Does Task-Based More Effective Than Other ways of Language Teaching on Iranian EFL Learners.

Hossein Rezaee,
English Department, Farhangian University, Arak, Iran
hosseinrezaee19@yahoo.com

Sara Rezaei
Arak Medical University Student
sararezaei8236@gmail.com

Abstract

This study strived to determine whether or not the adoption of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) would be a more effective means of increasing the students' reading comprehension achievement scores when compared to the traditional teaching method of the English language that involves prompting and drilling of students. This study also explored to gain issues and insights that accompany the application of TBLT through constant comparison and contrast with those that accompany the traditional teaching method. A pretest and posttests for collecting quantitative data was used, and classroom observation and researcher log for collecting qualitative data. The study involved 122 participants divided into treatment and control groups. The treatment group has received ten weeks of English language instruction via the TBLT method while the control group has received ten weeks of English language instruction via the traditional teaching method. The independent variable is the use of TBLT in the classroom and the effect/dependent variable is the students' reading comprehension achievement scores. By analyzing the data, the findings showed that teaching via the TBLT method has significantly helped students increase their reading comprehension achievement scores more than that of the traditional teaching method of the English language. The findings also suggest that the TBLT method, as a constructivist practice, is a better way for English language teaching and has involved practices that are desired in a modern educational context when compared to the traditional teaching method of the English language.

Key words: Task-based language teaching, traditional teaching method, Reading comprehension

introduction

Since Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is the treatment of this study, it is crucial to introduce it to the reader. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) uses meaningful, inquiry-based, real world activities (Willis, 2007). Many researchers view this method as emerging from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Brown, 2007). Others see it as a new approach to English language teaching and learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). In TBLT, priority is placed on the completion of tasks that are assessed in terms of outcome (Brown, 2007). Also, students pass through three stages when adopting TBLT in an English language lesson. In the first stage, groups of students engage in real life situations that are similar to the task they will perform in the classroom (pre-task stage). In the second stage, groups of students perform the main task of the associated lesson or content (running task stage). In the third stage, groups of students display or provide an indicator that they have successfully completed the task for the purposes of assessment and evaluation (task completion stage).

Cognitively, the task is a means of carrying topics into classrooms, setting the discourse motion, and encouraging students to produce an output (Wright, 1987). socioculturally, tasks are designed to provide students with dialogic interaction that can provide a "window for viewing the cognitive processes the learner is internalizing" (Ellis, 2003, p. 184). Some teachers, the author among them, believe that one reason for families' dissatisfaction with English language learning and teaching in intermediate schools is related to the existence of the traditional way of English language teaching in schools. This traditional way of teaching includes instructional practices that are collectively referred to as 'prompting' because they involve the prompting and 'drilling' of students. These practices are also described colloquially as 'drilling and killing,' 'memorizing,' 'answering and not questioning,' 'checking and not correcting,' 'individual learning' (as opposed to group work learning), 'teachers are the sources and producers of knowledge, 'students are the recipients,' and 'leaving no place for much thinking and understanding.' Due to research scope purposes, this study assumes that the traditional way of English language teaching does not help students better comprehend English when the emphasis is placed on reading comprehension.

The notion of significance varies from one society or culture to another and from one person to another within the same community. What is important or meaningful to one person could be nonsense to another and vice versa. However, there are universal issues that are perceived to be positive and desired by the majority of people, such as positive growth, morals and ethics, peace, and a good education. This study defines significance as that which helps to bring about desirable results or when it helps avoid undesired results. Applying this definition, investigation of this study, primarily, seeks to determine whether the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching in intermediate schools will have a significant impact on student reading comprehension.

The significance of the study extends to help all parties involved directly and indirectly in the educational process achieve desired outcomes through the avoidance of doing inappropriate instructional practices that lead to undesired learning outcomes. The avoided instructional practices should be replaced by more appropriate ones that could help teachers develop professionally and which would lead to better learning situations.

Methodology

This chapter outlines the steps necessary to answer the following questions:

1.Is using the TBLT method more effective than using the traditional method in English language teaching?

2.What insights and issues can be gained about implementing TBLT in this research setting?

Participants

This study targets high school (16-17-year-old students) in governmental schools of Arak city. English language curriculum for high school in Iran is highly standardized across the country—all follow the same curriculum and use the same textbooks for teaching the English language. Students' final assessments in all subjects, including English, are based on standardized tests that are supervised by the ministry of education and administered by the schools. Because the processes and the tests are the same country-wide, the findings of this study are potentially relevant for all high school students and English teachers in Iran. This will help to establish an acceptable level of external validity, especially when the study is replicated in different parts.

Students (participants). A total of 122 students, participating in the study, mostly from the middle class, and share similar characteristics in terms of socio-economic status.

Teachers (participants). Two English language teachers are included in the study. One has taught the treatment group and the other one has taught the control group. The treatment group teacher is the researcher since he is the most familiar with the treatment method of instruction. The other teacher has been teaching the control group through the use of the traditional method and who has been assigned by the school.

Settings

Schools. Two high schools are selected from all of the schools. These two schools are similar in terms of size, resources, and location. Because, as a male, the investigator cannot have access to schools for girls, the two schools chosen are for boys only.

Classroom settings. As the study is implemented in classrooms in schools, it is important to ensure the similarities of both of the control and treatment groups. The effect of the classroom setting (such as those with well-equipped laboratories with computers and high technology as opposed to those without) is a controversial issue. To be on the safe side, this study has involved classrooms with similar settings for both the treatment and control groups. The time of the class (i.e., beginning, middle, or end of the day) are also similar.

Design and Method

This mixed-method study investigates the effectiveness of using the TBLT method for teaching English as a second language to male twelve grade students. The study is based on a mixed method design (quantitative and qualitative) where the quantitative part includes a two-factor split-plot analysis with a pretest (covariate) and posttests as a part of quasi-experimental design. The qualitative part is based on observational data and a researcher log.

Researchers who employ quasi-experimental designs rely on various techniques to control (or at least reduce) the threats to the internal validity of the study. Variables such as the students' gender, age, and citizenship, the time of the class, classroom settings, teaching aids, the teachers, and the school are already being controlled for due to the design of the study or statistically in the analysis of the study. In addition to the tests' scores of the students for the quantitative part of the study, the researcher collects observational data as a quality check for the fidelity of the study and as the qualitative part of the design of this mixed method study.

Data Collection Tools

To gather data, the study uses: (a) a pretest—to document the level of students' English language reading comprehension they have at the beginning of the study; (b)

observation of the treatment group (researcher log) and control group (classroom visits); and (c) posttests—to evaluate particular areas of student study.

Pretest. The primary purpose of the pretest is to function as the main covariate. It is used to provide a baseline for the students' current English language reading comprehension levels so this study can examine the effect of treatment, relative to initial English language proficiency. The pretest also helps increase the power of the study by reducing the error that can be attributed to prior differences among students and its relation to the outcome. It is not used to place students in certain levels or groups. Two reading passage practice tests were used and which were developed by Ohio Department

There are two reasons that justify the choice of this particular test; one is that this reading test has met the criteria of validity and reliability (Moore, 2008). The second reason is that this reading test is the most appropriate placement test as it specifically designed to measure the reading comprehension of the students and, hence, is compatible with the posttest (both of pre and post tests measure students' reading comprehension). Based on the identified characteristics of the participating students (age, English language level), those two reading passages are appropriate. The two reading passages have a total of 22 questions that measure reading comprehension. Test scores are going to be based on a retelling rubric[1].

Observation. This study places great emphasis on this data collection tool and is aware that field notes gathered are going to represent the eyes, ears, and the perceptual senses of the reader (Patton, 2002). The form and notes provides insights and issues about implementing both of the TBLT and traditional methods in the control and treatment groups in this research setting. Among the techniques used when taking field notes is the usage of direct quotes, paraphrases, description of the context, and description of any behavioral experience that take place in the classroom (Schneider, 2005).

Observation of the control group. The treatment teacher (researcher) conducts ten visits to observe the control group. These observations provide data for the study, and help determine fidelity of the study. Two types of notes during these visits are used.

In the first, a checklist is filled out and which is designed to give insights about the engagement of the students and teacher in the lesson and the flow of instruction. In the second, open handwritten notes are gathered for collecting data that are not covered by the

first type of observational data. When observing the control group, the observer does not interact with the teacher or students during the observation, make any actions, or bring anything into the classroom other than a pen and a note pad. If the observer has any questions, he is to talk to the teacher after the end of the class session.

Observation of the treatment group. A colleague who is also knowledgeable of TBLT observes the treatment teacher (researcher) while teaching the treatment group via the TBLT method. This observer has several years of experience in English language teaching as an English language teacher. He has also had studied advanced courses in English language teaching methodology, teaching skills, curriculum and Instruction, and most importantly is familiar with the TBLT method.

Roles and duties of the observer while observing the treatment group are typical to those adopted by the researcher when observing the control group. For clarification purposes, two types of notes during these visits are used. In the first, a checklist is filled out and which is designed to give insights about the engagement of the students and teacher in the lesson and the flow of instruction. In the second, open handwritten notes are gathered for collecting data that are not covered by the first type of observational data. When observing the TBLT group, the observer does not interact with the treatment teacher or students during the observation, make any actions, or bring anything into the classroom other than a pen and a note pad. If the observer has any questions, he is instructed to talk to the teacher after the end of the class session. Analyzing collected data about both of the control and the treatment groups is carried out by both of the treatment teacher and the observer, as explained with more details under Chapter IV., through comparison and contrast between the two sets of observational data.

Researcher log. As the researcher is doing the teaching part for the treatment group using the TBLT, he cannot take notes (observed data) while he is teaching though he might observe valuable data. Hence, the treatment teacher creates a log where he writes down notes as he recalls them by the end of each day he teaches the treatment group (McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 1996). Those notes include insights and issues about implementing TBLT in this research setting.

Recalled data in researcher log can take the form of direct quotes, paraphrased responses, conversations, description of the context, and description of any behavioral experience that take place in the classroom (Schneider, 2005). When logging into researcher log by the end of each day, recalled data would be related to three types of interactions that take place in classrooms: student-to-student (such as group work or pair activities), student-to-teacher interaction (such as instruction by the teacher or questions and participation by the students), and students-to-curricular materials (such as textbooks and workbooks).

Posttests. Posttests are administered at the end of each two weeks to assess students' reading comprehension on the content covered in those two weeks. This process continues for ten weeks, which is the duration of the study. Each posttest consists of two formats; one is the researcher's prepared assessment (RPA) and the other one is the text established test (TET) and which students need to do it all in English. The RPA posttest is mainly retelling where the students read a passage and then are asked to retell the passage using on their own words as they have understood it. Only on this retelling question, students are allowed to retell in their first language (Persian) so as to reflect the level of their comprehension. The retelling question/s is designed in a way that a) measures the students' reading comprehension, b) imitates real life experiences, and c) open ended questions.

Subjects in both of the treatment and control groups are tested with both formats each time they have the posttest. This study has opted to adopt two formats of the posttests for two reasons; one is to correlate the RPA posttest with the TET one and which can, accordingly, establish concurrent validity. The second reason is that the researcher and a group of experts in literacy believe that the RPA can be a more accurate instrument for measuring the students' reading comprehension. The order of the two formats in each posttest is administered interchangeably during the duration of the study to control for order effects that might bias responses on either instrument.

The questions on the RPA posttest are prepared by the researcher on the reading content covered during the application of the study. Hence, the RPA format is created when the reading content is determined. To maintain an acceptable level of content validity of the RPA format, it is evaluated before using it by a group of experts in literacy. The second

posttest format, text established test (TET), is an existing instrument provided by the curriculum. This test is also on the covered content through the duration of the study. This study assumes that the psychometric properties of this instrument have already been established by the curriculum designer. Both (RPA & TET) provide the necessary assessment of student reading comprehension after introducing the treatment type (TBLT vs. Traditional).

Retelling rubric. Test scores of both the pretest and posttests are based on a retelling rubric originally designed by Applegate, Quinn, and Applegate (2008). The retelling rubric consists of nine grading levels ranging from zero to four where four represents the highest grading score and zero represents the lowest one. The grading level starts with four points and decreases by half of a point with each lower grade until it reaches zero as explained in the following.

A comprehensive retelling includes all information of the passage and a wellsupported personal response is graded with four points. Three and a half points is the grade for an exceptionally strong retelling that omits a small but significant part of the information but still includes a well-supported personal response. A very strong retelling that includes all information, but does not include a personal response is graded with three points. Two and a half points is the grade for a strong retelling that includes many pieces of information in a variety of combinations and may include a personal response; a reader who achieves this score has clearly comprehended the primary gist of the text. A solid retelling that includes most information but that is also characterized by some key omissions and that may include a personal response receives a grade of two points. One and a half points is the grade for a fairly weak retelling that includes some information but also omits a good deal of key information and may contain some factual distortions and that may include a personal response. A weak retelling that includes little information but is also characterized by some glaring omissions and factual distortions and that does not include a personal response is graded with only one point. At last but not least, half of a point is the grade for a very weak retelling that includes little disjointed information and factual distortion and that does not include a personal response. At last, a retelling that may include nothing more than a vague idea of the topic of the text and that does not include a personal response receives a grade of zero.

Procedural Details

Treatment. As described in chapter one, TBLT is a method of language instruction that uses a problem-solving approach to meaningful, real world tasks. In this method, priority is placed on task completion and tasks are assessed according to outcome (Brown, 2007; Willis & Willis, 2007). Students pass through three stages in a TBLT lesson: (a) groups of students engage in real life situations that are similar to the task they are going to perform in the classroom (pre-task stage), (b) groups of students do the intended goal or task of the lesson (running the task stage), and (c) groups of students display or provide an indicator that they have successfully completed the task for the purposes of assessment and evaluation (task completion stage).

Data Analysis

To answer the two research questions for this study, data are collected from three sources: a pretest, posttests, and through observation.

Table 1. *Data Analysis*

Research Questions	Pretest (Placement Test)	Observation		Posttest	
		Researcher Log	Classroom Visits	RPA (Retelling)	TET
Q 1: Is using the TBLT method more effective than using the traditional method in English language teaching?	*			*	*

Q 2: What insights and issues can be gained about implementing TBLT in this research setting?		*	*	

Analysis of Pre and Post Test Scores

Analysis involves entering the collected pre and post tests data into an SPSS data file with multiple accuracy checks. Analysis will also provide descriptive statistics, such as frequency tables, means, and standard deviations for all the variables in the study. The descriptive statistics helps identify any abnormalities in the collected data, such as missing values and outliers and help assess some of the assumptions needed for testing hypotheses related to the first research question.

As a primary tool to analyze the data for this study, a Two-Factor Split Plot ANOVA with a covariate involves one between subject's factor (Teaching method) and one within subject's factor; the repeated measure of the subjects five times over the duration of the study. The first is to control for the effects of the students' prior knowledge of the English language reading comprehension and which could be related to the outcome variable. This control helps level the ground for the two groups we are trying to compare by eliminating the pre-existing effects of such covariates on the outcome variable before comparing the effectiveness of the treatment group to the control group. This process helps boost the internal validity of the study by eliminating some feasible alternatives to the results. The second benefit is to achieve higher power when comparing the treatment and control groups. Introducing the pre test as a covariate to the model helps explain some of the inconsistencies in the outcome variable that otherwise summed under the error variance. Thus, reducing the error variance leads to a more powerful test of the intended null hypothesis.

To address the research question stated earlier in the chapter, the analysis will test the following:

- The null hypothesis: There is no overall significant difference in students' achievement between the TBLT teaching method of the English language and the traditional teaching method.

$$H_o: \mu_{TBLT} = \mu_{Traditional}$$

- The alternative hypothesis: There are significant differences between the TBLT method in teaching English compared to the traditional method, with higher means demonstrated by the TBLT method.

$$H_A: \mu_{TBLT} > \mu_{Traditional}$$

In addition to the above main hypothesis, the following are also tested: • The null hypothesis: there is no interaction effect between treatment type and the repeated measures across time.

$$H_o: \mu_{TBLT_i} = \mu_{Traditional_i}$$

- The alternative hypothesis: There is an interaction effect between the treatment type and the repeated measures across time.

$$H_A: \mu_{TBLT_i} \neq \mu_{Traditional_i}$$

Where *i* is equal to 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 teaching units defined by two weeks period.

The above hypotheses are tested with a probability of controlling type one error (alpha level of significance) at α .05. Previous research such as Gass, Mackey, and RossFeldman (2005) have shown that the chosen alpha level of significance (.05) with the given sample size and study design, provides an acceptable level of power.

