

# Integrating Soft Skills Into Task-Based Language Learning in Higher Education

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**Abstract**—Although research on soft skills in higher education has been widely conducted, research on assignments to promote soft skills remains limited. The aims are to investigate the forms of assignments made by lecturers to train students with soft skills in Task-Based Language Learning, to analyze the percentage growth in categories of soft skills, and to describe the most important soft skills from the perspective of a language educator. This study employs a quantitative and qualitative survey design. The quantitative survey questionnaire was created and delivered to 102 language teachers online; 84 were from Indonesian universities, while 16 were from Malaysian universities. Eight faculty members were interviewed in Focus Group Discussions to validate quantitative research findings and to determine the most required soft skills. The study found that while teachers have a relatively solid comprehension of each component of soft skills, the types of assignments issued to students vary. Educators believe that communication skills, teamwork, and computer literacy are the most important soft skills for graduates today. It is projected that the findings of this study will motivate lecturers to include varied activities in assignments to help students enhance their soft skills.

**Index Terms**—soft skills, assignment, task-based learning, higher education

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, education has progressed in information technology use and Internet communication, which has provided greater access for educators and students to upgrade their teaching and learning approaches, which may require some application of skills (Alyoussef, 2023). In the opinion of teachers (Lepeley et al., 2021), information technology can help university students become more prepared in any academic field. Meanwhile, some education experts emphasize the importance of using skills such as teamwork, communication, and lifelong learning to adapt to the contemporary needs of education (Tan et al., 2020; Emanuel et al., 2021), and they also encourage educators to help students develop soft skills. Soft skills refer to personal attributes and abilities that people may have natively, and they are often associated with a person's personality and character. These skills can help people interact successfully, display professionalism, and create relationships (Cuic Tankovic et al., 2023).

Most scholars have different opinions about the soft-skills categories. For example, some scholars (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012; Marin-Zapata et al., 2022) divide soft skills into ten categories: qualities or values, predispositions or attitudes, methodological skills, leadership or management abilities, interpersonal skills, communication skills, articulation work, emotional labor, and 'lookism', which relates to professional appearance. Moreover, soft skills are viewed as characteristics or attributes of one's personality which include time management,

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stress management, effective communication, creativity, and leading teams required at the university level (Gibb, 2014). Despite having different views of what soft skills are, these skills are then believed to stand as comprehensive and sufficient enough to be acquired by students in higher education levels (Gan, 2012). Thus, transformative learning in developing skills and competencies is vital to equipping students to be able “to solve environmentally important problems and lead an environmentally aware way of life” (Mulnix, 2012; Hassan et al., 2013; Kechagias, 2011).

Task-based language learning (TBLL) is one of the common platforms used by students and educators in classrooms. (Lorente et al., 2024; Oo et al., 2024; Rehan et al., 2024). Among its benefits are that it emphasizes more on a student-centered approach than a teacher-centered approach, uses language as a learning tool, facilitates the language skills application in a real-world context, conforms to students’ intermediate level, and enables classroom engagement while catering to students’ needs (Chu et al., 2024; Oo et al., 2024; Xue, 2022). TBLL is seen as an ideal language learning platform for students because it integrates the application of soft skills required by students. It deals mostly with active classroom activities (Ahmadian, 2016; Xue, 2022; Gurzynski & Baralt, 2014). For instance, role-playing can be a suitable classroom activity as it enhances students’ creativity in the language learning experience by encouraging them to respond to a real-life situation while improving their self-confidence. This greatly aligns with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which can be engaged in classroom activities as part of TBLL activities for students.

CLT improves students’ second language competence (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Common tasks like presenting from a group work discussion have developed students’ confidence and encouragement to participate and speak more often with their teammates (Abrami et al., 2015). This consequently improves their speaking skills. Through this activity, it is believed that students can pitch their creativity to making decisions. Therefore, implementing TBLL in the classroom significantly facilitates students better at harnessing their language learning (Alyoussef, 2023; Philp & Duchesne, 2016; Van der Zwaard & Bannink, 2019).

Recently, TBLL has given greater attention to the adaptation of cognitive skills focusing on memorizing, synthesizing, and analyzing especially towards developing decision-making skills about power and supremacy in administration areas (Finn et al., 2014; Taatgen, 2013). Besides looking at their ability to make decisions, soft skills like creativity are also crucial in problem-solving so that students can solve any job’s related issues rather than only using them in the classroom. Besides, meaningful learning experience contributes to an in-depth comprehension of language knowledge which is accomplished through the engagement of problem-solving skills (Kessler & Hubbard, 2017; Tadjer et al., 2020). These soft skills then undeniably need to be taught and harnessed by the teachers for classroom activities. (Hariti et al., 2020).

