Teaching EFL Skills Based on the Task-Based Approach: Insights from Albania

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Abstract

Building upon the initial exploration, this comprehensive research article meticulously investigates the effectiveness of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) methodology as a potent instrument for cultivating significant and lasting learning outcomes within the specific environment of English language education at a prominent university language center located in Tirana, Albania. Acknowledging the far-reaching and transformative impact of the pandemic, which necessitated an abrupt transition to virtual education platforms, the study undertakes a critical and nuanced examination of the multifaceted obstacles that arose during this significant pedagogical shift. Grounded firmly in David Ausubel's well-established theory of meaningful learning, the investigation rigorously emphasizes the indispensable significance of learners' existing prior knowledge structures and the crucial influence of a favorable and receptive learner attitude as foundational elements in the intricate process of effectively incorporating and internalizing new information. The empirical findings of this detailed study reveal a noteworthy and statistically significant discrepancy in students' intrinsic motivation levels and their observed procedural performance in task completion. This critical observation serves to underscore the pressing and undeniable need for the widespread adoption of innovative, engaging, and distinctly learner-centered instructional strategies that can effectively address these identified disparities. While the research outcomes strongly and consistently indicate that TBL holds substantial promise and considerable potential for fostering heightened levels of student engagement, cultivating a greater sense of autonomy, and ultimately bolstering learners' self-efficacy in language acquisition, its successful and consistent execution is demonstrably and significantly constrained by the deeply ingrained and persistent prevalence of traditional teacher-centered pedagogies.

Keywords: Language Proficiency, Motivation, Procedural Performance, Significant Learning, Task-Based Learning.

Introduction

In current educational discourse, the notion of meaningful learning surpasses the simple attainment of high assessment scores. The impact of the pandemic has significantly hastened the adoption of online instruction across various disciplines, particularly in the mastery and fluency of the English language (1, 2). As a result, the investigation into learning development has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Studies have clarified Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning, highlighting that prior knowledge is pivotal for the successful integration of new information (3, 4). This prior knowledge is vital as it is embedded within the learner's cognitive structure. Hence, it is crucial to comprehend the conditions that are conducive to promoting meaningful learning within the educational framework, which encompasses the necessity of suitable instructional materials and the learner's positive attitude towards education. The Task-Based Learning methodology, in particular, facilitates meaningful learning by guiding students through the processes that culminate in the completion of specific activities or tasks (5). It also aims to determine the subsequent enhancement of students' self-efficacy and satisfaction. Each task is structured around a specific sequence of phases, during which students participate in activities designed to achieve a particular objective through the essential use of English. This approach aligns with Task-Based Language Learning, which aims to replicate authentic communicative needs within the classroom environment (6, 7). This method serves to enhance motivation and foster enjoyment in the learning process. As students engage in these tasks, they actively "manipulate" and experiment with the language in a context that holds significance for them. They concentrate on a

tangible communicative goal, moving beyond the mere reproduction of learned structures in a rigid manner. Instead, they utilize all available linguistic resources, even if it means making formal errors, from which they can later learn. The theoretical framework of this study is enriched by incorporating sociocultural theory and cognitive load theory perspectives. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in learning, which is particularly relevant for task-based language teaching where collaborative tasks facilitate language acquisition through meaningful interaction (8). Cognitive load theory provides insights into how task complexity affects learning by considering the limitations of working memory and the need to optimize intrinsic, extraneous, and germane cognitive load during task performance (9). These theoretical perspectives complement Ausubel's meaningful learning theory by providing a more comprehensive understanding of how learners process and internalize language through task involvement. The post-communist educational context of Albania presents unique challenges and opportunities for TBLT implementation. The particular difficulties in this context include: deeply entrenched teacher-centered pedagogical traditions inherited from the communist educational system; limited resources and technological infrastructure; resistance to change among educators accustomed to traditional methods, and students' unfamiliarity with autonomous learning approaches. However, this context also presents opportunities: high motivation for English language learning as a gateway to European integration; young demographic eager to embrace modern teaching methods; government support for educational reform and potential for significant impact due to the contrast with traditional methods. Although TBL is well-acknowledged for its capacity to improve language skills and learner motivation, its integration into teacher-centric educational frameworks, such as those found in Albania, is still insufficiently examined. Furthermore, the shift to online education during the pandemic has presented new obstacles, including diminished student engagement and motivation, which call for innovative instructional strategies. Research investigating TBLT in post-communist or low-resource EFL environments supports this study's

originality and justification. Studies in Eastern European contexts and in resource-constrained Asian settings demonstrate similar challenges in implementing communicative approaches (10, 11). However, limited research specifically addresses TBLT implementation in Albanian higher education, making this study's contribution particularly valuable for understanding how task-based approaches can be adapted to post-communist educational contexts. Nevertheless, specific research relating TBL to the Western Balkans post-communist countries are lacking and thus little evidence can be provided in this regard. Despite the increasing implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL) within English as Foreign Language (EFL) environments, empirical research concerning its efficacy in post-pandemic online learning settings, especially in non-Western contexts such as Albania, remains sparse.

