

Learners' Perceptions of a Wiki-Enhanced Task-Based Language Teaching Approach Designed and Implemented at the Syllabus Level

This study examines learners' perceptions of an approach for improving Chinese-as-a-Foreign-Language learners' language proficiency, especially their speaking ability. Built upon the Distributed Design Model, a wiki-enhanced, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach was designed at the syllabus level, taking into consideration various learning contexts. The approach was implemented and evaluated. Findings show that the overall design of this approach and most of the different components of the pre-task, core-task (interviews with native speakers, wiki-writing, and in-class presentations), and post-task activities as well, were very positively perceived by the students. All students liked this design and enjoyed the class. The main reasons include 1) Students valued the opportunity to interact with native speakers outside the classroom; 2) The in-class presentations gave them an opportunity to express their personalities; 3) They liked the fact that the wiki-essay writing was connected to the in-class presentation because this helped them prepare the content of their presentation, also enabled them to develop writing and speaking on a single topic so they could become more advanced in that topic; 4) They also liked the consistency in organization and the eight units being procedurally similar. The learners held varying views on a few components of the pre-task and post-task activities.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching; TBLT; Distributed design; Educational Engineering; Technology enhanced TBLT; Chinese-as-a-Foreign-Language; CFL

笔者所作的需求分析和两种口语测试的结果显示，中文作为外语的中级学习者的听说读写能力，特别是口语技巧亟需提高，而任务型教学法可以成为一个很好的选择。现实情况是，任务教学法虽然已被广泛应用于教学中以提高学习者的口语能力，但是，如何将其有效地融入到中文教学具体的课程设计中并克服文献中所指出的任务教学法的局限，仍是一个尚待解决的问题。本文以教育工程理论中的分散设计模型为参照，设计、发展并实施了一套贯穿整个课程、以维基工具为辅助的任务型教学模式，并进一步考察了运用此模式进行的课堂教学中学生们的反馈意见。结果表明，学生对此模式都持肯定态度，其原因大致有四：1) 三大核心任务，特别是其中的在课外与操母语者进行有意义交流；2) 课堂报告给他们自由表达自己的个性的机会；3) 以写作为主的核任务与以口语交流为主的核任务相辅相成；4) 整个课程中的单元与单元之间具有连贯性。同时，学习者对不同阶段的任务及活动有更细致的反馈。

关键词: 任务型教学；科技辅助任务型教学；电脑科技辅助教学；教育工程理论；中文为第二外语

1. Introduction

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an approach that provides learners with opportunities to be engaged in meaningful interactions in authentic, task-based activities (Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1998; 2003). The belief behind TBLT is that students learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task, rather than on the language they are learning (Littlewood, 2004; Prabhu, 1987), and that tasks provide

both the input and output processing that is necessary for learning the language (Richards & Rogers, 2001).

TBLT has been successful, depending on how the tasks are designed and used, in helping learners learn the language in many aspects. For example, Robinson (2001), in his study on the relationship between task complexity, difficulty, and production, found that there was a positive correlation between the cognitive complexity of tasks and the speaker-information-giver production. Chacón (2012) implemented TBLT using cooperative learning projects with films. The results of the study showed that the approach improved students' fluency in speaking, their listening comprehension, and their vocabulary-building skills. In addition, other studies found that TBLT could help build a positive learning environment (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007) and increase learners' confidence and motivation (Lopes, 2004; Park, 2012). Macías (2004) found that the implementation of TBLT helped students transfer what they learned in the classroom to the real world.

Despite the benefits of TBLT in second language acquisition, issues exist that have prevented TBLT from being widely adopted in the field of language learning. One issue is the conflict between the learners' belief in the importance of grammar instruction and TBLT's lack of focus on explicit grammar instruction (Bao & Du, 2015; Carless, 2007; Lai, Zhao, & Wang, 2011; Lopes, 2004; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007). Another issue is the lack of pronunciation instruction at the beginning stage of the TBLT second language learning approach (Bao & Du, 2015). Another big issue is that implementation of TBLT at the syllabus level requires a large investment of time from the teachers to design and develop the materials, but teachers generally have little time for such work (Bao & Kirkebæk, 2012; Carless, 2003; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007). Last but not least, the implementation of TBLT needs to take into consideration many different social contexts and classroom settings (Bygate, 2015; Carless, 2007; Klapper, 2003; Ortega, 2007; Seedhouse, 1999; Van den Branden, 2006; Vieira, 2017; Robinson, 2011).

A growing interest in learning Chinese in America and in the other parts of the world has further complicated this matter of TBLT. Chinese, with a logographic writing system and a heavy reliance on tones, poses unique challenges to second language learners (Zhang, 2016). Therefore, it is critical to consider not only the social context and classroom settings, but also the language features when designing and implementing TBLT (Du & Kirkebæk, 2012; Yuan, 2006).

It is time for researchers and practitioners to think deeply about how to implement TBLT at the syllabus level while addressing the above issues. The purpose of this study is to investigate students' perception of a wiki-enhanced TBLT approach designed at the syllabus level to support intermediate level Chinese-as-a-Foreign-Language (CFL) learners, taking into consideration various learning contexts. The findings are expected to contribute to the understanding of using TBLT in context with the support of technology.

2. Literature Review

TBLT uses tasks as the unit of instruction in language learning (Long, 1985, 2015). It emphasizes authentic, communication-driven tasks that could provide a focus on form that is task-related but at the same time is "congruent with a learner's own internal syllabus" (Bryfonski & McKay, 2017). The ultimate purpose of using TBLT in teaching is to prepare students to use their linguistic skills in meaningful interactions outside the classroom (Long, 2015). Ellis (2003) defined a task as a "work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms" (p. 16).

Much research has been done on TBLT in the field of ESL (Bryfonski & McKay, 2017; Bygate, 2015; Robinson, 2011), on its effect of different aspects of TBLT, such as on task interaction (Keck, Iberri-Shea, Tracy-Ventura, & Wa-Mbaleka, 2006), task complexity (Jackson & Suethanpornkul, 2013;

Sasayama, Malicka, & Norris, 2015), and factors that needed to be addressed in designing tasks (Breen, 1989), and on the general effectiveness of TBLT in ESL education (Butler 2011; Plonsky and Kim (2016; Ziegler (2016). In the context of CFL, however, there are only a few empirical studies examining the implementation of TBLT. Bao & Du (2015), in their exploratory study, found that TBLT increased the CFL beginning-level learners' participation in learning, eased their anxiety, and enhanced their enjoyment in learning the language. Meanwhile, they found that challenges existed in implementing TBLT in the CFL context such as "the lack of Chinese pronunciation practice, difficulty in balancing learners' different preferences for learning strategies, and the lack of sufficient instructional time support" (p. 299).

Lai, Zhao, & Wang (2011) used TBLT in a beginning-level CFL online course with the purpose of discovering learners' and teachers' reactions to TBLT and identifying possible issues that would emerge from the implementation of TBLT in an online, beginner's course for high school students. The results of their study showed that students and teachers reacted positively to the approach in general. The implementation of TBLT improved students' learning but had differential effect on learners, depending on learners' individual differences. Furthermore, they found that learners lacked the appropriate attitudes and strategies required for TBLT. They further found that the technology platform used for the course has significant influence on the implementation of TBLT.

Lin, Wang, Grant, Chien, & Lan (2013) completed a study investigating students' perceptions of integrating TBLT in the virtual classroom using Second Life. In the virtual environment, TBLT was found to help instructors provide opportunities for students to set clear goals and enhance the student-centered approach. It also provided multiple opportunities for input, production, and feedback.

Bao (2012) found that the use of TBLT increased afterschool, lower-secondary learners' participation and motivated them to learn Chinese. Kirkebæk (2012) discovered in his study that the use of TBLT helped high-school learners learn Chinese characters. Du and Kirkebæk (2012) argued that in the implementation of TBLT, both teachers and learners should have agreed-upon learning goals and the same understanding of the method.

All the studies found that learners have positive perceptions of the method when using TBLT to support Chinese language learning. However, many research questions remain to be answered, including the following: What needs to be considered when teachers plan for the use of TBLT at the syllabus level in a traditional Face-to-Face (FTF) classroom? How could teachers utilize the available technology to enhance the effect of the implementation of TBLT? How do we design the TBLT syllabus to address the issues that other researchers discovered in their implementation of TBLT? How do we make TBLT fit better in teaching Chinese as a foreign language? In short, studies are urgently needed to show the designing process when implementing TBLT at the syllabus level using available technology as a support and to examine how learners perceive the technology-enhanced TBLT syllabus.

Guided by Colpaert's Educational Engineering method and his Distributed Design Framework (2010; 2016a; 2016b), this paper reports on an empirical study of learner perceptions about the design and implementation of a TBLT approach for improving CFL learners' language proficiency, especially their speaking ability. This approach was designed at the syllabus level with the support of wiki. This research represents an attempt to base the syllabus design on this model and investigate the students' perceptions of the design in detail.

