

## Implementation of Task-based Language Teaching in EFL Context: Instructors' Perceptions and Challenges

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**Received** 16/09/0024

**Accepted** 19/04/2025

**Published** 01/07/2025

### Abstract

In many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, including Algeria, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been increasingly promoted as a potentially efficient approach to for English language instruction. Nevertheless, there is limited evidence regarding the instructors' attitudes towards it in higher education and the challenges they face when implementing it in real classroom settings. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to explore the perspectives of instructors on TBLT use and to identify the main obstacles that hinder its effective incorporation in EFL tertiary contexts. To achieve this, both a survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of forty-five university English instructors. The quantitative data were examined through descriptive statistics (frequencies, relative frequencies, means, and standard deviations), while the qualitative data were analysed using content analysis method. The results demonstrate that teachers hold favorable attitudes towards the implementation of TBLT due to their advanced comprehension of TBLT principles. However, they face challenges such as teaching large classes and assessing students' performance in task-based activities. Therefore, recommendations are offered in light of the results to assist teachers implement TBLT more efficiently in EFL tertiary contexts. The study's conclusions have various potential implications. The perception of TBLT by instructors significantly influences its implementation in the classroom. The favorable attitudes of teachers towards TBLT are essential for its effective implementation due to their crucial role in guiding and supporting students' learning. Teachers' attitudes may be enhanced by participating in continuous professional development programs, which would assist them in addressing the challenges of adopting TBLT in their classrooms.

**Keywords:** Challenges; EFL; implementation; instructors; perceptions; TBLT.

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*Journal of Languages & Translation* © 2025 Published by University of Chlef, Algeria.

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## Introduction

Within the context of foreign language learning, there has been a continuous evolution of various methods, approaches, techniques, and instructional materials throughout time (Norris, 2016; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). TBLT, which stands out as a key component in the classroom, is one of the approaches utilized by English teachers. It emphasizes the completion of the tasks assigned by the teacher in order to enable students comprehend the specific objectives of the target language, which are presented in a pragmatic manner (Long, 2015; Nunan, 2004). This teaching approach focusses on activities that are specifically designed to offer students in-depth knowledge and promote effective communication in the target language (East, 2019; Ellis, 2018).

TBLT has gained prominence in the field of EFL and English as a Second Language (ESL) learning. It focusses on developing process-oriented syllabi and designing communicative tasks that strengthen students' practical use of language. This approach emerged in the early 1980s with the advent of communicative language teaching, and has since emphasised the importance of learners' communicative skills (Arifani, 2022). TBLT offers several benefits, such as creating authentic learning experiences that align with the specific needs and interests of students. It fosters more engaging and significant learning, while also establishing a conducive atmosphere that supports instructors in attaining their targeted objectives (Ocel & Bergil, 2022). Nevertheless, TBLT often faces resistance from teachers during implementation, mostly owing to the scarcity of teaching resources, absence of an appropriate assessment system, and the significant time investment required for lesson planning utilising this approach (Carless, 2012; Ellis, 2018; Ocel & Bergil, 2022).

Hence, the current study aims to investigate EFL instructors' perspectives on the implementation of TBLT approach in a higher education setting, as well as identify the obstacles they encounter when using it. This study enhances the existing knowledge in the field of TBLT instruction and provides valuable insights into the application of TBLT in the Algerian classroom context.

## 1. Literature Review

### *1.1 TBLT Approach*

The task-based approach to language teaching has emerged as a response to the limitations of the traditional Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) approach. TBLT approach is based on the constructivist theory of learning and the communicative language teaching methodology (Ellis, 2018; Long, 2015). This indicates that learning a language is a process that develops communication and social interaction rather than a final product that is reinforced through repetition of language elements, and that learners achieve a stronger command of the target language when they engage in meaningful task-based assignments. This perspective of learning languages in the 1980s led to the development of many task-based methodologies (Breen, 1987; Prabhu, 1987), which flourished at that time. In addition, it evolved into a complete framework for the communicative classroom, where learners engaged in task-based activities through a series of stages: pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task feedback (East, 2019; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

TBLT in teaching second and foreign languages was initially introduced by Prabhu, who released the Bangalore study report in 1982 and pioneered the notion of task-based language

approach (Wei, 2004). Researchers interested in task-based methodologies have assimilated knowledge from studies on language, language learning, and foreign language acquisition, resulting in its continuous development and refinement. The researchers in the field of language teaching acknowledged the value of TBLT in creating learner-centred instruction and authentic learning contexts. These learning environments provide learners with opportunities to communicate and interact, thereby improving their ability to use the target language and resolve communicative issues (Nunan, 2004). TBLT has garnered increasing interest in the field of foreign language instruction since the 1980s. As a learner-centred approach, it considers language as a means of communication. It focusses on providing learners with chances to develop proficiency in both spoken and written language via engaging learning activities that promote the authentic, practical, and pragmatic use of language (Long, 2015).

