

Needs Analysis: A Student's Real Needs Emerging from their Experiences

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Abstract

According to the century-long history of transfer research, similarity between learning contexts and performance contexts plays the most important role in enhancing transfer of learning. Task-based language teaching is powerful in this respect because it embodies real-life tasks as its teaching contexts. In determining which tasks to employ, it is recommended to carry out needs analysis which identifies what learners should learn based on their own needs. The current study is a single case study that attempts to make a Japanese student's needs in a different country clear by means of interviews. Three interviews were conducted with the student, which depict what she experiences in the United States as well as difficulties she faces. In Vivo coding is used in the process of qualitative analysis. Discussion will focus around two research questions addressed in this paper: 1) What are the actual difficulties and challenges a Japanese student faces in her 9-month stay in the United States?; and 2) What tasks may be appropriate to carry out in language classrooms based on these findings?

1. Introduction

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been drawing a considerable amount of attention from researchers and language educators. In fact, Benson (2016) points out that we have "a growing body of empirical evidence to support how and to what extent this approach can promote language learning" (p. 341). One of the important phases in TBLT is students' needs analysis. Needs analysis clarifies what students want to learn, need to gain, and ought to overcome, and thus enables language educators to provide their students with exactly what they need in language classrooms.

Needs analysis is powerful because, carried out properly, it can maximize the chances of learners' transfer of learning (defined in the next section). Haskell (2001, p. 116) suggests that "significant and general transfer is primarily the consequence

of personality and other dispositional characteristics such as attitude, motivation, and feeling. In short, I [he] will suggest that general transfer is the consequence of what I [he] refer[s] to as the spirit of transfer.” James (2012) classifies such motivation of transfer into eight categories, which include perceptions of opportunity for transfer. It is, therefore, suggested that students with clear learning purposes and those who can envision future situations where their learning may be useful will have a better chance of transfer. Therefore, needs analysis is one of the very important topics in transfer of learning and TBLT research.

This paper, as an exploratory case study, introduces a Japanese student's needs during her 9-month stay in the United States, mainly from linguistic and task-based perspectives, identified by means of interviews which interrogate her real-life experiences. As a first step towards building a transfer-appropriate TBLT, this paper further discusses future directions based on the current findings.

2. Transfer of learning

Transfer of learning means the application of learning in one context to different contexts. We may transfer our language skills acquired when learning a second language to learning another language. We may also transfer our sport skills when trying new sports for the first time. Educators want their students to transfer their learning in a class to their next class, next school year, and ultimately, to their outside-of-school and real-world experiences. Likewise, our life is full of transfer opportunities. Yet, what I would like to discuss in this paper is a more general type of transfer: transferring knowledge and skills to different contexts to perform them properly there.

Transfer of learning has been researched by both psychology and second language acquisition researchers. In fact, transfer research in educational psychology has more than a century of history. The first study was carried out by Thorndike and Woodworth in 1901. Their finding is often discussed as the “identical element” theory which claims that transfer is very rare but may occur in cases where there are identical elements shared by two different functions or contexts. A similar discussion is made by Morris, Bransford, and Franks (1977) and they put forward the transfer-appropriate processing (TAP) theory. Likewise, a line of research on transfer of learning in the last century has reached a sort of consensus, that is, in short, that the more similar two contexts are, the better transfer happens between them. This claim has been supported by a large number

of researchers with a large amount of empirical evidence (e.g., Godden & Baddeley, 1975; Cann & Ross, 1989; Balch, Bowman, & Mohler, 1992; Metzger, 2002; Shin et al., 2021; Essoe et al., 2022).

The theory of TAP or the similarity principle is sometimes mentioned in second language acquisition research too, although SLA study on transfer is still scarce. One of the common claims that connects transfer of learning to language teaching is that learners should learn communicative language skills in actual communication. Lightbown (2007), for example, says that “TAP is also consistent with the idea that the most effective preparation for understanding and producing language in communicative environments will occur in contexts where learners gain experience in understanding and producing language in communicative environments” (p. 32).

Other aspects of transfer of learning are also discussed both in psychology and in second language acquisition. James (2018), for example, developed 6 important factors that can affect transfer of L2 learning:

1. contextual similarity (e.g., between learning and testing tasks)
2. learning of general principles
3. amount of practice
4. variability in practice
5. learner affect (e.g., motivation for transfer)
6. support for transfer in transfer contexts (p. 332).

As you can see, beside contextual similarity, we have more principles to take into consideration, and indeed, there is underlying evidence for each factor listed above. (See James’ (2018) research timeline.) However, the biggest emphasis is always put on the importance of the similarity principle, and this is why task-based language teaching may play an important role in the transfer of second language learning. I would like to discuss it more in the next chapter.

