INVESTIGATING TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN A VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IN THE UAE

A THESIS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Presented to the Faculty of the American University of Sharjah
College of Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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B.A. 1996
Sharjah, UAE
June 2011

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ABSTRACT

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an approach to teaching a foreign/second language that attempts to engage language learners in interactionally authentic language use through having them perform communicative tasks. TBLT uses tasks as the core unit of planning, teaching, and assessment. There is a plethora of literature on the value of using authentic tasks in facilitating and promoting language learning, as tasks could be more motivating, engaging, and learner-entered than traditional linguistic exercise. Tasks thus would ignite the acquisition processes on the part of learners.

This study investigated the attitudes of English-as-a-foreign language (EFL) instructors toward TBLT in their setting. This research used consciousness-raising presentations, a questionnaire, observations of classes utilizing TBLT, and interviews with teachers who instructors who implemented TBLT for one lesson. The participants in this study were 12 EFL instructors at a government vocational school in the UAE. The results indicate that most of the surveyed participants' negative attitudes toward TBLT were due to lack of familiarity with TBLT or reasons not directly related to the potential of TBLT to promote better language learning. Other negative attitudes were due to negative perceptions by supervisors, lack of familiarity with task design, having to adhere to the textbook, and student preference of explicit grammar teaching.

However, the participants, especially those who were observed when they implemented TBLT, had generally positive attitudes toward the potential of TBLT as they noticed a number of benefits for students such as the purposefulness of tasks, the provision of comprehensible input, greater opportunities to produce the target language, and higher levels of interest and engagement. The teachers who were observed when they implemented TBLT in their classes stated that they had found

their experience with TBLT more interesting than their usual form-focused work. From a teaching point of view, they found the experience rewarding as it gave them opportunity to get hands-on practice with TBLT. They also thought that the experience gave them better understanding of the importance of communicative tasks in language learning and teaching. Finally, they found that tasks required less teaching time as students needed to work on tasks using their linguistic resources and with minimal intervention by the teacher.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this study would not have been possible without the support of the primary supervisor of my thesis, Dr. Betty Lanteigne, who through it all has been immensely supportive and an emotionally intelligent scholar. I am also grateful to the committee members, Dr. David Prescott and Dr. Peter Crompton, for making this learning experience a satisfying and rewarding venture. I'd like also to acknowledge the assistance that my dear colleagues, May Yehya and Samer Safwat, have rendered. This assistance has been a valuable contribution to the accomplishment of this study.

My sincere appreciation is extended to all of you for being the wind beneath my wings.

DEDICATION

To my wife, May, the love of my life. To my son, Nabeal, the joy and pride of my life. To my parents, may their souls rest in peace, who planted the belief that I should always keep looking forward even in times of adversity.

CHAPTER 1
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

In the government vocational school in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where this study was conducted, and also in numerous secondary schools around the UAE, English is taught as a foreign language with the view of enhancing communication in the workplace or any other context where English is the main medium of communication. The rationale for adopting this communication-oriented trend in English education is attributed to the fact that English is widely spoken and used in the UAE, for business transactions, education, or daily dealings. However, it is my observation at my school that apart from the highly motivated students, learners seldom attain an acceptable level of proficiency in the target language (TL). Most of these language learners are taught by methods that give primacy to the mastery of grammar. Within these form-based approaches, language is viewed as a system of wordings governed by structures and lexicon. Language learning thus is a matter of replacing first language (L1) linguistic rules and words by the rules and words of the TL. In other words, the reality of how language is instructed in this UAE vocational school does not match the rhetoric of the administrative leaders who are in charge of the instruction of English. One adverse consequence of failure to execute the school's vision of how language should be instructed could be attributed to the reality that some of the language teachers in this school still use conventional methodologies in language teaching which put much emphasis on grammatical accuracy, to the exclusion of communicative ability.

One reservation about these methods which emphasize formal accuracy is that they divide language into chunks. In other words, elements of the linguistic system such as sounds, morphemes, grammar and vocabulary are the basic components of instruction. In these linguistic approaches preselected chunks of language are taught step by step and in isolation in a predetermined order. Learning, as such, is considered the accumulation of small predetermined pieces. Due to this feature of separating language constituents, Branden (2006) sees that "linguistic syllabuses are full of fully artificial and stilted language" (p. 5). In turn, learners do not find the activities employed in the language classroom motivating, engaging, or relevant to their real-world needs which are the reason for embarking on this foreign language learning

experience. In this vein, Branden argues that form-based methods are antithetical to the findings of research on second language acquisition (SLA) which has shown that language learning does not occur in a linear fashion based on the premise that language learners learn in the same way they are taught (p. 5).

Students in my vocational school embark on studying there in the hope of raising their chances of employability in the UAE job market. Graduates of my school can obtain a competitive edge over their peers who received their education in the mainstream UAE general education system. This competitive advantage stems from the vocational skills they have acquired in their vocational school. The vocational skills include not only knowledge specific to their majors, but also their ability to communicate effectively in English, which is one of the criteria upon which they are evaluated when they are interviewed and hired. In other words, it is immensely important for learners in my vocational school to study not only the specialized terms specific to their disciplines, but also to receive extensive training on how to use these terms effectively in potential situations that they may engage in to accomplish specific goals in their prospective places of employment.

One alternative to form-focused methods is TBLT. Through my experience as a teacher of English as a foreign language (EFL) I have noticed that my colleagues do not implement task-based language teaching (TBLT) with their classes or any other alternative method. Even those who have a little knowledge of TBLT, either have a distorted image of it or are not convinced of the potential of using tasks in their teaching context. As such, TBLT is rarely used by my colleagues. In order to better understand my colleagues' attitudes, this research was conducted to understand the challenges and difficulties that prevent the implementation of TBLT, and also to help the participating teachers better understand the potentially beneficial pedagogic implications of TBLT. In this research, I sought to answer the following questions:

1. What do the participating teachers think of the potential of using task-based language teaching in their classes?
2. What benefits of task-based language teaching are observed when two participating teachers implement task-based language teaching in their classrooms?

3. What challenges of task-based language teaching are observed when two participating teachers implement task-based language teaching in their classrooms?
4. What do the observed teachers report as benefits of task-based language teaching?
5. What do the observed teachers report as challenges of task-based language teaching?

Significance of the Research

In this research, I investigated the views of EFL teachers in my school about the potential of employing tasks in their classroom instruction. This study as such does not claim generalizability to other contexts, as it involved only twelve English language instructors from a vocational school in a set of circumstances which may not be found in other schools.

According to literature on TBLT, this approach to language teaching can benefit language learners in more ways than one. First and foremost, *task*, according to Branden (2006), "is a vehicle to elicit language production, interaction, negotiation of meaning, processing of input and focus on form, all of which are believed to foster second language acquisition" (p. 1). In a similar vein, Shehadeh (2005) posits that "tasks provide a better context for activating learner acquisition processes and promoting L2 learning" (p. 15). Richards and Rodgers (2001) report tasks can promote language learning and produce better levels of linguistic proficiency because they "foster processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are at the heart of second language learning" (p. 228).

Although there is a plethora of research on task-based learning and teaching, there has been little attitudinal research on TBLT in the UAE. In a sense, the use of presentations in this research was like the use of consciousness-raising (CR) tasks in TBLT. The intent of the presentations was to increase participants' awareness of features of TBLT. Ellis (2003) points out that CR tasks are intended to explicitly draw learners' attention to a linguistic feature (p. 26). In other words, learners use the target structure as the point of discussion. Thus, Ellis adds, "CR tasks are designed to cater primarily to … explicit learning—that is, they are intended to develop awareness at the level of understanding … [thus] the desired outcome of a CR task is awareness of

how some linguistic feature works" (p. 162). In CR tasks key TBLT principles come into play such as students talking meaningfully about a language point using their own linguistic resources. The focus of the task is not to use the linguistic feature in question, but to engage in language use to accomplish the outcome of the task. Ellis believes that "the rationale of CR tasks draws partly on the role of explicit knowledge as a facilitator for the acquisition of implicit knowledge" (p. 163). The same TBLT principles apply to this research which may explicitly provide insights into the ways that tasks can be designed, adapted, and implemented for teachers with little or no experience with TBLT in their classes. As such, the participating teachers can benefit from the presentations and ensuing discussions through the knowledge they may add to their repertoire of teaching practices.

Finally, this research hoped to reveal some essential data about the obstacles, difficulties, and challenges these teachers may encounter in their classrooms with TBLT. Consequently, the data obtained from the surveys, observations, and interviews with the participating teachers was intended to suggest ways to help teachers overcome such obstacles and challenges in order to use TBLT more effectively.

Roles of the Researcher

In this study, I had three main roles: a researcher, a teacher trainer, and a colleague. As a researcher, the role entailed reviewing literature on TBLT and developing data collection instruments to answer the research questions of this research. As a researcher, I also had to communicate with a number of stakeholders in the school where this study was conducted to inform them of the purpose of the study and to solicit their help in the accomplishment of this study.

A second role that I played in this research was a teacher trainer. In this role I utilized a variety of methods. I conducted two presentations with the participants in order to help them obtain better understanding of TBLT. Presentations were not the only stages of the study that involved my role as a teacher trainer. I assumed this role of a more knowledgeable partner in this TBLT learning experience, through the assistance that I provided to the two teachers who implemented TBLT lessons with their classes. At that stage, I provided these teachers with guidance in developing TBLT materials, using these materials, and explaining how TBLT principles came into play through teaching these materials.

My third role in this study was that of a colleague. This study was conducted in my place of work, a vocational school in the UAE. The participants were my language instructor colleagues, all of whom have taught in this vocational school for over three years. My position as a colleague of these participating teachers was crucial in terms of the level of trust that I enjoyed with these participants, a status that assisted me to a great degree in gaining better insights into their working situations. It also helped the participants benefit from my availability in the same workplace as a staff member who could be approached whenever an explanation about TBLT or assistance with developing TBLT materials was needed. This was the case with the two teachers who implemented TBLT lessons with their classes.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter One offers a brief overview of the research. It also provides a brief discussion of TBLT and how it differs from traditional approaches which emphasize the teaching of grammar. Chapter One also discusses the situation that stimulated this research and the questions that I sought to answer through this research. It also discusses the significance and other pedagogical implications of the research.

Chapter Two discusses the literature reviewed on TBLT. It also discusses in detail the definitions of task and TBLT, the rationale and emergence of TBLT. In addition, it examines key areas in TBLT such as the role of the teacher and the perspectives from which TBLT is approached to account for how it can facilitate L2 learning. Furthermore, it discusses areas that are essential to the implementation of TBLT such as the difference between tasks and traditional exercises, and a number of challenges to TBLT identified in research findings in a variety of contexts.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology employed in the collection of data for this research: the presentations, the questionnaire, class observations, and finally the interviews. It also provides demographic information about the participants.

Chapter Four presents the research findings and the analysis of the collected data.

Finally, Chapter Five discusses the pedagogic implications of the data obtained through the data collection instruments employed in this research. It also discusses conclusions and limitations of the research, and suggests possibilities for future research.

Seven appendices are also included, and these are referred to at appropriate stages of the research.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a historical background about the emergence of task and TBLT in second/foreign language education. Also discussed are key aspects of task and TBLT, such as definitions of task and TBLT, rationale for using tasks, task versus exercise, premises of TBLT, perspectives of TBLT, task-cycle, roles of the teacher in TBLT, and challenges of TBLT.

Tasks in Education

From a historical perspective, Nunan (1991) points out that "the communicative task has evolved as an important component within curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation… tasks-based teaching [thus] entered the language field from the educational mainstream" (pp. 279-280). In 1949, Tyler put forward principles which comprised an approach to curriculum design that he called the "*rational model*" (p. 95). Nunan says that TBLT was a byproduct of teacher education programs in which teachers-in-training were instructed to use the rational model which included planning, implementing, and finally evaluating their programs (p. 280). Nunan explains that within practicum courses that adopted the rational model, teachers-in-training were taught to "begin with objectives and move through tasks to evaluation" (p. 280). It was noticed that once teachers began practicing, they tended to focus on pedagogical tasks. Nunan argues that "this insight from research into teachers' professional planning and decision-making processes enhanced the status of task as a curriculum planning tool" (p. 280).

Nunan (1991) also points out that TBLT is "linked to mainstream education by its close relationship with experiential learning" (p. 280). In this vein, Norris (2009) states that that "task-based instruction rejects the notion that knowledge can be learned independently of its application and embraces instead the value of learning by doing, or experiential learning" (p. 578). According to Dewey's (1933) *experiential learning* model, instruction should be built around principal elements of "activities worthwhile for their own sake" (p. 87). That is, according to Norris (2009),

> Through engaging learners in doing activities that are relevant to them, they become more motivated in the instructional content. Moreover, learners establish meaningful connection between the knowledge acquired in the

> classroom and how to put this knowledge to use in the real world beyond the walls of the classroom. (p. 579)

Proponents of the experiential model of learning believe that it has great potential for learning. Norris argues that "crucial cognitive and emotional mechanisms are triggered through learning by doing things holistically, including in particular the essential feedback … in the context of, and relatable to, the activities that we are immediately focused on doing" (p. 279). Dewey (1938) posits that holistic activities provide learners the opportunity to test hypotheses to see what works, to analyze what they do, and in this way helps them construct their own explanations and making such understanding "available under actual conditions of life" (p. 48).

The tenets of experiential learning have spawned diversity of models of practice such as cognitive psychological theories, apprenticeship and socialization framework (Beard & Wilson, 2006, pp. 1-14). It is widely believed in SLA that theoretical underpinnings of experiential learning have ramifications in TBLT in areas advocating the employment of holistic tasks. Norris (2009) believes that experiential learning and TBLT share "the idea that holistic activity structures, such as tasks, offer an ideal frame within which knowledge use can be experienced and understood, and from which learning opportunities should be developed" (p. 578). Sternberg (2003) points out the privileged place that holistic tasks hold:

> For starters, this means having students do tasks, or at least meaningful simulations, that experts do in the various disciplines. Second, it means teaching them to think in ways that experts do when they perform these tasks. (p. 5)

Thus, tasks have become an effective organizing constituent for the implementation of experiential learning in a variety of disciplines, including social work, medicine, and environment. The employment of task as the encapsulating unit for the benefits of experiential learning reverberated in language education, too. Samuda and Bygate (2008) summarize this paradigm shift in language education by arguing that "what we are calling 'tasks' can thus be seen as a means of creating experience-based opportunities for language learning" (p. 36).

Task Defined

Given the recurrence of the word *task* in the previous discussion, it is obvious by now that real-world tasks play an important role in TBLT. It thus would be useful

to clearly specify what we mean by *task* in order to see how tasks aid in promotion of language learning. The literature on TBLT gives no single, unanimously agreed on definition of tasks. Samuda and Bygate point out:

> While a widely agreed definition of the term is both desirable and necessary … arriving at such a definition is not straightforward – a considerable part of the second language task literature has been concerned with the search for a precise, yet comprehensive definition of a "task." (p. 62)

In his extensive review of literature on tasks in English language education, Ellis (2003, pp. 4-5) offers nine definitions in which tasks were described and studied from different perspectives and for different purposes. For instance, second language acquisition (SLA) research looks at tasks in terms of their usefulness to collect data and elicit samples of learners' language for research purposes. Pica, Holiday, and Morgenthaler (1989), for example, argue that a task should be developed to "meet criteria for information control, information flow and goals of the study" (p. 71). In criticism of a SLA researcher for conducting a great deal of research on TBLT in conditions and controlled settings that are similar to the conditions of science laboratories, Branden (2006) observes that research has been mostly psycholinguistic in nature and "inspired by a desire to elaborate our knowledge of how people acquire a second language" (p. 1). Thus, according to Branden, "In SLA research, tasks have been widely used as vehicles to elicit language production, interaction, negotiation of meaning, processing of input and focus on form, all of which are believed to foster second language acquisition" (p. 1). In the same vein, Ellis (2003) notes that SLA researchers employ tasks as research instruments that may help provide data to answer two central questions in SLA: "What effect do the properties of the task have on learners' comprehension? , and what effect do the properties of the task have on L2 acquisition?" (p. 37). Mackey (2007) also points out that "researchers can manipulate tasks … to understand how the intricacies of how task-based interaction plays a facilitative role in instructed language development and how research on tasks can inform task-based syllabus design" (p. vii).

Others view tasks from a purely classroom interaction perspective. In this sense Willis (1996b) defines a classroom task as "a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome" (p. 53). Thus, language use to achieve these tasks is likely to simulate language use in the outside world. Consistent with this perspective, Nunan (1989) gives a slightly broader definition of classroom

tasks. He points out that a communication task is "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than on form" (p. 10). Others argue that besides being meaning-oriented, classroom tasks must simulate real-world contexts of language use. Skehan (1996), for example, argues that classroom tasks are "activities which have meaning as their primary focus. Success in the task is evaluated in terms of achievement of an outcome, and tasks generally bear resemblance to real-life language use" (p. 20). Ellis (2003) outlines the basic features of tasks which include the aspects identified by Skehan and adds that a task is a "work plan for learners [which] requires learners to employ cognitive processes [and] can involve any of the four skills" (pp. 9-10). Summarily, whether a part of SLA research or pedagogy-oriented activity, tasks are considered an essential component of SLA researchers and teachers' endeavors to elicit samples of learners' language and to promote second or foreign language acquisition. In this vein and based on informed investigations on tasks in formal language learning, Mayo (2007) points out that "researchers and teachers consider it of the utmost importance to elicit samples of learners language as this is the basic material that will help us understand how learners restructure their interlanguage over time and design materials accordingly" (p. 1).

Other Definitions

Since there is no agreement over what constitutes an overarching definition of a task, let us look at different definitions of a task in the hope of obtaining common denominators among them that can outline basic components. Freez (1998) defines a task as a real-world or pedagogical activity in which the focus is on the process rather than the product. Purposeful activities that emphasize communication and meaning are basic elements, and the learners interact communicatively and purposefully (p. 17). Willis (2005, p. 3) outlines the five central characteristics of a task, which seem rather similar to Freez's definition of a *task*. 1) Willis points out that in a task the emphasis is on exchanging information and understanding the meaning rather than on practicing formal patterns. 2) The task should have some kind of goal. 3) The outcome of a task can be shared with others. 4) The task can employ any or all of the four skills: listening, reading, writing, or speaking. 5) Finally, the use of a task does not mean abstention from focus on specific linguistic forms or patterns, but any

language-focused instruction should come before introducing the task itself. Samuda and Bygate (2008) define *task* as "a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning, through process of product or both" (p. 69).

