Research Paper

Task-Based Language Teaching in Iraqi Secondary Schools: EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Implementation Challenges

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Abstract
Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is replacing long-standing traditional teaching methods in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Iraq due to the increased prominence and frequent use of tasks in language instruction. Although the implementation of TBLT has been extensively studied, little is known about the perceptions of EFL teachers and their views on the difficulties in applying TBLT in the educational context of Iraq. The current study aimed to find out how TBLT was perceived and used by EFL teachers in Iraq. Through the use of mixed-methods quantitative-qualitative design, the research objectives were addressed. Initially, the participants (N= 156) filled out a survey with a self-report scale for the quantitative phase. Following this, five teachers from these participants took part in semi-structured interviews. Three main themes, including issues related to tasks, students, and teachers, were extracted. The results showed that instructors embraced implementing the TBLT approach in their classes and harbored a highly positive attitude toward it. However, they also mentioned some significant challenges and constraints for its optimal enactment in Iraqi secondary schools. The findings also indicated that instructors with varying experience levels had diverse understandings of TBLT. The findings could be used to devise appropriate measures to address the identified challenges in promoting TBLT-oriented language teaching practices in Iraqi public schools.

Keywords: EFL teachers; Implementation; Perceptions; Task-based language teaching

INTRODUCTION
The subject of teaching English has long witnessed the emergence of several ideas, techniques, and procedures that purport to provide ideal insights. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasizes meaningful communication through task completion, has significantly impacted the discipline in recent years. Many resources have been produced to support the superiority of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) over its predecessors since its launch in the 1980s. Although TBLT has garnered support from various authors and researchers (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004), it has

also faced criticism due to its significant departure from conventional perspectives on language instruction, overemphasis on meaning at the expense of form, and significant implementation challenges in the classroom.

Altamirano (2018) states that TBLT is still extensively accepted and used. The number of studies that are currently being conducted in the context of undergraduate education in Asian countries, as well as the research that has been conducted in the context of secondary and primary schools in various countries worldwide, demonstrate the impact it has on the field of research. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has examined how students

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and teachers feel about task-based language teaching.

The New Curriculum Standards (NCS) have strongly emphasized task-based language Teaching (TBLT) in recent years. NCS advised English instructors to use a range of methods that emphasize both process and product in order to improve their student's ability to complete tasks in English by simulating real-world situations and events in the classroom. Since then, TBLT has been widely used in English schools as a component of an effort to enhance pedagogical approaches across the entire curriculum. Academics and English language instructors in Iraq have also started considering the ideas and practices of TBLT from a variety of perspectives. Since TBLT is a learner-centered approach to teaching languages, it is seen to be particularly helpful in assisting language learners in developing more meaningful communication skills. It frequently offers extra, helpful language skill development.

There is much to be determined about its effectiveness in the context of EFL education in Iraq. Investigating the implementation challenges of TBLT in the Iraqi educational context is crucial to enable English instructors to understand better how to utilize TBLT to enhance English language teaching (ELT) in Iraqi EFL. Therefore, the main goal of this study is to probe the possible challenges of implementing TBLT based on EFL teachers' perspectives in Iraqi educational contexts.

Theoretical framework

Over the past several decades, there have been a lot of developments in the language teaching profession. Instead of focusing just on teaching grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary, or listening skills, contemporary approaches to language teaching aim to foster communicative competence. Currently, TBLT offers multiple settings for language education and encourages actual practice in the target language (Izadpanah, 2010).

Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT gives students the chance to practice speaking, reading, writing, and listening via meaningful class activities that require them to utilize language in a practical and useful way. Consequently, because TBLT gives students the chance to practice the target language continuously, it encourages and supports the integration of skills through the completion of everyday tasks that enhance their communicative ability. For students, learning provides an opportunity to engage in problem-solving and creative, authentic communication via active class tasks. The aforementioned characteristics of TBLT imply that this technique encourages real language use, which successfully supports the integration of the abilities.

Nunan (1999) supported this theory by claiming that to solve the task's difficulty, TBLT demands speaking, listening, reading, and writing all in the same exercise. When this approach is used in the classroom, real-world tasks are typically assigned that allow students to practice all of their language skills.

