

Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Task-Based Language Teaching in Enhancing EFL Learners' Communicative Competence at a University in Vietnam

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of task-based language teaching (TBLT) as a pedagogical approach to enhance communicative competence among freshmen in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at a university in Vietnam. Despite its established effectiveness in various contexts, challenges related to students' grammatical and vocabulary proficiency continue to hinder language acquisition. The present study investigates EFL teachers' perceptions and practices of TBLT in a speaking course, employing a mixed-methods approach that includes questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and classroom observations. The research findings reveal that while teachers recognize the benefits of TBLT, they articulate various reasons for its selective application in the classroom. The study highlights both benefits and drawbacks from the teachers' perspectives, providing insights into the practical implications of TBLT in real-world classroom settings. The study contributes a better insight into, and more practical implications for, effective integration of TBLT into language instruction to enhance the communicative competence for EFL learners.

Keywords: Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT); communicative competence; speaking course; teachers' perceptions; classroom implementation

I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of communication is a pivotal aspect of language teaching and learning. Since the emergence of the communicative approach in the 1970s, the integration of functional and structural language aspects has become essential. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) movement shifted the focus from strict adherence to grammar rules to prioritizing communicative ability as the primary objective (Fulcher, 2013), thus emphasizing real-life application and task-based learning to foster authentic communication. In contrast to more conventional approaches to learning like Grammar-Translation methods, CLT shifts the attention from language competence to communicative competence. In this regard, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a methodology that operationalizes the principles of CLT within the classroom. Indeed, research by Ellis (2021) underscores the effectiveness of TBLT in fostering communicative competence, demonstrating that task-based approaches not only enhance language proficiency but also cultivate learners' abilities to use language in contextually relevant ways.

In Vietnam, recent reforms in higher education have emphasized the need for high-quality foreign language instruction, particularly in developing students' English proficiency for everyday communication, academic pursuits, and employment in an increasingly competitive global economy (Ministry of Education and Training, 2008). Despite this emphasis, TBLT has not been extensively implemented, as traditional lecturing still remains the primary method of instruction in universities for English language teaching (Nguyen, 2013; Pham, 2010). In the context of this research conducted at a university in Vietnam, the

washback effect of standardized tests such as IELTS has significantly influenced both English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and students. The emphasis on achieving favorable test outcomes has led to a prioritization of test preparation over the development of communicative competence. Consequently, courses designed for skill acquisition often devolve into mere exam drills, undermining the effectiveness of CLT and TBLT methodologies.

In light of these challenges, we decided to conduct a study entitled: *“Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices of Task-Based Language Teaching in Enhancing EFL Learners’ Communicative Competence at a University in Vietnam.”* The study thus aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions among EFL teachers towards TBLT in English speaking classes at the university?
2. What TBLT practices are experienced by EFL students at a university in Vietnam?

This study is significant for advancing English language education, particularly in freshmen courses at a university in Vietnam. It analyzes the teaching methodologies of English lecturers, focusing on TBLT and its effectiveness in improving students' communicative competence. The research hopes to provide valuable insights and resources for teachers interested in implementing.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Review of Previous Studies

A growing body of literature highlights the significance of TBLT in developing learners' language proficiency and communicative competence. Since the early 1990s, TBLT has gained popularity in language teaching for its effectiveness in promoting communication among learners (Van Gorp & Deygers, 2013). Particularly in Asia and Vietnam, Vu and Nguyen (2021) examined the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing learner communicative competence, where TBLT is emerging as a key approach. In their terms, given the tremendous potential, TBLT faces challenges in Vietnam. Chief amongst those are exam-oriented learning, classroom constraints, and teacher resistance to innovative methods. The analysis suggested that trust in TBLT can be built over time, highlighting that it can significantly improve communicative competence when implemented with patience and flexibility.

Numerous studies have been carried out across Asia to investigate the implementation of TBLT with a focus especially on teachers' perceptions. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) investigated how teachers responded to a task-based EFL course in Thailand and discovered that Thai EFL teachers responded favorably to the courses. They concurred that TBLT genuinely assisted students in developing their independence, which in turn may meet their needs for academic fulfillment in the real world. According to Cheng and Mose (2011), the majority of EFL teachers in China had favorable opinions about TBLT and a good grasp of its ideas. The two biggest obstacles to using TBLT in the classroom, as revealed by this study, are the large sizes and the challenge of assessing students' task-based performances. In a case study on two Japanese language instructors in Hong Kong, Seo (2012) used semi-structured interviews to learn more about the teachers' opinions of TBLT. Tasks, according to both panelists, have the potential to improve students' performance. Despite these benefits, there were some unsettling issues as well, particularly when they had trouble coming up with perfect jobs. As the reports show, the two educators adhered closely to the form-oriented instructional duties found in the resource books created by textbook companies.

Meanwhile, in the context of Vietnam, TBLT has been the subject of numerous concerns raised by researchers and educators. These concerns include the conceptualization of task-based language teaching itself, the availability of appropriate materials to support TBLT implementation, challenges related to class size and time allocation, its effectiveness in mixed-level or exam-oriented classes, as well as teachers' lack of expertise and experience in TBLT. Researchers such as Pham (2000), Barnard and Nguyen (2010), Nguyen (2014), Nguyen, Le, and Barnard (2015), Phuong (2016), Cao (2018), Nguyen, Jaspert, and Van den Branden (2018), Duong and Nguyen (2021) have addressed these concerns in their studies and highlighted the potential limitations or areas, such as class size, curriculum incompatibility with TBLT's focus, preparation time, instructor role uncertainty, declining English grammar proficiency, and a lack of evaluation tools for task-based learning performance, that require further attention in the implementation of TBLT. Therefore, to broaden the research foundation on the possibility of applying TBLT in a Vietnamese context to develop learners' communicative competence, this study attempts to further elaborate on the practices of the

TBLT approach in a higher education setting to first-year students of English major in a private university in Vietnam and its impact on EFL's development in communicative competence.

Revisiting Key Concepts

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Communicative Competence (CC)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is widely recognized as an approach to language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to Celce-Murcia (2001), CLT represents a particular model, research paradigm, or theory, and its foundation lies in the idea that communication is the main purpose of language use and that speaking is the best way to learn a language.

Richards (2005) tailors the nature of CLT with seven principles being elaborated as follows:

- (i) *The primary goal of language teaching is to enable learners to use language to communicate.*
- (ii) *Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.*
- (iii) *Fluency is an important aspect of communication.*
- (iv) *Communicative involves the integration of different language skills*
- (v) *Errors are tolerated and seen as a natural outcome of the learning process.*
- (vi) *Drilling may occur, but it is not central and does not to ensure memorization without context.*
- (vii) *Learners' own personal experiences are enhanced as contributing elements to classroom learning.*

Central to CLT is the concept of Communicative Competence (CC), which encompasses not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts. Communicative Competence or CC, a foundational concept in language education, highlights the ability to use language effectively and appropriately across various social contexts. Originally introduced by Dell Hymes in the 1970s, this concept was further developed by Canale and Swain (1980), who identified four components: *grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence*. Together, these components provide a holistic view of effective communication.

