, Ellis (2009) divided tasks into unfocused and focused tasks. Unfocused tasks focus more on using language in general communication, while focused tasks provide opportunities designed for learners to communicate using certain pre-specified grammatical structures.

Skehan (1998b) identified four criteria of tasks: “Meaning is primary, there is a goal that needs to be worked towards, the activity is outcome-evaluated, and there is a real-world relationship” (p. 226). Long and Crooks (1993) are in line with Skehan with the last factors. They emphasised that in designing tasks, the teacher should take into account the relevance to the learners of real-world needs. Calvert and Sheen (2014), on the other hand, defined a good task as one that covers three factors. They are “enjoyable, useful and meaningful, which in turn influences teaching effectiveness” (p. 230).

Tsui (2001) argued that tasks invite learners’ participation in types of activity involving pair work, group work, and the whole class. She also emphasised that pair work and group work provide more classroom interaction in producing speech acts than does teacher-fronted interaction. Van den Branden (2006) pointed out that in a TBLT program, students are presented with real-life situations. Bygate (2015) argued that “real-world tasks are intended to provide ‘situational authenticity’, in the sense that the tasks are genuine exemplars of what the learners can be expected to have to do outside the classroom” (p. 381).

The definitions of tasks expressed by the TBLT researchers above are in line with the purpose of ME classes which emphasise the need for tasks with more focus on real-world activities, where the meaning is the first concern in executing the task. From their perspectives, this focus on real-world activities is the key to training future seafarers to be able to perform necessary duties in English. For example, Kielbratowska (2009), giving suggestions towards authentic situation tasks related to reading
skill activity, suggested giving learners a reading text related to a recent accident they have already
heard about.

**Task-based syllabus.** A syllabus can be analagised as a branch of a tree with a curriculum as its
stem in teaching and learning. Breen (2001) defined syllabus as a planning device in the process of
teaching and learning, related to what should be achieved during the process. He concluded there are
four elements in syllabus: aims, content, methodology and evaluation. A syllabus is formally
documented either as a national or institutional framework for a specific group of learners, or as in the
content of published textbook. According to Richards and Rodgers (2015) “the syllabus of TBLT is
typically more specific on language structures, functions, topics, themes, and macro-skills (listening,
speaking, reading and writing); the pattern of the syllabus gives the teacher a framework for designing
meaningful tasks” (p. 184). Krashen (1985) summarised the task-based syllabus as focusing on meaning,
from this perspective, the aim of task-based syllabus design is to create suitable tasks to encourage
interaction and, through it, negotiation for meaning. The learner would interpret and express the
meaning while carrying out an appropriate task, thus enhancing his or her linguistic knowledge and its
social use.

A task-based syllabus tends to emphasise real-life communication, although a Maritime English
syllabus also puts emphasis on grammatical structures, as they are frequently targeted in Maritime
English exams. For example, included in the International Shipping Federation (ISF) Marlins English
Testing for Seafarers—one of the online Maritime English testing sites (Marlins, n.d.)—30 out of a total
85 Maritime English questions concern on grammar instead of other English skills. Maritime English
(2015) stated that linguistic content consists of three areas of language (grammar, vocabulary, and
phonology), along with the practice of communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

However, it might seem ambiguous why Maritime English emphasizes communicative
competence on the other hand and grammar on the other. Fotos and Ellis (1991) contended that
whether grammar has to be explicitly taught in a TBLT lesson is a controversial issue. However, Nunan
(2003) stated that presenting “the grammar in a context that makes clear relationship between the
grammatical form and the communicative function” (p. 159) is the key. Grammar in Maritime English is
crucial in radio communications, nautical publications, meteorological information, and messages
concerning the vessel’s safety and operation; and it is required to communicate with other vessels, VTS
stations, and multinational crews, as well as to use the Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP)
successfully and efficiently. Therefore, the role of grammatical competence in the Maritime context (and
others ESP contexts) is to convey meaning well within communication.

By using the task-based syllabus, Maritime English teachers can choose grammatical rules that
are appropriate to the learners’ needs and are suitable for their future jobs in the Maritime context.
Teachers can first set up a task where the use of grammar rules to be taught is needed. For example, if
ME teachers were to teach about the past tense, they could introduce a story about a past voyage
(taken from a book, a newspaper article, the internet, or other sources) and discuss what might have
happened. If needed, teachers then can explain the grammar rules explicitly. This teaching approach
should help students do well on the Maritime English exam for seafarers, and also produce well-
structured sentences in their maritime communications and avoid misunderstanding.