Analysis of Observational Data and Researcher Log Data

Enormous amount of field notes emerges from classroom observation and researcher log. Hence, data analysis of observational data gathered from classroom observations (from the control group) and from researcher log (from the treatment group) includes categorization, description, and synthesis. Analysis then involves a description of the categories using little technical language. Both observational data from classroom visits and from researcher log are presented to a peer to read and get his thoughts and impressions about the observed data. To retain the confidentiality of the schools and participants, participants are anonymous and data are reported collectively. Results or interpretation of data are presented with *thick description* that strives to make meaning and interprets how

participants (teachers and students) behave during the application of the study. To ensure the validity of the findings of the data collected via observation, this study presents a detailed description of the observation visits.

Summary

This study addresses two questions:

1. Is using the TBLT method more effective than using the traditional method in English language teaching?

2. What insights and issues can be gained about implementing TBLT in this research setting?

To answer the research questions, the study examines the implementation of TBLT in two intermediate schools in Saudi Arabia. The study compares the treatment group to the control group on the outcome after controlling for the students' pre-existing knowledge of the English language as a covariate. One hundred and twenty-two students, the investigator as the treatment group teacher, and an English language teacher for the control group participates in this study. This study has a mixed-design design (quantitative and qualitative) where quasi-experimental analysis with pre and post tests represent the quantitative part and synthesis of observational data represent the qualitative part. The treatment is the application of the TBLT method through a time frame of ten weeks. The regulation and permission procedures include dissertation committee members' approval for the study and a number of permissions from the IRB at Kent State University, the sponsoring agency (Qassim University), the host of the study, and participants and their parents in the study. Quantitative data are analyzed through using a Two-Factor Split Plot analysis; qualitative data are analyzed through categorizing, describing, and synthesizing the observed insights.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Results of the Quantitative Analysis of
the First Research Question

1. Is using the TBLT method for teaching English as a second language for male, third-grade students in intermediate schools in Saudi Arabia more effective in the acquisition of the English language, in terms of students' achievement on reading comprehension, than using the traditional "prompting" method?

Nature of Quantitative Data

The statistical analysis needed to address this research question was the TwoFactor Spilt-Plot design. The Two-Factor Spilt-Plot design is often called a mixed design and that is due to the combination of the characteristics of the One-Factor Repeated Measures and the Two-Factor Fixed-Effects models (Lomax, 2007). In this study the repeated measures (within-subject factor) is the posttest and the treatment (i.e., TBLT and Traditional teaching method) represents the between-subject factor (see Figure 1).

Variables included in the design are:

1- Pretest measure of students' initial level of the English language reading comprehension. This measure is used as the covariate in the design to help control for students' differences in their initial knowledge of the English language. The covariate will also increase the power of the analysis by explaining some of the variability in the posttests scores that is attributed to differences in students' initial level of the English language rather than the TBLT treatment effect.

2- Treatment factor with two groups. The treatment group consists of students taught the English language with emphasis on reading comprehension through using the TBLT method. The control group consists of students taught the English language

with emphasis on reading comprehension through using the traditional method. The treatment factor is the between-subjects factor in the design.

3- Each student will be tested over time using five sets of posttests measures administered two weeks apart after introducing the two treatments (teaching with TBLT and traditional methods). Each set of the tests consists of one standardized test and one researcher-prepared assessment. Both tests are intended to measure students' reading comprehension in the materials covered during the preceding two weeks. Standardized posttests are the traditional tests used in all the intermediate schools in Saudi Arabia. To accommodate the use of the TBLT teaching method of the English language, this study recognizes the need to develop another test (researcher-prepared assessment) to assure a valid assessment of students reading comprehension. The multiple posttests over time represent the within-subject factor of the design.

Pretest summary statistics. The average score on the pretest for all the 122 students who took the test was 19.885 with minimum and maximum scores of 11.00 and 30.00 respectively. The standard deviation for the pretest scores was 4.03. Table 2 presents summary statistics for the pretest broken down by the two groups of the treatment.

Table 2. *Pretest Summary Statistics*

Treatment Groups	*n*	*M*	*SD*
TBLT Group	66	19.561	4.218
Control Group	56	20.268	3.802

Note: TBLT= Task-Based Language Teaching

An independent t-test was conducted to answer the question, "Is there a significant difference in the pretest score between the TBLT and the traditional teaching methods groups?" There was no statistically significant differences, (t (120) = -.965, p= .336) between students taught by the TBLT method and students taught by the traditional method of teaching on their pretest score suggesting that the two groups' initial proficiency of the English reading comprehension before administering the treatment is about the same.

Posttests summary statistics. There are five sets of posttests. Each set consists of a standardized test and a researcher-prepared assessment. Each set designed to measure students' level of learning the English language material covered in the segment preceding the tests. Standardized posttests were developed and being used to assess students' achievement of the reading passages before the introduction of the TBLT teaching method. To have a comprehensive assessment of students' reading comprehension, whether they were taught with TBLT method or the traditional method, the researcher prepared posttests that help complement standardized posttest in the assessment of students' reading comprehension.

All five standardized posttests have a scale that ranges from zero to eight. The other five researcher-prepared assessment posttests are measured on a scale ranges from zero to four. Table 3 provides summary statistics for the five standardized posttests broken down by the two treatment groups.

Table 3. *Standardized Posttests Summary Statistics*

Treatment Groups		Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3	Posttest 4	Posttest 5
TBLT Group (n = 57)	*M*	7.035	5.246	6.632	5.719	7.070
	SD	.906	1.675	1.046	1.998	1.226
Control Group (n = 47)	*M*	1.128	1.904	5.617	1.723	3.298
	SD	1.498	1.421	1.739	1.470	1.559

Note. TBLT= Task-Based Language Teaching

Table 3 shows that there are pronounced differences between TBLT and control groups across all the five posttests measures, with the exception of the third posttest. The largest difference, ($M_{TBLT} - M_{Control} = 5.907$) between the two groups was on the first posttest. The smallest difference ($M_{TBLT} - M_{Control} = 1.015$) between the two groups was on the third posttest.

Summary statistics for the five researcher-prepared posttests broken down by the two treatment groups are presented in Table 4. Similar to standardized posttests there are sizable differences between the TBLT and control groups on the five researcherprepared posttests with the exception of the third posttest. The largest difference ($M_{TBLT} - M_{Control} = 1.014$) between the two groups was on the fourth posttest. The smallest difference ($M_{TBLT} - M_{Control} = -0.119$) between the two groups was on the third posttest.

Table 4. *Researcher-Prepared Posttests Summary Statistics*

Treatment Group		Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3	Posttest 4	Posttest 5
TBLT	*M*	2.228	2.667	2.360	3.237	3.239
Group						
(n = 57)	*SD*	1.161	.970	1.125	.808	.872
Control	*M*	1.745	1.692	2.479	2.223	2.117
Group						
(n = 47)	*SD*	1.117	1.337	1.402	1.250	1.134

Note. TBLT= Task-Based Language Teaching

Results for treatment effect. Treatment effect makes up the major part of the quantitative analysis of this study in addressing the first general question. The adopted Split-Plot design for this analysis allows for answering several sub-questions that collectively address the general research question. These sub questions are.

1- Does the pretest have a significant effect across all the five posttests? If so, does this effect vary across the different posttests?

Having the pretest in the design helps remove some of the variability in the posttests that can be attributed to the pretest, reduce the error term in the design, and, thus, increase the power of the analysis. Answering this question helps in examining the effect of the pretest on the posttests and in assessing its contribution to the model before examining the main effect of the treatment. It furthers examine whether or not the effect of the pretest on the posttests varies across the five posttests.

2- Is there a significant treatment effect across all the five posttests after controlling for the pretest? If so, does the treatment effect on the posttests vary across the different posttests?

The first part of the second question simply examines the difference between the two groups (TBLT versus traditional teaching methods) on all the posttests simultaneously. The second part of the question helps us examine if the differences between the two groups (TBLT versus traditional teaching methods) varies across the five different posttests. That is simply checking the interaction between the two levels of the treatment and the five posttests.

3- Are there significant differences across the posttests? If so, do these differences constitute a specific pattern?

The third question investigates the differences among the posttests. Further, it looks into whether these differences fit a specific trend.

The above sub-questions will be addressed a couple of times. Once when standardized posttests were used to assess students' reading comprehension and another time when researcher-prepared posttests were used as an outcome.

Standardized posttests results. A mixed Split-Plot design with one betweengroups (TBLT teaching method versus traditional teaching method) factor and one within-subjects (standardized posttest1 to posttest5) factor plus a pretest was adopted to answer the three sub-questions above. A check of the required assumptions for the analysis revealed that the assumption of Sphericity was violated where Mauchly's test of Sphericity was statistically significant (x^2 (9) = 34.464, p= .000). Violating the assumption of Sphericity can lead to invalid F-tests ratio, which can result in a loss of power (Lomax, 2007). Several corrections have been proposed, most notably the Greenhouse-Geisser, Huynh-Feldt epsilon and Greenhouse-Geisser lower-bound estimate corrections. These do not affect the computed F-statistic, but instead raise the critical F value needed to reject the null hypothesis by adjusting the degrees of freedom. Greenhouse-Geisser F-test adjusted is reported with the adjusted degrees of freedom for any within-subject effect test that is tested.

Pretest effect. A between-subjects test for the pretest (F (1, 101) = 25.260, p=.000) revealed that there is a significant effect of the pretest across the five posttests with a large

effect size (*partial* η^2 = .200). From this test, we can infer that having the pretest in the model contributed significantly to the model and any derived conclusion from the treatment effect is adjusted for this significant contribution of the pretest.

Further look at the within-subjects test for examining whether the effect of the pretest varies significantly across the five posttests, (F (3.411, 344.509) = 2.269, p=.072) revealed no statistical significant for this variation. This test infers that the pretest effect on the posttests does not vary significantly across the five posttests. Both of the between and within-subjects tests indicate that the pretest effect on the posttests is invariant across the five posttests.

Treatment effect. The between-subjects test for examining the treatment effect indicates that there is a significant treatment effect on the posttests scores (F (1,101) = 518.311, p= .000) with a relatively large effect size (η^2 = .837). Students taught with TBLT method on average scored (M=6.373, SE=0.108) higher across the posttests than students taught with the traditional teaching method (M=2.694, SE= .119).

Looking at the treatment effect within the five standardized posttests (withinsubjects effect) showed a significant interaction with the five posttests (F (3.411, 344.509) = 45.701, p= .000) with a large effect size (η^2 = .312). Based on the estimated model Table 5 shows that the largest difference between TBLT (M = 7.050, SE = .160) and control (M = 1.110, SE = .176) groups occurred on the first standardized posttest.

The smallest difference was found on the third posttest where TBLT students (M = 6.667, SE = .178) on average scored a bit higher than control group students (M = 5.574, SE = .196).

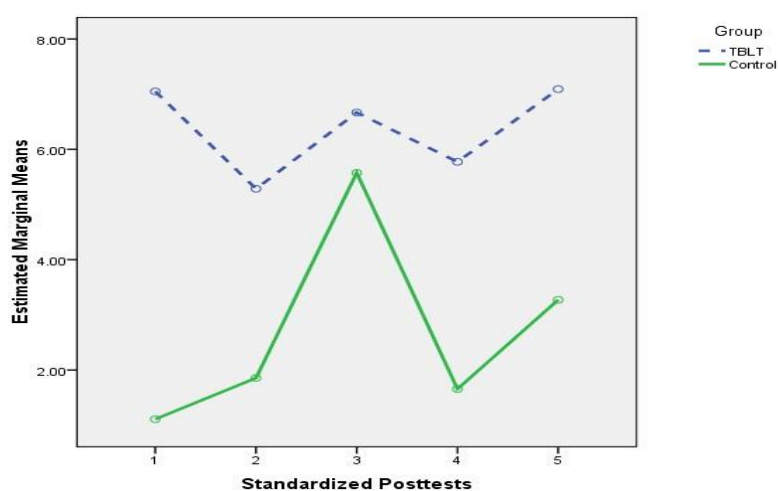Table 5. *Standardized Posttests Estimated Means and Their Standard Errors*

Treatment groups		Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3	Posttest 4	Posttest 5
TBLT	*M*	7.050	5.285	6.667	5.774	7.091
(n = 57)	*SE*	.160	.198	.178	.220	.182
Control	*M*	1.110	1.856	5.574	1.657	3.372

| (n = 47) | *SE* | .176 | .218 | .196 | .242 | .200 |

Note. TBLT= Task-Based Language Teaching

Figure 5 depicts the estimated means in Table 5. The graph shows that TBLT students, on average, performed better than control group students on all the five posttests with varying degrees.

Figure 5. Estimated Means of Standardized Posttests for TBLT and Control Groups

Posttest effect. One aspect of the analysis is examining the pattern of the differences among the posttests regardless of the group (TBLT vs. control) membership. The within-subjects effect for testing the differences between the five posttests is statistically significant (*F* (3.411, 344.509)= 6.252, *p*= .000) indicating that, on average, students' posttests scores do differ significantly from one posttest to another with a medium effect size (*partial* η^2 = .058). Table 6 presents the five standardized posttests estimated means, their standard errors of estimation, and the 95% confidence interval associated with each estimated mean.

Table 6. *Standardized Posttests Estimated Means with Their Standard Errors and 95%*
Confidence Interval

Posttest	M	SE	(95% CI)
1	4.080	.118	(3.845, 4.315)
2	3.571	.147	(3.279, 3.863)
3	6.121	.132	(5.859, 6.382)
4	3.716	.163	(3.392, 4.039)
5	5.182	.135	(4.914, 5.449)

The 95% confidence intervals for the posttests' means show that all of the posttests means are significantly different from zero. Figure 6 displays the estimated means of the five posttests. Students' highest score was on the third posttest when compared to the remaining four posttests.
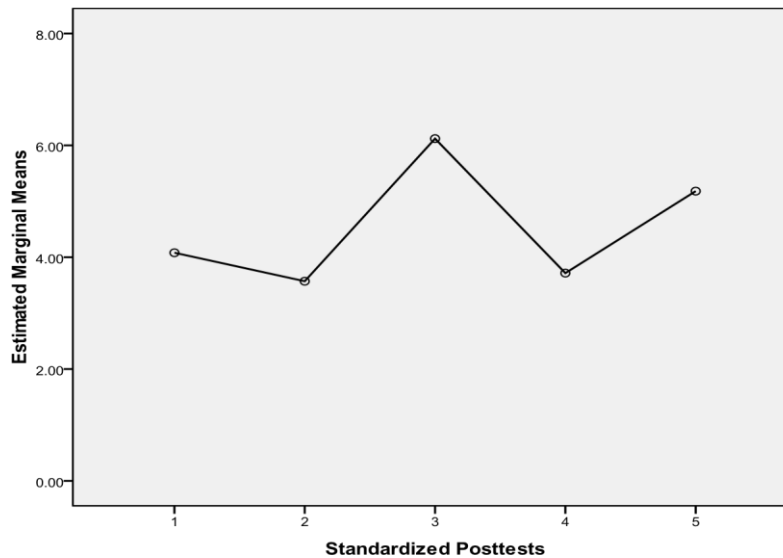

Figure 6. Estimated Means for the Five Standardized Posttests.

The fact that the five posttests were conducted over a period of 10 weeks with two weeks apart, allows for further investigation for the presence of possible significant trends in students' scores over time. There was a significant quadratic trend (F (1, 101) = 5.107, p = .026) and Order 4 trend (F (1, 101) = 19.264, p = .000). While both trends are feasibly possible to represent the fluctuation in the posttests means, Order 4 appears to be the representation of that fluctuation (i.e., note the p value). The posttest means tend to decline on the second posttest, incline sharply on the third, decline again on the fourth, then moderately incline on the fifth posttest giving us the significant Order 4 trend.

Bonferroni pairwise multiple comparisons of the posttests means gives another closer look at the posttests means' fluctuation. Table 7 presents the ten pairwise comparisons among the posttest scores with their statistical significance. Eight out of the ten pairwise comparisons were large enough to be statistically significant. The largest significant difference in posttests scores was between the second and the third posttests (2.550, with p= .000). Out of the two insignificant pair wise comparisons, the smallest difference was between the second and the fourth posttests scores (-.145, with p= 1.000).

Table 7. *Bonferroni Pairwise Comparisons Among Standardized Posttests*

Posttest	2	3	4	5
1	.509*	-2.041***	.364	-1.102***
2		-2.550***	-.145	-1.611***
3			2.405***	.939***
4				-1.466***

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Researcher-Prepared Posttests Results

Researcher-prepared posttests were examined as the other outcomes of the study. The tests were prepared by the researcher to accommodate the TBLT method of teaching, capture, and assess any aspect of students' English reading comprehension that cannot be addressed with standardized posttests. Administrating RPA tests is at the same time of administering standardized posttests. To avoid recall contamination, randomization to the order of the tests (standardized vs. researcher-prepared) administration was applied during students testing.

