



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### EFFECT AND MOTIVATION OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES: IMPLEMENTATION

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#### ABSTRACT

Migration is a prime political issue: it is regulated by local, national and supranational processes; it engages some of the most brilliant thinkers of our time; it sparks numerous public debates and scientific studies (Castles e Miller, 2018; Mantovan, 2007). Some scholars also believe that migrations over the past twenty years has fundamentally contributed to restructure social conflict within contemporary society (Zincone, 2000; Sirkeci and Cohen, 2016; Kriesi *et al.*, 2012). "Assimilationist, multiculturalist and mutual accommodation" approaches have not helped us understand and manage the migration issue better over the decades. Furthermore, over the years European States have never expressed unified policies regarding issues of reception and integration (Freeman, 2004). In Europe the migration narrative expressed by various governments has relied for years on demographic needs rather than a widespread sense of inclusion. In our exploration we analyse the various Italian policies and the contradictions that arise from them, considering migration a completely legitimate expressive form of the human condition, while we find that the mass media narratives often describe migrant irregularity as a condition frequently associated with illegality. The tension between the status of irregularity and regularity poses a challenge for local and national governments to create innovative and effective policies that can fully address the needs, arising from the conflict between the two conditions. We acknowledge from the scientific literature (Zanfrini, 2021; Mostaccio, 2021; Corrado and Perrotta, 2012; Reyneri, 1998) that irregularity is functional to the labour market and the maintenance of productive segments that would otherwise be in crisis such as agriculture, domestic work, elder care, and the food industry and its distribution (Cheliotis, 2017). Current policies, in our opinion, accept clandestinity within complex regulatory frameworks, intertwining entries, stabilizations, work, and family with undeclared illegality. There is a legislative vacuum accompanied by an organisational void, and by friction among government levels in managing migration flows. The territorial dimension, then, serves as a background to this complex scenario, where migrants represent an element capable of shaping and reshaping cities: questioning them, stimulating them, and promoting unusual social scenarios and urban renewal (Sassen, 2009). Our analysis reveals that at least four dimensions are involved in the phenomenon, namely: the education of minors children of immigrants; access to healthcare; access to housing; and, finally, welfare measures. Public policies along these four axes play a decisive role, as do the Funds made available by Europe, reflected in various national welfare measures. Nowadays it is widely recognized that the arrival and the irregular stay of migrants cannot be managed solely through control policies or through the application of disincentives (Ambrosini, 2010). After a careful analysis of the measures implemented by the central government, including the establishment of "detention camps" in Albania, we ask ourselves whether this is the best way to manage migrations which are an integral part of individual conditions and expressions. Is the Italian model capable of meeting migration needs and managing the migration issue?. Can the integration developed by local governments be considered successful in its inclusion goal?. Does "social solidarity" by encouraging a widespread local reception minimize conflict or does it risk exacerbating it? These are some of the questions, we attempt to address in this essay, which soon from its first lines demonstrates a social complexity, that sociology can attempt to elucidate.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, the notion of "task" has been a center stage in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. Labor is the expending of effort to produce something for oneself or another person, either freely or exchanged for some form of compensation.

There are other definitions such as: outside classrooms—real-world tasks, and target tasks; inside classrooms—pedagogical tasks. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) refers an approach towards teaching a second/foreign language which aims to provide conditions for learning the target language as result of the use of interactionally authentic language through performing a sequence of tasks.

TBLT has been linked with CLT by some researchers but consider that TBLT is different than CLT (Shehadeh, 1999). The understanding of the notion 'task' is an essential one for TBLT since tasks are the most fundamental components of the approach. Nonetheless, Thornbury (2006) note that TBLT is "an approach where the task is the basic unit of planning and teaching" [2, p.9]. According to Nunan, TBLT is "an approach to the design of language courses in which the starting point is a set of tasks rather than an ordered list of grammatical items". Because of the complicated link between TBLT and CLT as well as the vagueness and controversy surrounding the concept of task, a simpler definition of TBLT is fraught with complexity and variability. In brief, TBLT is a controversial and eternally tenuous notion — the nature of which still eludes any particularly solid definition. Moreover, when it comes to the effects of TBLT in Chinese tertiary settings, the existing studies in the recent two decades mainly focus on a specific aspect of English teaching and learning for college students in China, such as reading, writing, speaking or listening. However, these four domains in English learning are interrelated and influence each other, so it cannot present a whole picture by just focusing on one specific domain. As such, the study attempts to comprehensively investigate the effects of TBLT in three fields (speaking, reading and writing) so as to generate a broad picture of the perceptions of students in terms of TBLT approach. Based on the specific result, it is hoped to establish a pertinent framework for further improvement of TBLT in Chinese English classrooms and maximize its potential and usefulness.

In addition, after implementation of TBLT in Chinese tertiary settings or other countries, it has been reported that students' motivation in English learning would change. It is well known that motivation is a main topic in second language acquisition for English learners, and a lot of research has been conducted on the relations between motivation, anxiety, self-efficacy and so on. However, few studies have been conducted with pertinent target on students' motivation after implementation of TBLT, especially in Chinese tertiary settings. But this is also an issue worth exploring in that specific teaching plans can be prepared in advance in TBLT teaching so as to maximize students' motivations for English learning in specific dimensions of motivation, which would be conducive for both students' better performance and use of English and teachers' improvement of their teaching plans and optimal realization of teaching objectives. To sum up, relatively few studies have focused on a comprehensive study of TBLT in the university settings, such as learners' perceptions on TBLT implementations, effects and motivations as well as the interrelations between these variables, and this is what the current study aims to solve.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In general, this study aims to investigate the implementation, effects and motivations for task-based language teaching in Chinese universities from perspectives of learners. More specifically, the purposes of the study are as follows: to identify the level of implementation of TBLT in terms of learners' perceptions of tasks, perceptions on grouping and cooperative learning and perceptions on co-assessment; to investigate the effects of TBLT in three sub-domains (English speaking, writing and reading); to identify the learners' motivation after implementation of TBLT in terms of three sub-domains, namely, motivational intensity, desire to learn

English, and attitudes towards learning English); to test the difference of responses on implementation, effects and motivation of TBLT when grouped according to different profiles of groups (such as age, gender and language proficiency level); to determine the significant relationship between and among implementation, effects and motivation of TBLT; and to propose a program and some suggestions for teacher training on TBLT in the Chinese university context based on the previous results and analysis.