This study seeks to fill these voids by assessing the efficacy of TBL at a university language center in Tirana, Albania, and investigating how it can be modified to address the challenges posed by conventional teacher-centric approaches in an online learning environment. The key research question that this study aims to answer is: To what extent does the Task-Based Learning (TBL) methodology facilitate significant learning results, enhance motivation, and improve language proficiency among EFL learners at a university language center in Albania, particularly within the framework of online education?

Definition of Task

Based on a prominent advocate task-based learning, the Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) approach, offers a comprehensive definition of a task that encompasses a wide range of activities while adhering to the fundamental principles of prioritizing meaning over form and employing language pragmatically. The author defines a "task" as a purposeful endeavor wherein learners utilize language to achieve a tangible outcome. This implies that learners draw upon their available language resources to address a problem, solve a puzzle, engage in a game, or share and compare their experiences. Furthermore, she emphasizes the importance of having a shared goal within the task that can yield measurable results for the group (12).

This approach encourages students to engage in Task-Based Language learning by recreating

authentic communicative needs within the classroom. Students are prompted to confront the task and reflect on their actions in a manner that aligns with the specific context. The problem situation establishes a framework of shared understanding between the teacher and students, guiding the structure of the project and anticipating the final product of the collaborative work (13). Tasks can originate from various stimuli, including written texts, audio recordings, images, or even the students' prior knowledge and representations. Engagement in various activities such as games, presentations, and interviews can facilitate meaningful communication in this approach. It is crucial that students genuinely convey their thoughts during these tasks rather than merely reciting memorized phrases. This necessitates providing learners with opportunities to communicate their intentions and express their emotions or thoughts. Utilizing language for authentic purposes allows learners to recall and apply their existing linguistic knowledge (14). The focus is on the significance of communication, where learners utilize language to share meanings with a specific aim in mind. They should have the freedom to employ the vocabulary and structures they find appropriate, leveraging their entire linguistic repertoire while also exploring new linguistic elements. In the case of English as a second language but also as a lingua franca, task-based learning and teaching and effectiveness strategies gain a specific importance (15, 16).

Task-Based Language Learning Approach

The significance of language as a fundamental tool for communication underscores the principles of Task-Based Language Learning, which incorporates the theoretical framework of the lexical approach that approach suggests that in the initial phases of language acquisition, it is more beneficial and "natural" to concentrate on the lexicon rather than beginning with grammatical structures (17). The lexicon is viewed not merely as a collection of words to be memorized, but as meaningful segments known as chunks. Engaging with and reflecting on these lines facilitates an inductive understanding of the grammatical system, akin to the way native speakers utilize structures without necessarily being aware of formal grammatical rules.

Critics of this perspective contend that, given the vast number of lines in any language, it is more effective to first teach learners grammatical rules that provide a framework for constructing sentences (18). While it is true that there are numerous grammatical rules, the ability to acquire and utilize complex lexical units from the outset, without the need for morph syntactic analysis, enhances fluency and self-efficacy. This is because it is easier and faster to recall complete expressions from memory and adapt them as necessary, rather than to build each sentence from abstract grammatical principles. The focus is not on the rote memorization of fixed expressions for the sake of linguistic practice.

Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL), which has gained prominence since the 1990s, aligns with the communicative approach and challenges the traditional presentation-practice-production (PPP) framework. Following advancements in second language acquisition research, numerous scholars began to critique the effectiveness of the PPP model that had been prevalent until that time (19, 20). They also argued that merely replicating communicative scenarios would not inherently create the cognitive conflict necessary for students, nor would it ensure the level of mental engagement required to facilitate a meaningful and enduring development of their inter-language advancement. Each task-based teaching unit is structured around distinct phases that aim to engage cognitive processes, aligning with the cognitive premise that "language proficiency is the reflection of cognitive processes" (21). These units are designed to address the fundamental aspects of second language acquisition. Language in this sense is more effectively learned when utilized for its primary purpose of conveying meaning; students are more likely to recognize gaps in their knowledge when they encounter a need for the missing information; learning occurs more readily when individuals are prepared for it. Research emphasizes that in genuine communication, meaning takes precedence over form; individuals articulate personal meanings rather than merely imitating others, thus moving beyond rote repetition (22).

