

Original Paper

The Manifestation of Task-Based Language Teaching in Chinese Business English Textbooks

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Received: October 13, 2025 Accepted: November 17, 2025 Online Published: November 21, 2025
doi:10.22158/eltls.v7n6p35 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/eltls.v7n6p35>

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the extent to which a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach is integrated into Business English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials used in China. Adopting a qualitative analytical framework, the research evaluates two prominent coursebooks, Business English: An Integrated Course 2 and Market Leader: Pre-Intermediate, against established TBLT criteria and Willis's (1996) task-based learning framework. The analysis reveals a divergent application of TBLT principles between the two materials. Findings indicate that Market Leader incorporates TBLT to a significant extent, featuring communicative tasks aligned with real-world business activities and a coherent task cycle. In contrast, Business English: An Integrated Course 2 demonstrates a lower level of TBLT integration, with a stronger emphasis on discrete language points and grammatical exercises over holistic, meaning-focused tasks. The study concludes that the implementation of TBLT in Chinese Business English ESP materials remains insufficient and inconsistent. It is recommended that material developers and practitioners consciously adapt pedagogical activities to better align with TBLT principles, thereby enhancing the development of students' practical communicative skills in authentic business contexts.

Keywords

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Business English, English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

1. Introduction

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), an extension of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), is an instructional approach that organizes language teaching around tasks as the central unit of planning and practice. Since its emergence and subsequent development in the 1980s, TBLT has garnered significant attention from second language acquisition (SLA) scholars and linguists. In China, it has been advocated as a key component of language teaching reform. TBLT emphasizes a student-centered

learning process, where learners are motivated through task engagement to participate actively in the classroom. Through the iterative process of tackling meaningful tasks, students develop comprehensive language skills, thereby achieving language learning objectives by accomplishing authentic communicative activities.

The ongoing development of the global economy has intensified international trade activities, consequently generating a growing demand in China for professionals with specialized Business English skills. In response to this trend, studies by Chinese scholars have investigated the status of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in higher education, concluding that ESP instruction is not only necessary and feasible but also warrants more extensive implementation. Although research in this field started relatively late, ESP courses, particularly Business English, are receiving escalating scholarly and pedagogical attention in the Chinese context. It is noteworthy that, as Gimenez (2001, p. 169) observes, a considerable body of research has traditionally centered on interactions between native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS). In reality, however, the use of Business English is now increasingly prevalent in interactions solely among NNSs.

The data for this study are drawn from two Business English ESP textbooks widely adopted in the Chinese context, particularly at the undergraduate level. This article is structured as follows. It begins with a literature review establishing the theoretical foundations, which encompasses key definitions, criteria, and frameworks of TBLT, alongside the core concept of ESP. Subsequently, it presents a detailed analysis of the two selected textbooks, evaluating their alignment with TBLT principles and Willis's (1996) framework to determine the extent of TBLT implementation. The paper concludes by summarizing the key findings and offering practical recommendations for pedagogy and materials development.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Conceptual Foundation of Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT was first systematically proposed by Prabhu (1987) from a pedagogical standpoint, with the foundational goal of facilitating language acquisition through the process of completing meaning-focused tasks.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) characterize TBLT as an approach designed to supplant traditional, language-centric syllabi with those organized around communicative tasks as the core instructional unit. They further note that TBLT is often regarded as an evolution and refinement of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, given its emphasis on structuring learning around authentic tasks. Within this process, aspects of communicative language use and grammatical knowledge are anticipated to arise naturally. This perspective firmly establishes TBLT as a distinct branch within the broader CLT paradigm.

Complementing this view, Jack C. Richards describes TBLT more as a 'procedure' than a 'method'. This distinction aligns with Kumaravadivelu's (2006, p. 93) assertion that a 'task is not a

methodological construct; it is curricular content,' highlighting the role of tasks as central components of the curriculum rather than merely instructional techniques.

The Concept of 'Task' in TBLT

The concept of 'task' is central to the planning and implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching. A clear understanding of how 'task' is defined is therefore a prerequisite for any in-depth engagement with the TBLT framework. However, the field lacks a singular, universally accepted definition, as interpretations vary considerably among scholars. The evolution of the concept reflects a shift from broad, real-world activities to more focused pedagogical constructs.

Early definitions emphasized real-world relevance. Long (1985), for instance, conceptualized tasks broadly as the myriad activities people undertake in daily life and work, ranging from mundane chores to professional duties. Crookes (1986) built upon this foundation but narrowed the scope, defining a task more specifically as a goal-oriented activity undertaken within an educational or occupational setting.

With Prabhu (1987), the focus shifted explicitly to the classroom dynamic. He defined a task as a cognitive activity where learners derive an outcome from given information, a process facilitated and regulated by the teacher. Ellis (2003, p. 16) further refined the pedagogical perspective, characterizing a task primarily as a 'workplan' that requires learners to use language pragmatically to achieve a communicatively evaluable outcome.

In critiquing the overly broad nature of earlier definitions, Nunan (2004, p. 4) argued for a definition centered on classroom application. He emphasizes that a pedagogical task must engage learners in meaningful communication using the target language, with a primary focus on conveying meaning rather than manipulating form. Furthermore, he stresses that a genuine task should possess a coherent structure, standing as a complete communicative act in itself.

In summary, despite the nuanced differences in the definitions reviewed, a consensus emerges on several core attributes of a task. As Willis (1996) authoritatively asserts, tasks are fundamentally goal-oriented activities. They are versatile in format, encompassing a spectrum from written exercises and oral dialogues to simulations like games and interviews. The essential starting point for any task is a communicative need that prompts learners to strategically deploy their existing language resources and engage with the task's core features to achieve authentic and meaningful linguistic outcomes.

Defining Principles of a Task

Given the plurality of definitions for a 'task', establishing a set of core criteria is essential for a clear and operational understanding of TBLT. While scholars have proposed various frameworks, this study synthesizes the seminal work of Ellis (2009) and Willis and Willis (2007) to form its analytical basis. Ellis (2009), building upon and defending earlier proposals by Skehan (1998) against critiques from scholars like Widdowson (2003), elaborated a robust set of four criteria that integrate semantic and pragmatic meaning. Willis and Willis (2007) proposed a highly compatible set of principles. The convergence of these perspectives allows for the consolidation of five core criteria, which are

summarized in Table 1 and will guide the subsequent textbook analysis in this study.