3. The Study

The impetus for using TBLT was the students' need to improve their four language skills, especially their speaking skills. The university Chinese courses were 5 credit courses from the beginning level to advanced level. The textbook used for this course was Integrated Chinese, Level 2 Part 1 (Liu, Yao, Bi, Shi, & Ge, 2010). In teaching the courses, the instructor focused on the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). At the beginning of the second year, i.e. students' third semester of learning Chinese, a needs analysis was done via a survey and a speaking test. Both the survey and the speaking test showed that students needed to improve their four skills, especially their speaking skills. They earnestly wanted to

improve their tones, fluency, accuracy, and organization of ideas, as well as the connectivity of their sentences. Some students were aware that in order to speak well, much improvement was urgently needed, such as expanding their vocabulary, getting a better understanding of complex grammar, being able to form complex sentences, and expressing complicated ideas.

The results of the survey also indicated that these students planned to use strategies such as, listening to recordings, reading texts aloud, talking with native speaker friends, and completing homework. These strategies could help, but they may work better if meaningful practice is focused when they apply these strategies in their learning. TBLT has been proven to be effective to improve students' language proficiency and speaking ability (Chacón, 2012; Macías, 2004; Rahimpour, 2008; Robinson, 2001) when it is used in a meaningful context. Therefore, it is considered in this endeavor for improving students' language proficiency in the four skills, especially the speaking skill.

This study was conducted in an intermediate Chinese course at a large, Midwestern research university. The established curriculum for all the Chinese courses at the university is rooted in the communicative approach to language teaching. Students meet five days a week for 50 minutes. There were eight units for the course and for each unit there were three phrases: pre-task phrase, core-task phase, and post-task phase. Each unit was completed within 9 days. Completing each unit successfully the students could earn up to 10% of the total grade for the course. Attendance and the final exam take up to 20% of the total grade. The syllabus was designed based on this context.

4. Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following question:

What are students' perceptions of using a wiki-enhanced TBLT approach, contextually designed at the syllabus level, in supporting them in learning Chinese language and culture and improving their language skills?

5. Design of the Syllabus

The design of the syllabus was based on the Educational Engineering Research Theory and its Distributed Design Approach (Colpaert, 2010; 2016a; 2016b). During the process of selecting and sequencing tasks, Nunan (1993)'s guideline was followed. According to the Educational Engineering theory, the first step in designing learning environments should be analyzing real-world situations, and the design should take into consideration of all the specificity of contexts. The Distributed Design Approach follows a modified ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) instructional design model. The impetus for using the TBLT approach was based on the need analysis. Due to length considerations, only the design phase will be focused on in this article.

5.1 Eight units designed

Eight units, in accordance with the theme of each chapter in the textbook, were designed for the semester, with each unit having a different theme. These themes include:

1. Introduce campus life to new Chinese students;
2. Introduce your home layout and backyard; or, as a real estate agent, introduce houses to potential buyers from China; or collaborate with a Chinese student to design a blueprint for reconstructing a destroyed town;
3. Dine out in a Chinese restaurant;
4. Interview Chinese native speakers about their shopping habits and compare them to your shopping habits;
5. Talk about your field of study and your future plans. Find out how one or two Chinese students plan for their future;

6. Ask native speakers to tell you a classical love story set in China, and you tell a love story set in America;
7. Investigate the use of social media among Chinese students; or Interview 3-5 Chinese students about their habit of using social media websites.
8. Find 2-3 native speakers, ask them about their part-time job, and compare your view on having a part-time job in college with their view; or write a job application letter; or ask 2-3 native speakers about their future job plans and compare their plan with your own future job plan.

5.2 Sequence of the tasks

In each unit, there are three phases: Pre-task, core-task, and post-task (Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2007). In designing each phase, various social and learning contexts were taken into consideration, such as the special features of the Chinese language (the importance of tones of words in understanding speech and the logographic feature of the language), students' belief that they need solid coverage of grammar, the affordances that the web 2.0 could provide, and the abundance of native speakers of Chinese on campus. Since one key to successful teaching is consistency in organization (Wong-Fillmore, 1985), a similar routine was followed in each learning unit.

In the pre-task phase, students learned vocabulary (the right pronunciation and tones, the writing of some of the characters, and how to use the vocabulary in different contexts) and structure patterns; read an essay, a story, or an article closely, watched a performance of what they read; completed listening comprehension exercises to become familiar with the language forms (theme-related vocabulary and patterns); engaged in extensive reading; and participated in classroom group and pair communicative activities, which were built around the core-task they are going to complete (Nunan, 2004).

In the core-task phase, students wrote a wiki-essay to share with their teacher and peers. The essay was related to a presentation the students were going to give later in class. In order to complete the assignment, students had to find native speakers to talk with and obtain the information they would use in writing the essay and doing the presentation. This made the core task related to the real world (Skehan, 1998). The essay was read by other peers and the teacher and the students got feedback from those readers. Students' presentations reported on what they did with the native speakers and what they discovered during those conversations. Following each student's presentation, there was a Q & A session, and the teachers gave each student feedback in written form. See Appendix A for a description of the core tasks in the eight units.

In the post-task phase, students completed comprehensive writing and reading exercises that summarized what they had learned; wrote a reflection journal describing their learning process, problems they had, and strategies they used in learning; and also summarized what they had learned and what they should do next. See Appendix B for the reflection journal instruction.

5.3 Teacher's role

The teacher in the process provided guidance and assistance and played three roles: facilitator, participant and observer (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Nunan, 2004). In the process of playing these roles, the teacher spoke Chinese 90% of the time so that the students were immersed in a learning environment where the target language was used. The various tasks, both the pedagogical tasks and the real-world tasks, connected the teacher, the learners, the co-learners, and the native speakers together. The wiki writing tool functioned as a connection among the learners and between the learners and the teacher outside the classroom. Therefore, the core tasks and the wiki tool helped extend learning beyond the classroom, since the learners had the chance to learn from the native speakers in real contexts through face to face interactions, and to learn from the teacher and their co-learners through their feedback as well as through the wiki comments. See Figure 1.

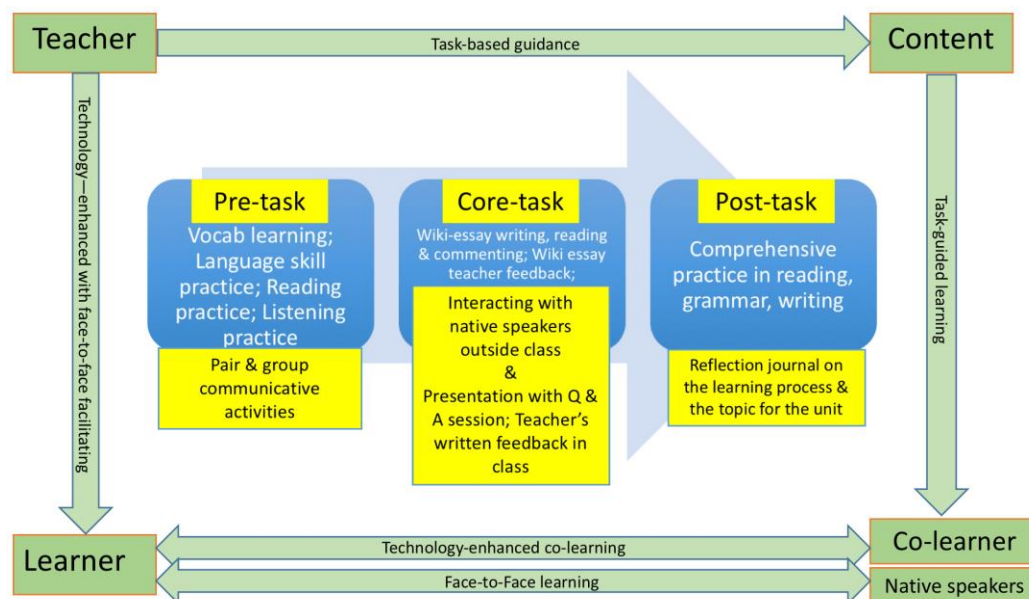


Figure 1. The flow and framework of the technology-enhanced TBLT syllabus

5.4 An example unit

Take unit #4, shopping habits, as an example. In the pre-task phase, some activities happened in class and some happened outside class. In class, the students first learned the new vocabulary associated with shopping, especially clothes shopping, such as 打折 (dǎzhé, to give discount), 样子 (yàngzi, style)、颜色 (yánsè, color)、大小 (dàxiǎo, size)、长短 (chángduǎn, length)、合适 (héshì, suitable)、价钱 (jiàqián, price)、质量 (zhìliàng, quality)、名牌 (míngpái, name brand)、牌子 (páizi, brand)、产地 (chǎndì, origin of products)、网上购物 (wǎngshàng gòuwù, online shopping)、标准 (biāozhǔn, standard), 在乎 (zàihu, to care), etc., and some specific structures such as 非...不可 (fēi...bùkě, have to), 无论...都 (wúlùn...dōu, no matter ...). They practiced using each of these in different contexts. They then read closely an article on discussing shopping habits. Outside class, they watched the video in which native speakers performed actions based on the article, and completed listening comprehension activities and extensive reading practice related to shopping. Video watching and the listening practice happened online, whereas the reading materials were still paper-copied.