This enables students to take advantage of many communication possibilities both within and outside the classroom by completing projects directly or indirectly relevant to daily life. Additionally, Kurniasih (2011) emphasized that the goal of TBLT is to improve the use of language as a way to concentrate on real learning. Promoting realistic tasks that enable the students to satisfy their linguistic demands is crucial to achieving this goal. Integrating the four language skills to enhance learners' competencies and facilitate language learning is imperative.

Furthermore, by giving students a variety of in-class activities to do, TBLT improves the development of learning tasks that meet their requirements and assists them in effectively mastering all abilities, as noted by Richards and Rodgers (2001). Ellis (2009) discussed a few characteristics that set TBLT apart from conventional teaching methods. He clarified that the methodology aims to integrate language learning with creative activities. Students are also required to effectively convey their ideas, deduce meaning from oral and written communication, and engage in creative thinking. Lastly, Li (1998) contended that TBLT increases competency levels in all language abilities by placing learners at the center of the language process, improving language learning. Moreover, TBLT is a technique that facilitates skills

integration, according to Nunan (2005). It enables learning through production, manipulation, and interaction among students.

Typically, this methodology necessitates authentic assignments where students assume primary responsibilities and consistently apply the four competencies. In order to finish the work, this aids students in exploring their options for verbal and written communication as well as text and oral comprehension. This method is important since it stresses communication behaviors and authenticity, as Willis (1996) and Carless (2007) noted. According to them, students take on active roles when TBLT is used in the classroom.

Tasks for English language learning

Tasks are seen as crucial elements in English language education that support the growth of competency and make learning a language easier by getting students more engaged in the classroom. According to Nunan (2004), learning tasks intended to engage students in the authentic, practical, and functional use of language are intended to allow learners to explore both written and spoken language. According to this theory, a task's primary function is to encourage learners' innate drive to become more proficient in the language by setting and completing clear, meaningful, and practical goals that advance the acquisition of grammar and other language-related abilities. Furthermore, tasks are defined as an activity or action that is carried out as a result of a process to understand a language by Richards et al. (as stated in Nunan, 2004). A few examples are drawing a map, following instructions, purchasing tickets, making bill payments, and operating a vehicle in a city. When assigning these kinds of assignments, the instructor usually has to outline the conditions for passing, establish the assignment's objectives, and implement unique teaching strategies that are not often used in an English class.

Furthermore, according to Long (1985), a task is any effort done for someone else or oneself, voluntarily or in exchange for a reward. Painting a fence, getting a child dressed, filling out a form, purchasing shoes, booking an airplane ticket, checking out a library book, taking a driving test, composing a letter, weighing a patient, organizing correspondence, and so forth are a few examples of tasks. Accordingly, "tasks are believed to foster a process of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are at the heart of second language learning," according to Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 228). According to Nunan (1999), activities encourage and stimulate second language acquisition through collaboration, debate, and adaptation. Activities, in general, provide students more exposure to the language learning process by providing rehearsal chances where they get ready to carry out activities that they will encounter on a daily basis and which will aid in their acquisition of information and experience in the target language.

Implementing Tasks

Several language theorists have vigorously debated the process of implementing TBLT in English schools (e.g., Lee, 2000; Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996). They emphasize that completing a task involves three essential processes. The "pre-task stage" is the first, during which the instructor presents the subject and gives guidance on how to proceed, including the content and goals of each task step. Willis and Prabu (1994) and Littlewood (2004) make reference to this step, suggesting that it produces an overview of the knowledge that students need to complete all of the assignment's requirements.

Furthermore, according to Skehan (1998), this stage serves as an introduction or summary of all the guidelines that students must adhere to in order to do the assignments successfully. This stage of task planning is often used to select the task's topic, organize the students' presentation of their work, or think through the evaluation criteria for the task's outcomes and the next steps to be done in relation to the student's performance.

Ellis (2006) recommends completing two fundamental tasks during the 'during task' phase. This means that the task's development should be analyzed first, followed by a potential completion scenario study. According to Seedhouse (1999), it is important to supervise students while they work, ask them to demonstrate their progress in reading, writing, watching videos, or making sure they're paying attention

to the materials they've been given. Finally, give them insightful feedback. According to Numrich (1996) and Junker (1960), students at this level need to be willing to make adjustments to their reports and presentations. In support of this, Crookes and Gass (1993) state that students must have the flexibility to repeat, edit, and rearrange their work after receiving guidance from the teacher. At this point, the students work together to resolve conflicts, examine the material, and redo any portions that still require work before turning in their report. They also answer questions from the teacher and other group members.