In Asian nations such as Indonesia and Malaysia, the curriculum that directly addresses the development of soft skills has not been fully defined (Jaedun et al., 2024; Tamsah et al., 2023). University curricula always emphasize the quality of mastery of hard or technical abilities. Indeed, several lecturers in universities in Indonesia and Malaysia have used the soft-skills development method (Ormond & Sulianti, 2017; Shakir, 2009; Tan et al., 2020). This can directly stimulate the development of their soft skills, which has received little attention from universities and lecturers.

Previous research has explored how college students apply soft skills to support their academic activities (Hora et al., 2018; Musa et al., 2012; Tadjer et al., 2020, 2022; Yousef et al., 2020). Several research looked at soft skill education, soft skill mastery by lecturers and students, soft skill development using media, the relationship between soft skills and digital literacy, and soft skill empowerment to push students to learn (Scott & Willison, 2021). However, lecturers’ perspectives on soft skill development, types of assignments to students, and the research of soft skills most needed by the labor market have never been discussed previously.

Based on the discussion made on the roles of soft skills in higher education, this paper intends to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the lecturers’ perceptions of integrating soft skills in learning activities?
2. How do educators assign students to improve their soft skills in task-based language learning?
3. Which soft skills are urgently needed for students’ future work?

## II. METHOD

This study employed a survey research design that collected both qualitative and quantitative data to explore the practices of tertiary language educators in developing their students’ soft skills through assignment-based learning activities.

A survey was developed and distributed through an online platform to a total of 102 language lecturers, with 18 participants from Malaysia and 84 from Indonesia. The participants consisted of 44 male and 58 female lecturers and were recruited through professional associations and social media groups for educators in both countries. These participants were recruited from a total of 35 institutions in Indonesia and another 6 institutions in Malaysia. Furthermore, the participants consisted of educators with various teaching experiences in diverse subject areas such as English proficiency skills, linguistics, education, literature, language assessment, and teaching of third languages such as Arabic, Indonesian, Japanese, and French. By having a mix of participants from different backgrounds, a wider range of ideas is explored compared to having a lack of diversity that stifles the generation of new ideas.

A semi-structured online survey was developed as the primary instrument to address the research questions and objectives. Semi-structured questions have an advantage where they offer the participants flexibility in giving out

responses. The survey comprises 19 questions in total with a combination of 10 open-ended and 9 closed-ended questions. A section containing six demographic questions on the participants' teaching background is also included as demographic data enables participants' diversity in the study to be recognized. The open-ended questions focused on lecturers' experiences in developing students' soft skills development and their specific assignment methods in doing so. A total of 9 soft skills themes are inquired including communication skills, critical thinking, ethics in speaking, self-confidence, cooperation and teamwork, emotional intelligence, networking skills, adaptation skills, and students' creativity skills. Meanwhile, the closed-ended questions gathered information on the frequency of the assignment tasks applied by the educators to enhance the inquired soft skills. For this type of item, a frequency scale is used to identify how often the participants perform the tasks. As the data were collected through a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions, thematic analysis was utilized as a method to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), this method involves sifting through a set of data to find repeated themes and in the process of doing so, researchers also interpret the data at the same time.

The study followed some steps to ensure validity and credibility. Firstly, the research team obtained approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Universiti Teknologi MARA before distributing the instruments. UiTM's REC ensures that the study conforms to the standard guidelines of research laws and regulations (Research Ethics Committee, 2018).

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Results

##### (a). Lecturers' Perception of Soft Skills

When language teachers were asked about their comprehension, the description of their answers is displayed in Figure 1 below.

