

Project entitled

**Attitude and experience of task-based language teaching approach from the perspectives of pre-service English teachers in Hong Kong primary schools**

Submitted by

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## Declaration

I, Ip Hoyl Shan , declare that this research report represents my own work under the supervision of Dr. Yu Baohua, and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_Ip Hoyl Shan\_\_\_\_\_

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# **Attitude and experience of task-based language teaching approach from the perspectives of pre-service English teachers in Hong Kong primary schools**

## **Abstract**

This study targeted at the ESL pre-service English Primary teachers in Hong Kong to find out the attitude, knowledge level of TBLT and the challenges they faced to impede using TBLT in their field experience. A mixed method was conducted with 30 participants and 17 participants to fill in the 2 sets of questionnaire respectively and 8 participants in the interviews. Results proved that these pre-service teachers had positive attitude and high knowledge level of TBLT. Furthermore, they all admitted that they had encountered difficulties that hindered them to use TBLT. The challenging factors were synthesized to three aspects, teachers, schools and students. Despite the challenges encountered, with the prerequisite of holding positive attitude towards and high knowledge level of TBLT, Hong Kong pre-service teachers are expected to implement TBLT well. When they become experienced teachers, they will have the ability and flexibility to solve the challenging problems.

**Keywords:** Task-based language teaching approach, Hong Kong pre-service teachers, attitude towards TBLT, knowledge about TBLT, challenges.

## **Introduction**

Task-based language teaching approach (TBLT) has become a prominent English language teaching pedagogy over ESL and EFL countries. The concept of upholding the development of communicative competence of the targeted language among students has been appreciated by educators and researchers for many years. There are a number of research claiming and proving its effectiveness of helping students

to acquire the communicative skills in goal-oriented tasks under authentic contexts. Iranmehr, Erfani and Davari (2011) researched on the grammar acquisition among ESL learners with the use of TBLT and discovered that they could communicate meaning with correct grammar whereas students who were taught under the memorization of grammar rules acquired much less ability to communicate with the targeted grammar structures. Manggopa and Mandang (2017) also investigated the effectiveness of TBLT with the comparison of conventional approach and found out that TBLT had more significant positive effects on improving students' speaking skills. As such, TBLT has initiated benefits over decades on the side of students. However, on the side of teachers, the implementation of TBLT has been a challenge, causing resistance of implementation instead. In other words, when teachers implemented TBLT in real classroom, they encountered difficulties which impede them from using it. For example, two studies (Liu & Xiong, 2016; B. Xhaferi & G. Xhaferi, 2013) found out the limited preparation time, inability to modify textbooks to design tasks, large class size and low confidence hinder them to use TBLT.

## **Literature Review**

As communication is positioned as the focus of TBLT, a task is defined as a student-centred activity that facilitates students to achieve the communicative purpose and outcome in using the targeted language (Willis, 2000). This definition is agreed with other scholars who then further developed the claim about the content of a task. Bygate et al (2001 cited in B. Xhaferi & G. Xhaferi, 2013) and Ellis (2003) argued that content of a task should be meaning-focused more than form-focused. In other words, building up communicative competence in the targeted language is the first priority whereas the accuracy of grammar rules and the spelling of vocabulary have a lower priority. To design a meaning-focused task, Willis (2000), Bygate et al (2001, cited in

B. Xhaferi, & G. Xhaferi, 2013) and Ellis (2003) all proposed the necessity of contextualising a task. The prerequisite of achieving communicative competence is to learn in an either imaginary or authentic context where the targeted language is the only means of communication. The authenticity of a context affects the effectiveness of learning in a task (Nunan, 2004). If the context has real-life situations, then they will be more able to acquire the communication.

The framework of TBLT lies in its chronological structure. Pre-task, during-task and post task all have its usefulness in terms of chronology, which paves the way for the next task, thus helping students to bridge the learning gap. Pre-task functions as activating the prior knowledge and motivating students' learning interest (Ellis, 2003; Willis, 2000). While students are warmed up in the pre-task, they learnt mainly designed learning objectives in the during task through contextualized tasks. Both pre-task and during-task lead students to the post-task which produces either tangible or intangible output of the learning objectives ( Ellis, 2003; Willis, 2000). The three tasks cannot be reversed because its chronology serves as a leading role which provides inputs and learning process for students to the communicative learning outcome.

The focus of communication, the necessity of contextualization and the structural framework of TBLT contributed to creating benefits on the sides of students, contributing to a more holistic development of the targeted language such as increasing motivation to learn, improving grammatical acquisition and speaking proficiency. In terms of motivation, the implementation of TBLT successfully increases students' learning interest and engaged themselves in doing the tasks (NamazianDost, Bohloulzadeh & Pazhakh, 2017). It was found out that the students

who received TBLT performed better in grammar assessment (NamazianDost et al., 2017). Regarding speaking proficiency, Albino (2017) discovered that students' utterance showed an increase of comprehensibility, clear elaboration, grammatical accuracy and speed of speech production. Therefore, TBLT received enough renown in language acquisition in the perspective of students.