The 'post-task' phase would be at the end. According to Lynch (2001), the analysis and edition of the group's and the teacher's observations, views, and suggestions on the student's performance in the task outcomes are what is being done at this time. Regarding this stage, Ellis (2014) believes it is critical to review the mistakes made by the students after completing the task. This can be accomplished by having the class discuss how well their classmates performed, reviewing the teacher's notes, or having the students assess their own presentations. One crucial measure to contemplate is extending an invitation to students to rectify any potential errors and designate supplementary tasks. Furthermore, according to Willis (1996), this stage helps students automate their output, make choices based on the task's outcomes, and assess which course of action to take to further their language proficiency. Finally, Long (1985) and Rahimpour and Magsoudpour (2011) noted that learners need this procedure since it gives them a chance to think back on what they have done.

Research questions
This study intends to analyze the perceptions of Iraqi teachers of EFL regarding TBLT and the challenges they may face in implementing the approach, which is based on the theoretical underpinning of TBLT, which implies that this approach is crucial to learning English and integrating language skills. As a result, the study aims to address the following research questions:

RQ1: *What perceptions do Iraqi secondary school teachers have about TBLT?*

RQ2: *What problems and challenges do Iraqi teachers have while using TBLT?*

Methodology
The current study used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods strategy for both data collection and analysis. Data were first gathered and subjected to quantitative and then qualitative analysis to support the study's findings.

Participants
In the quantitative phase of the study, 156 Iraqi English instructors from different schools were selected by convenience sampling. More precisely, 156 Iraqi in-service teachers—82 female and 74 male—completed the same questions. The participants were graduates of various English-related degrees, including linguistics, teaching English as a foreign language, English language and literature, and English translation, and their years of teaching experience varied. They have prior expertise in instructing students in English at various competency levels in classroom settings. With regard to their educational backgrounds, the great majority of the participants had degrees in English, including doctorates, master's degrees, and bachelor's degrees.

A request for participation resulted in the recruitment of five participants for the qualitative phase. All volunteers who agreed to participate in the interviews had completed teacher preparation courses and had experience instructing students at various skill levels.

Instruments
TBLT Questionnaire
In order to ascertain the perspectives of instructors on the use of TBLT, a closed-ended survey with two distinct parts was utilized, which was a modified version of Jeon and Hahn's scale (2006). The participants were asked to write about their age, gender, and teaching experience in the first section of the questionnaire. The notion of tasks and the fundamentals of TBLT are the subjects of seven questions in Section 2, while the application of TBLT in the classroom is the subject of eight questions in Section 3. The Likert scale had five points, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly

agree." It comprised four parts, A, B, and C, and it included a total of 15 items in all. According to Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient data (0.89), the scale is highly reliable in the current investigation.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also done with five of the participants in order to achieve triangulation, which strengthens the validity of qualitative findings (Nassaji, 2020). The researchers developed an interview guide with four pre-planned questions and a few follow-ups before the interview sessions began. Prior to conducting interviews with study participants, a few non-participants were interviewed to test the interview guide, which aids researchers in identifying potential issues with the interview prompts. The researchers questioned every participant separately. Due to the low level of English proficiency among the participants, the interviews were done in Arabic. The interviews were recorded, and the participants' views about the challenges and difficulties in using TBLT in Iraqi educational settings were verbatim transcribed for additional content analysis.

Procedure

Through the use of mixed-methods design, the research objectives were addressed. Initially, the participants filled out a survey with a self-report scale for the quantitative phase. The online versions of the surveys were made using the Google Docs program in order to increase administration convenience. Following that, the online survey was converted into a booklet questionnaire format and distributed to English teachers in Iraq via online groups and channels (such as WhatsApp and Telegram). The respondents were requested to complete the first section of the booklet, which asked for their personal details, such as gender, age, educational background, and teaching experience, before proceeding through the scale's items. The responders were also assured that their information would remain confidential and be used exclusively for research purposes.