3. Task-based language teaching and transfer of learning

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) assigns tasks to learners, and they focus on completing those tasks while the target language is communicatively used among learners. In other words, completion of tasks is the primary goal of learners while TBLT “promotes learning language knowledge and training skills in the process of performing tasks” (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011, p. 49).

TBLT may be one of the most transfer-appropriate teaching frameworks because well-designed tasks can embody some of the transfer-related principles. First of all, it embodies transfer-appropriate processing theory, because everyday life outside of school is full of small tasks, from taking public transportation to making an order at a café and shopping at a nearby supermarket. This characteristic may be the most important aspect of TBLT, as Lin (2009) points out that the “task-based approach has closed the distance between class and real life and has changed the malpractice in which teachers completely separated traditional foreign language teaching from real life” (p. 23).

Actually, TBLT sets itself apart from traditional language teaching in many ways as a strong version of communicative language teaching. The comparison table below that appears in Ducker (2012, p. 5) summarizes it very well.

Table 1. Comparison of methodology (Ducker, 2012, p. 5)

Aspect	Task-based instruction	Traditional
Focus of learning	Meaning	Form (grammar etc...)
Learning input	Students generate language	Teacher generated language and rules of language
Learning content	Driven by student needs	Pre-determined by teacher
Learning action	Implicit learning by student deduction	Explicit learning by teacher instruction
Description of language	Holistic “chunks” of natural language	Discreet segments of synthesized language
Learning activity	Tasks to practice whole integrated skills	Exercise to practice segments of language

There may be so many aspects to discuss when it comes to comparing TBLT and traditional or other teaching frameworks, but I would like to focus on the learning content which is determined based on what students need. “A properly designed TBLT course begins with a needs analysis (NA)” (Long, Lee, and Hillman, 2019, p. 507), and therefore, TBLT is “consistent with this practical goal in that the instruction is centered around real-life tasks students need (or will need) to accomplish outside the classroom” (Iizuka, 2019, p. 134).

In the next chapter, I would like to look at needs analysis a little more deeply.

4. Needs analysis

In an analytical approach, where learners are holistically exposed to large amounts of target language input, such as TBLT and other communicative language teaching methods, clear learning purposes are crucial. Without them, such an approach often falls into what is called TENOR (Teaching English for No Obvious Reason) that leads to “situations in which instruction is generally unfocused, learner motivation is lower than it could be, and learners come out of individual courses, and the program as a whole, without any clear idea of what they have learned or the ability to pull it together for any functional purpose” (Lambert, 2010, p. 101). Needs analysis plays a powerful role here to overcome such problems.

In fact, needs analysis studies have been conducted in several different contexts. Botev and Sybing (2022), for example, interviewed Japanese study abroad students and identified challenges they encountered in the target countries. Iizuka’s (2019) needs analysis used interviews and a questionnaire, focusing on communicative needs of American students and their Japanese host families, and figured out that students are heavily concerned about their speaking skills. On the other hand, Lambert’s (2010) needs analysis focuses on Japanese graduates’ business English needs. In a similar vein, Huh (2006) identified frequent business English tasks encountered by Korean business professionals. Likewise, needs analysis is useful in multiple contexts to identify different kinds of needs.

In terms of TBLT, needs analysis first clarifies what Long, Lee, and Hillman (2019) call “target tasks,” that is, “the real-world communicative uses to which learners will put the L2 beyond the classroom” (p. 507). Taking these real needs into consideration, task-based approaches can not only provide learners with explicit goals but also maximize their motivation to learn a language set necessary to complete the tasks. According to Long, Lee, and Hillman (2019), identification of target tasks is followed by identification of “target discourse,” which means “gathering genuine samples of target language use by NSs (native speakers) performing the most frequent or most critical target tasks” (p. 508). This way, learners experience communication involving authentic language as well as tasks which are also authentic and directly applicable to similar tasks outside of classrooms.

However, Iizuka (2019) notes that this integral part of TBLT is frequently skipped by language educators and curriculum designers (p. 135). According to Bryfonski and McKay's (2017) analysis, only 9 out of 47 task-based studies conducted needs analysis. It seems clear that more needs analysis studies are needed.

5. Research purposes and questions

The current case study on a Japanese student's needs is a beginning phase of my designing transfer-appropriate TBLT. Once I clarify the student's needs, I am going to define target tasks and target discourse based on those needs, and then design pedagogic tasks that can actually be carried out in transfer-appropriate task-based language teaching in my future research. Long, Lee, and Hillman (2019) explain that “modified *elaborated* (not linguistically simplified) versions of the prototypical spoken or written target discourse models are used in the production of task-based material—*pedagogic tasks*” (p. 509).