The term “task” has gained increased recognition in the field of language instruction and learning, leading to a range of different interpretations. According to Long (2015), a task may be defined as a specific piece of work that is either based on specific demands or aimed at addressing real-world situations. This real-world activity engages learners in a goal-driven learning process that extends beyond the classroom setting. Willis (1996) defines a task as an activity in which the learner uses the target language for purposes of communication with the aim of achieving a specific objective. This concept implies that tasks can enable learners to utilise a language in a significant manner, since the actual usage of language holds greater significance than mere language practice (Nunan, 2004). An illustration of a task could involve providing a response to a query (linguistic), or requesting guidance on reaching a certain destination (non-linguistic). Similarly, according to Ellis (2018), tasks may be defined as activities that involve the use of language with an emphasis on meaning. Nunan (2006) provides a definition of a task as an activity in the classroom that requires learners to use language in order to create meaning for the goal of communication.

While there may be different interpretations of what constitutes a task, it is generally agreed that a task is an activity with a specific objective that prompts students to comprehend, perform, or engage in communication using the target language. During the task, students are encouraged to activate their existing knowledge and understanding to convey a particular concept. Hence, the instructional process is conducted completely through communicative activities, with a primary emphasis on comprehending and using the language, while successfully doing the assigned tasks (Ellis, 2018).

### ***1.2 Benefits and Challenges***

The majority of the research literature on TBLT has indicated the advantages and efficacy of this approach in facilitating EFL learning. The favourable view of TBLT has been extensively documented in several research across different contexts (Arifani, 2022; Carless, 2009; Grant, 2017; Tan, 2016; Van den Branden, 2016). These studies contend that TBLT has the capacity to facilitate authentic learning, hence fostering learning opportunities and a more immersive learning environment (Ellis, 2015; Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden, 2016). The design of a task-based course is emphasised to encourage natural learning, which engages learners in meaningful activities aimed at attaining specific communicative goals. This suggests that learners are involved in purposeful tasks or activities during the session, without any explicit form of instruction, similar to the natural process by which individuals acquire language. According to Ellis (2015, 2018), the natural learning of TBLT provides greater benefits when learning a foreign language. Additionally, it enhances the learning experience and offers better learning opportunities. By incorporating all of the characteristics of the tasks and task

sequences, TBLT enables learners to acquire language in a more implicit manner, thereby fostering the potential of language learning beyond what has been specifically targeted by instructors (Arifani, 2022).

Furthermore, it is important to consider the potential feedback provided by classmates and instructors during the activity as a valuable advantage of TBLT. As learners work through tasks in a specific order, they are likely to give and receive feedback related to the content and structure of the tasks (Boston, 2008). This feedback is particularly valuable for learners as it assists them in actively identifying and paying attention to language elements while completing the tasks (Long, 2015; Van den Branden, 2016).

Additionally, TBLT offers a more favorable learning opportunity that aligns closely with learners' motivation to learn English. According to prior research, the teachers have concluded that the students are very motivated both during and after the implementation phase. Namazian Dost, Bohloulzadeh, & Pazhakh (2017) and Pietri (2015) have conducted empirical studies to examine the impact of TBLT on learners' motivation. These two studies indicate that implementing TBLT in EFL classroom can enhance learners' motivation. Previously, it has been demonstrated how TBLT facilitates a more authentic learning experience, thereby promoting learners' active participation. This engagement is typically linked to a significant level of motivation. Moreover, since tasks in TBLT are meticulously crafted to enhance learners' cognitive abilities (Ellis, 2018, Nunan, 2004), there is a high probability of learners successfully completing tasks. Learners can consistently attain a feeling of accomplishment in this scenario (Van den Branden, 2016). Ultimately, the feeling of accomplishment results in a heightened level of drive and determination (Boston, 2008).