After that preparation, the students came back to class and focused on group and pair speaking activities. For example, in pairs and/or small groups, students acted as shopping assistants and customers based on very specific instruction. For example, they had to talk about whether there was discount, what style of clothes they were looking for, whether the length and size fit, and so on. They talked about what they cared about and what standards they had in shopping for clothes and furniture. They also talked about the advantages and disadvantages of shopping in a brick and mortar mall versus shopping online. The topics that they practiced prepared them for finishing the core task with native speakers outside class.

In the core-task phase, the students interviewed Chinese students about their shopping habits (especially shopping for clothes), wrote a wiki-essay, commented on their peers' essays, and completed class presentations. In order to make sure that the core tasks were done well, the students were given very detailed instructions on what to prepare before the interview, what to do during the interview, and what to complete after the interview.

First, the students prepared the interview questions. These questions were reviewed by the teacher to make sure 1) they did prepare the student for the interview, and 2) their questions were well-formed and thoughtful. However, the students were told that these questions should not become hindrance for

their interview, and that students should ask follow-up questions on the spot based on the interviewee's answers. Each student then conducted the interview, recorded it, transcribed it, and wrote a wiki-essay on the interview. The essay covered content such as who they interviewed; the interviewee's age, gender, hometown, and major; the main questions they asked; and the similarities and differences in shopping habits and criteria for buying clothes between the interviewer and the interviewee. Their wiki-essays were read and commented on by their peers and the teacher. As the summit of the core-task phase, each student gave a presentation in class describing the interview process, the interviewee(s), and the findings from the interview. There was a Q & A session after each presentation. The teacher wrote detailed feedback and gave it to them the next day. All this was done in Chinese.

In the post-task phase, students completed a set of comprehensive writing and reading exercises that helped them to review what they had learned. After class, they wrote a journal reflecting their learning in this unit. The reflection journal included four big sections: making connections, examining the learning process, clarifying what they are learning, and reflecting on mistakes and successes. The students were allowed to have one or more foci in their reflection paper.

6. Methodology

6.1 Participants

One class comprised of 11 intermediate level CFL students in their third semester of taking Chinese language courses participated in this study. Ten of the students were from different colleges in the university and one student was a high school student. Out of the 11 students, two were heritage speakers. One of the heritage speakers grew up in a family who speak some Cantonese but do not speak Mandarin. The other knew a little bit Mandarin Chinese before starting to take Chinese classes. Among the 9 non-heritage speakers, only one had been in China for a few days as a tourist before.

6.2 Assessments

Three types of data were collected at the end of the semester to discover students' perceptions of the design. First, the students filled out a questionnaire asking about their perceptions of the learning experience using the wiki-enhanced TBLT approach based on the contextually designed syllabus. The 40-item questionnaire, with Likert scale questions and open questions, was designed to obtain information about students' perceptions of the overall course design, each step in the process of finishing each unit, their learning strategies, and the use of the wiki (See appendix C). The questionnaire was composed of seven groups of questions: 1) their overall opinion on the design of the approach and what language skill(s) they thought had been improved; 2) their opinion on each of the pre-task activities; 3) their opinion on each of the core-task activities; 4) their opinion on each of the post-task activities; 5) their likes and dislikes about each of the core task activities, their favorite activities and the most beneficial activities; 6) whether or not they have learned any learning strategies; 7) additional comments and suggestions.

Second, the students wrote a reflection paper at the end of the semester. Writing the reflection paper was one of the post-task activities, but at the same time served as part of the data for the study to help understand the students' overall perceptions of the approach. In the reflection, the students could choose to address one or more of four themes: to make connections, to examine the learning processes, to clarify what they are learning, and to reflect on mistakes and successes.

Third, an informal interview was done to further learn about the students' thoughts and opinions towards the end of the semester. The interviews were conducted in the researcher/teacher's office or in the classroom after class. The questions used in the interviews were: 1) What is the most challenging part in learning Chinese this semester and what is the most enjoyable part? 2) what would you suggest the teacher to change or to improve for the future classes like this one? 3) What is your next step in

improving your Chinese after this semester is over? The time spent on each interview ranged from 5 to 8 minutes. The interviews were not recorded. The researcher/teacher took detailed notes on them.

6.3 Data analysis

The data collected via the questionnaire and the informal interviews were analyzed using a descriptive data analysis method. Students' reflection papers were analyzed using the grounded theory borrowed from anthropology (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The reflection papers were read closely to identify different themes. A comparative analysis was conducted to look for themes similar enough that they should be grouped into a single category. By triangulating the three different sources of data, a more comprehensive view about the students' perception could be achieved. These analysis was done by the researcher/teacher.

7. Findings and Discussion

Results showed that this approach was well-perceived by the learners, but some pre-task activities could be improved. All students liked this design, and 82% of the students liked the pace of the class throughout the semester, which was "slow enough to be not overwhelming", but they "would not take with other hard classes." All students felt that, out of the four language skills, their speaking and listening had improved the most. All but one student expressed that they liked the core tasks and that the end product of the core task, the in-class presentation, had helped improve their speaking ability. For example, one student wrote in her reflection journal talking about the importance of class presentations,

After this class, I feel my speaking is what has improved the most. The presentations were definitely something new to force me to improve my speaking. I also talked to a few Chinese students during the semester and surprised them and myself with how easy it was.

Some students expressed how important the class presentations were:

The presentations are my favorite part; it's where I get to apply what we just learned and vocalize it. Although we learn the grammar structure and can use them in an essay, I think vocalize these through the presentation helps with memory and correct usage.

I would have to say my overall language skills have improved. My speaking ability is MUCH better than what it used to be!!! Also, my listening ability have improved so much as well. In comparison to where I was at the beginning of the semester to where I am now, is very shocking and uplifting. It's showing all my hard work is paying off.

One of the main reasons students perceived the course as helping them improve their speaking and helping them enjoy the class design is that the core tasks gave them many opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom, most of the time with native speakers. They wrote various reasons for that, such as "[There was] more outside use of the language inspires me to study harder," "It was nice to have a conversation in Chinese with native speakers," "I got to use my Chinese outside the classroom and it was challenging but interesting," "I got to learn more about the culture and learned how effective my speaking was," "It was interesting to see others' lives etc. and learn about them and it helped me get confidence for talking with native speakers," "I liked interacting with the Chinese students a lot because I really like Chinese [and] it was fun to get to know about them and Chinese more." Another reason that needs to be separately pointed out was, as one student wrote in the questionnaire, "I knew who I was interviewing every time and I could understand her well, and she made it fun."

One student liked the talking with native speakers the most among all the activities and he wrote,

The actual interview is when I felt I took the most away from this approach. Having to listen and speak are the two hardest things for me so this was when I could really feel myself improving.”

Another important reason for them liking the format was its “emphasis on in-class speaking activities and in-class presentation.” Another reason they gave is that the core tasks gave them an opportunity to express their personalities. One student wrote about that aspect of the course:

Another thing I liked was the presentations. They gave me a chance to put out my personality in Chinese, and that definitely did more for my learning than simply being made to study characters and perform bland translations. I prepared for the presentations using the wiki article I wrote, but towards the end I got to be good enough at knowing what I wanted to say that I just needed some notes on my phone and the pictures on my PowerPoint to say what I wanted.

In addition, they liked the consistency of the eight units being procedurally similar. They also liked the simplicity of the way each unit was organized and arranged with pre-tasks, core tasks and post tasks.

I liked the simplicity. You [the teacher/researcher] really did a great job of giving us the same format every lesson with vocabulary learning, written homework for character practice, wiki article, presentation, and unit quiz. That was nice, because I always knew what I needed to do.

7.1 Perceptions of pre-task activities

The students liked most of the components of the pre-task, core-task, and post-task and perceived them as being beneficial, but a few tasks were perceived as being less helpful for a variety of reasons. Vocabulary learning and language skill exercises in the pre-task phase were perceived useful in improving their language skills and in preparing them for completing the core tasks by most of the students.

All students agreed that the language skills exercises, such as the translation exercises, helped them with their learning in general. About 91% of students felt that those language skills exercises helped with the core tasks (wiki-writing, conversation with native speakers, and in-class presentations) and 9% were neutral as to whether or not they were helpful.