Five semi-structured interviews were carried out in the qualitative phase with a group of randomly chosen instructors. Interview candidates were chosen for the study until theoretical data saturation was attained. In other words, the researchers came to the conclusion that gathering more data would not provide any new insights into the difficulties associated with TBLT in Iraqi contexts. With the informed agreement of the interviewees, the interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

Data collection and analysis for the current study's first phase were conducted using a quantitative research approach. A total of 156 questionnaires were sent, focusing on the opinions and perceptions of EFL teachers about TBLT. After that, SPSS was used to enter the data. Initially, distribution normalcy was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S test), and data reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha. Then, a series of descriptive analyses were run through the scale.

The interview data was assessed using a thematic analysis. The transcribed interviews were analyzed using open thematic coding to identify the main topics regarding the instructors' opinions on TBLT. As a result, emerging themes were grouped based on their links using axial coding. Ultimately, labels were assigned to each group based on the common codes among groups with comparable main themes. The above-listed procedures used a bottom-up and iterative methodology. The researchers completed the procedures of open coding, classifying, and labeling and verified by another qualified L2 researcher to guarantee the inter-rater reliability. Any differences were then reviewed and addressed.

Results
Quantitative results
Table 1 presents the descriptive results for the overall scores and subscales of the TBLT questionnaire. The table indicates that the Cronbach alpha values range from 0.85 to 0.88, indicating a rather good internal consistency level in the questionnaire items' replies. Furthermore, the KS test scores span from 0.07 to 0.09, demonstrating the distribution's normality for the gathered data.

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics of teachers' understanding and implementing TBLT

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Alpha	KS Sig.
Understanding TBLT	1.10	5	3.34	1.56	0.88	0.07
Implementing TBLT	1.28	5	3.41	1.34	0.85	0.09

The second section of the scale regarding teachers' understanding of TBLT and its statistical results is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
The percentage of agree (A) and strongly agree (SA) for each item

According to the statistics, the instructors' perceptions of TBLT in this study were consistent with what is now believed to be true. In particular, around 80% of respondents acknowledged that students were the focal point of the TBLT method (Item 6), and 76% acknowledged that a task's ability to produce a clearly defined outcome was one of its qualities (Item 3). The three TBLT stages of pre-task, task implementation, and post-task were identified by nearly three-quarters of the lecturers polled (Item 7). Generally, 66% of the EFL teachers in this survey agreed that TBLT is consistent with CLT's tenets (Item 6) and that tasks should provide students with opportunities to use the target language in tasks that are meant to achieve communicative goals.

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test regarding the instructors' opinions of TBLT are shown in Table 4. The tables show no appreciable changes in the instructors' understandings of tasks and TBLT based on their teaching degrees, which may be used to investigate whether EFL teachers' understandings of TBLT varied based on their teaching degrees.

Table 2.
*Kruskal-Wallis test by teacher degrees for TBLT understanding*

	Understanding BLT
Chi-square	1.61
df	2
Asym. Sig. (two-tailed)	0.46

The Kruskal-Wallis results for investigating the significant differences in EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT based on their years of teaching experience are shown in Table 3. The finding was significant at $H(2) = 7.974$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that teachers with more years of experience rated TBLT higher.

Table 3.
Years of teaching experience as a factor in understanding TBLT statistics on the Kruskal-Wallis test

	Understanding BLT
Chi-square	7.97
df	2
Asym. Sig. (two-tailed)	0.02

The information on the EFL instructors' perspectives on using TBLT in the classroom is displayed in Figure 2.
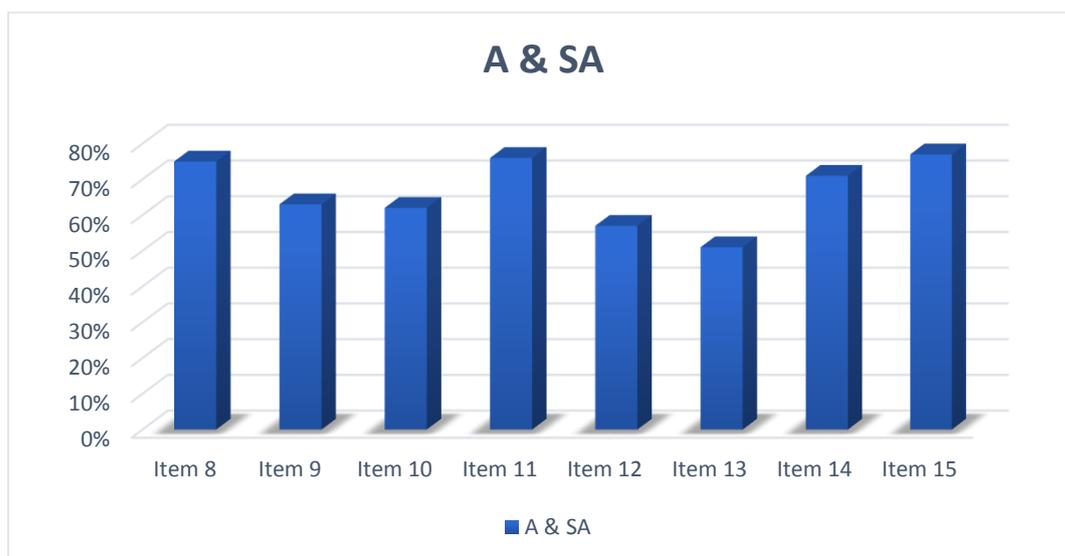
Figure 2
The percentage of agree (A) and strongly agree (SA) for each item