Aside from the advantages already mentioned, it is also worth examining the challenges teachers face while implementing TBLT approach. Teachers encounter numerous challenges when planning and implementing a task-based session, and one of these challenges is the amount of time required for preparation. This specific issue has been documented in several pertinent studies (Carless, 2012; Douglas & Kim, 2014; Ocel & Bergil, 2022; Rubaiat, 2018). Instructors who employ the PPP method in lesson planning may discover that creating a task-based lecture requires a significant investment of time. According to Carless (2009), the process of designing a lesson in TBLT is more complicated compared to the PPP approach. When implementing TBLT, teachers should take into account several aspects as the characteristics of a task, the scaffolding element that discourages explicit instruction, and the cognitive requirements. However, the PPP approach facilitates explicit instruction, enabling instructors to more effectively structure their lessons. Furthermore, in the PPP approach, learners' output can be more effectively regulated compared to the TBLT approach due to the provision of explicit instruction during the scaffolding process. Despite the complexity of TBLT over PPP, several studies have shown that TBLT is more effective than PPP in the classroom setting (Sheen, 2006; Shintani, 2011). Thus, despite the time-consuming nature of planning a task-based lesson, the efforts put in by instructors ultimately yield positive results.

Furthermore, the teachers' uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of TBLT is an additional obstacle that hinders the successful implementation of TBLT in EFL context. Most of the research conducted on TBLT has focused on ESL settings. However, there has been a growing interest in TBLT from EFL countries, especially when attempts to adopt CLT have faced resistance and achieved different levels of success (Ellis, 2015; Littlewood, 2007). Although these studies sought to investigate the factors behind the avoidance of TBLT and provide potential solutions, the implementation of TBLT in EFL contexts still encounters challenges.

The lack of TBLT implementation can be attributed to various factors related to teachers. These factors include their inability to effectively apply TBLT and their misconceptions about it. Several studies (Barnard & Nguyen, 2010; Carless, 2012; East, 2019; Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Mahdavirad, 2017; Prianty, Ngadiso, & Wijayanto, 2021) have highlighted this issue. Additionally, some teachers are unwilling to adopt TBLT due to their negative beliefs and doubts about their own capabilities, as discussed by Carless (2012) and Jeon & Hahn (2006). Moreover, teachers may have reservations about the effectiveness of TBLT and may prefer traditional teaching methods that they perceive as more comfortable and reliable (Carless, 2012; East, 2019). Teachers in countries where traditional teacher-centered classes are the standard may require a period of adaptation to the interactive nature of TBLT, as shown in McDonough and Chaikitmongkol's (2007) investigation of a task-based EFL lessons in Thailand. This study found that task-based lessons placed greater emphasis on grammar teaching and language forms. Additionally, it revealed that teachers had different perspectives regarding the objectives of task-based learning. In a separate research conducted by İlin, İnözü, and Yumru (2007), it was highlighted that the tasks employed in EFL lessons mostly consisted of language practice exercises that emphasised form rather than meaning. Despite being aware of the objectives of task-based learning, the teachers in this research opted to utilise activities at the end of classes to introduce language items due to societal expectations. According to Jeon and Hahn (2006), TBLT techniques, which come from Western countries, may not work well with assessment requirements and may clash with educational beliefs and traditions in non-Western settings.

Littlewood (2007) identified five issues that instructors may have with the implementation of TBLT. The concerns encompass difficulties in classroom management, including maintaining control during communicative tasks, addressing noise and discipline issues, and handling large class sizes (Xiongyong & Moses, 2011). Another concern is teachers' lack of confidence in implementing communicative activities using TBLT approach (Mahdavirad, 2017). Learner-related factors, such as mixed proficiency levels among students in classes, also contribute to the challenges (Barnard & Nguyen, 2010). Additionally, aligning TBLT with assessment requirements and reconciling it with educational beliefs and principles pose further difficulties (Carless, 2012; East, 2019; Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Littlewood, 2007).

Studies have investigated the perception and implementation of TBLT in various EFL contexts. In Bogali's (2009) study, it was revealed that the majority of instructors possessed a strong understanding of TBLT methodologies. Nevertheless, there were several constraints that hindered its implementation, such as the presence of large class sizes and the difficulty in assessing students' task-based performance. Xiongyong and Moses (2011) conducted a study on EFL instructors' perceptions of TBLT and the challenges they encounter in TBLT implementation. The study revealed that these instructors had positive attitudes and a good knowledge of TBLT approach. However, they faced challenges in implementing their teaching methods owing to rigid syllabuses, overcrowded classrooms, exam-oriented systems, and restricted teaching time.