In-class pair and group communicative activities were well-accepted. One student wrote,

I feel like the small group exercises we did with the class helped out a lot- not only did we learn about each other, we also got to learn from each other, which I think is always good. Most of the conversations we had were interesting, and it really helped us use the grammar points we were learning.

The in-class pair and group speaking activities, compared with other pre-task activities, were thought positively in preparing them for completing the core-tasks. However, compared to the core task, in-class presentations, the pre-task activities --in-class pair activities and in-class group speaking activities, in some students' views, do not provide enough exercise for gaining confidence for speaking in front of an audience. As one student wrote,

The biggest contributor has been presentations. I have never had to speak in front of a group in Chinese for an extended time before, so this was something very new and helpful. In-class partner speaking never really gave me much.

Listening exercises primarily consisted of watching a native speaker-made video and completing some audio listening homework. In addition, students also practiced their listening skills by being exposed to the instructor's use of Chinese in teaching and communicating with the students during class

most of the class time. Seventy-three percent of students agreed that their listening skills in Chinese had improved significantly, 21% had a neutral attitude, while 6% disagreed. The main reason for the improvement, according to student responses, was that the teacher speaks in Chinese in class. One student put it,

The most helpful thing is when you [the teacher] conduct class in Chinese, and if I don't get something and have to ask you again, then you just repeat yourself in Chinese. So, I have to pay attention.

Another student wrote, “with Laoshi speaking more Chinese and at a quicker pace, I am able to improve!!”

Watching the videos, however, did not seem to be very helpful. Only 36% of students agreed that watching the videos had helped them improve their listening skills in general. Forty-six percent were neutral and 18% disagreed that the videos were helpful for improving their listening abilities. The reasons the students gave were primarily that the quality of the videos was low and that the native speakers spoke too fast and too softly in the video. They were “too hard to understand to get much out of,” as one student said.

Eighty-two percent of students felt that the extensive reading activities, such as the passage reading assignments, assignments to read the essays written by their peers, and occasional reading practice in class improved their reading speed, their comprehension, and their vocabulary retention. One student wrote, “I am able to read much quicker. And understand as I read. I don't have to read it then re-read to decipher.”

When being asked if they agreed that each different pre-task activity had helped them prepare for the core-tasks, students' response is corresponding to their perception of how helpful these pre-task activities helped with their acquisition and practice of different language skills. Figure 2 shows the students' overall feelings about different pre-task activities. The percentage in figure 2 is the percentage of those who strongly agreed and those who agreed).

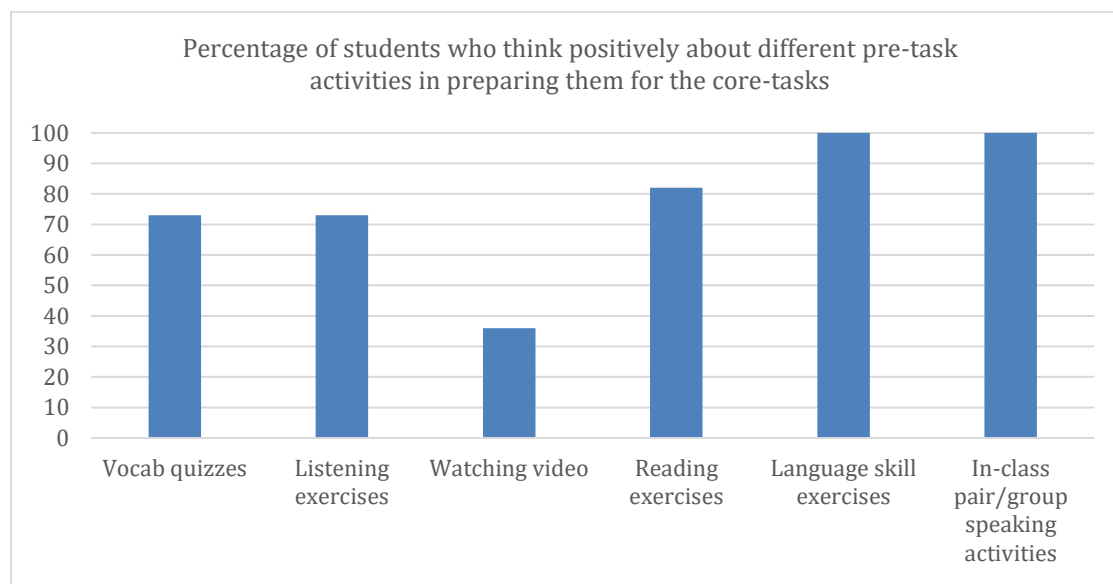


Figure 2. Percentage of students who think positively about different pre-task activities in preparing them for the core task

7.2 Perception of the core tasks: interaction with native speakers

In general, the students thought highly of their experience interacting with native speakers. They reported that this experience had helped them reducing anxiety level while speaking with native speakers, increase their fluency, ability of circumlocution, their listening skills, their awareness of the difference between their native language and the Chinese language, and most importantly, and their knowledge of Chinese vocabulary and grammar. Most importantly, they regarded the opportunities valuable to use Chinese beyond the classroom setting. See figure 3 for a comparison chart on the students' perception of interacting with native speakers.

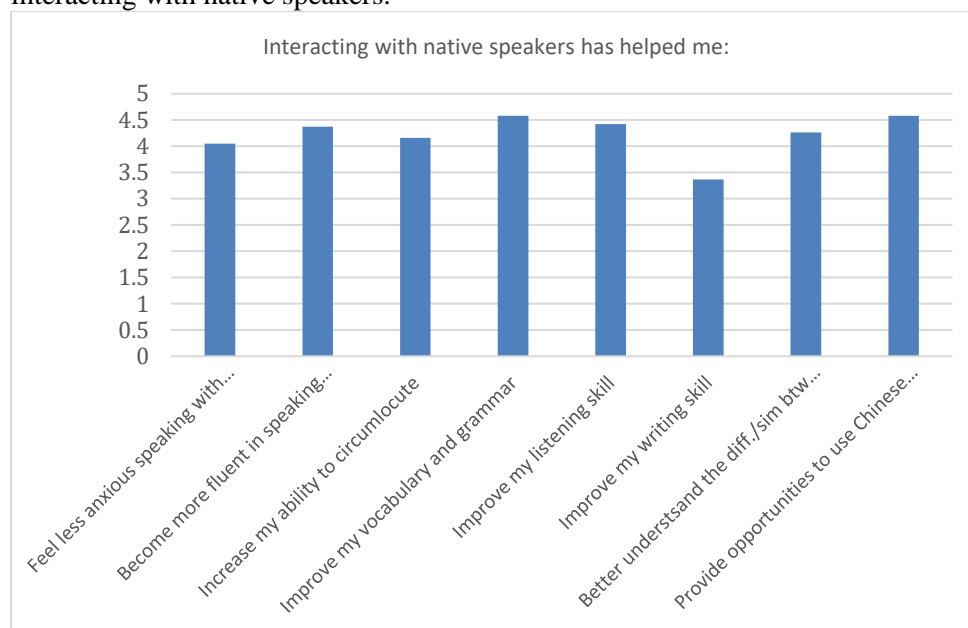


Figure 3. Students' perception of the experience of interaction with native speakers

The opportunities that the students had to interact with native speakers enormously improved the students' confidence in talking with native speakers and their ability to have conversations with native speakers. For example, one student wrote the following:

I definitely think the language barrier that normally separates Americans and Chinese communicating has been dimmed through the multiple projects in this class involving speaking to Chinese people. I have a lot more confidence in my Chinese now than I did at the start of this class, so I call it a success. I believe that if I went back to China at this point, I would be able to communicate to other people in Chinese with more success than previous times.

Another student shared this experience:

... I had the real experience of conversing and communicating with a native speaker in his or her tongue. By listening and trying to understand their responses.... All in all, I feel like our conversations with the native speakers went really well. They didn't speak fast or slow, but just at the right pace. And most of them [native speakers] spoke very clearly which was also beneficial and was easily understandable.

Another student appreciated the opportunities to be exposed to different styles of speaking:

I think this was a good experience for me. The problem I have with most classroom language learning is the lack of exposure. There are many different dialects and accents in Chinese, and in a classroom, you only have one speaker teaching. The projects gave good exposure to different

speaking patterns, styles, construction, and accents. It also gave good examples of some contexts in which the vocabulary in this lesson can be used.

7.3 Perception of the core tasks: wiki-essay writing and commenting

Wiki-essay writing and wiki-commenting tasks were regarded as a very important and helpful in improving students' writing skills, structuring their presentations, and even enhancing their reading skills. Figure 4 shows the percentage of students who thought that the wiki-essay tasks helped them successfully learn several aspects of language skills.