## Literature Review

**Effects of TBLT:** Existing studies on effects of TBLT can be classified into two broad lines: support of effects of TBLT on ELT and criticism of effects of TBLT on ELT. One theme is related to the support of TBLT effects on ELT. Both evaluation studies and experimental studies (e.g. Shintani, 2015) have revealed that TBLT can foster the development of both linguistic and communicative competence more effectively than the traditional "focus-on-form" instruction. Studies on this field are either related to the effect of TBLT on the overall academic performance of EFL learners or on one specific domain of English skills such as speaking, reading and writing. For instance, Rezaeya (2014) investigated the impact of TBLT on the academic achievement of Iranian EFL female learners in Yasui high school by adopting a quasi-experimental experiment. The participants were 48 female learners aged 14 to 15. One experimental and one control group were selected randomly, with 24 participants in each group. Both pre-test and post-test were taken, and then descriptive analysis and independent samples t-test and paired-samples t-tests were used to analyze the data. The results showed that the implementation of TBLT could significantly affect the academic achievement Iranian EFL learners in high school.

The following will review the support of TBLT on the effects of EFL learners' speaking, reading, writing and other relevant skills. In terms of the effect of TBLT on EFL learners' speaking ability, positive effect of TBLT has been reported. Nemat Tabrizi (2011) aimed to investigate the relationship of effects of TBLT regarding the speaking proficiency development of Iranian EFL learners. Meanwhile, it also attempted to examine the effect of gender on English speaking proficiency development under the context of TBLT teaching. Sixty male and female Iranian EFL participants from intermediate level took part in the study, and two groups of participants (30 learners as experimental group who receive TBLT teaching and another 30 learners as control group who do not receive TBLT teaching) were divided. Results showed that learners from the experimental group performed significantly better than those from the control group on the speaking post-test, and additionally, it was found that gender did not constitute a decisive factor in English speaking proficiency development under the TBLT approach. In particular, scholars from other countries also investigated the effects of TBLT on speaking for EFL learners. For example, Tuyen and An (2019) conducted an investigation of TBLT at a private university in Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam by focusing on the speaking activities in class. In total, 383 EFL learners and 10 EFL teachers took part in the study, and both questionnaire and classroom observation are used to collect data. Benefits of TBLT on speaking were reported, such as enhancement of interaction, enhancement of language skills and knowledge and improvement of confidence. Similar positive recognition of the effects of TBLT on speaking is also

found in other studies. For instance, Murad (2009) took secondary EFL students in Israel as subjects of study and investigated the effects of TBLT on developing their speaking skills and discussed their attitude towards English. Ravirot (2015) adopted Thai vocational learners as participants and investigated the effect of TBLT and its impact on oral presentation skills. In terms of the effect of TBLT on EFL learners' reading ability, various researchers have carried out thorough study. For instance, Hokmi (2005) states that "assigning students real-world tasks conveys the value of reading for message and influences the reading comprehension positively". Similarly, Madhkan and Mousavi (2017) investigated the impact of TBLT on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension performance. Seventy participants took part in the study in experimental and control groups, where TBLT and classical reading comprehension were adopted respectively. Results showed that TBLT had a significantly more positive effect on learners' reading performance compared to traditional reading instruction. The study also proposed some effective strategies for enhancing learners' reading competence, such as taking notes and discussion.

In terms of the effect of TBLT on EFL learners' writing ability, TBLT has been regarded as one of the learning models that can maximize learners' writing achievement, and one of these studies are conducted by Tusino et al. (2019). They described the effect of online TBLT on writing performance and showing students' perceptions towards the implementation of TBLT in EFL writing course. Twenty-six EFL learners in a university in Indonesia participated in the study. A mixed-method approach with explanatory design was adopted, with a combination of instruments of writing tests and semi-constructed interviews. Results showed that EFL learners' grammar, mechanics and vocabulary were improved significantly, whereas their organization and content have low improvement. Furthermore, Khatib & Dehghankar (2018) investigated the effects of TBLT on ESP learners' productive skills, including writing skills. Sixty ESP students majoring in law in two classes in a university in Iran and ten ESP teachers took part in the study. Results showed that the experimental group performed better than the control group after implementation of TBLT in terms of learners' productive skills. The result was in line with Ahmed and Bidin (2016)'s study on the effects of TBLT on EFL learners' writing skills. Their study used a quasi-experimental research design and adopted international students enrolled in undergraduate programs at public sector Malaysian universities. Results indicated that TBLT has effectively improved EFL learners' writing competence both in terms of fluency and accuracy, and reinforce that positive effect of TBLT to help EFL learners to be fluent and confident users of English language.

Despite the popularity of the recognition of the positive effects of TBLT worldwide on the overall academic performance and individual skills such as speaking, reading and writing, there were also criticism of TBLT effects, claiming that there is no evidence to show TBLT is more effective than the traditional approach of focus on forms (Sheen, 2006). However, Sheen (2006)'s study is flawed and demonstrates difficulty in designing comparative method studies (Ellis, et al., 2020). Moreover, TBLT has also been criticized for its "relative silence" (East, 2012) on intercultural communication competence, despite the implicit consideration of its core position in TBLT. It is well known that every message a human being communicates through language is

communicated in a cultural context. Culture shaped the ways language is structured and the ways in which language is used". Despite the inseparability of language and culture, whether TBLT has really benefited EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence is still not confirmed. Moreover, one of the claims that is notable was the incompatibility of TBLT with cultures of learning different from those in the Western settings, and one of researchers in this regard was Littlewood (2014), who argued that CLT (including TBLT) was not compatible with the traditional Chinese culture of learning, in which "education is conceived more as a process of knowledge accumulation than a process of using knowledge for immediate purposes" (Littlewood, 2014). That is to say, in China, knowledge transmission and teacher-centered instruction are highlighted, and Littlewood came out with a preference for task-supported language teaching, "where tasks are used to provide communicative practice for language items taught in accordance with a traditional structural syllabus—in other words, presentation, practice, production (PPP)" (Ellis et al., 2020). It calls for the attention on the cultural factors in classroom life in the implementation of TBLT.