Such honour has led to embrace of ESL and EFL teachers and urged the education bureaus in many countries to have a paradigm shift to using TBLT in ESL and EFL classrooms. The in-service teachers had positive attitude towards TBLT, strong belief in its effectiveness and high level of understanding of the concept of TBLT (Liu & Xiong 2016; B, Xhaferi & G, Xhaferi 2013). Mahdavidrad (2017) also found out a similar result about positive attitude and high understanding. However, Mahdavidrad (2017) implies an insight that the in-service teachers had negative attitude towards their own implementation of TBLT in real classroom. This insight echoed the challenges that in-service teachers faced while using TBLT in the previous research in China and Korea. (Carless, 2005; Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Liu & Xiong 2016). Carless (2012) explained that when TBLT became from theory to practice in Asia in response to the paradigm shift suggested by their education bureaus, there appeared a lot of challenges among in-service teachers. In-service teachers faced three aspects of challenges which were teachers' inner difficulties, schools and students. In the aspect of teachers' inner ability, low confidence was identified that the one of the major challenges the in-service encountered in China and Korea (Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Liu & Xiong 2016; Tan, 2016). The in-service teachers in China and Korea perceived themselves as having low confidence to use English to carry out communicative tasks and handle the unpredicted language needs appeared in doing the task. Other than confidence, they also encountered limited preparation time and inability to

modify textbooks for designing tasks (Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Liu & Xiong 2016; Tan, 2016). For the schools' aspects, they faced uncontrollable situations that hinder them to use TBLT. For the students' aspect, Tam (2011) proposed that classroom disciplinary problem could be an obstacle as well. Tam (2011) argued that the noise created during the tasks was unacceptable to teachers in Hong Kong because teachers perceived a quiet classroom as an effective learning environment and vice versa, leading to increasing unwillingness to implement TBLT. However, this proposed challenge has not yet been proved in Hong Kong.

### **Research gap and aims**

From the review of the literature, it is clear about the attitude, understanding level of TBLT and the challenges they faced during the implementation of TBLT among in-service English teachers. Yet, the three aspects among pre-service English teachers in Hong Kong are still a question. Since the results from previous research cannot be applied directly to Hong Kong due to the difference in targeted participants and context, this research aimed at bridging the gap to discover the attitude, knowledge level and the challenging factors they faced during their field experience.

### **Significance of the research**

This research would make a contribution to the development of teacher training courses and the implementation of TBLT in real classroom in Hong Kong. First, since attitude and knowledge level are the variables, the results can be insights for curriculum developers to evaluate the quality of the courses teaching TBLT. Second, another variable is challenging factors they would encounter in their implementation of TBLT during field experience; the result for that can be referred to Education Bureau to initiative solutions or changes in improving the future use of TBLT in Hong

Kong classroom in order to help the future implementation of TBLT among Hong Kong English teachers.

## **Research Questions**

- 1) What is the attitude towards TBLT among Hong Kong pre-service English primary teachers?
- 2) Do they have sufficient knowledge about TBLT?
- 3) Did they implement TBLT in Field Experience? If not, what are the challenges that impeded them from implementation?

## **Research Methodology**

### Procedure

This data collection had three phases. The first phase included a questionnaire to answer research question one, two and three to find out their levels of attitude, knowledge and the challenges mentioned in the previous research about TBLT whereas the second phase was an interview section in response to research question 3 to investigate both the opinions about the challenging factors mentioned in the questionnaire and the other challenging factors that were not mentioned. The last phase was a follow-up questionnaire which synthesized all the challenging factors to find out the ranking of the impedance of the challenging factors.

### Participants

This study was targeted at 30 Hong Kong pre-service English primary teachers at the Education University of Hong Kong who had completed the field experience. These participants had received training courses about the TBLT prior to their practicum.



## Sampling

It was a convenience based sampling about 30 participants. In the first questionnaire, 30 responses were received whereas in the interview, 8 of them were conveniently selected from 30 of them.

## Instruments

A mix method was adopted in this research. According to the first phase, a set of close-ended questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data about the participants' attitude, knowledge and the extent of the challenges. In the questionnaire, the statements were supported by 5-Likert scale so the participants had to choose the extent of their agreement towards the statements. It comprises of three parts which are 5 positive statements for attitude, 8 positive statements for knowledge and 6 statements for challenging factors ( See Appendix 1).

For the second phase, an English interview was conducted separately based on convenience with 8 participants who had completed the questionnaire. It is semi-structured with open-ended questions to explore their opinions of using TBLT in field experience (See Appendix 2). The participants were also asked to state and explain the challenges apart from the ones mentioned in the questionnaire that had impeded them from using TBLT.

In the third phase, a follow-up questionnaire was employed. It is closed-ended which consists of all the challenging factors in a holistic list with 5-Likert scale (See Appendix 3). The same participants were asked to rate the degree of the challenging factors in terms of impeding them from using TBLT.

## Data analysis

Quantitative data were entered to SPSS for calculating mean and standard deviation of each statement in the questionnaire for comparison. Moreover, the overall mean and standard deviation of all the questions of each variable were calculated as well to generate an overview of each variable among the participants' responses. Particularly, the means and standard deviations of all challenging factors found in the follow-up questionnaire were calculated in which the means were used for comparison to produce a ranking in which the highest mean was claimed to be the most challenging factor whereas the lowest mean was the least challenging one.

Thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2012) was applied to analyse the interview data. The first step was to familiarise the data by reading the transcriptions. Next, the data were reviewed to find out the salient features. After that, the consistent features of the data were synthesized to themes and explained with reference to the previous research.

## **Findings**

### Result of attitude (Variable 1)

30 responses were collected for the first questionnaire and calculated by SPSS. In a general sense, the overall mean for the first variable, attitude, is 3.64 with standard deviation of 0.85. It means that the participants have a positive attitude towards TBLT. The details of the results are displayed as follows.

Table 1 shows that over 70% of the pre-service teachers stated their preference for TBLT as a teaching strategy in real classroom. Furthermore, nearly all of them

acknowledged about its effectiveness on ESL acquisition for statement 2. When it comes to the connection between the effectiveness of TBLT and their teaching, over 80% of them believed solidly that TBLT facilitated their teaching in statement 3.