Based on a review of an array of definitions of *task* as language learning goals, Branden (2006) defines *task* as "an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language" (p. 4), which is the definition adopted for the purpose of this research and which, despite its brevity, best suits my school context of teaching English for vocational purposes. On the other hand, Branden's definition meets an equally essential element of task in TBLT which is the goal-orientation of task. That is, a task must have a clear outcome toward which students work interactively in order to achieve. Ellis (2003) explains why outcome is an essential component of a task by arguing, "The real purpose of the task is not that learners should arrive at a successful outcome but that they should use language in ways that will promote language learning" (p. 8). As such, Branden's definition of task is particularly useful for language learners in my school, which is the use of language to achieve a specific goal.

From the previous discussion, it is obvious that TBLT uses the notion of task as a basic unit of planning and teaching. Although there is no overarching definition of what is meant by a task, there is a commonsensical understanding in task-based language education that a task is an activity that has meaning as its primary focus, that has a clear outcome which requires language which reflects the real-world language use to accomplish this outcome, and which can use any of or all the four linguistic skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) in order to achieve a specific goal.

Rationale for Using Tasks

The rationale for the use of tasks in TBLT is that it is believed that tasks provide better contexts for activating learner acquisition processes and promoting language learning. Richard and Rogers (2001) report that "tasks are believed to foster negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are at the heart of second language learning" (p. 228). Hence, TBLT is based on a theory of learning. Gorp and Bogaert (2006) explain that the tasks utilized should be interaction-stimulating and sometimes, but not necessarily always, require the learners to

collaborate with peers or even the teacher in some kind of interaction (p. 101). Gorp and Bogaert attribute TBLT inclination toward interactive and collaborative accomplishment of tasks to the fact that "task-based language learning is highly dependent on the basic premises of social-constructivism, stating that learners acquire complex skills by actively tackling holistic tasks, calling for an integrated use of the target skills, and by collaborating with peers and more knowledgeable partners" (p. 101). Thus, tasks are carefully designed to generate authentic interaction, discussion, exchange of information and negotiation of meaning or scaffolding each other's language output. According to TBLT principles as defined by Freez (1998, p. 17), these features drive language learning (Duran & Ramaut, 2006, p. 47). Similarly, Long and Crookes (1992) argue that

> Tasks provide a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate target language samples to learners—input which they will inevitably reshape via application of general cognitive processing capacities—and for the delivery of comprehension and production opportunities of negotiable difficulty. (p. 43)

Language taught by methods that emphasize the mastery of grammar is divided into language chunks. These preselected elements of language are taught step by step and in a predetermined order. It is believed that learning of language occurs as a result of the accumulation of these linguistic pieces. Branden (2006) criticizes this approach as being counterproductive because it is inconsistent with evidence from SLA. In this vein, Branden notes that:

> SLA research shows that people do not learn isolated items in L2 one at time, in an additive, linear fashion, but rather as parts of complex mappings of form-function relationships. Furthermore, linguistic syllabuses often call for immediate target-like mastery of "form of the day", while SLA research shows that learners rarely move from zero to target-like mastery of new items in one step. In sum, linguistic syllabuses rely too much on the equation "what is taught is what is learnt"… an equation that SLA research has proven to be simplistic. (p. 5)

Skehan (1996, p. 18) notices that learners working within methods which emphasize the mastery of grammar seldom attain an acceptable level of proficiency in the second language. Skehan adds that one of the drawbacks of grammar-based approaches is that they are not based on sound theoretical background because they

assume learning will occur in the same order of teaching, yet there is no evidence for this assumption from research on second language acquisition (SLA) (p. 18).

In a sharp contrast to form-focused language instruction, TBLT does not break language into small pieces. Instead, TBLT employs holistic, functional and communicative tasks as the central unit for the design of the teaching activity. Long and Crookes (1993) posit that tasks provide a vehicle for the presentation of linguistic input which students will manipulate through "the application of general cognitive processing capacities and for the delivery of comprehension and production opportunities of negotiable difficulty. New form-function relationships in the target language are perceived by the learner as a result" (p. 39).

Principles of Instructed Language Learning

Realizing the importance of guidance that ESL/EFL teachers need, especially novice teachers, and drawing on a variety of theoretical perspectives, Ellis (2005) outlines principles of instructed language learning that language educators need to consider and incorporate in their teaching (pp. 13-22). Although Ellis's set of generalizations was initially intended to be the basis for language teacher education, they directly relate to the use of tasks as a heuristic for encapsulating the benefits of these guiding principles from SLA that are intended to inform ESL/EFL instructors how to facilitate the restructuring of language learners' linguistic knowledge in the process of acquisition. In the following discussion, I will try to establish meaningful connections between these principles and the suitability of tasks to fulfill these principles.

Focus on Meaning

The first of Ellis's (2005) principle of instructed language learning is that "[i]nstruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning" (p. 14). *Meaning*, according to Ellis, refers to the semantic meaning, "the meanings of lexical items or of specific grammatical structures," and pragmatic meaning, "the highly contextualized meanings that arise in acts communication" (p. 14). Ellis (2003) argues that TBLT utilizes tasks which simulate authentic tasks that require learners to communicate meanings in a way similar to what could occur outside the walls of the classroom and thus, "the language behavior they elicit corresponds to the kind of communicative behavior that arise from performing real-world tasks" (p. 6). Richards

and Rodgers (2001) argue that the interactional authenticity of TBLT tasks improves learners' motivation and therefore promotes learning because tasks "require learners to use authentic language" (p. 229). However, Ellis (2005) points out that a focus on pragmatic meanings does not suggest that learners should be exclusively provided with opportunities to create pragmatic meaning. Instead, it suggests that effective instruction must give the learners opportunities to focus on both types of meanings with the pragmatic meaning being more important for language acquisition (p. 14). TBLT meets Ellis's principle of instructed learning because the successful completion of the task necessitates a focus on understanding and communicating meaning.

Focus on Form

The second principle of instructed language learning is that "instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form" (p. 15). Schmidt (2001) argues that there is no learning without conscious attention to form and learners need to attend to form (p. 4). However, Schmidt argues that attention to form refers to noticing specific linguistic features that occur in the input which learners are exposed to, not to grammatical rules (pp. 3-4). Willis (2004) points out that there is currently a large body of evidence from SLA research that learners need to attend to form, which in turn can help them achieve a greater level of accuracy (p. 12). Branden (2006) posits that focus on form refers to form-function mapping—the correlation between form and the meaning it establishes—which "the learner will need to manipulate and thus pay at least some (conscious or unconscious) attention to form" (p. 9).

Willis (2004) argues that TBLT fulfills the focus on form principle through drawing learners' attention to form in the post-task phase termed also the "language focus" stage (p. 42). Charless (2009) defines the language focus stage as "an opportunity for explicit language instruction through strategies, such as language analysis or language practice. While carrying out the task mainly promotes fluency, the post-task usually focuses on accuracy" (p. 52). Ellis (2003) puts forward an alternative option to the post-task-stage form focus in which focus on form can be established in the form of tasks that Ellis calls "focused tasks" (p. 141). According to Ellis, focused tasks have two objectives: first, to stimulate communicative language use, and second, to target a pre-determined grammatical structure (pp. 144-145). In a nutshell, effective language instruction should include traditional focus on form and incidental instruction of a whole range of structures in the form of TBLT lessons.

TBLT fulfills this principle through the marriage of meaning and form which is one of the key features of TBLT. According to Long and Norris (2000), TBLT

> is an attempt to harness the benefits of a focus on meaning via adoption of an analytic syllabus, while simultaneously, through use of focus on form (not forms), to deal with its known shortcomings, particularly rate of development and incompleteness where grammatical accuracy is concerned. (p. 599)

Implicit Knowledge

According to the third principle of instructed language learning outlined by Ellis (2005), "Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of second language but should no neglect explicit knowledge" (p. 16). Drawing on cognitive psychology, Ellis (2009) distinguishes between implicit/explicit leaning and implicit /explicit knowledge. Ellis argues that *implicit knowledge* refers to the learning that "proceeds without making demand on intentional resources [in which] learners remain unaware of the learning that has taken place, although it is evident in the behavioral responses they make" (p. 3). *Explicit learning*, according to Ellis, "involves memorizing a series of successive facts and thus makes heavy demand on the memory" and awareness of what is learned (p. 3). Implicit knowledge is unconscious because learners are unaware of what has been learned, although new knowledge is integrated into their underlying language system elicited by their responses, while explicit knowledge is conscious because learners are aware of what has been learned and able to verbalize it. Huang (2010) points out, "competence in second language is primarily achieved through implicit knowledge because it allows learners to use the language without thinking about it, [whereas] explicit knowledge allows learners to notice the target forms in the input and eventually acquire these forms" (p. 31). Overall, this principle encourages language instructors to cater for both kinds of knowledge with priority given to instruction focused on implicit knowledge.

Proponents of TBLT believe that TBLT promotes implicit knowledge which underlies the ability to communicate fluently and confidently in L2. Ellis (2005), for instance, argues that implicit knowledge arises out of "meaning-focused communication, aided, perhaps, by some focus on form" (p. 16). Ellis (2003) points out that irrespective of theorists' positions on the relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge, learners need to participate in communicative tasks that play a

central role in instruction directed toward implicit knowledge (p. 106). According to Ellis, too, this condition of communicative activities—where emphasis is placed on communicating meaning and specific grammatical forms are instructed implicitly—could be realized by employing focused tasks. Nunan (2004) defines *focused task* as "one in which a particular structure is required in order for a task to be completed" (p. 94). Ellis adds, focused tasks "provide means by which learners can be given opportunities to communicate in such a way that they might be able to learn specific linguistic forms implicitly" (p. 151).

Input

In the fourth principle of instructed language learning (Ellis, 2005), "Successful instructed language learning requires extensive second language input" (p. 18). According to Nunan (2004), "input refers to the spoken, written, and visual data that the learners work with in the course of completing a task" (p. 47). Linguistic data and linguistic input can be provided by the teacher, the textbook, or the social environment in which a learner lives in, or they can be generated by the learners themselves. In fact, one can write a very long list of linguistic input such as newspaper extracts, bus timetables, and numerous other sources, which with a little imagination, can be utilized by ESL/EFL instructors to maximize learners' exposure to language in the context of communicative tasks.

Drawing on a series of studies known as the morpheme order studies, Krashen advanced a hypothesis of language acquisition that he termed the "input hypothysis (Nunan, 2004, p. 76). Krashen argues that "comprehensible language input" is the best way to learn a second languages (Grabe & Stoller, 1997, p. 6). According to Krashen (1985), comprehensible input is the only condition necessary to activate the acquisition processes of the target language (p. 2). Krashen and Terrell (1998) argue that there is no role for grammar in the acquisition process of language and even speaking is unnecessary for acquisition because "we acquire from what we hear (or read) not from what we say" (p. 56). In other words, Ellis (2003) explains, the input hypothesis claims "that language acquisition is input-driven; that is, learners acquire an L2 incidentally and subconsciously when they are able to comprehend the input they are exposed to" (p. 23). Krashen (1995) argues that input becomes comprehensible when it is embedded within a context and is tuned to the learners' level of proficiency (p. 20). Although the input hypothesis still ignites fresh waves of

controversy in SLA circles, “it is argued that second language learning will be most effective if it parallels first language acquisition” (Furuta, 2002, p. 11). Ellis (2005) points out that in the process of acquiring their L1, children take two to five years to achieve “full grammatical competence, during which time they are exposed to massive amounts of input” (p. 19). It is widely accepted in SLA that L2 learning can be greatly enhanced by extensive exposure to the target language (Ellis, 2003, p. 24). Ellis (2005) sums up the exposure-acquisition correlation by stating, “If learners do not receive exposure to the target language they cannot acquire it” (p. 19). Krashen (1985) argues that the more learners are exposed to the target language, the faster they learn it (p. 31). In his strong position on the importance of input, Krashen (1995) refers to studies that have shown a positive correlation between the length of residence in the countries where target languages are spoken and the level of language proficiency attained by learners who traveled to these countries (p. 35).

Whether in short tasks or projects that may take a whole term, TBLT enables students to have access to extensive input. Within a task, learners receive input from a variety of sources such as the teacher, the materials used in the task (which usually come from authentic sources such as videos, audios, newspapers, etc., and other learners. Rosenkjar (2010) reports on a creative task that used English poetry in which focus on grammatical items was integrated with focus on meaning (pp. 67-78). Some tasks require learners to read extensively, extract data, and then present findings in written texts or classroom presentations. For instance, Arena and Cruvinel (2010) used tools available online to design collaborative tasks in which learners are required to work in teams, to read inquisitively about stereotypes, and then prepare podcasts which served as probes for classroom discussions (pp. 111-121). From a TBLT point of view, the SambaEFL project, as Arena and Cruvinel called it, is consistent with the characteristics of language learning tasks outlined by Willis (2005):

> First, in carrying out a task the learner’ principle focus is on exchanging and understanding meanings, rather than on practice of pre-specified forms. Second, there is a kind of purpose or goal set for the task, so that the learners know what they are expected to achieve by the end of the task. Third, the outcome of the tasks can be shared in some way with others. Fourth, tasks can involve any or all the four skills. Finally, focus on grammatical rules does not precede the task completion. (p. 3)

From a pedagogic point of view and in the same vein of the principle of extensive exposure to the target language, Gitaski and Taylor (2001) state, "Web-assisted language learning satisfies the three essential conditions for language learning as these are outlined in the task-based framework for language learning, i.e. exposure, use and motivation" (p. 2). Thus, these three conditions must be met in order for anyone to learn a second language. In a discussion of the role of input in SLA, Huang (2010) states, "Although researchers may not agree with Krashen that comprehensible input is all that is required for successful language acquisition, there is no doubt that learners need extensive second language input in order to acquire the language" (p. 32).

Output

The fifth principle that Ellis (2005) outlines for instructed language learning states, "Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output" (p. 20). As a rebuttal to Krashen's insistence that language acquisition depends solely on comprehensible input, theoreticians such as Swain acknowledge that output also plays a part in fueling the acquisition process of language. Acknowledging the important role of learner output in SLA, Brown (2004) argues that learners must have "ample opportunities to play with language in classroom … [as such] teaching sets up the practice game of language learning: the opportunities for learners to listen, take risks, sets goals, and process feedback" (p. 5). According to Swain (1995), output contributes to acquisition because

> [p]roduction has the potential to generate more comprehensible input through the feedback that is elicited by learners' efforts at production. Also, it pulls learners' attention to grammar as they notice the gap between what they can say and what they want to say. Moreover, it helps learners test hypotheses about the target language. Additionally, it helps them automatize existing knowledge. Furthermore, it helps learners to have a personal voice when they divert conversation to topics they are interested in. (p. 126)

Ellis (2005) asserts that "the importance of creating opportunities for output … constitutes one of the main reasons for incorporating tasks into a language program" (p. 20). Research conducted with tasks looked into how different task dimensions can impact opportunities for learners' production of modified output. Researchers demonstrated that task-type does provide learners with varied

opportunities toward modified output. Shehadeh (2005) found that a picture-description task provided greater opportunities than opinion-exchange tasks toward modified output (p. 22). Huang (2010) summarizes the discussion on input and output by stating, "Both input and output are necessary for second language acquisition. During output, learners have the opportunity to produce the language, test their hypotheses about grammar, and make their knowledge of grammar automatic" (p. 32). Communicative tasks has the potential for fulfilling the principle of providing learners with opportunities to modify input/output as they are the accomplishment of the task requires them to negotiate and communicate meanings.

Interaction

Another principle of instructed language learning that Ellis (2005) outlines states, "The opportunity to interact in the second language is central to developing second language proficiency" (p. 20). That is, beside the role of input and output in acquisition, teachers need to provide learners with opportunities to interact with one another, as input and output are likely to co-occur in oral interaction. Hatch (1978) posits, "One learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of the interaction syntactic structures are developed" (p. 404). As Ellis (2003) sees it, interaction fosters language acquisition through the opportunities to negotiate meaning and the input provided by the task, especially when a communication problem arises, through the corrective feedback received, and through the opportunity to reformulate utterances (p. 80). According to the sociocultural theory, interaction serves as a form of mediation that can enable to construct new forms and perform functions collaboratively (Ellis, 2003, pp. 175-176). According to this view, learning is first evident on the social plane and later on the psychological plane. Vygotsky (1981) explains how these two psychological processes become available as result of social interaction by providing explanation of how children develop mental skills:

> Any function in the child's development appears twice or on two planes, first it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane, first it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. (p. 163)

Huang (2010) points out that TBLT fulfills this principle through the utility of tasks which are usually performed in pairs or groups in order to provide opportunities for this sort of social interaction (p. 32). In turn, according to Fujii and Mackey

(2009), “interaction provides valuable opportunities for important processes that have been claimed to benefit L2 learning” (p. 267). In the same vein, Philip, Walter and Basturkmen (2010) argue that besides complementing for the teacher-fronted interaction, “peer interaction may facilitate acquisition through fostering learner production, feedback, and noticing of form” (p. 261).

Task Versus Exercise

While tasks and exercises are both intended to promote learning, Ellis (2003) points out that tasks and exercises differ in the means by which the overall purpose of promoting language learning is to be achieved (p. 3). Charless (2004) argues that to label an activity as a task, activities need to be evaluated across elements such as having a purpose, simulating real-world context, resulting in a product, and focusing on process (p. 641). Willis (2005) argues that the following should be present in any TBLT task: a primary focus on meaning, clearly defined communicative outcome, involvement of any or all the four skills, no direct instruction of grammar before the task (p. 3). However, Ellis (2003) believes that considering these elements as the only distinction between tasks and exercises is quite simplistic, as some exercises may contain features of tasks (p. 3).

Ellis (2003) says, “Tasks are activities that call for primarily meaning-focused language use. In contrast, exercises are activities that call for primarily for form-focused language use” (p. 3). Similarly, Nunan (2004) points out that what distinguishes tasks from classroom exercises is that tasks “have non-linguistic outcome” (p. 2). Nunan also believes that another distinction between tasks and exercises is that in a task learners are free to use any linguistic resources to achieve the outcome, whereas exercises specify the grammatical forms to be used in advance (p. 4). Willis (2005) extrapolates that in classroom exercises, “teachers model the target language forms and get students to repeat them, and then ask questions intended to elicit the target forms in response” (p. 4). That means any deviation from the grammatical forms specified in advance is not acceptable, no matter how comprehensible the meaning was.

Widdowson (1998) points out that a task is concerned with pragmatic meaning, meaning in context, whereas an exercise is concerned with semantic meaning, the meaning that a specific form can convey, irrespective of context (p. 328). Rahman (2010) argues that “an exercise is premised on the need to develop

linguistic skills as a prerequisite for the learning communicative ability, while a task is based on the assumption that linguistic abilities are developed through communicative activity" (p. 4). Samuda and Bygate (2008) argue that tasks draw learners' attention to meaning and form, while exercises "focus attention on a pre-selected language item … as in drills involving the production of a particular vowel sound … without attention to meaning" (p. 8). Gorp and Bogaret (2006) believe that exercises can be part of tasks as one of the options for teachers to prepare students for the task, before the task, or to focus on linguistic features after the task (p. 103).