The Meaning of "Task"

According to Long (2015), "tasks are tangible activities individuals consider when organizing, carrying out, or summarizing their day" (p. 6). In the pedagogic environment, Long also states that tasks refer to the activities and materials that teachers and/or students engage in within the classroom or other educational settings. Skehan (2011) presents five essential attributes of a task based on insights from various authors. These include (i) *meaning is primary*; (ii) *learners are not given other people's meaning to regurgitate*; (iii) *there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities*; (iv) *task completion has some priority*; and (v) *the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome*.

Types of Tasks

Pica et al. (1993) introduced a typology of task types based on Prabhu's (1987) tripartite task model for interactional purposes. They suggested five fundamental types, including *jigsaw, information gap, problem-solving, decision-making, and opinion exchange* (Table 1). Pica et al. (1993) found variations in the efficacy of these five task types in offering learners chances for "comprehension, feedback, and interlanguage modification" (p.23). Jigsaw and information gap tasks were believed to be the most beneficial for these objectives, while opinion exchange tasks seemed to be the least beneficial.

Table 1: Typology of communication tasks (Pica, Kanagy, & Falodun, 1993, p.19)

Task type	Information holder, requester, or supplier	Interactant relationship	Interaction requirement	Goal orientation	Outcome options
Jigsaw	<i>Both interactants</i>	<i>Shared</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Convergent</i>	<i>Single</i>
Info gap	<i>Either one interactant or the other</i>	<i>Independent or shared</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Convergent</i>	<i>Single</i>

Problem-solving	<i>Both interactants</i>	<i>Independent or shared</i>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>Convergent</i>	<i>Single</i>
Decision-making	<i>Both interactants</i>	<i>Independent or shared</i>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>Convergent</i>	<i>Multiple</i>
Opinion exchange	<i>Both interactants</i>	<i>Independent or shared</i>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>Divergent</i>	<i>Multiple</i>

In Willis and Willis's taxonomy, seven types of tasks can be categorized. Examples pertaining to each type can be seen in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Taxonomy of task types in Willis and Willis's research (2013)

Task types	Examples of specific tasks
<i>Listing</i>	<i>Brainstorming Fact-finding Games based on listing: quizzes, memory and guessing</i>
<i>Ordering and sorting</i>	<i>Sequencing Ranking ordering Classifying</i>
<i>Comparing and contrasting</i>	<i>Games finding similarities and differences Graphics organizes</i>
<i>Problem-solving tasks</i>	<i>Logic problem prediction</i>
<i>Projects and creative tasks</i>	<i>Newspaper Posters Survey fantasy</i>
<i>Sharing personal experience</i>	<i>Story telling Anecdotes Reminiscences</i>
<i>Matching</i>	<i>Words and phrases to pictures</i>

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-based Language Teaching (or TBLT) is defined as "an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.226). According to Ellis (2021), "tasks hold a central place in current language pedagogy and second language acquisition (SLA) research" (p.1). Richard and Rodgers (2001) also believe that TBLT is based on language's functional, interactional, and occasionally, structural models.

For Ellis (2021), three main phases are involved with TBLT: *pre-task*, *during-task*, and *post-task*. The pre-task phase is designed for two purposes: i) to present and pique interest in the selected topic and task; and (ii) to activate words, phrases, and target sentences relevant to the topic that will help complete the assignment and in real-world communication. In the "during task" phase, students employ whatever linguistic resources they have to accomplish the objectives of the task while working in groups or pairs, depending on the nature of the activity. Form-focused work can be done during the framework's language emphasis post-task phase.

In modern language classes, TBLT is still strongly utilized. The approach offers several advantages in the fast-paced language learning environment of today and fits in nicely with the methods and approaches used in language instruction today. Through the use of real-world, purposeful exercises, TBLT aims to improve learners' communication ability. It gives students the chance to apply language in authentic contexts, fostering the growth of their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities.

The Role of TBLT in Enhancing Learners' Communicative Competence

TBLT provides a useful method for fostering the development of these abilities in a classroom setting. This is due to the fact that it enables language learners to build their unique tactics through conversation and peer engagement. Jackson (2022) asserted that 'tasks' play a vital role in enabling learners to develop their

communicative abilities while actively engaging in social activities that are pertinent to their current and future objectives. Tasks offer students several advantages, which can be elaborated as follows.

- (1) *Opportunities for meaningful communication in the second language (L2)*: Tasks enable authentic communication, helping learners acquire new language skills through understandable input, feedback, and modified output opportunities.
- (2) *Practice for enhancing fluency and target specific language features*: Tasks allow learners to practice and improve their fluency in a second language (L2) while addressing specific linguistic challenges, helping them consolidate their understanding and develop proficiency in difficult language features.
- (3) *Empowerment through choice*: Tasks empower students to choose lesson content and procedures, leading to more meaningful and engaging learning experiences. This autonomy fosters ownership and motivation by allowing students to select tasks that align with their interests.

In a nutshell, building communication skills is a key component of TBLT. The goal of the tasks is to get students to practice authentic communication skills like opinion expression, meaning negotiation, and information exchange. TBLT encourages learners to use language meaningfully by assigning them activities that call for it to accomplish a certain objective or finish a task. Students are more engaged and encourage active language creation when they are motivated to utilize language to complete a goal. The emphasis on meaningful language use aids in the development of learners' capacity to communicate meaning through language.

Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs, linked to concepts like teacher cognition and pedagogical knowledge, significantly impact their instructional practices and decision-making in the language classroom (Borg, 2003). These beliefs encompass their assumptions and values about teaching and learning, influencing their pedagogical goals and strategies. For instance, a teacher who values communicative language teaching will create activities that promote authentic communication, while one focused on traditional grammar may prioritize explicit instruction. The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices is reciprocal; beliefs shape instructional choices, and classroom experiences can, in turn, influence and refine those beliefs through reflection and evaluation.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Research Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to assess various teaching styles. This approach enhances data accuracy and reliability by considering multiple factors influencing results. The methodology includes survey questionnaires, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and activity analyses. These are believed to enable a thorough evaluation of TBLT and its effect on enhancing communicative competence.

Quantitative data was gathered from a semi-structured questionnaire targeting four full-time English lecturers, alongside observations of classroom activities to confirm TBLT practices experienced by students. Qualitative insights were obtained through in-depth interviews with the same teachers, offering a deeper understanding of their perceptions and experiences related to TBLT. Overall, the mixed-methods approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Setting, Population, and Sampling

This research was carried out at a private university in Vietnam. It was conducted within the academic setting of the Faculty of English Language and Culture (FELC), and the investigation centered on the full-time lecturers of this particular faculty. The study was conducted within the context of the *Speaking Skills 2* course, utilizing the instructional material *"Nice Talking with You 1"* published by Cambridge University Press. The course aims to enhance students' speaking proficiency by providing practical exercises focused on practical communication and interactive skills for beginner learners.