The data demonstrates that most participants commented positively about using TBLT in their classrooms. In particular, 77% of teachers agreed that TBLT materials should have purpose and meaning based on real contexts (Item 15), and 75% of them expressed interest in implementing TBLT in their classrooms (Item 1) because it developed integrated skills, activated learners' needs and interests, and created a pleasant environment to encourage students to use English.

Nonetheless, more than half of respondents (51%) thought that TBLT took more time for preparation than other strategies, and over one-third weren't sure if TBLT was appropriate for managing classrooms.

Qualitative results

Based on the second research question, the study's general pattern was the challenges that EFL teachers might face when applying TBLT in the Iraqi educational context. This pattern is illustrated by a number of themes and sub-themes, some of which were derived and represented by hierarchical models in the subsequent sections. The summary of the extracted theme can be observed in Table 4.

Table 4.
Themes and sub-themes in the interview data on EFL Teachers' challenges in implementing TBLT

Main themes	Sub-themes
Issues related to tasks	Materials in textbooks
	Time constraints
Issues related to teachers	Classroom management
	The linguistic proficiency and background knowledge
	Familiarity with task-based instruction
Issues related to students	Students are not accustomed to learning through tasks
	Large class size
	Uneven proficiency levels among students

Issues related to tasks
Materials in textbooks
A vital component of learning English is task input in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which involves exposing students to materials both before and during the performance of tasks. However, the absence of real and relevant input and the inconsistency between task input and textbook material make it difficult to prepare task input in EFL settings. Teacher 2 said:

The authenticity of task input is hindered in EFL contexts by the absence of native-like situations since imported or produced materials

are unrelated to the real world of language learning or language learners' everyday lives. Teachers must have access to authentic resources in academic and real-world contexts to guarantee authentic and relevant input.

Engaging assignments must be significant enough to be tailored to students' individual learning preferences and offer additional chances to utilize English in authentic contexts.

Another obstacle to applying TBLT in Iraq is the discrepancy between task input and textbook material. Teacher 5 highlighted this point: "Unrelated task input might discourage teachers from completing textbook-related instructional schedules and even make it more difficult for them to do so."

Developing their own curriculum based on goals and teaching experience, choosing textbooks based on the intended achievement of tasks, and working with other subject teachers to integrate academic knowledge and language teaching skills in task input preparation are some solutions.

Time constraints

The five participating instructors agreed that they had to spend too much time planning or selecting suitable tasks for their students during the two weekly times that they used to teach English. T3, for instance, stated:

"I can't complete tasks in my classroom practice because I don't have enough time for almost all of the activities."

Having insufficient teaching time was a major problem, particularly when using TBLT. When conducting TBLT lessons, four teachers stated that they were typically under strict time constraints because they had to schedule adequate time for the task implementation phase, leave time for delivering feedback during the final stage, and schedule time for comprehensive teaching and scaffolding during the pre-task phase:

I believe the biggest challenge is the time constraint. It takes a lot of time to do task-based exercises, and I find it challenging to complete a whole sequence of procedures like that in the little amount of time I have available for instruction. (T5).

Issues related to teachers
Classroom management
Two young EFL teachers said that in addition to the class size, students' lack of groupwork abilities made it difficult to manage collaborative tasks. A teacher noticed unequal engagement from the learners, with certain students doing more work than others.

"There were times, after 20 minutes of group work, when my students were still not prepared for the outcome presentations because they did not divide works appropriately in their groups," said T3, the other instructor.