What Is TBLT?

TBLT is not new. It was first adopted in the mid-1970s. Two early applications of the TBLT approach within a communicative framework for language instruction were the Bangalore project in India and the Malaysian Communicational Syllabus (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 223). Although the two projects were short-lived, teachers and practitioners who worked on these two projects noticed the value of integrating tasks into their language teaching. Ever since then, the role of tasks as the core unit of planning, teaching, and assessment has received greater support from researchers in second language acquisition. Willis (1996a) argues that TBLT is a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) because it draws on basic principles of the CLT movement: 1) Employing activities that involve real-world communication is fundamental for language learning, 2) activities which require language to accomplish meaningful tasks promote learning, and 3) language that is meaningful to the language learner is a great aid to the learning process (p. 236). Colpin and Gysen (2006) believe that TBLT is a reverberation of the paradigm shift in the previous decades that has pervaded language education leading to greater emphasis on communication and functional language use (p. 151).

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an approach to language methodology based on the utility of tasks as the principal unit of planning, instruction, and assessment in language teaching. TBLT draws on key principles that underpin the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. Some CLT principles identified by Richards and Rodgers (2001) are

> [a]ctivities that involve real communication are essential for language learning, activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks

promote learning, and language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. (p. 223)

According to these CLT principles, TBLT meets fundamental requirements for effective communicative second or foreign language learning/teaching, through having activities designed with real purpose, interaction, and meaningful content. Willis (1996a) stresses that tasks in TBLT must have real communication as a goal because tasks are activities in which the target language is used by learners for real communicative purposes (p. 23). Likewise, according to Oxford (2001), TBLT emphasizes "doing tasks that require communicative language use" as communicative tasks are the essence of TBLT (pp. 2-3).

The Emergence of TBLT

CLT has succeeded in introducing more interesting and motivating activities that seek to simulate real-life communications beyond the walls of the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 172). The basis for CLT is that when language is used for communication and when language is meaningful for learners, language acquisition is highly promoted (Nunan, 1998, p. 12). However, CLT fell short in areas like grammatical and sociolinguistic competence because of the heavy reliance of purely meaning-focused approaches that drew on CLT principles such as the natural approach in which grammar was deemed unnecessary (Willis, 2004, p. 7). A form-focused approach such as PPP claimed to compensate for the lack of grammar instruction which studies proved to be necessary for developing communicative competence in the target language (Huang, 2010, p. 31). However, investigations of PPP classrooms revealed more emphasis on structures than functions (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 62).

Research was ignited by the need for an approach to language learning/teaching which balances between focus on meaning and focus on form and which better facilitates language learning. Kumaravadivelu reports "the trend away from CLT and toward TBLT is illustrated in part by the fact that *communicative*, the label that was ubiquitous is the titles of scholarly books and student textbooks published in the 1980s, has been gradually replaced by another, *task*" (p. 64). As Norris (2009) believes, "The concept of 'task' presented an opportunity to consolidate these ideas into an integrated approach which might accomplish a variety of instructional ends" (p. 580). Samuda and Bygate (2008) state that "Johnson (1979)

was the first one to articulate the need for the concept of task to incorporate the dimension of language processing into materials and as the orientation for teaching" (p. 53). According to Johnson (1979),

> Methodologies should be based not only on linguistic insights as to the nature of 'knowledge of a language', but also on psycholinguistic insights as to the processes involved in its use … it is for reasons such as this that fluency in communicative process can only be developed within 'task-oriented teaching' –on which provides 'actual meaning' by focusing on tasks to be mediated through language, and where success or failure is seen to be judged in terms of whether or not these tasks are performed. (pp. 180-200)

Thus, the distinction between CLT and TBLT is that TBLT focuses on task accomplishment as part of what is being taught or assessed, whereas CLT uses task as a means to display language and may/may not address task accomplishment.

Willis (2004) points out, "Some practitioners, for example, those teaching content-based instruction (CBI) programs, adopted … task-based instruction out of a desire for a meaning-focused approach that reflected real-life language use" (p. 8). According to Skehan and Foster (2001), this trend is based on the belief that "meaning is recoverable even when its form is incorrect … [and thus] a strategy of prioritizing the meaning of the message over its form is not uncommon among language users" (p. 183). Norris (2009) also notes that "early recourse to task in ELT focused on ways of bringing 'real' communication and learner-centered process into the classroom, by respecting learners' interests and attending to interlanguage development as it unfolded in the use of language" (p. 580). Samuda and Bygate (2008) argue that task was first explored by practitioners working in programs of language for specific or academic purposes (LS/AP) in which language training is provided for non-English majors who need English for professional or academic purposes (p. 53).

Oglivie and Dunn (2010) find TBLT innovative at the philosophical and methodological levels. As Oglivie and Dunn see it:

> At the philosophical level, TBLT views second language acquisition as an organic process that is not directly influenced by formal instruction, but which is fostered through the meaningful use of language. At the methodological level, TBLT invites students to act as language users rather than learners, with

> the explicit analysis of language structures and forms emerging from difficulties experienced during the completion of tasks. (p. 162)

Premises of TBLT

> According to Willis (2004), TBLT rests on the following three premises: 1) Language learning does not proceed in a linear additive fashion but is a complex organic process; 2) language forms are best learned when learners' attention is on meaning; and 3) beside exposure, learners need ample opportunities to use the target language for real purposes in order to learn it. (p. 8)

In other words, language learning is an organic process that does not always proceed in a linear, additive fashion. Skehan (1996) explains, "Learners often go through a developmental sequence which does not go directly to the target form, but involves a number of errors on the way" (p. 18). The implication is that teaching of discrete linguistic items does not result in immediate mastery of that item. Also, according to Brumfit (1984), the implication that forms are best learned when learners' attention is on meaning is that the "grappling" to understand meanings will lead to the subconscious acquisition of form (p. 234). This, in turn, means that learners need extensive exposure to the target language in a variety of contexts, both spoken and written, that is slightly above the learners' current level of linguistic knowledge—often referred to as the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985). As for the implication of the third premise that learners should be given opportunities to use the language, Willis (2004) further explains that "output occurs in the context of interaction … [which] provides opportunities for negotiation of meaning, which in turn facilitates second language acquisition" (pp. 8-9). Willis (1996a) indicates that TBLT "offers a rich but comprehensible exposure to language in use, through listening and reading, and provides opportunities for both spontaneous and planned speaking and writing" (p. 1).

Clearly TBLT is experiential learning (Norris, 2009). Samuda and Bygate (2008) argue that TBLT draws on Dewey's experiential learning, a model of learning arguing that classroom learning needs to be focused and shaped so that it meets the interests that pupils bring with them and the goals they hold in sight (p. 19). Dewey believed that new ways needed to be sought out that pupils might be brought into active mental engagement with new knowledge in ways relevant to what is already

familiar. Dewey (1913) called “good teaching” the integration of what is known with what is new. By this he meant “teaching that appeals to established power while it includes such new material as will demand their redirection for a new end, this redirection requiring thought – intelligent effort” (p. 58).

Nunan (2004) believes that experiential leaning is the conceptual basis underlying TBLT, which takes the learner’s personal experience as the point of departure for the learning experience (p. 12). Beard and Wilson (2006) argue that intellectual growth and intrinsic motivation for learning occur when learners engage in and reflect on sequences of tasks. This engagement is a central concept to this approach often referred to as learning by doing (pp. 15-44). Rogers (1996) takes the concept of learner’s experience a little further, saying, “There is growing consensus that experience forms the basis of all learning” (p. 107).

Nunan (2004) believes that experiential learning can be seen as the theoretical blueprint for TBLT in terms of the following:

> Encourag[ing] the transformation of knowledge within the learner rather than the transmission of knowledge from the teacher, encourage[ing] learners to participate actively in small, collaborative groups… , embrac[ing] a holistic attitude towards subject matter rather than static, atomistic and hierarchical attitude, emphasiz[ing] process rather than product, learning how to learn, self-inquiry, social and communication skills, encouraging self-directed rather than teacher-directed learning, [and] promot[ing] intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation. (p. 12)

Another rationale for TBLT is that it taps into key principles in the L2 classroom, such as learner-centeredness and learner autonomy (Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010, p. 4). Also, Nunan (1989) posits that findings from SLA research revealed advantages of linking learner-centeredness and learning tasks (p. 20). Magno and Sembrano (2009) argue that students who received their education within a learner-centered approach have shown greater level of success, as it is “context-sensitive” in which tasks contents are made appropriate for the level of low-achieving students (p. 158). Schrenko (1994) argues that tasks in a learner-centered classroom “are designed to help students use the thinking and learning strategies they will need to succeed in both school and life” (p. 28). According to Wohlfarth et al (2008),

> Learner-centered approach to teaching is an effective way of learning in which students are actively involved in shaping how they learn; there is a great

deal of teacher-student and student-student interaction; the teacher's role is a facilitator, an adviser, and a partner of the learning process. (p. 67)

Findings obtained from research in SLA have shown a greater level of engagement on the part of learners when their needs and interests were taken as the starting point of the learning process. For instance, Shehadeh and Coombe (2010) argue that research done with TBLT pair and group tasks that centered on students' preferences generated not only greater involvement on the part of learners, but also showed that learners took more responsibility in their learning (p. 4). Shehadeh (2004) argues that pair and group tasks free the teacher to focus on monitoring learners and providing feedback (p. 276). Ellis (2003) argues that one way of ensuring that students adopt an active role in a TB lesson is through assigning group or pair work (p. 277).

Perspectives of Task-Based Learning

Task-based learning (TBL) has been approached from different perspectives in order to account for how TBLT can facilitate L2 learning. These perspectives offer a variety of options ranging from explicit focus on form to pure focus on meaning and function. The following section summarizes TBLT perspectives, the theoretical conclusions based on these perspectives, and how a task is seen to promote language learning from each perspective.

The Interaction Hypothesis Perspective

According to Shehadeh (2005), the interaction hypothesis posits that "negotiation of meaning provides learners with opportunities for both the provision of comprehensible input and the production of modified output" (p. 21). It is believed that comprehensive input and the opportunity to modify output are necessary for language acquisition. Krashen (1985) argues that people learn language best by comprehending input that is slightly beyond their current level of linguistic competence. Krashen sums up this process in the equation "I + 1" (p. 32). For instance, acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input (I) that belongs to the next level (I+1). Given the practical reality of second/foreign language classrooms where not all learners will be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, "Krashen suggests that natural communicative input is the key to designing a syllabus ensuring in this way each learner will receive some

'I+1' input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence" (Schutz, 2007, p. 1). Ellis (2000) believes that the negotiation of meaning aids learners in paying attention to linguistic forms as they attempt to produce the target language. Also, Ellis mentions that this attention to formal properties of the target language is necessary for L2 learning as it offers a context for the negotiation of meaning that "serves as the means by which learners … data need [can be effectively met]" (p. 199). To summarize, tasks provide learners with opportunities to negotiate meanings, receive feedback, modify input, and pay attention to the formal properties of the L2.

The Output Hypothesis Perspective

According to the output hypothesis learner output, the language produced by the learner, is not only a sign of acquired knowledge, but also a sign of learning in process (Swain, 2000). In other words, output is not only the product of acquisition that has already occurred, but it also plays a significant role in the acquisition process of the target language (TL). Swain (1998) argues that output draws the learners' attention more toward syntactic analysis rather than semantic analysis only and this move helps them test hypotheses and reflect on the language they are producing (p. 79). By doing so, Swain (1995) adds, learners notice the gaps between what they want to produce in the TL and what they can produce, which stimulates them to stretch their current interlanguage capacity in order to fill these gaps, "enabling them to control and internalize linguistic knowledge" (p. 126). Sheen (2008) argues that noticing of form could be accomplished through "corrective feedback in the form of recasts" (p. 836). Sheen extrapolates that "recasts are assumed to promote learners' noticing of form while their primary focus remains on meaning/message … it is argued that recasts create an optimal condition for the cognitive comparison needed for learning to take place" (p. 836).

Swain calls the language produced as a result of this stretched interlanguage the "pushed output" (p. 126). Swain and Lapkin (1995) also believe that the process of filling the gaps represents "the internalization of new linguistic knowledge or the consolidation of existing knowledge" (p. 374). Evidence from research on tasks has shown that they provide learners with opportunities to modify their output in order to make it more comprehensible (Shehadeh, 2001, pp. 443-444).

The Cognitive Perspective

This perspective draws on Skehan's (1998) work on TBLT. According to Skehan, learner performance consists of aspects: fluency, accuracy, and complexity. *Fluency* refers to the learners' ability to communicate in real time, *accuracy* their ability to use the TL according to the norms peculiar to that language, and *complexity* refers to the learners' ability to use more complex structures of the TL (p. 112). Ellis (2003) offers a similar definition to these three aspects of production. According to Ellis:

> Fluency, [is] the capacity of the learner to mobilized his/her system to communicate meaning in real time; accuracy [is] the ability of the learner to handle whatever level of interlanguage complexity he/she has currently achieved; and complexity [is] the utilization of interlanguage structures that are 'cutting edge', elaborate, and structured. (p. 113)

Skehan (1998) also argues that we can influence these three basic aspects of performance through engaging the learner in different types of production and communication. For instance, if we want to promote fluency, it is a good idea to get the learner engaged in meaning-oriented tasks. However, if we want to promote accuracy of complexity in the learners, we should get them engaged in more form-focused tasks. Additionally, Ellis (2000) argues that task variables could be manipulated in order to affect fluency, accuracy, or complexity in learners' production (p. 23). In this vein, Loumpourdi (2005) found that giving students a planning time before reporting on their task-based focused tasks seemed to promote both fluency and accuracy. Also, Lynch and Maclean (2001) noticed improved fluency and accuracy when students were asked to repeat the task (p. 159).

The Sociocultural Perspective

This perspective looks at how learners approach and perform a task. The sociocultural perspective postulates that learners construct knowledge collaboratively as a joint activity. It draws from Vygotsky's theories (1987) as to how tasks are accomplished jointly and how this process of task accomplishment promotes language learning. Vygotsky believed that "dialogic interaction is an important trigger for language learning … [and] that social activities in which the learner participates are the main source of mental/cognitive activities" (Shehadeh, 2005, p. 24). The cognitive processes as such are awakened when the learner interacts with other people. The

processes which occur on the interpsychological (social) plane include cognitive and language development. Eventually, what is presented in the social plane, according to Vygotsky, will be presented intrapsychologically (internally) within the learner. In other words, learners will internalize language through interacting, in a dialogue for instance, with others. The classroom implication of this perspective is that it is very useful to engage learners in tasks that require collaboration, interaction, and dialogue to complete them.

Social interaction is believed to mediate learning. Ellis (2000) notes that "learners first succeed in performing a new function with the assistance of another person and then internalize this function so that they can perform it unassisted" (p. 209), a process often referred to by Vygotsky as scaffolding. Research has shown that tasks which are carefully designed could generate authentic interaction, discussion, exchange of information, negotiation of meaning, and learners scaffolding each other language output. According to task-based principles, these features help drive language learning (Duran & Ramaut, 2006, p. 47).

Task Cycle

Tasks are the units through which the principles underlying the various perspectives of TBLT could be implemented in the classroom. A question that needs to be answered here is how a task could be used in actual teaching and what options teachers have during each stage of the task in order to create the conditions that could better promote language learning. Before answering this question crucial to the implementation of TBLT, it should be noted that the rationale for employing tasks in language teaching is not because they could offer more interesting classroom activities, but because they could also provide language learners with conditions conducive to a better language learning experience. In this vein, Willis (2004) notes that "task-based language instruction is not a matter of getting students to do tasks. It is more a matter of working out tasks to create optimum conditions for learning, to engage students' interest, and to stimulate target language use—both receptive and productive" (p. 37). TBLT is not restricted to a single method. It can be applied creatively by language teachers, and it can also be modified to teachers' respective contexts. Tasks can vary enormously, and so may the classroom practices in order to accommodate a variety of learners' levels. Willis (2004) points out that "TBI is not monolithic; it does not constitute one single methodology. It is a multifaceted

approach, which can be creatively applied with different syllabus types and for different purposes" (p. 3).

How do ESL/EFL teachers implement TBLT in their classrooms? As previously mentioned, there is no single answer to this question. Some tasks can be completed in two minutes, whereas other tasks may take a whole lesson. Additionally, some creative tasks and projects may be accomplished in stages over a week or even a term. Willis (2004) attributes this rich variety in TBLT practices to the fact that it is needed in order "to accommodate learners' language levels, their needs and wishes, and in order to make the most of the social context in which they are learning … , and the resources and materials available, both inside and outside the teaching institution" (p. 36).

The most cited framework for the instruction of TBLT in literature is Willis's (1996a) tripartite structure of pre-task, during-task, and post-task phases (p. 155). Shehadeh (2005) believes that Willis's model is popular among language teachers and researchers because it is "quite practical and straightforward" (p. 26). In the *pre-task* phase, teachers frame the activity and explain it to students in order to establish topic schemata, prepare the students, motivate them to do the task by telling them about the usefulness and the purpose of the task and how it is relevant to them, and clarify the task outcome. Beside these options, Willis points out that there is also a variety of other options available for teachers during this stage. Among the pretask options are rehearsing a similar task and playing a video or audio cassette of a similar task (p. 38). Teachers could also give students some time to plan their own way of doing the task. Ellis (2003) believes that giving students pretask planning time could increase learners' engagement with the task (p. 247). Foster and Skehan (1996) found pretask planning time useful for increasing the quantity and quality of the language produced by students during the task because it reduces the mental load during the performance of the task (p. 310).

In the *during-task* phase, learners, individually or in pairs or groups, work toward the task outcome. At this stage, the focus of the task is placed principally on meaning. Because students are working with peers, the situation is nonthreatening. As such, students are encouraged to take risks, experiment with language forms that they are not yet sure of, and focus on fluency in terms of forms that they already know and which come readily to them. Willis points out that the main task options could include that the teachers interact with pairs and groups, "providing useful language, ensuring

that the TL is being used, analyzing students' deficiencies, and correcting errors" (p. 38). Ellis (2003) points out that the teacher could record the students while they are doing the task and then part of it could be played in order to draw students' attention to accuracy of forms (p. 248). Shehadeh (2005) points out that one of the options that is very useful for teachers to choose is to give students some time to report to the class about the results of their task (p. 27). Willis (1996b) states that this "reporting stage … ensures a smooth transition from private to more public interaction" (p. 56). In order to enable this transition to occur, a planning time should be given for students before the report stage. According to Skehan (1998), the planning phase in the main task stage helps students attend to form in preparation for the report stage (p. 198). Shehadeh (2005) argues that when students are given planning time before reporting to the whole class, "learners will focus on form and try to produce more complex language" (p. 27).