To answer the three sub-questions stated earlier, similar analysis for standardized posttests is used, Split-Plot design, to analyze researcher-prepared posttests score. These questions examine the effects of the three factors in the split-plot design, which are the between-groups (TBLT teaching method versus traditional teaching method) factor and the within-subjects (researcher-prepared posttest1 to posttest5) factor plus controlling for a pretest as a covariate in the model. Mauchly's test of Sphericity was not statistically significant (Mauchly's $W= .873$, $\chi^2 (9) = 13.542$, $p= .140$). This test infers that the assumption of Sphericity was not violated and, hence, there is no need for adjustments to the F-tests.

Pretest effect. A between-subjects test of the pretest revealed that there was a significant effect of the pretest across the five researcher-prepared posttests ($F (1, 101) = 13.611$, $p= .000$) and effect size ($\eta^2 = .119$) This test infers that having the pretest in the model contributed significantly to the model and any derived conclusion from the treatment effect on researcher-prepared posttests scores is adjusted for this significant contribution of the pretest.

A within-subjects test for examining if the effect of the pretest varies significantly within the five researcher-prepared posttests revealed no statistical significant for this variation ($F (4, 404) = .106$, $p= .980$) with a small effect size ($\eta^2 = .001$). This test indicates that the pretest effect on the posttests does not vary significantly across the five posttests. Both of the between and within-subjects tests suggest that the pretest significant effect on the posttests is invariant across the five posttests. These findings are similar to those obtained when using standardized posttests scores. That is the pretest does have about the same significant effect on the five posttests.

Treatment effect. The between-subjects test for examining the treatment effect indicated that there is a significant treatment effect on the posttests scores (F (1,101) = 24.483, p= .000) with relatively small to moderate effect size (=0.195). Students taught with TBLT method on average scored (M=2.768, SE= .101)η^2 higher across researcher-prepared posttests than students taught with the traditional teaching method (M=2.024, SE= .111).

Looking at the treatment effect within the five researcher-prepared posttests (within-subjects effect) revealed a significant interaction of the treatment with the five posttests (F (4, 404) = 9.061, p= .000) with a medium to a large effect size (= .082). Based on the estimated model, Table 8 shows that the largest difference between η^2 TBLT (M = 3.261, SE = .127) and control (M = 2.088, SE = .140) groups occurred on the fifth researcher-prepared assessment. The smallest difference was found on the third posttest where TBLT students (M = 2.382, SE = .164) on average scored a bit lower than control group students (M = 2.452, SE = .180).

Table 8. *Researcher-Prepared Posttests Estimated Means and Their Standard Errors*

Treatment groups		Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3	Posttest 4	Posttest 5
TBLT	*M*	2.247	2.691	2.382	3.260	3.261
(n = 57)	*SE*	.149	.148	.164	.132	.127
Control	*M*	1.722	1.662	2.452	2.195	2.088
(n = 47)	*SE*	.164	.163	.180	.145	.140

Note. TBLT= Task-Based Language Teaching

Figure 7 below depicts the estimated means in Table 8. The graph shows that TBLT students, on average, performed better than control group students did on four of the five posttests. Students from both groups scored about the same with slightly higher scores in favor of the control group on the third researcher-prepared posttest.
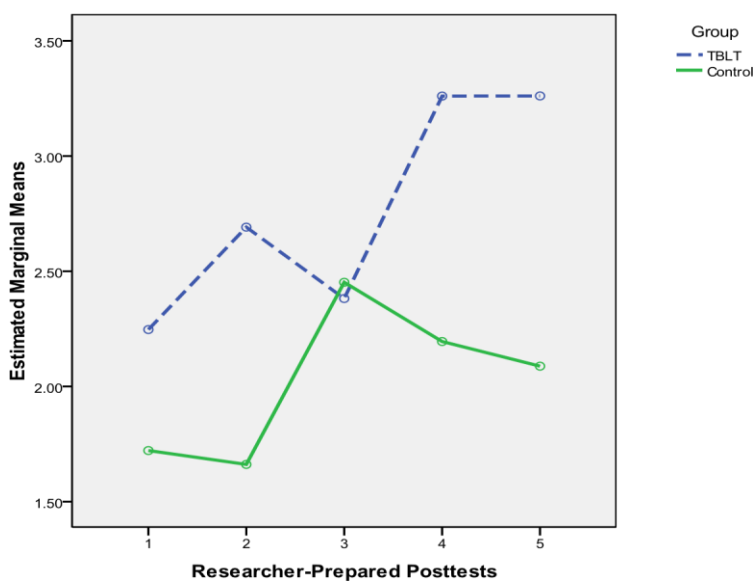
Figure 7. Estimated Means of Researcher-Prepared Posttests for TBLT and Control Groups.

Posttest effect. As in the analysis of standardized posttests, the following shows examination of the pattern of the differences among researcher-prepared posttests regardless of the group (TBLT vs. control) membership. The within-subjects test for examining the differences between the five posttests is not statistically significant indicating that, on average, students' posttests scores did not differ significantly from one posttest to another ($F (4, 404)= .341$, $p= .850$) and a small effect size (= .003). Table 9 presents the five researcher-prepared posttests estimated means, their standard errors of estimation and the 95% confidence interval associated with each estimated mean.

Table 9. *Researcher-Prepared Posttests Estimated Means with Their Standard Errors and 95% Confidence Interval*

Posttest	M	SE	(95% CI)
1	1.984	.111	(1.765, 2.204)
2	2.176	.110	(1.959, 2.394)
3	2.417	.122	(2.176, 2.658)
4	2.728	.098	(2.533, 2.922)

5	2.674	.094	(2.487, 2.862)

The 95% confidence intervals for the posttests mean show that all of the posttests means are significantly different from zero. Figure 8 displays the estimated means of the five posttests. Students' highest score was on the third posttest when compared to the remaining four posttests.
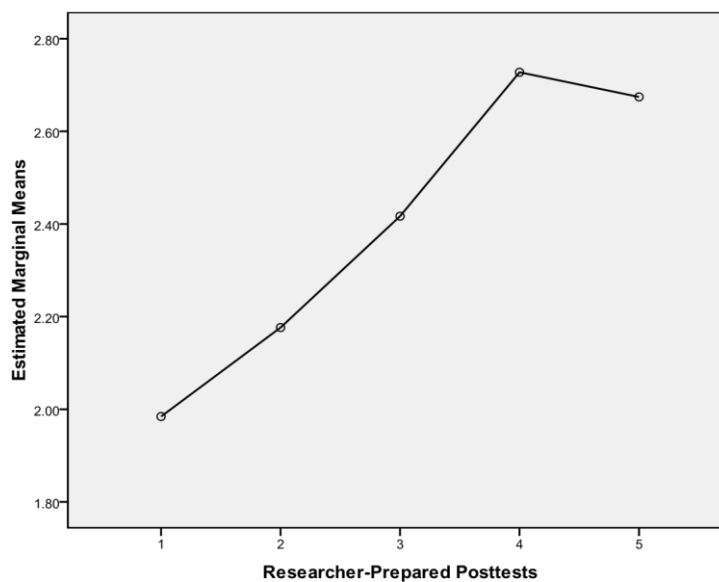

Figure 8. Estimated Means for the Five Researcher-Prepared Posttests.

Table 10 presents the ten pairwise comparisons among researcher-prepared posttests scores with their statistical significance. Five out of the ten pairwise comparisons were large enough to be statistically significant. The largest significant difference in posttests scores was between the first and the fourth posttests (-.743, with p= .000). Out of the remaining five insignificant pairwise comparisons, the smallest difference was between the fourth and the fifth posttests scores (.053, with p= 1.000). Interestingly enough when the five significant contrasts depicted on the graph in Figure 8, it is obvious that there is a consistent gradual pattern of significant differences. Differences between the posttests start to be significant as we move from the first to the third posttests and gradually continue to be significant all the way to the fifth posttest. Difference between the first and the second

posttests was not large enough to be statistically significant. Similar pattern inhibited in the second row of Table 10, where the significant differences started in comparing the second posttest with the fourth and

the fifth posttests. Comparison between the second and the third posttests were deemed not to be significant. Such pattern does not exist when comparing the third posttest to the fourth or the fifth posttests as the means in these comparisons are from posttests either next to each other or very close. This is also true for the last comparison between the fourth and the fifth posttests. Furthermore, all differences have a negative values indicating that there is a gradual improvement in students' performances over time except between the fourth and the fifth posttests where that difference was very small in magnitude yet positive value. This difference is not significant and could be an artifact of a random error in the sample.

Table 10. *Bonferroni Pair Wise Comparisons Among Researcher-Prepared Posttests*

Posttest	2	3	4	5
1	-.192	-.432[*]	-.743[***]	-.690[***]
2		-.240	-.551[***]	-.498[***]
3			-.311	-.258
4				.053

Note. [*]$p < .05$, [**]$p < .01$, [***]$p < .001$.

Results of the Qualitative Analysis of
the Second Research Question

2. What insights and issues can be gained about implementing TBLT in this research setting?

Nature of Qualitative Data

Data for this research question were gathered through two data collection techniques. The first one was *observation* for both of the control and the treatment groups. This data collection provides observational data about the control and TBLT groups. The second data collection technique was *researcher log* where notes were written down as recalled after each time the treatment teacher (researcher) taught the treatment group. Data from both types of data collection techniques took the form of written notes. The following presents the analysis and results for the second research question from both qualitative data collection techniques.

Observation of the Control and Treatment Groups

With reference to Figure 2 in Chapter III, the study focused on nine categories to be considered when writing down observational notes. The first one was (1) *setting the* stage which described what the teacher mainly did to create a desired atmosphere for starting the lesson he had planned such as having the students sit on groups or pairs and also introducing the lesson at hand. The second category of observational notes, (2) *engaging the* students, were interested in showing how the teacher and the students got involved in the main goal of the lesson such as linking the content of the lesson to something the students already knew in their daily lives. The third one, (3) *running the task*, described how and what both of the teacher and the students did to learn the targeted content (achieve the main goal of the lesson). The fourth one, (4) *task completion,* provided notes that describe how both of the teacher and students ensured achieving the main goal or content of the lesson. The fifth and the sixth categories of observational notes described the attitudes of both of (5) the students and (6) the teacher throughout the entire the lesson. The seventh category of observational notes emphasized (7) the difficulties that faced both of the teacher and the students for achieving the main goal of the lesson. The eighth and ninth categories of notes stated (8) the advantages and (9) disadvantages of the teaching method used while teaching the lesson. Table 11 (for the control group) and Table 12 (for the treatment group) represent a comparison, using the above categories of observational notes, between the control group, which had been taught using the traditional teaching

method, and the treatment group, which had been taught using the TBLT method. Each column in Table 11 and Table 12 represents an observational visit.

   Observational visits to the control group. Data were gathered upon classroom visits to the control group. Analysis of data out of those observational visits was through a process of reading written notes multiple times. This process of reading helped in forming trends. These trends aim at describing, making meaning, and explaining the nature of the teaching and learning situations that accompanied teaching for reading comprehension in an English as a second language classroom via the traditional 'prompting' teaching method (see Appendix I for observational data sample about the control group).

Table 11. *Observational Visits to the Control Group*

T= Teacher	Weeks 1&2 Jan 19- Jan 30		Weeks 3&4 Feb 02- Feb 13		Weeks 5&6 Feb 16- Feb 27		Weeks 7&8 Mar 02- March 13		Weeks 9&10 Mar 16- March 27	
SS= students	Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)	
Setting the Stage	T asks ss to be seated on their seats	T asks ss to sit down and get their materials ready.	T enters the classroom and instructs ss to get ready.	T asks ss to be quiet and seated properly.	At the request of T, researcher reminded ss about the importance of what they are doing.	T asks ss to be seated and their materials ready.	T takes about five minutes to talk about the midterm exam.	T starts with writing the topic of the lesson on the board. T asks ss to concentrate with him.	T asks ss to be seated on and have their materials ready.	T asks ss to be seated and have their materials ready.
Engaging the Student (Control) = Pre Task Stage (Treatment)	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on *Bill Gates* reading passage.	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on *Calvin Hutt* reading passage.	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on the reading passage.	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on *Different customs* reading passage.	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on the reading passage (story).	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on *Sherlock Holmes* reading passage.	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on *the* reading passage.	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on *Brooklyn Bridge* reading passage.	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on *Eating Habits* reading passage.	T instructs ss to open their textbooks on the reading passage.

(Continued)

The way the main goal is learned (control) = Running the Task (Treatment)	T reads *Bill Gates* passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads *Calvin Hutt* passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads the passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads *Different customs* passage and explains meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads the passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads *Sherlock Holmes* passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads the passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads *Brooklyn Bridge* passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads *Eating Habit* passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.	T reads the passage and explains the meaning of the new vocabularies. Three ss take turns to read the passage loudly for the class.

Note. T= teacher/ SS= students

Table11

T= Teacher	Weeks 1&2 Jan 19- Jan 30	Weeks 3&4 Feb 02- Feb 13	Weeks 5&6 Feb 16- Feb 27	Weeks 7&8 Mar 02- March 13	Weeks 9&10 Mar 16- March 27

(Continued)

SS= students	Traditional Method (Control Group)				Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)	
Assessment (Control) = Task Completion (Treatment)	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.	T asks ss to do the provided exercises and complete the remaining as homework.
Student Attitudes	Ss are distracted. E.g. one s plays with his cell phone, two ss are chatting secretly. The front line of the class seemed to be following greatly with T.	SS are very quiet and few of them are yawning.	SS do not like the reading lesson. E.g. one s says quietly to his neighbor "do we have to study this?"	SS are reluctant to volunteer for reading the passage loudly.	SS show more enthusiasm. E.g. about six ss show interest while T is reading a story (the reading passage) e.g. They asked some questions.	Few SS want to complete writing math notes on the board from previous lesson. SS are tired.	SS show lack of interest in the lesson as they asked about topic not related to the lesson. Two ss have a battle of words for a reason I do not know. SS with lower abilities have trouble doing the reading exercises/ few ss give up.	SS show better attention with the T as he reads the passage than before.	Some students want to bother themselves with anything to avoid following with the reader. E.g. eyes wandering, playing with pens, using body languages to communicate with other ss so as not to be overheard.	Easily sensed the discomfort of ss. Some ss blew breath strongly out of their mouths/ dropping the textbook strongly on a table. One s said "yea it is going to be the last time to do this"

Note. T= teacher/ SS= students

(Continued)

Table 11

T= Teacher	Weeks 1&2 Jan 19- Jan 30		Weeks 3&4 Feb 02- Feb 13		Weeks 5&6 Feb 16- Feb 27		Weeks 7&8 Mar 02- March 13		Weeks 9&10 Mar 16- March 27	
SS= students	Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)		Traditional Method (Control Group)	
Teacher Attitudes	T is tensed. E.g he repeatedly asks ss to pay attention and follow with him as he was reading.	T has a hard time making ss active and follow with him as he is reading. E.g. T raises his voice and asks ss to pay attention.	T is keeping control of the class. Ss needed a verbal permission from T to do anything i.e read, write, leave the class.	T promises to give extra points for those who volunteer to read.	T gives a general warning at the beginning of the lesson that he is going to take points off of those who do not pay attention.	T looks inconvenient at the situation. T Uses some humor to withdraw ss attention.	T has control over the class. T is earnest. T directed ss who asked unrelated questions to see him after class.	T is more relaxed this time. Probably due to the interesting story he is teaching or maybe because ss are interested and enthusiastic.	T shows concentration while reading the passage. T is prompting the ss with all info. E.g. T says something and asks ss to repeat after him.	T does not show care whether ss liked the lesson or no. T continues to do what he usually does (reading). T picks three ss to take turns to read loudly for the class.

(Continued)

Difficulties	Having ss concentrate on the lesson.	Having ss concentrated on the lesson.	Ss at the back of the class are not sure what to do with the passage exercises.	SS do not want to read loudly for the class.	No difficulties are observed.	SS are concentrating on another lesson.	Keeping track of time as the time elapsed before completing the lesson. Having all students concentrated on the lesson.	No difficulties observed.	SS do not show care about the topic at hand.	The atmosphere of the class is tensed. I doubt of the ss benefited from the reading passage.