**Role of the teacher in the TBLT approach.** Van den Branden (2016) and Hutchinson and Waters
(1987) stated that TBLT is regarded as student-centred, as it focuses on students’ classroom activities in
carrying out tasks. Similarly, Swan (2005) considered the teacher as a manager and facilitator in
communicative activities in TBLT classes. In contrast, in the pre-task section, the teacher should be a
good model in presenting examples of task performances, and then the main task will be completed by
the students. Prabhu (1987) stated that:
In the classroom, the teacher controlled the complexity of his or her language in more or less the same way as an adult does in speaking to a child – avoiding or paraphrasing what he or she felt might be too difficult, repeating statements, and speaking slowly when there seemed to be difficulties of understanding. (p. 57)

Van den Branden (2006) divided the role of the teacher in TBLT into three points: first, the teacher as a motivator – the teacher motivates learners to invest mental energy in performing tasks and keeps up the motivation through various phases of the tasks; second, the teacher organises the task activity, giving instructions, preparing learners to perform the task, guiding them into groups (for group work), and making sure that they all have the materials they need, or understand how they can obtain them; thirdly, the teacher interacts to support the learners as they carry out the task.

Sharma (2014, p. 233) considered that success in a language class depends on the role played by the teacher, who not only designs and implements tasks, but also mediates these tasks with learners, making them aware of learning outcomes and learning potential. Maritime English is a major subject in MET because of its function in navigating a ship, communicating on the ship, and socialising with ship workers from different parts of the world. Therefore, the role of the Maritime English teacher is essential in creating reliable seafarers who have not only good maritime skills, but also excellent communication ability in English.

The author suggests to Maritime English teachers that they be more creative in developing tasks; for example, the teacher can take learners to practise speaking on a bridge simulator for an experience that resemble real-life, on-board communication.

In addition, it is better for the teacher to focus on learners with low motivation to enhance their understanding and motivation related to the importance of the English language in the maritime sector; these learners might not be able to compete with other friends in the class. The teacher is expected to be slower in giving instructions about a task, since not all learners have the same capability to absorb the materials.

**TBLT as a Solution to MET Challenges in Indonesia**

The first point of the challenge concerns on school regulations and activities. As noted above, there is strict regulation and many activities outside the classroom make learners feel exhausted and low in motivation towards learning. In my experience, the main purpose of applying TBLT in the classroom is to keep the students actively engaged with the learning topic during the learning process. Ellis (2003) stated that:

Task involve real-world process of language use, the work plan may require learners to engage in a language activity such as that found in the real world, for example, completing a form, or it may involve them in language activity that is artificial, for example, determining whether two pictures are the same or different. However, the process of language use that result from performing a task, for example, asking and answering questions or dealing with misunderstandings, will reflect those that occur in real-world skills. (p. 10)

In addition, I use tasks as a way to avoid long explanations of the learning topic, for example: using a topic related to the past tense, the teacher can use a reading text about a past voyage to explain meaning, function, when the past tense can be used, etc. Several tasks directly give learners understanding related to that task’s function in their work; for instance, in a maritime context, tasks
train learners to be able to make a voyage report, and the writing skills can help learners to communicate with the shipping company by email. Another good point in applying a task-based approach—and an important part of learning—is its effectiveness in motivating learners. Richards and Rodgers (2014) stated:

Task activity and achievement are motivational. Tasks are also used to improved learner motivation and therefore promote learning. This is because they require the learners to use authentic language, they have well-defined dimension and closure, they are varied in format and operation, they typically include physical activity, they involve partnership and collaboration, they may call on the learners’ past experience, and encourage a variety of communication styles. (p. 182)

Van Gorp and Bogart (2006) also stressed the importance of motivation in task-based classes:

Task will work best to the extent that they inspire the learner to work i.e. to invest mental energy in task performance and to persist, even if the tasks is complex or difficult. The learner has to keep task performance going. The motivation to perform a task should therefore preferably be learner intrinsic, rather than the kind of “surrogate motivation” provided by gimmicks, grades and superficial devices. (p. 82)

On the one hand, some students are enthusiastic about Maritime English lessons, even though some of them sometimes look tired during the learning process. On the other hand, the rest of the students seem to have no interest in Maritime English, assuming that the English language is not a priority for those working in a shipping company. They see most graduates working in local shipping companies, where the English language is rarely used. In such cases, the teacher should encourage the learners when explaining the purpose of the tasks to change their attitude towards learning English.

The second challenge faced by MET schools is textbooks. There is almost no official textbook for Maritime English. Some researchers have positive attitudes about textbooks, but others are against them. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) are positive, stating that the textbook is a very important part in teaching and learning English, providing important input into lessons through activities, reading and explanation. Otherwise, textbooks are seen as a teaching aid that makes the teacher less responsible in the teaching-learning process. Swan (1992) warned:

The danger with ready-made textbooks is that they can seem to absolve teachers of responsibility. Instead of participating in the day-to-day decisions that have to be made about what to teach and how to teach it, it is easy to just sit back and operate the system, secure in the belief that the wise and virtuous people who produced the textbook knew what was good for us, unfortunately this is rarely the case. (p. 33)