The task phase is followed by a post-task phase. In the *post-task* phase, teachers have also a variety of instructional options. According to Plews and Zhao (2010), post-task phase is the focus-on-form stage in which teachers give explicit instruction on "discrete grammar items that emerged as new or difficult for learners during task and report completion" (p. 42). Willis (1996b) also calls this stage "language focus," opportunities for direct grammar instruction through the use of language analysis and practice (p. 27). Willis (2004) states that teachers could use the post-task stage to make students compare the results of their tasks to the results of a similar task that was done by native speakers through a video that the teachers play (p. 39). Willis and Willis (1996) point out that students could draft, finalize, and present the outcome or finished product to others. During this report stage, a sociolinguistic context is created where attention is directed toward more accurate and complex language (p. 37). Ellis (2003) argues that teachers could use the post-task stage to focus on form through reviewing students' errors, consciousness-raising tasks, and noticing activities (p. 261).

The range of instructional options reviewed in this section demonstrates the extent to which teachers could be creative in TBLT. Through the three phases of the task, teachers could come up with different activities and use a variety of materials. It also demonstrates the extent to which a task could be adapted to the teachers' contexts and learners' needs. It is immensely important for teachers to be familiar with these options and other options in order to be more able to employ the activity that could

make their teaching more effective. Willis (2004) points out that "knowing a range of options is like having a wide repertoire of music. It is an advantage to have something for every occasion" (p. 39).

Roles of the Teacher in TBLT

The teacher's role in TBLT is different from the roles that teachers play in traditional, teacher-centered approaches. However, it is equally crucial. In this section I am going to describe the various views of teacher's role in TBLT. One question should be asked here is what *role* means? Nunan (2004) defines *role* as "the part that learners and teachers are expected to play in carrying out learning tasks as well as the social and interpersonal relationships between the participants" (p. 64). Numerous researchers in SLA believe that TBLT is the natural development of CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 223). According to Nunan (1989), "the teacher has three main roles in the communicative classroom. The first is to act as facilitator of the communicative process, the second is … a participant, and the third is an observer and learner" (p. 87). Harmer (2001) argues that "within the classroom [teacher's] role changes from one activity to another" (p. 57). It is clear that teachers in TBLT classrooms need to conduct their teaching practices in a way that facilitates learner-learner communication and teacher-learner communication. The result is a great deal of meaning negotiation, learner-learner interaction, and input-output opportunities—processes that lie at the heart of SLA.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), three roles are assumed for teachers in TBLT, including selecting and sequencing tasks, preparing learners for tasks, and raising learners' consciousness of critical language features (p. 236). Willis (2004) agrees that teachers in TBLT should design tasks themselves and then put them into a teaching sequence in line with students' needs and skill level (pp. 28-35). TBLT proponents also agree that learners should go through some pre-task preparation. Willis argues that pre-task activities might include rehearsing a similar task, topic introduction, clarifying task instructions, playing a video of the same task, or providing support for those students who feel more secure if teachers show them how to do things (p. 38). The third role that Richards and Rodgers (2001) set for teachers in TBLT holds that language is better acquired if learners notice features of the language they use or hear (p. 236). This view is consistent with Schmidt's (2001) noticing principle which argues that there is no learning without conscious attention to

form and learners need to attend to form (p. 4). However, proponents of TBLT point out that learners' need to attend to critical linguistic features does not mean doing explicit grammar instruction before students take on a task. Willis, for instance, stresses that teachers should not do a grammar lesson in the pre-task stage and any form-focusing techniques should be employed in the post-task stage, after the task has been accomplished (p. 34).

The first two roles described by Richards and Rodgers (2001) assign the job of organizer to the teacher in a TBLT approach. As Harmer (2001) sees it, organizing teachers are the ones who provide students with clear information about learning tasks, how to perform these tasks, and how much time should be spent on them (p. 58). As to the third role, the teacher is a tutor who points learners in directions they have not yet thought of taking. According to Harmer, being a tutor implies two roles: a resource of information in the middle of activity, and a prompter when learners lose the thread of the lesson and cannot move forward productively. In such instances, "the teacher "nudge[s] them in a discreet and supportive way" (p. 61). Whether the teacher is an organizer, a prompter, or even a resource, the role of the learner is given prominence through the teacher being the facilitator of the communicative task and intervening if/only when the need arises to help students accomplish the task outcome.

Avermaet et al (2006) argue that there are two roles that the teacher should perform in order for tasks to elicit rich learner involvement and enhance language learning. These roles are

> motivating the learner to invest intensive mental energy in task completion; [and] interactionally supporting task performance in such a way as to trigger processes such as the negotiation of meaning and content, the comprehension of rich input, the production of output and focus on form, which are believed to be central to second language learning. (p. 175)

Nunan (2004) agrees with the view which holds that the teacher's role in TBLT is to provide the learners with any assistance that enables them to achieve the goal of the task successfully. Nunan argues that the teacher in this case is "a scaffolder providing a supporting framework for the learner who is struggling to express herself" (p. 69).

In this discussion of the various views about the roles that are assumed for teachers in TBLT, it is seen that the teacher is a facilitator who provides support for

learners in order to cope with the demands of the task and to learn something new that can help them perform a similar task in the future. The teacher is also a designer who prepares the instructional activity in order to meets students' needs. Moreover, the teacher is the motivator who encourages students to do the task and an organizer who provides the learners with clear instructions about the task. A question should be asked here about what all these views have in common. The roles discussed in this section demonstrate the important role played by teachers in TBLT in exploiting the learning potential of tasks. Through electing the tasks that fulfill learners' needs and interests, encouraging learners to invest mental energy in the performance of the task, and supporting learners in task performance, teachers can create an environment that could be more conducive to language learning. More importantly, what these views have in common is taking the learner as the starting point and end point of the learning process. The teacher, in all these views, is the guide on the side who gives learners a greater initiative. Nunan (2004) believes that in TBLT classroom where classroom activities center on the learners, "the teacher plays a less prominent role, taking a back seat and allowing learners all the space they need. The principle role of the teacher is to listen and support the interaction, which often takes on the appearance of a casual conversation outside the classroom" (p. 69).

Challenges of TBLT

The attractiveness of TBLT is attributable to a large amount of evidence from research in SLA on the effectiveness of TBLT for foreign/second language learning/teaching. TBLT has been also promoted in a number of settings around the world, and success stories about the implementation of TBLT are reported. For instance, Branden (2006) reports positively on the implementation of TBLT to teach Dutch as a second language in schools in Flanders (pp. 1-16).

However, the attractiveness of TBLT is still open to debate due to a number of challenges that are reported through research conducted with teachers working within educational systems that have adopted TBLT. For example, in a study conducted with twenty-four EFL teachers working in the Hong Kong context, Charless (2009) points out that teachers expressed concerns over areas such as students' unwillingness to communicate through English, discipline problems, the need of additional time for preparation, and lack of TBLT instructional materials (p. 55). Adams and Newton (2009) report similar areas that Korean EFL teachers found

challenging in their experience with TBLT. Challenges included things such as classroom management, as TBLT calls for participatory structures like pair and group work, accommodation of mixed proficiency classes, and little knowledge about TBLT (pp. 5-9).

Another challenge of TBLT is that some teachers and even learners who received their foreign language education through a structure-based approach fail to see legitimacy in TBLT. Shehadeh (2005) notes that in some countries form-based instruction is "well-established and difficult to shake" (p. 14). Thus, these teachers may not find useful the view of the proponents of a strong interpretation of TBLT that "meaning is primary … the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome and [TBLT] is not concerned with language display" (Skehan, 1998, p. 98).

Concerning a learner's perspective, Nunan (2004) believes that TBLT can be problematic even with teachers who are convinced of the potential of TBLT and try to implement it with their classes. Nunan points out that because TBLT "gives learners a more active role in the classroom" (p. 67), a problem is likely to arise from the mismatch between the teachers' and learners' views about teachers' roles and learners' roles when "the learners see the teacher as someone who should be providing explicit instruction and modeling of the target language, but the teacher sees him or herself as a facilitator and guide, then conflicts arise" (p. 67). Nunan (1989) believes that teachers can work out this mismatch between teachers and learners' perceptions of their roles in the language classroom through discussing the issue with the learners and explaining to them why they want them to engage in communicative tasks (p. 87).

One criticism of TBLT is that it is seen as not teaching grammar (see Swan, 2005). However, according to Willis (2004), explicit learning of grammar helps learners recognize linguistic patterns and notice them in subsequent input. As such, focus on form at some point in TBLT "can help learners achieve greater level of accuracy" (p. 12). Nunan (2004) posits that tasks can be used creatively by teachers to cater to learners' need to learn about grammar. He argues that tasks can be *"focused"* or "*unfocused."* Nunan defines a focused task as "one in which a particular structure is required in order for a task to be completed, [whereas an] unfocused task is one in which the learners are able to use any linguistic resources at their disposal in order to complete the task" (p. 94). An example of focused tasks is narrative tasks, which necessitate the use of the past tense to achieve recalling a complete account of events

that occurred in the past. However, Ellis believes that "it is important to recognize that focused tasks, like unfocused tasks, must meet all the criteria of tasks" (p. 141). Ellis's criteria for task include features like putting primary emphasis on meaning, involving any of the four language skills, and having a clearly defined communicative outcome (p. 10).

This section of the literature review has presented information about challenges to implementation of TBLT. The following chapter introduces the research instruments that I employed to collect data about teachers' views for choosing or avoiding the implementation of TBLT in their classrooms.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of 12 EFL instructors toward the potential of TBLT in their language classes. Specifically, the study aimed, first of all, to investigate the participating instructors' understanding of basic aspects and principles of tasks and of TBLT. Second, the study aimed to highlight instructors' concerns, obstacles, and opinions about choosing or avoiding the implementation of TBLT. The study also sought to reveal the extent to which two instructors were successful in implementing TBLT through doing actual teaching in which tasks were used as the basic unit of instruction.

Data for this study were obtained from three main sources: a questionnaire, class observations, and interviews. I first invited the 12 English teachers at my school to attend two one-hour presentations about TBLT which were held at the regularly scheduled teacher development session time. In the first presentation (see Appendix A) I explained the theoretical underpinnings of TBLT and how it differs from traditional structure-based approaches that emphasize the mastery of grammar. In the second presentation (see Appendix B), I demonstrated a sample TBLT lesson. I also showed how some key task-based principles come into play in the sample lesson. Group discussions followed both of the presentations. After the second presentation, the teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire. All 12 teachers agreed.

In addition to the questionnaire, class observations and interviews were used. The observations were of the first two teachers who volunteered to implement TBLT in their classes. I offered them my help with designing TBLT lessons or any other further assistance that they found necessary for them to implement TBLT lessons. These two teachers were observed and then interviewed.

Participants

The research was conducted with all of the EFL instructors of my school. There are 12 English teachers in my school. Three of the participating teachers are from India and speak different Indian languages. Two of the teachers from India speak Malayalam, and the third teacher speaks Hindi. Arabic is the L1 for seven participants, and English is the L1 for two participants. ELT qualifications of the participants ranged between bachelor degrees in applied linguistics and English

literature to a minimal ELT qualification such as DELTA and CELTA. One participant had no ELT qualification. All 12 participants teach at two different levels: National Diploma (ND) level, which equates to UAE secondary education, and Higher National Diploma (HND), which equates to UAE post-secondary education.

The 12 participants were organized in two groups, based on the level of involvement that they had in the study. The first group was comprised of all 12 teachers attending the presentations who answered the questionnaire. All the participants had four or more years of teaching English as a foreign language. Three of the twelve participating teachers were female, and nine teachers were male. (See Table 1 for demographic information from the questionnaire.)

Table 1: Background Data about the Participants in the Questionnaire

Participants	Gender	L1	Teaching Level	Years of Experience	ELT Qualification
1.	Male	English	G.10&11	7-10	ELT
2.	Female	Arabic	HND	4-6	BA of English
3.	Female	Arabic	G.10 &11	4-6	English literature
4.	Female	Malayalam	G.10 &11	7-10	DELTA
5.	Male	Arabic	G.10 &11	4-6	English literature
6.	Male	Arabic	G. 12	11-15	English literature
7.	Male	Hindi	G. 12	11-15	DELTA
8.	Male	Arabic	G. 10& 11	7-10	CELTA
9.	Male	Arabic	G.11&12	7-10	None
10.	Male	Arabic	G. 10 &11	7-10	CELTA
11.	Male	English	G.12	21	TEFL
12.	Male	Malayalam	G.11 &12	11-15	BEd

The second group (see Table 2) consisted of two participants who volunteered to have their classes observed while teaching TBLT lessons and to be interviewed.

Table 2: The Background Data of the Observed and Interviewed Participants

Participants	Gender	L1	Teaching Level	Years of Experience
2.	Female	Arabic	HND (Post-	5
8.	Male	Arabic	G. 10& 11	8

The first teacher, Participant 2, a female teacher, has taught for the past five years. The second teacher, Participant 8, a male teacher, has taught English in the UAE for seven years.

Data Collection

There were three sources of data: questionnaire, class observations, and teacher interviews.

Questionnaire

First, prior to distribution of the questionnaire, two one-hour presentations were conducted with the 12 participants at the school's regularly scheduled teacher development session time. These presentations were to increase these teachers' understanding of TBLT so that they might comment on its feasibility in their classes. The first presentation (see Appendix A) covered the theoretical underpinnings of TBLT. The second presentation (see Appendix B) demonstrated a sample TBLT lesson that was based on a task. The content of the task was based on a traditional vocabulary lesson from the textbook used in the school where this study was conducted. In the textbook, the lesson was introduced as a list of decontextualized vocabulary items. In the sample TBLT lesson a task was developed which required students to work in pairs in order to decide the accountability of accidents that occurred in the workplace. Students were also required to write a report of the accident for which information needed to be extracted from the accident scenarios.

Participants were told to take notes and raise any questions at the end of presentations. They asked a number of questions concerning the points raised in the two presentations. Most of the discussion occurred in the first presentation, which is very likely due to the use of a variety of new terms such as *task*, *TBLT*, *form-focused*, *meaning-focused*. Most of the discussions centered around concepts such as the link of TBLT to CLT, task versus exercise, and task-cycle. These areas represent the pedagogic implications of the theoretical basis of TBLT, and teachers are usually more interested in the practical aspects of teaching methods. Follow-up questions were resolved by discussions.

Most of the discussions that occurred in the second presentation centered on how different TBLT principles came into play. In order to save time, teachers were given a copy of the slide which contained the task-cycle, as it was repeatedly referred to throughout the second presentation. The task-cycle represents the three stages in which a typical TBLT lesson proceeds: Pre-task stage, task stage, and the post-task stage. This cycle also demonstrates how a communicative task differs from a traditional exercise. The cycle also allows textbook content to be recycled and

employed to develop TBLT materials. Follow-up discussions for clarification were held involving five participants.

The questionnaire (see Appendix C) was given to the twelve participating teachers after the presentations in order to investigate their attitudes toward the potential of TBLT in their language classrooms, to find out their understanding of TBLT, and finally, to find out whether or not they thought that they would be able to implement TBLT in their classrooms. The questionnaire included statements that represent the benefits and challenges of TBLT for language learners and language teachers. These statements of benefits and challenges were based on Charless's (2009) research with EFL instructors in which the instructors implemented TBLT with their classes and reported on this experience.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section contained demographic questions. The second section contained 20 questions in five-item Likert scale form which were designed to elicit the degree to which the participants agreed or disagreed with particular statements based on principles in different areas of TBLT. The questions used a five-point scale ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The third section consisted of open-ended questions intended to elicit reasons for choosing or avoiding the implementation of TBLT.

The questionnaire aimed to identify any benefits, challenges and obstacles the teachers perceived about the application of this approach in their classrooms. It was also intended to provide valuable data about the participating teachers' understanding of the theoretical underpinnings and class implementation of TBLT. The questionnaire was included to provide data that assisted in answering my first research question: What do the participating teachers think of the potential of using task-based language teaching in their classes? A statement was included in the questionnaire to ask for interested volunteers to be interviewed at a scheduled time at their convenience after filling out the questionnaire.

Observations

Second, after the presentations and questionnaire, volunteers were sought to implement TBLT in their classes, and two teachers (17% of the same twelve teachers) volunteered to implement TBLT and also to be interviewed. Two lessons (see Appendix F and G) were designed by the researcher for the purpose of practical implementation of TBLT. Assistance for the teachers involved design of the lessons,

answering questions, and providing background material on TBLT. A series of one-on-one conferences was conducted with the teachers to further clarify what each part of the lesson meant and how each should be executed in teaching.

The permission was granted to conduct observations of the teachers. Each teacher was observed once. An observation log (see Appendix D) was developed for this purpose. It was a checklist which was related to steps in the three stages of a TBLT lesson. The purpose was to identify evidence of the implementation of the basic principles discussed in the two presentations, such as output, interaction, meaning negotiation, authenticity of the task, engagement, and the availability of clear task outcomes. Data collected from the class observations addressed the second research question: What benefits and challenges of task-based language teaching are observed when two participating teachers implement task-based language teaching in their classrooms? Data obtained from these observations also addressed the third research question: What challenges of task-based language teaching are observed when two participating teachers implement task-based language teaching in their classrooms?

Interviews

Finally, interviews (see Appendix E) were conducted with the two teachers who implemented TBLT with their classes. The interviews were audio-recorded. They were used in order to explore the benefits and challenges that the participating teachers found when they implemented TBLT in their classrooms. Interviews were also used in order to elicit any changes in the attitudes of the participants toward the implementation of task-based instruction in their classes. The interviews assisted in attaining deeper insights into the obstacles and challenges that might hamper the incorporation of TBLT in teaching. Data collected from these interviews were useful for addressing the fourth research question: What do the observed teachers report as benefits of task-based language teaching? Interview data also addressed the fifth research question: What do the participating teachers report as challenges of task-based language teaching?

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the data analysis and the findings of the study. The collected data and findings from the questionnaire, class observations, and the interviews were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The participants were in three groups. The first group included the twelve EFL teachers who attended the two presentations and responded to the post-presentations questionnaire; the second group was comprised of the two teachers who were interested in implementing TBLT in their classes and observed in the meantime. Finally, the third group composed the observed teachers who were interviewed.

Data will be presented in three sections. The first section illustrates the data collected from the questionnaire which will be analyzed quantitatively by using percentages and looking into patterns that reflect the participants' attitudes and understanding of key principles and aspects of task and TBLT. The open-ended responses were displayed in tables. Data obtained from the class observations and the interviews is presented descriptively.

Questionnaire Findings

As mentioned previously, a questionnaire (see Appendix C) was given to the 12 participating teachers in order to obtain data to answer the first research question: What do the participating teachers think of the potential of using task-based language teaching in their classes? The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part included demographic information about the population of participants (see Table 1).