Table 1. Synthesis of Task Criteria for Analysis

Core Criteria (This Study)	Corresponding Emphasis in Foundational Frameworks
1) Meaning-focused	Primary focus on “meaning” (semantic and pragmatic processing of utterances). (Ellis, 2009)
2) Involves communication	Presence of a “gap” (e.g., need to convey information, express opinion, infer meaning). (Ellis, 2009)
3) Use of own language resources	Learners rely on their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources. (Ellis, 2009)
4) Clear outcome	A clearly defined, non-linguistic outcome is required. (Ellis, 2009; Willis & Willis, 2007)
5) Real-world activity	Relation to real-world activities and processes. (Skehan, 1998; Willis & Willis, 2007)

A Framework for Task-based Learning

Willis’s (1996) task-based learning framework, graphically summarized in Figure 1, provides a robust three-stage model for structuring lessons: Pre-task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus. This framework presents a deliberate departure from the traditional Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) sequence. Unlike PPP, which moves from linguistic form to communicative application, the TBL framework prioritizes meaningful communication from the outset, addressing language form only after a communicative task has been completed. This reversal of sequence is designed to provide learners with a broader and more authentic range of language learning opportunities.

The three stages of the framework are detailed below:

1) Pre-Task

The teacher introduces the topic and the task, allowing students time to process the requirements and activate their schemata. Typical introductory activities include brainstorming, using visual aids, games, discussions, and vocabulary preparation. This phase serves to familiarize students with the task and stimulate engagement (Willis & Willis, 1996, p. 56).

2) Task Cycle

This core phase comprises three key segments:

- a. **Task:** Students perform the task in pairs or small groups, while the teacher monitors and ensures comprehension.
- b. **Planning:** Students prepare to report on the outcome of their task, focusing on organization and language accuracy.
- c. **Report:** Selected groups or individuals present their findings to the class, either orally or in writing.

Throughout this cycle, the teacher's role is to facilitate and encourage students to utilize their acquired language resources as much as possible (Willis & Willis, 1996, pp. 56-57).

3) Language Focus

The final stage shifts attention to linguistic form through analysis and practice. Students examine language features from the task, such as vocabulary, collocations, and grammatical structures, and then consolidate this knowledge through targeted exercises (Willis & Willis, 1996, pp. 57-58).

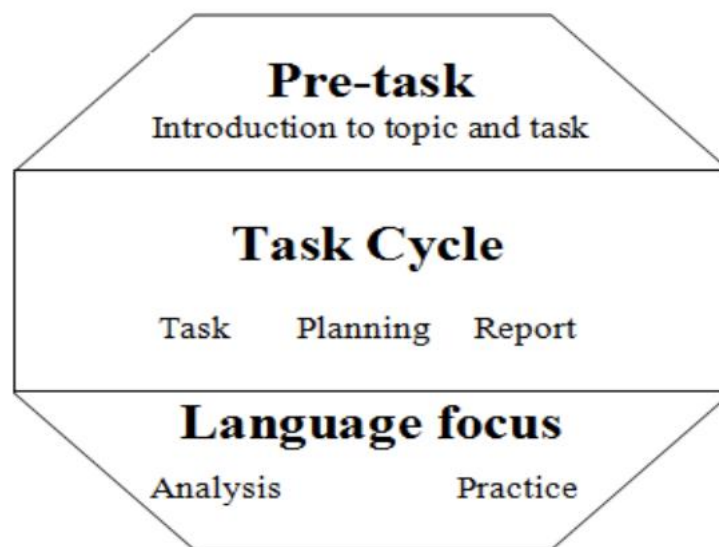


Figure 1. A Task-Based Framework by Willis

Willis and Willis (1996, pp. 59-60) contend that this framework simultaneously fulfills four key conditions for language acquisition: exposure to the target language, opportunities for its genuine use, heightened motivation, and a deliberate focus on language form. This aligns with Nunan's (2004, p. 19) assertion that TBLT begins with real-world tasks, which must then be pedagogically transformed for the classroom. The TBL framework offers a flexible and practical structure for achieving this essential conversion.

2.2 The Concept of English for Specific Purposes

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emerged in the 1960s from a recognition that general English courses were failing to address the specific linguistic needs of learners and the demands of employers. This gap prompted the development of tailored courses designed to meet the precise requirements of particular learner groups.

As an umbrella term, ESP encompasses a wide range of courses which can be classified in various ways. A foundational classification by Jordan (1997) dichotomizes English into English for General Purposes (EGP) and ESP. ESP is further divided into English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), which focuses on workplace communication, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which addresses the language demands of academic study. EAP can be subdivided into English for Specific Academic

Purposes (ESAP) and English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP).

The conceptualization of ESP has evolved significantly since its inception. Halliday, McIntosh, and Strevens (1964) initially defined ESP through a series of specialized varieties, such as ‘English for civil servants’ and ‘English for engineers.’ In contrast, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) fundamentally redefined ESP not as a set of specialized varieties, but as a principled approach to language teaching. They argued that all decisions regarding content and methodology should be derived from the learners’ specific reasons for learning, thereby emphasizing a needs-based, pedagogical philosophy over a purely linguistic one.

Synthesizing these perspectives, ESP can be understood as an approach to teaching English that is intrinsically linked to a specific occupation, academic discipline, or purpose. Its two distinctive characteristics are: (1) a clearly defined, practical scope for its target learners, who require the language for use within their professional or academic fields, and (2) learning content that encompasses the specialized language and communicative practices relevant to that field.

3. Research Methodology and Materials

This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach to evaluate the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in two widely used Business English textbooks in China. The primary data for analysis are drawn from the following materials: *Business English: An Integrated Course 2* (Wang, 2018), hereafter referred to as BEIC, and *Market Leader: Pre-Intermediate* (Cotton, Falvey, & Kent, 2002), abbreviated as ML. The analysis consults both the student’s and teacher’s books of each textbook to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the intended pedagogical design and classroom application.

BEIC, the second volume in a four-level series, is predominantly adopted as a pre-service ESP coursebook for first and second-year undergraduates majoring in Business English, Finance, or Management in Chinese universities. It consists of eight thematic units, each built around three interrelated reading texts and supplemented by integrated language skill exercises.