However, beyond the pros and cons of the textbook’s existence, the MET Institute uses IMO Model Course 3.17, and this helps the teacher by giving suggestions about which kind of book can be used to develop learning materials as set out in the three points above. To correspond to this problem, TBLT helps the teacher to present meaningful tasks instead of reaching the target syllabus from a textbook. This takes us back to the purpose of TBLT as an approach to language education that introduces the learners to functional tasks, with focus on meaning and use of language in the real world, not just for linguistic purposes (Van den Branden, 2006).
TBLT itself challenges teachers to be more creative in delivering language knowledge through various task designs. Teachers can develop learning materials through the TBLT approach by incorporating speaking, listening, reading and writing into fun and meaningful activities – for example, designing a game activity as a task. Perifanou (2009) proposed that games are highly influential in language learning; learners can become involved in various games such as storytelling, fantasy, music, movement, role-plays, language games and problem solving. Research by Alqahtani (2015) related to the attitudes of engineering students in an ESP class found that all 16 students interviewed stated that learning English could be facilitated by using movies, books and newspapers. In terms of the maritime context, the teacher can include fun activities by using video to see effective communication on board, types of ships, machinery compartments on a ship, and on-board emergencies. The teacher can ask learners to retell a story after watching an activity, or can pose questions to be answered randomly by the learners. Other fun activities that can be practised in the Maritime English class are role-play, group discussions and presentations.

The third challenge in MET schools is terminology. It is noted above that most ME teachers started out as General English teachers. The problem faced in MET mostly involves maritime terms. Terminology isolates the teacher during the teaching process, such as in naming parts of the ship and ship’s machinery. In addition, English is a foreign language in Indonesia; Ellis (1994) stated that “English as a foreign language takes place in settings where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom” (p. 12). Therefore, Most of Indonesian learners face difficulties in learning English because it is not spoken in daily communication and is rarely used outside the classroom. Thus, maritime terminology is also new to them because it is not common or in use by the general population. ESP learners, in this case at the MET Institute, also find difficulties in learning new terminology or vocabulary specifically in the maritime sector, because the vocabulary is not used frequently. As Xhaferi (2015) stated: “It is difficult to learn words especially ESP words because they are low frequency words and are not encountered very often” (p. 232).

To overcome the terminology problem, TBLT represents a strategy for both teachers and learners to broaden and enrich their maritime terms through tasks which focus on meaning. Sarani and Sahebi (2012) stated that teaching methods based on tasks can help learners to pay more attention and concentrate on meaning. In the ME context, the teacher might create tasks using “matching words”, matching synonyms between General English and Maritime English words, or matching maritime terminology to its definition or to a picture in order to help learners to absorb maritime terminology. Another way to solve the terminology issue is through reading tasks, as it is widely believed that reading is the major source of vocabulary growth in L1 (first language). Students with strong reading skills who read a variety of texts may make substantial gains in their vocabulary, without direct instruction (Xhaferi, 2015, p. 233).

Conclusion

The TBLT approach offers meaningful materials for the MET teachers and students to work with because its functional task reflects real-life situations, which encourages learners “to focus primarily on meaning exchange and to use language for real-world, non-linguistic purposes” (Van den Branden, 2014, p. 174). Functional tasks give MET learners practice in facing real-life situations on board, which in turn will help them acquire knowledge and skills required in their real-life as seafarers. Thus, the use of TBLT in MET classes will help learners be better prepared for their future careers.
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Chapter 10

Critical Perspective on Language Learning: TBLT and Digital Games

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Abstract
This research review addresses a number of questions regarding language learning, current trends in second language acquisition (SLA) research, how they are related to digital games, and the many reasons why digital games hold promise for language learning. Also, it will be seen why and how past movements to incorporate digital games in language teaching methodology (such as computer assisted language learning—CALL) have been relatively unsuccessful. Furthermore, the fundamental principles behind how good digital games are designed and the main empirical benefits of digital game-based learning will be shown to correlate with idea in TBLT. Hopefully by accomplishing these goals a clearer view of what digital games can offer and what research is still necessary will be illuminated.

Keywords: Computer Assisted Language Learning; Digital Game-Based Learning; language learning; Second Language Acquisition; Task-Based Language Teaching

In the field of Education, Gee (2007b) analyzed how learning happens in commercial video games by focusing on different groups of learning principles such as semiotic domains, learning and identity, situated meaning, telling and doing, cultural models, and social mind. Gee ultimately organized 36 learning principles that he had found in most “good” commercial games, games that have been designed for the entertainment market. Gee’s first-hand approach to researching video games has also been utilized by a number of other researchers (Chen & Yang, 2012; deHaan, Reed, & Kuwada, 2010). This has led to a number of research studies related to commercial games, that are designed for entertainment, not specifically for learning purposes, in the field of digital game-based learning (DGBL) (Reinders, 2012). It should be noted that these commercial games contrast with programs designed specifically as language learning tools such as those designed as computer assisted language learning (CALL). Gee primarily questions why good learning can happen in commercial video games but so often does not happen in classrooms, where activities and methodologies are designed to specifically enhance learning.

