TBL in TBT: 
A longitudinal study on training the next generation of teachers of L2 Chinese

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Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is becoming increasingly known for its distinct edge in developing learners’ functional competence. Although its potential in promoting content-based learning – where content learning is intentional and language learning incidental -- has yet to be substantially revealed, it is, nevertheless, psychologically real, given the primary attention to meaning in TBLT. To what extent, then, does the potential play out in foreign language teacher education, a domain involving much content learning, is both an intellectually stimulating and practical question – one that the present study sought to address. This paper reports on a semester-long study investigating task-based learning in a Chinese language teacher-training program that promoted TBLT. Participants were Chinese-speaking trainees, who, while being exposed to TBLT as the subject, performed ongoing tasks. Data from one task – reading journal entries – written in English by three of the participants were analyzed for both content and language, quantitatively and qualitatively. Results show tangible gains on both counts - understanding TBLT (content) and the ability to articulate it (language). Conceptual and methodological implications of the findings are discussed for future research.

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