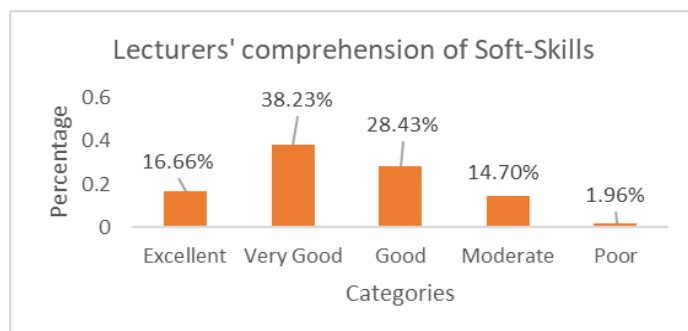


Figure 1. Lecturers' Comprehension of Soft Skills (n=102)

When language teachers were asked about their frequency in preparing students' soft skills development at the beginning of the teaching and learning process, their responses were as shown in Figure 2 below.

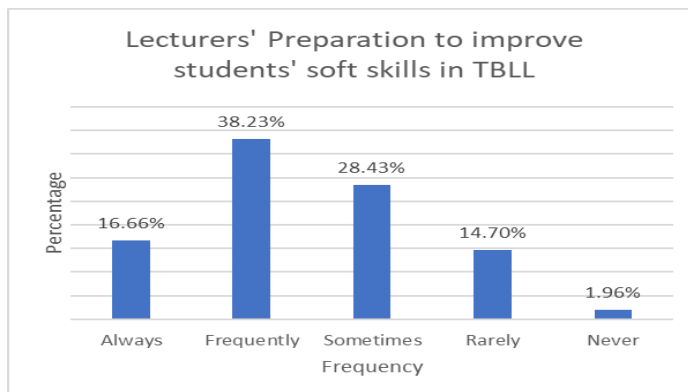


Figure 2. Teachers' Planning of Soft Skills in TBLL

When language teachers were asked about the frequency of assessing students' soft skills during the learning process, their responses are depicted in Figure 3 below.

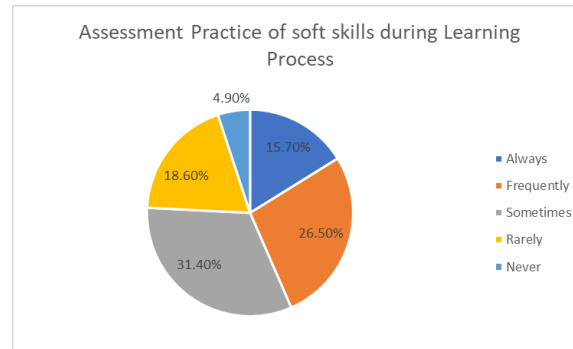


Figure 3. Assessment Practice of Soft Skills During Learning Process

(b). *The Form of Assignments to Improve Soft Skills in TBLL*

When language teachers were asked about the types of activities they assigned to students to improve their communication skills, the description of their assigned activities is described in the table below:

TABLE 1  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN COMMUNICATION SKILLS/N=102

No	Assignment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Individual/group presentation	32	31.37%
2	Debates	26	25.49%
3	Role-playing	20	19.60%-
4	Storytelling/Narration	10	9.80%
5	Writing peer review	5	4.90%
6	Panel discussion	4	3.92%
7	Podcast/video creation	3	2.94%
8	Classroom forum/blogs	2	1.96%

Assignments that are dynamic and captivating might help students develop their communication abilities. Students can work together or independently to prepare and make a presentation on a specified topic, improving their verbal communication and teamwork skills. In debating activities, to promote critical thinking and effective speaking, students are given topics to investigate and make justifications for or against. Students are given roles (such as interviewee/interviewer or customer/service provider) in role-playing exercises to mimic authentic communication situations. In storytelling or narration activities, to enhance their descriptive and expressive abilities, students are encouraged to recount a tale or an experience. In Writing and Peer Review activities, Essays, blogs, or reflective journals are given to students, and peer review sessions are incorporated to give them practice giving constructive criticism. In panel discussion exercises, students imitate professional communication situations by taking part in or moderating discussions on certain subjects. In Podcast or Video Creation activities, Students improve their verbal and digital communication skills by recording conversations, lessons, or original content. Students combine textual and digital communication abilities by creating an online platform in Classroom Forums or Blogs where they can publish ideas or reply to suggestions.

*Critical thinking skills*

When language teachers were asked about the types of activities they assigned to students to improve their critical-thinking skills, the description of their assigned activities is described in the table below.