Similar to Gee’s (2007b) principles, Prensky (2001) observed that most games involve “rules; goals and objectives; outcome and feedback; conflict, competition, challenge and opposition; interaction; [and] the representation of a story” (p. 2). Similarly, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as a current trend has utilized these features by attempting to clearly distinguish tasks (active/situated learning) and activities (simply a learning exercise) in language teaching methodology. Few would consider a digital game simply an activity (often described as “play” or “digital experience”), while many would consider language learning book-work simply an activity. Skehan (1998) provided this distinction of a task (as distinct from an activity) as follows: (a) a task is oriented towards communicative activity and focused on pragmatic communicative meaning, (b) it is achievement-based and outcome-evaluated, and (c) it has a real world relationship link. Similarly, Nunan (2004) defined a task with six main criteria. The most focused of these being that a task must emphasize communication through interaction, focus on the learning process, include and enhance learners’ personal experience, and link classroom language to real world language. These definitions of task mostly summarize a task as an active and situated
pedagogical tool. Thus, the target of both DGBL and TBLT aims for active and situated learning, which offers the learner agency and an environment in which to use context-specific language to accomplish a goal.

**Gee’s Learning Principles in Light of SLA Theories**

What digital games have succeeded with over the years has been the ability to situate the player in a learning environment (Gee, 2004, 2007a, 2007b). Gee’s main critique throughout his work seems to boil down to two main points: (a) why commercial games utilize more effective learning principles than schools, and (b) how these principles can be used to begin solving big problems in education. Gee’s first point will be the main focus of this paper.

From here two points will be presented in more detail: (a) what principles Gee (2007b) has found in commercial games that are most relevant to SLA research, and (b) how these principles relate to past or current methodological trends such as CALL and TBLT. Ten most relevant principles of Gee’s 36 learning principles have been selected in an attempt to show compatibility with relevant SLA research. The ten principles (Gee, 2007b) with brief summaries are as follows:

1. Psychosocial Moratorium Principle: Spaces are available in which risks can be taken and consequences are lowered.
2. Practice Principle: Lots of active practice is provided to students in context and on their own terms.
3. Incremental Principle: Learning is set in stages and builds towards more complexity.
4. Explicit Information On-Demand and Just-in-Time Principle: When and only when the learner needs and can use explicit information is it provided during practice.
5. Concentrated Sample Principle: Important elements of a task are concentrated in early stages so learners can efficiently practice and learn them.
6. Bottom-up Basic Skills Principle: Basic skills need to be learned in context and from the bottom-up.
7. Identity Principle: Learners have real choices and have ample chances to reflect on their old identities and their new projected ones.
8. Committed Learning Principle: Learners are given plenty of time to engage in the learning environment they feel commitment to.
9. Active, Critical Learning Principle: The learning environment is not designed for passive learning but instead for active and critical engagement.
10. Probing Principle: Learners engage in a cycle of learning in which they form a hypothesis, test their hypothesis, and reflect on their understanding and knowledge.

Further description of the principles will be introduced with their relevance to SLA research as they are brought up throughout the paper.

**SLA and DGBL**

What Gee (2004, 2007b) is able to identify as far as game design and how it engages gamers in learning environments shares many of the same pedagogical implications as SLA research such as the role of skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 2007), input processing (VanPatten, 2012), statistical learning (Rebuschat, 2013), identity and agency (Duff, 2012), and interactionist approach (Mackey, Abbuhl, Gass, 2012) and noticing and awareness in language learning (Hamrick, 2013; Williams, 2005; Schmidt, 1990). In this section, these SLA theories will be explored in relation with Gee’s learning principles and DGBL more generally.
**Skill acquisition.** Skill acquisition theory attempts to explain how skills are learned from initial to advanced proficiency (DeKeyser, 2007). Within this theory, automatization (skill acquisition) requires procedural knowledge that often begins with the acquisition of declarative knowledge. This then requires “slow and deliberate practice” from the bottom-up (p. 100, 107, 108). This practice often does not incorporate any or all practice, but rather requires the learner to practice a small sample and infer how/why a rule (such as auxiliary fronting) applies in many cases (i.e. with a *normal verb* adding *do*, with a *be-verb* when using present continuous or passive, with modals, etc.). Additionally, this practice must be presented incrementally. However, DeKeyser (2007) claims “no amount of any activity means much if it does not fit into the right point of development of skill for a given individual” (p. 108) posing a difficulty for teachers to design activities that are at the right level for all learners in a diverse classroom.