This study is exploratory in nature, qualitatively focusing on a single case of a student who spends her time in a different country. A main purpose of the current paper, therefore, is to figure out what tasks a Japanese student actually experiences in the real life of the United States in order to build transfer-appropriate language tasks later.

Accordingly, research questions employed in this paper are:

- 1) What are the actual difficulties and challenges a Japanese student faces in her 9-month stay in the United States?
- 2) What tasks may be appropriate to carry out in language classrooms based on these findings?

6. Methods

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted during a period of nine months while a Japanese student was studying abroad in the United States. The first interview was carried out on December 10th, 2022. The second interview was conducted on March 11th, 2023, followed by a third interview on May 17th, within a few days of her return from the United States.

Each interview consists of six prepared questions with some impromptu questions following them. The first interview has four more questions to ask her expectations before leaving for the United States. The ten prepared questions are shown below in

English:

1. What was your motivation for studying abroad?
2. What were you looking forward to before leaving Japan?
3. What were you worried about before leaving Japan?
4. What did you do and prepare for studying abroad?
5. What difficulties have you experienced so far?
6. How has your impression on studying abroad changed since you started studying abroad?
7. What do you think you should have done before studying abroad?
8. How do you spend your time when you are not taking university classes?
9. What English phrases or expressions do you often use or hear in your daily life?
10. If you were to give a piece of advice to students who want to study abroad, what would it be?

The first four questions were used to clarify the student's motivation for studying abroad, and what difficulties and challenges she had expected, as well as what she had done to prepare for such expected challenges. Question 5, 7, and 10 deal with needs in the United States: Question 5 directly asks the difficulties and challenges she actually faced while staying in the United States; question 7 asks her needs too but from a different angle; and the last question asks for her advice to those who want to study abroad, with an underlying purpose to figure out the needs that she thinks study abroad students have before studying abroad. Question 6 focuses on changes in her attitude towards studying abroad. Questions 8 and 9 focus on her daily life outside her academic classes in order to elucidate everyday tasks and language use in the United States.

The original questions are all in Japanese and the interviews were also conducted in Japanese. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, but excerpts from the interview, which will appear in the next chapter, were translated into English by the author.

Transcribed data was analyzed by means of In Vivo coding, which uses "a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 105). I used this coding method because using the participant's own language in codes can avoid a researcher's subjective labeling based on his/her arbitrary interpretations. Saldaña (2016) points out coding examples which are based on the

same single set of data but labeled differently according to different researchers. He explains that “coding requires that you wear your researcher’s analytic lens. But how you perceive and interpret what is happening in the data depends on what type of filter covers that lens and from which angle you view the phenomenon” (pp. 7-8).

I used the student’s original language to label each code. However, since the original data is Japanese, it was codified in Japanese; therefore, English translations of the codes do not necessarily match the exact language in the English excerpts due to the additional process of translation. (Excerpts from the original Japanese transcripts with In Vivo codes will be shown in the Appendix.)

7. Findings

I would like to cover each question, comparing her answers to each question across the three interviews, but first, let me introduce her motivation and expectations for studying abroad before leaving Japan. In the next section, I would like to introduce the student’s answers to the first four questions that shed light on the period before studying abroad.

7.1. Before studying abroad

As a result of In Vivo codification, four codes are identified in her answer to the first question: “Interests when in high and junior high school”, “Pure desire when at university”, “Wanted to get rid of it soon”, and “Did not have to be the United States.”

Her answer to the first question tells us that her original motivation for studying abroad was relatively weak and she did not have any strong and clear goals before leaving Japan. The following excerpt includes all the four codes I identified, which will be put in square parentheses after corresponding answer. The S before each quote represents “student” and R stands for “researcher,” meaning the interviewer.

Excerpt 1:

S: I just wanted to study abroad anyway. I had been longing for it since when I was in junior high school and high school [“Interests when in high and junior high school”], which motivated me to study for it, but when I became a university student, it was not really a motivation anymore, but something like a pure desire [“Pure desire when at university”], and I felt like getting rid of it as soon as

possible [“Wanted to get rid of it soon”].

R: Does that mean where you would study abroad didn’t have to be the United States?

S: Exactly, it didn’t have to be the United States [“Did not have to be the United States”].

When I asked whether her target country had to be the United States and she denied it, she explained that she wanted to study somewhere in Europe instead.

The second question was about what she was looking forward to before studying abroad. Identified In Vivo codes are “Changing environment” and “Verbalize studying abroad.” Although she briefly said she was looking forward to the new environment, the largest part of her answer to this question indicates that she considered studying abroad as something to aspire to rather than an opportunity to do something. The following excerpt shows the “Verbalize studying abroad” part that suggests that she was not interested in what to do in the United States and she was rather obsessed with studying abroad itself instead.