**Motivation and TBLT:** Motivation is defined as "Beliefs, values, and expectations usually center on some combination of self-regulation, self-efficacy, interest, goal-setting, and attributions of (or reasons for) success and failure" (Grabe, 2009). The study of motivation has been a dominant area for research in applied linguistics, psychology and education for many years (Dörnyei, 1998). Many researchers have classified motivation into different dimensions. From the perspective of sociolinguistics, Gardner and Lambert (1959, p. 266) have made two main classifications: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation means that an individual has a strong interest in the language itself and hopes to integrate into the culture of the language being learned when learning a foreign language. People with an integrative motivation can enjoy the fun of learning a foreign language, feel less boring and more easily master the language they are learning. Instrumental motivation refers to the condition that an individual has no interest in foreign languages or has no chance to communicate with native speakers, and learning foreign languages is only used as a means or tool for other purposes. Gardner and Lambert (1959) believe that if the goal is to integrate, foreign language learning will be highly motivated and conscious. This kind of motivation persists. If using foreign languages as a tool, foreign language learning is passive, and the focal point of different goals is different. This type of motivation will exist for a period of time. Once the goal is achieved, the motivation will disappear. For an individual, integrative motivation and instrumental motivation may coexist. The key lies in which motivation dominates. For the actual situation in China, due to the influence of foreign language teaching environment, the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, the motivation of most foreign language learners to learn target languages belongs to instrumental motivation. Another classification of motivation is intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Noels, Clement & Pelletier, 1999) from the perspective of cognitive psychology. Internal motivation referred to the motivation generated by an individual who is interested in the activity he is engaged in. Such activities can satisfy individuals. Individuals do not need to be pushed by external forces when engaging in such activities. When foreign language learners have this kind of motivation, they can learn foreign languages consciously, they were not susceptible to external interference,

and they can maintain their passion for foreign language learning for a long time. External motivation is the motivation generated by stimulation other than the activities that the individual engaged in. Engaging in activities does not bring direct satisfaction to the individual, but it can obtain effects other than one or more activities through these activities, these effects indirectly make the individual satisfied. For example, undergraduates majoring in English work hard to pass College English Test Band 4 and 6, which may make them easier to find high-paid jobs. When the goal is achieved, this kind of motivation may disappear. The distinction between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation is also not absolute, so both motivations may exist at the same time.

**Table 1. Summary Table on Effects of TBLT**

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Effects of TBLT on speaking	3.00	Agree	2
2. Effects of TBLT on writing	2.98	Agree	3
3. Effects of TBLT on reading	3.07	Agree	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Studies on motivation abroad cover a wide range. To start with, Gardner and Lambert (1959) proposed a socio-psychological model and a socio-educational model for second language learning, and they created the Gardner Approach, including a series of research procedures, standardized measurement methods, and tools. Among them, the language learning motivation survey tool—Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was still the authoritative survey tool of foreign language learning motivation. The socio-educational model emphasized the social nature of learning motivation, thinking that it contains four aspects of goal, action, desire, and attitude. And Gardner and Lambert classified learning motivation into integrative motivation and instrumental motivation from the perspective of social psychology (This classification was briefly mentioned before). Their theoretical model and research methods based on social psychology had become the dominant model and research paradigm for foreign language learning motivation research in the following thirty to forty years, and their theoretical model has become the classic language learning motivation research model.

After the late 1980s, many scholars believed that the classic language learning motivation research model was limited to the perspective of social psychology, and this model only focused on the impact of learning motivation on foreign language learning from the perspective of the social environment, so they thought that Gardner and Lambert's classic motivation models should be expanded from a diversified perspective. Dörnyei (1990; 1994) researched the learning motivation of foreign language learners and extended the motivation model, and proposed a three-level foreign language learning motivation model. These three levels are language level, learner level, and learning situation level. This motivation theory analyzed foreign language learning motivations from multiple levels and perspectives and shows that foreign language learning motivations are not only related to the subject (learner), but also the object (the target language), and were also largely controlled by the learning context of the learner.

Moreover, researchers paid more attention to the diachronic change and process of motivation, emphasizing that motivation is not stable and static, but a dynamic and constantly changing cyclic process. Then Dörnyei (1998) proposed seven related variables that affect foreign language learning motivations based on constructing three-dimensional models of foreign language learning motivations: Affective/fusion dimensions (including emotional motivation, integrative motivation, intrinsic motivation, language attitude, interest); Tool/practical dimensions; Macro-environment-related dimensions (including multiculturalism, national relations); Dimensions related to self-concept (including self-confidence, self-efficacy, anxiety, fear, attribution of success or failure, expectations, achievements); Goal-related dimensions; Factors related to the educational context (including the learning environment, classroom environment, and school environment); Other influential dimensions related to the individual (such as family, parents, peers, etc.). Williams and Burden (1997) proposed a motivation model with cognitive and social constructivist characteristics based on a discussion of previous motivational theories. They thought that motivation is a cognitive and emotional arousal state that leads to a conscious decision to take action and results in sustained mental or physical effort over a while, the purpose of which is to reach a goal or a set of goals. And they listed many factors that affect learning motivation, such as interest, self-confidence, anxiety, fear and so on. Their motivation theory provided a good theoretical basis for the study of foreign language learning motivation.

Noels, et al. (1999) divided motivation into external motivation and internal motivation. External motivation refers to the learner's behavior based on some instrumental purposes, such as winning a reward or avoiding punishment. It is divided into three categories: External law; Introverted self-discipline; Self-discipline. Internal motivation referred to the individual's internal interest in learning activities and satisfaction in the activities, which are divided into three categories: Knowledge-based internal motivation; Achievement-based internal motivation; Stimulating-type internal motivation. Many successful learners have both internal and external motivations. After short-term goals are achieved, they work towards long-term goals. Zimmerman (2000) pointed out the role of self-efficacy in learning motivation and learning, paying particular attention to students' ability to regulate their learning activities, and discussing their sensitivity to teaching and other sociocultural influences. Twenty years of research had proven the effectiveness of self-efficacy as a predictor of student motivation and learning.