TABLE 2  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Case studies/problem-solving	34	33.33%
2	Debates	25	24.50%
3	Socratic seminar	14	13.72%
4	Research projects	9	8.82%
5	“What if” scenarios	7	6.86%
6	Concept mapping	6	5.88%
7	Compare and contrast assignment.	5	4.90%
8	Media or literature analysis	5	4.90%
9	Reflection Assignment	2	1.96%

Teachers provide their students with interesting assignments to help them develop their critical thinking abilities. In Case Studies and Problem-Solving assignments, Teachers provide students with hypothetical or real-world situations to analyze and suggest solutions for. In debate activities, teachers give students a contentious issue to investigate and make an argument for or against. Students' logical thinking, arguments supported by evidence, and viewpoint evaluation are all demonstrated in these exercises. In Socratic seminars, Teachers assign readings and lead conversations in which

students pose and respond to challenging issues. Investigating deeper meanings and challenging presumptions are the main goals of this exercise. In research project activity, students are given open-ended research topics by their lecturers, and they must collect, assess, and synthesize data to conclude. In the “What if” scenario, to promote logical and creative thinking, teachers provide their students with hypothetical situations to think about. In concept mapping assignments, to demonstrate the links and interactions between concepts, teachers ask students to make a visual map of the notion. The activity improves the participants' ability to arrange and synthesize information. In the “compare and contrast” assignment, teachers Give pupils two concepts, theories, or viewpoints so they can compare and contrast them. In Analysis of Media or Literature, students are given assignments by teachers to critically assess literary works, news pieces, or ads. Teachers offer reflective essays or journals for students to assess their own decision-making and mental processes as part of the Reflection assignment.

*Speaking Ethics*

When language teachers were asked about the types of activities they assigned to students to improve their ethics in speaking, the description of their assigned activities is described in the following table.

TABLE 3  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN ETHICS IN SPEAKING

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Debate with ethical guideline	28	27.45%
2	Role-playing scenario	25	24.50%
3	Famous speech analysis	21	20.58%
4	Peer feedback exercises	10	9.80%
5	Code of Ethics creation	6	5.88%
6	Persuasive speaking	4	3.92%
7	Ethical storytelling	3	2.94%
8	Reflection of ethical communication	3	2.94%
9	Ethic assignment	2	1.96%

In this skill, assignments should emphasize respect, honesty, empathy, and accountability in communicating to assist students in developing their speaking ethics. In the Debate with Ethical Guidelines activity, students discuss a sensitive topic (e.g., privacy vs. security). They maintain a respectful discourse while avoiding insults and incorrect information. The project intends to teach students how to argue sensitive topics in an ethical and useful manner. In role-playing scenarios, teachers present students with circumstances in which they must resolve moral quandaries in communication, such as giving bad news to a coworker or clarifying a misunderstanding. In the famous speech analysis, students evaluate speeches by well-known individuals, highlighting moral attributes such as honesty, tolerance for opposing viewpoints, and avoidance of deceptive language. The activity's goal is to understand how ethics supports good communication.

Through the Peer Feedback Exercise, Students give a brief speech or presentation, followed by a structured peer evaluation on ethical issues (e.g., fairness and respect for other viewpoints). The goal is to reinforce the value of constructive criticism and courteous discourse. In the code of creation activity, Teachers provide students with the duty of developing a "speaking code of ethics" for themselves or their groups, which encompasses ideals like integrity, openness, and decency. The goal is to encourage contemplation about their roles as moral communicators. Through the persuasive speaking activity, students prepare a persuasive speech on any topic they choose, ensuring that their ideas are supported by facts and free of rhetoric or deception. The goal is to emphasize the necessity of ethical persuasion and authenticity. In the ethical storytelling activity, Students emphasize honesty, and respect for people or cultures and refrain from using unpleasant words. Teachers urge students to share a personal or cultural story. The purpose is to engage in culturally sensitive and ethical storytelling. In the Reflection of Ethical Communication activity, teachers provide students with a reflective essay or diary entry to write about an instance in which they witnessed or participated in unethical speech. The goal is to promote self-awareness and adherence to moral behavior. In addition, in an ethical project, professors ask students to assess a media star or public speaker's ethical behavior during interviews or speeches.

*Self-Confidence*

The table below describes the types of activities that language teachers allocate to students to increase their self-confidence skills.