Mahdavirad (2017) found that most teachers had a solid understanding of TBLT concepts and principles. Yet, there are several adverse viewpoints about the use of TBLT in English classrooms. The study findings indicate that instructors' views about language and language learning greatly influence their teaching methods in the classroom. Liu, Mishan, and Chambers (2018) found evidence suggesting that the implementation of TBLT in China has the potential for success. Nevertheless, the majority of participants exhibited a lack of confidence in their understanding of TBLT. The implementation of TBLT was hindered by significant reasons such

as limited resources, administrative restrictions, and limits associated with both students and instructors. A further investigation conducted by Pham and Nguyen (2018) examined the perspectives of sixty-eight university instructors on TBLT through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicated that the instructors had favourable attitudes and a thorough understanding of the TBLT approach.

Although the aforementioned studies offer valuable insights into how instructors perceive TBLT in various EFL settings, there is a lack of research specifically focused on instructors' perceptions of TBLT efficacy in EFL higher education, especially within the Algerian context. This paper aims to address the insufficient examination of TBLT in the Algerian tertiary context by exploring the current state of TBLT implementation in EFL classes and the perspectives of teachers on the advantages and disadvantages of this instructional approach, as well as the challenges encountered in its implementation. Therefore, the research questions that have been refined for this study are as follows:

1. How do Algerian university EFL instructors perceive the implementation of TBLT approach?
2. What are the challenges that Algerian university EFL instructors encounter when incorporating TBLT into their classes?

## **2. Research Methodology**

### ***2.1 Research Participants***

The study included a total of forty-five EFL instructors from five universities in Algeria: Djillali Liabes University of Sidi Belabees, Mostefa Benboulaïd University of Batna, Ferhat Abbas University of Setif, Mentouri University of Constantine, and Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila. Out of the total sample, 27 individuals (60%) were female, whereas 18 individuals (40%) were male. Their ages spanned from twenties to fifties. During the study, the teachers' years of experience ranged from 5 to 20 years. Out of the total number of teachers, 8 had 5 years of experience (17.78%), 10 had between 5 and 9 years of experience (22.22%), 15 had between 10 and 15 years of experience (33.33%), and 12 had more than 20 years of experience (26.67%).

### ***2.2 Research Instruments***

A mixed-method design was employed to examine instructors' perspectives on TBLT approach and the difficulties they face in its implementation in university settings. The integration of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in research offers a valuable opportunity to acquire a comprehensive and profound comprehension of the topic being investigated.

#### ***2.2.1 Questionnaire***

In this study, a questionnaire adapted from Jeon and Hahn (2006)'s Teacher Questionnaire was utilized for gathering quantitative data. The first section of the questionnaire aimed to collect demographic information from instructors, including their gender, age, and years of experience in the field of teaching. The second section aimed to investigate EFL teachers' perspectives on the implementation of TBLT approach. The last section was designed to examine the obstacles they face when implementing TBLT. The survey utilized a five Likert Scale, which ranged from

strongly disagree to strongly agree. A panel of experts thoroughly reviewed and examined all of the survey questions before piloting them to confirm the reliability of this research instrument. A total of ten EFL teachers were chosen to take part in the pilot study. The Cronbach's alpha for the pilot testing of 0.79 suggests that the questionnaire used for data collection is very reliable.

### **2.2.2 Interviews**

In addition to the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were carried out with five participating instructors. The interview questions were split into two separate sets: instructors' perspectives on the implementation of TBLT approach, and the difficulties encountered during its implementation. The interviews were utilised to explore the complex nature of the participants' profound ideas and experiences about the adoption of TBLT. Prior to their use in the research, the interview questions underwent pilot testing. The comments and responses obtained from the respondents during the preliminary interviews facilitated the refinement of the questions, the time frame of the interview, and revisions of the content before conducting the actual interviews.

### **2.3 Analysis Methods**

The questionnaire's quantitative data were analyzed using the software of Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, relative frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyse and assess the participants' response to the questionnaire items. The interview data were transcribed and subsequently analysed using content analysis method, which entails the application of techniques such as categorisation, coding, and interpretation.

## **3. Results**

This section presents the study's findings regarding the perspectives of EFL instructors on the implementation of TBLT in the tertiary EFL context, as well as the challenges they encounter when utilising it in the classroom.

### **3.1 Instructors' Perceptions about TBLT Implementation in EFL Classroom**

The results suggest that all EFL instructors had favourable attitudes towards the implementation of TBLT as a consequence of their comprehensive understanding of this pedagogical approach. Furthermore, they expressed their enthusiasm for incorporating TBLT into their instructional practices (Table 1).