Ryan and Deci (2000) reexamined the classic definitions of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation based on contemporary researches and theories in the context of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that had been extensively studied. They believed that intrinsic motivation is still an important component, which reflects the natural tendency of humans to learn. However, external motions were quite different in autonomy, so they can reflect external control or true self-regulation. They also discussed the relationship between these two motivations and basic human needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These studies broaden the field of motivation research and helped the researchers examine the relationship between motivation and other variables from a broader perspective. Chinese scholars have also studied motivation, and their research on motivation can be divided into several stages.

Meanwhile, in China, a lot of studies are also conducted about motivation. The early 1980s and early 1990s were the early stages of research on motivation for language learning at home and abroad. Chinese researchers only introduced foreign theories and researches, following Gardner's classic learning motivation model. They considered learning motivation as an important socio-psychological factor and study its impact and role in Chinese students' foreign language learning (Yuan, 2010, p. 200). Since the 1990s, international motivation research had been diversified. Domestic researchers were no longer only confined to the socio-psychological perspective. Like foreign researchers, they studied the motivation of second language learning from multiple perspectives, such as physiology, behaviorism, cognition, and sociology (Yuan, 2010, p. 200). Wen (1996) classified motivations based on the theory of stimulation of behaviorist psychology. She divided motivation into deep motivation and surface motivation. Deep motivation referred to deep-seated motivation that is not generated by material stimulation. And surface motivation referred to the power generated by surface material stimulation. Wen (2001) studied the change of controllable factors (motivation, ideas, and strategies) and their relationships in English majors. The results of the study showed that the relationship between motivation, ideas, and strategies was highly stable. Motivation affected ideas and strategies, and ideas also influenced strategies.

To sum up, there was a lot of research on second language and foreign language learning motivation abroad, and it has reached a relatively mature stage. Based on the classic language learning motivation research model proposed by Gardner and Lambert, foreign scholars have expanded the classic motivation model from a diversified perspective and conducted a large number of empirical studies on foreign language learning motivation and related factors, which greatly broadened the area of study on foreign language learning motivation. Early Chinese researchers introduced and followed Gardner's classic model, and then studied Western researchers turning to multi-perspective research. After a summary of studies on motivation of EFL learners, next section will turn to a discussion of motivation and TBLT.

Studies on learners' motivation and TBLT, though not many, have laid a solid foundation in the area of SLA, and most researchers in this field discovered that TBLT could increase learners' learning motivation. For instance, Chua, et al (2018) maintained that the introduction of TBLT in foreign language context positively influence learning outcomes, and several possible reasons were also proposed. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) pointed out that TBLT creates a favorable learning environment to promote learners' enjoyment, and Bao and Du (2015) put forward that TBLT decreases learners' learning anxiety and boosts their confidence. Additionally, Pietri (2015) investigated the effects of TBLT for Thai students at Stramford International University, with the view to test the Thai students' motivation in finishing assignments related to English language teaching. The findings revealed that TBLT was conducive to encouraging students to learn and retain language skills and could also encourage students' creativity, and it could also stimulate students' motivation and willingness to learn and use English. Furthermore, Zhang and Hung (2012) investigated the viability of TBLT in big-size classes on college students' learning attainments, motivation and attitudes towards oral English performance. Learners in experimental group received

TBLT while learners in the control group received traditional methods of English teaching. Based on data collected from individual interviews, the results showed that learners in the experimental group tended to be more active and more motivated in learning English.

To sum up, the previous and relevant research that has been undertaken on the themes pertinent to this present study have been summarized and evaluated. By briefly reflecting the current situation of TBLT in the context of China, systematically exploring and reviewing the terms 'task' and 'task-based language teaching', explaining the range of frameworks proposed for TBLT, presenting a variety of task types, a solid background has been provided for the current study. Based on this, relevant studies on effects of TBLT, studies on motivations and the existing relevant empirical studies in this field in an international context have also been discussed. From the discussions and reviews given above, one can identify that TBLT remained controversial in its defining of "tasks". Concerns have also been identified in the appropriateness of implementing TBLT in China and its effects especially in tertiary settings. As such, it is necessary to explore TBLT implementation in Chinese EFL classrooms. Therefore, a comprehensive picture regarding the Chinese EFL learners' perception of TBLT implementation, effects and motivation is urgently needed, and this is also the focus of the current study.

## METHODS

**Research Design:** The design of this study is descriptive quantitative research. Descriptive research aims to ask questions about the distribution of variable, which demonstrate the existing phenomenon and involves describing but not manipulating variables. In order to investigate to what extent the Chinese EFL learners (the research participants of this study) understand the key concepts of TBLT implementation, effects and motivation, quantitative research is applied in this study. Quantitative research explains phenomena through collection of numerical data and analysis of such data by drawing upon mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)" (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). A typical research method technique for quantitative research is the employment of a questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2007). As such, quantitative questionnaires are used in this study. Litosseliti (2010) suggests that quantitative research is concerned with 'how much or how many there is/are of a particular characteristic or item'. The most significant advantage of quantitative research is that it enables the researcher to generalize findings through the comparing of relatively large numbers of items.

"Quantitative descriptive analysis characterizes the world or a phenomenon by identifying patterns in data to answer questions about who, what, where, when and to what extent.", with a goal to get "a more general understanding of patterns across a population of interest" (Loeb, et al., 2017, p. 1). Therefore, a quantitative descriptive research design is suitable to present a natural picture of Chinese EFL learners' perceptions on TBLT implementation, effects and motivation, so as to answer the research questions of the current study.

**Participants:** Participants of the study came from EFL learners in Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang University and Zhejiang Normal University in China.

These three universities were chosen because they could represent the universities in China tertiary settings in that they included both public universities and private university, a comprehensive university and language university, and a university dedicated to teacher education majors. The numbers of samples were determined by Raosoft sample size calculator. A total of approximate 45,000 university students enrolled in these three universities. The margin of error is 5%, and the confidence level is 95%. The recommend sample size is three hundred eighty one (381). Altogether, there are three hundred and ninety three (393) participants who took part in the questionnaire, which is within the range of the recommended sample. These participants were from four departments (English Department, Business Department, Engineering Department and Social Science Department) in these three universities, and around 30 to 40 participants for each department in these three universities were randomly chosen to take part in the questionnaire survey. The online questionnaires were distributed by their English teachers. The learners were from three grades (freshman, sophomore and junior learners). Both girls and boys were included. Their language proficiency was classified before they participate in the study based on their score of College English Test (CET 3, CET 4, CET 6) and Test for English Majors (TEM 4 and TEM 8) in China.