Alternatively, games offer the player similar means yet perhaps to better ends. Games offer a safe, low risk environment in which to practice required actions that represent a small sample of what will be required later in the game. This is an example of the *psychosocial moratorium* principle, in which learners can take risks and consequences are lowered. Games also utilize the *practice principle*, in which learners get extensive practice in a context that is relevant to themselves and in which they experience frequent success (Gee, 2007b). This practice is also far more particular in games than classroom activities thus nearly always avoiding practice that does not fit in the learning process.

Additionally, games’ requirements are often briefly presented explicitly and are eventually automatized (through acquired procedural knowledge) which is often a prerequisite for continuing or finishing the game (due to the designed learning curve). In this way, the *incremental principle* (Gee, 2007b) ensures that:

Learning situations are ordered in the early stages so that earlier cases lead to generalizations that are fruitful for later cases. When learners face more complex cases later, the learning space (the number and type of guesses the learner can make) is constrained by the sorts of fruitful patterns or generalizations the learner has found earlier. (p. 210)

In other words, if a game demands the player to perform a new action that requires a set of learned actions, the game must be designed in a way that progressively builds on previously learned skills for the gamer to successfully create a skill set (Gee, 2007b). In this way, many safe and low-risk stages are designed to allow the gamer to consolidate their skills and self-assess how to apply their acquired skills for each new challenge. Games offer well-ordered problems (levels) and encourage risk taking, exploration, and even failure (Gee, 2007a).

**Input processing.** Consciousness and input processing address a number of questions related to input and intake in language learning. One of these questions is whether input and intake is consciously or unconsciously controlled when making form and meaning connections (Schmidt, 1990, p. 138; VanPatten, 2012, p. 269). Some hints can be found in the “noticing” and the “enhancement of input” principles in SLA which both suggest that the simple enhancement of input as a pedagogical strategy can be beneficial for comprehension and recall of previous form/meaning knowledge (Han, Park, & Combs, 2008). Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis in particular emphasizes that L2 learners are able to notice and acquire language forms in the input, but only when it is provided at the right timing when learners are developmentally ready. Utilizing these strategies can help learners automatically notice forms implicitly or notice and recall declarative knowledge explicitly to aid in the completion of a task. When tasks are designed in a way that monopolizes on this strategic input, incidental learning is possible and beneficial.

Video Games often exclusively provide contextual input related to the task at hand avoiding the inefficiency of processing too much information and cutting the risk of cognitive overload. In this way, games follow the *explicit information on-demand and just-in-time principle*. This learning principle demands that information is provided explicitly in a way that is accessible to the learners, as they need it
or at a point where it can be best understood and utilized for practice (Gee, 2007b). Thus, this principle deals with providing input at the right time within a task in a way that is most beneficial. If done correctly (as it is in “good” games) intake does not result in a distraction while trying to solve a task and rather serves as an enhancement of the input that helps solve the task.

**Statistical learning and cognitive domains.** Statistical learning suggests that statistical information can be acquired implicitly and explicitly (such as syntactic structures i.e. grammatical rules like subject-verb agreement and lexical pairs i.e. collocations) (Hamrick & Rebuschat, 2014). The cognitive mechanism involved is also not specific to just language learning but to domains in general such as visual or auditory stimuli, “i.e. the learning mechanism applies to statistical information in the environment” (Rebuschat, 2013, p. 613). For example, auditory and visual cues can both result in statistical learning yet both require a large amount of input. Hamrick and Rebuschat (2014) specifically found that the impact input has on learners’ development and ability to mirror the input is dependent on the interaction of frequency and the learning conditions.

As mentioned games often encourage practice and exploration before mastery. This exploration allows learners to collect statistical information from the environment. The reverse which is often practiced in schools is unlikely to occur in a game environment: competence before performance. A gamer would be left outside of the game context with only a small sample of explicit information about the game and yet be expected to develop procedural skills required to perform well in the game. This would be practically impossible and would likely result in a quickly demotivating way of playing and learning. Thus games utilize the concentrated sample principle and the bottom-up basic skills principle. The concentrated sample principle maintains that learners should not only get lots of practice in early stages but that there should be more instances of key symbols, signs, and actions that will be required later. This increases the chances of incidental learning and successful automatization of the games requirements. The bottom-up basic skills principle further suggests that basic skills are not learned out of context or isolated from the task at hand and that by engaging in the task the learner gains skills that can be applied to similar domains (similar tasks and similar genres). Additionally, the virtual environments of games provide far more control in ways that can help mediate not only the frequency of input but also the learning conditions that are necessary to make robust statistical learning successful.

**Identity and agency.** Learners often choose specific learning approaches and take-up identities related to their social groups (Duff, 2012). Identity in social groupings and a sense of agency within a group provides learners with knowledge of discursive practices that may otherwise seem inaccessible although necessary to complete real world tasks (Gee, 2004). This knowledge is essential for learners to gain both skills and confidence to engage in English for specific purposes, especially. Ultimately, Duff claims that a lack of agency can lead to a passive and disengaged learner ultimately undermining the learning process and underscoring its importance (p. 417). Alternatively, when learners have a strong sense of agency (one that empowers them to engage in social groups, participate in communities of practice, and follow discursive practices) they not only develop skills but they additionally do so largely autonomously (outside the classroom and on their own volition).