Consequently, the focus should shift from a model of formal correctness (presentation) that is to be memorized and reproduced, to the task itself, which encourages students to engage their skills

and prior knowledge. This approach, according to the author, fosters a genuine need to learn or enhance their understanding of concepts they have yet to master. As further research succinctly articulate, the TBL methodology transitions from achieving correctness from the outset to achieving it (23). This shift implies that attention to form is more beneficial when introduced at a later stage, rather than at the beginning as suggested by the traditional PPP model. Such an approach enhances the stability of learning, as students are motivated and prepared to acquire structures that arise from their communicative needs and voluntary attempts to utilize them. When tasked with executing an assignment, outcomes are evaluated based on the conveyance of meanings rather than mere signifiers, learners utilize the full spectrum of linguistic resources available to them. This process does not necessarily involve the replication of structures provided in a situational context. Rather, it reflects the authentic interactions they would engage in with native speakers. Consequently, learning transpires through a process that is both instinctive and analytical. As students engage in practical application without having undergone an initial phase of "modeling" to acquire foundational structures, they experience cognitive dissonance.

This dissonance prompts them to reflect on their language use, leading them to consider what to employ and how to do so effectively. Students embark on a comprehensive experience of language application, refining their focus on specific features that naturally arise within that language. By this stage, students have actively engaged with the language and have processed it for meaning. The analysis of language that occurs following the task production phase plays a crucial role in engaging and maintaining student interest. This engagement arises from the students' prior attempts to utilize the targeted structures, which creates a perceived necessity to complete the task. From the perspective of inter-language development, students may feel prepared to assimilate these structures. A task-based approach offers significant advantages according to research it not only fosters an environment conducive to language acquisition but also enables the teacher to maintain a degree of control over the classroom activities (24). Through the task, the professor can provide students with opportunities for meaningful language use and subsequently direct their attention to specific linguistic features that enhance task completion (25, 26).

The stages of Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) are organized into three primary categories: the pre-task, the task, and the post-task. A concise overview of the various components within the TBLL framework is provided in the following Figure 1.
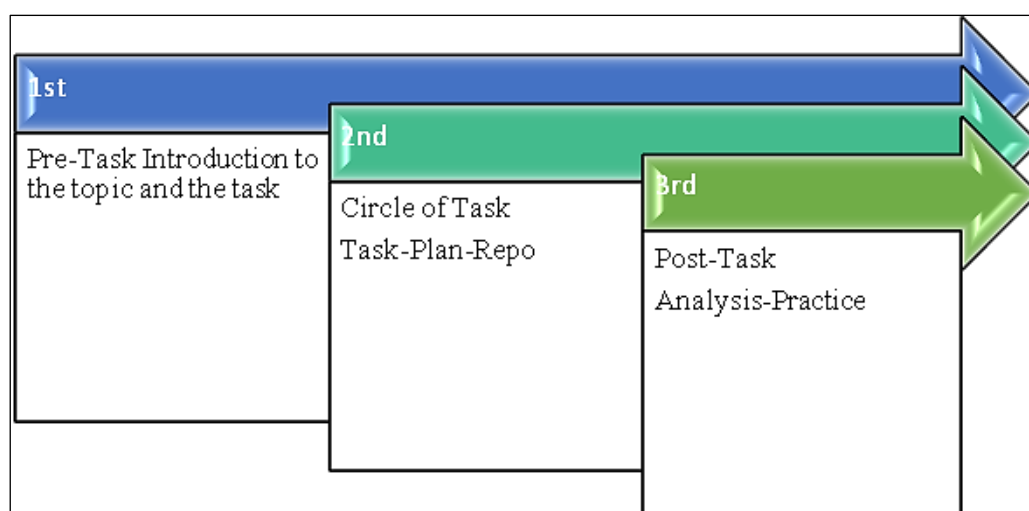
Figure 1*: TBLL Framework Stages

The initial pre-task phase involves the introduction of both the topic and the task at hand. It is essential for the professor to prepare relevant materials and activities that not only contextualize the task but also stimulate student interest and engagement. During this phase, students should be exposed to language and stimuli that facilitate the reactivation of previously learned vocabulary and structures, as well as the identification of new, useful linguistic elements. Importantly, language