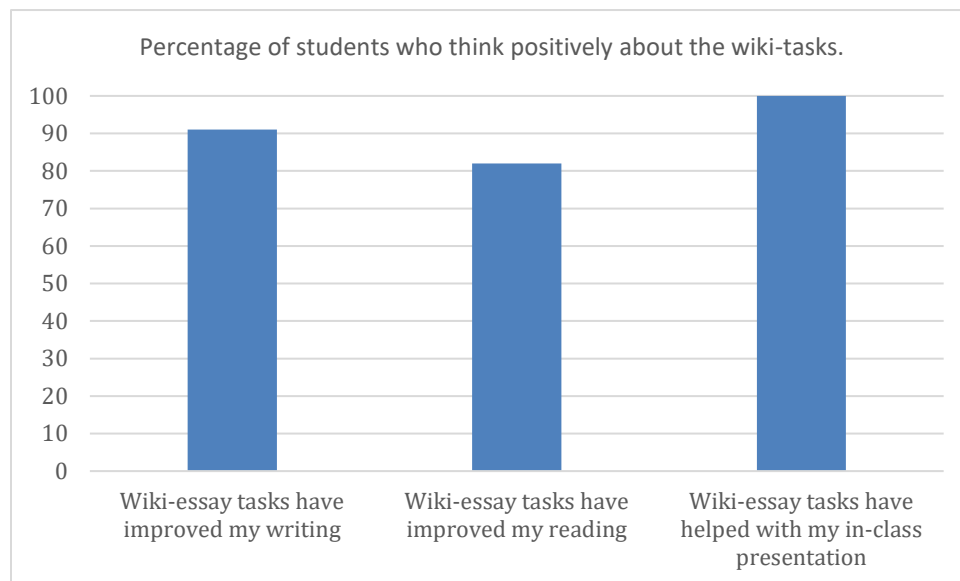


Figure 4. Percentage of students who think positively about the wiki-tasks.

The students enjoyed the wiki-essay writing task because it helped them learn the language, gave them an opportunity for creative writing within certain criteria and guidelines, and “expanded on what [they] could write about in Chinese.” One student wrote the following in the questionnaire:

I definitely think my reading and writing skills have improved greatly this semester. I think it was because we did a lot more with writing (at least “officially”) and that writing was one of my worst skills when we started the year. I do feel like I can come up with sentences in Chinese much better than at the beginning of the semester, and I do feel like I have a deeper understanding of the way the grammar works in the language. As a side note, I would like to officially mention here that I liked the exercises where we had to use criteria, but come up with our own story/translations more than I liked the more traditional translations, but I will attribute this to being a writer, and liking to do my own thing by my nature.

Most students liked the fact that the wiki-essay writing was connected to the in-class presentation. It was not just because the wiki-essay writing task helped the students prepare the content of their presentation, but also because it enabled the students to “develop writing and speaking on a single topic” so they could “become more advanced in that single topic (with vocabulary and grammar etc.)” One student wrote, “writing the wiki-essay helps give us an outline, then during our presentation I can elaborate more and even differently.”

In addition, many students mentioned that they liked having the wiki-essay and presentation on the same topic, because “it allows students to work more on it and have quality work,” and makes the students “more prepared for both.” As one student commented, “more work [if the two tasks were on different topics] sometimes equals more rushed, lesser quality work.” Another wrote, “I’m not sure I could have had the time to come up with two separate things and have both be good.” If the two tasks were totally separated, it could have prevented “students from having time to just look over what they need to and practice it.” One student wrote,

Writing the wiki-essays forces me to use the new vocabulary and express myself clearly. It gives me time to say exactly what I want, as correctly as possible. The presentations are a good way to solidify this, as well as to practice speaking Chinese in front of others without being embarrassed.

The results indicated that 82% of the students thought that the wiki-essay commenting task helped them with their reading skills. However, since different students wrote the essays differently and some may have used difficult vocabulary that they learned from their native speaker partners or from the dictionary, some students complained that “some of my classmates used a bunch of very difficult vocab, making it impossible to comprehend.”

7.4 Perception of the core tasks: in-class presentation

The in-class presentation was perceived by all students as very beneficial in that it helped with their confidence in speaking in front of an audience, with their speaking fluency in general, and with specific skills, “especially transitioning sentences.” Students wrote long passages expressing how they felt about the in-class presentations and why they liked them. Here are two examples:

The presentations/ wiki. I’m adding this as one entry, because they were basically the same thing to me- it’s hard to think of this class existing with one but not the other. They were very nerve-racking, and I hated going out in front of the class, but I think they really did help a lot. Not only did we get practice with writing and reading, we also got to practice speaking and listening.

One of my favorite things about the Chinese 201 class is the presentations we give at the completion of every chapter... They truly have improved my speaking ability and my confidence. I feel that with the presentations, we are obtaining more of each chapter than we would if we simply did not have a presentation. When I give my presentations, although I go along with what I had wrote in the essay, I try to not read directly off the slides, and this allows me to think about what to say. Overall these presentations help with my speaking fluidity and confidence.

In addition, the presentations helped students get to know more about their peers, thereby helping build a learning community, helping build a good learning environment, helping improve their ability to “speak-on-the-spot”, and helping improve their listening ability. See Figure 5.

However, listening to peer presentations was not totally satisfying. Students said that, “they do not always speak with proper tones, pronunciation and word order,” and said that “listening to native speakers is better, but that isn’t an option here, and the presentations are good.”

Since there was question and answer time after each presentation, the presenter had to answer the peers’ as well as the teacher’s questions. Eighty-two percent of students felt that by doing this, their ability to speak on-the-spot and their conversational skills improved. One student, however, wrote, “I get really nervous so my mind blanks.”

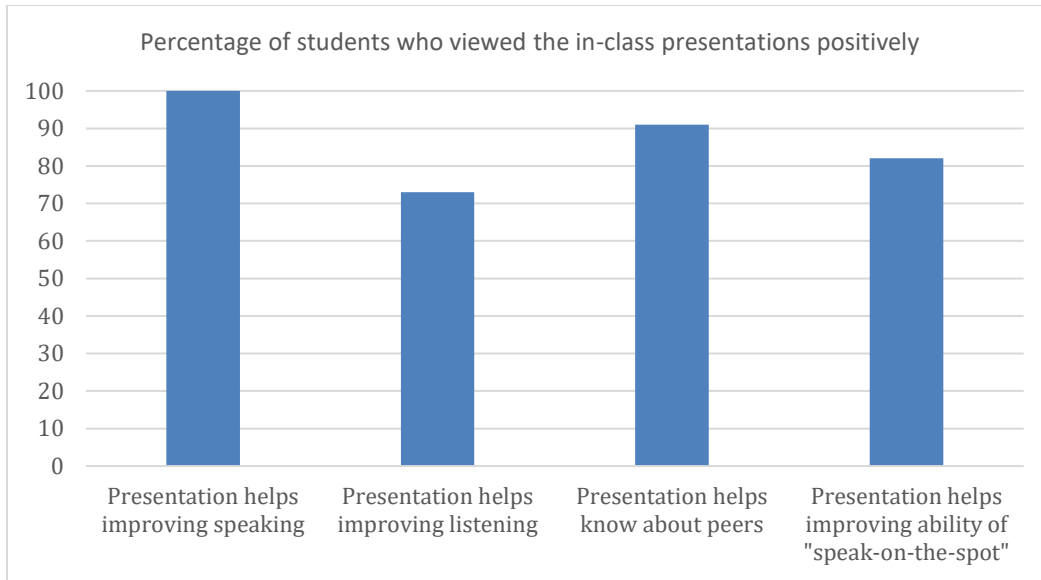


Figure 5. Percentage of students who think positively about the in-class presentations.

7.5 Perception of the post-tasks: unit comprehensive exercise and reflection

All students agreed that doing the unit comprehensive exercise gave them an opportunity to think about and review what they had learned, what the most important concept was, and what concept was the most challenging. However, students had different views about the value of writing unit reflection journals as related to managing their Chinese learning and helping them learn Chinese. See Figure 6.