The second part was composed of 20 items in a 5-item Likert scale that dealt with basic conceptions of task and TBLT. These items were designed to identify teachers' understanding of task TBLT concepts and to investigate teachers' attitudes toward the potential of implementing TBLT in their classes. The first 10 items relate to reasons for avoiding the implementation of TBLT, while the second 10 items relate to the reasons for implementing TBLT. The five-point scale ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. All 12 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 100%.

The third part of the questionnaire contained open-ended questions which were constructed to obtain insights into the reasons for implementing or avoiding TBLT.

Problems with TBLT

Table 3 presents teachers' responses to the first 10 items on teachers' views of TBLT problems in their classes. Responses on the five-point scale were merged into three categories (strongly agree/agree, uncertain, and strongly disagree /disagree). Findings from the first 10 items which present the problems with TBLT are organized by four themes: Comparison of TBLT with traditional form-focused instruction, role of teachers, content, and other views.

Table 3: Teachers' Views Toward Problems of TBLT in Their Classes

Statements				
I would not like to implement TBLT in my classes because		Strongly Agree & Agree	Uncertain	Strongly Disagree & Disagree
1.	form-focus work is easier to manage.	9/12 (75%)	2/12 (17%)	1/12 (8%)
2.	teachers' role is not clearly defined in TBLT.	9/12 (75%)	1/12 (8%)	2/12 (17%)
3.	it conflicts with learners' perception of my role as a teacher who is the provider of the target language.	8/12 (67%)	2/12 (17%)	2/12 (17%)
4.	it cannot be implemented with low-ability students who lack the linguistic resources to convey meaningful messages.	7/12 (58%)	3/12 (25%)	2/12 (17%)
5.	the role of grammar is not clearly defined in TBLT.	8/12 (67%)	3/12 (25%)	1/12 (8%)
6.	I do not see a significant difference between focused tasks and form-focused activities.	5/12 (42%)	3/12 (25%)	4/12 (33%)
7.	it is complex since it has many variations options that are not easy followed like form-focused approaches such as PPP.	9/12 (75%)	2/12 (17%)	1/12 (8%)
8.	I need a special materials designer to design task-based lessons in my context.	10/12 (83%)		2/12 (17%)
9.	learners and other stakeholders may not find legitimacy in TBLT because it is not consistent with their perception that language learning should be based on a text-book.	10/12 (84%)		2/12 (17%)
10.	it is not as easy to assess learners' progress as it is with PPP.	6/12 (50%)	5/12 (42%)	1/12 (8%)

Items 1, 7, and 10 present comparison of TBLT with traditional form-focused instruction. Form-focused was seen as easier by nine (75%) teachers. In response to item 1 which investigated teachers' reasons for implementing form-focused work,

nine (75%) respondents stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because form-focused work is easier to manage. In response to item 7, nine respondents (75%) stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because it is complex since it has many variations that are not easy followed, unlike form-focused approaches such as PPP. As to item 10, six respondents (50%) stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because it is not as easy to assess learners' progress as it is with PPP, and five respondents (42%) were uncertain, whereas one respondent (8%) disagreed to this item. Teachers' responses showed that they preferred to use form-focused teaching because it seemed easier than TBLT.

Items 2, 3, and 8 represent teachers' views of the role of the teacher in TBLT. In response to item 2, which investigated teachers' understanding of the teachers' role in TBLT, the majority of respondents, nine (75%), stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because the teachers' role is not clearly defined in TBLT. In response to item 3, eight respondents (67%) stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because it conflicts with learners' perception of the teachers as the provider of the target language. For item 8, ten respondents (83%) stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because they need a special material designer to design task-based lessons. Teachers' responses showed that form-focused language teaching was seen as easier because of familiarity with the roles assumed for teachers.

As to the teachers' views of the content of TBLT, items 4 and 5 investigate whether or not TBLT is suitable for low-ability students and the role grammar in TBLT. In response to item 4, seven respondents (58%) stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because it cannot be implemented with low-ability students who lack the linguistic resources to convey meaningful messages. while three respondents (25%) were uncertain about this item. As to item 5, eight respondents (67%) stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because the role of grammar is not clearly defined in TBLT. Three respondents (25%) were uncertain this item.

Item 9 represents other views that teachers had about problems of TBLT with their classes. Item 9 stated, "I would not like to implement TBLT in my classes because learners and other stakeholders may not find legitimacy in TBLT because it is not consistent with their perceptions that language learning should be based on a text-book." Ten respondents (83%) agreed with this statement.

Potential Benefits of TBLT

Table 4 presents teachers' responses to the second 10 Likert items (11-20) on teachers' views of TBLT positive potential in their classes. Items (11-20) were also organized by two themes: Potential benefits of TBLT and content of TBLT.

Table 4: Teachers' Views Toward Benefits of TBLT in Their Classes

I would like to implement TBLT in my classes because		Strongly Agree & Agree	Uncertain	Strongly Disagree & Disagree
11.	tasks are purposeful and emphasize communication and meaning.	11/12 (92%)	1/12 (8%)	0
12.	tasks provide the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition.	10/12 (83%)	2/12 (17%)	0
13.	it is learner-centered because tasks are relevant to learners' needs.	5/12 (42%)	6/12 (50%)	1/12 (8%)
14.	tasks result in a higher level of communicative interaction.	9/12 (75%)	3/12 (25%)	0
15.	it promotes a higher level of thinking.	3/12 (25%)	8/12 (67%)	1/12 (8%)
16.	new lexical items are introduced within a meaningful contexts.	12/12 (100%)	0	0
17.	task achievement is motivational and thus learning is promoted.	6/12 (50%)	5/12 (42%)	1/12 (8%)
18.	learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned.	3/12 (25%)	6/12 (50%)	3/12 (25%)
19.	it provides better context for the activation of learning processes than form-focused activities.	3/12 (25%)	7/12 (58%)	2/12 (17%)
20.	it makes language learners be users of language rather than only learners of language.	10/12 (83%)	2/12 (17%)	0

Teachers' responses showed overall positive attitudes toward benefits of TBLT. Items 11, 16, and 20 present comparison of TBLT with traditional form-focused instruction. With item 11, all but one respondent (92%) stated that they would like to implement TBLT because tasks are purposeful and emphasize communication and meaning. In response to item 14, nine respondents (75%) stated that they would like to implement TBLT because tasks result in a higher level of interaction. In response to item 16, all the twelve respondents (100%) stated that new lexical items are introduced within a meaningful context. As to item 20, the majority of respondents ten (83%) believed that they would like to implement TBLT because it makes language learners be users of language rather than only learners of language.

Teachers' responses indicated a positive attitude toward TBLT because tasks provide opportunities for input and output, but high uncertainty was shown toward negotiating learning difficulty and activating learning processes. Items 12, 16, 18, and

19 represent the second theme by which benefits of TBLT are organized—content. In response to item 12, ten respondents (83%) stated that they would implement TBLT because tasks provide the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition. As for item 16, the twelve respondents unanimously (100%) stated that they would like to implement TBLT because new lexical items are introduced within a meaningful context. As to item 18, three respondents (25%) thought that they would like to implement TBLT in their classes because learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned. Six respondents (50%) were uncertain that learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned in TBLT, but three respondents (25%) thought that learning difficulty cannot be negotiated and fine-tuned. As to item 19, three respondents (25%) thought they would like to implement TBLT because it provides better context for the activation of learning processes than form-focused activities. Seven respondents (58%) were uncertain that TBLT provides better context for the activation of learning processes than form-focused activities; whereas two respondents (17%) thought that TBLT does not provide better context for the activation of learning processes that form-focused activities.

The final section of the questionnaire included two open-ended questions in order to obtain qualitative data that may help elicit the participating teachers' attitude toward the potential of using TBLT as classroom practice. The first question asked the respondents to state any comments they would like to make regarding the uses of TBLT in their English language classes. Of the twelve, only six participants responded to this question, giving a total response rate of 50%. Table 5 presents the six teachers' responses to the first open-ended question.

Data analysis revealed three major aspects of TBLT through the answers of the six respondents to the first open-ended question. The first aspect is design of the task. Four of the six respondents to this question thought that the design of the task requires time and special training in material design. This finding is consistent with the quantitative data obtained from item 8 in which 10 of the 12 respondents (83%) stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because they would need a special material designer.

The second aspect mentioned by one of the six respondents to this question was about the possibility of using the textbook lessons to design tasks. Participant 3 exclaimed, "How can I use the textbook if I want to implement TBLT?" The tasks for the lessons that I used in the second presentation (see Appendix C) were based on a

lesson from the textbook that some participants use. Also, the literature on TBLT reviewed in this study has shown that traditional textbook lessons, which could revolve around grammar or decontexualized vocabulary, could be used to design communicative tasks in a mild form of TBLT usually termed "task-supported language teaching" (Ellis, 2003, p. 28).

The third aspect that one of the six respondents mentioned in his reply to this question was that he is not inclined to methods that do not teach grammar explicitly because, as he stated, "They are futile." This opinion reflects traditional form-focused approaches which emphasize the explicit instruction of grammar. Table 5 presents the aspects of teachers' response to the first open-ended question which asked them to state any comments they would like to make regarding using TBLT in their classes.

Table 5: Teacher Comments about Using TBLT

Pattern	Participant	Response
Difficulty of task design	2	"I need guidance about task design."
	5	"Tasks are not easy to design."
	8	"I am not sure how tasks could be designed."
	12	"Task design takes time."
Difficulty of using textbooks with TBLT	3	"How can I use the textbook if want to implement TBLT?"
Place of grammar	4	"I am totally averse to methods that ignore grammar."

Table 6 presents the teachers' responses to the second open-ended question, asking them to state any reservations they would like to make regarding using TBLT in their classes.

Table 6: Teacher Reservations about TBLT

Pattern	Participant	Response
Negative perceptions by seniors	2	"My biggest concern is the way my supervisor would see it"
	5	"Administrators may object to my teaching activities."
	8	"Supervisor may not like my teaching."
Lack of familiarity with task design	9	"Design of materials is difficult."
	10	"Task design is possible with support."
Having to adhere to the textbook	6	"I use the textbook, so I can't use tasks not from the book."
Students' preference for explicit grammar	4	"Students prefer grammar to be presented directly."

The second open-ended question required the respondents to explain any reservations, if any, they have toward task-based language teaching in their classes.

Seven of the total 12 participants (58%) responded to this question. Data analysis revealed four major concerns the seven teachers had about task-based methods: negative perception of teaching practices by administrative teachers; students' preference for explicit grammar instruction; being restricted to the textbook; and lack of familiarity with task design.

Overall, teacher responses about TBLT were mixed. Generally speaking, data collected from the questionnaire showed that the majority (83%) of teachers had positive attitudes toward the potential of implementing TBLT in their UAE classes in terms of facilitating second/foreign language learning. However, in the questionnaire, teachers also showed negative attitudes toward the potential of TBLT in their UAE classes, expressing concerns about the place of grammar in TBLT (67%), the teacher's role in TBLT (75%), the design of TBLT materials (83%), and institutional factors (83%)—job security—stemming from a concern over administrators not seeing legitimacy in TBLT teaching. Also, the teachers expressed more uncertainty about the potential for TBLT than about problems with TBLT.

Observations of Teachers Using TBLT

Class observations were conducted in order to collect qualitative data to answer the second and third research questions: "What benefits of task-based language teaching are observed when up to five participating teachers implement task-based language teaching in their classrooms?" and "What challenges of task-based language teaching are observed when up to five participating teachers implement task-based language teaching in their classrooms?"

Observation of the First Lesson

The first lesson (see Appendix F) was developed with the assistance of Participant 2 who teaches the Higher National Diploma (HND) class of Hospitality. HND is part of the post-secondary education in the UAE, and HND students have secondary education certificates (high school). The objective of the first lesson was to teach verbs that relate to cooking such as *boil, simmer, heat, bake*, *shake*, etc.

Participant 2's questionnaire responses indicated that she agreed with most of the items that a teacher would give for avoiding the implementation of TBLT, such as form-focus work being easier to manage, TBLT conflicting with her perception of teacher's role as a provider of the TL, the role of grammar not being clearly defined in

TBLT, TBLT being complex, difficulty of task design, and learners and other stakeholders not seeing legitimacy in TBLT. Checking Participant 2's responses to the questionnaire items about choosing the implementation of TBLT in their classes, I noticed that she also agreed to most of the items, especially those items that are considered among the strengths of TBLT, such as the purposefulness and the emphasis on meaning of tasks, providing comprehensible input and ample opportunities of output, and the higher level of interaction; principles that lie at the heart of second language acquisition. This conflict between her personal perceptions probably stemming from unfamiliarity with TBLT and her agreement with basic aspects and principle of TBLT implies that the two presentations that I gave aroused not only awareness of TBLT with Participant 2, but also resulted in a positive change of attitude that would likely to be affirmed after the implementation of TBLT in her classroom. When Participant 2 stated her interest in implementing TBLT, we both agreed that she would give the same lesson she had done earlier but to a different group. At that point, a series followed of one-on-one discussions and explanations of how TBLT principles came into play in her lesson.

Her lesson, as I mentioned previously, was to introduce cooking verbs. In this section I will discuss what actually happened in the lesson, my observations, and the analysis of data that relate to the purpose of these observations, the benefits and challenges observed when the two teachers implemented TBLT. The teacher started the lesson by asking students about their favorite cuisine. Students requested clarification about the meaning of cuisine. The teacher gave the dictionary meaning, which is "the style of cooking." To make it easier, the teacher said that her favorite cuisine is Italian. Immediately, students started rattling out the names of their favorite Italian dishes. Other students started talking about their favorite cuisines. Some mentioned French; others mentioned Indian; and still others mentioned Chinese. The teachers recast the adjectives for nationalities that were mispronounced by students, e.g., "France" was recast as "French."

Then, students were assigned to groups of three according to their favorite cuisine, for instance, the French cuisine group, and the Italian cuisine group. Students were given pictures that described the action expressed through the cooking verbs and a list of all the verbs. Students then started discussing which verb went with each picture. After that, students were shown the same pictures on the smart board. The

whole class started matching the verbs with the pictures. In the meantime, groups were told to check their answers and to correct any mistakes.

Next, the teacher gave the students a text which contained the recipe for a shepherd's pie. While they were reading, I noticed that students sought each other's help with unfamiliar vocabulary such as *ingredients*, *lamb*, and *lump*. Students also sought the teacher's help when group mates failed to give a satisfactory answer. Finally, students were told to write the recipe of a dish they choose. Students were given 10 minutes to do the task. Students were told that once they finished, one of each group had to tell the class about the recipe for their dish. Students started constructing their collective text. At times, students used some clarification requests in Arabic when they sensed a communication breakdown. At other times, students directed their requests to the teacher immediately when their partners failed to find the suitable word or structure. The teacher was going around and taking notes.

When the 10 minutes finished, a student from each group reported to the class about the ingredients and the recipe of their dish. Once all the groups finished, the teacher started giving explicit teaching on the imperatives and transition words. Students were told the importance of using transitions when describing a process. Finally, students were told to rewrite their recipes using what was instructed about imperatives and transitions.

My observations (see Table 7) about this task-based lesson were that the teacher was very successful in leading the class through a pre-task stage in which the topic was explored. She did so by awaking the schemata through asking students about their favorite cuisines and eliciting any vocabulary that related to cooking. The teacher also highlighted the target words—cooking verbs—in an effective manner.

The teacher helped learners understand the task by giving clear instructions and through giving a model of a similar task that was written by a native speaker. Students were responsive and became immediately engaged in group class discussions about their favorite cuisines and dishes. Students took notes of the meaning of newly introduced verbs and unfamiliar vocabulary.

During the task cycle, students were assigned in groups to do a task and were encouraged to communicate and seek each other's help. They were also encouraged to ask the teacher, if necessary. In groups, I noticed a lot of interaction, meaning negotiation, and clarification requests.

Table 7: Observations of the First Lesson.

Pre-Task Stage		
Teacher	*Yes/No/Somewhat*	*Notes*
Explores the topic with class.	Yes	
Highlights useful words and phrases.	Yes	
Helps learners to understand task instructions and ensures the intended outcome is clear.	Yes	
Plays learners a recording of a similar task.	No	She used a reading
Gives clear instructions.	Yes	
Students		
Seem to understand the instructions.	Yes	
Are responsive.	Yes	
Take notes.	Somewhat	
Demonstrate engagement.	Yes	
Task Cycle		
Teacher	*Yes/No/Somewhat*	*Notes*
Checks progress on the task.	Somewhat	
Takes notes of students on task implementation, difficulties, linguistic	Yes	
Helps if necessary.	Yes	
Encourages attempts at communication.	Somewhat	
Corrects.	No	
Visits pairs/groups to give language advice.	Yes	
Acts as chairperson, summing up in the end.	No	Students are able to express their meanings
Students		
Demonstrate engagement.	Yes	
Negotiate meaning.	Yes	
Seem to experiment yet make mistakes.	Yes	
Prepare to report to the whole class.	Yes	
Post-Task Stage/Language Focus		
Teacher	*Yes/No/Somewhat*	*Notes*
Reviews findings with the class.	No	
Brings other useful words, phrases, and patterns to learners' attention.	Yes	Grammar: Usage and structure of imperatives and transitions
Picks up on language items from the earlier task cycle.	Somewhat	Teacher used the text to point to the structure of imperatives
Conducts class practice activities for new words, phrases, and patterns occurring in the data collected during the task to build confidence.	Yes	Teacher asked students to rewrite their recipes based on her instruction of imperatives and transitions
Students		
Examine and then discuss specific features of the text (consciousness-raising activities).	No	
Demonstrate signs of acquired knowledge.	Yes	Students rewrote their recipes in a short time
Request clarification requests about features, words, or phrases they came across in the task.	Yes	Students sought teachers' opinion about the appropriateness of features and words they used in their revised text

The teacher also did a lot of recasts for ungrammatical utterances by the students, but without any explicit teaching of linguistic features—a technique the teacher was told about by the researcher.

The students demonstrated a high level of engagement as they were preparing to report to the whole class. One noticeable aspect of the report stage of the lesson that is worth mentioning is that students used some of the newly introduced verbs to describe their dishes, which is a sign of internalized knowledge used to express personal meanings.

In the post-task cycle, the teacher used her notes that she had taken during the performance of the task and started giving explicit instruction on the imperatives, a verb form usually used to describe a process, and the use of transitions in writing. After she clarified some points that students raised, students in the end were told to rewrite their recipes, in accordance with the last language analysis stage.