## Instruments

### **The study used questionnaire to collect data. It was composed of three sections:**

Section I displayed the participants' demographic information, where some basic information of learners was collected, such as their sex, age, grade, major and language proficiency level; Section II focused on the understanding and perception of tasks and TBLT as well as statements about task implementation. The learners' questionnaires (see Appendices) were adapted from part of Chen & Wang (2019)'s questionnaire (excluding their open-ended questions at the end). To be more specific, it included 15 4-scale Likert questions on checking learners' perception of implementation of TBLT. Among them, seven items were related to learners' perceptions on tasks; five items were concerned learners' perceptions on grouping and cooperative learning; and three items focused on learners' perceptions on co-assessment. Section III involved learners' perceptions on effects of TBLT based on 22 4-scale Likert questions. Among them, eight items were designed to test the effects of TBLT in speaking; seven items aimed to investigate the effects of TBLT in writing, and seven items attempted to identify the effects of TBLT in reading comprehension.

Section IV is a questionnaire on learners' motivation, which was adapted from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner (1985). The AMTB consisted 104 items, and its reliability and validity had been supported in the previous studies (Gardner, 1985). As one aspect of the major focuses of the current study was on the relationship between learners' motivation and TBLT implementation, three most relevant scales of the above ten scales were chosen: motivational intensity (10 items) and desire to learn English (10 items) and attitudes towards learning English (10 items). Both positive and negative-directed statements were included in the original questionnaire. Only positive-directed statements were adopted for the study, for the revised motivation

questionnaire aimed to test the change of learners' motivation after the implementation of TBLT. Therefore, altogether 15 4-scale Likert questions were included in this section, among which five items were related to learners' motivational intensity; five items oriented towards learners' desire to learn English, and five items aimed to investigate learners' attitudes towards learning English.

**Procedure:** The whole research procedure consists of two stages. The first stage was to conduct a pilot study. Thirty (30) learners from three grades of three universities were chosen to take part in the pilot test for learners' questionnaire for TBLT, to check their perceptions on TBLT understanding and implementation, effects and motivations in TBLT. The questionnaire has been designed in an app and distributed to these learners. After collection of data, a reliability test was conducted to check the questionnaire by calculating Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Then came Stage 2 of the study, where a large-scale questionnaire investigation was conducted. Other participants from three grades in three universities took part in the learners' questionnaire for TBLT, to check their perceptions and motivations after implementation of TBLT learning. For the first stage, as to the investigation of the validity of the questionnaire items, three scholars in the field of English language teaching (including a native English teacher) were asked to evaluate the validity of the questionnaires, with comments given on the items. In addition, the questionnaire was translated into Chinese with the help of two expert English-Chinese translators so as to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Therefore, all the experts and translators noted that all the items in the questionnaire were valid to investigate the research questions. In the pilot study, the researcher measured the reliability of the questionnaire items by randomly choosing 30 learners from the target participants. The item reliability was evaluated by employing the reliability coefficient test with Cronbach Alpha. As indicated in the table, in respect of the different sub-domains in the questionnaire items, the value of Cronbach Alpha ranges from 0.707 to 0.890, indicating acceptable consistency of reliability, because "ideally, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of a scale should be above .7" (Pallant, 2005).

**Data analysis:** Data analysis involves inspection, transformation and modeling data with a view to reaching the goal of finding out useful information, figuring out significant patterns and drawing conclusions. The data analysis for each dimension of variables in this study is listed as follows. For the first dimension of analysis, the Likert-scale items in the questionnaire were described in accordance with the three sub-domains: learners' perceptions on tasks, grouping and cooperative learning and co-assessment. This formed the data analysis, with tables and charts subsequently being used to analyze the data when discussing the findings. For the second dimension of analysis, learners' perception of effects of TBLT in terms of skills of speaking, writing and reading comprehension were analyzed. The third dimension focused on the changes of learners' motivations after implementation of TBLT in three subdomains mentioned in the previous section. SPSS 23.0 was used to analyze the data. For all these three dimensions, the composite means would be first displayed and analyzed, followed by weighted mean of each sub-domains, and ranks of the results of data would be compared, with special analysis on the variables with highest and lowest values. Four Likert scales were adopted to represent the grade,

weighted mean and verbal interpretation. Other relevant T-test, Anova test and correlation test were also included in the analysis to address the issues proposed in the objectives of the study. The last stage of analysis was to propose a program on TBLT for the EFL teaching in Chinese tertiary settings.

**Ethical considerations:** A number of ethical issues have been taken into consideration throughout the research. Prior to the start of the data collection process, all participants will be informed of the study and its data collection procedure, with informed consent obtained. The participants will be told that they have the right to refuse to answer any questions in the questionnaire that made them feel uncomfortable. In addition, participants were not required to provide their personal details (such as names or addresses) when completing the questionnaire. This ensured that the data would be kept anonymous and confidential.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the summary on the effects of TBLT. The composite mean is 3.02, which indicated a positive effect of TBLT overall. The effects of TBLT on language learning were comprehensive and enormous, and covers almost every aspect of learning process, including speaking, writing, and reading (Lou et al, 2016; Tuyen & An, 2019; Murad,2009; Hokmi, 2005). Generally speaking, all sub-domains indicated a positive effect of TBLT in terms of speaking, writing and reading. A closer look indicated that effects of TBLT on reading are the most obvious, followed by effects of TBLT on speaking, while effects on writing is the least improved area for learners.

The item of “effects of TBLT on reading” occupied the first in the rank, with a composite mean of 3.07, showing that students consider that they have benefited the most from TBLT in improving their reading skills. This supported the previous findings on the effects of TBLT on improving students’ reading competence reported by Hokmi (2005) as well as Madhkan and Mousavi (2017). The item of “effects of TBLT on speaking” comes the second in the rank, with a composite mean of 3.00, which indicated a positive view of students on the improvement of their own speaking skills by TBLT approach. This is further supported by Ravirot (2015) and Lou et al. (2016), who reported that TBLT is conducive to improving students’ oral presentation skills and oral performance in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity compared with traditional instruction. Meanwhile, the study’s findings were also consistent to Murad (2009) in terms of some anxiety in participating some tasks such as speaking in front of classrooms.