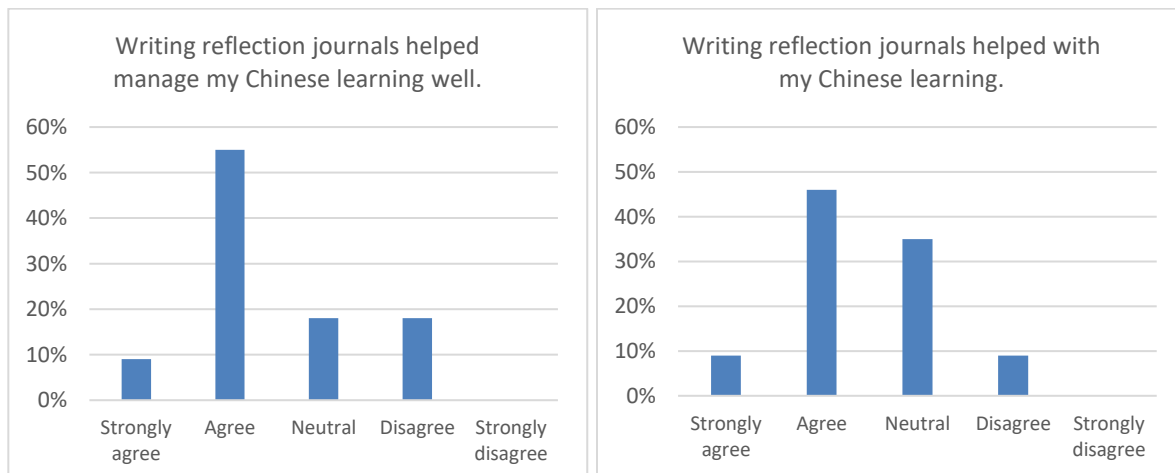


Figure 6. Students' view on writing unit reflection journals

Students who found writing unit reflection journals a helpful way of managing their learning of Chinese spoke highly of the process. One student wrote,

My third favorite part of this course was the reflections. At the beginning of the semester these reflections allowed me to self-reflect. With doing this, I could understand and see where I was making mistakes within the homework, essays, presentations, and preparation for the exams. It helped me realize what was needed to be done to keep improving and getting better.

Some students also expressed that writing reflection journals helped them think about how they learn best and also about strategies they should change in the future. One student wrote, "I think journaling and reflection in education is good. It is hard for me to measure its effect on my learning here." Another student wrote, "Reflections led me to identifying the flaws in my learning and coming up with ways to fix them. I was able to start learning the way I wanted to." However, the students who did not think it was helpful did not enjoy writing those journals. One student wrote, "It was a pain to write, and it never seemed to relate much to the chapter after I wrote it."

7.6 Perception of the design: harvest of learning strategies, culture, and friendship/learning environment

In addition to expressing how each component of the pre-task, core-task, and post-task helped or did not help with their learning, the students also expressed that they had learned using other learning strategies such as: interacting with native speakers, watching Chinese videos, using the vocabulary as often possible and in meaningful context to help with vocabulary retention, and being able to use the vocabulary appropriately. They felt these strategies were critical to learning the language. One student wrote,

Any chance, speak with natives. Send emails to Chinese people, watch Chinese videos. Become involved with the vocab so it is more useful thus easy to remember. Don't be afraid to make a mistake. Don't skip because it's too much fun. :)

Another student wrote, "I'm not too sure I would call them learning strategies, but I did learn I work a lot better when practicing with others (speaking, writing socially). I also figured out I am more excited to work on creative projects than straight translation."

Sometimes students mentioned strategies that are very commonly used and the teacher/researcher thought that students would already know to use, but found that not all students implemented those techniques. Teaching with the TBLT approach helped students become aware of the importance of adopting these basic strategies. One student said, "I have learned that it is better to continually study the vocab and grammar structures, rather than right before the tests. This allows for better retention and better incorporation into spoken word." Another student wrote, "I learned that re-reading the dialogue helps a lot!! I learned to always do the workbook translations and grammar structure exercises to help." Another one expressed, "I learned to ask questions even if I think the questions are dumb and to try in-class even if I make mistakes."

In addition, some students wrote additional comments on the questionnaire expressing that they felt that they learned more about Chinese culture and that they got to know their peers better. Below are two examples:

I feel like I learned more about Chinese culture in our class, just by the conversations that we had in class and the readings in each chapter. I also learned a lot about my peers, and made a lot of friends in that class. It was nice to have a class that would actually talk to each other, unlike my other classes which were either lectures or full of awkward freshmen.

One of my favorite things that happened while trying to improve my skills was when I met Juan from the class project and we have now been friends for a couple months and I have learned so much about Sino-American culture similarities and differences.

7.7 The most beneficial and the most and least favorable core tasks

Within the eight units, there were 12 topics for students' in-class presentations. (Note: there were several options for some units.) Students were asked to choose the most beneficial (the topics that they thought

had helped them the most in improving their language skills), the least favorable (the topic they enjoyed the least), and the most favorable (the topic they enjoyed most). Among the 12 topics, *Interview with Native Speakers on Shopping Habits* and *Views on the Use of Social Media* were ranked at the top as the most beneficial topics, followed by *Field of Study and Future Plans*, then followed by *Tell a Love Story* and *Views on Having a Part-time Job in College*.

Among the most favorable topics, *Tell a Love Story* was ranked at the top, followed by *Dining Out in a Chinese Restaurant*, *Interview with Native Speakers on Shopping Habits*, and *Views on the Use of Social Media*. Only two topics were chosen as their least favorable topics: *Interview with Native speakers on Part-time Jobs* and *Views about Having a Part-time Job in College*.

There are overlaps among the three categories. *Interview with Native Speakers on Shopping Habits* was the one that caused many controversies and was viewed as the most beneficial, the least favorable, and the most favorable topic.

Out of the 12 different topics, *Interview with Native Speakers on Shopping Habits* was ranked at the top in three categories: the most beneficial, the most favorable, and the least favorable, and it became the most controversial topic. The students gave reasons for their choices. The reason for the controversy was that completing this task required a significant investment of time and energy from the students compared to other topics. Therefore, most students learned a great deal, but at the same time, the effort tired them out. It was the most beneficial topic, not just because their Chinese language skills improved, but because they learned much more about the Chinese culture through the interview about native speakers' shopping habits compared to other topics. The interview was the most favorable because they enjoyed the in-depth interview with native speakers and broadened their horizons. It was also the least favorable, because the interview task was very time consuming, especially when they were required to record and transcribe their conversation. However, without spending the time doing all the hard work, such as coming up with interview questions, conducting the interview, recording the interview, transcribing the recording, organizing the notes, writing the wiki essays, and presenting the interview process and the results, they would not have learned as much and therefore would not have enjoyed all that they had experienced and would not have felt it was one of the most favorable and the most beneficial topics.

Tell a Love Story and *Views on the Use of Social Media* were regarded both as one of the most beneficial and as one of the most favorable topics. *Views about Having a Part-time Job in College* was regarded as one of the most beneficial, but not liked by the students. See Figure 7.

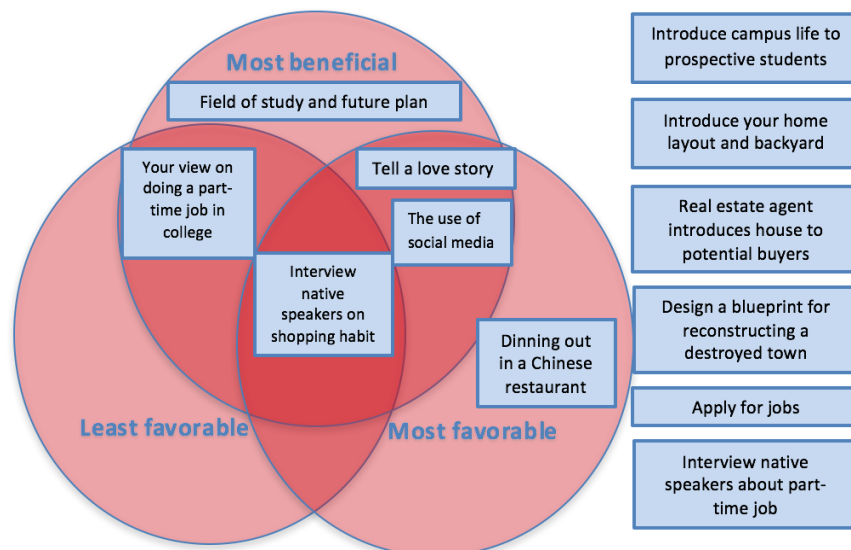


Figure 7. Students' perception of the in-class presentation topics

8 Conclusion

The findings suggest that the design of the Web 2.0-enhanced TBLT syllabus was perceived positively by the learners. The pre-task activities that were designed to help students prepare for the core-task (Nunan, 2004) in different aspects of the language, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, structure, listening, reading, speaking, and writing, seemed to have played the role they were designed to play. Furthermore, since the pre-task activities were designed to provide opportunities through different channels, auditory and visual, for the learners to be exposed to the language, different styles of learning were accommodated (Lu, 2011). The face-to-face communicative speaking opportunities offered through pair and/or group activities gave the students a meaningful context in which to use what they had learned and thereby helped them build discrete skills needed to complete the core-task.

These pre-task activities were designed to prepare the learners in both acquiring the necessary forms and in applying the forms in meaningful contexts. As Ellis (2003) cautioned, if the order of learning the linguistic forms in a syllabus does not coincide with the built-in syllabus of the learners in a syllabus that focuses on forms, learners may have difficulties in learning the target linguistic forms. However, in this wiki-enhanced TBLT syllabus, all the pre-task activities were used to help the learners build up linguistically so that they will be capable and developmentally ready to use what they have learned in meaningful contexts.