Excerpt 2:

I have been wondering what studying abroad is. Although I came across a lot of answers to this question by other people, they simply did not convince me, and I was looking forward to becoming able to verbalize it myself [“Verbalize studying abroad”].

The third and the fourth questions are about what she was worried about and what she actually did to prepare for studying abroad, respectively. In Vivo codes in the third question are “Language proficiency”, “English”, “Housework”, “Conversation”, and “Making friends.” In question 4, “Watching Vlogs about literature”, “Nothing useful for daily life”, “Watching academic YouTube videos”, “No English conversation”, and “Reading a grammar book.” Her answers to these questions in the following excerpts show that she did not do anything special to learn something useful for her life in the United States, even though she had a considerable amount of anxiety.

Excerpt 3:

I was worried about my English because I had not studied it to prepare for studying abroad at all ["English"]. Also, I had never lived by myself before and did not do housework and I was concerned about laundry, how to close the gas tap, and stuff like that ["Housework"]. I also thought that I would not be able to join conversation ["Conversation"]. And friends. I was so worried about making friends that it brought me unease ["Making friends"].

Excerpt 4:

S: I told my university that I wanted to take literature classes, which was true. I really thought so, and I watched some Vlogs of literature students who are in other English-speaking countries... ["Watching Vlogs about literature"] I did not watch something useful for daily life ["Nothing useful for daily life"], but instead, I often watched YouTube videos on something academic like that ["Watching academic YouTube videos"].

R: So, didn't you learn English for daily conversation that much?

S: You're right. I didn't study it because I was not motivated, and what I was interested in was that part (English literature) ["No English conversation"].

The student's answers to the questions about the period immediately before studying abroad and the excerpts above reveal that she did not clearly envision her future life in the target country and thus did not prepare anything special for it. Rather, what she was looking forward to was studying abroad itself and English literature classes. This may be a rare case where a studying abroad student is less motivated, but the current findings about the student in my study would suggest that students sometimes need to envision their future needs and goals more explicitly in order to actually do something and prepare for studying abroad. Therefore, the rest of the questions in the interviews and her answers to them, which will show up in the next section, are very important not only for identifying what difficulties and challenges a student actually faces but also for providing study abroad students with real needs that they may not be able to perceive by themselves before leaving their home countries.

7.2. While and after studying abroad

With the last six questions, which were used in all the three interviews, I shed light on her needs while staying in the United States. Asking her the same set of questions three times in the 9-month period allowed me to obtain not only a more accurate description of what the study abroad student experiences, but it may also reveal the gradual changes in her attitudes as well as needs in her daily life.

The fifth question was “What difficulties have you experienced so far?” and the following table summarizes and compares In Vivo codes identified from her answers in the three interviews.

Table 2. Codes derived from the student’s answers to question 5

1st interview after 3 months	2nd interview after 6 months	3rd interview after 9 months
“Conversation at meals with her host family” “Low language proficiency outside campus” “Talking with a janitor” “Paying dormitory fee” “Understanding explanation at the orientation” “Making friends” “Continuing conversation” “No one uses an umbrella” “Colorful foods and drinks” “Jetlag” “An annoying roommate” “Discussion based lessons”	“Catching up with classes” “Understanding other students’ comments” “Fewer friends than before” “Loneliness”	“Communication at café and restaurants” “Understanding unexpected utterances” “Explaining directions” “Understanding other students’ comments”

Although it is not surprising that she had more difficulties right after her arrival in the United States, comparing her answers in the three interviews highlights that the number of difficulties she mentioned decreases as she stays in the target country,

suggesting that she gradually got used to these challenges. However, it seems like she still had some language problems especially when she had to communicate with unfamiliar people. The following excerpt from the third interview shows an example of this tendency.

Excerpt 5:

S: I still cannot understand what people say when, for example, eating out at a restaurant. I cannot understand if I cannot expect what they would say beforehand, although I can guess what I should reply without understanding their utterances ["Communication at café and restaurants"].

Another example situation she mentioned in the interviews as being challenging was her university classes, which is codified as "Understanding other students' comments." She explained that she was able to express her ideas when asked in classes, but she had problems when it comes to class discussions that happened after local students shared their opinions, because, she said, understanding unfamiliar native speakers' language was very hard for her.

Question 6 was "How has your impression on studying abroad changed since you started studying abroad?" I included this question expecting that she might remark that studying abroad requires much more than she originally thought it would, which could make a difference in her answers, but she said almost the same things through the three interviews as Table 3 shows.