TABLE 4  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN SELF-CONFIDENCE

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Individual presentation	30	29.41%
2	Personal achievement journal	18	17.64%
3	Role-playing exercise	13	12.74%
4	Peer-teaching assignment	11	10.78%
5	Gradual exposure challenge	12	11.76%
6	Talent shows or showcase	7	6.86%
7	Positive affirmation activities	6	5.88%
8	Collaborative projects	3	2.94%
9	Storytelling experience	2	1.96%

Improving student self-confidence involves assignments encouraging self-expression, resilience, and gradual exposure to new challenges. In individual presentation assignments, students prepare and give a presentation on a chosen topic. It begins with informal settings before transitioning to official ones. The goal is to gain confidence in public speaking and communicating ideas. Students keep a notebook in the personal achievement journal assignment to record their accomplishments, obstacles conquered, and good feedback received. The purpose is to encourage self-reflection and recognize personal improvement. In the Role-playing exercise, Students are given real-life events (e.g., job interviews, conflict resolution) to act out in a safe and supportive setting. The goal is to gain confidence in handling a variety of scenarios. In the Peer-Teaching assignment, students plan a short lesson to teach their peers a subject in which they excel or enjoy. The goal is to let students take ownership of their knowledge and skills. Students are assigned more difficult assignments in the Gradual Exposure challenge activity, such as beginning with group presentations and progressing to individual presentations. The idea is to help them acquire confidence gradually. In talent shows or showcase activities, Students demonstrate or present a skill, ability, or project they are proud of in front of their classmates. The idea is to inspire pupils to embrace and demonstrate their unique strengths. Teachers assign students to write letters to themselves through positive affirmation activities, stressing their virtues and successes. Its purpose is to boost self-esteem and improve self-perception. In Collaborative project activities, Teachers create group activities in which students contribute unique responsibilities, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to shine. The goal is to increase confidence via teamwork and shared achievement. In the Storytelling experience, Teachers ask students to share a personal experience or reflect on how they overcame a hurdle. The idea is to normalize vulnerability and increase resilience.

#### *Cooperation and Teamwork*

When asked what activities they assigned to students to increase their collaboration and teamwork abilities, language teachers provided their responses as stated in the table below.

TABLE 5  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK

<i>No</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Group project	34	33.33%
2	Role-based task assignment	22	21.56%
3	Collaborative Problem Solving	15	14.70%
4	Peer Teaching Assignment	11	10.78%
5	Creative Work Project	8	7.84%
6	Team-based competition	6	5.88%
7	Simulation or role-playing	3	2.94%
8	Peer Review Workshop	3	2.94%

Improving student teamwork involves assignments promoting collaboration, communication, and mutual accountability. In group projects, Teachers propose a project that requires students to collaborate, split tasks, and create a finished output (such as a presentation, report, or creative piece). The purpose is to instill shared responsibility, coordination, and compromise. In the Role-based task assignment, within group work, students are allocated certain roles (for example, leader, researcher, or presenter). Rotate roles for future assignments. The goal is to help children understand and value the various contributions to a team. In the Collaborative Problem-Solving activity, Teachers give a hard challenge that must be solved with the participation of all team members. The purpose is to promote creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration towards a common solution. In the Peer Teaching Assignment, Teachers assign groups of students to teach their classmates a topic or concept. Every member should participate in the planning and delivery. The purpose is to promote collaboration, responsibility, and knowledge sharing. In the Creative Work Project assignment, teachers assign teams to create something together (e.g., a video, artwork, or skit) that demands collaboration and the integration of varied ideas. The purpose is to foster companionship and creativity through collaborative efforts. In the Team-based Competition, teachers create a pleasant competition in which groups compete to solve puzzles, accomplish tasks, or propose ideas. The goal is to create teamwork under pressure and improve strategic thinking. In the Simulation or role-playing activities, Teachers assign a simulation in which students take on responsibilities within a team to address a problem (for example, running a business or managing a crisis). The goal is to improve cooperative, communicative, and decision-making abilities. In the Peer-Review Workshop activity, Groups of students review and provide comments on each other's work, emphasizing constructive criticism and collaborative progress. The purpose is to foster respect for peers' viewpoints and teamwork when improving ideas.

#### *Emotional Intelligence*

The table below describes the types of tasks that language teachers allocate to students to increase their Emotional Intelligence skills.