The population for this study was EFL lecturers at the Faculty of English Language and Culture at a private university in Vietnam. These 04 teachers are currently full-time lecturers of the English Language Faculty of the university and are in charge of freshmen's English-majored courses. For the matter of confidentiality, the names of four teachers were replaced as T1, T2, T3, and T4.

The study sample consists of the teachers' questionnaire responses, the transcripts of their interviews, and detailed notes from the researcher's classroom observation form in English classes for freshmen at the university. All of these data were gathered, documented, and meticulously transcribed.

Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

Instruments

Three instruments were utilized in the current study to achieve its objectives: (1) *classroom observations*, (2) *teachers' questionnaires*, and (3) *in-depth interviews*. Various data-gathering methods were employed to increase the reliability and validity of the study findings.

Data Collection Procedure

The research procedure outlined below facilitates the investigation into teachers' perceptions towards TBLT and evaluate the implementation of TBLT practices in the classroom in chronological order:

(i) Questionnaire and Teacher Interviews

The researcher administered a questionnaire via the Google Form platform to teachers to gather information about their understanding, familiarity, and perceptions of TBLT. The researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with teachers to delve deeper into their perspectives and experiences related to TBLT. All responses were meticulously documented and examined to establish a basis for the classroom observation stage.

(ii) Classroom Observation

Classroom observations were conducted to gain insights into the extent to which TBLT practices were being implemented in the period of the first half of the semester. The researcher observed the activities used by teachers, evaluated their adherence to task-like characteristics, and assessed the communicative goals of the tasks being employed in the classroom. To evaluate the task-likeness of the textbook activities and the activities that were conducted by the teachers, all activities were coded for the presence or absence of the four task criteria proposed by Ellis (2018) (See **Table 3**).

The assessment of the communicativeness level and the characteristics of the activities used by EFL teachers involved coding all activities according to Littlewood's (2004) continuum of communicativeness (See **Table 4**). It is important to note that the task analysis form for classroom observation was developed based on the framework established by Dao and Newton (2021).

Table 3: Criteria for defining tasks as a workplan (Ellis, 2018)

Criteria	Description
1. The key focus is on meaning	A workplan should involve a meaningful engagement where students understand and generate messages for a communicative purpose.
2. There is some kind of gap	A workplan should be created in a manner that consists of a communication gap that needs to be solved during task performance. The gap allows for exchange of information or expressing opinion.
3. Learners depend on their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources	Learners should be able to tap into their already existing linguistic resource (i.e. both L1 and L2) and non-linguistic resources (e.g. facial expressions or gestures) in order to understand and generate meaning.
4. There is a clearly defined communicative outcome	The workplan is explicit about the communicative goal of the task. The success of task completion is based on whether the communication goal has been achieved and not on the correct use of the language.

Table 4: The 'communicative continuum' of Littlewood (2004)

<i>Analytic strategies</i>					<i>Experiential strategies</i>	
<i>Non-communicative learning</i>	<i>Pre-communicative language practice</i>	<i>Communicative language practice</i>	<i>Structure communication</i>	<i>Authentic communication</i>		
<i>Focus on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean.</i>	<i>Practice language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others.</i>	<i>Practice pre-taught language in a context where it communicates new information.</i>	<i>Use language to communicate in situations that elicit pre-learned language, but with some unpredictability.</i>	<i>Use language to communicate in situations where the meanings are unpredictable.</i>		
<i>Focus on forms and meanings</i>					<i>Focus on meanings and messages</i>	
<i>'Enabling task'</i>		<i>'Focused tasks'</i>			<i>'Communicative tasks'</i>	
<i>Task-supported</i>					<i>Task-based</i>	

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Perceptions of TBLT among EFL Teachers in Freshmen Speaking Language Courses

Before delving into the teachers' perceptions towards TBLT as an approach, it is important to scan the teacher respondents' backgrounds with some questions designated in the first part of the survey enquiring about their highest level of education. For the first question, T1, T3, and T4 all have a master's degree in the English Language, while T2 has a degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). As regards the respondents' teaching experience, as demonstrated in the second question in the survey, it is noted that most respondents are young. Specifically, none of the respondents have more than 10 years of teaching experience. T1 has less than 5 years of experience, while the remaining teachers, T2, T3, and T4, have between 5 to 9 years of teaching experience. This background knowledge facilitates further understanding of how familiar the EFL teachers are with the TBLT approach before embarking on the delivery of the speaking course.

Familiarity with the TBLT Approach Before Delivery of the Speaking Course

The second part of the survey assessed the teachers' familiarity with the TBLT approach. Respondents were asked to rate their level of familiarity on a scale ranging from "very familiar" to "not at all familiar." Interestingly, T2, the participant with a TESOL degree, selected the "very familiar" option, indicating a strong understanding of the TBLT methodology. In contrast, the other respondents, T1, T3, and T4, chose the middle of the scale, suggesting they have some knowledge of TBLT but are not highly confident or experienced in its application.

From the gathered knowledge regarding TBLT and the familiarity of the teachers with this approach, the responses to the in-depth interview question about the meaning of a "task" were notably consistent. All four teachers provided nearly identical definitions, reflecting a shared understanding of what constitutes a task within the context of task-based language teaching.

From my point of view, a task is an activity that requires learners to use the target language to achieve a specific outcome or goal. I think it focuses on the side of 'activity,' or what I mean is...achieving by doing. (T3)

Teacher T2 was the only one who did not seem uncomfortable discussing how they understood TBLT.

A task is an activity in the classroom that simulates a real-world situation and requires students to communicate in the target language to reach a conclusion or find a solution. A task is a classroom activity that involves the authentic use of language. That's what I have learned and also what I believe is right for the meaning of 'task' in my opinion. (T2)

Teachers T1, T3, and T4 rated their familiarity at a middle level, suggesting they possess some knowledge of TBLT but lack confidence and experience in its application. This reflects a common trend where educators may understand the theoretical aspects of TBLT but struggle with practical implementation due to insufficient training or support (Littlewood, 2024). The fact that T2 was more comfortable discussing TBLT suggests that her extensive training may have equipped her with a deeper understanding of its principles, allowing her to articulate her thoughts more clearly. The findings resonate with van den Branden (2006), who stresses that effective teacher training is essential for fostering a comprehensive understanding of TBLT.

Sources of Knowledge about TBLT Familiarity

When asked about the contexts in which they learned about the TBLT approach, all four teachers (100%) reported gaining knowledge through professional development workshops or conferences. However, only T2, the TESOL-trained participant, had learned about TBLT during their undergraduate or graduate studies (25%). Additionally, T2 was the sole respondent who had engaged in self-study and research on the TBLT methodology (25%).