The linguistic proficiency and background knowledge
T3 voiced his worry about how his poor command of the English language in class affected his ability to complete a certain task. He declared:

"Teachers need to speak English fluently. Giving pupils precise directions is, therefore, occasionally difficult for me."

It was also the opinion of three of the five interviewers that teachers needed to include their pupils in-class activities, and this was not possible without a good command of English proficiency. For instance, T4 stated:

"...in order to prevent our students from feeling under pressure while completing a challenging task, we have to create a friendly learning environment. We need to have enough proficiency to convince the pupils that this is merely an enjoyable exercise for them to complete".

Familiarity with task-based instruction
According to two instructors, having a broad social and professional background is necessary for teachers to effectively utilize TBLT in the classroom and provide students with insightful feedback. One said that in order to properly apply TBLT, instructors themselves required to have a sufficient level of language proficiency, while the other acknowledged that her lack of confidence prevented her from trying to apply TBLT:

"I myself don't feel confident enough with this approach." I have never received instruction on that topic, seen a class employing TBLT, or received mentoring about this methodology (T2).

In summary, one of the main barriers to instructors incorporating TBLT into their regular teaching practices is their lack of TBLT expertise and practical experience.

Issues related to students
Students are not accustomed to learning through tasks

Four out of five instructors voiced concerns regarding students' lack of experience completing tasks. As an example, T1 stated that:

When pupils are given a task, they are unsure about what to perform since they believe it to be completely unfamiliar. Sometimes, even though they know what to do, they are unable to finish the activities or perform them improperly.

Two instructors say pupils are becoming less comfortable with each other and their classmates. T2 stated:

For instance, students are too shy to do the task because they fear being made fun of. Students frequently delegated responsibility to others when given a task to do in pairs or small groups of five.

According to this quotation, T2 thought tasks were difficult, which might have affected how he carried out his work.

Large class size

According to four of the five EFL instructors, big class sizes have significantly impacted their use of TBLT. Each said that their courses typically consisted of about forty students. They all said:

"It is very hard for me to manage my class effectively".

T5 clarified on this issue by saying that:

I am unable to provide equal feedback to all groups.

Monitoring the entire class proved to be challenging, even in larger courses that were broken up into smaller groups.

Heterogenous students

When teachers also had to take into account the actual language knowledge and skill of their pupils, the TBLT components of the classes became more challenging. Four out of the five EFL teachers surveyed deemed teaching classes at different levels tough. T2 saw that varying proficiency levels produced varying results and that lower-level pupils occasionally experienced discouragement when completing tasks. As T1 stated in the following quotation:

"I find it challenging to work in groups with learners of different levels. While inferior students may not participate much, better students often have more influence over the tasks".

T3 and T5 struggled to tailor their task-based sessions to meet the needs and expectations of every student, and they devoted a lot of time to teaching and scaffolding exercises.

Discussion

This study investigated how a group of EFL instructors in Iraq perceived the implementation of TBLT and any possible challenges. According to the quantitative and qualitative survey results, most of the instructors had positive views on TBLT. The results of the semi-structured interviews aligned with the survey, which indicated that instructors and students faced significant obstacles when applying task-based learning techniques. The outcomes of this investigation were in line with previous findings (e.g., Duong & Nguyen, 2021; Harris, 2016; Pham & Nguyen, 2018; Zhang, Y.; Liu et al., 2021), although they differed from Dao's (2017) and Jones' (2020) findings. The teachers' lack of TBLT training and professional development programs and the fact that TBLT performance and perceptions vary depending on the language learning and teaching context can be used to explain the alignment and discrepancies.

Even if they were just familiar with the terms, several participants were able to explain the main ideas of TBLT, but the majority of instructors stated that they had not received formal training in TBLT. Language instructors can benefit from professional development in a variety of ways, including training programs and seminars on techniques that give them confidence, instructional skills, and language proficiency (Borg, 2018). Teachers with bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees who were qualified but not necessarily trained in TBLT participated in this study. This is why the teachers' credentials had little impact on their

TBLT practices despite their extensive training and expertise.