TABLE 6  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Reflective journals	28	27.45%
2	Empathy exercises	21	20.58%
3	Role-playing Scenarios	16	15.68%
4	Group Discussion with an emotional focus	10	9.80%
5	Mindful Assignment	9	8.82%
6	Emotional Intelligence Case Studies	7	6.86%
7	Gratitude Letter Writing	5	4.90%
8	Emotional Vocabulary Expansion	4	3.92%
9	Peer feedback on emotional skills	2	1.96%

Improving students' emotional intelligence (EI) involves fostering self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, social skills, and motivation. In the Reflective journal activity, teachers guide students to keep a notebook in which they can reflect on their emotions, reactions, and how they handled various events. The goal is to increase self-awareness and emotional regulation. In the Empathy Exercises, Teachers provide projects that require students to write or role-play as someone else. The goal is to create empathy and comprehension of how others feel. In the Role-playing scenarios, Teachers provide scenarios in which students must handle disagreements or emotionally intense interactions. The goal is to improve self-regulation, active listening skills, and empathy. In Group Discussions with an emotional focus, teachers offer talks on themes such as stress management, relationship development, and dealing with disappointments. The goal is to improve social skills and encourage sharing emotions in a safe environment. In the Mindfulness Assignments, Teachers guide students through mindfulness techniques (such as deep breathing and meditation) and ask them to evaluate how they affect their emotions. In the Emotional Intelligence Case Studies, teachers offer case studies in which students analyze the emotional dynamics of a scenario and provide acceptable solutions. In Gratitude Letter Writing, Teachers assign students to write letters of gratitude to those who have had a good impact on their lives. The purpose is to promote happy feelings and develop connections. In the Emotional Vocabulary Expansion, Teachers provide activities in which students explore and express complicated emotions, allowing them to articulate sentiments more precisely.

*Networks*

An assignment to improve students' networking skills can be designed to encourage interaction, collaboration, and practical use of networking concepts. The table below highlights the many types of assignments that language professors assign to pupils to help them improve their network skills.

TABLE 7  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN NETWORKS

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Networking Event Simulation	35	34.31%
2	Informational Interviews	26	25.49%
3	Collaborative Group Projects	18	17.64%
4	Networking Challenges	14	13.72%
5	Case Studies on Networking	9	8.82%

In networking Event Simulation, students organize a simulated networking event, such as a career fair or a professional meet and greet. This project trains students in event management, public speaking, and interactions with peers and professionals. Finally, they create reports that outline the event planning process and reflect on the networking interactions. In Informational Interviews, each student seeks out and contacts a professional in their field of interest for a quick interview. This exercise helps people increase their ability to make relationships, initiate professional conversations, and gain industry insights. In Collaborative Group Projects, Students work together in groups to complete a project that needs them to network with other stakeholders, such as guest lecturers or industry partners. Throughout the project, children can practice teamwork, external communication, and connection-building. Finally, students will be able to report on the completed project and share their thoughts on the networking experience. In Networking Challenges, Students are given weekly challenges such as attending a professional webinar, engaging in an online conversation, or introducing themselves to someone new. They will demonstrate spontaneous networking, adaptability, and confidence. In Case Studies on Networking, students look at case studies of successful professionals and how networking helped them flourish. The skills developed include analytical thinking and an understanding of networking strategies.

*Adaptation*

The assignments are intended to increase students' adaption skills, with a focus on helping them become more flexible, resilient, and resourceful in various situations. The table below describes the types of tasks that language teachers offer to students to develop their adaptability skills.

TABLE 8  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO ADAPTATION

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	<i>Role-Reversal Exercise</i>	35	34.31%
2	<i>Case Study Analysis</i>	26	25.49%
3	<i>Cross-Cultural Simulation</i>	20	19.60%
4	<i>Dynamic Team Challenge</i>	12	11.76%
5	<i>Scenario-Based Problem-Solving</i>	9	8.82%

In the reversal exercise, students take on a role or responsibility that is outside of their comfort zone, such as serving as a team leader, completing a task for a different department, or presenting an opposing viewpoint in a debate. Flexibility, perspective-taking, and problem-solving abilities have all been enhanced. The delivery can be a report or video diary detailing their struggles and adaptations. In Case Study Analysis, Students are given to analyze real-life or hypothetical events demanding quick adaptation (for example, a firm pivoting during a crisis or an athlete adjusting to an unexpected obstacle). The project helps to develop analytical thinking, strategic planning, and decision-making skills. The report is a written study that includes advice on how to adapt effectively. In Cross-Cultural Simulation, students simulate navigating a diverse cultural setting (for example, a business discussion or a group project with international participation). In the Dynamic Team Challenge, Students work in rotating teams on a project with changing requirements or restrictions (such as unexpected changes in resources, timeframes, or objectives). Teamwork, flexibility to change, and resilience under duress are all cultivated talents. The report could be a finished project or a group reflection on their adaptation strategies. In Scenario-Based Problem-Solving, students are provided with scenarios in which they must alter their plans in response to unforeseen events (for example, a natural disaster, technical failure, or policy change).