Most teacher respondents acknowledged their familiarity with such terms as "task" and "task-based language teaching or learning". They claimed that they were primarily introduced to these ideas through various professional development workshops.

I just started my teaching career for about four years. I think maybe I have applied TBLT in my lesson more than once in the whole time. (T1)

Throughout my career, I have participated in many career development workshops and courses. Yes, I am familiar with terms like "grammar-translation method," "project-based learning," "communicative teaching," or even "task-based language teaching." And I am quite sure that I did apply it more than once or twice in my teaching, but things are still a little blurry to me, sometimes, I apply TBLT quite unintentionally, just because I purely think it is a fun way to teach the lesson. (T3)

All four teachers reported acquiring knowledge about TBLT primarily through professional development workshops or conferences. However, only Teacher T2, who holds a TESOL degree, indicated that she had learned about TBLT during her formal education, specifically during her undergraduate or graduate studies. This aligns with research by Richards and Rodgers (2014), which suggests that teachers with specialized training in language teaching methodologies are better equipped to implement innovative approaches like TBLT. According to Carless (2004), teachers may find it difficult to apply TBLT successfully if they lack a firm grasp of it, which could result in a dependence on conventional approaches that place more emphasis on vocabulary and grammar than communicative competence.

Extent of Intentional Incorporation of TBLT Activities in Teaching the Speaking Course

To gain a clearer understanding of the extent to which teachers intentionally incorporate TBLT activities into the speaking course, **Table 5** provides an overview of these activities, which are included in the class delivery.

Table 5: Extent of Intentional Incorporation of TBLT Activities in Teaching the Speaking Course

<i>The extent to which the teachers intentionally incorporated TBLT activities in their Speaking courses</i>	<i>Respondents</i>				<i>%</i>
	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>T4</i>	
<i>Extensively</i>	-	✓	-	-	25%
<i>Somewhat extensive</i>	-	-	✓	-	25%
<i>Moderate</i>	✓	-	-	✓	50%
<i>Somewhat limited</i>	-	-	-	-	
<i>Not at all</i>	-	-	-	-	

The third part of the survey was designated to the implementation of TBLT in the teachers' speaking classes. As shown in **Table 5**, when asked about the extent to which they intentionally incorporated TBLT

activities in their speaking courses, T2 chose the "extensively" option, representing 25% of the sample, while T1 and T4 selected the middle of the scale (50%). T3 reported a relatively high level of TBLT implementation in their speaking instruction. This result suggests that the teachers' level of familiarity and educational background in TBLT may influence their willingness and ability to incorporate TBLT-based activities into their teaching practices. The TESOL-trained participant, T2, demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of TBLT and was more likely to extensively implement it in their speaking courses compared to the other teachers. The focus now shifts to a discussion of specific tasks or activities that have been conducted in the English speaking course at the research university.

Specific TBLT Tasks or Activities Included in Lessons

Table 6 outlines the specific TBLT tasks or activities incorporated into language lessons, or rather, in the teaching of speaking, which offers insights into the diverse methodologies employed by the language instructors at the university.

Table 6: Specific TBLT Tasks or Activities Included in Lessons

The specific TBLT tasks or activities the teachers included in their lessons	Respondents				%
	T1	T2	T3	T4	
<i>Information gap tasks</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
<i>Discuss in pairs, group on current events</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
<i>Role-playing, storytelling tasks</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
<i>Making conversations (interview, survey,...)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
<i>Problem-solving tasks</i>	-	✓	-	-	25%
<i>Task-based project work</i>	-	✓	✓	-	50%

The survey data from **Table 6** show the types of TBLT tasks used by EFL teachers in their speaking classes. Indeed, all four teachers reported using various interactive activities, including information gap tasks, discussion-based exercises, role-playing, and conversation-building tasks like interviews and surveys. Information gap tasks, which require students to exchange incomplete information, are particularly common. Discussion tasks engage students by leveraging their personal experiences while role-playing and storytelling offer contextual practice for speaking skills. The widespread use of these tasks aligns with the teachers' beliefs about TBLT's benefits, such as enhancing communicative competence and facilitating authentic language use. However, the implementation of more complex TBLT tasks varied. Only T2 used problem-solving tasks, while both T2 and T3 incorporated task-based project work into their instruction. More cognitively demanding activities like problem-solving and extended projects were less frequently used, likely due to higher planning demands and challenges in assessment.

Overall Effectiveness of the TBLT Approach in Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills

The survey asked teachers to rate the effectiveness of the TBLT approach in improving students' speaking skills on a 5-point scale. A clear divide emerged: T2 and T3, both with TESOL training, rated TBLT as "highly effective," reflecting their extensive use of various TBLT tasks and familiarity with the methodology. In contrast, T1 and T4 rated it as "somewhat effective," which may be linked to their lower levels of TBLT implementation and moderate familiarity with the approach. This suggests they might be less convinced of TBLT's overall effectiveness or face challenges in integrating its activities into their instruction.

Main Benefits of Using TBLT in the Speaking Course

Table 7 outlines teachers' perceptions on the major benefits that the TBLT practices can have towards the students' speaking performance, which reveals insights into how the TBLT approach can enhance language instruction and student engagement, thus leveraging their communicative competence.

Table 7: The Teachers' Perception of the Main Benefits of Using TBLT in the Speaking Course

The teachers' perception about the main benefits of using TBLT in the Speaking Course	Respondents				%
	T1	T2	T3	T4	
<i>Increasing students' engagement and motivation</i>	✓	✓	✓	-	75%
<i>Improving communication competence</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
<i>Opportunities for authentic language use</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
<i>Developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills</i>	-	✓	✓	-	50%
<i>Collaborative peer-learning and peer-interaction</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%

As shown in **Table 7**, the questionnaire asked teachers to identify the primary benefits of incorporating TBLT in speaking instruction, presenting five key options. "Increasing students' engagement and motivation" was selected by 3 out of 4 teachers (T1, T2, T3), indicating that 75% of respondents find TBLT effective for enhancing learner engagement. This resonates with the literature, such as Pham and Nguyen (2018), which emphasizes that active participation in task-based activities can significantly boost student motivation and involvement in the learning process. All four teachers (100%) unanimously agreed on "Improving communication competence," demonstrating a strong belief in TBLT's role in developing students' overall communicative abilities. This is consistent with Nguyen et al. (2018), who discovered that teachers see TBLT as a valuable strategy for improving learners' language skills and communicative efficacy.

Similarly, "Providing opportunities for authentic language use" and "Facilitating collaborative peer-learning" were also recognized by all four teachers (100%), highlighting TBLT's capacity for genuine interaction and idea exchange. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) support this notion, noting that task-based approaches can create real-world communication contexts that enhance language use and peer collaboration. Additionally, "Developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills" was selected by half of the respondents (T2 and T3), indicating an awareness of TBLT's potential to foster higher-order thinking alongside language skills. The findings of Cheng and Mose (2011), who contend that task-based learning fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are crucial for successful language acquisition, are in line with this.