models are not provided in advance. This approach encourages students to independently determine how to express their meanings, develop their own strategies, and recognize their need to learn specific linguistic features. Past research articulate this idea effectively: when students identify gaps in their skills that hinder task completion, they are likely to seek the teacher's assistance spontaneously and will be more open to the explanations offered, as these will be crucial for task fulfillment (27). Consequently, students will utilize and acquire only those linguistic forms that emerge as necessary within that context, thereby enhancing their readiness and motivation to learn. The second phase, referred to as the task cycle, can be further subdivided into two distinct sub-phases: the initial sub-phase involves collaborative work in pairs or groups to strategize the task, followed by the plenary session where results and strategies are shared. In the first sub-phase, students are organized into pairs or groups based on the nature of the task at hand. They are allotted preparation time, which enables students to contemplate their contributions and articulate their thoughts. This preparation period is believed to enhance metalinguistic awareness regarding language form, as students are motivated to execute the task effectively (28). It is crucial for the instructor to allow students the autonomy to engage with the task independently, adhering to the provided guidelines, and to refrain from correcting errors or offering suggestions unless explicitly solicited by students who may require assistance with specific linguistic elements. In the subsequent sub-phase, students present their work to the class and engage in comparative discussions. The professor assumes the role of a facilitator during this process. The "production" phase, which is typically positioned at the end of a lesson in traditional communicative approaches, is uniquely prioritized in Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) before the presentation and practice phases, marking a significant innovation in this pedagogical approach (29). The final phase transitions the focus from meaning to form, emphasizing the grammatical structures and vocabulary that have surfaced during the task. This is followed by activities designed to reinforce and apply the newly acquired knowledge alongside previously established understanding.

Methodology

This section presents the findings derived from applying various data collection techniques. A questionnaire was administered to 40 English students at the University of Tirana Foreign Languages Center to assess their perceptions of meaningful learning about their language proficiency. Additionally, semi-structured interview guides were utilized for EFL professors. Interviewing professors aimed to gather in-depth insights regarding the implications of meaningful learning in their professional practice. The professors' objective was to understand the organizational processes that would facilitate meaningful learning for students within the Center. Finally, upon completing the virtual interviews, necessitated by the post-pandemic context, the theoretical and practical knowledge regarding the strategies employed in their English language teaching sessions was verified. This allowed for a comparison of the obtained results with those from the questionnaire, thereby enabling a confirmation of the identified issues.

Purpose

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Task-Based Learning (TBL) framework in enhancing meaningful learning outcomes, motivation, and procedural competence among EFL students in Albania. The study objective is to identify the challenges and obstacles associated with the implementation of TBL and offer pragmatic recommendations for employing TBL strategies to improve student engagement, self-esteem, and language proficiency in EFL contexts in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Variables of the Study

The current study defined various dependent and independent variables, such as the acquisition and instruction of English via a task-based methodology (dependent variables), and an assessment of learning's importance (independent variable). The independent variable indicates that, in the context of second language acquisition, the activities that teachers are required to develop are crucial for facilitating significant learning experiences for their students.

Instruments

The research employed two primary instruments: the interview guide and the questionnaire. Both

instruments underwent the validation processes to establish their validity and reliability within the context of scientific research.

Questionnaire

The researchers advocating for the Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) approach identify three essential prerequisites for facilitating language acquisition: exposure to the target language, its practical application, and learner motivation. The development of a questionnaire stems from the necessity to reliably assess students' motivation for learning English, moving beyond subjective empirical observations. This instrument comprises both closed and open-ended questions designed to gauge students' appreciation for the subject matter and to identify which activities and methodologies are perceived as most engaging. Such insights are crucial for making informed adjustments to instructional strategies.

The questionnaire also features a section that employs a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "never" and 5 signifies "always," to evaluate students' perceptions of their self-efficacy in learning and performing in a foreign language. Analyzing the data from a comparative standpoint will be particularly enlightening, given the strong correlation between self-efficacy and motivation as literature argues (30). Although the TBLL framework typically discourages the use of the mother tongue, this questionnaire was nonetheless composed in Albanian. Due to the considerations and considering the contemporary context, the questionnaire was distributed in a virtual platform (Google Form). The questionnaire metric properties underscore its reliability, with this study revealing Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega values of $\alpha = 0.861$ and $\omega = 0.79$.

The Quasi-Experimental Phase

The course was structured into three instructional segments, each lasting fifty minutes. The overarching goals included enabling students to effectively introduce themselves, inquire about others, and respond regarding personal information. Additionally, students were expected to articulate their interests and discuss hobbies to facilitate communication with English -speaking counterparts. The initial activity designed within this innovative framework of linguistic exchange was, as one might expect, a presentation. To emphasize oral production in the research, the task required each student to produce an audio recording.

Qualitative Analysis

The process of analyzing, interpreting, and discussing the results commenced with the systematic reduction of the extensive information and data gathered from two primary instruments: the survey and the interview. Qualitative analysis was conducted using MAXDA Pro, which enabled data reduction through coding, thereby allowing for the identification of key themes or codes articulated by the interview participants. Subsequently, a triangulation process was implemented to compare the data obtained from the interviewees with existing concepts and theories.