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of teachers' perspectives on TBLT<sup>2</sup>**

		SA	A	N	D	SD	M	S.D
1. I have a keen interest in implementing TBLT in my EFL instruction.	<b>F</b>	28	14	2	1	0	4.53	.69
	<b>R.F</b>	62.2	31.1	4.4	2.2	0		
2. TBLT fosters a collaborative environment that encourages the use of EFL language.	<b>F</b>	24	16	3	2	0	4.37	.80
	<b>R.F</b>	53.3	35.6	6.7	4.4	0		
3. TBLT materials have meaningfulness and are centered around real life situations.	<b>F</b>	8	29	7	1	0	3.97	.65
	<b>R.F</b>	17.8	64.4	15.6	2.2	0		
4. TBLT has the potential to enhance students' creativity and proficiency.	<b>F</b>	18	15	8	3	1	4.02	1.03
	<b>R.F</b>	40.0	33.3	17.8	6.7	2.2		
5. TBLT places a significant psychological strain on EFL instructors.	<b>F</b>	1	3	16	19	6	2.42	.89
	<b>R.F</b>	2.2	6.7	35.6	42.2	13.3		
6. Students lack enthusiasm in task-based courses.	<b>F</b>	2	7	4	15	17	2.15	1.22
	<b>R.F</b>	4.4	15.6	8.9	33.3	37.8		
7. Students do not gain any advantages from utilising TBLT approach in the classroom.	<b>F</b>	0	6	9	7	23	1.95	1.12
	<b>R.F</b>	0	13.3	20.0	15.6	51.1		
8. TBLT facilitates the development of different language skills within the classroom setting.	<b>F</b>	24	15	6	0	0	4.40	.71
	<b>R.F</b>	53.3	33.3	13.3	0	0		
9. Students with low proficiency levels can complete tasks successfully.	<b>F</b>	14	19	7	3	2	3.88	1.07
	<b>R.F</b>	31.1	42.2	15.6	6.7	4.4		
10. TBLT caters to the specific requirements and preferences of learners.	<b>F</b>	15	22	6	2	0	4.06	.93
	<b>R.F</b>	33.3	48.9	13.3	4.4	0		
11. TBLT is effective in classrooms with a large number of students.	<b>F</b>	1	9	20	15	0	1.91	.79
	<b>R.F</b>	2.2	20.0	44.4	33.3	0		
12. TBLT is appropriate for the development of classroom arrangements.	<b>F</b>	13	24	4	2	2	3.97	.98
	<b>R.F</b>	28.9	53.3	8.9	4.4	4.4		
13. Students will struggle to complete tasks without proficient and accurate English.	<b>F</b>	10	13	8	8	6	3.28	1.35
	<b>R.F</b>	22.2	28.9	17.8	17.8	13.3		
14. TBLT consumes a significant amount of preparation time in comparison to other methods.	<b>F</b>	13	21	7	3	1	3.93	.96
	<b>R.F</b>	28.9	46.7	15.6	6.7	2.2		

The findings of Table 1 reveal that EFL instructors have a favourable attitudes towards the implementation of TBLT approach. The overwhelming majority of responses can be classified as “agree and strongly agree,” as demonstrated by the frequency and average scores for each item, which indicate the positive perspectives of teachers towards the incorporation of TBLT. The results indicated that the teachers expressed a significant level of interest (M=4.53) in implementing TBLT into their EFL instruction (item 1). Based on the provided data, the

<sup>2</sup> Note: F: frequency, R.F: relative frequency, SA: strongly agree, A: agree, N, neutral, D: disagree, SD: strongly disagree, M: mean, S.D: standard deviation.



teachers perceive this pedagogical instruction as a beneficial method for influencing students' use of the target language, as the average scores are higher than 4.0 (a value ranging from 4.0 to 4.40). Particularly, the findings for Item 8 indicate that 53.3% (n=24) of the participants strongly acknowledged that the most significant advantage of implementing TBLT is its potential to enhance students' various language skills (M=4.40, SD=.71). Item 2 received the second highest percentage of responses, with 53.3% (n=24) of teachers expressing their strong belief that TBLT creates a collaborative environment that promotes the use of EFL language (M=4.37, SD=.80). Subsequently, 48.9% (n=22) of participants in Item 10 stated their conviction that TBLT effectively caters to the specific requirements and preferences of learners (M=4.06, SD=.93). Furthermore, a significant number of 40% (n=18) of respondents strongly indicated in their responses to Item 4 that TBLT has the potential to improve students' creativity and proficiency (M=4.02, SD=1.03). Nevertheless, with regard to Item 11, numerous respondents found that TBLT is ineffective in classrooms with a large number of students (M=1.91, SD=.79).