Main Challenges or Drawbacks of Using TBLT in the Speaking Course

Alongside the benefits, the implementation of the TBLT approach is not without limitations, and the teacher respondents also mentioned these in their responses. **Table 8** is an exploration of teachers' perceptions concerning the primary drawbacks of implementing TBLT in the speaking course.

Table 8: The teachers' perception about the main drawbacks of using TBLT in the Speaking Course

The teachers' perception about the main drawbacks of using TBLT in the Speaking Course	Respondents				%
	T1	T2	T3	T4	
<i>Time-consuming to plan and implement</i>	✓	-	✓	✓	75%
<i>Difficulty in assessing individual student progress</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
<i>Uneven participation among students</i>	✓	-	-	✓	50%
<i>Lack of explicit grammar-vocabulary instruction</i>	✓	-	-	✓	50%
<i>Mismatch with the students' expectations, preferences, or proficiency level</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%

The teachers' perception about the main drawbacks of using TBLT in the Speaking Course	Respondents				%
	T1	T2	T3	T4	
<i>Materials in textbooks are not proper for using task-based language teaching.</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
<i>Large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods.</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	75%

As data from **Table 8** show, the teachers identified several challenges associated with implementing TBLT in their speaking classes. Three out of four teachers (T1, T3, T4) noted that TBLT is "time-consuming to plan and implement," highlighting concerns about the increased preparation required for effective tasks. This concern echoes Nguyen et al. (2018), who found that Vietnamese teachers often struggle with the demands of TBLT due to the extensive planning involved.

All four teachers (100%) agreed that "difficulty in assessing individual student progress" is a significant drawback, as the open-ended nature of TBLT makes it hard to accurately evaluate each learner's progress. Phuong (2016) pointed out comparable evaluation challenges among Vietnamese teachers switching from conventional to TBLT, which is parallel to this.

The main challenge I am facing is transitioning my students away from a more traditional, test-centered approach to language learning. Many of them are accustomed to a teacher-led instructional model focused on grammar rules and vocabulary memorization. (T2)

Additionally, all teachers acknowledged a mismatch between TBLT activities and students' expectations, preferences, or proficiency levels, which can lead to resistance or frustration. This reflects the findings of Pham & Nguyen (2018) which shed light on the challenges that arise when TBLT activities do not align with students' needs and expectations, potentially leading to student resistance or frustration.

My students are already quite low-proficiency and often struggle to stay engaged, so I'm concerned that an overly task-based approach may leave them feeling overwhelmed and underperforming on the midterm and final exams. (T1)

I'll need to carefully consider how to balance the communicative focus of TBLT with the more traditional, test-oriented instruction required to ensure my students' academic success, also how I assess my students' task-based performance is quite a problem for me cause I think there will be a lot of things that are needed to be considered. Also, some students may be uncomfortable with the increased autonomy and responsibility, most of my students are quite shy when it comes to speaking in front of the class. (T3)

They also noted the lack of TBLT-aligned materials in commonly used textbooks, necessitating extra time and effort to create or adapt resources. Teachers T1 and T4 expressed worries that a task-based approach might overshadow the need for direct instruction in linguistic forms, highlighting a common tension in TBLT implementation, where the focus on communicative competence can sometimes conflict with grammar instruction (Pham & Nguyen, 2018).

Designing effective, engaging tasks that are appropriately aligned with my students' proficiency levels will require a significant amount of planning and preparation on my part since I don't think our course material is task-based. (T4)

Lastly, three teachers (T1, T3, and T4) identified "large class size" as a challenge, making it more difficult to manage the interactive nature of TBLT tasks effectively. This concern mirrors broader issues reported in Vietnamese classrooms, where large student numbers can hinder effective engagement in task-based activities (Nguyen et al., 2018).

Willingness to Teach More Speaking Lessons Using the TBLT Approach in the Future

This division in the teachers' willingness to use more TBLT-based speaking lessons aligns with the previous observations regarding their perceptions of the effectiveness of TBLT for speaking skill development. The data indicates a clear divide between the teachers in terms of their willingness to incorporate more TBLT-based speaking lessons in their instruction. T2 and T3 were described as being "very willing" to teach more speaking lessons using the TBLT approach. This suggests that these two teachers, who

were previously identified as having a stronger grasp of TBLT principles and more extensive implementation of the approach, have a very positive attitude towards using TBLT for speaking instruction. In contrast, T1 and T4 were described as being "somewhat willing" to teach more TBLT-based speaking lessons. This moderate level of willingness likely stems from the teachers' more mixed views on the approach. As noted earlier, T1 and T4 exhibited a greater awareness of the potential drawbacks and challenges associated with TBLT, such as increased planning demands, assessment difficulties, and potential misalignment with learner preferences. These perceived drawbacks may make them somewhat less inclined to wholeheartedly embrace TBLT for their speaking courses, leading to a "somewhat willing" stance.

In the interviews, when being asked about the implementation of "tasks" in their teaching, each teacher has different perspectives. For Teachers T1 and T3, they were both skeptical about implementing tasks in the teaching context:

I understand the value of meaningful, communicative tasks for developing speaking and integrated language skills. However, I'm quite hesitant about fully incorporating TBLT into my teaching. My students tend to be fairly low-proficiency and quite lazy when it comes to active participation. I'm worried that if I shift the focus too heavily towards open-ended, communicative tasks, my students won't be adequately prepared for the midterm and final exams, which are still a crucial part of the curriculum. (T1)

I'm afraid that if I shift too heavily towards a task-based approach, my students may struggle to demonstrate the discrete grammar and vocabulary knowledge required for success on these high-stakes tests. (T3)

As can be seen from the answers, Teacher T1 expressed skepticism about fully adopting TBLT, citing worries about her low-proficiency students' participation and the potential impact on their exam readiness. While acknowledging the value of communicative tasks, T1 fears that focusing too much on open-ended activities may hinder students' ability to demonstrate essential grammar and vocabulary knowledge. These concerns reflect the findings of Pham & Nguyen (2018), which showed that many EFL teachers in Vietnam tend to be cautious about implementing TBLT. Their reluctance stems from fears about students' preparedness for high-stakes exams, leading them to emphasize traditional teaching approaches that prioritize grammar and vocabulary over communicative competence. Teacher T3 shared similar concerns, fearing that a task-based approach might detract from students' mastery of discrete language forms required for high-stakes tests. This reflects a broader trend where educators feel compelled to emphasize grammar and vocabulary acquisition over communicative competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Teacher T4 expressed a cautious interest in using TBLT in her Speaking course:

On the one hand, I'm quite excited by the idea of using tasks to engage my students in authentic, communicative language use, as I believe that will ultimately help them become more proficient and confident language users. At the same time, I can't ignore the realities of the current educational system, where standardized tests still carry significant weight. I guess my problem is finding a "middle ground" for this, how to combine these two into one. (T4)

Though recognizing its potential for fostering authentic language use while grappling with standardized testing realities, T4 sought a "middle ground" between incorporating communicative tasks and meeting assessment requirements, echoing van den Branden's (2006) emphasis on a balanced approach that integrates both communicative tasks and explicit instruction.