The item of “effects of TBLT on writing” is the last one in the rank, with a composite mean of 2.98. Though not as high as that for the first item, it also indicated a favorable perception of students on the improvement of their writing skills by TBLT approach, which is in line with literature in the relevant fields by Khatib and Dehghankar (2018), Ahmed and Bidin (2016) and Tusino et al.(2019). Unlike traditional teaching method, TBLT shifts the focus to learners, provides real-world situations, and promotes the use of authentic language to carry out meaningful practices. The purpose of language is to convey meanings and solve problems rather than perfect forms, in TBLT model, learners are motivated to collect and

practice what they have learned to speak, write, and read based on the tasks. In this process, learners are more likely to develop fluent language and confidence to master the language. All these detailed analyses will generate a program and offer specific guidance on proposing suggestions for TBLT teacher training for the Chinese university context. Table 2 presents the effects of TBLT on learners’ motivational intensity. The composite mean score is 2.98, indicating that most participants have relatively strong motivational intensity after implementation of TBLT in English classrooms. This also showed that with learner-focused model by the TBLT, most students can realize the importance of learning English, pay attention to everyday English in their daily life and can, in general, were willing to ask for help when they do not understand. The conclusions in the study were consistent with the results reported by Chua and Lin (2020), who stated that TBLT can increase learners’ motivational intensity. Learners would like to spare sufficient time and lots of efforts to understand English, strive to learn English, and concentrate on English studies. Meanwhile, learners were happy to ask teachers for help to solve their problems. Table 10 also shows the ranks of each item in this subdomain in terms of weighted mean scores. Item 1, on making a point of trying to understand all the English that is seen or heard, ranks the first, with a weighted mean score of 3.03. That is to say, students think it is important to do so. This indicated that TBLT has aroused the awareness of everyday English in majority of students, as it gives situations that were similar in daily life and draws examples from the real life to students’ learning practices. In a similar vein, Bao and Du (2015) also discovered similar favorable role of TBLT in promoting learners’ motivational intensity. They have illustrated various areas that TBLT has contributed learners, such as increasing learners’ participation in all kinds of classroom tasks, inviting more learners to engage in speaking tasks, and help learners maximize their effort in English learning.

This awareness also led to their commitment in learning English, which is also proved by Item 4, hard work to learn English by students, whose weighted mean score is 3.01. In a similar vein, the third one in the rank is Item 2, on keeping up to date with English with daily practice, slightly lower than item 1. This means although they realize the importance of understanding daily English, they do not have enough motivation to keep up to date with English with daily practice as it is a relatively high requirement. However, there were still some students who can fulfill some challenging tasks. Meanwhile, Zhang (2016), based on one international school in China, has also indicated that TBLT could increase students’ enthusiasm and interest in learning language. The fourth one in the list is item 5, with a weighted mean score of 2.97, which showed that students agree they can concentrate on their tasks while learning English. However, as to Item 3 about readiness to ask for help from teachers, it has the lowest weighted mean score of 2.87 among all these items. When communicating, failure to understand something can lead to failure to your task, the students that cannot take the initiative to ask may not be able to fulfill the task with good quality. This also reminds that teachers should check students’ difficulties or problems in the implementation of TBLT even though the students choose not to ask them for help when encountering problems. Table 3 indicates a summary on students’ motivations after TBLT. The composite mean is 3.05, showing that students hold a positive view on their motivations after TBLT.

**Table 2. Learners' Motivation after TBLT in Terms of Motivational intensity**

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear.	3.03	Agree	1
2. I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every day.	3.00	Agree	3
3. When I have a problem understanding something in my English class, I always ask my teacher for help.	2.87	Agree	5
4. I really work hard to learn English.	3.01	Agree	2
5. When I am studying English, I ignore distractions and pay attention to my task.	2.97	Agree	4
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

**Table 3. Summary Table on Learners' Motivations after TBLT**

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Motivational intensity	2.98	Agree	3
2. Desire to Learn English	3.08	Agree	2
3. Attitudes towards Learning English	3.11	Agree	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

**Table 4. Relationship Between the Implementation of TBLT and Learners' Motivation after TBLT**

Learners' perceptions on tasks	rho	p-value	Interpretation
Motivational intensity	.404**	0.000	Highly Significant
Desire to learn English	.453**	0.000	Highly Significant
Attitudes towards learning English	.431**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Learners' perceptions on grouping and cooperative learning</b>			
Motivational intensity	.432**	0.000	Highly Significant
Desire to learn English	.415**	0.000	Highly Significant
Attitudes towards learning English	.439**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Learners' perceptions on co-assessment</b>			
Motivational intensity	.412**	0.000	Highly Significant
Desire to learn English	.348**	0.000	Highly Significant
Attitudes towards learning English	.357**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

**Table 5. Relationship Between the Effects of TBLT and Learners' Motivation after TBLT**

Speaking	rho	p-value	Interpretation
Motivational intensity	.537**	0.000	Highly Significant
Desire to learn English	.450**	0.000	Highly Significant
Attitudes towards learning English	.384**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Reading</b>			
Motivational intensity	.563**	0.000	Highly Significant
Desire to learn English	.517**	0.000	Highly Significant
Attitudes towards learning English	.401**	0.000	Highly Significant
<b>Writing</b>			
Motivational intensity	.654**	0.000	Highly Significant
Desire to learn English	.608**	0.000	Highly Significant
Attitudes towards learning English	.476**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

When it comes to specific sub-domains, learners after implementation of TBLT have a relatively positive attitude towards learning English, followed by strong desire to learn English; while their motivational intensity ranks the last among these three sub-domains. The first item in the rank is students' attitude towards learning English, with a weighted mean of 3.11, indicating that students hold a favorable attitude towards learning English after implementation of TBLT. This is further supported by Lou, et al. (2016) and Hunag (2016)'s study, both of whom reported that TBLT can greatly increase more favorable attitudes. The students' desire to learn English comes the second in the rank, with a composite mean of 3.08, indicating a positive view on their desire to learn more about English upon implementation of TBLT. Similar results are also reported by Pietri (2015), who found out that TBLT can motivate Thai students' desire to learn English, and by Tuyen and An (2019), who claimed that students have a stronger

desire to learn English and explore more English after attending various tasks. Students' motivational intensity is the last one in the rank, with a composite mean of 2.98, indicating that students have some strong motivational intensity in learning English after implementation of TBLT. This finding of general increase of students' motivations after the implementation of TBLT is partly consistent with the empirical results from Chua and Lin (2020)'s study, and the results of their study indicate that their results suggest that, for the second cycle post treatment survey, TBLT has an effect in enhancing motivation of Learners in English learning. However, during the first cycle of post treatment survey, learners' motivation is reported to be reduced. This discrepancy is explained by Bao and Du (2015) that the negative response of learners towards TBLT during the introduction stage resulted from lack of explicit grammar instruction.