A gamer not only takes on the identity of a character but also commits to interacting in the game’s environment which holds its own set of values and principles that must be understood and utilized. Thus, games utilize the identity principle in which “learning involves taking on and playing with identities in such a way that the learner has real choices [in developing the virtual identity]” (Gee, 2007b, p. 208).

Furthermore, many games allow players to produce aspects of the game whether it be modifying character features and abilities that can drastically change the style of play (providing
flexibility through customization such as the pace or intensity) or even specific skill focus of play (modifying the approach a player must take). These multiple approaches attend to the committed learning principle in which players “participate in extended engagement (lots of effort and practice) as extensions of their real world identities in relation to a virtual identity to which they feel some commitment and a virtual world they feel compelling.” (Gee, 2007b, p. 208) and the active, critical learning principle in which “All aspects of the learning environment (including ways in which the semiotic domain is designed and presented) are set up to encourage active and critical, not passive, learning.” (p. 208). Beyond this, even modifying the game itself is an added feature within many games. These modifications are produced by creating new environments that are open to engagement or by creating completely new games generating critical learning opportunities even outside of the original game.

Compared to our industrial style of education (one that does not always align knowledge and skills with practical application) games are far more flexible at not only affording players a sense of agency but also affording options for difficulty adjustment leading to more individualized learning by design. Research on learning styles is often criticized for legitimizing student limitations and incentivizing only practicing what is comfortable for students ultimately reducing learners’ flexibility and adaptability to different learning styles (Curry & Snyder, 1990; Reynolds, 1997); however, this is not the case for many gamers. Gamers often deliberately seek out difficult tasks and challenging games. In fact, it is often a criterion for review referred to as replay value (how often the game can be replayed with new challenges and new features). If players want to or need to test a new style of play (which requires understanding and mastering a new set of principles within the game), they can do it easily with instantaneous feedback about their performance. Even a workshop style class would struggle to match such a level of particular learner attention that a game is able to offer a player (notably often not at the fault of the teacher at all but rather the inherent institutional limitations).

Interaction. Interactionist approach most generally suggests that interaction benefits language acquisition (Mackey, Abbduhl, & Gass, 2012; Loewen, 2013). Although the kind of feedback that is most beneficial to L2 learning and the impact of individual differences is still under investigation, the benefits of interaction seems to be quite clear (García-Mayo, 2013); especially feedback received during interaction has been shown to facilitate the L2 learning process and L2 development (Mackey, 1999, 2006). Furthermore, recent interaction research has focused on the cognitive, individual, and social factors involved in interaction such as aptitude, motivation, setting, and interlocutor (Decke-Cornill, 2007; Dorney & Tseng, 2009; Trofimovich, 2011).

Games are situated and active, so the interaction that takes place within them is contextually relevant. If understood successfully, feedback players receive from other players (i.e., intake of the feedback received) can be used to modify their own approach in the game and then cross checked with the feedback from the game (is the gamer performing better or worse based on the interlocutor’s feedback). This loop allows gamers to use active communication in a situated environment to explore and engage in inquiry about problems while trying to solve them. This follows the probing principle in that “Learning is a cycle of probing the world (doing something); reflecting in and on this action and, on this basis, forming a hypothesis; reprobing the world to test this hypothesis, and then accepting or rethinking the hypothesis.” (Gee, 2007b, p. 208).

Specifically, in DGBL Reinhardt and Sykes (2012) studied interaction in games and found that Massive multiplayer online games (MMOG) such as World of Warcraft (WoW) offered non-native English speaker players opportunities to interact with English speakers on a daily basis (p. 35). MMOG games specifically offer more interaction because “their designs afford player-player interaction and their
content includes more narrative and language use than other game genres.” (p. 36). This interaction was thus shown to be highly contextual and instantly useful for the player/learner.

**Pedagogical Potential**

Thus far, it has been shown that principles found in games are concurrent with theories of language learning in SLA. As I will argue in more depth in this section, however, technology-centric methodologies such as CALL have been insufficient in providing the learning realities that games offer. TBLT, on the other hand, is a focused methodology that aims to provide active and situated learning providing more theoretical cohesion with DGBL. Although DGBL is not a silver bullet as not all aspects of game-based learning yield gains over traditional learning styles, the most positive empirical findings seem to converge towards the same aims of TBLT.