#### *Leadership*

The table below describes the types of exercises that language teachers allocate to students to strengthen their leadership skills.

TABLE 9  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN LEADERSHIP

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	<i>Group projects</i>	39	38.23%
2	<i>Event Planning and Execution</i>	28	27.45%
3	<i>Case Study on Leadership Styles</i>	21	20.58%
4	<i>Leadership Role-Playing</i>	12	9.80%

In Group projects, teachers assign students to lead group projects. They are in charge of creating goals, distributing work, and guaranteeing project completion. Skills learned include team management, communication, decision-making, and problem-solving. The finished project, a leadership reflection notebook, and peer assessments. In Event Planning and Execution, Students plan and lead a small event (such as a seminar, fundraiser, or community outreach activity). Planning, delegating, dispute resolution, and resource management are all abilities that have been acquired. The event outcomes include a summary report and a reflection on leadership challenges and accomplishments. In Case Study on Leadership Styles, Students examine several leadership styles using case studies of renowned leaders or organizations to discover their strengths, flaws, and situational applications. Analytical thinking, comprehension of various leadership techniques, and adaptability are among the improved skills. The report consists of a written analysis and a presentation that proposes how to apply the lessons learned. In Leadership Role-Playing, students practice leadership scenarios (e.g., dispute resolution, crisis management, or team inspiration) in which they take on leadership responsibilities. Public speaking, problem-solving, and making decisions under duress are among the talents that have been developed.

#### *Digital Literacy*

Improving students' digital literacy entails teaching them how to utilize digital tools efficiently and responsibly, evaluate online material, and navigate the digital world. The table below describes the types of tasks that language teachers allocate to students to develop their digital literacy skills.

TABLE 10  
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN DIGITAL LITERACY

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Digital Research Project	42	41.17%
2	Online Collaboration Exercise	20	19.60%
3	Digital Presentation Assignment	18	17.64%
4	Data Analysis and Visualization	17	9.80%
5	Data Analysis and Visualization	5	4.90%

In a Digital research project, Students are instructed to research a topic using online resources, ensuring that their sources are credible and relevant. This activity promotes information literacy, critical thinking, and citation abilities. The report takes the shape of a research paper or a presentation, with a bibliography of reliable sources and an explanation of why each source was selected. In Online Collaboration Exercises, Students use collaboration

applications (such as Google Docs, Trello, and Slack) to work on a group project. Collaborative abilities, knowledge of digital technologies, and communication skills have all been developed. The report takes the form of a finished project, including a summary of tools utilized and reflections on their effectiveness. With Digital Presentation Assignments, students use multimedia presentation tools such as PowerPoint, Canva, or Prezi to incorporate text, pictures, and videos (Durak, 2019). Content development, visual design, and expertise with digital tools are among the talents developed. The activity report contains a polished presentation and a perspective on the creative process. Students can collect and visualize publicly available data using technologies such as Excel or Google Sheets. The developed skills include data literacy, analytical thinking, and digital tool use.

*C. Soft Skills Are Urgently Required for Work*

Based on the result of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), there are three soft skills most needed by students that directly support them in their future jobs, the teachers responded with their answers as displayed in the following table.

TABLE 11  
THE NEEDED SOFT SKILLS IN WORK

Soft skills	Frequency	Percentage
Communication	92	90.19%
Digital literacy	87	85.29%
Teamwork	76	74.50%
Critical thinking	42	41.17%
Creativity	40	39.21%
Adaptation	34	33.33%
Problem-solving	31	30.39%
Leadership skills	28	27.45%
Collaborative	19	18.62%

According to the respondents, communication skills (90.19%) are the most important soft skills in the workplace, followed by computer literacy (85.29%) and collaborative abilities (74.5%). Graduates with strong communication skills are more likely to stand out and be promoted because they can express themselves convincingly in meetings, presentations, and reports. Furthermore, they can assist graduates in effectively communicating their thoughts and opinions in reports, presentations, and meetings, increasing their chances of recognition and development (Beaty & Silvia, 2012).