ML is part of a five-level series catering to learners from CEFR levels A1 to C2. This research focuses on its Pre-Intermediate level, suitable for learners at CEFR A2 to B1. Beyond its use in undergraduate programs, ML is also designed for corporate training contexts, rendering it suitable for both pre-service and in-service ESP instruction. The textbook comprises 12 core units and 4 revision units, regularly featuring authentic texts from the Financial Times, which enhances the authenticity and business relevance of its content.

The syllabi and unit structures of the two textbooks differ considerably. Table 2 provides a comparative overview of their standard unit components, illustrating the distinct organizational logic of each.

Table 2. A Comparison of Unit Components in BEIC and ML

Textbook	Unit Components
BEIC	Activation, Reading, Language Focus, Study Skill, Grammar, Writing Skill, Intercultural Business Communication Skills
ML	Starting up, Vocabulary, Reading, Listening, Language Review, Skills, Case Study

A comparative examination reveals a fundamental divergence in pedagogical emphasis. While BEIC features fewer units, it provides more depth and detail within each, characterized by substantial reading texts, explicit vocabulary and grammar instruction, and comprehensive exercises. Conversely, the sequential components in an ML unit often serve as scaffolding, systematically preparing learners for the final, integrative Case Study task. This structural distinction highlights BEIC's primary focus on systematic language acquisition, in contrast to ML's stronger emphasis on practical, task-based business skills.

4. Analysis and Discussion

This section evaluates the extent to which a task-based approach is applied in the selected ESP materials. To facilitate a detailed comparison, one representative unit from each textbook—Unit 1 from BEIC and Unit 3 from ML—is subjected to a two-pronged analysis. Drawing on pedagogical suggestions from the teacher's books, the investigation first assesses the unit activities against the five established criteria of a task (Ellis, 2009; Willis & Willis, 2007), followed by an examination of their alignment with Willis's (1996) TBL framework. The results of this dual analysis are presented and discussed in the subsequent subsections.

4.1 Analysis Against TBLT Criteria

4.1.1 Case Analysis: BEIC Unit 1

This analysis examines Unit 1 of BEIC (Appendix A-1), with reference to the pedagogical guidance in the teacher's book (Appendix A-2). Following the advice of the chief editor, the analysis of the Reading section is confined to Text I, as Texts II and III are designated for self-study. The evaluation of each unit component against the five TBLT criteria is detailed below.

- 1) **Activity:** This lead-in activity aims to prepare students for the lesson theme and relevant vocabulary, providing a clear outcome. The inclusion of an authentic video clip and the suggested role-play constitute a communicative task that activates learners' existing language resources and creates an information gap.
- 2) **Reading:** The lengthy Text I is framed by two discussions. The pre-reading warm-up on language barriers and the post-reading comprehensive check both encourage students to utilize their own resources to share views, representing an opinion gap and a reasoning gap, respectively.
- 3) **Language Focus:** This section is predominantly composed of lexical drills, which do not fulfill the

core criteria of a task.

4) **Study Skills:** Primarily designed for self-study, this section is advised to be brief in classroom teaching and is not evaluated as a task.

5) **Grammar:** This component provides a clear outcome by targeting the consolidation of fundamental grammar rules but remains a traditional grammar exercise.

6) **Writing Skills:** This section lists useful collocations to improve academic writing, constituting a lexical exercise rather than a meaning-focused task.

7) **Intercultural Business Communication Skills:** While intended to build necessary knowledge for future business communication, this section lacks authentic material, hindering its connection to real-world activities.

The results of the analysis are synthesized in Table 3.

Table 3. TBLT Criteria Analysis of BEIC Unit 1

	Activatio n	Readin g	Langua ge focus	Study skill	Grammar	Writing skill	Intercultural business communicatio ns skills
Meaning-focused							
Use of own language resources	x	x					
Real-world activity	x						
Involves communication	x	x					
Clear outcome	x				x	x	x
Nature of Activity	Activity	Exercis e	Lexical drill	Activity	Gramma r exercise	Lexical exercis e	Activity

As clearly evidenced in Table 3, the application of TBLT principles in BEIC Unit 1 is limited. The textbook exhibits a strong focus on discrete language points through substantial practice exercises, while the development of integrated practical skills is less emphasized—a potential shortcoming for Business English instruction where practical competence is paramount. Although the unit as a whole does not form a coherent TBLT sequence, its components can be adapted. For instance, the ‘Intercultural Business Communication Skills’ section could be transformed into a task-based activity as follows:

- 1) The teacher provides authentic video material illustrating different questioning techniques (e.g., closed vs. open questions).
- 2) The class is divided into groups, each analyzing and summarizing one question type from the video, utilizing their own language resources.
- 3) Each group selects a representative to present their findings to the class, creating an information gap.
- 4) Non-presenting students take notes and provide peer comments, ensuring the activity remains meaning-focused.
- 5) The teacher concludes with structured feedback to consolidate learning.

4.1.2 Case Analysis: ML Unit 3

This analysis evaluates Unit 3 of ML (Appendix B-1) with reference to its teacher's book (Appendix B-2). The evaluation of each component against the five TBLT criteria is detailed as follows.

- 1) **Starting up:** This section, divided into parts A and B, engages students in pair discussions, fulfilling the criteria for communication and real-world activity. While part B introduces relevant vocabulary in a meaning-focused context, it lacks a clearly defined non-linguistic outcome.
- 2) **Vocabulary:** Although the group exercises may stimulate a reasoning gap, the activity is fundamentally structured as a lexical exercise rather than a holistic task.
- 3) **Listening:** This component utilizes authentic listening materials followed by comprehension exercises, successfully meeting the criteria for real-world activity and a focus on meaning.
- 4) **Reading:** Pedagogical suggestions recommend information-gap exercises, note-taking, and subsequent explanation of key points in students' own words. This sequence fully satisfies all five task criteria.
- 5) **Language review:** While this is a grammar exercise, it is contextualized within a meaning-focused framework and involves peer communication, though it remains a form-focused activity rather than a task.
- 6) **Skills:** This section requires students to listen to a recording, take notes, and deliver a presentation, constituting a task that meets all five criteria.
- 7) **Case study:** This component embodies a complete pedagogical task, featuring a clear staged process and fulfilling all the established task criteria.

The results of this analysis are synthesized in Table 4.