In contrast to what other teachers said, Teacher T2 seemed very enthusiastic about using tasks in her classroom:

I believe tasks can be incredibly beneficial in my teaching. Alongside other methods I use to teach my students, like project-based, TBLT seems to align perfectly with what I want to bring into my lesson. I want my students to be actively engaged in meaningful, communicative language use rather than just passively absorbing grammar rules, model sentences, and vocabulary. I'm confident that the communicative focus of TBLT will ultimately help them become more confident and competent language users. (T2)

T2 believed that task-based learning actively engages students in meaningful communication, concurring with Willis's (1996) argument that real-world tasks enhance student engagement and language acquisition.

Implementation of TBLT in English-majored Freshmen's Speaking Classes at the University

This section details observations of four instructors (T1 through T4) teaching a Speaking Course to Classes A, B, C, and D during Unit 10 (Lessons 10A and 10B). The researcher assessed the teachers' activities based on their communicative goals and task-like qualities. Using criteria from Ellis (2018) for task descriptions and Littlewood's (2004) (see **Table 3** and **Table 4**) idea of the 'communicative continuum' for analysis, the textbook tasks and those produced by the teachers were compared.

TBLT Practices for Lesson 10A

The instructional plan for Lesson 10A includes ten activities over three class periods (135 minutes), focusing on essential vocabulary and grammar. Each instructor began by reviewing previous content. Instructors T1 and T3 proceeded directly to new material, while T2 started with a warm-up game to boost engagement.

Most activities involved independent work, but T1 used a partner reading exercise that lacked a broader communicative focus. The sixth activity shifted to a conversation-based task, allowing for increased student interaction, with T2 enhancing it by having students brainstorm questions beforehand. T2 also encouraged students to create additional questions, promoting deeper engagement. **Table 9** below provides a detailed overview of Activity 6 as implemented by the three teachers.

Table 9: Analysis of Activity 6 in Lesson 10A

Textbook Activities	Communicative-ness	Task-likeness	Teacher Activities	Communicative-ness	Task-likeness
<i>Practice asking and answering the questions with different partners</i>	Com	Task-like (C1,2,3)	T1 <i>T asked the Ss to do the activity in pair and switch partner for at least 3 times. And then T called random pairs of Ss to practice in front of the class.</i>	Com	Task-like (C1,2,3)
			T2 <i>T asked the Ss to generate 3 different jobs first in their mind. Then, T asked the Ss to do the activity in pair and switch to other partner after finish for 3 times. T called random pairs of Ss to practice in front of the class.</i>	Struc-com	Task (C1,2,3,4)
			<i>T asked the Ss to come up with 3 other questions they would like to ask other people about their jobs. Then Ss practiced the new questions in pair.</i>	Auth-com	Task (C1,2,3,4)
			T3 <i>T asked the Ss to do the activity in pair and switch to other partner after switching for at least 4 partners.</i>	Struc-com	Task-like (C1,2,3)

The eighth activity introduced double questions, following the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) model. T1 and T3 focused on grammar rules, while T2 emphasized usage and made it interactive with games. A thorough summary of Activity 8, as carried out by the three teachers, is given in **Table 10**.

Table 10: Analysis of Activity 8 in Lesson 10A

Textbook Activities	Communicative-ness	Task-likeness	Teacher Activities	Communicative-ness	Task-likeness
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<i>Textbook Activities</i>	<i>Communicative-ness</i>	<i>Task-likeness</i>	<i>Teacher Activities</i>		<i>Communicative-ness</i>	<i>Task-likeness</i>
<i>Doubling the question: Match the double questions</i>	<i>Non-com</i>	<i>Non-task (C1)</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T presented new model sentences and tried to elicit from the students the rule of the model.</i>	<i>Non-com</i>	<i>Non-task (C1)</i>
				<i>T asked the Ss to do the activity individually. T called random Ss to read the answer out loud for the class to check.</i>	<i>Pre-com</i>	<i>Non-task (C1,2)</i>
				<i>T gave the Ss some extra questions and ask them to practice writing double question. Then Ss practiced in pair and T called random pairs of Ss to practice in front of the class.</i>		
			<i>T2</i>	<i>T showed an example about doubled question on a board and asked the Ss about the purposes of the double questions.</i>	<i>Non-com</i>	<i>Non-task (C1)</i>
				<i>T asked the Ss to do the activity individually. And then T called random Ss to read the answer out loud for the class to check.</i>	<i>Pre-com</i>	<i>Non-task (C1,2)</i>
				<i>T hosted the game: The longest chain. Each team had 10 students. The first students gave a question and the next 9 students had to put double questions so that their team chain could be the longest.</i>	<i>Auth-com</i>	<i>Task (C1,2,3,4)</i>
			<i>T3</i>	<i>T presented new model sentences and tried to elicit from the students the rule of the model.</i>	<i>Non-com</i>	<i>Non-task (C1)</i>
				<i>T asked the Ss to do the activity individually. And then T called random Ss to read the answer out loud for the class to check.</i>	<i>Pre-com</i>	<i>Non-task (C1)</i>
				<i>T gave Ss some extra exercises to practice the double questions.</i>	<i>Struc-com</i>	<i>Task-like (C1,2,3)</i>

The final activity of Lesson 10A involved paired exercises where students guessed missing words, with T2 incorporating a simulated job interview for practical application.

The instructional plan for Lesson 10A outlines the varied teaching approaches of three instructors (T1, T2, and T3) across ten activities, comparing them to the principles of TBLT, which emphasizes meaningful tasks for language learning. Teacher T1 primarily used a structured teaching approach, focusing on directly presenting new material after reviewing prior content. For initial activities, T1 directed students to work independently, emphasizing grammar and vocabulary practice through textbook exercises. Although T1 incorporated partner reading to improve oral delivery skills, this activity lacked a broader communicative context. As defined by Ellis (2003), TBLT tasks should engage students in meaningful communication, requiring them to negotiate meaning and solve problems using the target language. T1's reliance on

independent work and controlled practice does not align with TBLT's focus on interaction and real-world relevance. By incorporating tasks that promote collaboration and authentic communication, T1 could enhance student engagement.

Meanwhile, Teacher T2 demonstrated a more dynamic approach, particularly in warm-up activities that included games to engage students. T2 creatively enhanced activities by allowing students to brainstorm questions before engaging in dialogue, providing context for their communication. In the final activity, T2 implemented a simulated job interview, contextualizing the language used in a realistic scenario. TBLT encourages authentic tasks that reflect real-life situations (Skehan, 2011), and T2's strategies align closely with these principles. The job interview role-play and brainstorming sessions fostered an environment for meaningful language use, allowing students to generate their content. This approach reflects Long's (2015) definition of tasks as activities where the focus is on meaning rather than form.