In the core-task phase, each of the three activities - interacting with native speakers, essay-writing, and in-class presentations - complemented each other well to make learning meaningful and motivating. Learning did not only happen inside the classroom. The design of the three activities with the support of Web 2.0 technology extended learning beyond classroom and enhanced the co-learning among the peers and between the CFL learners and the native speakers. As the pinnacle of all class activities, the class presentations gave the learners an opportunity to express their personality and to be creative. Most importantly, through the class presentations, students' outside classroom interactions with native speakers gained a real purpose, because there was a real audience who was eager to hear their findings from their meaningful conversations with native speakers. When there was a real purpose and a real audience, people put more energy and effort into completing the tasks. Furthermore, during the process of interacting with native speakers, presenting in class, and answering questions from their peers, students not only gained more confidence in speaking in the target language but also made friends and achieved a better understanding of Chinese culture.

The use of a wiki not only expanded the learners' learning beyond the classroom, it enabled continuous feedback on their writing from both the teacher and their peers when students were not in the classroom. Reading these wiki-essays not only familiarized the learners with what their peers were doing, but also gave them another opportunity to practice reading and writing (commenting), continually exposing them to the target language even after class was over.

With the wiki-essay writing having the same topic as the presentation, the writing and speaking enhanced each other. The students had time to focus on one topic especially deeply, and their focus was not scattered. The language was retained better, and the learners gained a deeper understanding of how the language is used.

The main reason that most students liked the unit topics for the core tasks was that these topics were closely related to their real lives. Being familiar with the topic made the task less challenging and made it more likely that the students would have extra energy to be creative. This confirms Lu (2011)'s finding that the task topic for a TBLT approach should not overload the learner, especially when unfamiliar linguistic forms are used in the tasks. Unfamiliar topics might not engage students, and most importantly, students would be too busy familiarizing themselves with the topic to have energy left for creation.

These agree with the three principles of task design that Nunan (1999) identified. These principles are the principle of authenticity, the principle of form-function, and the principle task dependency. Authenticity has been characterized as a main aspect in defining a task (Long 1985; Skehan 1996; Ellis 2003). The core-tasks in the approach have features of both the interactional authenticity (i.e.

learners are using the language in exchanging or negotiating for meaning) and the situational authenticity (i.e. the core tasks are related to learners' real life activities). The form-function principle states that form and function must be made transparent during language teaching. The wiki-essay writing helped with the process. Finally, the task dependency principle states that each task must be dependent from the task that precedes it. In designing the different phrases of tasks, each one followed the previous ones so the learners got prepared well with the final production, the pinnacle of all class activities, i.e. the in-class presentation.

There are some components of the pre- and post-task phases, however, that need further improvement. First, compared to the other pre-task, core-task and post-task activities, watching videos as a listening exercise received the lowest positive feedback from the students, due to the lack of quality in the videos and the performers' rapid speaking speed and unclear enunciation. Those videos need to be revised and remade so that the speakers in the video enunciate the sentences and slow their speaking speed, especially for the first few units.

Second, writing reflection journals as a post-task activity received the second lowest positive feedback from the students. One of the reasons for this low rating is that some students struggled to know what to write about in the reflection journal, despite the fact that detailed instructions were provided for what the reflection was to be about. As has been noted by various researchers, reflective inquiry, as the fundamental process through which human beings gain knowledge from experience, is particularly important in learning because it enables informed experimentation and develops personal awareness, academic understanding, and professional practice (Fenwick, 2001; Illeris, 2007, McGuire, Lay, & Peters, 2009; Schön, 1983). Some students were aware of the importance of being reflective in learning and even understood it as one of the learning strategies acquired in taking this course. However, in order to make everyone benefit from writing reflections, more guidance needs to be provided.

In summary, the design of the Web 2.0-enhanced TBLT syllabus allowed learners to be exposed to the target language via different channels both in the face-to-face learning environment and beyond the classroom. This study shows that it is feasible to take into consideration the different contexts of the Educational Engineering framework proposed by Colpaert (2016a; 2016b). By taking into consideration the possible problems that could arise in using the TBLT approach, such as students' persistent belief in the usefulness of grammar teaching (Bao & Du, 2015; Carless, 2007; Lai, Zhao, & Wang, 2011), teachers' lack of time for integrating TBLT at the syllabus level (Lai et al., 2011; Lopes, 2004; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol; 2007), and the lack of pronunciation/tone practice (Bao & Du, 2015), the design helped achieve the main goal that researchers and practitioners expect of TBLT, that is, providing learners with opportunities to be engaged in meaningful interactions (Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1998; 2003) through completing tasks that are related to the real world.

Given the current lack of a TBLT approach that could address both the learners' belief in the importance of grammar instruction and the importance of pronunciation instruction at the beginning stage of Chinese language learning, the findings of this study will no doubt contribute to the field by providing an approach that could be implemented at the syllabus level and gave the learners plenty of chances to learn both the grammar and use them in authentic and meaningful contexts. The students' learning is extended beyond the classroom setting by taking advantage of the wiki-tool and of the interactions with native speakers. The study, however, does have its limitations. First, if this study is only a small-scale case study. The total number of participants is 11. Most of them were Caucasians and there is a lack of diversity in the case study. If this approach was implemented with a different group of students, who are more diverse, the findings might be slightly different. Second, the data were all self-reported data. The next step could be to do an experimental study to test the effectiveness of the implementation of this approach on students' learning and motivation to learn.

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Appendix A. A description of the two core tasks (wiki-essay writing and in-class presentation)

Instruction for the wiki-essays and in-class presentations for each unit. Basic requirements for in-class presentation:

- Use visual aids, e.g. images in PPT, to help enhance the audience's understanding of your presentation.
- You should PRESENT, not read. You can have an outline with you though.
- Each of you will have 4 to 6 minutes. It's not a lot of time, so you need to prepare very well before class so that you can express all that you want to say in these few minutes.
- Use your loud and clear voice.
- Your presentations should be an expansion of your wiki-essays. The wiki-essay and the presentation are on the same topic, but they should not be exactly the same.

Unit 1. Self-Introduction and Introducing Campus Life to New Chinese Students

Suppose that you are writing and speaking to a group of Chinese students who are planning to come to this university to study.

First, you want them to get to know a little bit about you.

Second, you want them to know why you chose this university and what the pros and cons are to study at this university.

Third, tell them how long you have been at this university and whether you have adapted to the life here.

Fourth, tell them where you live, off-campus or on-campus and what the pros and cons are living off-campus and on-campus. With this info, these prospective international students will be able to make a decision soon. If they attend this university, they will know whether they will live on or off-campus. Basically, your wiki-essay¹ and presentation should include answers to the following questions with many details.

你叫什么名字(中文名字)? 你的名字是什么意思, 是哪几个字? 你是从哪儿来的? 你是在哪儿, 什么时候出生的?

你是什么时候开始上这所大学的? 你现在是大几的学生?

你为什么上这所大学? 上这所大学有什么好处有什么坏处?

你适应了这里的生活/气候/文化了吗?

你住在哪儿? 校内还是校外? 住在校内和校外的好处跟坏处。

Unit 2. Home Layout and Neighborhood (3 options)

Option #1: Find one native speaker of Chinese and ask him/her to describe to you their living environment and their house/apt in China. You will also tell him/her about your home, including the rooms, the furniture, the yard, and the neighborhood. Compare the his/hers with yours and write an

¹ The minimum number of characters for all the wiki-essays is 450. Rubrics are available for both the essays and the presentations upon request.

essay. You will describe both living places and do comparison in your in-class presentation.

Option #2: A new employee of university is going to move to Ames in a few months. He's looking for a house. You, as a real estate agent are going to recommend to this person two houses to buy. You need to tell your customer about the layout of the house, the environment, the pros and cons etc. Before doing this, please find a native speaker of Chinese and ask him/her they kind of houses they would purchase if they get a job at this university. In your wiki-essay, you will describe the two houses and make your description convincing. In the in-class presentation, you should tell us what kind of houses your Chinese friend would buy and the two houses you would recommend to them.

Option #3: A war destroyed your small town. You, with your native speaker of Chinese partner together, need to design a blueprint for re-construction. In your wiki-essay, describe the blueprint with details. In your presentation, you should tell how the war destroyed the town and your blue print. Your description of the blue print should be in details

Unit 3. Dining Out in a Chinese Restaurant

Find a time and go with a friend (native speaker of Chinese, if you have a Chinese friend) to a Chinese restaurant and order dishes IN CHINESE. Bring a menu back if possible. In your wiki-essay, write about your dining experience. In your in-class presentation, you need to address the following questions:

- a. Where did you go? With whom? When did you go? Where is this restaurant located? How did you go there? Why did you choose this particular place?
- b. Your dining experience. What did you order? How did the dishes taste?
- c. Overall comments of the restaurant. Decide whether you'd recommend it to the class or not and explain why.