Table 4. TBLT Criteria Analysis of ML Unit 3

	Starting up	Vocabulary	Listening	Reading	Language review	Skills	Case study
Meaning-focused	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Use of own	x			x		x	x

language resources

Real-world activity	x		x	x		x	x
Involves	x	x		x	x	x	x
communication							
Clear outcome				x		x	x
Nature of Activity	Activity	Lexical exercise	Listening exercise	Task	Grammar exercise	Task	task

As evidenced in Table 4, the application of TBLT principles in ML Unit 3 is substantially more pronounced than in BEIC. Three core components—Reading, Skills, and the culminating Case Study—are fully realized as tasks. This structural emphasis aligns with the textbook’s overarching pedagogical focus on developing practical, real-world business skills, demonstrating a strong integration of task-based methodology.

4.2 Analysis Against the TBL Framework

4.2.1 Framework Alignment: BEIC Unit 1

This section evaluates the structure of BEIC Unit 1 against Willis’s (1996) TBL framework. The unit’s overall sequence is assessed to determine its inherent alignment with the pre-task, task cycle, and language focus stages.

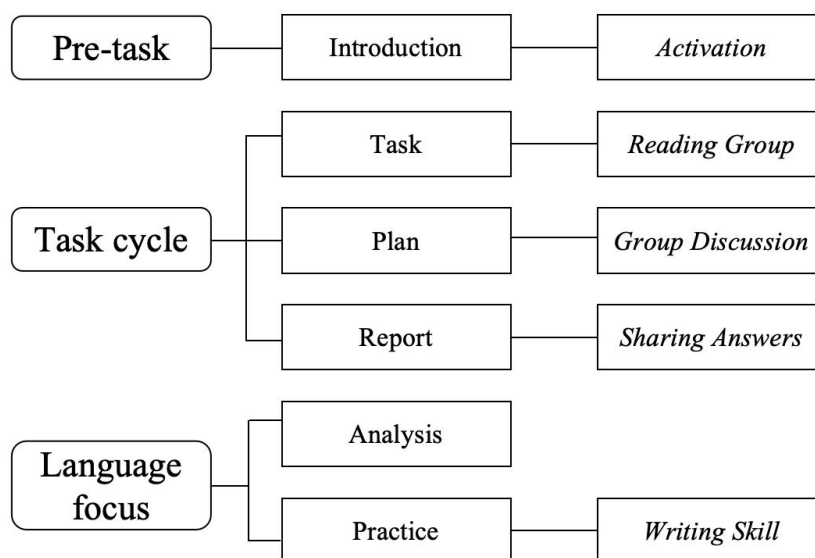


Figure 2. Framework of BEIC

As illustrated in Figure 2, the unit’s design can be partially mapped onto the TBL framework, yet significant deviations are evident. The Activation phase functions effectively as a pre-task, introducing the topic through discussion, vocabulary activities, and a video clip to engage learners.

However, the core of the unit lacks a coherent task cycle. The Reading section and its accompanying comprehensive check exercises do not constitute a full task-plan-report sequence as defined by Willis. Rather than promoting collaborative problem-solving and planning for a communicative outcome, the activities remain largely comprehension-based. To align with the TBL framework, this section would require significant adaptation, such as organizing students into reading groups to collaboratively complete the exercises (task and plan), followed by a cross-group sharing session (report).

Finally, the language focus phase is present but underdeveloped. While the Writing Skills section could serve as a form of practice, the unit lacks a dedicated analysis stage where learners systematically examine the language encountered during the task cycle.

In conclusion, the structure of BEIC Unit 1 does not conform to the TBL framework. Its design reflects a more traditional methodology that prioritizes text comprehension and language practice over a coherent, task-driven learning cycle.

4.2.2 Framework Alignment: ML Unit 3 Case Study

In contrast to BEIC, the Case Study in ML Unit 3 serves as an exemplar of the TBL framework in practice. This analysis focuses on this culminating activity, the structure of which is delineated in Figure 3.

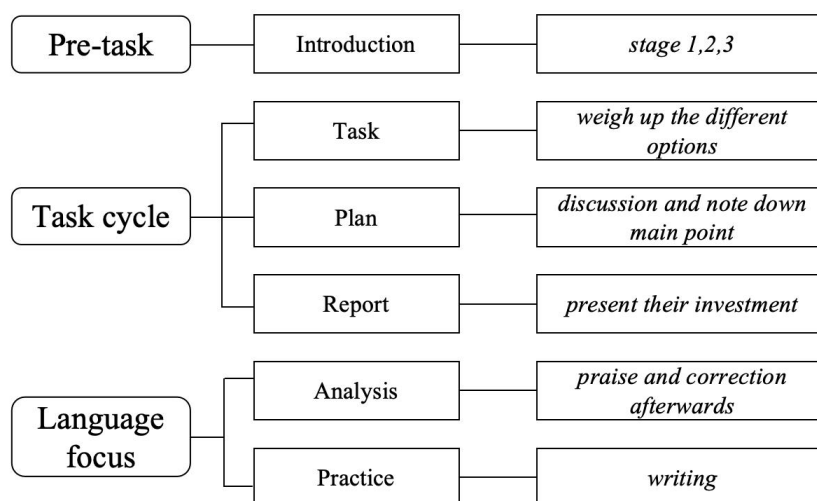


Figure 3. Framework of ML

The Case Study meticulously follows the three-stage TBL model. In the pre-task phase (stages 1-3), students are introduced to a realistic business scenario, providing the necessary background and context to engage with the subsequent task meaningfully.

This leads directly into a well-defined task cycle (stage 4). Learners are first placed into pairs or small groups to analyze the scenario and undertake the core task. They then proceed to a planning stage, formulating their solutions or strategies. The cycle culminates in a report phase, where groups present their investment recommendations or decisions to the class.

The sequence concludes with an explicit language focus. The teacher provides feedback, offering praise and conducting error correction, which serves as a form of language analysis. This is followed by a consolidation activity, typically a written assignment, allowing students to practice and solidify the language forms that emerged as necessary during the task.

Therefore, the Case Study in ML Unit 3 demonstrates a high degree of consistency with Willis's TBL framework, effectively integrating communicative task performance with subsequent language analysis.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the extent of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) application in two widely used Business English ESP materials in China: *Business English: An Integrated Course 2* (BEIC) and *Market Leader: Pre-Intermediate* (ML). The analysis, conducted through the dual lenses of established task criteria and Willis's (1996) TBL framework, reveals a divergent and overall insufficient integration of TBLT principles.