Table 3. Codes derived from the student's answers to question 6

1st interview after 3 months	2nd interview after 6 months	3rd interview after 9 months
"Not that great" "Good environment for studying"	"Just living in a different place" "Not that special"	"Not that special"

I would like to use an excerpt from the second interview below, but her answers in the first and the third interviews were quite similar.

Excerpt 6:

S: I heard a lot of comments like ‘you are going to change if you study abroad,’ which made me think of studying abroad as something very special [“Not that special”]. But come to think of it now, I realize that it is just living in a different country and studying there [“Just living in a different place”].

Although she identified many difficulties in the last question, her impression on studying abroad seemed not affected much by them. Rather, she experienced a kind of disillusionment that may be because of her strong desire and aspirations for studying abroad before leaving Japan, which we saw in the previous section.

The next question was “What do you think you should have done before studying abroad?” and this question led to rather interesting answers in the three interviews. As the following table shows, as of December when she had spent 3 months there, she thought there was nothing that she should have done before. However, after another 3 months, she said she should have studied English more as the following excerpt from the second interview shows.

Table 4. Codes derived from the student’s answers to question 7

1st interview after 3 months	2nd interview after 6 months	3rd interview after 9 months
“Nothing” “Accept new things”	“Studying English” “Having more opportunity to learn English” “Being more eager to learn English”	“Cannot avoid difficulties” “Prepare for current concerns” “Background knowledge”

Excerpt 7:

S: I wish I had had more opportunity to learn English in a way that suits me better [“Having more opportunity to learn English”]. I watched YouTube videos about English sometimes, but I found a lot of more useful videos here though I could have done it in Japan before studying abroad. I think I should have been more eager to learn English [“Being more eager to learn English”].

However, in the third interview, she told me something different. She said that people cannot completely avoid difficulties no matter what they do before studying abroad, explaining that they can only prepare for something they are looking forward to, interested in, or concerned about. One of the examples that she mentioned in the third interview was about the culture in the United States. The following excerpt shows what happened to her.

Excerpt 8:

S: The most difficult thing was the local students' background knowledge. I cannot understand examples given in classes because I do not share the same background knowledge underlying them. For example, the Marvel movies, the Bible, and something cultural and local like that made me have a hard time catching up with what people were talking about using examples ["Background knowledge"].

She explained that being interested in the target culture could be a big advantage in such situations. Likewise, she talked about learning politics, something which Japanese people are often indifferent about. She explained that hearing other people saying that they should have learned politics before studying abroad does not necessarily make students learn it, but rather, they should learn something that is directly useful in their own situations.

The next question was "How do you spend your time when you are not taking university classes?" which was included in the interview questions to clarify task-based needs in her daily life. She told me quite a lot of things to do as the following table shows.

Table 5. Codes derived from the student's answers to question 8

1st interview after 3 months	2nd interview after 6 months	3rd interview after 9 months
"Study" "Going downtown" "Shopping" "Cafes" "Ping pong with friends"	"Traveling" "Studying at the Academic Support Center" "Reading books"	"Going downtown" "Ice cream shops" "Café" "Bar"

“Keeping a diary” “Eating out with host family” “Teaching Japanese language and culture”		
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The question was particularly useful in identifying which tasks are relevant to the real daily life in the United States. However, as Lambert’s (2010) study points out that “respondents to the open questionnaire rarely provided information at the level of specific target tasks. They conceptualized their language use in terms of general activities and variations on a limited range of task types” (p. 104), the student in my study also mentioned events as broadly as task types. Therefore, I asked her some follow-up questions in order to clarify what she and people there do in certain task types. In the third interview, for example, I asked several additional questions about the ice cream shop and what she did there. My follow-up questions led to more specific information around tasks in this interview. The following excerpt depicts how a visit to a bar went.

Excerpt 9:

R: So, you did not visit a bar?

S: Well, I did [“Bar”].

R: Oh, you did?

S: I watched the baseball game in which Ohtani Shohei played in a bar, a sport bar.

R: Can you tell me more about that. What was is like?

S: Well, my senior made a reservation call and asked if they were going to show Ohtani’s game there. Then after walking in the bar, they asked us if we wanted some appetizer. I ordered fish and chips then. When I ordered, they asked me the size. They serve appetizer in several sizes, and you can choose from them just like when you order a pizza. It was my second time there and I was able to order without any problem, but I was not able to understand what the server said when I ordered for the first time, not knowing that we got size options.

...

R: Did you sit at a table?

S: Yes. We visited there several times, but we used table seats all the time.

...

R: How many times have you been there?

S: Three times.

...

S: "And yeah, you are supposed to show your ID when buying drinks. This is very important. And sometimes, they charge you some entrance fee. It is like a fee to pay the performers there. They randomly charge us about once a week or so, and we were charged about 5 dollars then. ...Also, it was a bit surprising, but students often use cash here.