From a TBLT teaching point of view, more benefits than one were observed in the way this lesson was instructed. First, the lesson was based on students' need to talk about recipes in classes of the vocational teachers who teach in the discipline of Hospitality. Thus, students were very motivated to learn the language that would be very useful to them when they do their vocational assignments. Second, students were provided with input that was enhanced through providing visual aids that helped them establish meaningful connections to newly introduced cooking verbs. Another source of input was provided which came through the text that used the verbs in a meaningful context, which further facilitated the learning of these verbs. The content of the lesson was very interesting as it introduced a new dish that students were unfamiliar with, which is a reward in its own right, especially for hospitality students who plan to have their own restaurants or work in restaurants in the future. Moreover, the teacher skillfully used a motivational technique, group work, in which groups were assigned according to a common preference. This technique facilitated engagement in in-group discussions that included even the dish they would choose to talk about, which added to the level of interaction that included suggestions, agreeing, disagreeing, and justifying reasons for choosing or avoiding a particular recipe. Another positive aspect of the lesson is that it provided students with the language necessary for the accomplishment of the task. The task, as such, provided an opportunity to produce the target linguistic items of the lesson.

As to the challenges that were observed when this task-based lesson was implemented by Participant 2, the only challenging part was explaining to her how the task she used was firmly embedded in TBLT. The teacher was totally unfamiliar with this approach, for two reasons. First, the teaching methodology course that was part of her certification program did not include anything about TBLT. Second, after her graduation in 1997, Participant 2 did not work as an English language educator until 2006. As such, she had been away from ELT circles for ten years. To increase her awareness with TBLT, I had a series of additional individual discussions with her that covered key areas in SLA and methodology. Another challenging aspect was the time required in design of the task. Participant 2 stated in a conversation about the task she used that it had taken her hours to design this task, starting from surveying the vocational teachers about the content of instruction in the discipline of hospitality, finding suitable pictures, and finally finding a suitable text that used the linguistic items in question.

Observation of the Second Lesson

The second lesson (see Appendix G) was based on Huang (2010) which consists of a dictogloss task. The lesson was chosen because it is a similar to a lesson given in the Construction discipline (Civil Engineering) about useful vocabulary that are found in apartment leases. The text of the lesson was also used to introduce modal verbs, their meanings, and how they fit into an apartment lease. A *dictogloss task* is a variation of dictation in which learners are required to reconstruct a short text they have listened to, and then "in small groups, the students … pool their resources to reconstruct their version of the original text" (Wajnryb, 1990, p. 5).

A dictogloss task requires students to engage in a collaborative dialogue within groups in order to restructure a dictated text. The lesson was reviewed with the teacher, whose questions about how the lesson is based on TBLT principles were answered in depth. Considerable time was invested by the researcher in order to help the participating teacher whose only ELT qualification is an eight-week course in CELTA. The class where this lesson was given was a National Diploma (ND) (grade 11) all-male class of the discipline of Construction.

A review of the responses that Participant 8 gave to the questionnaire items revealed that, like Participant 2, he agreed to most items that would make teachers not implement TBLT in their classes. However, he agreed to most of the items that would

make teachers choose to implement TBLT in their classes, which implies that Participant 8 seemed to agree with TBLT principles and strengths discussed in the theoretical background presentation in spite of his reservation about TBLT. Among the reasons why Participant 8 agreed with statements for choosing not to implement TBLT was the simplicity of form-focused approaches in his teaching experience. This attitude is most likely attributed to his familiarity with the long accepted and practiced form-focused approach. It could also be attributed to his lack of training in other methods. To the open-ended items, Participant 8 responded, "I am not quite sure about how task could be used to teach grammar." It is particularly for this reason I chose this task for Participant 8 to implement, since unsuitability to teach grammar was a reservation he perceived would make him avoid the implementation of TBLT.

Dictogloss draws on TBLT principles in that it is a holistic task that involves all he four skills. According to Jacobs (2003), a dictogloss task involves "listening (to the teacher read the text and to groupmates discuss the reconstruction), speaking (to groupmates during reconstruction), reading (notes taken while listening to the teacher, the groups' reconstruction, and the original text), and writing the reconstruction" (p. 2). Another TBLT principle that dictogloss draws on is student-student interaction which occurs when groupmates work together using their notes to reconstruct the dictated text. According to Nabei (1996), "language is best learned through interaction" (p. 59), such as student-student interaction.

My observations (see Table 8) about this task-based lesson were that this teacher introduced the topic of apartment leases by asking students whether or not they live in an apartment. Those students who lived in apartments said, "Yes." Then the teacher asked them if this apartment had a lease. After that, a student interrupted, "What is a lease?" The teacher referred the question to other students. One student whose father has a real estate agency started explaining the term in English and then in Arabic when he sensed a failure to understand what he meant on the part of other students. After that exchange, the teacher asked this student whether or not he understood what is written in a lease. The student admitted that his father contacts a translator in order to help him understand the terms, a situation which is sometimes problematic, due to poor translation. This student seemed very motivated to study the lesson as it would help him become more able to assist with his family business.

Table 8: Observations of the Second Lesson.

Pre-Task Stage		
Teacher	*Yes/No/Somewhat*	*Notes*
Explores the topic with class.	Yes	
Highlights useful words and phrases.	Yes	
Helps learners to understand task instructions and ensures the intended outcome is clear.	Somewhat	Teacher should have clarified the instructions more as students do a dictogloss for the first time
Plays learners a recording of a similar task.	No	
Gives clear instructions.	Somewhat	
Students		
Seem to understand the instructions.	Somewhat	Students sought clarification
Are responsive.	Yes	
Take notes.	Yes	Meanings of unfamiliar words
Demonstrate engagement.	Yes	
Task Cycle		
Teacher	*Yes/No/Somewhat*	*Notes*
Checks progress on the task.	Somewhat	
Takes notes of students on task implementation, difficulties, linguistic features, etc.	Yes	
Helps if necessary.	Yes	
Encourages attempts at communication.	Yes	
Corrects.	Yes	
Visits pairs/groups to give language advice.	Yes	
Acts as chairperson, summing up in the end.	No	
Students		
Demonstrate engagement.	Yes	
Negotiate meaning.	Yes	Students seek each other's and the teacher's help
Seem to experiment yet make mistakes.	Yes	
Prepare to report to the whole class.	Yes	
Post-Task Stage/Language Focus		
Teacher	*Yes/No/Somewhat*	*Notes*
Reviews findings with the class.	Yes	
Brings other useful words, phrases, and patterns to learners' attention.	Yes	Gives instruction on modals
Picks up on language items from the earlier task cycle.	Yes	Teacher refers to modal verbs in the text
Conducts class practice activities for new words, phrases, and patterns occurring in the data collected during the task to build	Yes	Teacher asked students used the original text to identify modal verbs
Students		
Examine and then discuss specific features of the text (consciousness-raising activities).	Yes	
Demonstrate signs of acquired knowledge.	Yes	
Request clarification requests about features, words, or phrases they came across in the task.	Yes	

The teacher sought to elicit from the students the meaning of the key vocabulary. The teacher then asked students to use their dictionaries to translate the list of words in worksheets which were distributed to the whole class.

Next, a matching exercise followed, and some sentences were provided for students to complete with the words in question. I noticed that the students started to become more engaged as the target vocabulary words were used in sentences.

It seemed that their interest was aroused by the range of meanings that could be expressed through these vocabulary words. The lesson culminated in a dictogloss task. Students were told to take notes of key words in the text as the teacher fairly slowly read the text. After the second time of reading, they were told to work in groups of four and reconstruct the same text, which the teacher read at a normal rate this time. One student of each group read out loud the reconstructed text.

After the task was done by students, the teacher explained what is meant by modal verbs. The teacher drew students' attention explicitly to the structure of a sentence that has a modal verb. Students then were told to circle all the modal verbs in their reconstructed texts. Finally, students were given copies of the original text to compare with their reconstructed ones.

The beneficial aspects that I observed in this task-based lesson fall into three areas. First, the task was a bit challenging for students whose low linguistic ability could hinder their engagement in such a task that requires them to use unfamiliar vocabulary to restructure a written text. Writing for such students is the most challenging area in English. Nevertheless, the teacher managed to fine-tune the difficulty of the task through using elicitation, and when the teacher sensed that students did not seem to fully understand the meanings of these vocabulary items, he employed exercises (matching and fill in the blanks) in order to further help students get the meaning of each word. The teacher seemed to understand the difference between tasks and exercises (as presented in the section about how tasks differ from an exercise, in the first presentation). Exercises could be fitted into a task as part of the pre/post task stage to draw attention to important linguistic items that could help students achieve the task outcome.

Another noted benefit in this TBLT lesson is that students were engaged in note-taking, which was surprising for the teacher. I told the teacher that it is attributed to giving them an outcome that requires them to take notes in order to achieve it, which is a technique that is considered as one of the strengths of TBLT. Another

positive aspect that I noticed was the level of interaction that especially occurred when students were told to take five minutes to finalize their restructured texts. Interaction was in terms of seeking each other's help and seeking the teacher's help about the appropriateness of structures and vocabulary items they wanted to use.

Furthermore, the grammar part of the lesson took less time than the teacher usually gives to introduce grammatical features. I noted that the assistance that the students were provided clarified their comprehension of the meaning overall meaning of the text so that students did not need to understand each and every word of the text, which is another strength of TBLT. Another benefit I noticed was all students were able to identify the grammatical forms introduced in the post-task stage. At that point I intervened and asked students if they noticed any difference between the forms they used in their restructured texts and the original text. The majority noticed that they used "to" after some modal verbs, which is ungrammatical.

The challenging aspect that I observed while working with Participant 8 was his lack of confidence that is probably attributable to lack of knowledge of TBLT. He also expressed his concern over how to explain his teaching practices to seniors who already know that he has no degree in ELT. Still, this reason does not reflect any perceived disadvantages in TBLT. It is simply related to job security. In the post observation conference that Participant 8 and I had, he was surprised that his teaching time was not as usual. However, he felt that students were more responsive. Another challenge that I observed was the design of tasks. Participant 2 was worried that he might not have enough time to design tasks, especially when teachers have a heavy teaching load. I told him that it should not be a long and complicated task. A simple activity could be labeled as task if it meets requirements such as being goal-oriented, having a clear outcome, emphasizing meaning, and involving any or all of the four skills, which were set forth in the theoretical section of the presentation. I also pointed out how traditional exercises taken from the text book, the matching and fill in the blanks, were used to prepare students for the task. He was also surprised to learn that the whole task did not take me more than five minutes to develop, as I took it from an online article that I read about TBLT. I was trying to show him the possibilities available for him when it comes to the design of the task.

Teachers' Views about Use of TBLT

Interviews (see Appendix E), the "gold standard" of qualitative research (Silverman, 2000, p. 291), were used in order to answer the fourth and fifth research questions of this study: What do the participating teachers report as benefits of task-based language teaching? What do the participating teachers report as challenges of task-based language teaching? The interview was comprised of two sets of questions. The first set of questions was designed for any of the 12 participants interested in interviews after attending the two presentations that were given by the researcher. The second set of questions was designed for the participants who participated in the implementation of TBLT for one lesson. Interviews were conducted with the two teachers who were observed while implementing TBLT in their classrooms, Participant 2 and Participant 8. These two participants were the only ones who indicated interest in implementing TBLT and being interviewed. The interviews lasted around 20 minutes each. Both interviews were tape-recorded. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis in order to allow the interviewees to speak more freely without the fear of jeopardizing their jobs. I believed that doing so would be a more effective means of helping the interviewees give better insights into their experience with TBLT in their contexts. Clearer insights, in turn, would be very effective means of collecting data addressing my research questions. Quotations of the teachers' exact words are used in the results and analysis in order to allow readers to get a sense of the responses of participants.

Interview Data Analysis

When asked to describe her experience with task-based language learning, Participant 2 said, "It was very interesting and useful as I'm now able to understand why students need to be given communicative tasks and how this helps them learn language better." When asked about her perceptions of TBLT after having experienced it, Participant 2 replied, "I believe that it is more useful for my students as it gives them more opportunities to practice English whether in speaking or writing." She added, "The thing that I liked best about TBLT is that I didn't have to teach a lot." "It also," she said, "resulted in more opportunities for low-achieving students to be engaged in classroom activities."

When asked about what benefits she identified when she tried task-based language teaching in her classroom, Participant 2 replied, "Less teaching time, higher

levels of engagement and motivation, and students found the task very interesting." When asked about any problems of TBLT when it is implemented in the classroom, Participant 2 replied, "The design of the task took a long time. I had to spend hours looking for suitable pictures that go with the target cooking verbs and a suitable text that uses these verbs." When asked about any response observed on the part of students, she replied, "Students seemed very responsive. I have noticed that lessons which contain reading usually stimulate a bit of discussions." When asked about what went well and why, Participant 2 replied, "The lesson generally went well especially the ability of students to quickly use the target verbs to talk about their own dishes." She also added, "I guess it was because students were more motivated to learn verbs and the language which would help them do their vocational assignments."

Finally, when asked about what did not go well and why, Participant 2 replied, "I do not remember anything go wrong. I guess I was prepared and more able to understand why this activity which was in groups would help students better learn."

The responses of Participant 2 are revealing. First, there was a positive change of attitude toward TBLT from her questionnaire responses to interview question 1 which asked to describe her experience with of TBLT. In her response to question 6, Participant 2 was undecided about whether or not there are any significant differences between tasks and form-focused activities. After having implemented TBLT, Participant 2 now believed that her experience was "interesting." She added in the interview, "I now understand what is a task and what is an exercise. I know more about what it takes to call an activity tasks." Also, she believed that she is now more knowledgeable about why students need to be engaged in such communicative tasks. A newly developed positive attitude toward TBLT could be identified through her reply to interview question 2, which asked about her perception of TBLT after having implemented it. Participant 2 found it more useful for her students because it helped them play an active role as they need to communicate. However, in her response to question 3 of the questionnaire, Participant 2 had thought that TBLT conflicted with learners' perception of the teacher's role as the provider of the target language. After TBLT implementation, Participant 2 found TBLT does not require the same amount of time that she used to give for teaching, as students share the responsibility of teaching through working together toward a common goal, whereas in question 7 of the questionnaire, she indicated that TBLT was complex and form-focused work was

easier to manage, two reasons which would have made her choose not to implement TBLT in her classroom.

As for Participant 8, when asked to describe his experience with task-based language learning, he said, “I liked it. It gave me the opportunity to learn about new approach that I used to know so little about.” Participant 8 added, “It was interesting to see how to link theory to practice, which is the most difficult part for me.” When asked about his perceptions of TBLT after having experienced it, Participant 8 replied, “TBLT is easier than I thought when it was first introduced in the presentations. It seemed a little hard for me to understand all the terms that you mentioned, but now I understand what is meant by task and how task is different from exercise.”

When asked about what benefits he identified when he tried task-based language teaching in his classroom, Participant 8 replied, “I found that grammar did not prevent students from understanding the overall meaning of the task, at least for the good students. I also found that students were more able to understand the grammatical points, I mean modal verbs.” “I guess because students were more familiar with the text, so it was easier to identify the target grammar,” he said. When asked about any problems of TBLT when it was implemented in the classroom, Participant 8 replied, “In the beginning I was a bit not comfortable with starting the lesson with a discussion especially when I want to teach grammar. I usually find it easy for me to start the lesson with the grammar points that I have as the objectives of the lesson.” When asked about any response observed on the part of students, Participant 8 replied, “In the beginning students were a little unresponsive.” He added, “They expect me to teach grammar first, that’s how I usually start my lesson, but I was surprised that students seemed more responsive after giving them some teaching about the words they would need to understand the reading passage.” When asked about what went well and why, Participant 8 replied, “Students were able to understand the reading passage without starting with grammar. I think it is because they were prepared enough before reading the passage and that’s why they did not find it so difficult to understand.” Finally, when asked about what did not go well and why, Participant 8 replied, “I have noticed that weak students did not do a lot of work during the task.” “Most of the work was done by students who could have better ability to understand English and to speak it,” he pointed out.

Participant 8 found the whole experience rewarding as it gave him opportunity to get some hands-on practice with a teaching method that he is not familiar with, which is not a surprising attitude as Participant 8 is not extensively trained in English language teaching (ELT). Nevertheless, the lack of ELT knowledge did not prevent him from embarking on a learning experience impacted his attitudes toward TBLT. Participant 8's response to interview question 2, which asked about his perception of TBLT after having experienced it, was to admit that he found TBLT easier when implemented than he first thought from what was first introduced in the presentations. A positive attitude toward TBLT developed on the part of Participant 8 which conflicts with what he stated in question 7 of the questionnaire that he would not implement TBLT because it is complex. Additionally, his revised attitude conflicts with the reason that he gave for not choosing to implement TBLT—the simplicity of managing form-focused work. TBLT was easier than he thought it would be.

Another positive change identified through Participant 8's response was about grammar, in that he was surprised that not starting his lesson with grammar did not prevent his low-ability students from understanding the text. The reason he gave to explain this level of understanding on the part of students was because he thought that familiarity with the text helped students become better able to notice the location of the target grammatical items in the text. This opinion also indicates that Participant 8 had a sense of how attending to general meaning could be conducive to better comprehension of texts. It also indicates his newly developed attitude about how task difficulty could be fine-tuned, a topic about which he had been uncertain about according to his responses to question 18 of the questionnaire. Moreover, it also indicates a newly developed positive attitude toward the potential benefit of TBLT with low-ability students, because he had thought that TBLT could not be implemented with low-ability students like his students, especially when he sensed a higher level of engagement and responsiveness on the part of his low-ability students.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of findings that relate to the research questions of this study. It also presents the pedagogical implications that relate to the analysis of data collected in this research. In addition, it discusses the limitations of the research. Finally, it provides suggestions for further future research.

The objective of the study was to research English language instructors' attitudes toward TBLT, particularly the potential of implementing TBLT in the classrooms of a UAE vocational school. Teachers' views of the potential for use of TBLT were examined through a questionnaire that focused on reasons that EFL teachers gave for choosing or avoiding the implementation of TBLT in their classrooms in a similar study (Charless, 2009). What distinguishes this study from Charless's study is that in the latter, no assistance was provided to the participating teachers. Also, Charless relied heavily on the participants' experience and knowledge about different teaching approaches. Teachers implemented TBLT lessons, and then they were interviewed by Charless to get a sense of their experience after having used TBLT. In this study, I provided the participating teachers with a variety of assistance ranging from presentations covering different concepts of task and TBLT to demonstrating how these theoretical principles come into play in actual implementation of TBLT lessons.