Table 1:

*Responses about attitude*

Statements	Percentage of responses			Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Disagree and disagree (SD + D)	Neutral	Strongly agree and agree (SA + A)		
1) I <b>like</b> implementing TBLT in classroom during FE.	3.3%	23.3%	73.3%	3.8	.664
2) I understand TBLT has <b>positive effects</b> on English language acquisition among ESL learner.	0	6.7%	93.4%	4.1	.481
3) I believe TBLT <b>facilitates</b> me to teach English effectively.	6.7%	10%	83.4%	3.83	.648

From table 2, in response to statement 4, there were 60% of them who kept implementing TBLT due to its benefits on students' learning. The agreement decreased to 30% of them in statement 6 about a frequent habit of using it.

Table 2

*Responses about attitude (continued)*

Statements	Percentage of responses	Mean	Standard
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	Strongly Disagree and disagree (SD + D)	Neutral	Strongly agree and agree (SA + A)		Deviation
4) I insisted to use TBLT because it's effective to improve learners' interaction skills.	16.7%	23.3%	60%	3.47	.819
5) I used TBLT to teach over half of my total lessons in a week.	40%	26.7%	33.3%	3	1.083
Overall:				3.64	0.85

#### Result of knowledge level (Variable 2)

The participants had sufficient knowledge about the concept of TBLT as the overall mean is 4.17 with standard deviation 0.86. In other words, most of them understood thoroughly about the nature, the communicative focus, contextualization, structure and the tangibility of the end product. In respect of the nature of TBLT for statements 7 and 8, there were over 90% of the participants who understood the nature of centering on students and communication. When it was about the top priority of communicative meaning instead of language form in statement 9, the agreement reduced little to approximately 70%.

Table 3

#### *Responses about knowledge level*

Statements	Percentage of responses	Mean	Standard
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	Strongly Disagree and disagree (SD + D)	Neutral	Strongly agree and agree (SA + A)	Mean	Deviation
7) TBLT is a student centered instructional approach.	0%	3.3%	96.6%	4.1	.403
8) TBLT agrees with the principles of communicative language teaching	0%	3.3%	96.6%	4.1	.403
9) A task has a fundamental focus on communicative meaning rather than the language form.	13.3%	13.3%	73.3%	3.83	.950

Regarding the contextualization of TBLT from Table 4, all of the participants agreed on that. In terms of the structure of TBLT, more than 90% of the them understood the structure and the functions of pre-task, during task and post task for statements 12-14. The participants showed little doubt only on the tangibility of the end product on statement 15 which has over 80% of agreement.

Table 4

*Responses about knowledge level (continued)*

Statements	Percentage of responses			Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Disagree and disagree (SD + D)	Neutral	Strongly agree and agree (SA + A)		
10) A task has a context.	0%	0%	100%	4.5	.509

11) TBLT has 3 stages: pre-task, during-task and post-task.	0%	6.7%	90.4%	4.3	.596
12) A pre-task motivates and prepares students for doing the while and post tasks.	0%	0%	100%	4.3	.466
13) A while-task is the main task which usually consists of cooperative work.	0%	6.7%	93.3%	4.17	.379
14) A post-task consolidates the knowledge learnt in the while-task.	0%	0%	100%	3.97	.490
15) A task has a product which is either tangible or intangible.	6.7%	6.7%	86.6%	4.13	.819
Overall:				4.17	0.86

### Result of Challenging Factors (Variable 3):

From table 5, the challenging factors appeared in the previous research about the in-service teachers also existed in the situation of the pre-service teachers in Hong Kong. With regard to statement 1, with evidence of 3.97 as the mean and the small deviation (0.49) of statement 16, over 80% of them expressed that they had difficulties. Among all the difficulties, low confidence due to non-native identify (statement 17) occupied less than 7% for agreement with 2.27 as the mean, becoming the smallest difficulty. Another factor about the inability of modifying textbooks, received a high standard deviation (1.098). Although it has about 30 % for agreement and about 50% for disagreement, with a low mean (2.63), having the high standard means that the deviation between disagreement and agreement about the

pre-service teachers perceiving themselves as unable to modify the textbooks was significantly huge. Next, the changeling factor about the in-school's teachers' negative attitude and low understanding of TBLT is minor to the participants in this research because only 20% of them agreed that it was a challenge. Large class size was a more major factor when compared to those mentioned above because over 50% of them showed agreement on that with a relatively high mean (3.17). To be more particular, the standard deviation (0.999) of large class size is relatively high, showing that there is a large difference between strong disagreement and agreement.

What comes to be major challenging factors is limited preparation time. It was found to be the top challenging factor among all the factors appeared in the previous research because it had 90% of agreement with a high mean (4.13) and an insignificant standard deviation (0.681).

Table 5

*Responses about the challenging factors*

Statements	Percentage of responses			Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Disagree and disagree (SD + D)	Neutral	Strongly agree and agree (SA + A)		
16) I encountered difficulties in implementing TBLT in real classrooms.	0%	13.3%	86.7%	3.97	.490
17) Low confidence due to my non-native	80%	26.7%	6.7%	2.27	.785

identity.					
18) Inability to modify textbooks.	56.6%	10%	33.3%	2.63	1.098
19) The in-school teachers' negative attitudes towards TBLT and the understanding of TBLT.	50%	26.7%	23.3%	2.73	.828
20) Large class size	23.3%	20%	56.7%	3.37	.999
21) Limited preparation time	3.3%	6.7%	90%	4.13	.681

Result of interviews:

After the collecting the data of the questionnaire above, interviews were individually with 8 participants who had completed the questionnaire, aiming to find out the opinions on the factors mentioned in the questionnaire and the other challenging factors faced during field experience. The result is shown as follows.