Note. T= teacher/ SS= students

Table 11

	Weeks 1&2 Jan 19- Jan 30	Weeks 3&4 Feb 02- Feb 13	Weeks 5&6 Feb 16- Feb 27	Weeks 7&8 Mar 02- March 13	Weeks 9&10 Mar 16- March 27
T= Teacher					
SS= students	Traditional Method (Control Group)	Traditional Method (Control Group)	Traditional Method (Control Group)	Traditional Method (Control Group)	Traditional Method (Control Group)

(Continued)

Advantages	Easy for T to control the class.	A very quiet class.	The class is extremely quiet.	T's promise of extra points encouraged few five students to volunteer for reading.	Easy control for the class.	T is intelligent for using his sense of humor.	No advantages observed.	The topic of the reading helped T and ss to be involved greatly in the lesson. SS needed more motivation. SS participated more than usual.	No advantages observed.	Easy for the T. E.g T sits on his chair and monitors the class.
Disadvantages	T centered. SS seemed to be board.	T centered. Passive SS.	Ss are passive i.e could not find any token of enthusiasm. E.g. T asks a question no one volunteered to answer. Ss never ask questions. So T has to pick one.	T centered. SS are passive. Individual work.	Boring class. Passive ss. T centered.	T cannot give ss all what he planned to give due to elapse of time. T centered.	T uses about 80% of time. Passive students.	T centered. SS are mostly listeners.	T centered. T is prompting SS. A great deal of drills and repetition.	Boring/ prompting/ no active involvement in the reading/ and T centered.

Note. T= teacher/ SS= students

Table

12. *Observational Visits to the Task-Based Language Teaching TBLT Group*

T= Teacher	Weeks 1&2 Jan 19- Jan 30	Weeks 3&4 Feb 02- Feb 13	Weeks 5&6 Feb 16- Feb 27		Weeks 7&8 Mar 02- March 13	Weeks 9&10 Mar 16- March 27
SS= students	Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)	Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)	Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)		Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)	Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)
Setting the Stage	SS have prepared themselves and set in groups of four to five ss. 2 ss help the T hock the computer and projector. T provides a road map to the ss/ what they are going to do/ and what is expected out of the lesson.	SS have prepared themselves and set in groups of four to five ss. 2 ss help the T hock the computer and projector. T provides a road map to the ss/ what they are going to do/ and what is expected out of the lesson.	SS have prepared themselves and set in groups of four to five ss. 2 ss help the T hock the computer and projector. T provides a road map to the ss/ what they are going to do/ and what is expected out of the lesson.	SS have prepared themselves and set in groups of four to five ss. 2 ss help the T hock the computer and projector. T provides a road map to the ss/ what they are going to do/ and what is expected out of the lesson.	SS have prepared themselves and set in groups of four to five ss. 2 ss help the T hock the computer and projector. T provides a road map to the ss/ what they are going to do/ and what is expected out of the lesson.	SS have prepared themselves and set in groups of four to five ss. 2 ss help the T hock the computer and projector. T provides a road map to the ss/ what they are going to do/ and what is expected out of the lesson.
Engaging the Student	T runs PowerPoint slides (exercise) about rich people whom ss know in their real lives. This exercise is related to the main goal of the lesson. T accepts almost all participation from groups.	T runs PowerPoint slides (exercise) about video games that ss are familiar with in their daily lives and which are related to the main goal of the lesson. T provides a catchy task for ss to do.	Ss are involved into group discussion to provide some of the recent stereotypes they see in their daily lives. This activity is related to the main goal of the lesson.	T runs PowerPoint slides (exercise) about famous TV & movie stars that ss are familiar. This exercise is related to the main goal of the lesson. The slides work in perfect harmony with groups of ss.	T runs PowerPoint slides (exercise) about nursery stories that ss are familiar with and from their real lives and which are related to the main goal of the lesson. Little interruption from the counselor.	T runs PowerPoint slides (exercise) about types of food that ss are familiar with and from their real lives and which are related to the main goal of the lesson. Due to time constraint, groups have to share answers fast.

Table

Running the Task (TBLT) The way the main goal is learned (control Group)	Ss read *Bill Gates* reading passage in groups. SS within each group help each other understand the passage. Each group shares with other groups what they have learned. T reads the passage and explains anything the students have missed. Ss ask T about the reading passage.	Ss are engaged in reading *East Coast Games* passage in groups. After they finished reading they share with other groups what they have learned. T facilitates the work of groups. T reads the passage for all groups with explanation.	Groups of Ss are involved in reading *Different Customs*. Every group tells the other groups what they understood from passage. T reads the passage loudly and explains it to all the class.	Ss read *Sherlock Holmes* reading passage in groups. Each group shares with other groups what they have learned. T reads the passage and provides further explanation. Few ss asked about things they did not understood from the passage.	Ss begin reading a story about the *Man Who Sold Brooklyn Bridge* in groups. Each group shares with other groups what they have learned from the story. T reads the passage and explains anything the students have missed. Ss ask T about the reading passage. Some ss gave their opinions about the main character of the story.	In groups, ss read *Eating Habits* reading passage in groups. Ss within each group discuss with each other the ideas presented in the passage. Groups share with others what they have learned. T reads the passage and for all class. Ss gave comments about the passage.

12 (Continued)

T= Teacher	Weeks 1&2 Jan 19- Jan 30	Weeks 3&4 Feb 02- Feb 13	Weeks 5&6 Feb 16- Feb 27		Weeks 7&8 Mar 02- March 13	Weeks 9&10 Mar 16- March 27
SS= students	**Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)**	**Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)**	**Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)**		**Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)**	**Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)**
Task Completion (assessment)	SS do the provided exercises in groups and share what and how they answered the questions. Each S does the narrative question by himself.	SS do the provided exercises in groups and share what and how they answered the questions. Each S does the narrative question by himself.	SS do the provided exercises in groups and share what and how they answered the questions. Each S does	SS do the provided exercises in groups and share what and how they answered the questions. Each S does the narrative question by himself.	SS do the provided exercises in groups and share what and how they answered the questions. Each S does the narrative question by himself.	SS do the provided exercises in groups and share what and how they answered the questions. Each S does the narrative question by himself.

Table

			the narrative question by himself.			
Student Attitudes	Ss are interested in the lesson. SS like the idea of being in groups. E.g. one s said "we are studying differently". Group work is new to them. This provided extra burden on T to explain groups' duties over and over again.	Ss showed concentration while reading the passage. SS seem to enjoy being in groups, which appears in their serious discussions.	Ss show great enthusiasm. E.g. it looks like groups are competing against each other i.e which one can give more information about the passage.	Ss are attentive and excited which is shown through their sharing with other groups and through their questions to their T	Ss are very active in participation. They speak far more than the T. However, there is slightly side chat that is not relevant to the story. However, ss gave wonderful point of views about the main character of the story.	Ss are very encouraged to participate and share what they have learned from the passage. This appears in their comments on the reading passage.
Teacher Attitudes	T is anxious about the time. T gives clear instruction. T gives ss a great deal of encouragement and praise to ss.	T is more relaxed this time. T gives ss a great deal of encouragement and praise to ss. T is tolerant. E.g. he accepts almost all participation i.e not picking on ss, which is right or wrong.	T models a facilitator as he passes among groups. T always praises the groups stating that they are doing wonderful job.	T gives clear instruction. T is anxious about the time. T give ss a great deal of encouragement and praise to ss.	T is a little annoyed from the counselor who interrupted the class. T is very anxious about the time.	T is relaxed and frequently uses humor. T encourages and praises the groups as they working.
Difficulties	Ss lack the knowledge of the meaning of group work. Time is elapsing quickly. Side chats among few ss. Hard for the teacher	T is standing all the duration of the lesson and passes through groups.	T continuously passes through groups and provides attention to all groups.	T keeps attention to all groups.	Keeping track of time as the time elapsed before completing the lesson. This is due to the interruption made by the counselor. Time is not sufficient. Side chat among few ss.	T's breath shows that he is fainted.

Table

12 (Continued)

T= Teacher	Weeks 1&2 Jan 19- Jan 30	Weeks 3&4 Feb 02- Feb 13	Weeks 5&6 Feb 16- Feb 27		Weeks 7&8 Mar 02- March 13	Weeks 9&10 Mar 16- March 27
SS= students	Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)	Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)	Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)		Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)	Teaching with TBLT (Treatment)
Advantages	Ss centered. Ss are active in asking questions and providing responses. Teaching focuses more in understanding. T is a facilitator.	All groups are busy working. Ss negotiate the meaning of the reading passage they have. T is passing groups and provides guidance for ss. T provides guidance	Ss speak far more than their teacher. Ss seem to learn from each other more than that from their T.	It is all about understanding. SS are very active in participation (asking questions and sharing responses).T is a facilitator.	SS are active in asking questions and providing responses/ learning is ss centered/ T role is minimal.	Ss are very active in asking questions and providing responses / learning is ss centered/ T role is to guide and monitor groups of ss.
Disadvantages	Requires mental and physical attendance of T. Time needs to be highly organized.	Requires mental and physical attendance of T. T has the required skills to teach via TBLT. Other Ts might need training to be able to teach via TBLT.	Requires mental and physical attendance of T.	Requires mental and physical attendance of T. T has the required skills to teach via TBLT. Other Ts might need training to be able to teach via TBLT.	Requires mental and physical attendance of T. Time needs to be highly organized.	Requires mental and physical attendance of T.

Note. TBLT = Task-Based Language Teaching/ T= teacher/ SS= students

One of these trends, as interpreted from Table 11, is that teaching via the traditional method is *monotonous*. In other words, the way the lessons were introduced, run, and assessed, students and teacher's attitudes, difficulties, advantages, and disadvantages were pretty much similar across most of the observational visits. For instance, teacher's asking students to be seated with their textbooks opened on the reading passage was a mundane introduction to almost all reading lessons observed. Also, reading the passage solely by the teacher and a couple of students took turns to read aloud for the whole class, and had, afterwards, all students individually do the providedexercises were common themes among running the lesson and assessing students for achieving the main goal of the lesson. The monotonous nature of the traditional teaching method yielded almost similar observational notes for the students and teacher's attitudes, difficulties, and advantages and disadvantages.

Analyzing data related to students' attitude showed that students lacked interest in the reading lessons. This interpretation is obtained from a number of responses and actions done by the students across the several visits. For instance, eyes wandering in the celling and sometimes yawning of students were pretty much common across most of the observational visits. In earlier visits, students in the control group would remain quite and not take the initiative to ask questions, provide answers to questions asked by the teacher or, even volunteer to read the passage for the class. Later on, when the presence of the investigator in the classroom became a regular matter, students started to show more courage to display their attitudes towards the learning situations taking place. For example, in the third week, one student said quietly to his neighbor, "do we have to study this?" showing little care to be overheard by the investigator who was sitting next to them. Also, in the seventh week, students asked about things that were totally unrelated to the reading lesson. They wanted to do anything but not reading. The last week provided a valuable insight about the students' lack of interest in the reading lesson; almost all students exclaimed with happiness that it was their last time in the semester to do reading.

Teacher's attitudes, on the other hand, provided another evidence of inadequacy of the traditional teaching method. In other words, teacher was tensed with the situation that students were not paying the expected attention across most of the observed reading lessons and, hence, repeatedly asked students, in a tune that showed inconvenience, to follow with him and concentrate at the reading passage. The teacher even pointed out in the eighth week that he would take off points of students who did not follow with him as he was reading the passage. Also, it was obvious that the teacher was annoyed of the students being passive and not volunteering to ask questions or respond to questions he asked. To overcome this problem, the teacher promised to give extra credit points for students who showed active involvement in the reading lesson.

Consistent difficulties across most of the observed lessons can be classified into two main categories. The first and most important difficulty the teacher faced was having students involve and concentrate on the reading lesson. For example, the teacher repeatedly and with louder voice asked students to pay attention to what he was reading and students were almost always reluctant to participate through reading, asking, or responding to questions. The second category of difficulties was emerging from the solo work of students. In other words, the nature of the implemented traditional teaching method required students to individually do the provided reading exercises. Students who did not know what or how to do those exercises found themselves left alone and finally gave up.

The advantages of the traditional teaching method seemed to be far less than the observed disadvantages. One advantage of the traditional teaching method was that it was easy for the teacher to teach and enabled him to have control over class the entire duration of the lesson. Another controversial advantage was that students were quiet across most of the lessons observed.

Disadvantages, on the other hand, could be seen from three main perspectives. The first one was that the traditional teaching method was highly *teacher-centered*. In other words, it was the teacher who did most of the work in the reading lesson. The teacher would read the passage, explain the reading passage, assign two or three students to read,

give instructions to students, and read exercises and ask students to do them. The teacher alone used about 70 to 80% of time of the duration of the reading lesson. The second perspective was that the students were bored with the English language reading class. Students used from 70 to 80% of time listening to their teacher while speaking. Students did not have any types of activities to do during the reading lesson except the one they do individually towards the end of the lesson. The third perspective of disadvantages was that the traditional teaching method heavily relied on prompting practices. In other words, instruction and explanation were always orally by the teacher.

Students also did several drills to memorize the correct pronunciations of some English words.

Observational visits to the TBLT group. Observational data gathered about the treatment (TBLT) group were through classroom visits by a knowledgeable colleague of TBLT to the treatment teacher (researcher) who was teaching English with emphasis on reading comprehension via the TBLT method to the treatment group. Analysis of those observational data was through a process of reading written notes multiple times. This process of reading helped in forming trends. These trends aim at describing and explaining the nature of the teaching and learning situations that accompanied teaching reading in an English as a second language classroom via the TBLT method (see Appendix J for observational data sample about the treatment group).

One of the trends, as interpreted from Table 12, was that teaching via the TBLT method took longer time to describe. In other words, written notes about the teaching and learning situations while implementing TBLT had more descriptive details. The reason behind that is that the nature of the TBLT method consists of various elements that lead to more actions to take place in classroom from all parties involved in the lesson being taught. In essence, there were more things that took place while running the lesson and, hence, needed more words to describe them.

Another interpreted trend about the implementation of TBLT was consistency. In other words, the *skeleton* of the reading lesson taught via TBLT consisted of three main stages. The first one, *pre-task,* aimed at engaging students into the main goal of the lesson.

The second stage, *running the task,* described students while they were actually doing what they were intended to do. In the third stage, *task completion,* students provided their teacher with a product for the purposes of assessing to what extent students had achieved the main goal of the lesson.

Having said that the observational data suggested consistency following the three stages of the TBLT method, teaching and learning were also characterized by having a great deal of variety. In other words, various activities took place during the three fixed stages of the TBLT method. For example, in a reading lesson in the second week about *Calvin Hutt's Career Life,* students in the *pre-task* stage provided their classmates with lists of video games they were playing at home and read a passage about *Calvin Hutt's Career Life* in the *running task* stage. Students in the *task completion* stage imagined they were participating in a live competition show to answer a question asked by the interviewer where they told the audience (their teacher and other groups of students) as much details as they could about *Calvin Hutt's Career Life*.

The most prevailing trend across most of the nine observational data categories in Table 12 was that learning via the TBLT method was *learner-centered.* Learner-centered meant here that that the students were the central focus of instruction and students participated in creating their learning situations. To clarify this notion, a careful investigation is bestowed to the nine observational data categories in Table 12. Students were described or mentioned by the observer almost in every cell across all columns unlike the teacher whom the observer mentioned fewer times and described in roles of being a facilitator rather than a source of instruction. In other words, students were *active learners* (i.e., they were discussing, negotiating, reading, and displaying their understanding of what they had been learning). This meant the learning situation via the TBLT method revolved around the learners.

Students had realized in the first week of the study the difference occurred in the way they were taught and which appeared in one student's comment to his group, "we are studying differently." Studying via TBLT or "studying differently" had positively enhanced students' verbal responses towards the learning situation, and which was

revealed in multiple occasions across the following weeks of the study. For instances, students tended to organize themselves at the beginning of each lesson, join their groups, and show readiness to start the reading lessons without much efforts or further notices from the treatment teacher (researcher). Also, the students always showed engagement in group works and enthusiastically shared their responses with their classmates.

Difficulties as observed when adopting the TBLT method could be seen from three perspectives. One difficulty was related to the design of the lesson plan. The design of lesson plan was compound involving three interrelated stages (*pre-task, running the task, and task completion)*. The interrelation among those three stages meant that they all strived to accomplish the intended goal of the lesson. This interrelation required a kind of coherence or *unity* in the *mechanism* of those three stages where each stage was derived from or built upon the other stages. In other words, the *pre-task* stage primarily introduced the *running task* stage and the *task completion* stage investigated or showed to what extent the *task* was run and learned. To visually see how the *unity* of *mechanism* was carried out, see lesson plans in Appendix K.

The second difficulty about implementing the TBLT method was the factor of time. Since there were multiple activities to be carried out by students across the three stages of the lesson, keeping track of time seemed to be the most challenging difficulty that the treatment teacher. Upon designing the lesson plan, each one of the three stages of the lesson was allotted a certain amount of time of the duration of the lesson. The occurrence of unintended loss of time or spending more time than planned in one stage might lead to not achieving the main goal of the lesson as hoped or planned. The problem of the time factor happened in the seventh week when there was an interruption by the counselor, who took about ten minutes from the time of the class, a failure to comply with the designed lesson plan took place. The students did not have time to go the *task completion* stage in that lesson.