The findings indicate a clear disparity between the two textbooks. ML demonstrates a substantial alignment with TBLT, particularly in its culminating Case Study activities, which effectively embody a complete task cycle and satisfy core task criteria. In stark contrast, BEIC exhibits a relatively low level of TBLT application. Its design, characterized by lengthy texts and a strong emphasis on discrete vocabulary and grammar exercises, only partially meets the task criteria and does not conform to the TBL framework. This suggests a pedagogical orientation that prioritizes language knowledge over the development of integrated practical skills, which are crucial for ESP learners.

It is important to note that this evaluation is based on the design of the textbooks and their suggested teacher's guidelines. This does not preclude the potential for pedagogical adaptation. As demonstrated through the proposed modifications to BEIC's activities, educators can consciously redesign existing content around task criteria and the TBL framework to foster more communicative and authentic learning experiences.

In summary, while the adoption of TBLT in Chinese Business English ESP materials remains inconsistent and limited, its potential for enhancing practical skill acquisition is significant. Therefore, it is recommended that material developers more deliberately incorporate TBLT principles into future editions. Simultaneously, practitioners are encouraged to employ adaptive teaching strategies, transforming traditional exercises into meaningful tasks to better address the real-world communicative needs of Business English learners.

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[illegible]

[illegible][illegible]

8. Questions Implication are the first three background information about the questions and the questions itself. There are three entire sentences in Chinese. Are there any?	was introduced in an essay by Outstanding Writing in English in <i>Wash Post</i> (1998). It was reported that Brown and the 1700 students learned English.
9. Answer 1. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching?	10. Listen, Watch and Discuss Suggestion: An activity for first year students of the course. Watch and listen and play the video.
2. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching? 3. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching? 4. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching? 5. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching? 6. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching? 7. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching? 8. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching? 9. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching? 10. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching?	Suggested answers: 1. The answer seems to be far from obvious since the students are talking and listening to each other. 2. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese. 3. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese. 4. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese. 5. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese. 6. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese. 7. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese. 8. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese. 9. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese. 10. The volunteers are "tagging" which means they identify in American English and Chinese.
11. Yes I thought I could manage. English was also concept teaching?	11. American English and British English 12. American English and British English 13. American English and British English 14. American English and British English 15. American English and British English 16. American English and British English 17. American English and British English 18. American English and British English 19. American English and British English 20. American English and British English 21. American English and British English 22. American English and British English 23. American English and British English 24. American English and British English 25. American English and British English 26. American English and British English 27. American English and British English 28. American English and British English 29. American English and British English 30. American English and British English 31. American English and British English 32. American English and British English 33. American English and British English 34. American English and British English 35. American English and British English 36. American English and British English 37. American English and British English 38. American English and British English 39. American English and British English 40. American English and British English 41. American English and British English 42. American English and British English 43. American English and British English 44. American English and British English 45. American English and British English 46. American English and British English 47. American English and British English 48. American English and British English 49. American English and British English 50. American English and British English 51. American English and British English 52. American English and British English 53. American English and British English 54. American English and British English 55. American English and British English 56. American English and British English 57. American English and British English 58. American English and British English 59. American English and British English 60. American English and British English 61. American English and British English 62. American English and British English 63. American English and British English 64. American English and British English 65. American English and British English 66. American English and British English 67. American English and British English 68. American English and British English 69. American English and British English 70. American English and British English 71. American English and British English 72. American English and British English 73. American English and British English 74. American English and British English 75. American English and British English 76. American English and British English 77. American English and British English 78. American English and British English 79. American English and British English 80. American English and British English 81. American English and British English 82. American English and British English 83. American English and British English 84. American English and British English 85. American English and British English 86. American English and British English 87. American English and British English 88. American English and British English 89. American English and British English 90. American English and British English 91. American English and British English 92. American English and British English 93. American English and British English 94. American English and British English 95. American English and British English 96. American English and British English 97. American English and British English 98. American English and British English 99. American English and British English 100. American English and British English

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Appendix B-1. Unit 3 of the ML (student's book)

Language review

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. The company **is** (be) **growing** rapidly at the moment.

2. The company **has** (have) **been** **expanding** its market for several years.

3. The company **will** (will) **be** **launching** a new product next year.

4. The company **is** (be) **planning** to open a new office in London.

5. The company **has** (have) **been** **investing** in research and development for years.

6. The company **is** (be) **considering** a takeover of a smaller company.

7. The company **has** (have) **been** **struggling** to keep up with its competitors.

8. The company **is** (be) **looking** for ways to improve its efficiency.

9. The company **has** (have) **been** **working** hard to improve its customer service.

10. The company **is** (be) **aiming** to become a global leader in its industry.

Reading

Read the text about the company and answer the questions.

The company has been successful in its market for many years. It has a strong reputation for quality and reliability. The company is now looking for ways to expand its market and increase its profits. The company has a number of strengths, including a strong brand, a loyal customer base, and a highly skilled workforce. The company also has a number of weaknesses, including a high level of competition and a reliance on a single market. The company is currently working on a number of projects to address these weaknesses and improve its overall performance.

Listening

Listen to the audio and answer the questions.

1. What is the main purpose of the audio?

2. What are the main points of the audio?

3. What are the main conclusions of the audio?

Speaking

Prepare a presentation about the company.

1. What is the company's name?

2. What is the company's main product?

3. What is the company's main market?

4. What are the company's main strengths?

5. What are the company's main weaknesses?

6. What are the company's main goals?

Writing

Write a memo about the company.