Table 6. Proposed Program to Enhance the TBLT in EFL Classes in China

Key Result Areas & Objectives	Strategies or Activities	Key Performance Indicator	Persons Involved
<b>I. Effects of TBLT</b>			
<b>2.1 Effects of TBLT in writing</b>			
To give special attention to the effects of TBLT in writing, in particular the grammatical mistakes.	<b>Design special writing tasks for TBLT lesson plan, such as special exercises or workbooks like “Grammar Accuracy and Writing”, with focus on grammar exercises.</b> <b>Make a good balance between focus on forms and focus on meanings</b> and not neglect the grammatical mistakes in students’ writing. Activities such as competition for grammatical use in writing is advocated.	Enhanced output in writing performances with focus on grammar should be implemented, with sufficient attention given to grammar in TBLT writing.	EFL teachers; students; textbook compliers
<b>2.2 Effects of TBLT in speaking</b>			
To continue to emphasize the effects of TBLT on students’ speaking performance.	<b>Adopt activities such as routine “FreeDiscussion” to mitigate students’ psychological barriers for completing speaking tasks in TBLT.</b> Teachers should encourage students to have a correct attitude towards mistakes, use encouraging feedback to invite students to speak out their ideas instead of worrying too much about “losing face” in front of others. TBLT advocates focus on meaning, so successful deliver of meanings is encouraged to fulfill the tasks in speaking. Students should not be hindered by their own unnecessary anxiety, fear or perfectionism. <b>Design pertinent speaking tasks in TBLT to improve students’ fluency.</b> Specific speaking resources to improve speaking fluency in TBLT are needed to be developed by EFL teachers or textbook compliers, such as specific phonetic exercises, connected speech, and so on.	Students can freely express their opinions and complete speaking tasks in TBLT by overcoming their psychological barriers. A proper assessment for speaking fluency is encouraged to be launched.	EFL teachers; students; textbook compliers
<b>2.2 Effects of TBLT in reading</b>			
To constantly improve the effects of TBLT in reading, with focus on improving reading speed.	<b>Design special reading activities to practice various strategies on improving reading speed in TBLT lesson plan.</b> Teachers had better introduce more useful reading skills and strategies such as skimming and scanning and so on to students in TBLT so as to increase their reading speed. In addition, various reading materials are also encouraged to be compiled to assist TBLT teaching.	Reading speed assessment is needed. More pertinent reference on reading skills and relevant reading materials to the classroom teaching are needed.	EFL teachers; students; textbook compliers
<b>III. Learners’ motivation after TBLT</b>			
<b>3.1 Motivational intensity</b>			
To further strengthen learners’ motivational intensity, particularly encouraging students to ask teachers or others for help	<b>Always ask teachers for help whenever there is problem in understanding something in English class.</b> Students are encouraged to use EFL teachers’ tutorial sessions or office hours after class and/or online question and answer sessions to ask teachers of any problems that they are not clear in classroom instead of just letting it go. Sometimes it may not be convenient to ask teachers in class, but students can use these offline and online forms of interaction opportunities with their teachers to solve any doubts in classrooms.	Teacher-student interactions after class are highly recommended so as to guide students to improve their motivational intensity in English learning.	Faculty; EFL teachers; students
<b>3.2 Desire to learn English</b>			
To continue to try every means to enhance students’ desire to learn English after TBLT, especially the desire of commitment in learning English	<b>Conduct study campaigns such as group learning so as to ensure students’ sufficient time and commitment for English learning.</b> The university can hold various kinds of English contests and activities such as Speaking Contest and weekly English Corner and establish some incentive mechanisms for the students with outstanding performance. EFL teachers can also use various means to guide students to be willing to spend more time on English.	Various English language-related activities can be held by the department/university and the teachers.	Faculty; EFL teachers; students
<b>3.3 Attitudes towards learning English</b>			
To guide students to have a more positive attitude towards leaning English after TBLT, especially their enjoyment in learning English	<b>Carry out various activities to enhance students’ enjoyment in English learning.</b> Teachers should guide students to find the beauty of English and appreciate the enjoyment in English learning. For instance, EFL teachers can adopt multimodal means to carry out the tasks in classroom activities, enjoy beautiful classical English proses, watch English movies, and so on to enjoy English language with the students.	Varied methods to explore the enjoyment of English are adopted.	EFL teachers; students

Once EFL learners become adapted to TBLT, their motivation to English learning would be greatly increased. The current study just surveyed students' motivation after the implementation of TBLT; whether the learners have had similar motivations at the initial stage of TBLT remains to be investigated. Hence, university EFL teachers in China had better bear this in mind that there is a need for university students, especially freshmen, to have some time to adjust their learning to TBLT mode, which is a great transfer from the exam-oriented traditional English teaching in their secondary schools. To sum up, all the favorable perceptions of learners' motivations after the implementation of TBLT will promote further implementation of this approach in EFL teaching in China.