Following a pattern similar to T1, Teacher T3 focused heavily on the direct presentation of new material and directing students to complete tasks independently. While T3 engaged in some pair work, the tasks remained largely textbook-driven, emphasizing grammar and vocabulary over communicative use. Like T1, T3's methods do not fully embrace TBLT principles, which emphasize tasks that allow learners to use language in real-world contexts, moving beyond rote practice. T3 could enhance her instructional approach by integrating more communicative tasks that allow for authentic interaction and problem-solving.

Overall, Instructors T1 and T3 adhered more to traditional methodologies, focusing on structured presentations and controlled practice. In contrast, T2 embraced a more innovative and engaging approach, aligning closely with TBLT principles. T2's incorporation of authentic tasks and promotion of meaningful communication fostered an environment conducive to language acquisition.

TBLT Practices for Lesson 10B

In Lesson 10B, the teachers employed strategies to build on the language and structures from Lesson 10A. Most instructors began with impromptu questions to activate prior knowledge, while Teacher T2 used Activity 10 as a warm-up to facilitate the reapplication of the target language. Teacher T1 enhanced this by incorporating additional sentences into Activity 10, further scaffolding student understanding, while other instructors utilized warm-up games for active engagement. The lesson emphasized opportunities for speaking practice, even in controlled activities, to gradually develop communicative competence. Activities 1-3 included listening tasks followed by speaking practice, with Teacher T4 integrating a gap-fill exercise based on listening transcripts to reinforce comprehension.

Variations in Activity 4, the "Designing Mind Map" task, highlighted different instructional strategies. Teachers T1 and T3 assigned individual completion, while Teacher T2 transformed it into a collaborative group task, fostering creativity and authentic communication. Activity 5 involved pair work to facilitate interactive dialogue, though Teacher T2 omitted whole-class presentations due to time constraints. **Table 11** provides a comprehensive overview of the instructional strategies employed by the teachers during Activity 4.

Table 11: Analysis of Activity 4 in Lesson 10B

<i>Textbook Activities</i>	<i>Communicative-ness</i>	<i>Task-likeness</i>	<i>Teacher Activities</i>		<i>Communicative-ness</i>	<i>Task-likeness</i>
<i>Organize your questions, answers and vocabulary into the mindmap</i>	<i>Com</i>	<i>Task-like (C1,2,3,4)</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T asked the Ss to do the activity and then present their mind map individually in front of the class.</i>	<i>Com</i>	<i>Task (C1,2,3,4)</i>
			<i>T2</i>	<i>T asked the Ss do the activity in groups of 6. Ss worked in group and presented their mind maps onto A3 posters. Then T went around the class to check the posters</i>	<i>Auth-com</i>	<i>Task (C1,2,3,4)</i>

<i>Textbook Activities</i>	<i>Communicative-ness</i>	<i>Task-likeness</i>	<i>Teacher Activities</i>	<i>Communicative-ness</i>	<i>Task-likeness</i>
			<i>and correct some minor grammatical-vocabulary mistakes.</i>		
			<i>T asked the groups to present their posters one-by-one in front of the class.</i>	<i>Auth-com</i>	<i>Task (C1,2,3,4)</i>
			<i>T4 T asked the Ss to work individually to finish the mind map, the present their answer with their partner.</i>	<i>Struc-com</i>	<i>Task-like (C1,2,3)</i>

Activities 6 and 7 maintained a consistent focus on listening and speaking practice, with Teacher T4 again incorporating gap-fill exercises. In Activity 8, Teacher T1 required answers without rationale, whereas Teachers T2 and T4 encouraged students to articulate their reasoning, promoting deeper engagement. Activity 9 involved student presentations, with Teacher T4 facilitating small group discussions to enhance collaborative discourse.

From class observations of Lesson 10B, it is evident that the instructors employed distinct teaching strategies that built upon the content from Lesson 10A. Each approach can be analyzed in relation to TBLT principles, focusing on how they activated prior knowledge, facilitated communication, and structured activities. Teacher T1 began with impromptu questions to check students' recall, effectively activating prior knowledge. T1 reintroduced Activity 10 with additional sentences to scaffold practice and emphasized individual work, particularly in a mind-mapping task. Following this, T1 facilitated pair work and whole-class presentations, allowing for feedback. While T1's approach aligns with TBLT by activating prior knowledge and facilitating structured interaction, the focus on individual tasks limits opportunities for spontaneous communication. According to Ellis (2003), effective tasks should encourage negotiation of meaning; thus, T1 could enhance engagement by integrating more open-ended tasks.

Teacher T2 adopted a more dynamic and interactive approach. Using Activity 10 to revisit the target language, T2 transformed the mind-mapping activity into a collaborative group task, emphasizing teamwork and creativity. T2 encouraged frequent partner switching during conversation practice, enhancing interaction. Although some whole-class presentations were omitted due to time constraints, T2 fostered a communicative atmosphere. T2's approach exemplifies TBLT principles, as activities required authentic communication and collaboration (Long, 2015) The group poster task necessitated creative thinking and real-world skills, aligning well with Willis's (1996) framework on meaningful language use.

Teacher T4 utilized a more structured approach, emphasizing listening activities followed by speaking practice. T4 began with engaging listening exercises, including gap-fill tasks based on the listening transcript, which reinforced comprehension and ensured active student involvement. In subsequent activities, T4 encouraged speaking practice through pair work and included whole-class presentations for feedback, facilitating opportunities for students to share insights. This method underscores the importance of both input and output in language learning, aligning with the principles outlined by Swain (1985), who emphasized the role of output in language acquisition. However, the reliance on gap-fill exercises may limit opportunities for genuine communication. TBLT emphasizes meaningful tasks that involve interaction and negotiation of meaning (Ellis, 2003). To better align with TBLT, T4 could incorporate activities that promote spontaneous and authentic language use, such as role-plays or problem-solving tasks, which would enhance the communicative quality of the lesson and encourage students to apply their language skills in more realistic contexts (Nunan, 2004).

In summary, Teacher T1 employed structured, individual tasks to reinforce learning while limiting spontaneous communication. Teacher T2 embraced a dynamic, collaborative method, fostering creativity and authentic interaction. Teacher T4 focused on listening comprehension followed by controlled speaking

practice. Overall, while all three teachers engaged with TBLT principles, T2's emphasis on collaboration and real-world application represented a more comprehensive implementation of TBLT in promoting communicative competence.

Summary of Teaching Activities of the Instructors

It is necessary not to establish a summary table (Tables 12a and 12b) based on the teaching practices of four educators, categorizing their activities into two groups: low communicative value activities and high communicative value activities. This classification seeks to clarify the different levels of communicative engagement facilitated by each teacher's instructional approach.