Digital literacy is essential for recent graduates since it equips them with the skills and information required to navigate and thrive in today's technologically advanced society (Geng et al., 2019; Koltay, 2011). The majority of jobs require proficiency in digital technologies such as Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, and industry-specific applications. Employers want graduates who can manage data, communicate online, and collaborate digitally. Technology is always growing, and digital literacy allows graduates to quickly adapt to new tools and platforms. This adaptability is essential for maintaining competitiveness in the job market. In essence, digital literacy is a fundamental skill that equips recent graduates to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and digital society (Rogan & Miguel, 2013; Devedzic et al., 2018).

Teamwork is an essential ability for recent graduates since it equips them to effectively interact and contribute in professional settings (Sancho-Thomas et al., 2009; Sridharan & Boud, 2019). Most industries rely on teams to achieve objectives, solve problems, and produce results. Teamwork allows people to learn from others with different backgrounds, ideas, and expertise. Working in a team encourages excellent communication, which includes active listening, feedback, and idea sharing (Rineksa et al., 2021; Succi & Canovi, 2020). To summarize, cooperation is essential for new graduates since it fosters critical interpersonal, communication, and problem-solving skills, making them more effective and desirable in professional settings. In addition to the three soft skills above, respondents also chose other soft skills needed in work, although the percentage of their choices was lower, such as critical thinking, creativity, adaptation, problem-solving, leadership, and collaborative skills.

*B. Discussion*

Researching the implementation of soft skills in education is crucial because it helps educators, policymakers, and stakeholders develop effective strategies to equip students with the skills needed for personal and professional success (Fernandez & Liu, 2019; Hariti et al., 2020; Hora et al., 2018). The results of this study have revealed how educators perceive soft skills, the assignments they practice to improve each component of soft skills, and the types of soft skills that are most needed in the workplace.

Most instructors comprehend the applicability of soft skills. This finding is consistent with prior research (Hendarman & Cantner, 2018; Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012; Hurrell, 2016; Lyu & Liu, 2021). This found that if teachers understand soft skills effectively, they will endeavor to build their students' soft skills through a variety of activities during the learning process. Regarding the preparation for the implementation of soft-skills development in the learning process, there is still very little previous research that explores this topic. Most of them (Hurrell, 2016; Knox & Stone, 2019; Lyu & Liu, 2021) only emphasize the understanding and application of soft skills in teaching and learning activities in the classroom based on an analysis of student needs and the school environment.

This study is unique in that it examines how the forms of teacher assignments to students to develop their soft skills are supported by more extensive explanations of the forms of assignments and features that underpin the assignments that can directly improve students' soft skills (Ngang et al., 2015). Another distinguishing feature of the study's findings is the investigation of the types of soft skills that are most needed in the workplace, which employs university graduates. This information is undoubtedly critical for educators planning soft skills development in classroom learning activities.

The results of the study assist educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in developing successful strategies to provide students with the skills they require for personal and professional success (Fernandez & Liu, 2019; Hariti et al., 2020). In addition, it ensures that educational programs address these gaps and prepare students for the workforce. Understanding how to integrate soft skills into education helps align curricula with the needs of modern industries. It ensures that students develop competencies like problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration, which are essential for career readiness. Researching their implementation helps educators identify teaching methods that enhance engagement, motivation, and academic performance.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate lecturers' perspectives on how to improve students' soft skills, the types of assignments they practice, and the soft skills elements that are most needed to prepare them for future work. The results indicate that most professors have distinct perspectives on soft skills in TBLL. This fact is supported by several tasks assigned by professors to strengthen one soft skill. Communication, computer literacy, and teamwork are the most important soft skills that students will need in their future careers. This research also exposes the varied assignments given by lecturers during the learning process based on the soft skills components required by students. Furthermore, this study explains the types of soft skills that new graduates need to prepare for their future jobs. These findings highlight the critical role of lecturers in improving students' soft skills through the types of tasks they provide to students during the learning process. Students are expected to be able to train and enhance their soft skills through these projects to assist their mastery of hard skills learned during their studies. The findings of this study undoubtedly contribute to increasing the quality of graduates from higher education and enriching the literature on soft skills development. Several limitations of this study, such as the number of respondents, the relationship between mastery of soft-skills components, and the triangulation of research techniques, can be addressed by future researchers to create a more thorough definition of soft-skills mastery.

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