Results and Discussion
Results of the Survey conducted with Students

For the present applied research, whose objective is to develop or improve a specific situation, it has been necessary to use a quantitative instrument to diagnose the problematic situation more concretely; and thus, to be able to find a solution to it. To do so, a survey was conducted with 40 students, to verify the development of significant learning of the English language. This is considered the opinion they have about their learning and that is linked to the performance of the subject teacher, who is the one who directs the teaching-learning process.

The figure and tables in this paper show the distribution of student responses and the progression of language proficiency scores over the semester. For example, Table 1 summarizes student motivation levels before and after TBLT implementation, while Figure 1 shows the increase in average speaking proficiency scores. These visual aids support the quantitative findings and highlight the positive impact of TBLT.

The results were processed using the statistical package SPSS-v29. The following table 1 gives a view of these data.

Table 1: Levels of Significance of Learning

		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Accumulative Percentage
Valid	Low	20	48	48	48
	Normal	12	26	26	52
	High	8	26	26	100
	Total	40	100	100	

The analysis of the interpretative findings concerning the importance of acquiring proficiency in the English language revealed that among the 40 respondents, 48% of the students do not adequately grasp the concepts necessary for their current level of study.

In a summary of the tabulated data from the survey, it was observed that:

- 78% of students reported increased motivation;
- 65% felt their speaking skills improbe;
- 82% preferred task-based lessons over traditional grammar-focused lessons.

Only 26 % of the participants reported a distinct experience. This disparity suggests that the comprehension of course material is not occurring as intended. It is well established that meaningful learning is realized when the knowledge acquired is effectively assimilated and utilized within a specific context. Table 2 provides the results of the relation between procedure and attitudinal performance levels.

Table 2: Significant Procedure and Attitudinal Performance Levels

		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Accumulative Percentage
Valid	Low	20	50	50	52
	Normal	15	34	34	48
	High	5	16	16	100
	Total	40	100	100	

In terms of notable procedural and attitudinal performance, it was observed that among the total respondents [40], 50% of the surveyed students exhibited a lack of an active and evaluative attitude during class sessions. Conversely, only 16% of the participants express a contrary viewpoint. This suggests a substantial likelihood that the knowledge acquired is not being effectively applied. In the absence of assessment for learning, it is unlikely that students will achieve significant academic performance (know-how), as shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3: Levels of Educational Motivation

		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage	Accumulative Percentage
Valid	Low	17	43	43	38
	Normal	15	38	38	62
	High	8	19	19	100
	Total	100	100	100	

As can be deduced from the above table, in terms of the analysis of educational motivation, it was revealed that among the 40 respondents, 43% reported a lack of motivation to engage in learning during class sessions. This finding underscores the importance of the teacher's and professor's role in exploring innovative strategies to nurture students' intrinsic desire for continued learning. Conversely, it was observed that only 19% of the respondents expressed motivation to learn, highlighting that fostering motivation is a critical component of the overall learning experience for students.

The findings indicate that students responded positively to TBLT, reporting increased motivation, engagement, and perceived language proficiency. Teachers noted improvements in students' willingness to communicate and collaborate. However, challenges included limited

resources, large class sizes, and initial resistance to new teaching methods.

Interviews with Professors

The purpose of interviewing students and professors was to gather comprehensive insights on how significant learning influences their professional practices. For professors, the aim was to understand the organizational processes that facilitate significant learning for students within the center. Two interviews were conducted virtually, allowing for the validation of both theoretical and practical knowledge regarding the strategies employed in face-to-face sessions that promote significant learning in English language instruction. This approach enabled a comparison of the findings from the interviews with the questionnaire results to confirm the identified issues.

The Results Derived from Interviews with Professors

Qualitative data revealed that meaningful learning in English language instruction highlights a consensus on the importance of establishing connections with students. Specifically, professors emphasized the need to select topics that resonate with students' interests and are pertinent to the Albanian context, thereby enhancing their willingness to engage in the learning process. Regarding the improvements necessary for fostering meaningful learning, the first professor noted that instructional materials should exhibit coherence in their content to aid student comprehension. In contrast, the second professor advocated for the adaptation of content to align with student preferences. When discussing the reasons behind students' difficulties in achieving fluent communication in English, both professors concurred that insufficient practice contributes to their lack of confidence in student's interactions. In addressing the apparent disinterest among students in learning the language, the first professor attributed this to the limited time allocated for language practice and a weak foundational background, particularly for those who attended national schools. The second professor suggested that individual learning challenges and negative past experiences could also play a role. Both professors recognized educational motivation as a critical element in the learning process. They expressed that motivating student during lessons is often difficult, as a lack of

motivation can create an unengaged classroom environment, hindering social integration. They indicated that professors face specific challenges related to the development of the four language skills, which results in many students lacking the necessary fluency to effectively communicate in English. In terms of strategies to enhance meaningful learning among university students, the first professor interviewed suggested that writing on topics relevant to their field of study could be beneficial. Conversely, the second interviewee emphasized the critical role of virtual platforms in English language instruction, asserting that these tools are vital for contemporary student learning. Concerning the final aspect of the interview, which focused on techniques, resources, or activities aimed at improving language skills, both professors noted their use of digital platforms, including music and videos, to facilitate the practice of learned material. The analysis of the professors' interviews provided a deeper insight into their perspectives on significant learning within their professional roles. While it highlighted key concepts, it also revealed certain areas for improvement in the teaching of the English language. In terms of an evidence-based approach in TBLT lesson plan, both professors suggested a map of TBLT that in a role-play context included the following steps:

Topic: Ordering Food at a Restaurant

Pre-task: Brainstorm vocabulary and phrases related to restaurants.

Task: In pairs, students role-play a restaurant scenario, with one acting as the waiter and the other as the customer. They must order food, ask about menu items, and handle a complaint.

Post-task: Groups share their experiences and discuss strategies for effective communication. This lesson map demonstrates how TBLT can be applied in the classroom to promote authentic language use and develop communicative competence.

Analysis, Interpretation, Triangulation, and Discussion of the Results

This triangulation process elucidates the analysis and interpretation of all findings, integrating qualitative and quantitative data from each subcategory related to the primary problem category. From this analysis, two emergent categories have been identified.

The findings derived from the fieldwork pertaining to the subcategory "Significance of Learning" are

shown in the Figure 2 below.
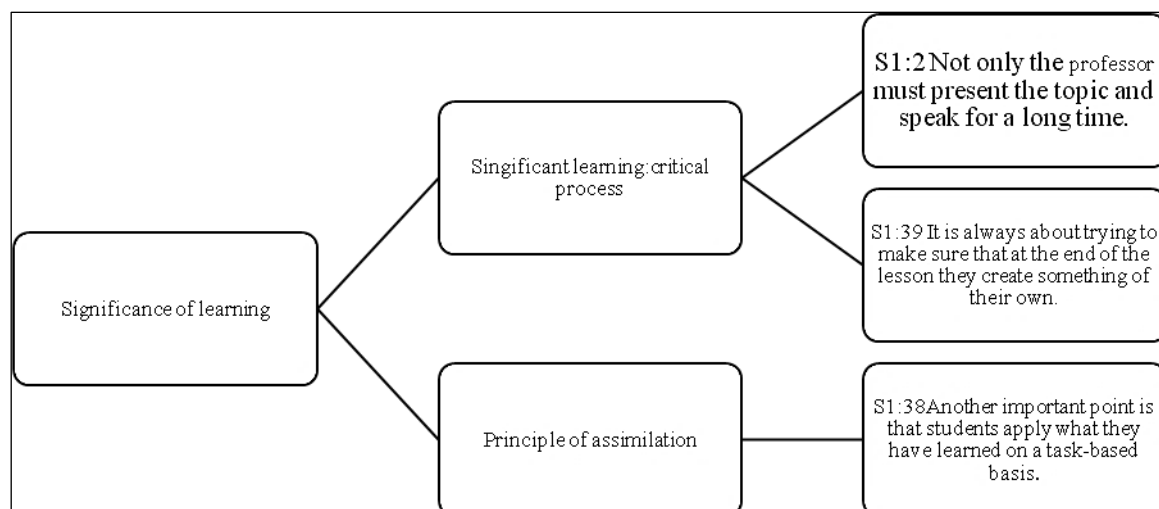
Figure 2: Qualitative Analysis of the Subcategory Significance of Learning

Most students, specifically 48%, fail to attain meaningful learning outcomes while 26 % achieve it to a satisfactory level. This observation is corroborated by the interviewees, who indicate that a limited number of professors successfully foster a critical perspective among their students regarding the relevance and applicability of knowledge. This situation persists due to the continued reliance on teacher-centered methodologies. Consequently, it is often the case that the professor dominates the discourse, overshadowing the student's role in the educational process. As noted by research achieving meaningful learning necessitates that students adopt an active approach to organizing

their knowledge, which includes identifying similarities and differences within the information they encounter (31). Direct quotes from participants included in the thematic analysis, employ:

"I felt more confident speaking English when we worked in groups on real-life tasks."

"At first, I was not used to this way of learning, but now I enjoy it because it is more practical."