1. What is the memo's purpose?

2. What are the main points of the memo?

3. What are the main conclusions of the memo?

Appendix B-2. Unit 3 of the ML(teacher's book)

UNIT 3 Companies

At a glance

Lesson	Classwork - Course Book	Further work
Lesson 1 Each lesson (excluding case studies) is about 45-60 minutes. This does not include administration and time spent going through homework.	Starting up Ss talk about the type of company they would most like to work for and the business sector they work in now. Vocabulary: Describing companies Ss look at vocabulary used to describe companies and that used in company reports to describe performance. Listening: A successful company Ss listen to IKEA's UK Deputy Country Manager talk about the factors that make his company successful.	Practice File Vocabulary (page 12)
Lesson 2	Reading: The world's most respected companies Ss look at tables showing the world's top ten companies in an FT survey. Language review: Present simple and present continuous The two tenses are compared and contrasted. Ss then complete a job advertisement with the correct tenses.	Text bank (pages 118 and 119) Practice File Language review (page 13) Business Grammar and Usage
Lesson 3	Skills: Presenting your company Ss look at some advice for making presentations, listen to a presentation about a fashion company and then make a presentation about a company they invent.	Resource bank (page 148)
Lesson 4 Each case study is about 1 to 1½ hours.	Case study: Valentino Chocolates A maker of fine chocolates is in difficulty. Ss propose a strategy for revival and growth.	Practice File Writing (page 14)

For a fast route through the unit focusing mainly on speaking skills, just use the underlined sections.

For 1-to-1 situations, most parts of the unit lend themselves, with minimal adaptation, to use with individual students. Where this is not the case, alternative procedures are given.

Business brief

Multinationals are the most visible of companies. Their **local subsidiaries** give them sometimes global reach, even if their **corporate culture**, the way they do things, depends largely on their country of origin. But the issue of most national economies is made up of much smaller organisations. Many countries owe much of their prosperity to **SMEs** (small and medium-sized enterprises) with tens or hundreds of employees, rather than the tens of thousands employed by large corporations.

Small businesses with just a few employees are also important. Many governments hope that the small businesses of today will become the multinationals of tomorrow, but many owners of small companies choose to work that way because they find it more congenial and do not want to expand. And then of course there are the **sole traders**, one-man or one-woman businesses. In the professional world, these **freelancers** are often people who have left (or been forced to leave) large organisations and who have set up on their own, taking the expertise they have gained with them.

But in every case the principle is the same to survive – the money coming in has to be more than the money going out. Companies with **shareholders** are looking for more than survival – they want **return on investment**. Shares in the company rise and fall in relation to how investors see the future profitability of the company; they demand **shareholder value** in the way the company is run to maximise profitability for investors, in terms of increased **dividends** and a rising **share price**. **Publicly quoted companies**, with their shares **listed or quoted on a stock exchange**, come under a lot of scrutiny in this area. Some large companies (often family-owned or dominated) are **private**: they choose not to have their shares openly bought and sold, perhaps because they do not want this scrutiny, but they may have trouble raising the capital they need to grow and develop.

Profitability is key. Formulas for success are the subject of thousands of business courses and business books. Of course, what works for one person may not work for others. See below for books on two styles of running a company that might be hard to imitate!

Read on

Michael Brett: *How to Read the Financial Pages*, 5th edition, Random House, 2000

David Carson et al.: *Marketing and Entrepreneurship in SMEs*, Financial Times Prentice Hall, 1995

Jack Welch: *Jack: What I've Learned Leading a Great Company and Great People*, Headline, 2001

Richard Branson: *Leaving My Virginity: How I've Survived, Had Fun, and Made a Fortune Doing Business My Way*, Virgin Books, 2000

BUSINESS BRIEF

Lesson notes

Warmer

- Write the word company on the right of the board.

- As a quick **free activity**, ask Ss to say which **adjectives** and **verbs** could come in front of the word company. You may end up with something like this, depending on their level. You could give the initial letters of the words on the left as clues.

family-owned	company
multinational	
small	
medium-sized	
profitable	
falling	
bankrupt	
work for a	
stay with a	
change	

Overview

- Ask the Ss to look at the Overview section on page 22. Tell them a little about the things you will be doing, using the table on page 24 of this book as a guide. Tell them which sections you will be covering in this lesson and which in later lessons.

Quotation

- Write the quotation on the board. Ask Ss to discuss briefly in pairs what they understand by it.
- Bring together the pairs' findings with the whole class. If they haven't mentioned it, ask if it's really possible to 'be everywhere and do everything'.

Starting up

Ss talk about the type of company they would most like to work for and, for those at work, the business sector they work in now.

- Get Ss to discuss the question in pairs. Obviously, to work Ss will approach this differently to those not in work. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary. Then ask each pair to present its ideas to the whole class.

- Alternatively, you could do the activity as a class discussion and provide a number of points for Ss to think about for each type of company by presenting a table like the one below. Write the headings from the left-hand column on the board. Then discuss what to put in each box in the right-hand column. Of course, these are just suggestions. People in different places will have different ideas about the merits of working for each type of company. The answer in many

cases will be 'it depends'. Teach this expression, and then ask Ss to say what it depends on. Your Ss may mention other issues in addition to the headings given in the table.

Work environment	May be more friendly in a small family business. But some family-owned businesses are multinationals with thousands of employees, and the environment may not be that different to working in an ordinary multinational. Self-employed people working on their own sometimes complain about feeling isolated. You may feel more in control running your own company, but there again, if you have employees to look after, this can be a big responsibility.
Pay	Small family companies may or may not pay good wages and salaries. One issue here is that when multinationals come to an area with low unemployment, they may make it more expensive for firms in the area to employ people in office or factory jobs. On the other hand, some multinationals are well known for paying very low wages to people in places such as fast-food outlets. The pay of self-employed people, of course, varies enormously.
Promotion possibilities	There will be fewer opportunities for promotion in family companies, especially if family members are in key positions. Multinationals will probably offer more scope – the fast-food worker may become a branch manager and possibly go even further, but examples of top managers who have risen all the way from shop-floor level are rare.
Job security (i.e. probability that you will keep the job)	Family companies may hesitate longer before laying people off (explain this expression) out of a feeling of responsibility towards their employees. Multinationals have had different attitudes towards laying people off, but companies in general are probably quicker to lay people off than before.

- Before working on the activity itself, check that Ss know what the different industries are.
- Then practice stress and pronunciation of the names of the industries. Write them up on the board, putting the stressed syllable in capitals: Telecommunications Engineering Retailing

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3 Companies

- Get Ss to repeat the names with the correct stress.
- Then get Ss to discuss the questions. If you did the previous activity as a whole-class activity, do this one as pair work, and vice-versa.
- If doing this as pair work, circulate, monitor and assist if necessary. Ss may need help with naming companies in each sector, especially if there are no well-known 'national champions' in their own country/countries.
- If there is interest and your Ss have access to the Internet, get them to look at the industries section on FT.com (click on 'Industries' on the FT.com home page) and see which companies are currently in the news in each industry. Ss should not try to read the articles, just spot company names in the headlines. You could ask them to do this for homework.