Opinions about the factors mentioned in the questionnaire:

1. Limited preparation time

When asked about why limited preparation time was a challenge, some interviewees expressed that they had different types of work in terms of administrative work, extra-curricular activities and supplying lessons to handle everyday, which deprived of their time to preparation task-based materials.

Interviewee A: I had a lot of administrative work to do at my FE schools. And also I was assigned to be responsible for after-school activities. I don't have time to prepare activities for pre-task, during-task and post-task. The workload is really heavy.



Interviewee B: Every day I needed to supply the lessons when the in-school teachers were absent. Even though I didn't need to teach on those lessons, I still needed to manage the classes so I lost time to do my own work. It's quite time-consuming.

Interviewee F: I had a lot of work to do, including marking assignment, dictation and handling correction stuff with the students during recesses.

Another reason for limited preparation time is the workload caused by the nature and structure of TBLT itself, which required them to prepare a large number of resources in order to implement task-based approach thoroughly. Due to this, all of them usually replaced TBLT with traditional teaching strategies, such as drilling.

Interviewee E: there are three stages in TBLT like pre, during and post. They include a lot of materials. For example, when I taught the topic about pet shop. I need to modify the textbook, prepared powerpoint slides, redesign the contexts, factsheets for purchase pets. These are the materials needed for only one task. There's a lot to do for TBLT.

Interviewee B: I need to prepare extra worksheets and props for each task. I need to much time to think about how to design the tasks and worksheets. So sometimes, I would choose to teach with exercises instead. I only used TBLT during the lesson supervision.

Interviewee D: I gave up TBLT because I don't have time to contextualise the tasks and design relevant worksheet for every task for each lesson. I abandoned it and used the drilling exercises given by the school to teach.

## 2. Low confidence due to non-native identity

The majority of the interviewees did not think that it was a challenge because the implementation of TBLT such as giving instructions, contextualising and dealing with unpredicted questions from students does not require a native level of proficiency from teachers. These pre-service teachers perceived themselves as having high confidence in their English proficiency to implement TBLT in real classroom.

Interviewee G: I think the English ability needed for carrying out TBLT is not really that high because I just need to give simple instructions. I can handle it very well.

Interviewee A: I use imperatives to give instructions. That has no difficulty to do that. And students can understand the instructions very well.

Interviewee H: I think the contexts of the tasks are daily-life so I am so familiarise with them like going to supermarket and travelling. I know all the languages needed for the contexts.

Interviewee E: the contexts I created are the real-life experience. They are every simple.

Interviewee C: I did encounter some unpredicted questions from students while they were doing group work. But usually those questions are not very difficult. If I really don't know the answers, I will search the answers in the internet. I think I have the ability to deal with that.

### 3. Large class size

2 out of 8 interviewees expressed that large class size was a concern to them. They explained that large class size affected the quality of teaching and learning, especially in group tasks of TBLT. If there are too many groups in a class, the time teachers spend on each group will be decreased, leading to the consequence of learning gap between students.

Interviewee B: If the class size is large, that means there will be 30-40 students. If students are groups in groups of 4, then there will be at least 8 groups. It would be hard for me to help in each group within the time limit.

Interviewee F: My class had 30 something students. I think it's a large class. I could not help each student and students would not learn the best. If each group has to present, then one lesson is not enough.

### 4. Inability to modify textbooks

The opinions about the inability to modify textbooks vary among interviewees. Some admitted that the quality of textbooks was low which added burden to design tasks, contexts and materials in order to implement TBLT. The other interviewees expressed that textbooks were useful because they give them ideas for designing tasks.

Interviewee A: To me the textbooks are not good enough. The contexts in the textbooks are not good enough because they are fake. I need to think about other real-life contexts on my own.

Interviewee D: I seldom use textbooks because I think there are not relevant material. I used the school-based materials instead.

Interviewee B: I think textbooks are quite good. Since they followed the curriculum of EBD, I'm not worried about using textbooks. And they give me ideas for teaching.

Interviewee C: The textbooks I used are not of low-quality. I think somewhat they inspire me to further develop the contexts and tasks.

## 5. In-school teachers' negative attitude towards TBLT

All the interviewees did not encounter any obstacles from their supporting teachers that impede them to use TBLT. They experienced freedom, guidance and support from their supporting teachers rather than the pressure to impede from using TBLT.

Interview A: My supporting teachers did not really watch over me a lot. I did lesson planning and preparation on my own.

Interview B: I think my supporting teacher were quite supportive. She gave me advice to improve.

Interview C: My supporting teachers are not mean at all. They left me some space to do what I wanted to teach.

Interviewee D: My supporting teacher only observed for a few times at the beginning. She never commented on my teaching after that.

Interviewee E: I don't think my supporting teacher give me pressure.

Interviewee F: My supporting teacher was quite good. She taught me how to use TBLT more effectively.

Interviewee G: My supporting teacher was busy. She did not really supervise me and stop me from using TBLT.

Interviewee H: My supporting teacher supported me a lot. She taught me how to improve on designing materials for TBLT.

Other challenging factors:

After collecting their opinions about the challenging factors that appeared in the questionnaire which were derived from the previous research. The following is the result for the other challenging factors that appeared in the Hong Kong context among pre-service English primary school teachers.

### 1. Schools' curriculum restriction

Few interviewees pointed out that their host schools had restricted them to use other pedagogies such as TBLT to teach. It is because they had to follow the school-based curriculum and resources to teach.