**CALL and DGBL**

If parallels in a synthesis of SLA and Gee’s learning principles clearly exist, why has CALL, an area of research that is argued to be closely related to SLA (Chapelle, 2009), not been more successful in initiating substantive change to our classroom realities? CALL has been used as an umbrella term for the use of technology in language teaching and research, and especially early CALL studies were primarily concerned with the use of technology per se rather than considering CALL as a new approach to L2 teaching (Chapelle, 1990; Gitsaki, 2013). Some practical and pedagogical questions that had been asked at the onset of CALL (Chappelle, 1990) are still being asked today such as those regarding how CALL materials differ from those traditionally used in the classroom (Chappelle, 2010), what exact pedagogical goals of using particular hardware and software are (Stockwell, 2007), and where robust empirical evidence of the benefits of using the technology has been found (Handely, 2017). Although CALL has greatly evolved and shows immense potential to language learning from its initially traditional classroom-based style (e.g., Schwienhorst, 2002), there are still many unanswered questions particularly those regarding pedagogy, such as the technological features most effective for language learning; the effects of technology on linguistic complexity, accuracy, and fluency; task designs that help focus learners’ attention to linguistic forms in otherwise communicative tasks; the strategies used by learners while using technology; the points of improvement for language assessment; the beneficial effects on technology-mediated feedback; the effects of web-based tools and social networking on motivation; and the beneficial effects of the emerging use of mobile technology (Gitsaki, 2013). These are all very particular questions, but they are necessary to substantiate the pedagogical potential and provide conviction to the practical use of technology in the classroom. Additionally, Stockwell’s (2007) analysis of CALL research from 2001-2005 showed little evidence that the technology used in classes was used in parallel with substantive pedagogical change. Not only was a gap found between the hardware and software technology that appeared in CALL research and those used in practice but further much of the technology used in practice did not show clear evidence of substantial pedagogical change.

While the main accomplishments of CALL appear to be the application of technology to existing pedagogy, this paper argues that DGBL is in fact distinct. DGBL explores the inherent learning principles utilized in the design of commercial games, and it is concerned with pedagogy as a whole rather than the mere use of technology in the classroom. Thus, DGBL lends more potential to the investigation of how digital environments can contribute to effective pedagogy and further how language learning methodologies can take up game-enhanced, game-based, synthetic immersive environments, and “teaching as designing” (p. xiii)—ultimately arguing for a postmethods approach in that instructors design and adapt the learning systems that guarantee learner success—as part of the digital education revolution (Reinders, 2012). However, it should be noted that DGBL clearly does not solve the questions
of CALL nor does it replace or erase the primary work done in CALL particularly that of surveying attitudes and perceptions of learners and comparing technology-based approaches of language learning to non-technology based approaches (Levy & Stockwell, 2006).

**TBLT and DGBL**

Although TBLT can be implemented without the help of technology, it shows methodological symmetry to learning principles found in games. However, only specific points of DGBL seem to hold practical value to language learning notably controllability, learner autonomy, and genres that promote “arenas” and “task-relevant” spaces.

**Empirical findings on DGBL.** TBLT functions as a learner-centered and negotiation focused methodology in which students must work together to solve problems (Swales, 2009). Interaction is a means to reach these ends, and particularly in this way language learning with the utilization of technology offers a lot of potential to TBLT. Digital games offer a medium in which learners can be exposed to novel language situations, cooperate towards shared goals, and use context-specific language (all in a structured environment).

However, some elements of DGBL seem to be more useful to deploy pedagogically than others. Notably, performance (playing games) taps cognitive resources potentially resulting in weaker linguistic gains suggesting some caveats to taking a performative role in games. Research has shown that when in-game tasks are particularly demanding, the players’ cognitive resources are more limited than observers of the game (Amoia, Bretaudiere, Denis, Gardent, Perez-Beltrachini, 2012; Chen and Yang, 2012). This is also reiterated in deHaan, Reed, and Kuwada (2010) which finds that players were able to recall significantly less vocabulary than the observers of particularly demanding gameplay (p. 84).

On the other hand, elements of controllability and learner autonomy have been noted as beneficial. deHaan (2005) suggested that games with a high factor of controllability allowed for stronger gains especially when paired with repetition, contextualized language input, and both aural and textual language presented simultaneously (p. 281). Furthermore, Thomas (2012) found that particular game genres such as “puzzle adventure games, simulation games, virtual pet social sims, web-based strategy games, MMORPG and alternate reality games (ARG)” serve as tools and “arenas” for language to be situated and “task-relevant” (p. 21).

It is quite clear that although some of these findings suggest that games may deprive learning (i.e. the cognitive demands), other factors such as controllability, learner autonomy, and genres that promote “arenas” and “task-relevant” spaces suggest potential benefits. Clearly, DGBL is not a silver bullet, but there does seem to be theoretical and empirical support for the use of games and game design in language education.

**Implications for TBLT.** Games (by design) have the ability to offer controllability, learner autonomy, and arenas of task-relevant spaces. TBLT similarly aims to offer these affordances. Nunan’s (2004) and Skehan’s (1998) similar definitions of task criteria not only follow well in line with the empirical benefits of DGBL discussed above, but further synthesize well with the learning principles Gee (2007b) found implemented in good games.