Vocabulary: Describing companies

Ss look at the vocabulary used to describe companies and that used in company reports to describe performance.

- Tell Ss to do the exercise in pairs. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary.
- 1 turnover (Point out that this is only used in BrE. Americans just talk about 'sales').
- 2 profit
- 3 subsidiary (Point out the stress).
- 4 workforce
- 5 market share
- 6 head office
- 7 share price

- Go through the exercise with the whole class, asking for the answers and explaining any remaining difficulties.

- Get Ss to do the exercise in pairs. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary. Make sure Ss read the whole extract before trying to complete it. Explain any difficult vocabulary, for example *loyal*.

- 1 turnover
- 2 profit
- 3 market share
- 4 share price
- 5 head office
- 6 subsidiary
- 7 workforce

- Go through the exercise with the whole class, asking for the answers and explaining any remaining difficulties.

- Before doing the exercise, check comprehension and pronunciation of the words in the exercise, for example *chemical*.

- Write the table from the Course Book on the board and get Ss to call out the answers to fill the gaps.

Company	Main activity	Nationality
Cisco Systems	Internet equipment supplier	American
Peugeot	Car manufacturer	French
Tacardi Martini	Drinks supplier	Spanish
American Express	Travel and financial services provider	American
Bayer	Drug and chemical maker	German
Benetton	Clothing manufacturer	Italian
Sony	Electronic goods maker	Japanese
AP Moller-Maersk	Container ship operator	Danish

- Go round the class and get Ss to talk about particular companies, following the model: Cisco Systems is an American IT company which supplies Internet equipment.

- Ask Ss to work in pairs in describing a company they know well. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary.
- With the whole class, ask three or four Ss to say which companies they talked about.

Listening: A successful company

Ss listen to the UK Deputy Country Manager of the Swedish furniture company IKEA talk about what makes the company so successful.

- Go through the six points to ensure that Ss understand them, focusing on difficult vocabulary, e.g. *market share*, *user-friendly*, *workforce*.
- Get Ss to work in groups of three or four and discuss which factors they think contribute most to a company's success.
- Give the groups five minutes to reach agreement, then ask a spokesperson from each group to list the three factors they have chosen. If the groups have chosen different factors, have a short debate on the reasons for their choices. Can you reach a class consensus?

- Before playing the recording, ask Ss if they have heard of IKEA and, if so, whether they have ever visited an IKEA store. If they haven't, explain that IKEA is a Swedish furniture store that specialises in low-cost furniture with simple, modern designs. It manages to keep its costs down by supplying many of the items as 'flat pack', i.e. customers have to put the furniture together themselves.

LESSON NOTES

- Play the recording, then ask Ss to identify which factors from Exercise A that Peter Jenkins mentions. If necessary, play the recording again for Ss to put the factors in the right order.
- Check answers with the class.

- 1 starting with a simple business idea that is easy to understand
- 2 having a strong company culture
- 3 having good designers who also understand production
- 4 having user-friendly packaging

C 3.2

- Have Ss read the notes and predict what words might fill the gaps (you can tell them that gaps 1-3 need one word and gap 4 needs two). Even if they don't guess the correct words, they should be able to predict that they need a verb in the -ing form for gap 1, the second half of a compound noun for gap 2, a plural noun for gap 3 and a verb phrase in the -ing form for gap 4.
- Play the recording for Ss to complete the notes, then check their answers. Play the recording a second time if necessary.

- 1 understanding 2 needs 3 competitors 4 offering solutions

B 3.3

- Have Ss read the four questions and make sure they understand them.
- Play the recording and ask Ss which question they think Peter is answering. This is quite tricky, so you may need to play the recording several times.

Question 3

Reading: The world's most respected companies

Ss do information-gap exercises with the results of an FT survey; then read articles on either Toyota or Microsoft and swap information.

- Get Ss to read the information box first, as this gives the background to the survey. Go through the vocabulary, especially terms such as *criteria*, *ranking*, *shareholder value*, *community commitment*, to ensure that Ss understand.
- Ss work in pairs and sum to relevant pages. Make sure they understand that they have to ask the appropriate questions to complete the gaps in their tables.
- When they have finished, allow them to look at their partner's table to check that they have the right answers.
- Discuss the tables with the class. Were they surprised at the results? Were there any companies that they expected to see, but didn't? Or companies that they were surprised to see?

- In some pairs, Ss read one of the two articles on page 25 and make notes on the key information. Remind Ss that notes do not have to be complete sentences, and should not be lifted verbatim from the text.

- Ss then expand on their notes to explain in their own words what they have learned about Toyota/Microsoft, and make notes about their partner's company in the table.
- This practices the skills of taking from notes and taking notes from a talk, both of which are extremely useful in business.

Language review: Present simple and present continuous

The two tenses are compared and contrasted. Ss then complete a job advertisement with the correct tenses.

- Go through the examples with the whole class, then have Ss complete the rules with the phrases provided.

- 1 factual information
- 2 routine activities and habits
- 3 ongoing situations and actions
- 4 temporary situations
- 5 future arrangements

- The main thing to underline with the present simple is that it is for 'general truths': factual information about companies is one example of this. You could also give the example *Paris stands on the Seine*. Point out that Paris is standing on the Seine is very strange, implying perhaps that yesterday it was standing somewhere else, for example on the Loire.
- The present simple is also used for routine activities, with always as in the Course Book example, and also never, sometimes, generally, often, etc.
- The main thing to underline with the present continuous is that it is for temporary or changing situations, even if they are not taking place at the moment of speaking. A company marketing director can say 'We're constantly improving the way we sell our products' even when he is not at work.

- The present continuous can also be used for future arrangements, especially fixed plans (as in the third example in the Course Book).

- Tell Ss to work on the sentences in pairs. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary.
- Go through the exercise with the whole class, working on any difficulties.

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- 1 hold; are holding
- 2 are using; use
- 3 takes
- 4 raise; are raising
- 5 deals
- 6 recruit; are advertising
- 7 are resting
- 8 wants

⑥

● Tell Ss to work in pairs. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary.