Interviewee D: My school developed their own curriculum and worksheets. They had a clear schedule about using what worksheets to teach. I had to follow.

Interviewee H: My school asked us to use the worksheets to teach nearly every day. These worksheets were mainly design for grammar drilling or drilling for other language skills.

### 2. Tight teaching schedule

Few of the interviewees expressed that the teaching schedule was tight in their host schools which hindered them to use TBLT. Since TBLT requires a number of lessons in order to complete pre-task, during-task and post-task, it becomes difficult for teachers to spare lessons from routine work such as dictation to implement TBLT.

Interviewee F: the teaching schedule was fixed, I had to follow strictly otherwise the class would be left behind. That was why I sometime gave up TBLT because there was not much time to do so.

Interviewee G: I had to deal with a lot of things in each lesson, like dictation, correction and so on.

Interviewee H: they had a scheme of work which dated the things to teach. I had to follow the schedule and it was quite packed actually.

### 3. Limited lesson time for TBLT

Two of the interviewees stated that limited lesson time was a challenge for them to implement TBLT of the large scale of TBLT. As TBLT has three stages, they thought it was difficult for them to carry out a task in one lesson which had only 30 mins.

Interviewee G: the lesson time was too short for me because there were just 30 mins. I couldn't really finish the task.

Interviewee H: I just had 30 minutes for a lesson which was very short. TBLT is too extensive that requires a period period to be carried out.

### 4. Large gap of students' learning abilities

Nearly half of the interviewees commented that large gap of learning abilities was a difficulty because it had significant influence on the effectiveness of implementation of TBLT. High-ability students tend to dominate the group work at the expense of learning opportunity of low-ability students, which led to imbalance of learning outcome among students with diverse learning abilities and thus decreasing the benefits of TBLT.

Interviewee C: The high-ability students wanted to show off how much they knew and so wanted to finish all the work on their own whereas the low-ability students just sat there quietly. I don't think they were learning in TBLT.

Interviewee F: I remember that TBLT was not very successful in my class because some of my students learnt very fast and they finished all the things the teacher wanted them to do.

Interviewee G: The low-ability students in my class could not benefit from TBLT.

### 5. Students' low proficiency in English

Almost all of the interviewees agreed that students' low proficiency in English was a challenge to the implementation of TBLT. Since the nature of TBLT is the development of communicative competence, students at high level of proficiency can

be beneficial because of their previous knowledge and ability. However, low-ability students are benefited more on traditional teaching about language form before going to TBLT.

Interview B: I think TBLT is suitable for P.4-P.6 because they have higher proficiency in English. They can communicate better in English during the task.

Interviewee F: My students had very low proficiency. It was extremely hard for me to carry out TBLT. They couldn't understand the language needed in the tasks. They don't know how to speak in English to communicate. They were so confused about how to do the tasks.

Interviewee H: I think TBLT was only for high-ability students because students need to communicate and produce something in English. How could the low-ability students do that? If you ask them to present their products during the post-task, they just don't have the ability to speak for complete sentences.

## 6. Students' learning habits

Two interviewees commented that the rigidity of students learning habits made the implementation of TBLT much challenging. Since HK students are used to spoon-fed teaching style, when it comes to TBLT which is an interactive and exploratory approach, they do not become used to explore the knowledge by communication, collaboration and production. Due to this rigidity, the pre-service teachers tended to replace TBLT with drilling which was the familiar teaching style among students.

Interviewee F: My students were used to drilling because that was the way how my supporting teacher taught them. So when I used TBLT, they gave me a lot of puzzling faces.

Interviewee G: they were familiar with drilling but not TBLT. When I tried to use TBLT, I could observe that they did not want to move around. They just wanted to sit there and listen to the teachers.

## 7. Classroom disciplinary problem

About half of the interviewees pointed out that classroom disciplinary problem was one of the challenging factors. They explained that using TBLT in classroom created excessive noise that disrupted teaching and learning quality.

Interviewee C: They were so noisy when they were doing group tasks. I could not stand it. Then I stopped them to ask them to be a bit quieter.

Interviewee F: I think my class was a misbehaved class. During TBLT, they misbehaved a lot, like complaining other students and making noise.

Interviewee G: They spoke too loud. And I was afraid that when teachers or the principal passed by, they would think that I was not able to control the classroom.

Result of follow-up questionnaire:

There were 17 responses received and the result was ranked according to their means, which is shown in table 6. Limited preparation time and low confidence due to non-native identity were found to be the highest and the lowest challenging factors respectively. Referring to the mean of limited preparation time, it is 4.29 which is much higher than the average 3 with a small standard deviation, becoming the most challenge. On the other hand, low confidence due to non-native identity had relatively low standard deviation (0.78) and a low mean (2.12), turning to be the least challenge.

Limited lesson time is ranked as the second and followed by tight teaching schedule as the third and large gap for students' learning abilities as the fourth. Next, large class size and classroom disciplinary problem both belong to the fifth position. Students' low proficiency in English is positioned to the sixth whereas students' learning habit is at the seventh. The influence of challenge furthered dropped significantly after schools' curriculum restriction is ranked as the eighth. Both inability

to modify textbooks and the supporting teachers' negative attitude share a similar mean around 3 and are positioned to the ninth and tenth respectively. Finally, low confidence due to non-native identity has the lowest mean and thus ranked as the lowest position.