Table 12a: Summary of Teaching Activities – Lesson 10A

	<i>Low Communicative Value Activities</i>				<i>High Communicative Value Activities</i>					
	<i>Non-Com</i>		<i>Pre-Com</i>		<i>Com</i>		<i>Struc-Com</i>		<i>Auth-Com</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
T1	4	28.6	6	42.9	3	21.4	1	7.1	-	-
T2	2	12.5	7	43.8	1	6.3	3	18.8	3	18.8
T3	3	23.1	5	38.5	2	15.4	3	23.1	-	-

In Lesson 10A, which prepared students for the practical Lesson 10B, low communicative value activities predominated. Teacher T1 used 10 out of 14 activities, Teacher T2 9 out of 16, and Teacher T3 7 out of 12. Pre-communicative activities were most common, with T1 at 42.9%, T2 at 43.8%, and T3 at 38.5%. Teacher T2 featured the most diverse activities and the highest number of high communicative value tasks, with 7 out of 16, including 18.8% authentic communicative activities. In contrast, Teachers T1 and T3 mainly incorporated communicative and structured communicative activities as their high-value tasks.

Table 12b: Summary of Teaching Activities – Lesson 10B

	<i>Low Communicative Value Activities</i>				<i>High Communicative Value Activities</i>					
	<i>Non-Com</i>		<i>Pre-Com</i>		<i>Com</i>		<i>Struc-Com</i>		<i>Auth-Com</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
T1	-	-	6	50	1	8.3	4	33.3	1	8.3
T2	-	-	7	53.8	-	-	3	23.1	3	23.1
T4	-	-	7	50	1	7.1	5	35.7	1	7.1

In Lesson 10B, designed as a practice session for the concepts taught in Lesson 10A, there were increased opportunities for student practice. Notably, none of the three teachers included non-communicative activities and textbook activities primarily served as pre-communicative tasks, making up over 50% of instructional time. Teacher T2 featured the most authentic communicative activities, totaling three, while Teachers T1 and T3 each included one. Structured communicative activities were the most commonly used for controlled practice, particularly based on model sentences from the previous lesson.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion

Perceptions among EFL Teachers towards TBLT in English Speaking Classes

The findings from the analysis of questionnaire responses and in-depth interviews with EFL teachers indicate that the teachers possess varying levels of familiarity with the TBLT approach, resulting in instructional practices that may not fully align with TBLT approaches. Their knowledge of TBLT primarily stems from professional development events, enabling them to understand the concept of tasks and their application in teaching, albeit with differing degrees of depth.

Research supports the notion that teachers' understanding of TBLT principles directly influences their instructional practices. Carless (2004) notes that without a solid understanding of TBLT, teachers may struggle to implement it effectively, leading to a reliance on traditional methods that prioritize grammar and vocabulary over communicative competence. The teachers in this study recognize the benefits of TBLT in enhancing students' speaking skills and overall communicative competence, aligning with findings from Nunan (2004), who emphasizes the potential of TBLT to promote authentic communication in the classroom. The teachers recognize the benefits of TBLT in enhancing students' speaking skills and overall communicative competence.

However, several challenges hinder their ability to implement TBLT more extensively in the classroom. These include time constraints, difficulties in assessing student performance, and reliance on course materials. Skehan (2011) discusses how external pressures, such as standardized testing and curriculum demands, often compel teachers to adhere to traditional teaching methods, which can stifle innovation in the classroom. Additionally, they express concerns about the potential mismatch between the tasks and students' expectations, preferences, or proficiency levels. The pressure to cover all textbook content and ensure satisfactory test results further contributes to their hesitation in experimenting with alternative teaching methods.

Despite these challenges, the teachers express a willingness to incorporate TBLT in the future, provided they receive adequate training, support for assessment strategies, and access to appropriate materials. This reflects Richards and Renandya's (2002) assertion that ongoing professional development and access to appropriate resources are crucial for teachers to successfully adopt new pedagogical approaches.

TBLT Practices Experienced by English-Majored Students

The observation of classroom practices revealed that the English-majored freshmen indeed have quite limited exposure to TBLT. To evaluate the task-likeness of the textbook activities, all activities were coded for the presence or absence of the four task criteria proposed by Ellis (2018). Additionally, to assess the communicativeness level and characteristics of the activities employed by EFL teachers, each activity was analyzed using Littlewood's (2004) *Continuum of Communicativeness*. The classroom observation task analysis form was developed based on the framework established in the study conducted by Dao & Newton (2021).

Through classroom observation, it was evident that the teachers predominantly adhered to the activities outlined in the textbook. Notably, the characteristics of these textbook activities were from primarily non-communicative to pre-communicative and communicative. The teachers felt compelled to ensure that all content in the textbook was thoroughly delivered to students, with a strong emphasis on the knowledge objectives specified for each lesson. This highlights a common challenge in language instruction, where curricular constraints can limit the integration of more interactive and communicative methodologies.

Despite this reliance on textbook activities, the teachers made efforts to incorporate high communicative value activities whenever feasible, often utilizing them as a supplemental practice to reinforce the skills introduced in the textbook. All four teachers demonstrated a commitment to designing new activities aimed at enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. For example, they adapted exercises and created scenarios that encouraged more authentic language use, thus providing students with opportunities for meaningful communication – a core tenet of TBLT, as outlined by Nunan (2004).

The research lecturers also showed a divide in their willingness to implement task-based approaches and design authentic communicative tasks. The variation in the level of willingness may result from the previous training experience by one rather than another, which allows greater familiarity with contemporary pedagogical strategies, and which may contribute to a more dynamic and effective learning environment for students. Such findings underscore the need for professional development in TBLT methods, as highlighted by Carless (2004), to better equip educators to foster an engaging and communicative classroom atmosphere that aligns with the principles of task-based learning. Overall, the limited exposure to TBLT among these freshmen not only highlights the constraints posed by curriculum adherence but also points to the potential benefits of adopting more task-based approaches in future instruction.

Implications

The findings of this study suggest several implications for enhancing the implementation of TBLT in language education. First, educational institutions should consider developing a curriculum that thoroughly integrates TBLT principles. This may involve revising existing materials to include more task-based activities that align with learning objectives and cater to student needs, ensuring a coherent approach across different levels and subjects. Encouraging collaborative planning among teachers can foster creativity and facilitate the sharing of best practices.

Professional learning communities or collaborative workshops can provide platforms for educators to exchange ideas, resources, and strategies, ultimately leading to more effective lesson designs. Additionally, providing training for students on how to engage effectively in task-based activities can enhance their participation and willingness to communicate. Workshops or orientation sessions can help students understand the goals of TBLT and develop the necessary skills for successful collaboration and interaction.

Finally, developing clear assessment frameworks specifically tailored to TBLT can help teachers evaluate student performance more effectively. These frameworks should focus not only on outcomes but also on the processes involved in task completion, such as collaboration, problem-solving, and the use of language in context. Schools should also invest in resources that support task-based learning, such as authentic materials, technology, and task-based textbooks. Providing teachers with high-quality resources can facilitate the design of engaging and relevant tasks that resonate with students.

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