These definitions of task first include an emphasis on communication through interaction. From a sociocultural perspective, participants in a task always “co-construct” the task they are engaged in (Ellis, 2009, p. 121). By engaging in tasks together learners negotiate form and function/meaning relationships that help students accomplish “locally determined goals” and compare these language goals to their own knowledge and skills (p. 115, 121). TBLT is thus compatible with learner controllability and autonomy.
Following these pedagogical goals, the \textit{practice principle} and the \textit{psychosocial moratorium principle} show theoretical convergence with Nunan’s (2004) and Skehan’s (1998) interaction criterion. Completing a task, learners must engage in authentic practice that reflects the real world. This completion is further co-constructed and thus offers a realistic sense of how interlocutors outside the classroom may handle the task (or a similar task). This criterion thus offers practice that is an imagined version of a real world task and that is completed at their own pace (\textit{practice principle}). Furthermore, this classroom-based practice relies on negotiation between learners with an authentic and meaning based goal. The classroom setting allows real world consequences to be lowered. Learners thus have the ability to take risks and “play” with the language in a way they might be reluctant to or unable to do in a real world situation (\textit{psychosocial moratorium principle}).

Definitions of a task further specify that tasks focus on the learning process, include and enhance learners’ personal experience, and link language used in the classroom with the real world. One of the most unique features of a task is that it is outcome-evaluated (Ellis, 2009). This is not evaluation in a sense similar to an activity (i.e. focusing on accuracy as to whether something is correct or incorrect) but instead in terms of the completion of a communicative goal (a meaning focus). This allows learners to focus on the learning process (e.g., What speech acts are needed to order food? What grammatical forms are needed to describe job experience?), not just the completion of an activity. This learning process thus demands attendance to the procedure of achieving a communicative goal. The procedure is learner generated and co-constructed offering “multiple routes” to achievement allowing learners to use their personal experiences as a resource in the completion of a task and linking classroom language with real world language. (p. 121). In this way TBLT requires a highly contextualized environment in which students can engage and receive feedback within the process of completing a task.

Following these pedagogical goals, a number of learning principles (Gee, 2007b) show further cohesion. As tasks allow learners to focus on the learning process, they provide an opportunity for critical learning. This learning is not passive. It is accomplished by actively assessing the task at hand and engaging the interlocutor pragmatically (\textit{active, critical learning principle}). Furthermore, learners necessarily become aware that many stages of practice are necessary to successfully complete authentic communicative tasks. With this understanding they are able to deconstruct how to approach other complex tasks by applying the same procedures (\textit{incremental principle}). In turn learners thus become aware of the communicative needs necessary to complete a task and the benefits of being able to use resources as a tool to prepare for and to complete a task in practice sessions (\textit{explicit information on-demand and just-in-time principle}).

Additionally, as tasks allow for learner’s personal experiences outside of the classroom to contribute as a resource in the completion of a task, they are encouraged to express their knowledge of the real world practically and are in turn responsible for modifying their utterances as a means to successful ends. This not only reiterates that tasks aim for interaction and negotiation focused practice but also that tasks further demand identity and agency from the learner (\textit{identity principle}). This process of utilizing personal experience additionally demands that learners continually reflect on their experiences and the hypotheses they have created about the world and re-evaluate them depending on their successful or unsuccessful application in completing a task (\textit{probing principle}). This understanding of cyclical learning further demands learners understand the link between the language learning they do in the classroom and the real world. To do this, learners project their identities (ones they’ve built in the real world) on to the imagined role they take when participating in a classroom task (\textit{committed learning principle}).

The pedagogical potential of learning principles found in games and the pedagogical goals of TBLT thus show convergence and cohesion. Being a learner-centered, negotiation focused, and situated
methodology, TBLT can clearly benefit by integrating the main advantageous elements of DGBL, controllability and contextualization.

Conclusion

It has been shown that SLA and DGBL are both distinctly focused on understanding the learning processes and that much of the research of the two domains clearly converges. For example, skill acquisition, input processing, statistical learning and cognitive domains, identity and agency, and interaction have all been seen to theoretically correlate well with learning principles defined in DGBL research. The main empirical benefits of DGBL (controllability, learner autonomy, and genres that promote “arenas” and “task-relevant” spaces) are seen to run parallel to the main pedagogical goals of TBLT both emphasizing active and situated learning, which offers the learner agency and an environment in which to use context-specific language to accomplish a goal. Because of the inherent flexibility of games, TBLT can clearly yield benefits by utilizing DGBL pedagogically. Clearly much more work is still necessary to define more specifically the points of connection between DGBL and TBLT and further how these points are supported empirically; however, it should now be transparent that strong potential exists. Additionally, the work of finding existing games to apply for task use and (likely more useful) the work of building games for task use will hopefully emerge soon.

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