Table 6: Ranking of all the challenging factors

Ranking	Challenging factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Limited preparation time	4.29	.58
2	Limited lesson time	4.24	.58
3	Tight teaching schedule	4	.79
4	Large gap of students' learning abilities	3.82	.80
5	Large class size	3.76	.75
5	Classroom disciplinary problem	3.76	.90
6	Students' low proficiency in English	3.59	1.27
7	Students' learning habits	3.53	.94
8	Schools' curriculum restriction	3.41	1.12
9	Inability to modify textbooks	3.06	1.08
10	The Supporting teachers' negative attitude	3	1.11
11	Low confidence due to non-native identity	2.12	.78

## Discussion

In response to the first research question which is about the attitude towards TBLT among the pre-service English primary school teachers, the quantitative result of this study showed that they had positive attitude towards and strong belief of the benefits



of TBLT. It echoed with the previous research (Liu & Xiong, 2016; Mahdavirad, 2017; B. Xhaferi and G. Xhaferi, 2013) that all of them found out a positive attitude towards TBLT. However, this result of the study showed that implicit detail behind the positive attitude that has not been explored by the past researchers. Although the participants stated positively about their preference for TBLT and belief in its benefits, their positivity dropped when it was about the frequency of using TBLT in real classroom. The implicit detail shown is that the preference for TBLT do not contribute to the frequent use of TBLT. It can be interpreted that there is insignificant relationship between the positive attitude towards TBLT and the practice of the implementation of TBLT. In other words, even though the participants liked TBLT and believed in its' effectiveness of teaching, they did not use it usually.

In terms of the second research question about the knowledge level of TBLT, the participants acquired a high level of knowledge. The result confirms the previous research (Liu & Xiong, 2016; Mahdavirad, 2017; B. Xhaferi and G. Xhaferi, 2013). The sameness of the results can be explained by the quality of the teacher training courses the participants received before going to real classroom to teach. The participants received sufficient training and they were well assessed about the concept of TBLT, contributing to a high mastery of the nature, focus, structure of TBLT.

In a nutshell, the participants held a positive attitude and high knowledge level of TBLT. However, it can be further interpreted by a general view of the findings for the final research question that despite the positive attitude and high knowledge level of TBLT, they still encountered challenges which impede them from using TBLT in real classroom to teach. While comparing the challenging factors with the previous

research (Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Liu & Xiong, 2016; Mahdavi-rad, 2017; B. Khaferi and G. Khaferi, 2013), this study discovered the appearance of the challenging factors mentioned in the previous research and there were other challenging factors found. The challenging factors faced by the participants come from three aspects which are teachers' aspect, schools' aspect and students aspect (see table 7). As a result, the pre-service teachers in Hong Kong faced more challenges in terms of teachers, schools and students, than the in-service teachers did in the previous research.

Table 7

*Categorization of the challenging factors*

Teachers' aspect	Schools' aspect	Students' aspect.
Low confidence due to non-native identity	School curriculum restriction	Students' low proficiency in English
Inability to modify textbooks	Tight teaching schedule	Students' learning habits
Limited preparation time	Limited lesson time	Classroom disciplinary problems
	Large class size	
	Supporting teachers' negative attitude towards TBLT	

There is a difference about the challenging level of limited preparation time between this study and the previous research. With reference to the past studies (Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Liu & Xiong 2016; Tan, 2016), limited preparation time was found to be not a major challenging factor among in-service teachers. Yet, this factor was proved to be the most challenging one. Moreover from the interview data, the pre-service teachers explained that due to the heavy workload coming from different types of

work assigned such as administrative work, extra-curricular activities and assignment marking, the time allocated for preparing TBLT was scarce. One explanation for that is that the determination factor is the teaching experience of the participants and time management ability established in teaching experience. The participants in the past research were all in-service teachers who had years of teaching experience whereas the participants in this study were the pre-service teachers who were undergoing their first teaching experience. While preparing the tasks, the in-service teachers had more ideas, materials and resources to reuse and modify, which reduced the workload of the preparatory work for TBLT. Moreover, since they had become teachers for a certain period of time, they acquired time management skills to complete all the other types of work. It is not the case for pre-service teachers. Compared to in-service teachers, those pre-service teachers had much less experience and so they did not have ideas, materials and resources at their hands for reuse and modification. In this case, while implementing TBLT in class for every teaching content, they had to design the materials on their own before the lessons without previous resources to rely on. Furthermore, they did not have experience in handling non-teaching work, like administration and extra-curricular activities. When they were handling teaching and non-teaching work, time could not be managed well to complete both of them. As a result, the time they allocated for preparing TBLT was deprived of. Therefore, it can be claimed that years of teaching experience and time management skills affect the time invested for preparing TBLT.

The challenging level of low confidence due to non-native identity has an extreme opposition between the result in this study and the past research targeted at the in-service EFL teachers in China and Korea (Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Liu & Xiong 2016). This factor was found to be the most challenging one which impeded them from

using TBLT. They perceived themselves as unconfident to use English to carry out TBLT because they thought that the implementation of TBLT required a high level of proficiency to handle the complexity of it and the unpredicted language needs from students. On the other hand, it was the least one among the pre-service teachers in Hong Kong. From the interview data, they expressed the easiness of using English to implement TBLT. Such difference can be explained by the proficiency built under the English learning background of the teachers. In the researches (Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Liu & Xiong 2016), the in-service teachers learnt English as the foreign language whereas the pre-service teachers learnt English as the second language who had acquired a higher mastery of using English. As such, although both groups of the participants were all English teachers, EFL and ESL background affected their proficiency of English, leading to low confidence of using English to implement TBLT.