"Sometimes it was difficult because we did not have enough materials, but the tasks helped us learn by doing."
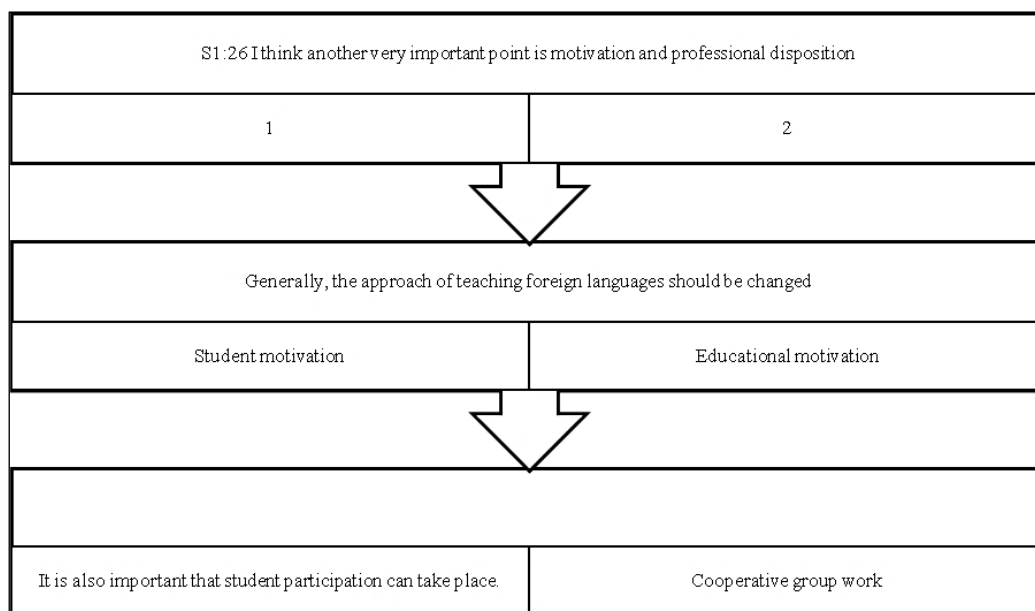
Following are the details of findings discovered in the subcategory "Significant procedural, attitudinal performance" in Figure 3.
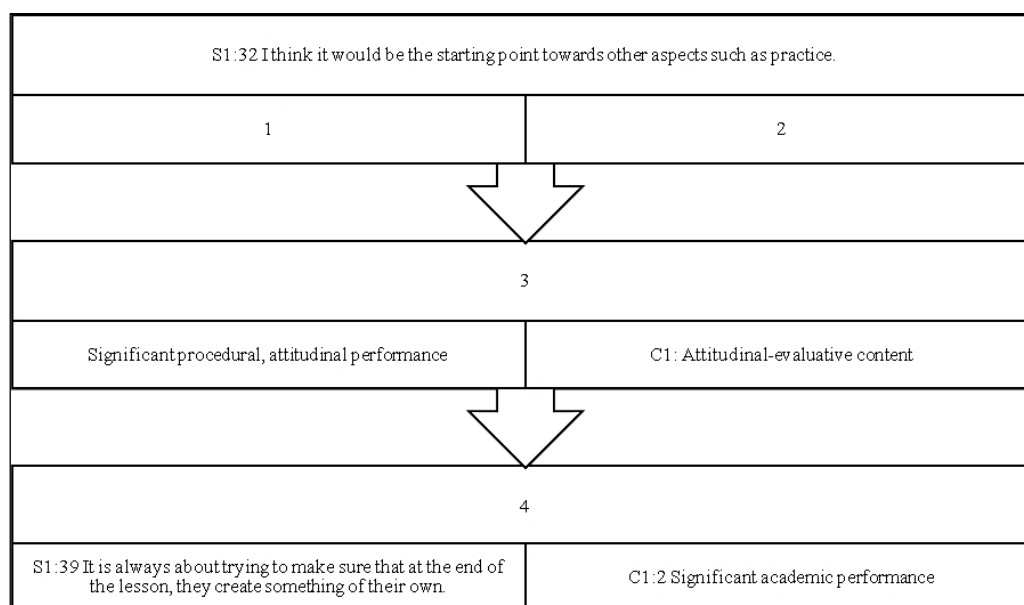
Figure 3: Qualitative Analysis of the Significant Procedural and Attitudinal Performance Subcategory

50% of students show a low attitude during physical class sessions. Conversely, only 16% of the participants express a contrary viewpoint. This observation is supported by the accounts of interviewees, who indicate that many students experience anxiety regarding the pronunciation of English words. This fear leads them to believe that they will struggle to acquire proficiency in the language. As a result, these students often fail to achieve satisfactory academic performance, which in turn hinders their ability to apply the knowledge acquired in class effectively. Consequently, the educational content delivered during sessions is not fully appreciated. Following are details of such findings discovered in the field work of the subcategory "Educational motivation" in Figure 4.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   S1:26 I think another very important point is motivation and    │
│                  professional disposition                         │
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│            1               │                2                    │
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│ Generally, the approach of teaching foreign languages should be   │
│                          changed                                  │
├────────────────────────────┬────────────────────────────────────┤
│      Student motivation    │        Educational motivation       │
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│ It is also important that  │      Cooperative group work         │
│ student participation can  │                                     │
│ take place.                │                                     │
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Figure 4: Qualitative Analysis of the Educational Motivation Subcategory