The third difficulty was pretty much related to the teacher role in the classroom. Mental and physical attendance needed to be present by the teacher. In other words, the teacher needed to physically pass through all groups of students who were discussing or

sharing information and be mentally available for guidance to students. Besides responding to any group questions, the teacher needed to even engage or participate with every group as a sign of paying attention to what students were saying in groups and value their inputs. The absence of appropriate physical and mental attendance of the teacher might lead to a deviation of groups of students from the intended group work to unrelated lesson talks. This suggests that teacher's role can be described by being a facilitator in the TBLT method and which is even more demanding on the teacher physically and mentally.

Careful analysis of the two categories of observational data related to the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of the TBLT method in Table 12 showed that the advantages and disadvantages went along with or supported by the interpreted trends earlier. Examples of advantages related to learners included; that students were very active in terms of asking questions and sharing responses, negotiation of meaning was always present among groups of students while reading passages, focus was on students since they tended to speak far more than their teacher, presence of peer or collegial learning as students learned more details about the reading passage from shared responses by groups of students, and students' comprehension of meaning was always the ultimate aim targeted by the practices involved in the TBLT lesson. Interpreted advantages related to the work of the teacher were much less than the observed ones about the students. The reason was that the teacher was not the central focus or the main source of information and, hence, focus was more on the students who were making action. Among the advantages that described the work of the teacher included that he was modeling the role of a facilitator as he was passing among groups providing them with guidance, monitoring group works, relaxed, and frequently used his sense of humor.

Disadvantages were minimal and related to the work of the teacher in the classroom rather than that of students. The most prevailing disadvantage about the implementation of the TBLT method was that it was demanding on the teacher and required mental and physical attendance by the teacher.[2] At last but not least, implementing TBLT required

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[2] This notion is elaborately explained under the observed difficulties that accompanied the implementation of the TBLT method earlier in this chapter.

more time and, hence, any unintended loss of time might easily lead to failure to achieve the main goal of the lesson as planned. At last, teaching via the TBLT method was not easy work for the teacher and required certain skills and background about the TBLT method before implementing it on the classroom, and which the treatment teacher had while he was teaching.

Researcher Log

With reference to *researcher log* in Chapter III, data gathered under this data collection tool were the observed data by the treatment teacher (researcher) as he recalled them after each time he taught the TBLT group. In other words, analyzed data under this tool were restricted to the TBLT group and not the control group. Analysis of these data followed a systematic process known in qualitative research as *Grounded Theory*. The reason for using *Grounded Theory* is that the observed data under *researcher log* primarily serve most of the five interrelated jobs of a theory which include: enabling prediction or explanation of behavior, being useful in theoretical advance in sociology, being usable in practical applications as predication and explanation foster practitioners to understand and have some control of situations, providing a perspective on behavior, and guiding and providing a style of research on particular areas of behavior (Glaser & Strauss, 1973).

Grounded Theory is a method of analyzing qualitative data (Glaser & Strauss,

1973). In essence, *Grounded Theory* works in reverse to the function of the regular theory. Whereas the regular theory starts with a hypothesis and then strives to gather *examples* or data to support the theoretical hypothesis, in *Grounded Theory* data are first gathered and based upon which a hypothesis emerges through a systematic process. This systematic process includes first collecting data, drawing a base line of repeated data, assigning codes for the repeated data, grouping these codes into similar concepts from which categories are formed. Categories become the basis for the creation of a theory.

Analysis of the observed data under *researcher log* accordingly followed a systematic process. After the data were collected, they were read many times. During reading, some collected data were repeated and which enabled to start assigning codes for

those repeated data. As this process was repeated many times, a base line was developed for repeated data. This process yielded a number of codes that represented the repeated data. These codes were grouped into similar categories. This analysis also included thoughts and understanding of the meaning of the collected data of a peer who read the collected data under *researcher log*.

The analysis of data collected via *researcher log* showed that they revolved around four categories. Not surprisingly, the two most prevailing categories were about the students' roles and attitudes in the classroom. The collected data under those two categories support the observational data interpreted under Table 12 and which adds further strength to the findings. The third category was very much related to running TBLT as a method of teaching with emphasis on reading comprehension in an English as a second language classroom in this research setting. The fourth category of data was related to the role and impression of the teacher (researcher) in the classroom while he was teaching via the TBLT method in this research setting. *Figure 9* shows the numbers of counted *key words* that describe each category.[3]

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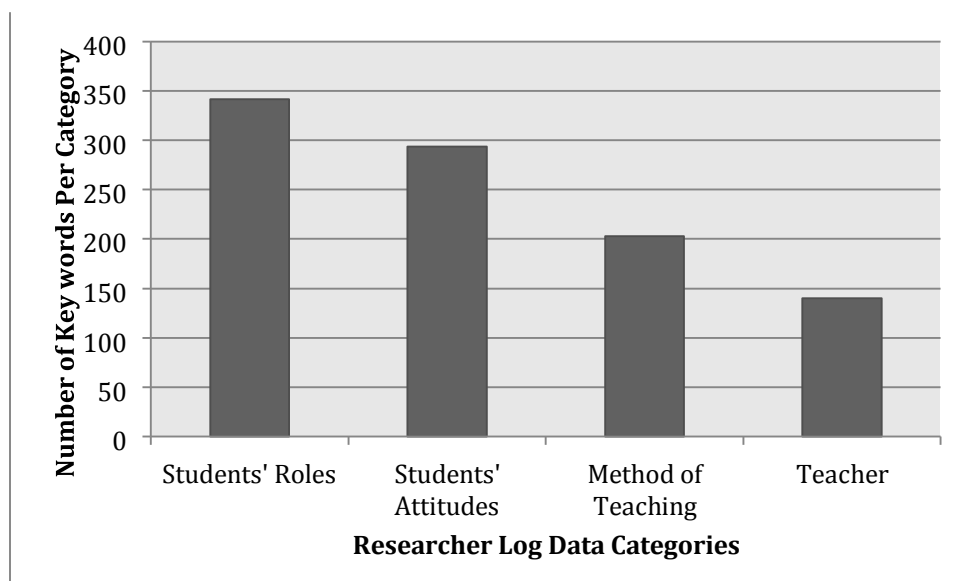
[3] *Figure 9* includes counted numbers of key words under each category and excludes neutral words such as articles, prepositions, and verbs to be.

Figure 9. Number of Counted Key Words under the Four Categories.

The reasons that made students' roles and attitudes be the two most prevailing categories in a reading lesson taught via the TBLT method could be linked to the reality that they had played a central role or were the action makers during the flow of the reading lesson. Data out of *researcher log* repeatedly described the roles of students they had been playing in the classroom. The three most frequent roles included reading, discussing, and sharing. Collected data also tended to report what students had been doing in the classroom. Students started every reading lesson with a group discussion, *the pre-task stage*, involving an activity that imitated students' daily lives and which helped engage the students in the intended reading content. Every group of students extended its work after the engaging activity to read the reading passage, group members discussed their understanding of what they had read, and formulated an agreed-upon response to share with other groups.

The second half of the prevailing data was a description of students' attitudes towards the reading lesson. The two most common words used to describe the students' attitudes were *enthusiasm* and *involvement*. Enthusiasm and involvement in this setting referred to the manner in which the students were performing the aforementioned roles (reading, discussing, and sharing). Two examples derived from the raw data could give a picture of enthusiasm and involvement of students in the reading lesson. In the third week, two groups of students had an argument about who should have the turn first to start sharing their responses with other groups. The group that started first usually had the opportunity to share another time as long as the time allotted for group sharing was not consumed. The second example was about a student who actually broke the boundaries of group work in the fifth week. When the turn was for his group to share with a response, that student enthusiastically stood up and orally narrated the whole of the reading passage consuming more than the time allotted for his group. In the meantime, the teacher (researcher) tried

to politely give the chance to another group but the student would not stop and continued all the way to the end of his long response.

Students' attitude towards the reading lesson taught via the TBLT method was positive. Interpreted data showed that they even loved and enjoyed what they were doing in the reading lesson. Beside the never observed complain or lack of interests tokens that universally accompany any an undesired class by students at the age of the students participating in the study, the treatment teacher (researcher) considered an incident that had happened in the fourth week as an evidence or at least an indicator that the students loved the reading lesson taught via the TBLT method.

It was Wednesday (the last day of school week days in Saudi Arabia) when the teacher (researcher), as usual after teaching students the reading class, headed towards the teachers' office room. The counselor stopped the treatment teacher and asked him if he gave his instructions to five of the students not to participate in a tour outside the school hosted by an outsider organization. The treatment teacher told the counselor that he had not given any instructions in this regards. In the middle of that conversation, the treatment teacher was shocked out of surprise and wondered about the reason that prevented the five students from going on the tour as he knew that every student wished to participate in similar tours. The treatment teacher asked the counselor about the reason that made the students opted not participate in the tour. The counselor replied that the students said that they had had an English reading class and they did not want go on the tour. That incident was complemented by a phone call after the end of the study by the original teacher to the treatment teacher (researcher) stating that some students asked him to teach them the way the treatment teacher (researcher) was teaching them.

The third category was related to the application of the TBLT method in this research setting. Interpreted data out of *researcher log* suggested some difficulties that the treatment teacher had faced when implementing the TBLT method. One of those difficulties was that the students did not know the meaning or not used to group work. At the beginning, students were sitting in groups but working individually which made the treatment teacher correct that at once explaining duties and expectations out of group work.

Another difficulty, which might be a consequence of the first one, was the existence of minimal side talks (not related to the lesson at hand) among some students at the beginning of the study. However, as the study progressed and students understood the meaning of group work, those minimal side talks started to vanish. The last difficulty was related to the challenge of time. Time was congesting and reading lessons taught in this study tended to finish exactly by the end of the allotted duration of time and sometime a minute or two minutes were to be borrowed from the breaks following the lessons. That warned that any unintended loss of time might severely prevent students from achieving the goal of the lesson as planned.

The fourth category was related to the teacher's (researcher) role and impression in this research setting. Interpreted data out of *researcher log* showed that the treatment teacher (researcher) had described what he was doing in every class he had taught. The way he was teaching was consistent across all lessons and strictly followed the principles of the TBLT method he was implementing including the three stages of a TBLT lesson (*pre-task, running the task,* and *task completion*). The treatment teacher precisely followed the lesson plans he designed for every reading lesson class. To engage students in the main task of the lesson, those lessons tended to start with group activities that were derived from students' daily lives while ensuring the achievement of the main goal of the lesson (*running the task*) was through a *retelling* activity that too imitated students' real lives. The teacher's (researcher) impression showed always satisfaction about the way he taught and the way students were working in the classroom. However, a couple of times the TBLT teacher mentioned that he was exhausted and that might be linked to the continuous physical motion the treatment teacher was doing while passing among groups and paying attention to groups' discussions as well as participating with them.

Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Each of the previous two sections (quantitative & qualitative analyses) provided detailed description of the analysis and the findings of the study. While each analysis revealed specific findings that were related to the nature of the data collection tools used to answer one of the two research questions, this section attempts to combine findings of

both quantitatively and qualitatively collected data to provide a full or complete picture about the findings of the study. The two research questions were:

1. Is using the TBLT method for teaching English as a second language for male, third-grade students in intermediate schools in Saudi Arabia more effective in the acquisition of the English language, in terms of students' achievement on reading comprehension, than using the traditional "prompting" method?

2. What insights and issues can be gained about implementing TBLT in this research setting?

The overall of the statistical analyses of the quantitatively collected data provided valuable findings to answer the first research question. The major finding that explicitly answered this question was: yes, the application of the TBLT method for teaching English as a second language for male, third-grade students in intermediate schools in

Saudi Arabia was more effective in the acquisition of the English language, in terms of students' achievement on reading comprehension, than using the traditional "prompting" method. In other words, the application of TBLT method in this research setting helped increase the students' achievement scores in reading comprehension. That major finding was statistically reported by two sources of data (researcher-prepared assessments and standardized text-established tests), and which even increased the validity of the findings. The pretest results also showed that students were equal across the control and treatment groups eliminating the possibility for effect of initial level of the English language reading comprehension before the application of the TBLT method. The average scores of both types of posttests (researcher-prepared assessment and standardized textestablished tests) of the control and treatment groups were highly significant in favor of the treatment group.

Qualitatively collected data on the other hand greatly helped describe and explain the surroundings of the application of the TBLT method in this research setting. Because neither group knew their group identification (treatment or control) nor knew the way they were going to be taught before the beginning of the study, this study assumes that students in both groups have a very low level of possibility to form a prejudice that might interact with their attitudes towards the learning situations. Hence, the interpreted qualitative data

showed that teaching via the TBLT method in this research setting helped students develop a desired attitudes towards the learning situations, unlike the traditional teaching method that showed that students had developed undesired attitudes towards the learning situations as elaborately explained under the analyses of the qualitative data.

Another vital finding interpreted from the qualitative data was that teaching via the TBLT method required both of the students and their teacher to play roles or involve in practices that went along with the practices of the constructivist learning theory, unlike the traditional teaching method which involved practices and roles of students and their teacher that went along with the behaviorist learning theory as elaborated in Chapter Two and under the analyses of the qualitative data.

Interpreted quantitative and qualitative data when combined showed that they had provided support and evidences for the findings suggested by each set of data. In other words, qualitative findings that suggested that the TBLT method had helped the students in the treatment group develop desired attitudes towards the learning situations were supported by the quantitative findings that showed that the TBLT method had also helped students increase their achievement scores in reading comprehension of the English language. Also, the quantitative findings that showed that the traditional teaching method did not help students in the control group increase their achievement scores in reading comprehension as compared to that of the TBLT method were supported by the qualitative findings that showed that the traditional teaching method also did not help the students develop desired attitudes towards the learning situations as that of the TBLT method.

Summary

Chapter IV presented the analyses and results of this study. The chapter had begun with an introduction that warned in advance that the analyses and results will be organized or divided into three main sections. The first section was related to the results of the quantitative analysis of the first research question. This section had shown that the statistical analysis addressed the first research question was the Two-Factor Spilt-Plot design. Interpreted quantitative results from the pre-test showed that students in both of the treatment and control groups were equal in terms of their prior knowledge of reading

comprehension of the English language. Interpreted quantitative results showed that students' posttests scores for the treatment group were higher and statistically significant than those of students' ones in the control group.

The second section was related to the results of the qualitative analysis of the second research question. This section had shown that observational data were distributed into two tables (Table 11 and Table 12) for the purposes of comparison and contrast between the traditional teaching method and the TBLT method. This section had also shown that analysis of data out of *researcher log* were via *Grounded Theory*. Interpreted results out of the qualitative data showed that the TBLT method helped students develop desired attitudes towards the learning situations and involved practices and roles of students and their teacher that went along with the constructivist learning theory. Interpreted results out of the qualitative data showed that the traditional teaching method did not help students develop desired attitudes towards the learning situations and involved practices and roles of students and their teacher that went along with the behaviorist learning theory. The Third section focused on combining both of the quantitative and qualitative findings. This section had shown that they had provided support and evidences for the findings suggested by each set of data.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Chapter V discusses the findings of the study and aims at linking them to some of the existing educational issues. For the purposes of organization, this chapter consists of three main parts. The first part, *Discussion*, addresses the major quantitative and qualitative findings of the study. Discussion of these findings provides the opportunity to address sub-topics related to where TBLT falls in a pedagogical context, student-centered vs. teacher-centered approach of instruction, classroom communication, and the methodological limitations of the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study. The second part, *Implications*, mainly addresses how the reported findings speak to the related educational context of the study. Benefited educational issues from this context include English language teaching method in Saudi Arabia, English language teacher education, educational policies related to designing the English language curriculum, and recommendations for future research. The third part, *Conclusion*, summarizes Chapter V and concludes the study.

Discussion

As the nature of the study has a mixed-method design (quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques), it is easier for the reader to discuss each type of findings by itself. The discussion of the findings attempts to make connections to some of the existing educational issues including teacher-centered vs. student-centered

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instruction and classroom communication. The discussion will begin with the quantitative findings and then followed by the qualitative ones.