The result about classroom disciplinary problem is insightful in a way that it confirms the proposed claim by Tam (2011) that teachers perceive classroom with noise as disciplinary problem and thus resulting in ineffective learning environment. According to the quantitative data of this study, classroom disciplinary problem is ranked as the fifth position, showing that it is a relatively significant challenge. Furthermore, the qualitative data from interviews reflected that the pre-service teachers in Hong Kong regarded the noise created during the group tasks as unacceptable which disturbed the learning atmosphere. The reason embedded for this insightful result is the Hong Kong educational culture which deep-rooted quite classroom as an effective learning environment (Tam, 2011). Over the past few decades, Hong Kong education was claimed to be spoon-fed in which students sit quietly and listen to learn (Carless, 2005). Because of that, the pre-service teachers held a consolidated perception about an effective classroom without noise. In this

sense, when they implemented TBLT which includes students' interaction in groups, they considered the noise as disciplinary problems instead of the necessary noise needed for tasks. Therefore, the perception about silent and effective learning environment among the pre-service teachers in Hong Kong has proved to oppose the implementation of TBLT in Hong Kong classroom.

### **Implications**

This study implies the potential of Hong Kong pre-service English primary schools in terms of implementing TBLT. First, they had positive attitude and strong belief towards TBLT. Second, they acquired high knowledge level of TBLT. Third, they own sufficient confidence in using English to implement TBLT. As a result, it can be generalised that our future Hong Kong English teachers can implement TBLT successfully if other problems such as limited preparation time can be solved.

It is expected that years of teaching experience is the solution to other problems. For example, in order to solve the biggest challenge, limited preparation time, a collection of sufficient teaching materials and ability to handle workload will be built up for them to reuse and modify to tasks in an efficient and economic way. Once these teachers who had positive attitude and high knowledge level about TBLT become in-service teachers with a number of years, they will have the experience and ability to solve the problems faced by the schools' and students' aspects.

To further enhance the implementation of TBLT, it is advised to Hong Kong teachers that they should have flexibility of allowing necessary noise in classroom. As explained above, noise is the by-product of interactive and communicative tasks under TBLT. To let the tasks going on, Hong Kong teachers should be tolerate to

necessary noise so that students can communicate to finish the tasks, learning effectively under TBLT.

### **Limitations**

This study has unavoidable limitations. First, it has limited scope. Since it was targeted only at 30 participants and 8 interviewees, the scope for generalization is not enough. A large-scale study would be needed to make a more convincing generalization. Another limitation is the representation of the backgrounds of participants. The participants in this research were the university students at the Education University of Hong Kong, the results of their responses might be not applicable to other pre-service teachers from other universities. A more representable research targeted at the Hong Kong pre-service teachers from other universities will be needed.

### **Conclusion**

The study has proved positive attitude towards TBLT and high knowledge level of TBLT among Hong Kong pre-service teachers with the use of a mix method that targeted at 30 pre-service English primary teachers in Hong Kong. It further justified that challenges appeared which might impede the use of TBLT in spite of the positive attitude and high knowledge level. The challenges come from the teachers', the schools', and the students' aspects. Nevertheless, Hong Kong pre-service teachers are anticipated to implement TBLT successfully if they have years' of learning experience and flexibility of allowing the necessary noise.

Word Count: 4948

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## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

### Part 1: Attitude

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I like implementing TBLT in classroom during FE.					

2. I understand that TBLT has positive effects on English Language acquisition among ESL students.					
3. I believe TBLT facilitates me to teach English effectively.					
4. I insisted to use TBLT because it's effective to improve learners' interaction skills.					
5. I used TBLT to teach over half of my total lessons in a week.					

Part 2: Knowledge level

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7) TBLT is a student centered instructional approach.					
8) TBLT agrees with the principles of communicative language teaching					
10) A task has a context.					
11) TBLT has 3 stages: pre-task, during-task and post-task.					
12) A pre-task motivates and prepares students for doing the while and post tasks.					
13) A while-task is the main task which usually consists of cooperative					

work.					
14) A post-task consolidates the knowledge learnt in the while-task.					
15) A task has a product which is either tangible or intangible.					

### Part 3: Challenging factors

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16) I encountered difficulties in implementing TBLT in real classrooms.					
17) Low confidence due to my non-native identity.					
18) Inability to modify textbooks.					
19) The in-school teachers' negative attitudes towards TBLT and the understanding of TBLT.					
20) Large class size					
21) Limited preparation time					

### Appendix 2: Interview Questions

1. Have you ever used TBLT in your classroom?
2. How frequently did you use task-based approach in your classroom? Why?
3. Did you encounter any challenges when you used TBLT?
4. What and why are the challenges?
5. What is your opinions about the challenges mentioned in the questionnaire?

6. Did you encounter other difficulties except those mentioned in the questionnaire?
7. What are they and why?

### Appendix 3: Follow-up questionnaire

The following factors challenged me to use TBLT.

Statements	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
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	Disagree				Agree
Large class size					
Limited preparation time					
Limited lesson time					
Inability to modify textbooks for tasks					
Low confidence due to non-native identity					
The supporting teachers' negative attitude towards TBLT					
School's curriculum restriction					
Classroom disciplinary problems					
Students' learning habits					
Students' low proficiency in English					
Tight teaching schedule					
Large gap of students' abilities					