The interview results indicated that the participating teachers recognised the significant impact of TBLT on enhancing students' learning in EFL classrooms. The themes encompassed enhanced students' engagement and interaction, integration of skills, and the effectiveness of TBLT in addressing students' different learning needs. For instance, when enquired about the usage of TBLT in their EFL instruction classes, one respondent stated,

I frequently employ TBLT in my classes, I believe that this instructional approach can assist students in developing their active learning. When collaborating in pairs or groups, students will engage in communication and actively share or exchange ideas. This way allows them to practise English in a more relaxed and authentic way. (Respondent # 5)

It is evident that this respondent comprehends the importance of the TBLT approach in improving the interaction and participation of students in the learning process, and in recognising the use of tasks as a means of fostering communication, which enables students to acquire English in a friendly and supportive environment.

In a similar vein, three teachers reported that they had implemented TBLT to integrate all four English skills into their courses. Participant 1 expressed his opinion:

I often utilise TBLT to encourage the development of all EFL skills. I believe this is a great way to help students improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing competencies. For instance, I will occasionally request my students to work together on activities. These activities initially help them in listening and speaking, and they will acquire other skills as a result of such tasks. (Respondent #1)

The quote above implies that the participating teacher was aware of the significance of TBLT in fostering the acquisition of the four English language skills. This is achieved through the implementation of communicative-oriented activities, which actively involve students in student-centered learning and provide them with opportunities to naturally develop their various competencies.

When asked about the appropriateness of TBLT in catering to students' different learning styles, all of the interview teachers believed that TBLT is effective in addressing students' learning needs and preferences. For example, one of the participants commented:

According to my opinion, the use of tasks in classroom is efficient as we can accommodate to various types of learning preferences throughout the teaching process. We can use different activities in the EFL class, thus students will never be bored because, you know, students can choose which activities they want to do based on their own interests. (Respondent #3)

The interview further explored the instructors' perspectives on TBLT by investigating the impact of particular tasks on EFL learners' abilities. The interview results revealed that the teachers acknowledged the advantages of certain activities, such as role play, presentations, discussions, problem-solving, and reports, in improving students' language proficiency. Nevertheless, for the majority of teachers, these assignments primarily serve to stimulate learners' pre-existing knowledge of English by enhancing their fluency, rather than to gain new knowledge. One teacher remarked: "TBLT is more effective for practicing knowledge, it is a better method to put what students have learnt into practice. For example, I use some tasks as interactions, problem solving and role play after students learn the course content" (Respondent #4). As demonstrated by this participant, assignments are solely utilised as a means to practise linguistic knowledge that has been previously taught in classroom. In other words, assignments were seen as a means of stimulating language use rather than developing new language abilities.

Despite the teachers' interest in incorporating tasks into their EFL instruction, they were unable to use TBLT as the framework of their entire teaching process. This was due to teachers' pressure to complete teaching activities and the limited period of time available for instruction. Respondent 2 conveyed this viewpoint, stating that: "I am unable to fully implement TBLT approach in my classroom within the given teaching hours. I am only able to incorporate certain components of TBLT into my teaching due to the lack of time". Therefore, the implementation of TBLT was restricted by contextual factors, which will be thoroughly examined in the subsequent section.

### ***3.2 Challenges in TBLT Implementation***

The responses of the instructors regarding the challenges they face in incorporating tasks into their EFL classroom are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Perceived barriers for EFL instructors<sup>3</sup>**

Challenges	M	S.D
1. Students have negative attitudes to task-based learning.	3.60	.91
2. The lack of time is the major obstacle to TBLT instruction.	4.40	.65
3. Large class size is a barrier to use TBLT in classrooms.	4.37	.71
4. I encounter challenges when evaluating the task-based performance of students.	4.35	.57
5. Students' limited English language competency is a constraint to TBLT implementation.	4.06	1.07
6. I have limited understanding of task-based instruction.	3.08	1.18
7. Learners lack authentic English-speaking environments for practice.	4.33	.85

<sup>3</sup> Note: M: mean, S.D: standard deviation.