Quantitative Findings

Quantitative findings were mainly obtained from two data collection tools that included conducting a pretest and five posttests for 122 students divided into two groups (i.e., control and treatment). The pretest primarily aimed at measuring students' initial level of the English language reading comprehension. Pretest scores showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the treatment group (students taught by the TBLT method) and control group (students taught by the traditional teaching method) suggesting that the two groups' initial level of the English language reading comprehension before administering the treatment was about the same. The finding of equivalence between the control and treatment groups prior to the application of the experiment validates attributing any positive or negative change that occurs on the students' reading comprehension achievement (posttest scores) to the effect of the method of teaching (TBLT vs. Traditional), especially when known that similar learning conditions were ensured for both of the treatment and control groups.

Posttests aimed at testing students over time using five measures administered two weeks apart after introducing the two treatments (teaching with TBLT and traditional methods). Each set of the tests consisted of one standardized test and one researcherprepared assessment resulting in ten sub-tests (five standardized and five researcherprepared assessment tests). Both sets of tests intended to measure students' reading comprehension in the materials covered during the preceding two weeks. Reasons for adopting two formats of posttests included having an accurate and comprehensive assessment of students' reading comprehension as researcher-prepared assessment complements standardized posttest in the assessment of students' reading comprehension. The treatment teacher (researcher) as well as the control group teacher graded both types of posttests. The grading process showed a very low level of disagreement (i.e., less than .03%).

Posttest scores showed that there were differences between treatment and control groups across all the posttest measures in favor of the treatment group, with the exception of the third posttest. Across the first, second, fourth, and fifth posttests, students in the treatment group significantly scored higher than students in the control group. In the third

posttest, neither group scored significantly higher than the other one. That is, the control group scored a little bit higher than the treatment group in researcherprepared assessment part while the treatment group similarly scored a little bit higher than the control group in the standardized part.

One reason that might help explain why students' test scores did not have significant differences in the third posttest between the treatment and control groups is *history*. History in this context refers to the situation when unanticipated events occur while the treatment is being conducted and participate in changing participants' behavior (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Those events become alternative explanations for the changes in participants' behavior rather than treatment. During the third posttest time for the treatment group, it happened that the school had had an open day.[4] Students in the treatment group had to finish their third posttest before they could join their colleagues and have fun in that open day.

Knowing some of the common characteristics and needs of students at this age may explain why students in the treatment group did not score significantly higher than students in the control one as they had done in the first, second, fourth, and fifth posttests. During the application of the third posttest, some students in the treatment group were most likely thinking of their colleagues who were having fun outside of the class. Other students might have wanted to finish as soon as they could so as not to miss much fun of the open day. Thus, it is possible that the effect of history interacted with the third posttest had led to nonsignificant differences. This is to say that students in the treatment group could have done better and might have scored significantly higher than students in the control group if there were no open day during the time of the third posttest. This means that students in the treatment group's not scoring significantly higher than that of students in the control group should not be attributed to the treatment effect but to the effect of an outside event (the open day) known quantitatively as history. This claim is supported by the other four posttests in which students in the treatment group have scored significantly higher than students in the control group.

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[4] In an open day, the school cancels all classes, gathers all students in one place, and do fun activities.

The findings of the pretest and posttest scores together answered the first research question. The pretest results, as mentioned earlier, showed equivalence of students' initial level of the English language reading comprehension before the application of any of the two teaching methods (i.e., TBLT vs. traditional) in both groups. The average scores of both types of posttests (researcher-prepared assessment and standardized text-established tests) of the control and treatment groups were significant in favor of the treatment group. That finding meant that the application of TBLT method in this research setting helped increase the students' achievement scores in English language reading comprehension more than that of the traditional teaching method. Equivalence of both groups attained prior to the application of the treatment and reporting significant differences from two data sources (researcher-prepared assessment and standardized textestablished tests) increased the validity of the findings.

Observed data help in explaining reasons related to having better quantitative results (posttest scores) in favor of the TBLT group. These data hypothesize that characteristics and procedures associated with TBLT help students, as reported quantitatively, increase their reading comprehension achievement scores more than those associated with the traditional teaching method. TBLT procedures and characteristics include teacher's role as a facilitator, group work, students' roles within group work, the type of activities in which students are involved, complexity of tasks, and lesson plan.

Yet all these procedures and characteristics of TBLT work in harmony and complement the work of each other, three elements of TBLT seem to make the greater difference from the traditional teaching method. First, the structure of the lesson that divides the duration of the lesson into three phases (*pre task, running the task, task completion*) accompanied by what this study would describe as a *unity of mechanism* that requires interrelation of these three phases where every phase is built upon the other. Second, the type of activities in which students are involved does imitate their daily lives. Third, the greater amount of space (time) that students have in groups to discuss, negotiate meaning, and share responses. (More details about how these elements work in classroom are elaborately discussed under Chapters I and II).

The above quantitative findings show a desired or better learning outcome achieved when applying the TBLT method. Better learning is always a primary common aim of

learning theories and which strive to describe how learning occurs and, consequently, what practitioners and learners should do towards having better learning and teaching. Careful examination of the TBLT principles and characteristics and those of the constructivist learning theory reveals strong connections between the constructivist learning theory and the TBLT Practice. These connections are addressed later on this chapter under the pedagogical context of the TBLT method.

Quantitative findings emerging out of the application of TBLT in this study are supported by findings of other studies that implemented TBLT in other teaching and learning settings (Aljarf, 2007; De Bot, 2001; Ellis & Fotos, 1991; Lopez, 2004; Stevens, 1983; Swain, & Lapkin, 2000). Connection between the findings of those studies and the findings of this study is seen through the significant results of the positive effect of TBLT when it is applied in various teaching and learning settings. For examples, students who were taught via task-based instruction learned more than those who were taught via presentation (Lopez, 2004). A significant interaction is found between achievement (acquisition of language) and the use of task in teaching (De Bot, 2001; Swain & Lapkin,

2000). TBLT helped students know far more language through activities (tasks) than what they exhibit in response to classroom drills (Stevens, 1983). The application of TBLT has motivated students, improved their speaking skills, and helped them use grammar and pronunciation correctly (Aljarf, 2007). Teaching students via TBLT helped them increase their knowledge of advanced grammatical rules (Fotos & Ellis, 1991). Such positive findings about TBLT in other research settings provide further validity and reliability to the findings of this study.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative findings were mainly obtained from two data collection sources that included observation and researcher log. Qualitative findings helped explain or visualize the surroundings of the application of the traditional and TBLT teaching methods in this research setting. Discussion of the qualitative and quantitative findings shows that they are in agreement; both types of findings suggest that when emphasis is placed on English language reading comprehension, TBLT is a better way of instruction than the traditional teaching method as discussed quantitatively earlier and qualitatively below.

The first theme of findings obtained out of observation provided certain characteristics or trends that tended to accompany the application of both types of teaching methods. Characteristics and trends associated with the traditional teaching method were mostly undesired in an educational setting. For examples, teaching via the traditional teaching method lacked variety and was almost always monotonous. Students lacked interest in reading lessons and which was reflected on the teacher's attitudes who was tensed during most of those lessons. Students' repeated solo work across all lessons resulted in a very weak participation by students who preferred to remain passive most of the time. The flow of the lesson was highly *teacher-centered* as a natural result of repetition and the prompting way of instruction run by the teacher.[5] Two controversial advantages were observed about the traditional teaching method. Those advantages included that the traditional method helped the teacher have control over students and the class was quite most of the time. These undesired characteristics of the traditional teaching method are not surprising, and can, further, be described by being a natural scenario for a teaching practice that is built on some assumptions of the behaviorist learning theory, as it is the case of the traditional teaching method.

A major assumption underlying the behaviorist learning theory (as discussed earlier in Chapter II) is the emphasis of the external workings of humans and animals where learning takes place through a structure or pattern of behavior that the learner must go through for learning to occur (Guthrie, 1935; Hull, 1935; Pavlov, 1927/1960; Skinner, 1938; Thorndike, 1913; Watson, 1924).[6] Examination of the assumptions of the behaviorist learning theories reveals excessive emphasis on the way an individual learns as an isolated unit from culture. This is to say that interaction with culture is hardly given attention as a powerful means of or even a cause for learning. Such assumption informs solo working in classroom and which is the case of the traditional teaching method where students work individually to read the reading passages and do attached exercises.

The behaviorist learning theory further informs the traditional teaching practice

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[5] More details will be discussed later on this chapter about student=centered vs. teacher-centered.

[6] More details about the assumptions of the behaviorist learning theory are elaborately discussed under Chapter II.

in this study setting with the assumption that learning happens due to the accumulation of habits (Frequency or repetition) (Watson, 1924). This type of frequency or repetition is seen in the drillings of students and the way the teacher repeatedly reads the reading passage for the students. Another vital assumption of behaviorism that informs the traditional teaching method in this setting is the positive and negative reinforcement (Skinner, 1935) which is seen through the given extra points or taken off points from students depending on their participation quality in classroom when teaching via the traditional teaching method.

However, characteristics and trends associated with the TBLT method were mostly recommended and desired in an educational setting. Those trends and characteristics could be classified into four themes. The first theme was related to the nature of the TBLT method. The findings showed that teaching via TBLT had a great deal of variety since it used more words and time to describe what had been taking place during observation. Taught lessons via TBLT were consistent to have the three main stages of the lesson (*pre-task, running task, and task completion*).

The second theme of trends and characteristics was related to the roles and attitudes of students. In contrast to the solo work, lack of interests, weak participation of students, and highly *teacher-centered* instruction when learning and teaching via the traditional method, the findings showed that group work and imitation of students' real lives were common themes among all lessons taught via the TBLT method. The flow of the lesson was mostly *student-centered* of lessons taught via TBLT as constructivist instructional practice.[7] Students were active learners in ways that they were discussing, negotiating, reading, and displaying their understanding of what they had been learning. Students showed positive attitudes orally and verbally towards the English language reading class; they had the initiative to volunteer to organize the settings of the classroom to form groups prior to the beginning of each lesson and the students' request by the end of the study to continue learning in the same way with their original English language teacher. The third theme of trends and characteristics was related to the roles and attitudes of the teacher. The findings showed that the teacher modeled the facilitator role rather than the source of information while teaching via the TBLT method. These desired findings so far about the

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[7] More details will be discussed later on this chapter about where TBLT falls in a pedagogical context and when addressing issues related student=centered vs. teacher-centered.

TBLT method as an instructional practice imply a number of issues for teachers and interested researchers to consider.

One issue is that teaching via TBLT, due to the great deal of variety involved, helps in providing teachers and learners with rich lessons. When lessons are rich, several good qualities of teaching come along the way. These qualities include students and teachers' high motivation and interest in the lesson, absorbing knowledge through multiple dimensions, experience sharing, and providing teachers and learners with opportunities for critical and creative thinking.

Another issue inferred from the findings is that learners are key participants along with their teacher in creating the learning situations as the mainstream of the lesson revolves around them (*student-centered instruction*). Needless to say how this is beneficial to students (as will be discussed later on this chapter), this is also beneficial for facilitating the work of the teacher; a teacher will be working with partners who are interested on what the teacher is saying and doing. To clarify this notion, when an individual shares a personal story or any topic with someone and the latter shows lack of interest, the speaker tends to finalize the topic fast and which might lead to deletion of important details. However, the speaker tends to provide more details and even includes personal thoughts as long as the listener is showing interest on what is being said.

A further issue inferred from these findings is that the teacher is not the source of knowledge in classroom, but a component that facilitate the work of students who are learning. It is vital that teachers understand that their primary job in classroom is not making students learn but helping them learn (as will be addressed shortly). In other words, once a teacher attempts to make students learn, s/he unintentionally plays the role of learning cause or creator. Such way of teaching prevents students from playing a vital role of the learning process, which is the creation of their learning. Learning should not be considered an outcome package to obtain but a process run through. Teachers in the Saudi context and in other contexts need to facilitate their students learning (where students participate in the process of learning) rather than making students learn (where students do not participate in the process of learning, but get a pre-packed learning outcome delivered by the teacher).

The fourth theme of trends and characteristics was related to the difficulties and challenges associated with teaching via the TBLT method. The findings showed that the path was not paved all the way when implementing the TBLT method in this research setting. Application of the TBLT method had a few difficulties some of which were unavoidable. One of those difficulties was related to the compound design of the lesson plan; it required a kind of coherence or unity in the mechanism of the three interrelated stages (pre task, running the task, and task completion) as each stage was derived from or built upon the other stages. This challenge urges teachers in the Saudi context and other contexts to have a solid background and understanding about the TBLT method before implementing it in classroom. Otherwise, implementation of TBLT might deviate from following its fundamental principles and, consequently, lead to unwanted results.

Another challenge was keeping track of time; due to the multiple activities and roles played by students during the three stages of the lesson, any unintended loss of time could result in failure to achieve the main goal of the lesson as planned. This challenge is difficult to control for and, hence, teachers need to be cautious about the factor of time when implementing the TBLT method. An idea that might help reduce the challenge of time effect is to try it out first and see if extending the time of lesson or combining two lessons would be more effective.

A further difficulty was related to the excessive mental and physical efforts by the teacher; teaching via TBLT required a careful design of the lesson plan, a continuous movement inside the class, and being available physically and mentally to cope up with the demands of groups of students. This suggests that teaching via the TBLT method is more work on the teacher than when teaching via the traditional teaching method. Although the teacher tends to talk a lot more in the traditional teaching method than that in the TBLT one, teacher's mental work that precedes the class through planning and designing the lesson, and the continuous physical and mental presence with groups of students when teaching via TBLT far exceed the work of the teacher in the traditional teaching method. This means that good language teaching as represented by TBLT in this study requires far more work than in traditional way of language teaching. Some teachers might say that TBLT is more work on teachers and adds further burden to their work. Response to this point of view is seen from two perspectives. First, teaching is a time consuming and

requires continuous development and, therefore, by definition is very complex. Second, the outcome associated with this time consuming work (teaching practices) is worth the investment.

Qualitative findings obtained from *researcher log* provided further understanding about the application of the TBLT method in this research setting. Findings out of researcher log about the TBLT method went along with those obtained from classroom observation. An outer look showed that findings out of researcher log were classified into four categories. Two of those categories were related to the students, one was related to the teaching method, and the last one was related to the teacher.

The first category of findings was related to the students' roles they had been playing in the classroom. The three most frequent roles showed that groups of students were reading, discussing, and sharing. The second category of findings was related to the students' attitudes towards the reading lesson. The two most common words used to describe the students' attitudes were enthusiasm and involvement while they were working in the classroom. Enthusiasm and involvement of students represent a source of motivation to their teacher. The students' attitudes were positive towards the reading lessons taught via the TBLT method and which can be concluded from the never observed complaining or lack of interest that universally accompany any an unmotivated class of students. The students recognized that they were unwilling to miss any reading classes.

Plural verbal and non-verbal responses derived from the raw data show the positive attitudes of students taught via TBLT towards the reading lesson. For examples, a student excitedly exclaimed, " We are studying differently" in the first week of the implementation of TBLT. Another one enthusiastically stood up and orally narrated his understanding of the entire reading passage consuming more than the time allotted for his group. Two short stories observed while teaching students via TBLT could expresses far more than what words could do about how students loved the way they were learning.

The first story is about five students who refused to participate in a tour outside of the school and preferred to attend the reading class. It was Wednesday (the last day of school week days in Saudi Arabia) when the treatment teacher (researcher), as usual after the end of the reading class, headed towards the teachers' office room. The counselor stopped the treatment teacher and asked him if he gave his instructions to five of the students

not to participate in a tour outside the school hosted by an outsider organization. The treatment teacher had neither known about the tour nor given any instructions in this regards. To the treatment teacher and consoler surprise, they found out that those five students preferred to attend the English language reading class rather than joining the trip.

The second story is about two groups of students who were having an argument about who would have the first turn to start sharing responses with other groups. With efforts to calm the arguing groups, the teacher told them that there is no need for this argument as every group is going to have the chance to share its responses with other groups. The arguing groups justified their argument with fact they observed across previous lessons; that the group that usually starts first tends to have the opportunity to share one more time as long as time allows. All these examples and stories are complemented by students' request to their original teacher to teach them the way the TBLT teacher (researcher) had been teaching them.

The third category of findings was related to the application of the TBLT method in this research setting. The application of TBLT involved some difficulties that are associated with students' adaptation to the new teaching method, TBLT. These difficulties included students' lack of knowledge and training about how group work was done. At the beginning students were sitting in groups but working individually in addition to the existence of minimal side talks that were unrelated to the lesson. However, when expectations and duties of group work were explained, students started to work effectively in groups as expected.