However, years of teaching experience affected the teachers' perceptions of TBA more than degrees did. More experienced instructors are knowledgeable and have practical teaching techniques to boost classroom efficiency. However, experience also increases performance (Podolsky et al., 2019), which gives educators greater confidence to implement novel strategies like TBLT in the classroom. Class size, the teaching context, the teacher's interests, and the student's proficiency levels all play a significant role in determining whether or not a teacher can successfully implement a particular approach in the classroom. As a result, general professional experiences also did not significantly influence the study's teachers' adoption of TBLT in their daily teaching practices.

Even though the majority of the instructors in this research were enthusiastic about using TBLT in the classroom, they did point out a number of challenges, including big class numbers, the teachers' lack of experience in implementing TBLT, a range of student proficiency levels, poor teaching resources, and time restrictions. This result was consistent with earlier studies (e.g., Zheng & Borg, 2013; Duong & Nguyen, 2021; Nguyen, 2020).

Since the research was ostensibly carried out in EFL environments, it is easy to explain why the results regarding the restrictions are consistently consistent. Additionally, losing face or suffering private damage in collectivist societies is terrible and should be avoided. Iraq is a very collectivistic country with a low individuality index score. As a result, it is possible that the professors here did not employ TBLT in class because they were afraid of looking naive.

However, some educators did point to personal constraints as the reason they did not use TBLT in their instruction, which was consistent with findings by Jeon and Hahn (2006), who discovered that a lack of task-based knowledge caused instructors' inability to apply TBLT in the classroom.

This study offers a number of implications based on the issues that were previously discussed. Regarding professional development,

providing teacher education courses that emphasize TBLT background knowledge is critical, covering both the advantages and disadvantages of that approach. This can assist educators in being proactive rather than reactive when new problems arise during a class (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). In-depth training sessions are also required when experienced educators may impart their extensive TBLT knowledge and expertise to novices in the areas of planning, executing, and evaluating. That could increase the confidence of aspiring teachers to apply TBLT in their classrooms successfully. Insufficient teaching resources make some teachers hesitant to perform TBLT; therefore, in order to encourage TBLT adoption, greater training on course book adaption and class material production is necessary.

Administrators might provide instructors with more comprehensive external assistance, such as reducing class numbers, improving classroom conditions, and providing frequent professional development, to help minimize sociocultural barriers to EFL teachers utilizing TBLT methods in their classrooms.

To properly implement TBLT, instructors must focus on important theoretical elements such as instruction input, teachers' language proficiency and background knowledge, classroom management, and evaluating and providing feedback on students' performance. Practically speaking, teachers should advise students to prepare task-related vocabulary before sessions to overcome the challenge of time constraints in task-based learning. Teachers should also be adaptable rather than adhering to every step of the task cycle (Ellis, 2006). Lastly, teachers should help struggling students in mixed-level classes by giving them clear instructions, allowing ample time for their responses, repeating important concepts, and offering timely feedback (Duong & Nguyen, 2021).

Conclusion

The study included EFL teachers' perceptions about their use of tasks in the classroom and their difficulties with implementing tasks. One hundred fifty-six instructors answered the study's questionnaire, and five participated in the following semi-structured interviews.

Because of TBLT's clear advantages, most participants rated it highly and said they would be eager to include it in their language teaching methods. Nevertheless, the instructors mentioned some challenges they experienced while using TBLT techniques. Though it is an engaging and dynamic method for enhancing students' communication ability, TBLT is not without merit. TBLT is a fantastic technique for increasing students' fluency in four skills, and it allows teachers to play various roles, as suggested by Nunan (2004) and Richards and Rogers (2014) in the classroom. However, Changes in the attitudes of Iraqi educators and school administrators would be necessary for the successful implementation of TBLT and modifications in governmental regulations.

This study adds to our understanding of English instructors' attitudes about and use of TBLT in the classroom. In particular, while communicative and task-based learning has lately been more prevalent in the Iraqi curriculum, little research has been done on the perspectives of English instructors about TBLT and the practical use of this method in the classroom. This study aims to partially address this research gap. Iraqi EFL instructors may understand the value of teaching English to students so they can communicate. Still, they may not have the institutional or personal resources to use communicative teaching methods in the classroom. Studying the attitudes and beliefs of English teachers regarding TBLT may help teachers, in general, comprehend TBLT and feel more comfortable implementing it into their classes, which will help students become more proficient communicators in the foreign languages they are studying. Lastly, the results of this study may persuade curriculum developers and school officials to eliminate institutional barriers that prevent teachers from using conventional teaching methods.

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