The ninth question was "What English phrases or expressions do you often use and hear in your daily life?" which was also included in the questions to identify some target discourse or useful expressions to focus on in task-based language teaching. Her answers included very casual phrases that are not specific to tasks mentioned in the previous answers, and thus, I also used follow-up questions and gave some specific situations and contexts so that she can more easily think of common expressions used there. For example, in the following excerpt, I asked her to give English phrases she used when making orders in the bar.

Excerpt 10:

R: Well, because we talked about a bar, do you want to share some phrases from the bar situations?

S: Well, maybe, 'can I get ~' and stuff like that ["Can I get ~"]. Bar is not that special, it is like a café.

R: Did you ask for recommendations there?

S: Ah, I said 'what would you recommend?' in the café ["Do you have any recommendations?"]. I didn't ask it in the bar though. But Ken (pseudonym: her senior) did by saying something like 'do you have any recommendations? I like something sweet.' So, we use 'something' a lot in phrases like 'something to drink', 'something sweet', and 'something hot' here ["Something ~"]. But even when asking for recommendations, I sometimes cannot understand what they say back to me. In that case, I say something like 'is it hot?' and 'is it spicy?' So, adjectives related to flavors and tastes should be useful ["Adjectives"].

Likewise, I asked her further questions about useful expressions in cafés too. Other English expressions she referred to are summarized below in the table. Very casual phrases that Japanese students do not usually learn at school like “I’m gonna ~” and “we’re gonna ~” are also mentioned.

Table 6. Codes derived from the student’s answers to question 9

1st interview after 3 months	2nd interview after 6 months	3rd interview after 9 months
“Can I get ~?” “I’m gonna ~” “We’re gonna ~”	“I’m gonna go” “Progressive aspect” “Would” “Could” “Screw up” “Might”	“I’m gonna ~.” “Could you ~?” “Can I get ~?” “Do you have any recommendations?” “Something ~.” “Adjectives” “Fluffy” “Slippery”

The last question in the interviews was “If you were to give a piece of advice to students who want to study abroad, what would it be?”, whose underlying purpose is quite similar to that of question 7, which asked what she should have done before studying abroad. Therefore, I expected her answers here to be very similar to those in question 7; however, as the table below shows, her answers were more holistic and seem to have little to do with what she said in question 7. She coherently stressed the importance of embracing new challenges through all the three interviews. Although such an answer does not say much about task-based needs, the coherence in her answers may suggest the strength of her belief.

Table 7. Codes derived from the student’s answers to question 10

1st interview after 3 months	2nd interview after 6 months	3rd interview after 9 months
“Accept new things”	“Open to new things” “Express yourself”	“Open to new things” “Get out of your comfort zone”

8. Discussion and conclusion

Needs analysis plays an important role in identifying what tasks to focus on and it helps language educators design transfer-appropriate language teaching curricula as well as learners prepare for real-world tasks to encounter in different countries.

In my needs analysis attempt, it turned out that the student did not see many needs before studying abroad. She actually did little to prepare for it. However, as the fifth interview question revealed, she had a considerable number of difficulties especially right after she started studying abroad. This highlights the importance of needs analysis studies and making students aware of such needs to get ready before studying abroad and reduce unnecessary obstacles. Although the number of difficulties the student mentioned in the interviews decreased as she stayed more in the United States, she thought she still had some language problems when communicating with new (unfamiliar) people there, providing an answer to the first research question: learning how to communicate with unfamiliar people may be one of the most important needs in daily life in the United States.

Some of the questions and the student's answers also led to useful findings that can be embedded in TBLT, because they successfully showed that the Japanese student experienced many tasks in real life in the United States. As we have seen, the student often went downtown to hang out with friends. She visited cafés, ice cream shops, and bars several times. There are some linguistic items that she identified as being very useful too. When designing a TBLT curriculum, they will be very useful references as target tasks and target discourses. Answering the second research question, tasks in these places such as making reservations and making orders are suggested to be incorporated in TBLT as real-life tasks that students frequently come across abroad. This finding is consistent with previous needs analysis studies which identified them as frequently encountered tasks (e.g., Iizuka, 2019; Hillman & Long, 2020; Botev & Sybing, 2022), suggesting that they should be a primary focus of TBLT.