This study also investigated the benefits and challenges observed during the actual implementation of TBLT lessons that were based on communicative tasks, by two of the participating teachers, and reported by them after the implementation of TBLT in their English classrooms. This study revealed specific reasons that the participating teachers gave for choosing to implement TBLT. In addition, the study identified some opinions and reservations that participating teachers gave for avoiding implementation of TBLT in their classrooms. The study also revealed a positive change of attitude toward the use of TBLTon the part of the two teachers who volunteered to implement TBLT after the support they received with TBLT. This support included theoretical explanations of the basic principles of TBLT, assistance with design of the tasks that they used in the practical implementation of the tasks, and suggestions and feedback on how the tasks should be used. The specific questions which guided the study were thus:

1. What do the participating teachers think of the potential of using task-based language teaching in their classes?
2. What benefits of task-based language teaching are observed when two participating teachers implement task-based language teaching in their classrooms?
3. What challenges of task-based language teaching are observed when two participating teachers implement task-based language teaching in their classrooms?
4. What do the observed teachers report as benefits of task-based language teaching?
5. What do the observed teachers report as challenges of task-based language teaching?

Summary of the Findings

Analysis of the questionnaire responses answered the research question about teachers' views of TBLT potential. Analysis of the class observations answered research questions about observed benefits and challenges of TBLT implementation. Interviews which were conducted with two participating teachers who implemented TBLT lessons addressed the research questions about teachers' reports of benefits and challenges of TBLT implementation.

Findings Related to the First Research Question (Believed Potential)

First, I wanted to investigate the attitudes of 12 teachers toward potential use of TBLT in their language classrooms. A questionnaire was specifically designed for this purpose. The questionnaire consisted of two types of questions: Scaled items and open-ended items. Scaled items were constructed to identify reasons that teachers gave for choosing or avoiding implementation of TBLT. The responses were grouped into three catogories (strongly agree & agree, undecided, and disagree & disagree). The open-ended items were constructed in order to obtain further insights into the reasons that the participating teachers had given.

According to analysis of the scaled items and open-ended items, the majority of the 12 participating teachers had positive attitudes toward the potential of TBLT in their classrooms because they agreed to items that presented the strengths of TBLT, such as the emphasis of tasks on meaning and communication the purposefulness of

tasks (eleven respondents), the provision of comprehensible input and opportunities to produce the TL (ten respondents), the higher level of interaction on the part of learners (nine respondents), and making learners becoming users of language instead of being passive receivers of knowledge (ten respondents). Overall, these positive attitudes toward TBLT imply that the participants understood the potentially beneficial aspects of TBLT which were introduced and discussed in the two presentations that I conducted with the 12 participants.

On the other side, the negative attitudes that nine participating teachers expressed toward the potential of implementing TBLT in their classrooms mostly stemmed from either a familiarity with a long accepted approach like form-focused work, rather than a belief in the traditional approach's potential for promoting better language learning. This finding agrees with the observations of Charless (2009) who found that teachers preferred form-focused work because they were more familiar with it and, thus, they found it easier to teaching language with it than with TBLT (pp. 63-64). This familiarity and subsequently long practice with a form-focused approach such as PPP are strongly embedded in the participants' teaching of English, which results in a simplicity that teachers would not like to replace with an approach that they are only superficially aware of or unfamiliar with, such as TBLT. Another reason mentioned by teachers was negative attitudes stemming from a fear of risking their jobs due to conflict with their administrators' perceptions of how language learning/teaching should be. A third reason that the majority of teachers (10 respondents) gave for their negative attitudes toward the implementation of TBLT in their classrooms came from unfamiliarity with material design and preference for using a textbook, reflecting a concern with increased preparation time.

Findings Related to the Second Research Question (Observed Benefits)

The second question explored benefits observed when the participants implemented TBLT lessons. Qualitative analysis of class observations of two teachers who implemented TBLT revealed a number of benefits for teachers and students. For these teachers, minimized teaching time was observed, as part of the teaching responsibility was placed on students when they were assigned to work in groups. Another observed benefit was a high level of student-teacher and student-student interaction with students, as the tasks accomplishment required considerable meaning negotiation, clarification checks, and recasts. For students, I observed a high level of

responsiveness, as the task was framed by the teachers and instructions were clarified, which resulted in a high level of engagement. Another observed benefit on the part of students was the high level of student-teacher interaction and student-student interaction. Students sought clarifications from each other, and when this failed, the teacher's assistance was sought. Moreover, a high level of motivation was observed in students as they assisted each other in their work toward the achievement of the task. Furthermore, students were more able to attend to the grammatical feature introduced in the post-task stage. That was especially true in Participant 8's class where students could easily notice the difference between forms in the original text and in their reconstructed texts. For instance, students were more able to notice the difference in modal usage in their restructured texts compared to the original text. Most of the students noticed that they used "to" after some modal verbs, which they described as ungrammatical. These findings coincide with the noticing principle in which, Schmidt (2001) argues, noticing of linguistic features is requisite for learning them, especially with adult students as there is no learning without noticing.

Findings Related to the Third Research Question (Observed Challenges)

The third question explored challenges observed when the two participants each implemented one TBLT lesson. Observations of these two teachers revealed two challenges to the implementation of TBLT in their language classrooms. First was lack of familiarity with TBLT, which can be attributed to the fact that TBLT was not taught in the teachers' certification program, which was the case with Participant 2; who does not have an ELT qualification, and Participant 8, who did not receive any education on teaching methodologies. Second, task-design was seen as a hindrance by these teachers. They found this aspect to be one of the challenges to the implementation of TBLT in their classrooms, which agrees with Adams and Newton (2009) whose study revealed that teachers found lack of and designing of TBLT materials were a challenge to the implementation of TBLT (pp. 5-9). The teachers in this study seemed confused about how to use textbook content to design communicative tasks, an indication of need for greater teacher training in TBLT or task-based textbooks or both.

Findings Related to the Fourth Research Question (Benefits Reported)

Concerning the two teachers' views of TBLT after using it in one lesson each, in the interviews they reported a number of benefits of task-based language learning. On the personal level, these teachers thought that the experience was rewarding, as it gave them hands-on practice with an approach that they were unfamiliar with. Another reported benefit was becoming more knowledgeable about instructional decisions such as group/pair work. They did not quite understand why such methods were recommended enthusiastically during professional presentations that they used to attend. Another benefit the interviewees reported was the shorter teaching time in comparison with lessons they used to give with PPP. The two participants were insightful in that they are in touch with practices in their school, also because they showed the extent to which TBLT was found useful for teachers who were both unfamiliar with TBLT before their participation in this study. Their only knowledge of TBLT was acquired through the two one-hour presentations, one-on-one discussion about TBLT with me, and observing a class demonstration of TBLT. In addition, they actually implemented TBLT with their classes and saw themselves the extent to which TBLT has potential for offering better language learning conditions.

Concerning the effect of TBLT on students, the interviewees reported noticing that students found the tasks more interesting than previous classes. Also, these teachers reported a higher level of engagement and a higher level of interaction among students. Students sought help from each other when assigned to groups. Moreover, students were more motivated to do the task and work together in order to accomplish the outcome of the task. Furthermore, when students' attention was directed toward the meaning and were helped to understand the general meaning of the text, students found it easier to notice the grammatical items that were targeted through the task. In a study that was conducted with high school students from Japan, Adams and Newton (2009) observed "openness to TBLT methodology" on the part of students that was reflected in "the richness of the interactions generated in the tasks performed" by these students (pp. 14).

Findings Related to the Fifth Research Question (Challenges Reported)

Concerning the reported challenges of TBLT by the interviewed teachers who implemented TBLT lessons, interviews revealed two main challenges. First, the design of tasks was the most challenging area of the TBLT experience. Second, for

Participant 8, the low level of participation on the part of the students with lower linguistic ability in comparison with the students with higher linguistic ability in the accomplishment of the task was a concern, as these students played a minimal role in the group activity.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of the study showed a variety of attitudes toward the potential of TBLT on the part of the participating teachers. Generally speaking, the participants showed positive attitudes toward the potential of TBLT to provide better language experience for language learners in their UAE language classrooms. Still, other findings stand out and result in pedagogical implications for these teachers that need to be discussed.

Among the reasons that teachers gave in the questionnaire for not choosing to implement TBLT in their classes were aspects that relate to problems with the content of TBLT. Nine (75%) respondents stated that they would not like to implement TBLT because form-focused work is easier to manage. Very likely, the respondents prefer a form-focused approach of teaching, not because of a belief that it facilitates language learning, but because of the simplicity of implementing form-focused work. It could also be attributed to the fact that the participating teachers have little experience or are unfamiliar with TBLT, which could be resolved with teacher training on TBLT. This study, in fact, demonstrated teacher training could be effective in changing attitudes about long accepted and practiced methods. Although Participant 8 was involved in a comparatively short teacher training which included two presentations about TBLT and implementing one TBLT lesson, a newly positive change of attitude was observed through Participant 8's responses.

Thus, this educational institution needs to invest more in teacher training in order to give its language teachers opportunities to stay update with current pedagogic methods which could demystify misconceptions about how language learning/teaching should be. More investment in teacher training could also result in enhancing teachers' skills in key areas in ELT such as materials design, which was seen as the most challenging area reported by the ten (83%) respondents in this study. Language teachers, like practitioners of other professions, need regular hands-on practice to boost their confidence in their knowledge and ability to implement a variety of teaching methods.

The difficulty of assessing learners' progress in TBLT as is done with PPP was another reason relating to problems with the content of TBLT that six respondents (50%) gave in the questionnaire for not choosing to implement TBLT. Actually, this opinion could be partially attributed to the fact that, due to the limited time of the presentation, the presentations did not cover how tasks are assessed. This opinion could also be related to the fact that PPP has been implemented for a long time, probably for the participants' entire teaching experience. Thus, they are more familiar with PPP in which students are required to use linguistic items in the same way introduced by teachers. Thus, PPP is consistent with teachers' expectations of signs of acquired knowledge, which is something that is perceived differently from a TBLT point of view. As such, any training with TBLT should also include task-based language assessment.

The role of teachers was another pattern that stood out in the problems that the teachers found problematic in TBLT. Thus, eight respondents (66.66%) in the questionnaire indicated that they would not like to implement TBLT because it conflicts with learners' perception of the teachers as the provider of the target language. This reason implies that the respondents prefer traditional teacher-fronted approaches because they feel safer. In other words, teachers feel that their jobs are secure with these traditional methods which are consistent with learners' perceptions of how a foreign language should be learned. Job security is a concern for EFL teachers in the UAE context where the majority of EFL teachers are expatriate teachers who can be easily replaced by others. Thus, the supervisors of these language teachers also need to be informed about TBLT and other methods.

Additionally, learners who received their initial foreign language education within traditional methods may not think TBLT is conducive to better language learning (Nunan, 2004, p. 67). It deserves a second mention here that teachers can address this student perspective by telling learners explicitly why they need to get engaged in such communicative activities (Nunan, 1989, p. 87).

Another view that stood out in the questionnaire was that ten respondents (83%) feared that other stakeholders may not find legitimacy in TBLT because it is not consistent with their perception that language learning should be based on a text-book. It is challenging to have conflicting perceptions of how language learning/teaching should be, between the teachers and other stakeholders, especially administrators. This situation becomes potentially problematic when these

administrators have no ELT qualification which is the situation in the context where this study was conducted. These teachers believed that lack of ELT qualification on the part of these administrators may prevent them from seeing legitimacy in their practices. The teachers fear that the occurrence of this situation could adversely affect their annual evaluation upon which the renewal of their contracts is based. Thus, these teachers believe that the easiest approach to keep their jobs is to implement the methods that these administrators perceive as good language learning/teaching.

An example of such an incident illustrates this concern. In my class, students were doing a task in which they are required to survey two students of the class in order to find out about the frequency of doing a list of activities. The objective of the task was to introduce the adverbs of frequency to talk about activities that are done on regular basis by students. An administrator was passing by and saw students moving around the classroom. This administrator was surprised to see such an apparent level of disorganization.

The consequence of an administrator having an opinion similar to this administrator's could be that teachers would likely choose to avoid implementing innovative teaching practices, even if effective, in order not to jeopardize their jobs by angering their administrators. Thus, these teachers take a rational approach that does not put their jobs at risk. Therefore, this negative opinion about TBLT does not necessarily stem from negative attitudes toward the potential of TBLT to facilitate language learning in their classrooms, but rather may be due to concerns with job security.

A pedagogical implication of this finding is that this educational institution needs to promote better channels of communication between administrators and teachers; channels of communication which ensure that the voices of all the parties involved are heard. This study revealed that lack of communication between the administrators and language teachers has made these teachers have negative attitudes toward the implementation of TBLT, although these teachers seemed enthusiastically disposed toward it, despite the brevity of the presentations conducted about TBLT. More importantly, language teachers should not sit idly and passively, expecting administrative staff, especially those of nonlinguistic background, to understand their instructional choices. Language teachers need to keep other stakeholders informed about their teaching practices. If informed of educational benefits, other stakeholders

may provide more resources that would ultimately feed into the teaching that teachers offer to language learners.

As to teachers' views about the positive potential of implementing TBLT, the majority of the participating teachers, nine respondents (75%), thought that the content of TBLT promotes a higher level of interaction. Moreover, all but one respondent (92%) found tasks to be more purposeful and emphasize communication and meaning. This response implies that the majority understood that tasks have communicative purpose and a primary focus on meaning. It also implies that the participating teachers agree with the definition of task that was discussed in theoretical background of TBLT discussed in the presentations. According to Branden (2006), a task is "an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language" (p. 4). This opinion shows that the majority of the teachers understood the positive effect of interaction on language acquisition. This opinion also indicates a positive attitude toward the potential of TBLT in their classes.

Another implication from these teachers' views about choosing to implement TBLT is that teachers need support in order to make what they find in theory more useful for language learners firmly embedded in their language teaching. Such support could be provided through opportunities for hands-on practice with TBLT, teacher training on task design, and educational institutions being flexible about adherence to the textbook. This study showed that when such support was provided for the two teachers who participated in the implementation of TBLT lessons, a number of positive benefits were reported by them, ranging from adding knowledge to their repertoire of teaching practices to developing a greater level of receptivity on the part of students.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of the study was the number of teachers who implemented TBLT, two teachers only, and the number of lessons observed, one for each teacher. A larger number of teachers implementing TBLT might very likely report other benefits or challenges. I tried to involve as many participants as possible in the implementation of TBLT in order to provide hands-on practice on TBLT and in order to help the participants see how the principles of TBLT come into play in actual teaching. More frequent observations of TBLT lessons would have provided a greater

basis for evaluation of TBLT implementation. Also, since the TBLT lesson was something new, student engagement might have increased due to novelty effect. More frequent lessons could lessen the novelty.

A factor that contributed to the limitation in the number of volunteers to the implementation of TBLT in this study was teachers' concerns. One of the participating teachers' concerns was that TBLT would require much preparation time, which would place another burden on teachers who are already loaded with heavy teaching loads. A greater participation level in the implementation of TBLT lessons could have given greater insights into teachers' attitudes toward the potential benefits/problems of TBLT in this UAE vocational school. It could have also helped to investigate whether or not the experience resulted in any changes of teachers' attitudes. Furthermore, reasons for any change in teachers' attitudes could have more thoroughly investigated.

A second limitation of this study was the limited number of presentations through which TBLT was introduced. Two one-hour presentations conducted with the participating teachers was not enough to duly cover all the aspects of TBLT, especially areas that the participants found challenging, such as the design of the task. Also, the teachers' understanding of TBLT was limited to what I told them in the presentations. If I were to do the research again, I would give a series of presentations and a series of classroom demonstrations of TBLT followed by post-teaching conferences in which questions could be asked and instructional choices explained and linked to literature embedded in SLA. The study could have provided the participants with a richer idea about TBLT if a series of presentations followed by more opportunities for actual implementation had been conducted.

A third limitation of this study was not covering an integral part to task-based teaching and learning: task-based assessment. Not covering assessment of tasks resulted in some participating teachers, six (50%), stating that they would not like to implement TBLT because it is not as easy to assess learners' progress as it is with PPP. Exclusion of assessment was intentional, due to time constraints. The limited number of presentations made it impractical to dedicate sufficient time to cover assessment in TBLT. It would also be impractical to introduce assessment in TBLT without ensuring a level of internalization of the basis of TBLT on the part of the participating teachers. It would have been helpful to have a number of presentations

dedicated to assessment in TBLT in order to ensure consistency between teaching and assessment.

Due to time constraints and the focus of presentations on key conceptions and principles of TBLT, important areas in TBLT like curriculum design and the sequencing of tasks were not covered sufficiently, a fourth limitation of this study. Curriculum design in TBLT would be valuable for the participating teachers when and if these teachers consider developing their own tasks.

Another limitation of this study is that the researcher intervened in the second observed lesson. It was inappropriate, from a research point of view, to interrupt an observed class as this action could affect the accuracy of the data resulting from this intervention. However, prior to this intervention I observed students noting the grammatical differences between the original and reconstructed texts, which was the issue I asked them about.

Suggestions for Further Research

In light of its results, this study could be replicated, gaining deeper insights into teachers' attitudes toward TBLT, if the methods employed to collect data in this study were varied. For instance, a series of presentations should be given to cover key areas in TBLT more extensively. More teachers could be motivated to participate in the implementation of TBLT lessons due to the potential confidence that could result from increased knowledge of TBLT. Consequently, more data could be obtained which would positively affect the quality of the research. Furthermore, a post implementation questionnaire could be added in order to investigate any change of teachers' attitudes after experiencing TBLT in their classrooms.

Similar research could be conducted with language teachers from the UAE general education system. A study of this kind would have potential for revealing the attitudes of language instructors in a different context from the context of the vocational school where this study was conducted. The benefit of such an attitudinal study would be an effective means to reveal the extent to which the UAE language classrooms live up to the claim of being communicative as the informants would be more insightful since they are language teachers serving in the system whose responsibility is to execute the pedagogic practices envisioned by the Ministry of Education. A study of this kind could reveal valuable data about teachers' views toward implementing or avoiding TBLT in their classrooms.

Another idea is investigating the views of other stakeholders, such as students and administrators. Students' views are important because TBLT reform in education was driven by learners' interests and needs (Willis, 2004, p. 8). TBLT seeks to provide language learners with pedagogical practices that may better cater to their needs and facilitate language learning. As such, students' views (positive or negative) may provide insights into the potential of implementing TBLT in UAE schools.

Investigating administrators' views of a shift to TBLT in their schools has potential for revealing data about the institutional factors that may facilitate or prevent the implementation of TBLT in these schools. Moreover, a study of this kind could familiarize these administrators with TBLT. It could also help them develop positive attitudes toward it. Positive attitudes toward TBLT on the part of administrators could result in greater understanding of teachers' pedagogic practices. Such understanding could be liberating for teachers, which in turn could reduce anxiety resulting from a fear of putting their jobs at risk for applying methods that conflict with their administrators' views of language learning/teaching.

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Appendix

Appendix A: First Consciousness-raising Presentation

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT): What and Why?

Emad A. Jasim

What Is TBLT

- An approach to second/foreign language learning and teaching methodology.
- Classroom activities and tasks constitute the main focus of instruction.
- The syllabus in TBLT is organized around tasks rather than grammar or vocabulary.