Unit 4. Shopping Habits

Interview a native speaker of Chinese, ask about his/her shopping habit and his/her criteria for buying clothes, and compare his/hers with yours. In your wiki-essay, you need to specify: who you interviewed, his/her age, gender, hometown, major in college, what questions you asked and the similarities and differences in shopping habits and criteria in buying clothes etc. between you and him/her. (See the other sample materials in this document for this unit.)

Unit 5. Field of Study and Future Plans

Talk with a native speaker of Chinese and find out

1. What his/her major is or what he/she is planning to major in.
2. Whether his/her parents help(ed) him/her decide on your major.
3. His/her course plan for the next semester (and the future years).
4. His/her plan after graduation and how he/she is working toward the goal.
5. Whether he/she thinks that parents should have a say in deciding his/her major.

Then, you need to compare yours with his/hers in the above aspects. In your wiki-essay, write about the similarities and differences between you and your Chinese friend with whom you talked with. In

your presentation, you need to tell us who you talked with, his/her answer to your questions, what you and he/she have in common and what are the differences, and what you think about those differences.

Unit 6. Love Story

Ask your Chinese friend to tell you a love story from China. You tell him/her a love story in your country. In your wiki-essay, you briefly tell about the two stories and talk about your opinion. In your in-class presentation, you need to tell about the two stories clearly and tell us your thoughts about these love stories.

Unit 7. Social Media (2 options)

Option #1: 网络的好处和坏处。有的人喜欢上网，有的人不喜欢上网，特别是社交网络(social media sites)。你是哪种人？你常常去一些社交网络吗？为什么？你觉得网络有什么好处有什么坏处？上社交网络有什么好处有什么坏处？请举例(give examples)。如果你愿意，你也可以简单介绍一下你喜欢去的社交网络。你的文章和报告(presentation)都要回答这些问题。

Option #2: 用中文采访3到5个中国学生,问一问他们喜欢上什么社交网络，为什么喜欢上那个（或者那些）社交网络，他们在那些社交网络做什么。在你的文章里和你的报告中(presentation)，你要写出你的采访过程(process)和结果(the results)。

Unit 8. Part-Time Job (3 options)

Option #1: 采访三位或者四位中国学生，问问他们打工还是不打工。如果打工，他们打什么工，为什么打工；如果不打工，为什么不打工。

Option #2: Suppose you are applying for an internship in a company in China, ask one or two students from China about working in a Chinese company, and write an application letter in Chinese.

Option #3: 一边上学一边打工有什么好处有什么坏处，你是怎样做的？你的中国朋友是怎样做的？你将来的工作计划是什么？你的中国朋友有什么打算？

Appendix B. The instruction for writing the unit reflection journal.

Reflection is a form of personal response to experiences, situations, events or new information. It is a 'processing' phase where thinking and learning take place. Reflective thinking is proved to be effective in helping us learn a language

In this class, you are required to write a reflection journal after finishing each chapter. 500 words minimum. Feel free to use English to write your reflection (mixed with Chinese maybe), unless you feel you want to try writing it in Chinese. There is neither a right nor a wrong way of writing reflections, there are just questions to explore. In your reflection, you can do one or more of the following:

- a. To make connections. What you learn in class builds on your prior knowledge, whether it is formal (e.g. gained in class) or accidental (e.g. gained through interaction with people/book outside classroom). You can use the reflection to help you develop and clarify the connections between what you already know and what you are learning, between theory and practice and between what you are doing and how and why you do it.
- b. To examine your learning processes. You can make comments on your learning experiences—not only WHAT you've learned, but HOW you did so. When you examine your learning processes, you can take into consideration the classroom activities you participated in, the listening, reading, and writing homework you completed, the interaction process you had with native speakers outside of the classroom, the in-class presentations and so on.
- c. To clarify what you are learning. You can clarify what you have studied, integrate new knowledge with previous knowledge, and identify the questions you have and what you have yet to learn.
- d. To reflect on mistakes and successes. Reflecting on mistakes can help you avoid repeating them. At the same time, reflecting on your discoveries helps identify successful principles to use again. What are the common mistakes that you often make in using the language, what are the things that it takes you a long time to do well, what do you think you still need a lot of practice in order to confidently use it?

Appendix C. Questionnaire (Note: The writing space left for the participants to write their answers was removed in the following questionnaire.)

The purpose of this survey is to get your opinion about the design of our course. Your opinion will help the instructor to improve her teaching in the future. There is no right or wrong answer.

We covered 8 topics this semester. For each topic, we proceeded step by step by following this design: Vocab learning, vocab quiz, text, video of the text, grammar learning, grammar (and reading) exercises, in-class speaking activity, wiki-essay, interacting with native speakers, in-class presentation, wiki-comment, chapter quiz, and reflection journal.

1. This design works very well for me.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional Comments:

2. I feel that my Chinese speaking skills have improved a lot this semester.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Please explain why.

3. I feel that my Chinese writing skills have improved a lot this semester.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Please explain why.

4. I feel that my Chinese listening skills have improved a lot this semester.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Please explain why.

5. I feel that my Chinese readings skills have improved a lot this semester.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Please explain why.

6. Both the wiki-essay and presentation for each chapter were intentionally designed to focus on the same topic. I wished that the essay and the presentation were on two different topics.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Please explain why.

7. Writing wiki-essays helped with my presentations.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

8. The Wiki-comment tasks require reading my classmates' essays before making comments. This helped with my reading comprehension.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

9. The wiki-comment tasks helped build a Chinese learning community outside the classroom.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

10. Listening to my classmates' presentations helped me improve my Chinese listening skills.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

11. Listening to my classmates' presentations helped me know more about my classmates.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

12. The in-class presentation helped me improve my Chinese speaking skills.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

13. Answering my teacher and my classmates' questions after each presentation improved my ability of "speaking on-the-spot" in Chinese.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

14. The Wiki-essay tasks improved my Chinese writing skills.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

15. The wiki-comment tasks improved my Chinese writing skills.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

16. Interacting with native speakers helped me feel less anxious when speaking with native speakers.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

17. Interacting with native speakers helped me become a more fluent speaker of the language.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

18. Interacting with native speakers improved my ability of circumlocution (expressing things even if I didn't know all of the vocabulary or structures) in the language.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

19. Interacting with native speakers helped me improve my vocabulary and grammar knowledge.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

20. Interacting with native speakers helped improve my listening skills to better interpret and understand Chinese.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

21. Interacting with native speakers helped improve my writing skills.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

22. Interacting with native speakers helped me better understand the differences and similarities between Chinese language and my own native language.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

23. Interacting with native speakers provided me with valuable opportunities to use Chinese beyond the classroom setting.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

24. Writing reflection journals helped me manage my Chinese learning well.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

25. Writing reflection journals helped with my Chinese learning.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Please explain why.

26. The language skills assignments (translation and grammar excercises) helped with my learning.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

27. The language skills assignments (translation and grammar exercises) helped with my wiki-essay writing and presentation.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

28. Knowing that all my classmates can see my wiki-essays motivated me to make more efforts to write my wiki-essays well.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

29. Watching the video of the text helped me improve my Chinese listening skills.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

30. Watching the video of the text helped me with my in-class presentation.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

31. The vocab quiz prepared me well for learning the text and the grammars.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

32. The chapter quiz helped me review all the important grammar structures and vocabulary.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

33. I liked the pace of this class.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Additional comments?

34. In the following matrix, please indicate whether you agree or disagree that the following activities have helped you with preparing for your in-class presentation. 5 indicates strongly agree and 1 indicates strongly disagree.

1) Vocabulary quizzes	5	4	3	2	1
2) Listening comprehension exercises	5	4	3	2	1
3) Video watching	5	4	3	2	1
4) Reading comprehension exercises	5	4	3	2	1
5) Language skills (translation and grammar exercises)	5	4	3	2	1
6) In-class pair/group speaking activity	5	4	3	2	1

35. What are the difficulties in completing interviewing with native speakers?

36. What are the difficulties in completing the in-class presentation task?

37. Which step(s) of the task do you like the most? Please circle and tell why?

- 1) Designing and preparing the interview questions
- 2) Conducting the interview
- 3) Preparing for your presentation
- 4) Writing the wiki-essay
- 5) Doing the presentation
- 6) Answering questions from your peers and teacher after the presentation
- 7) Getting feedback from the teacher after the presentation

Reason(s):

38. Have you learned any language/Chinese learning strategies in this class? If yes, please specify.

39. Additional comments on anything? Use the back of the page if there is not enough space.

40. You have finished eight wiki-essay and in-class presentation tasks. (Note: A brief description of the 8 tasks was provided on a separate paper to remind the students.)

- 1) List your 3 most favorite tasks and briefly tell about why.
- 2) List your 3 least favorite tasks and briefly tell about why.
- 3) The 3 tasks that you feel have benefited your Chinese learning the most and briefly tell about why.