With regards to the difficulties encountered by teachers in implementing TBLT, the findings of Table 2 revealed that the most significant concern expressed by teachers was the limitation of time (item 2,  $M=4.40$ ,  $SD=.65$ ). This was closely followed by the challenge of dealing with large class sizes, which is considered another major obstacle to the effective use of task-based methods (item 3,  $M=4.37$ ,  $SD=.71$ ). Two other significant issues were identified: teachers facing difficulties in evaluating students' performance (item 4,  $M=4.35$ ,  $SD=.57$ ) and the absence of an authentic and immersive English-speaking environment for practice (item 7,  $M=4.33$ ,  $SD=.85$ ). In addition, the teachers participating in the study identified two additional factors that hinder the implementation of TBLT lessons. Firstly, they noted that students have a limited level of competency in the target language (item 5,  $M=4.06$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ). Secondly, they highlighted that students have a negative attitude towards task-based learning (item 1,  $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=.91$ ). The last obstacle to the implementation of TBLT was the instructors' limited familiarity with task-based instruction, which hindered their ability to effectively present TBLT courses (item 6,  $M=3.08$ ,  $SD=1.18$ ).

All five interview teachers reported a variety of challenges when implementing task-based language instruction. These challenges included limited time, teaching large groups of students, the challenge of evaluating tasks, students' lack of familiarity with tasks, and students' insufficient English language skills during the task completion process.

The five participating teachers concurred that they were required to allocate an excessive amount of time to the planning and selection of appropriate assignments for their English classes on a weekly basis. For example, Respondent 2 stated: "I do not have sufficient time to complete all of the tasks in my classroom". The majority of teachers conveyed their concern about the perceived time required to prepare a lesson based on TBLT. It is accurate that TBLT requires a greater quantity of time for teachers to prepare the lesson when compared to other teaching methodologies. In addition, teachers indicated that their other responsibilities, aside from teaching, reduced their confidence in having the time to implement TBLT approach in their EFL instruction:

I believe that TBLT is an excellent method for my students. However, the process of developing task-based courses is time-consuming for me. Teachers in our department have many responsibilities to undertake, such as academic, administrative and pedagogic responsibilities that make it challenging for us to use TBLT in our classrooms. (Respondent #4)

In addition to the challenge of task preparation, three instructors also emphasised the challenges of assessing students' task performance, their inadequate comprehension of TBLT, and the absence of training opportunities. The instructors maintained that they must provide students with explicit instructions and feedback: "It's hard for teachers to make sure that all of their students understand the instructions at every stage. Teachers also have a hard time evaluating all of the tasks, and sometimes they don't understand how to do that either". (Respondent #1)

Despite attempts to enhance the availability of teacher training programs in TBLT in Algeria, this study revealed several issues that require additional attention. The study highlighted the necessity of investing in teacher training and professional development to facilitate the successful implementation of TBLT in EFL instruction.

Most of the interviewed instructors stated that their classes were excessively large, which they perceived as a barrier to the incorporation of TBLT in their teaching practice. The teachers noted that the large number of students in a single class impeded the use of task-based lessons and created several challenging issues, such as the increased stress on teachers, restricted interaction and involvement of students, classroom management, and evaluation difficulties. According to participant 5,

It is hard to use TBLT in a classroom with 40 or 50 students because of the problems that come with managing tasks and keeping the class in control. The class can get too noisy at times, and it's hard to carry out all the tasks.

Concerns regarding students' negative attitudes towards tasks were expressed by two interview participants. For example, participant 3 stated, "It's common for students to not have interest in doing tasks because they have never done it before. Sometimes they know what needs to be done but do not have the will to do it". According to this quote, the students' lack of interest in tasks is considered challenging and may have an impact on the implementation of tasks in EFL instruction.

Two participants frequently expressed their concerns about the limited proficiency level of English among students. These two teachers have significant difficulty in actively involving students with limited competencies in task-based lessons. Participant 4 expresses the challenge of engaging and involving every student in a task-based course:

It makes me disappointed when they have trouble with a task; it's hard to get students who have low proficiency involved in activities, especially when we have a large class. Sometimes I feel hesitant to use TBLT in my class due to this issue.

Participant 4 emphasises that the communicative nature of the task presents a challenge in terms of encouraging students with limited language proficiency to engage in conversation and interaction with their peers. Nevertheless, it is important to note that teachers have a responsibility to foster students' motivation to communicate by incorporating a variety of tasks that are appropriate for each student's level.