The fourth category of findings was related to the teacher's role and impression while he was implementing TBLT in this research setting. The teacher (researcher) frequently described himself being careful to follow the principles of TBLT in every reading lesson. His impression always showed satisfaction about the way he was teaching and the way students were working in the classroom. A couple of times the teacher (researcher) mentioned that he was exhausted and linked that to the continuous physical motion he was doing while passing among groups and paying attention to groups' discussions as well as participating with them. To conclude, findings out of classroom observation, researcher log, and quantitative tests had shown that teaching via TBLT had promoted learning far more than that of the traditional teaching method. This is to say that qualitative findings

have presented TBLT as a teaching method that helps students develop desired attitudes towards learning situations and which are also supported by the quantitative findings that have presented TBLT as a teaching method that helps students increase their achievement scores in reading comprehension of the English language.

Involvement and data collection in the setting of this study have provided the treatment teacher (researcher) with valuable experiences about teaching the English language with emphasis on reading comprehension through the two implemented ways in this study (the TBLT and the traditional teaching methods). One experience is that better learning occurs when learners are given the chance to learn (i.e., students in the TBLT group have learned more because they are given more time to participate in creating their learning through discussion, negotiation, sharing, and working in groups, unlike students in the traditional group who are mostly listening to what their teacher wants them to learn). This suggests that a teacher who talks more and has control over every element in classroom does not necessarily provide students with more knowledge and experience. Another experience is that a very quiet class (such as that of the control group) is not a positive sign for students' learning. It could be quite the opposite; it might indicate that students are either not interested in what is being offered or are not sure what to do. Action and sound of classroom (such as that of the TBLT group) refer to engaged students who are interested in what is being offered. A final valuable experience is that the fastest way to have students engage in the lesson is through providing them with intro activities (tasks) that imitate their daily lives and which are related to the main goal of the lesson.

TBLT Pedagogical Context

As the major focus of this study was on the application of TBLT in an educational setting, it would be beneficial to discuss where TBLT falls in a pedagogical context. Knowing that the quantitative findings showed that TBLT had promoted growth in English language reading comprehension achievement, the qualitative findings presented some of the principles and characteristics of TBLT in its pedagogical context. TBLT, as an instructional practice, falls under or goes along with the principles of the constructivist learning theory. Although the constructivist learning theory is elaborately discussed under Chapter II, the following discusses several linking ties of TBLT found throughout this study to the constructivist learning theory.

One of these ties is that teaching via TBLT involved practices that promote the role of social interaction in cognitive development emphasized by Piaget (1970) and Vygotsky (1978). Learning through interaction among learners is a fundamental principle of TBLT (Lee, 2000). For instance, the findings of this study show that students have been learning through group work where students interact with their colleagues and their teacher through self-thinking, discussion within group members, and sharing with other groups. The design of a TBLT lesson that involves three stages (*pretask, running task, and task completion*) all of which help facilitate the process of group work.[8] Use of language in interacting groups of students has served in mediating learning presented by the sociocultural theory and which, in essence, suggests that learning is socially constructed (Vygotsky, 1978). Further linkage of TBLT practices to the role of social interaction in cognitive development is seen in the way the tasks work which requires students to have a reciprocal interaction of language with their colleagues through production (within the self) and reception (from the environment). The function of tasks is, then, consistent with the cognitive vision that sees learning to be neither totally external nor totally internal, but a result of interaction between heredity (internal) and environment (external) (Piaget, 1969), and which group work has served as described earlier.

Another tie of TBLT to the constructivist learning theory is seen in the process of those three stages of a TBLT lesson that is consistent with the implications of Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the *Zone Proximal Development* ZPD. In essence, ZPD refers to what the learner can do without the help of others and what the learner cannot do alone, but with the help of others. ZPD guides task-based learning from two dimensions. The first one is that in ZPD, "learning is oriented toward developmental levels already reached by the learner and it does not aim for a new stage of the developmental process but rather lags behind this process" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89). The second perspective is that the nature of the ZPD requires the presence of self and others so as to provide the necessary interaction for learning to take place.

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[8] More details about how those three stages work are discussed a couple of times under Chapters I and IV.

The first perspective implies that learning advances development where the learner builds new knowledge (the things that she/he needed help from others to learn) upon the already known knowledge (the learner's actual knowledge). Similarly, when adopting tasks, it is important to emerge from the known (in the pre-task stage) to the unknown or intended to be learned (in the running and post task stages). Also, task-based learning needs to be an appropriate challenge by requiring learners to use the language in situations that enable them to dynamically build ZPDs.

The second perspective is similar to the case in TBLT since it requires the presence of the learner (the one who has the limited knowledge) and the presence of the more knowledgeable others (these could be the more knowledgeable peers or most likely their teacher who models the facilitator role). The interaction required by the ZPD is present in the TBLT and which can be seen by the roles played by students in groups work while performing tasks and the role of their teacher as a facilitator.[9]

Another tie this study shows is that the application of TBLT highly emphasizes imitation of students' daily lives during learning. This characteristic exactly matches the need to present imitation of real life in curricula (Friere, 2009). For example, in a reading lesson about "Calvin Hutt's Career Life," groups of students have begun engaging in the lesson by sharing lists of video games they have at home. After reading the passage students have imagined they that they have been participating in a live competition show to answer a question asked by the interviewer where they are to tell the audience (their teacher and other groups of students) as much details as they can about "Calvin Hutt's Career Life." The findings of this study has also shown that during the application of TBLT, the teacher facilitates learning rather than being the source of knowledge, and which is consistent with the roles of the facilitator teacher (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980). For instance, the findings show that the teacher has been the least one in the classroom who speaks; students have been the ones who have been creating their learning while the teacher has been monitoring group works and providing assistance when needed.

At last but not least, ties to constructivism extend to show that teaching and learning via TBLT necessarily involve activities or problem-solving exercises (tasks) to be carried

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[9] Further details about TBLT principles in literature and linkage to the Vygotsky's learning perspectives are elaborately discussed under Chapter II.

out in groups as discussed earlier. This way of learning is informed by the notion of learning through activities (Dewey, 2009) and learning through the exercises of problem solving (Bruner, 1961). At last, it is concluded from the reviewed literature and the findings of this study that the TBLT practice from the field of second language acquisition shares some principles and characteristics with other constructivist practices from other disciplines of knowledge such as *Whole Language* from Literacy Education,

Developmentally Appropriate Practice from Early Childhood Education, and *Continuous Progress* from Educational Leadership (Kasten, Lolli, & Van der Wilt, 1998).[10] The constructivist learning theory embodies the principles and characteristics of these practices.

Student-Centered Instruction vs. Teacher-Centered Instruction

Two findings involved classroom communication[11] in this study were about the teacher-centered teaching when learning via the traditional teaching method and about the student-centered teaching when learning via TBLT. Teacher-centered teaching is contrasted to student-centered and refers to the traditional way of teaching where lecturing by the teacher is the primary means of instruction, the teacher decides how the class is run, what is to be studied and tested, and involves little input from students (Brown, 2007; Guaverra, 2010). Literature has shown advocacy of replacing teachercentered instruction with student-centered learning (Kain, 2002; Keengwe, Onchwari, & Onchwari, 2009; Yilmaz, 2008). Teacher-centered approach in teaching is often criticized for involving judgments about what to be studied, how to be studied, and what constitutes knowledge solely rests on the teacher.

Excluding learners from roles related to how the class is run and what is to be studied and tested shows that teacher-centered approach does not go along with "the constructivist views of education, in which the construction of knowledge is shared and learning is achieved through students' engagement with activities in which they are invested" (Kain, 2002, p. 104). Teacher-centered instruction in the context of this study is presented through

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[10] More details about the connections between Whole language, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Continuous Progress, and TBLT are presented under Chapter II.

[11] More details about classroom communication will be addressed later on this chapter.

the description of how the teacher has been teaching and how the students have been learning in the control group. For instance, the findings show that the teacher has been the action maker during the reading class. It has been the teacher who has been doing most of the work in the reading lesson; the teacher has tended to read the passage, explain the reading passage, assign two or three students to read, give instructions to students, read exercises, and ask students to do them. The teacher alone has used about 70 to 80% of time of the duration of the reading lesson. Students have been mostly listeners and have not had any types of activities to do during the reading lesson except the one they used to do individually towards the end of the lesson.

This type of instruction enables passive learning and has the least amount of benefits to learners when compared to the student-centered instruction. Beside evidence presented by the findings of this study, other logical reasons for this judgment include that it is actually the teacher who is primarily targeted by learning when instruction in classroom is teacher-centered due to roles played by the teacher as described earlier. This is definitely not the primary goal for a classroom; classrooms are there to educate children in the first place and then other parties involved. Therefore, this study argues for minimizing teacher's control of everything taking place in classroom and shifting more roles to learners presented by student-centered instruction as discussed in the following.

Student-centered instruction, a characteristic of teaching via TBLT, is defined as a broad teaching approach that includes replacing the teacher-oriented instruction with active learning where students integrate self-paced learning with cooperative group learning, and holds up that the student be responsible for his own learning (Felder & Brant, 1996). Literature has positively recognized student-centered learning over the traditional ways of teaching such as that of the teacher-centered (Bonwell & Eisen, 1991; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; McKeachie, 1994; Meyers & Jones 1993; Nanney, 2004). Student-centered learning increases motivation for learning, retention of knowledge, depth of understanding, and appreciation of the subject matter.

The settings of student-centered learning have more desired characteristics than those of the traditional ways of learning as the case of teacher-centered (Nanney, 2004). Desired characteristics include group activities, interaction, students' participation in creating their own learning interests and needs, and which all lead to increase of

understanding and appreciation of the subject matter. Student-centered learning in the context of this study was presented through the description of how the teacher was teaching and how students were learning in the TBLT group. The students were the central focus of instruction and participated in creating their own learning situations. Students in groups were active learners (i.e., they were discussing, negotiating, reading, and displaying their understanding of what they had been learning). Reported findings from this study showed that students tended to use about 70-80% of the time of the class.

This meant that the learning situation via the TBLT method revolved around the learners. The teacher modeled the role of a facilitator rather than the source of instruction. For instance, the findings show that the TBLT teacher's roles have facilitated students learning through organizing group works, giving students most of the time to learn, providing students with challenging tasks that imitate their daily lives, and providing knowledge and experience that students could not get by themselves.

That is all to say that the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study showed that students in the TBLT group (characterized by having student-centered instruction) had done far better than students in the control group (characterized by having teachercentered instruction). Quantitatively, students in the TBLT group had significantly higher scores than the control group. Qualitatively, students in the TBLT group had developed positive attitudes and played roles that are desired in modern educational setting, unlike students in the control group.

Classroom communication. [12] Communication, scientifically, consists of interrelated processes of message production, message processing, interaction coordination, and social perception (Burleson, 2010). In classroom, communication is a continuous process of sending and receiving messages that help communicators share knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Miller, 1988). This suggests that through communication knowledge is transmitted. When teachers and students interact, classroom communication is taking place. The following intends to present some aspects of classroom communication.

Forms of classroom communication include verbal and nonverbal (Johnson, 1999; Zoric, Smid, & Pandzic, 2007). Verbal communication includes the use of words for sending and receiving messages while in nonverbal communication messages are sent and

received without the use of words such as facial expressions, touching, and body gestures. Nonverbal communication primarily supports verbal communication.

For the effective communication to take place, it needs to be accompanied by a suitable environment that is guided by four guidelines (Miller, 1988). The first guideline is the presence of a variety of stimuli. The second one is that communicators should feel secure. The third one is that the classroom should be suitable for communicators to make activities. The last guideline is that the classroom should provide privacy. These guidelines contribute to effective learning environment where the sense of community in classroom climate is present; community members rely and depend on each other through working alone and together and sharing responsibilities of daily life (Kasten & Lolli, 1998).

Synthesis of these guidelines of communication and the findings of this study help identify some facets about classroom communication when teaching via the TBLT and traditional teaching methods in this study setting. Teaching via TBLT explicitly goes in accordance to the first guideline in way that includes great variety of stimuli. The presence of wide variety of stimuli is a result of the nature of TBLT that includes group work, imitation of students' real lives, and active involvement in the lesson through discussing, questioning, and sharing. However, findings of this study showed very limited stimuli for students in the control group who were studying via the traditional teaching method.

Feeling of security during communication, as suggested by the second guideline, can be found in learning via TBLT more than that in the traditional way of teaching. The reason is that when all students communicate in groups the student's inner feeling of being afraid of making a mistake gets vanished; a reluctant student would most likely be encouraged to communicate as long as he sees everyone is communicating. This is definitely not the case for students in the control group. A student needed to be brave and very sure that he would not make a mistake before he participated as everyone in the classroom was listening to him. This nature of classroom does not provide students with the feeling of security.

The adequacy of classroom for communicators to make activities, as suggested by the third guideline mentioned earlier, is more found in the settings of the TBLT classroom rather than that of the traditional classroom. A TBLT classroom required students to do

activities in groups and which enhances further communications among group members. However, the traditional classroom showed that students were sitting in rows on individual chairs and tables. When every student sits isolated on his own chair and table, he most likely communicates much less than when he sits with a group of students.

The reviewed literature of communication in classroom (Barry, 2011; Ferrara, Goldberg, McTighe, 1995; Ibad, 2013; Johnson, 1999; McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2005; Miller, 2005; Suinn, 2006) show several roles and characteristics of good communication in classroom. Roles of good communication help maintain affinity, acquire information or understanding, influence others, confirm beliefs, and reach decisions (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2005). When comparing and contrasting these roles to the findings of this study, it becomes obvious that teaching via the traditional teaching method lacks most of these roles of communication in classroom. Some of these roles have mostly been part of the teacher's role, but not the students'. For instance, students have been mainly receptors while the teacher has been the dominant producer of communication when teaching and learning via the traditional teaching method. Students have been barely communicating with each other and with their teacher, which made even hard for them to have influence on each other, acquire knowledge or understanding, or even arrive at decisions.

However, the findings have shown that teaching via TBLT involved most of these roles of good classroom communication as part of the students'. For example, students who have been working in groups have shown a high level of gaining affinity, as they have been very comfortable communicating with each other and with their teacher. Also, students have managed to influence each other through group discussion and response sharing with other groups and with their teacher. Further, students have been able to arrive at decisions which can be seen through the agreed upon response that each group have to formulate for sharing with other groups.

One characteristic of good communication in classroom is clarity of communication through explaining and understanding expectations and duties of all parties involved (Ferrara, Goldberg, McTighe, 1995; Ibad, 2013). This characteristic is reflected by the observed data that show that both of the control and treatment teachers have explained in advance expectations and duties to students. Synthesis of these data has shown that this

characteristic of communication has been clearer to students taught via TBLT. Together the teacher and students have created the learning situation situations through sharing and switching roles. For example, some students tend to explain during group work to their classmates things that they have not understood from their teacher. This suggests that there are multiple sources of explanation, and which yields further clarity of communication. In the contrary, the teacher of the traditional teaching method has been alone the source of knowledge and has been striving to create a learning atmosphere for students to learn. Students' role is to wait for their teacher to make them learn. If a student had not understood something from their teacher, this would mean that the student had missed that point. This solo source of explanation might yield to unclear communication for some students who could not cope up with the teacher.

A further characteristic of communication in classroom is that it requires two ways of sending and receiving (Barry, 2011; Johnson, 1999; Suinn, 2006). These ways are sending and receiving messages by the teacher and sending and receiving messages by students. Teachers will find that communicating effectively begins with the environment. Findings out of this study have shown that classroom communication in the traditional teaching method has involved mostly a one-way of communication; the teacher has been sending messages and students have been receiving those messages. However, a two-way of communication (student-student/ teacher-student) have been present when teaching via TBLT; students have been sending and receiving messages during group works and during sharing responses with their teacher and other groups, and teacher has been sending and receiving messages while modeling the role of a facilitator.

Limitations

The careful design of the study and the accuracy of implementing the design helped reduce several limitations that exist when conducting research in educational settings. However, the nature of this study and similar studies yield few unavoidable limitations. The following presents these limitations and what has been done to reduce their effects.

Most of these limitations are categorized as methodological limitations. For example, in the quantitative portion, there was only one control variable included in the design and analysis of the study that determined equivalence of the two groups – the pretest. However, the nature of quasi-experimental studies helps reduce the effect of this limitation

through ensuring similarities of participants' characteristics when selecting the sample of the study, the random assignment of classrooms to treatment and control groups, and creating similar learning conditions during the implementation of the study.

Another methodological limitation in this study was the non-random selection of sample, which has an impact on the external validity (i.e., generalizability) of the findings. In other words, the non-random selection of sample limits the generalization of the findings to only schools similar in nature to those used in the study. Randomization is not always appropriate or feasible practically and conceptually in all educational research situations (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009), which is the case for this study. In addition to the expensive costs and difficult access to schools in various cities, the large size of the country that hosts the study, Saudi Arabia, prevents from maintaining randomization in sample selection. However, in contrast to the lower level of external validity, this study maintained higher level of internal validity[13].