Table 4 shows the association between the implementation of TBLT and learners' motivation after TBLT. The rho-values computed indicates a strong direct correlation, and the results of p-values were less than the alpha level. This means that there was significant relationship between the implementation of TBLT and learners' motivation after TBLT and revealed that the more favorable the learners' perceptions on the implementation of TBLT is, the more that the learners are motivated after TBLT. If learners have more favorable perceptions on tasks, they would believe that the tasks in the classroom are more related to the tasks in real life, and they would recognize the value of tasks in classroom design. Meanwhile, they also acknowledged that the skills gained in tasks in classroom would benefit them in the long run. Therefore, they would take initiative to take part in classroom activities, display more willingness in joining cooperative learning and group discussions and use English language more often. Therefore, it would be no surprise that such learners would have stronger motivation in learning English after the implementation of TBLT. More specifically, they would commit more time and efforts to English learning, concentrate on English learning, be willing to use English as much as they can, and enjoy the pleasure of English learning to the greatest extent. Similar results are also reported by Chen and Wang (2009)'s study, which proved that English language learners in universities with a positive attitude toward understanding of tasks and group learning and co-assessment would display more interest in participating in classroom activities and were more motivated in English learning. Equally important, this also indicated the importance and beneficial effect of learner-centeredness in language teaching (Nunan, 2004). Different from learner-centeredness in traditional curricula, for the TBLT curriculum, learner-centeredness is threaded through all stages of English teaching, from initial planning, implementation to evaluation and assessment. In other words, curriculum development has become a collaborative project between teachers and learners. If learners have a positive attitude towards tasks, group learning and co-assessment, they would be more motivated and get better achievement, and the benefits of combing learner-centeredness with learning tasks area in TBLT were also highlighted by Breen (1987).

Table 5 illustrates the association between the effects of TBLT and learners' motivation after TBLT. The rho-values computed indicates a strong direct correlation, and the p-values was less than the alpha level. This means that a significant relationship exists between the effects of TBLT and learners' motivation, which implies that the better effects of TBLT that the learners achieved, the more that the learners are motivated after TBLT.

It is known that if EFL learners get good performance in English language learning such as skills of English speaking, reading and writing, they would be more motivated for English language learning. This means that such learners would have stronger motivational intensity, have stronger desires to learn English more and have more favorable attitude towards English learning. In this way, a sound learning cycle after the implementation of TBLT is formed, and learners would have more confidence in using English and achieve better competency in English language.

This finding is in line with the study of Bao and Du (2015), who confirmed the correlation between effects of TBLT and learners' motivation after implementation of TBLT. They proved that TBLT is conducive to improvement of learners' performance, increased participation of learners, created more opportunities for speaking, reduced learners' anxiety, enhances learners' enjoyment, which in turn enhanced learners' motivation in learning. In a similar vein, this is also consistent with McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007)'s result of study, who confirmed that TBLT sets up a facilitating learning atmosphere to promote learners' enjoyment, and help learners achieve better performance in language abilities and enhance learners' motivations eventually. In particular, positive attitudes to reading are found to be associated with higher reading achievement (McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth, 1995), while positive attitude to English reading is also one important indicator of strong motivation to learn English. Based on this strong correlation between the effects of TBLT and learner's motivations after implementation TBLT, university EFL teachers in China may make good use of the benefits of TBLT on learners' speaking, writing and reading skills by designing more effective and interesting tasks. In this way, learners can acquire useful English language skills, get better performance and use English more confidently, which would enhance their motivations of English learning after implementation of TBLT.

**Proposed program:** The following proposed program is based on the problems emerged from the findings discussed above, with special attention paid to the variables with the lowest value in each domain (grouping and cooperative learning, co-assessment, effects on writing and motivational intensity) and sub-domain. In addition, the significant value in the gender influence on the TBLT effects in speaking as well as the age influence on learners' understanding of tasks and cooperative learning should also be taken into consideration. A detailed proposed program is proposed in the table below, and this program will be implemented in the universities whose students participated in the study from this semester via cooperation of various parties. Therefore, the outcome of this study will indeed be applied into the EFL practice in Chinese universities.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion and analysis about the data shown in the previous sections, and in combination of the results obtained from this study, the following conclusions are drawn so as to get ready to provide answers to the research questions proposed in the previous sections. In terms of demographics of the study, most of the respondents were females, between 20 - 24, and CET 4 passers.

- The study has reported an overall satisfactory perception of tasks in terms of the level of implementation of TBLT in the EFL classrooms in Chinese universities, including learners' positive attitudes towards tasks, perceptions on grouping and cooperative learning and perceptions on co-assessment;
- Majority of the respondents agreed on the effects of TBLT in three sub-domains of skills (English reading, speaking and writing), among which reading skills are perceived to be most greatly improved by TBLT;
- The study has identified a favorable learners' motivation after implementation of TBLT in terms of their attitudes towards learning English, desire to learn English, and motivational intensity;
- When grouped according to different profiles (age, gender and language proficiency level), no significant difference is found on their responses, except on implementation of TBLT when grouped to sex and age (except on learners' perceptions on co-assessment) as well as the effects of TBLT on speaking skills when grouped to sex.
- Highly significant associations are found between and among implementation, effects and motivation of TBLT.
- Based on the previous results and analysis, the researcher proposed a program to enhance the implementation of TBLT in the tertiary level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following lists some specific recommendations based on the findings of the study in order to properly localize and adapt TBLT in China and attempt to achieve the sustainable professional teacher development, with the hope to shed some new lights on the practice of TBLT in English classes of universities in China.

- The English department of the concerned universities may consider the proposed program for implementation and evaluation after. The English department should pay attention to TBLT in teacher training and continuously send teachers to attend trainings on the latest development on TBLT and acquire a systematic basis for the theoretical knowledge on TBLT. Meanwhile, the English department shall have designed some pertinent policies on flexibility when applying TBLT in the local practice of English teaching in China.
- Teachers in the English department of the concerned universities should attend training of TBLT seminars and practice sharing regularly. More specifically, teachers may adopt the weak version of TBLT might be a more appropriate approach in China (Luo and Yi, 2013), which would better meet the need of local tertiary settings in China. Moreover, English teachers in the concerned universities need to pay attention to individual differences of learners when implementing TBLT because gender and age are significant factors to influence the perception of implementation of tasks.
- Students in the concerned universities may actively take part in the TBLT activities designed by the teachers so as to achieve the maximum performance results of English speaking, reading and writing skills. Students are encouraged to take part in group activities in the three phases of TBLT in classrooms (i. e., pre-task phase,

while-task phase and post-task phase), with a balance between focus on meaning and focus on form.

- Future researchers may be encouraged to do some experimental research to further study the effects of TBLT on Chinese EFL students' performances. In addition, teachers' perceptions on tasks implementation may also be an interesting area to explore. Meanwhile, if possible, similar studies may be extended to EFL learning in other settings such as secondary schools in China.

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