#### **4. Discussion**

The results indicated that the teachers held favourable views towards the implementation of TBLT. This could be attributed to the advantages that their students acquired from incorporating tasks into the teaching process. The findings of this study align with previous research which has shown that teachers recognised the effectiveness of implementing TBLT in EFL classrooms (e.g., Liu et al., 2018; Pham & Nguyen, 2018; and Xiongyong & Samuel, 2011). The participants in this study reported various benefits of TBLT. They highly recognised the collaborative and interactive nature of TBLT, as well as its potential to motivate students. They contended that TBLT promoted the development of a cooperative learning environment, which in turn enhanced students' engagement and motivation in the classroom. In accordance with the Liu et al.'s (2018) finding, the majority of teachers choose to implement TBLT for its ability to foster a collaborative learning environment.

In addition, teachers acknowledged the efficacy of TBLT in enhancing a variety of language skills and its capacity to meet the distinct needs and preferences of learners. These findings corroborate the research of Arifani (2022) and Carless (2009), which emphasised that the use of a task-based methodologies offers an adequate option for teachers to accommodate the diverse

learning styles of students. These findings are also consistent with the research literature, which suggests that TBLT has the potential to enhance authentic learning by establishing an immersive environment that aligns with learners' interests and requirements (Ellis, 2015; Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden, 2016).

The quantitative and qualitative data analysis revealed that the EFL teachers had various motives for either adopting or resisting TBLT approach. While certain teachers chose to implement TBLT because of its effectiveness in fostering students' motivation, enhancing interactive skills, and fostering a collaborative learning atmosphere, others were hesitant to incorporate tasks due to various obstacles, such as large class sizes, limited teaching time, students' unfavourable attitudes towards task usage, students' limited English proficiency, and challenges in assessing tasks.

The participants' implementation process was significantly impeded by the limited teaching time. Previous research in the field (Carless, 2012; Douglas & Kim, 2014; Ocel & Bergil, 2022; Rubaiat, 2018) has also suggested that instructors struggle to implement TBLT within the constraints of their instructional time. TBLT poses a challenge to conventional classroom management approaches. Teachers who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods that are less time-consuming and less demanding may find it challenging to allocate time for the design and preparation of task-based classrooms. This may be due to the fact that the majority of the participating instructors were university teachers, who frequently have multiple responsibilities in the tertiary EFL context.

The participating teachers also believed that the large number of students in their EFL classroom was a major obstacle to their implementation of TBLT, as highlighted in previous research findings (Liu et al., 2018; Xiongyong & Samuel, 2011). The large class sizes made it extremely challenging for instructors to conduct task-based language lessons. The implementation of tasks in such classes suggests that teachers would be confronted with a variety of challenging issues, including the teachers' increased workload, restricted interaction and involvement of students, and difficulties with classroom management. The results also indicated that instructors were concerned with other issues, such as the pressure to evaluate teaching assignments, students' unfavourable attitudes toward tasks, and students' inadequate English language proficiency. These concerns could be addressed by providing teachers with training programs on TBLT, as noted by Van den Branden (2016), who emphasizes the importance of developing teachers' abilities in planning and designing appropriate task-based lessons within the constraints of their specific contexts.

## **Conclusion**

This study has examined the attitudes of EFL teachers towards using TBLT approach in the tertiary context, and the challenges they encounter when implementing it in their classrooms. The results of this study revealed that EFL instructors had favourable views towards the implementation of TBLT in their instruction. The results also indicated that, despite the favourable attitude towards TBLT, EFL instructors may have reluctance to incorporate TBLT into their classes due to a variety of constraints. The study's findings suggest several implications. Teachers' attitudes towards TBLT significantly influence classroom practices. Therefore, it is essential for teachers, who play a crucial role in guiding and supporting students' activities, to have positive perspectives on TBLT in order to effectively implement it. To do this, instructors should undergo regular training through professional development seminars or programs. This will enable them to alter their traditional thinking and adjust their lesson plans, thereby

improving the interactive and engaging nature of their classroom practices. In addition, teachers should provide assistance, encouragement and motivation to their students in order to enhance their task-related skills. It is crucial for teachers to create various assignments that accommodate the diverse learning preferences and demands of students. By doing so, teachers can vary their instructional methods, leading to increased student engagement and motivation in learning English as a foreign language.

It is crucial to recognise that there are certain aspects of this study that could be improved in future research. The primary goal of this investigation was to examine the implementation of TBLT in the Algerian tertiary EFL context. The incorporation of a significant sample of EFL instructors from a variety of educational institutions should be taken into account in future research. It is recommended that researchers investigate the perspectives of middle or secondary school teachers regarding the implementation of TBLT in their classrooms. Additionally, the study primarily examined the viewpoints and beliefs of instructors towards TBLT. Additional research should investigate the viewpoints of students, as well as those of other key individuals such as administrative authorities.

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