43% of the respondents report a lack of motivation to engage in learning during class sessions, while only 19% express a willingness to learn. This observation is supported by the interviewees, who indicate that many students experience anxiety when attempting to communicate in English. The anxiety may stem from several factors, including negative past experiences that have contributed to their insecurity. Motivation is seen as a specific technique rather than a teaching method, emphasizing that cognitive engagement is fostered throughout the learning process rather than being confined to isolated moments.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, the authors assert that the Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) approach is an effective method for teaching and learning foreign languages. This approach, when applied in broad TFL settings, will foster student interest, motivation, and active participation. By assigning practical functions to the language that aim at achieving specific objectives, students develop a genuine need for the language, which encourages them to engage with it in an initiative-taking and intentional manner. This engagement leads to enhanced learning outcomes that are deeper and more enduring. In this pedagogical framework, the professor's role shifts from merely imparting knowledge to facilitating learning by designing relevant tasks and guiding students toward greater independence and skill development. The establishment of a communicative context, exemplified by the language exchange project integrated with an English learning course, enabled the collaborative exploration of the meanings and objectives of the tasks presented. Our conclusions are organized into four primary categories as follows:

First: The primary aim of the research was achieved through the introduction of the Task-Based Learning methodological approach, which facilitates the enhancement of meaningful English learning at a university language center in Tirana.

Second: The fieldwork diagnosis employed various instruments and techniques for information collection, which were subsequently coded, analyzed, and interpreted. This process

revealed a significant lack of an appropriate methodological strategy for English language instruction. Specifically, it highlighted the persistence of a teacher-centered methodology, which is further supported by the students' limited proficiency in the language. Additionally, challenges in promoting transversal motivation during class sessions were also apparent.

Third: The theoretical underpinnings of the methodological approach aimed at fostering meaningful learning of the English language within a university language center in Tirana have been systematically organized. This process involved the examination of priori categories and subcategories, which were conceptualized based on the criteria established by foundational authors in the field. Consequently, the knowledge and information presented in this scientific research are substantiated and contribute to the actual literature background in TBL.

Fourth: The design of the TBL methodological strategy was aligned with the objectives based on theoretical, practical, and methodological criteria, which were crucial for fostering meaningful English learning at a university language center in Tirana. This alignment enhanced the feasibility of the proposal by encompassing various elements essential for its implementation, including alternative solutions, objectives, activities, specific tasks, designated responsibilities, and the formulation of a budget.

However, the results should be taken into account when it comes to the topics teachers use to discuss in class, how to boost educational motivation, what influence virtual platforms have, etc. This research adds to the current body of literature regarding Task-Based Learning (TBL) by furnishing empirical support for its efficacy within a non-Western, post-pandemic virtual educational framework. In particular, it emphasizes the difficulties encountered in applying TBL in teacher-centered educational systems and suggests practical strategies for adapting TBL to mitigate these obstacles. The results accentuate the significance of learner-centered pedagogical approaches and present a structured framework for incorporating TBL within virtual EFL settings. By reducing the disparity between theoretical perspectives and practical implementation, this study provides valuable direction for educators and policymakers aiming to improve language

learning outcomes in analogous environments. All outcomes reported in this paper, reflect the research goals of evaluating the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing student motivation, engagement, and language proficiency in a post-communist EFL context.

Although this study focuses on Albania, the findings have broader implications for other post-communist and transitional education systems. The challenges and opportunities identified—such as the need for teacher training, resource adaptation, and gradual pedagogical change—are relevant to similar contexts seeking to implement TBLT.

This research has limitations in terms of broad interpretation owing to the small sample size; however, it promotes further investigations into enhancing the teaching process via a task-based approach.

Abbreviation
None.

Author Contributions
Debora Gjoni: conceptualization, performed the analysis, final writing, drafted the manuscript, Klodeta Dibra: pre-draft review, supervision, wrote the methodology.

Conflict of Interest
The authors declare that they have no known competing or financial interests to disclose.

Ethics Approval
The authors commenced the data collection process involving the study participants according to the ethical guidelines established by the University of Tirana. Participants were provided with a comprehensive Informed Consent document that outlined the study's objectives, aims, general instructions for the questionnaire, and anticipated results. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were safeguarded in compliance with the ethical standards set forth by the Data Protection Law no. 9887, which was amended in 2014 by the Republic of Albania, as well as the European Regulation on the Protection

of Privacy and Personal Data concerning the handling of data for research purposes.

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