(Ricahrds & Schmidt, 2003)

Relation to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

- A logical development of CLT since it draws on several principles that formed part of CLT movement like:

1. Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning.
2. Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning.
3. Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

- **Tasks are proposed as useful vehicles for applying these principles.**

(Willis, 1996)

What Is a Task?

Conesus is that a task is an activity that should:

- Be goal-oriented.
- Be content-focused.
- Have a real outcome.
- Reflect real-life language use and language need.
- Involve any or all four skills: listening, reading, etc.
- Be meaning-focused rather than form-focused

(Willis & Shehadeh, 2005).

Task vs. Exercise

- A task is an activity that calls for primarily meaning-focused language use.
- A task is concerned with pragmatic meaning, the use of meaning in context.
- An exercise calls for primarily form-focused language use (Ellis 2003, P. 3).
- An exercise is concerned with semantic meaning, the meaning that a specific form can convey irrespective of context (Widdowson, 1998).

Task vs. Exercise

- With tasks, linguistic skills are viewed as developing through communicative activity.
- With exercises, linguistic skills are viewed as a prerequisite for engaging in a communicative activity.

(Widdowson 1995)

- Language use:
  - ➢ Task: meaning-focused
  - ➢ Exercise: form-focused

(Widdowson, 1998; Ellis, 2004)

?

Why TBLT?

(basis of TBLT)

Input Perspective

- Interaction provides learners with an opportunity to receive feedback at the level of their comprehension in the L2.
- This results in negotiated modification of conversation with their speech partners.
- This leads to the provision of comprehendible input which, in turn, is necessary for SLA (Long, 1996; Krashen, 1998).

Input Perspective

- Negotiation draws learners' attention to the formal properties of the TL as they attempt to produce it.
- Learners' attention to linguistic form is also a necessary requirement for L2 learning (Schmidt, 1995; Long 1996).

Role of Task According to This Input Perspective

- Tasks provide learners with excellent opportunities for:
  - ➢ Negotiating meaning
  - ➢ Modifying input
  - ➢ Focusing on the formal properties of the L2 (e.g., Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994; see also Ellis, 2003).

Classroom Implication

- Tasks should be designed in a way that stimulates interaction to achieve the task outcome.
- Tasks should provide input that is modestly challenging.

Output Perspective

- Learner output forces to move from semantic analysis of TL to a more syntactic analysis of it.
- It enables learners to test hypotheses about TL.
- It enables them to consciously reflect on the produced language.
- It helps them notice the gap between what they can say and what the want to say.
- It prompts them stretch their current interlanguage capacity—"pushed output hypothesis" (Swain, 1995).

Role of Task in the Output Perspective

- Learner output is not just a sign of acquired knwoledge, but also a sign of learning at work (Swain, 1998; 2000).
- Tasks provide learners with excellent opportunities to modify their output toward comprehensibility (Isashita, 1999; Shehadeh, 2001, 2003 & Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

Classroom Implication

- Tasks should be designed in a way that gives students opportunity to speak and modify input in order to achieve the task outcome.

Cognitive Perspective

- Learners' performance has 3 aspects: fluency, accuracy, and complexity.
- Fluency is the learners' capacity to communicate in real time.
- Accuracy is the learners' ability to use the TL according to its norms.
- Complexity is the learners' ability to use more elaborate and complex TL structures and forms (Skehan, 1998).

Continued

- The three aspects of performance can be influenced by engaging learners in different types of production and communication.

Role of Task

- Task-based instruction can promote fluency, accuracy, and complexity in learners (Ellis, 2005).
- If a teacher wants to promote fluency, he or she engages learners in meaning-oriented tasks
- If they want to promote accuracy or complexity, the teacher engages learners in more form-focused tasks (Shehadeh, 2005).

Classroom Implication

- Tasks should be designed in a way that allows students to get engaged in different types of communications .
- Students should be given planning time before reporting in order to attend to accuracy and complexity.

Socio-cultural Perspective

- External activities in which the learner participates are the main source of cognitive activities.
- When individuals interact, their cognitive processes are awakened.
- Social interaction mediates learning, as explained by Ellis (2000): "Learners first succeed in performing a new function with the assistance of another person and then internalize this function so that they can perform it unassisted" (p. 209).
- Collaborative construction of knowledge in a joint activity is an important source of L2 learning.

Role of Task

- Tasks are successfully accomplished by learners as a joint activity.
- This process of joint accomplishment indeed contributes to L2 learning (e.g., Lantolf, 1996; LaPierre, 1994).
- Jointly performed tasks enable students to solve linguistic problems that lie beyond their individual abilities (Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

Classroom Implication

- Tasks should be designed in a way that entails collaborative work toward the outcome.

Appendix B: Second Consciousness-raising Presentation

TBLT Classroom Implementations Example

Emad A. Jasim

Task-based Learning and Language Instruction

- **Pre-task phase** provides the necessary background, knowledge, and procedure, introduces students to the topic and task.
- **Task phase**: learners carry out a meaning-focused activity.
- **Report phase:** learners are required to present the result of their tasks work to the whole class.

Mind You!

- In the last phase (public performance) learners will be more motivated not only to produce fluent, but also accurate language.
- Thus, report stage ensures "a smooth transition from private to more public interaction" (Willis, 1996, p. 56).
- To enable this transition to happen, learners are given a planning phase between task and report.

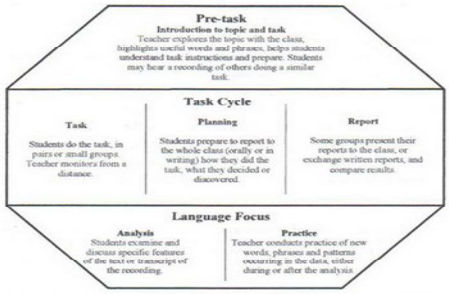

Table 1: Components of the task-based learning framework (adapted from Willis, 1996, p. 38).

Sample Lesson: The Hazards of Welding

Pre-task phase:

- Teaching of task-related vocabulary.
- Matching flashcards of the target lexical items to definitions.
- Vocabulary words: Burns , Fumes, Toxic gases, Hazardous substances, Suffocation, Explosion, Noise

Match Words to Definitions

- Burning
- Fumes
- Toxic
- Hazardous substances
- Suffocation
- Explosion
- Noise

- Extremely loud noise caused by things like a bomb.
- Smoke
- Action caused by fire
- Dangerous materials
- Poisonous
- Inability to breathe
- Loud sound

Task phase

In pairs, read the following scenarios and then fill out the accident reports to determine accountability.

- Site: Bad Company
- Scenario # 1 *9:30 am, 2/22/2010*
- Rashid has been a welder in Bad Company for two years now. His boss told him to do some welding in a windowless room. This room is about 2 km away from where he keeps his tools. He forgets to bring a gas mask. After one hour of working, Rashid passes out and falls on the floor. Luckily, his friend, Ahmed, in the next room hears the noise and rushes to check it out. Ahmed takes him in his truck to the hospital.
- Accountable person: employee employer
- Why? _____

Scenario # 2 *1:30 pm, 1/23/2010*

Rashid has been a welder in Bad Company for ten years now. His team supervisor tells him to do some welding on a car exhaust pipe (silencer). The lunch break whistle blows. Rashid wants to stop. He takes off his mask. Then he realizes that he forgot to finish a small part. He decides to finish it quickly, but he does not use a mask. He gets flash burns. He cries for help. Others workers give him first aid and cover his eyes. His supervisor drives him to the hospital.

Accountable Person: employee employer

Why? _____

Scenario # 3 *11:25 am, 12/25/2010*

Rashid has been a welder in Bad Company for two years now. His team supervisor tells him to weld two pieces of metal together. Rashid does not wear his overall. His boss promises to bring them overalls but he never does. Once he starts working, sparks fly everywhere. His shirt catches fire. Luckily, he takes off his shirt very fast. Rashid burned his arm. Now he is in the hospital.

Accountable: employee employer

Why? _____

Accident Report

Place of the Accident: _____
Injured Person's Name: _____
Date and Time of the Accident: _____
Describe the accident: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Nature of the injury: _____
Witness(s) to the accident: _____
_____
_____
_____

Signature of staff completing form date/time

Signature of director date/time

Report Phase

A volunteer from each pair reports to the class about who holds the accountability for the accidents reviewed. She/He should also give reasons for their opinions.

Language Focus

- Students, with more teacher intervention to help learners, notice any target forms or functions, practice other features occurring in the task or report stage.
- Students enter useful language items in their language notebooks.

Other Typical Tasks in TBLT

- Jig-saw (information-gap)
- Dictogloss
- Picture-description
- Problem-solving
- Decision-making
- Opinion-exchange
- Role play

(Pica, Kanagy & Faldoun, 1993)

Appendix C: Questionnaire about Teachers' Attitudes toward the Potential of Task-Based Language Teaching in Their UAE English Language Classes.

The purpose of this survey is to examine teachers' attitudes toward the potential of incorporating task-based language teaching in their UAE English language classrooms. The information that will be provided will be used for analysis as part of my thesis study. The data provided will remain confidential.
The questionnaire consists of three sections and three pages. Your time and effort are very much appreciated. Completion of this survey signifies consent for these responses to be used in this research.

Section One:

1. Gender :

   ❑ Male ❑ Female

2. Years of Teaching Experience:

   ❑ 1-3 ❑ 4-6 ❑ 7-10 ❑ 11-15 ❑ 16-20 ❑ 21+

3. Please describe your highest qualification in English language teaching (ELT):

   ❑ PHD ❑MA ❑ BA ❑ No Degree in ELT ❑ Other _____

4. What teacher training have you received?

   _____

5. Which division do you teach in?

   ❑ Construction
   ❑ Business
   ❑ IT
   ❑ Mechanics
   ❑ Telecommunications
   ❑ Health
   ❑ Beauty
   ❑ Tourism

Section Two:

Please complete the information below. Tick (✓) the appropriate response for statements 1-25.

***SA**=Strongly Agree; **A**=Agree; **U**=Uncertain; **D**=Disagree; **SD**=Strongly Disagree*

Statements						
I would not like to implement TBLT in my classes because		**SA**	**A**	**U**	**D**	**SD**
1.	form-focus work is easier to manage.					
2.	teachers' role is not clearly defined in TBLT.					
3.	it conflicts with learners' perception of my role as a teacher who is the provider of the target language.					
4.	it cannot be implemented with low-ability students who lack the linguistic resources to convey meaningful messages.					
5.	the role of grammar is not clearly defined in TBLT.					
6.	I do not see a significant difference between focused tasks and form-focused activities.					
7.	it is complex since it has many variations options that are not easy followed like form-focused approaches such as PPP.					
8.	I need a special materials designer to design task-based lessons in my context.					
9.	learners and other stakeholders may not find legitimacy in TBLT because it is not consistent with their perception that language learning should be based on a text-book.					
10.	it is not as easy to assess learners' progress as it is with PPP.					
I would like to implement TBLT in my classes because		**SA**	**A**	**U**	**D**	**SD**
11.	tasks are purposeful and emphasize communication and meaning.					
12.	tasks provide the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition.					
13.	it is learner-centered because tasks are relevant to learners' needs.					
14.	tasks result in a higher level of communicative interaction.					
15.	it promotes a higher level of thinking.					
16.	new lexical items are introduced within a meaningful contexts.					
17.	task achievement is motivational and thus learning is promoted.					
18.	learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned.					
19.	it provides better context for the activation of learning processes than form-focused activities.					
20.	it makes language learners be users of language rather than only learners of language.					

Section Three:

18. Please write any additional comments you would like to make regarding the uses of task-based language teaching in your English language classes.

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. Please explain the reservations, if any, you have toward task-based language teaching in your classes.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please supply the information below if you are willing to be observed and/or interviewed. The observation will take ***60 minutes***, whereas the interview should take about ***15-30 minutes***. The interview will revolve around issues of implementation of task-based language teaching in your classes.

- ❑ Yes, I would like to be observed and/or interviewed.

- ❑ No, I'd prefer not to be observed or interviewed.

If yes, name:_____ Mobile:_____

Appendix D: Observation Log

Pre-Task Stage		
Teacher	*Yes/No/Somewhat*	*Notes*
Explores the topic with class.		
Highlights useful words and phrases.		
Helps learners to understand task instructions and ensures the intended outcome is clear.		
Plays learners a recording of a similar task.		
Gives clear instructions.		
Students		
Seem to understand the instructions.		
Are responsive.		
Take notes.		
Demonstrate engagement.		

Task Cycle		
Teacher	*Yes/No/somewhat*	*Notes*
Checks progress on the task.		
Takes notes of students on task implementation, difficulties, linguistic features, etc.		
Helps if necessary.		
Encourages attempts at communication.		
Corrects.		
Visits pairs/groups to give language advice.		
Acts as chairperson, summing up in the end.		
Students		
Demonstrate engagement.		
Negotiate meaning.		
Seem to experiment yet make mistakes.		
Prepare to report to the whole class.		

Post-Task Stage/Language Focus		
Teacher	*Yes/No/somewhat*	*Notes*
Reviews findings with the class.		
Brings other useful words, phrases, and patterns to learners' attention.		
Picks up on language items from the earlier task cycle.		
Conducts class practice activities for new words, phrases, and patterns occurring in the data collected during the task to build confidence.		
Students		
Examine and then discuss specific features of the text (consciousness-raising activities).		
Demonstrate sings of acquired knowledge.		
Request clarification requests about features, words, or phrases they came across in the task.		

Teacher’s Name:
_____

Notes/Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Appendix E: Interview

Interviewee's Name: _____

Gender:

□ Male □ Female Nationality (Optional): _____

Please describe your highest academic qualification:

□ PHD □ MA □ BA □ No Degree in ELT

For all the participants in the interviews:

1. Does any aspect of task-based language teaching seem confusing to you?
2. Do you think you would be able to use task-based language teaching with your classes? Why?
3. If you were to decide to use task-based language teaching, what further help in setting up a task-based language teaching session?
4. Do you have anything to add?

For the participants who implemented TBLT:

1. Please describe your experience with task-based language learning.

2. Having experienced TBLT, what are your perceptions of it? Think of benefits, problems, positive aspects, negative aspects, etc.

3. What benefits did you identify when you tried task-based language teaching in your classroom?

4. What problems did you identify when you tried task-based language teaching in your classroom?

5. Did you notice any response on the part of students?

6. What went well? Why in your opinion did that happen?

7. What did not go well? Why?

Appendix F: Lesson 1

Preparation: Pictures that describe the target cooking verbs are displayed on the smart board: heat, bake, shake, fry, mash, grate, burn, spread, boil, beat, peel, melt, add, simmer, mix, chop, heat, sprinkle, grill, stir, and slice.	
Pre-task	1. Ask students the following questions: (a) What is your favorite cuisine? (b) What is your favorite dish from this cuisine? (c) In your own words, briefly describe the recipe? 2. Pre-teach vocabulary: Distribute the pictures of cooking verbs and a list of the verbs. Students match the verbs the pictures. Then, model answer is given to students. Students check their own answers.
Task Cycle	**Task**: Students read the text. (see below for the text *Shepherd's Pie*) **Planning**: Ask students to work in groups according to their favorite cuisine. Each group writes the recipe of a dish of their choice. **Report**: Ask one member from each group to read their constructed text.
Language Focus	**Analysis**: (a) Explain forms (imperatives), meaning, and use (b) Explain transitions (first, second, then, after that, finally, etc). **Practice**: Ask each group to rewrite their recipe using imperative verbs and transitions.

Shepherd's Pie

First, heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Second, add onion, carrot and celery and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until soft. Then, add lamb mince and cook, stirring to break up any lumps, for 5 minutes or until lamb changes color. After that, add the flour and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes or until combined. Add stock, bay leaf and tomato paste. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes or until sauce thickens. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Meanwhile, cook potato in a saucepan of salted boiling water for 15 minutes or until tender. Drain well. Return to the pan with the butter. Use a potato masher or fork to mash until smooth. Add milk and use a wooden spoon to stir until combined. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Preheat oven to 200°C. Finally, top with mashed potato and use a fork to spread over lamb mixture. Brush with butter. Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes or until mashed potato is golden brown. Serve immediately.

Appendix G: Lesson 2

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Preparation: A text with the target form is prepared. A text on apartment lease will be used.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pre-task</td><td>1. Ask students the following questions:

(a) Do you live in an apartment?

(b) Do you have a lease?

(c) Do you understand the lease when you singed it?

2. Pre-teach vocabulary that students might be unfamiliar. For example, lease, landlord, renter, rental, rent, terms of the lease, security deposit, smoke detector, damage, and 30-day notice.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Task Cycle</td><td>Task: Read the text to the students (see below for the text An Apartment Lease) twice at normal speed. The first time through, ask the students to listen and focus on the general meaning of what the text is about. The second time, ask them to write down key words.

Planning: Ask students to work in groups of three/four to reconstruct the text.

Report: Ask one member from each group to read their reconstructed text.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Language Focus</td><td>Analysis: Explain forms, meaning, and use

(a) Must, can, should + infinitives

(b) Have to + infinitives

(c) Can’t, shouldn’t, mustn’t + infinitives

(d) Explain meaning and use of the form

Give each group the original text and ask them to underline all the model verbs.

Practice: Ask each group to compare their reconstructed text with the original and correct mistakes.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">An Apartment Lease

When people rent an apartment, they often have to sign a lease. A lease is an agreement between the owner (landlord) and the renter (tenant). A lease states rules the renter must follow. Some leases contain the following rules: (1) Renters must not have a waterbed. (2) Renters must not have a pet; and (3) Renters must pay a security deposit. The renter does not have to agree to all the terms of the lease. He can ask for changes before he signs.

Owners also have to follow rules. They must put smoke a detector in each apartment and in the halls. Many owners ask the renter to pay a security deposit, in case</td></tr>
</table>

there are damages. When the renter moves out, the owner is supposed to return the deposit plus interest if the apartment is in good condition. If there is damage, the owner can use part or all of the money to repair the damage. However, he may not keep the renter's money for normal use of the apartment.

When the lease is up, the owner can offer the renter a new lease or he can ask the renter to leave. The owner is supposed to give the renter notice (usually at least 30 days) if he wants the renter to leave.

An owner can't refuse to rent to a person because of sex, race, religion, nationality, or disability.

VITA

Imad Abdulkareem Jasim received a BA in applied linguistics, literature, and translation from the College of Languages, Baghdad University in 1996. He taught English in North Africa, Jordan, and for 10 years he taught English for specific purposes (ESP) in the UAE. For one year now, he has taught English for academic purposes (EAP) in the University of Dubai. His professional interests are task-based language learning and teaching, language testing, culture, and computer assisted language learning (CALL). Imad is a member of TESOL International, TESOL Arabia, and The Middle East-North Africa Writing Centers Alliance (MENAWCA).