The duration of data collection for the study (10 weeks) was an unavoidable methodological limitation for the qualitative portion of the study. Qualitative data collection requires longer time demanded by the primary purpose of qualitative research which is striving at describing and making meaning of an existing phenomenon (Schram, 2006). That limitation was due to restrictions and regulations of data collections imposed by the researcher's sponsoring agency. This study used the maximum amount of time allowed for data collection. The limited access of this study to only male schools was also unavoidable limitation and beyond the abilities of the investigator. Another limitation was that the study involved a constructivist practice (TBLT) that was applied to an existing highly standardized curriculum established by an outside organization. That limitation was determined by the scope of this dissertation which did not allow for a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of all aspects of the targeted curriculum.

A final methodological limitation could be attributed to the fact that implementing the TBLT method by the treatment teacher (researcher) could contaminate the true effects of the TBLT method, and might in some cases yield biased data. To reduce the effect of this limitation, a number of factors were considered in the design of the study including the extensive description of instrumentation, sample selection, procedural details, and adopting

multiple data sources. For instance, there were three processes that should ensure unbiased data collection: (a) data collection and analysis involved multiple visions rather than a solo vision (the researcher, the control group teacher, and a knowledgeable colleague of TBLT), (b) the design of the study greatly participated in eliminating the data collection bias attributed to pre-existing differences among participants, (c) the researcher teaches students in the treatment group using the TBLT method and another teacher teaches the students in the control group using the traditional method. The four instruments of data collection (pretest, posttests, observation, researcher log) were administered in a controlled environment with supervision of the researcher.

Implications

This section of the chapter discusses how the reported findings speak to the related educational context of the study. Benefited educational issues from this context include English language teaching method in Saudi Arabia, English language teacher education, educational policies related to designing the English language curriculum, and recommendations for future research. Before discussing any of these educational issues, it is crucial to remind the reader that continuous development, some of which have become effective during data analysis of this study, has been taking place since the past seven years in various educational institutes. This movement of development increases the chances that implications out of this study find parties involved directly and indirectly in the educational process who will appreciate these implications and work towards adapting constructivist learning and teaching.

English Language Teaching Method Saudi Arabia (the Existing and the Expected)

English language instructional practices need further study and more development so as to cope up with the other rapidly developing aspects of curriculum in Saudi Arabia. The dominant English language way of teaching is highly teacher-centered which implies the presence of undesired instructional practices in modern educational settings. Those practices involve lecturing by teachers and listening by students, teaching to the test, drilling, memorization, passive students who work individually and lack interests, and teachers are the sources of knowledge. Development of this traditional way of teaching clashes with the need for effective cooperation of the human factor. In other words, great

teaching practices are available in books and in some policies; however, implementing them requires willingness, knowledge, and training by the existing teachers.[14]

The expected English language instructional practices should be based on the constructivist theory of learning. Student-centered based instruction such as the TBLT method implies the presence of desired instructional practices in modern educational settings. Those practices involve group works (tasks/ activities/ or problem-solving exercises) by students, students are motivated active learners who play several roles in the classroom, imitation of students' daily lives, focus is on comprehension, and the teacher facilitates learning. Those practices greatly help learners be fluent and accurate in the English language.

Teacher Education

Teacher education of English language teachers for intermediate and secondary levels has undergone through several plans of development recently. Although some aspects of teacher education development have reached an acceptable level such as the legislation and application of evaluation for new teachers before hiring them as will be discussed shortly. However, a lot of development work is urgently needed in various aspects of teacher education especially those related to professional development and teaching license. Regardless of the satisfaction and dissatisfaction about the past and present development, the current presence of the notion of development in teacher education is promising. Implications out of this study partially aim at helping move the wheel forward towards more developed teacher education. The following discusses the current teacher education, consideration of existing development efforts, and some recommendations for developing teacher education.

Newly hired secondary and intermediate English language teachers can start teaching English at an early age right away after their graduation from the university around the age of 22-23 years old.[15] Actual teacher education begins preparing teachers in the university level. Depending on the curriculum implemented by the university or college,

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[14] More details about the expected roles and qualifications of teachers are discussed later on this chapter.

[15] It should be noted that hiring teachers are determined by the needs, vacancies, and recently qualifications of applicants suggesting that if there were no need, a teacher could get older before he/she becomes a teacher.

new English language teachers are bachelor's degrees holders in English language and Translation. In the four to five years of the bachelor's degree, English language teachers are exposed to English grammar, listening, reading, writing, some pieces of English literature, phonetics, some linguistic theories, few and brief courses in psychology, curriculum, and teaching skills, and translation from English into Arabic and the vice versa.[16]

It is assumed that teachers are then qualified to teach and there are no requirements for certain certificates or degrees to be pursued in teaching or in curriculum and instruction. The only training that teachers receive before going to teach is a onesemester practicum during their last year of study of their bachelor's degree. However, there is a great new plan that will be effective starting from next year by some universities to add a fifth year to their bachelor's degree programs for students who are interested in teaching where they mainly do practicum and study advanced educational courses related to curriculum and various aspects of the teaching profession. Teachers who complete the fifth year will be awarded with a diploma in education. The teachers are assumed, then, to have the abilities to teach all the levels of the English language courses starting from the fifth grade in the elementary level to the third and last grade in the secondary level. Therefore, new teachers have no opportunity to think about what it means to teach, how to be a teacher, how to think about learning and student growth, and certainly little skills for management of students.

There are no obvious criteria or a set of qualifications that a teacher should obtain to teach a certain level. There is a general test, imposed recently, for all teachers interested in teaching all levels called in Arabic *Kefayat* or *Teachers' Test* that teachers need to pass before they can enroll to the teaching profession. This test primarily assesses whether or not the minimum set of qualifications are met for those who are applying for teaching jobs (*National Center for Assessment in Higher Education,* 2013). The test has major sections that include general information, science, and basic teaching skills.

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[16] 18 In new bachelor's program, student-teachers neither study any courses in curriculum, teaching, nor have any teaching practicum during their university courses of study, but can purse a diploma in education for a fifth year which involves advanced courses in curriculum, teaching, and practicum.

Existing development efforts started to sound recently, some of which are mentioned above. Existing development involved enforcing some regulations that new teachers had to go through before enrolling to the teaching profession. One of those regulations that greatly reduced hiring extremely unqualified teachers was enforcing *Kefayat* Examination Teachers' Test by both of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Service with the cooperation of National Center for Assessment in

Higher Education. Another developmental regulation is seen through an experiment for the purposes of teaching development that has started with a sample of schools from over the country. This developmental experiment targets already hired English language teachers in the sampled schools. This experiment involves having a more experienced English language teacher (First Teacher) in a school and who gets a reduced teaching load. In return, the First Teacher supervises and collegially helps other English language teachers in the same school. Other developmental efforts are seen through the numerous teaching workshops organized by school directorates over the country for English language teachers. However, enrolment and attendance of those workshops are optional.

Existing development of teacher education for English language teachers extends to the efforts paid by English language supervisors whose primary job is to foster English language teachers overcome any difficulties related to teaching or work in general. However, several obstacles prevent from having an acceptable level of satisfaction about efforts spent in supervision which include and not limited to the fewer number of supervisors compared to the huge number of English language teachers, responsibilities and administrational work that keep supervisors busy from doing their major roles, and absence of effective policies that organize supervision work and processes.

A promising developmental plan appears in the horizon that is expected to move teacher education forward several steps if organized and applied properly. This developmental plan is introduced by the Ministry of Education, which, in essence, classifies English language teachers into four levels depending on their experience, qualifications, and readiness to develop professionally. This plan suggests that teachers are to be hierarchically classified into *teacher*, *first teacher, supervisor teacher, and expert teacher*. A set of procedures, responsibilities, and benefits are attached to each level. Hopefully, this promising plan sees the light soon as it could represent a turning point in teacher education.

With respect and recognition to the helpful existing developmental efforts, implications out of this study, partially, provides some recommendations for teacher education development. For development in the medium to long term, this study highly recommends legislation and creation of a Continuous Professional Development Plan for all existing and new teachers. Enrollment to this Continuous Professional Development Plan involves courses, workshops, seminars, and assignments that provide teachers with the necessary exposure to knowledge and modern practices in the field and which could help them develop professionally. A set of regulations and procedures should accompany the Continuous Professional Development Plan that organizes its work, processes, benefits for enrollment, penalties for non-enrollment, and knowledge and expertise sharing by educators from Saudi Arabia and from around the world. This study highly recommends the presence of license to practice teaching and which could be based on success and valid enrolment to the suggested Continuous Professional Development Plan. This study also recommends attaching the new-promised developmental regulation that classifies teachers into four levels as discussed earlier to the recommended Continuous Professional Development Plan.

For development in the short to medium term, this study recommends offering existing English language teachers a workshop about a modern way of language instruction investigated by this study, the TBLT method. The workshop should provide English language teachers with TBLT theoretical framework (constructivist learning theory), the way a TBLT lesson is planned, the way TBLT lesson is run in class, advantages, disadvantages, and difficulties of the application of TBLT. Knowledge and practice of modern instructional practices could help English language teachers develop professionally and, accordingly, students would learn more and even be more accurate and fluent in the language of the world, the English language.

Educational Policies

Educational policies related to teaching and learning English language in general education have some great policies while some need to be created or developed. For example, an admired existing educational policy is the one related to continuously revising and developing the content introduced to students (textbooks). This policy urges having more authentic textbooks and which participates in serving the general aims of education in Saudi Arabia. Even policies related to teaching and learning practices are to some extent

great in words, as they exist in the policy guide. However, implementation of those instructional practices policies seems to be below expectations. Due to the vast scope of the topic of educational policies and the limited scope of this study, the following intends to present a list of practical recommendations for curriculum decision makers in the country to consider for implementing constructivist practices such as that of the TBLT method.

- Revision, evaluation of the existing educational policies, and adding new policies. Teachers, educators, students, administrators, and families should all participate in those processes. This policy should be done on continuous and regular bases.

- Re-conceptualizing the meaning of curriculum in education from its limited meaning (textbook) to its wide scope where the textbook is a part of it.

- Building curriculum upon a constructivist best practice paradigm.

- Ensuring that educational policies lead to or go along with constructivist learning and teaching.

- Developing the existing facilities in schools and classrooms to accommodate the constructivist curriculum.

- Curriculum needs to emphasize the purpose of learning for students and the purpose of teaching for teachers.

- Reorganizing policies, work, and processes related to English language supervision. This recommendation aims at overcoming existing obstacles that prevent English language supervisors from doing their expected roles. • Creation of policies that participate in changing the vision of teaching from a job to do towards a profession to master. Teachers need to participate in the creation of those policies. The new plan suggested by the Ministry of Education related to classifying teachers into four levels is greatly desired and can effectively participate in changing this vision.

- Creation and legislation of the Continuous Development Plan to move teacher education development steps ahead forward as discussed earlier in the previous section of this chapter.

- Legislation of license to practice teaching. Teacher's license needs to have prerequisites and post-requisites to maintain its validity. Teacher's license needs to be obtained by new and existing teachers to practice teaching.

- Revision and evaluation of the policies related to the unified curricula across the country. How about providing standards and having each school directorate creates its own curricula. This would create an atmosphere of competition among school directorates and provide a variety of educational products. Ministry of Education is to evaluate the products of all school directorates based on the given standards.

- Encouraging knowledge and expertise sharing of teaching and learning practices by educators from Saudi Arabia and from around the world. This is could be done through hosting international conferences and through academic journals and periodicals.

- For development in short term, this study recommends offering existing English language teachers a workshop about a modern way of language instruction investigated by this study, the TBLT method.

Implications out of this study suggest that the above recommendations to be considered, especially after future replication of this study in different groups and contexts, by curriculum decision makers when creating and revising educational policies. Some of the suggested recommendations are interrelated or overlapping which means application of one policy or recommendation will necessarily imply the application of the other. This is natural and healthy in educational settings.

Recommendations for Future Research

At this point of a study, typical researchers would look back at what they have found, learned, and make decisions on what they would want to do differently in future studies. This critical phase in research often implies a researcher's self-critique, can influence other colleagues' research interests through guiding them to investigate a certain topic, and can provide hints about a researcher's line of inquiry. The following presents some research ideas and recommendations to consider in future studies.

Hopefully, there would be a chance in the near future to investigate the application of TBLT in other aspects related to English language teaching and learning such as and not limited to listening comprehension and writing quality (semantically and syntactically). It is going to add greater value to the major theme of this study (TBLT) when finding out whether or not the findings out the study would be similar if applied on girls rather than boys or when the study is applied in different parts of Saudi Arabia.

Replication of this study in different settings will increase the reliability of the findings. Due to the tremendous work involved, one recommendation for colleagues who would like to further investigate this study in different settings or any of the above suggested research topics related to the application of TBLT in educational settings is to have more than one investigator in the design of the study. This is also going to enhance the quality of work and increase the validity of the findings. This should be true in most research areas and, especially, in experimental ones.

A very rich research topic would be about the extent English language teachers in

Saudi schools are satisfied with their current teaching practices and current teaching and learning policies. Another beneficial research idea suggested for future research, which can also provide researchers with a great number of research topics and research questions, is to survey and interview English language teachers, students, and families about issues related to teaching and learning the English language in schools. Some of these issues include what they want out of learning and teaching English, how they want to learn or teach English in schools, what is missing in learning and teaching English, and what should be done differently while learning and teaching the English language in schools.

Conclusion

This study has taken place in Buraydah, Saudi Arabia, where education, in general, and the teaching of English, in particular, receives considerable attention from the Ministry of Education, business leaders, and families. This study has involved the application of Task-Based Language Teaching TBLT into the existing curriculum. The study has strived to find out whether or not the TBLT method can help the students better acquire the English language through increasing their achievement scores on reading comprehension and also seek for insights or issues that can be gained about implementing the TBLT method in this research setting.

Literature reviewed has shown that the TBLT method is theoretically framed by the constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive development (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978) and is also informed by Dewey's (2009) notion of learning through activities. Tasks in language learning and teaching have developed across time. Literature has also presented other practices in other disciplines of

knowledge that share similar characteristics and principles of TBLT which include *Developmental Appropriate Practice* from Early Childhood, *Whole Language* from Literacy, and *Continuous Progress* from Educational Leadership.

The study has examined the effect of TBLT on reading comprehension in two intermediate schools in Saudi Arabia through a time frame of ten weeks. The treatment group is compared to the control group on the outcome after controlling for the students' pre-existing knowledge of the English language as a covariate. The study has had a mixed-design (quantitative and qualitative) where quasi-experimental analysis with pre and posttests represent the quantitative part and synthesis of observational data from classroom observation and researcher log represent the qualitative part.

The statistical analysis that has addressed the quantitative part (the first research question) is the Two-Factor Spilt-Plot design. Findings out of the pre-test have shown that students in both of the treatment and control groups are equal in terms of their prior knowledge of reading comprehension of the English language. Findings out of the posttests have shown that students in the treatment group have scored significantly higher than students in the control group suggesting that the TBLT method has helped students increase their reading comprehension more than that of the traditional teaching method. Qualitative analyses for the second research question have been through *Grounded Theory* for data obtained from researcher log and through a set of procedures to compare and contrast data obtained from classroom observation. Findings out of the qualitative data have shown that the TBLT method has helped students develop desired attitudes towards the learning situations and has involved practices and roles of students and their teacher that go along with the constructivist learning theory. Qualitative findings have also shown that the traditional teaching method has not helped students develop desired attitudes towards the learning situations and involved practices and roles of students and their teacher that went along with the behaviorist learning theory. Both of the quantitative and qualitative findings have provided support and evidences for the findings presented by each set of data.

Discussion of the findings of the study has shown that the major theme of this study (TBLT) falls in a constructivist pedagogical context. Discussion of the findings has also shown that learning and teaching via TBLT is *student-centered* while learning and teaching via the traditional teaching method is highly *teacher-centered*. Reviewed literature of

classroom communication has even provided further merits to teaching and learning via TBLT over that of the traditional teaching method suggesting that the application of TBLT encourages or goes along with most of the desired characteristics of effective classroom communication. Methodological limitations have included the presence of only one (statistically) controlling variable for determining equivalence of the control and treatment groups, the non-random selection of sample, the duration of data collection, and the implementation of a constructivist practice (TBLT) into an existing standardized curriculum.

At last but not least, implications have addressed some aspects related to how the study's educational context can benefit from the findings presented by the study. Benefited educational issues in this context have included English language teaching method in Saudi Arabia, English language teacher education, recommendations for educational policies related to English language teaching and learning, and recommendations for future research. At last, efforts invested in this study are rewarded with findings discovered and, hopefully, help interested educators in Saudi Arabia and around the world to pursue beneficial education for themselves, students, and their societies.

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