Although the current needs analysis of a student who studied abroad gives us some insights and useful information, it has some limitations as a single case study. First of all, like any individual case study, it is not possible to assume that the findings necessarily apply to everyone else, although a sufficiently qualitative description of participants, methodology, and setting would enable readers to determine what and how to apply to their own situations. Referring to more students' reports on their experiences

abroad may work as a set of data and be useful for consolidating the current findings and identifying what students in our context need in general. However, it is true that conducting a set of qualitative interviews, like the one in the current research, many times with a large number of students may be very time-consuming. Therefore, together with exploratory and qualitative research, quantitative studies with shorter and simpler types of questions, to focus only on their needs as rough as task types for example, may be useful to grasp a holistic trend of students' needs in a certain context.

Another limitation may be the subjectivity of the data. Suggesting the use of multiple sources and methods, Iizuka (2019, p. 140) claims that "learners' actual needs cannot be fully understood by consulting them; we also need input from ... local people in the target country such as host families in the case of survival NA, experienced workers on the particular job in the case of occupational NA, experienced professors in the respective fields in the case of academic NA, etc." As well as a larger number of participants, multiple approaches to their needs may be important.

Finally, in this paper, although I mainly refer to and explain the student's needs outside of school, such as ordering situations and daily conversations with people there, to make transfer discussion more relevant to a general real-life that Japanese students may experience in the United States, transfer targets can also be found within school contexts like academic activities and classes. In fact, the student in my study quite frequently referred to academic situations as being challenging as shown in Table 2. If the primary focus of needs analysis is to find out appropriate tasks specifically for studying abroad students, these needs should be one of the most important transfer targets in language education.

The next step is to actually build a transfer-appropriate TBLT based on the findings. From the transfer of learning perspective, making tasks as real as possible is the key to a successful outcome. With the example of making orders as a target task, simulating environments such as bars and restaurants and letting learners experience tasks as realistically as possible is a promising avenue for future research.

9. References

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10. Appendix

Excerpts used in this paper are all translated to English. The original Japanese with In Vivo coding appears here.

Excerpt 1:

S: とりあえず、留学をしてみたいというのですかね。なんかずっと小っちゃい頃から、中学校の頃から留学をしたいと思って。高校とか中学校のときは興味があって、それが勉強の動機になったんですけど [“ 中学高校、興味 ”]、大学ぐらいになったら、勉強の動機にもならないくらい、ただの欲望みたいになっちゃって [“ 大学、ただの欲望 ”]。だから、とりあえず、それを早く消し去りたいっていう感じがちょっとありました [“ 早く消し去りたい ”]。

R: ということは、アメリカじゃなくてもよかったって感じですか。

S: あー、ほんとはアメリカに行きたくなかったって感じです [“ アメリカ行きたくなかった ”]。

Excerpt 2:

S: 自分のなかで、留学ってなんなんだろうってずっと思ってた部分があって、色んな回答みて、でもそれでも納得できなかったの、留学行く前はそれが言語化できるなっていうのが楽しみでした [“ 留学ってなんだろう、言語化 ”]。

Excerpt 3:

S: まず、英語面は、動機付けが少なかったの、全然英語勉強してないのにやばくねみたいな [“ 英語勉強してない ”]、結構感じてました。生活面に関しては、一人暮らしとかしたことなかったのと、結構家の家事とかもしないタイプなので、洗濯物とかほんとわかんないんですよ、いまもわかんないんですけど、とりあえずそういうちょっとしたことが、ガスの元栓の締め方とか、逆にそういうのが心配だったのと [“ 家事 ”]、あと会話、絶対できないと思ったから、それも心配でしたね [“ 会話 ”]。あと、友達。友達めっちゃ不安でしたほんとに、気分悪くなるくらい [“ 友達 ”]。

Excerpt 4:

S: 文学の授業を基本取りたいと、文学の授業を受けたくて結構留学に行きたっていう理由を全面に大学側には出してたんですけど、これは真実で、実

際に自分ほんとにそう思ってた、同じ英文学、ほかの英語圏に住んでて大学に通ってる、文学部の人の vlog を見てました [“文学の vlog”]。…生活に必要な感じのはあんまり見てなくて [“生活に必要な感じのは見てない”]、どっちかというところそういう勉強系のユーチューバーの英語を聞いてました、積極的に [“勉強系の YouTuber”]。

R: あ、じゃあ特に日常会話とかの英語にはあんまり触れては来てなかったの。

S: ですね、やる気がなかったの、してないですね。興味があったのがそこだったので [“日常会話の英語してない”]。

Excerpt 5:

S: まだ、レストランとか行った時に、聞き取れない。予測ができないことは聞き取れない。だから、カフェ行った時、どういうこと聞かれて言ってるのは、もう、言ってることはわかんないけど、もう、あーこういうこと返せばいいってことはわかる [“レストラン、カフェ、聞き取れない”]。

Excerpt 6:

S: 「留学をするとすごく変わるよ、自分が変わるよ」とか、すごい留学行く前に聞いてたせいもある、すごい留学っていうコンセプト、概念に対してすごい特別な思いとか特別な意味があるなってずっと考えてたんですけど、ただただよく考えれば、他の国にただ住むことだ、その国でただ勉強することなんだなっていうことに気づきましたね [“ただ住むこと”]。

Excerpt 7:

S: もっと英語に触れられる機会を増やしてあげればよかったなって思います [“英語に触れられる機会”]。例えば、もっと自分に合った触れ方で英語に触れられてればよかったと思います。例えば、私 YouTube とかで英語の見たんですけど、なんかもっと真剣にそういうのやっとならばよかった、なんか、こっちに来てすごいいい youtuber を見つけたりしたんですよ。なんかもっとほんとにだったら日本でできたことなのに、なんかもうこれでいいやって思ってた、ずっとやってたんで、なんか、あきらめずにもっと英語勉強に対して食欲であるべきだったなって思います [“英語勉強に食欲であるべき”]。

Excerpt 8:

S: 難しいんですけど、何が1番難しかったかって、その生徒たちが持つてるバックグラウンド、例えば、の話がまずわからないから、具体例が何言ってるのかわからない。だから、あっちだとマーベルとか、すごいこっちでも流行ってるんですけど、なんかあっちの聖書の知識とか、そういう文化的な背景からの知識、あっちの環境下での知識、は私にはそれはわかんないので、具体例で何言ってるのかがまずわかんないっていうのは結構大変でしたね【“バックグラウンド”】。

Excerpt 9:

R: で、バーは結局行ってないんだよね。

S: あ、行きました【“バー”】。

R: あ、行った!?

S: あの、大谷翔平の、WBCを見に行った時に、バーで見たので、スポーツバーで。

R: ちょっと聞かしてもろていいですか、それ。ほんとに。ちょっとなんか、どんな感じなの。

S: 普通にまず入って行くじゃないですか、スポーツバー、なんかアイリッシュバーだったんですよ。で、入って行って、で、あ、まず予約した、先輩が予約したんですけど、が、「大谷翔平のやつあってる?」って言ったら、「あ、あってるよー」って「いいよー来なよー」みたいな感じで、であっててらしいよって言って行ったんですよ。で、行って、で普通に飲物頼んで、まあ、最初にアパタイザーとか聞かれて、アパタイザーで聞いて、で、私、そのフィッシュアンドチップス頼んだんですけど、その時に6オンスと12オンスみたいな、オンスか忘れたんですけど、その結構意外とサイズあるじゃないですか。ピザとか頼んだ時も、小さいサイズと大きいサイズ、それも結構最初は知らなくて、何言ってんのこの人と思ったことあったんですけど、でも2回目だったんで、だからそれであーこっちにしようかってこうやって、ただオーダーしただけなんです。

...

R: あーテーブルなの。

S: テーブルです。何回か行ったけど全部そうです。

...

R: うんうん、オーケー。え、何回くらいいったんですかバーは。

S: 結局、3回くらい行きました。

...

S: あ、あと、あれもありました。あの、最初お酒買う時はIDを見せる。あれ大事大事大事です。で、時々、あの入場料取られる。時々取られます。なんか、あの、演出者のための入場料が、なんか週に1回ランダムで取られたりして、私の時は取られました、5ドルぐらい。... で、意外と、学生はキャッシュで生活してますね。私ビックリしましたもん。「えっ、キャッシュなん？」ってなりました。

Excerpt 10:

R: じゃあ、さっきちょっとせっかくバーの話あったんで、バーでこれ使ったな〜みたいな覚えてますか。

S: いや〜でも、「can I get ~」とかほんとおなじです [“Can I get ~”]。そうですね、難しいですね、バー、えバーってそんな特別な場所じゃない、普通にバーって、カフェと同じレベルじゃないですか。

R: カフェも「can I get」とか？なんかオススメとか聞いたりしました？

S: あ、「do you have a recommendation?」ぐらいです。聞いたりしますね [Do you have any recommendations?]. でも、バーではさすがに聞いてないです。うーん、でも、kenさん、その日本人の方は聞いてました。「do you have a recommendation? I like something sweet」とか。甘いのがいいとか。そう言う時に使ってみました。だから、「something to drink」とか、「something sweet, something hot」とか、そう言う、やっぱ Something 使いますよね [“Something~”]。... でもやっぱ、「do you have a recommendation?」って聞いたとしても、言ってることがわからんこともあります。だからその時に、「Is it hot?」とか「Is it spicy?」とかはやっぱ聞きます。だから、調味料系、なんかその自分が食べれない味とかそういうの???するじゃないですか。だからそう言う味の形容詞とか覚えとくといいかなと思います [“形容詞”]。