● Go through the exercise with the whole class, working on any difficulties.

- 1 are
- 2 offer
- 3 have
- 4 are growing
- 5 employ
- 6 are considering
- 7 are preparing
- 8 are looking
- 9 need
- 10 offer/are offering

Skills: Presenting your company

Ss look at some advice for making presentations, listen to a presentation about a fashion company and then make a presentation about a company they invent.

④

● Ask Ss what experience they have of giving presentations both in their own language and in English. What did they find most difficult in each case? (Surveys show that speaking in front of an audience is the activity that most managers fear above all else, even in their own language. As a language trainer used to speaking in front of groups, don't lose sight of how difficult this is for most people.)

● With the whole class, go through the points one by one. See if your Ss agree with the following points:

- 1 Find out as much as possible about your audience and adapt your presentation accordingly, using this information. Don't just give the presentation you were going to give anyway.
- 2 Good idea. Make sure your in-work Ss know their job titles as they really would be in English rather than an anglicisation of the titles in their own language.
- 3 Humour is used very differently in different places. Some cultures see it as a lack of seriousness. If in doubt, leave it out.
- 4 Point out that in the English-speaking world, this is a fairly normal procedure. It certainly helps language learners to structure their presentations in this way.

- 5 You could ask Ss what they understand by tone. It could be taken to include stress (putting emphasis on particular syllables and words), volume (loudness) and intonation (rise and fall of the voice). These should be varied but, at the same time, don't overdo it!
- 6 Don't bury your nose in your notes and don't write out a complete script.
- 7 Good idea, but don't overdo it and use too many. Don't overcrowd the visuals with too much information.
- 8 Related to point 4 and very useful.

⑥ 3.4

- Prepare Ss for what they are going to hear by getting them to look at the chart. Explain any difficulties in the headings, for example net profit is profit after tax.
- Play the recording two or three times as necessary, stopping after key pieces of information, and get Ss to complete the chart.

Tara Fashions	
Where is the head office?	Córdoba, Spain
What does it sell?	Clothes (practise pronunciation)
Who are its customers?	Fashion-conscious men and women aged 20-35
Annual turnover?	€260 million
Annual net profits?	€16 million
Number of stores:	15
In Spain?	14
In other European cities?	1 (5 new stores next year)
Strengths?	Can bring out new designs very quickly Designs sold at right price
Future plans?	New store in New York next year

⑥ 3.4

- Play the recording again once or twice, this time getting Ss to concentrate on the language of presentations. Get them to tick the suggestions from Exercise A that the speaker uses.

The speaker uses suggestions 2, 4 and 5. She may also use 1 and 6, but you can't tell from the recording.

⑥

- Go through the phrases in the Useful language box with Ss. Have them read the phrases aloud and encourage them to think about the intonation.
- Give Ss a short time (e.g. five minutes) to prepare a few notes on their company (or a company they know), then ask them to make their presentation to their partner. Remind Ss that these can be very short – they only have to speak for a minute or two – but that what they say should be clear and well structured.

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3 Companies

Case study**Valentino Chocolates**

A maker of fine chocolates is in difficulty. Ss propose a strategy for revival and growth.

Stage 1: Background

- Instruct Ss to look at the background information. Meanwhile, write up the headings on the left of the table below on the board, but don't put in the other information.
- Answer any questions from the Ss about vocabulary difficulties, etc.
- Then elicit information from the whole class to complete the table.
- Ask one student to summarise the table in their own words for the whole class.

Company	Valentino
Products	Fine chocolates, packaged chocolates, Classic Bars, drinks, biscuits and cakes
Based in	Turin
Employees	300
Shops	75
Sales problems	Falling demand; rising costs; falling profits

Stage 2: Listening 3.5

- Tell Ss that they will hear three people speaking.
- You may need to play the recording several times, as the information does not come in the same order as presented in the table.
- Copy the table onto the board while Ss are listening. After each playing of the recording, ask Ss if they can supply any more information. Continue until the table is complete.

Reasons for falling profits	
Prices	Higher than competitors' prices due to price-cutting
Production	Delays due to old machinery breaking down
Demand	Falling demand for new products (biscuits and cakes) and Classic Bar
Staff morale	Sales team and production staff demotivated

Stage 3: The future

- Tell Ss to read the text about the future and the investment options (Chart 2) in pairs. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary.
- With the whole class, get Ss to say what the options are, using different expressions, for example:
– One option is to buy new machinery this would cost

30

€200,000 and it would end the delays caused by the old machines breaking down.
– Valentino could invest in more research and development. This would cost €200,000, but they could develop new products such as a low-fat chocolate drink or new biscuits and cakes.

Stage 4: Task

- Put Ss in pairs again and tell them that they will weigh up the different options. Warn them that one member of each pair may have to present the findings of the pair, so one member of each pair should note down the main points from the discussion and what their final choice of options is.
- Circulate and monitor. Note down language points for praise and correction afterwards, especially those relating to planning and growth.
- When the pairs have drawn up their plans, call the whole class to order, praise some of the good language you heard and work on half a dozen points that need improving. Get individual Ss to say the correct forms.
- Get two or three pairs to present their investment plans. Try to choose pairs whose ideas are different in order to give variety and stimulate discussion. Note down language points for praise and correction afterwards, this time concentrating on presentations language.
- Praise some of the good presentations language you heard and work on half a dozen points that need improving. Get individual Ss to say the correct forms.
- Get Ss to discuss the different plans as one group. If the class is very large, divide it into two or three groups. Circulate and monitor. Note down language points for praise and correction afterwards, perhaps ones related to some you noted earlier.
- Call the class to order. Work on half a dozen language points that require it.
- Rather than have another presentation of the final choice of investment options now, ask a representative of the group (or of each group) to prepare one for the following session. If you do this, don't forget to allow time for the presentation(s) in a future session. This will also allow you to recap key language from this session.

4 to 1

This case study can be done as a discussion between teacher and student and then as a basis for a presentation by the student. Don't forget to note language points for praise and correction afterwards. Also point out some of the key language you chose to use.

Stage 5: Writing

- The Ss write up the final selection of investment options as a proposal document to the CEO of Valentino. Make it clear whether the memo should reflect the opinion of the group as a whole or the opinions of the student writing it. This proposal can be done for homework.

Writing file page 131