#### Appendix 4: Interview transcriptions

**Interviewer:** Ip Hoyl Shan (I)

**Interviewee:** A (II)

**Time duration:** 00:12:32

Person	Dialogue
I	The first question is: Do you think implementing TBLT is a challenge to you?
II	Yes, because I think I do not have enough time to design the TBLT task for my students. I had a lot of administrative work to do at my FE schools. And also I was assigned to be responsible for after-school activities. I don't have time to prepare activities for pre-task, during-task and post-task. The workload is really heavy.
I	So, one of the difficulties that you have in your practice is preparation time. What are the other difficulties.
II	I think mostly it's about the time because ,as a teacher, you have lots of administrative work or lots of assignment that you need to design for the students. So, it's difficult to have extra time to design the TBLT tasks for my students.
I	So, in that case, you have a lot to handle in your own preparation time. If you don't use TVLT, what else would you use to replace that.
II	Mainly, I just use some E-books and PowerPoint. I design my own PowerPoint slides for them and teach them step by step. I do not have any main task for them but just completing the task book exercises or spelling the vocabulary.
I	When you use E-books to teach, do you mean that you follow the sections of the books, like we do part A then we do part B. If there is a dialog or a practice,then, you do it, right? Is this the normal way or the frequent way you used to teach instead of TBLT?
II	Yes, this is the normal way.
I	But you also use TBLT in your class but not that often.
II	Yes, not very often.
I	Okay. When you use TBLT, what other difficulties that you have encountered?
II	To amend the text book contents, to design a new TBLT task.
I	So, you mean text book is not a good resources for you to implement TBLT.
II	Exactly.

I	That means you have to redesign the task right?
II	Yes.
I	Besides text books, what else?
II	I think the level of students is a concern. As I have taught primary two students in my teaching practice, they are not able to do very complicated tasks. For example, once I asked them to design the poster, but it seems very difficult for them. Because they need to acquire all the vocabulary, all the sentence structures and features of a poster. They need to combine everything together. It is very difficult for younger age students.
I	You mentioned about the level of the students. So, what kind of inability of the students that hinders them to learn from TBLT?
II	They may be lack of the ability to organize all the things taught in the pre-task or in the while- task.
I	What else like fluency? Is fluency a problem of them?
II	Yes, words of English that they have.
I	So, they have limitations on vocabulary.
II	Yes.
I	What if you are going to teach p.4 to p.6 students, do you think TBLT is useful for them? If they don't have fluency, if they don't have vocabulary, do you think TBLT is still suitable?
II	Let's say they are very weak even they are in higher primary. I think they are not able to produce a product.
I	Okay, besides the level of students, what else?
II	In the questionnaire, you mentioned about non-native. Apparently, I am non-native but I don't think it hinders my design of TBLT. Because I understand what my students need. So, I can still design some tasks for non-native students. I use imperatives to give instructions. That has no difficulty to do that. And students can understand the instructions very well.

I	When you implement TBLT in class, do you think that you need native fluency to carry out the whole process?
II	No.
I	Why?
II	Because for young students, they just need simple instructions.
I	Do you think that having your non-native identity affects your confidence to implement TBLT? Why
II	No, because I am a professional teacher.
I	So, you think you have enough training from your program.
II	Yes.
I	What do you think the facilitating factors for implementing TBLT and Why?
II	I think students' interest motivates me the most. If students really enjoy doing tasks, you will have more motivation to design the tasks for them. And the students are really unable to follow the textbooks, you may also need to design some easier tasks for them.
I	So, you said you have used TBLT in your teaching practice. Do you think that when you use TBLT, students are more motivated to learn or it is the same level with using E-book and PowerPoint?
II	I think they are interested in PowerPoint but they also enjoy doing something extra. Teachers should at least give them some tasks to do so that they will be more motivated to learn. To me the textbooks are not good enough. The contexts in the textbooks are not good enough because they are fake. I need to think about other real-life contexts on my own.
I	So, do you have other facilitating factors?
II	No.
I	If I say there are some facilitating factors and you have to rate them from the highest to the lowest. First is that students' interest the most or the least, or preparation time and large class size.



II	I think preparation time would be my first concern.
I	And the second is?
II	Students' Interest. Third is the class size.
I	So, why is class size the least?
II	Because if your students are smart enough, even all of them need to do the same task, I can also make some group task for them to work together.
I	So, you mean that even though it is a large class size, you can still have tasks that each of them can participate in.
II	Yes.
I	Okay, good. Do you think you have enough training from your university? Do you think pre-service teachers need even more training on TBLT.
II	I think the TBLT training is more than enough.
I	What hinder TBLT implementation? Is just the contextual factors like preparation time and students' interest?
II	Yes.
I	What about the supporting teacher?
II	My supporting teachers did not really watch over me a lot. I did lesson planning and preparation on my own.
I	Okay. If the difficulties that you mentioned above are eliminated, what the implementation of TBLT will be like?
II	If I have unlimited time to design my tasks and the students are so capable in doing the tasks, I think maybe I also need to have more creativities.
I	If you have a lot of times and if you have high ability students, compare this with the experience that you have in your teaching practice, how would it be different? Or do you think your TBLT is a successful one in your teaching practice?

II	It was successful. But the main concern is that I need to use much time to design the tasks. If I have unlimited time, I think I can carry out successful TBLT lessons to my students.
I	The definition of being successful, do you mean that they can produce the product that you want?
II	Yes.
I	What about the process?
II	They're enjoying the process and the whole process is going smoothly. The students can acquire the sentence structure and vocabularies that I want them to learn throughout the task.
I	Do you have other comments or reflections?
II	For question number six, other than TBLT, I will suggest my school to teach more different teaching approaches. Even TBLT can be successfully used, more teaching practice or more teaching methods can help student teachers to have more choice to implementing their methodology.
I	To have more choices, do you mean that TBLT is not a good teaching approach?
II	It is good but it's still time-consuming in reality.
I	Okay, you mean that pre-service teachers need more efficient teaching approach.
II	Yes.
I	Thank you.

**Interviewer:** Ip Hoyl Shan (I)

**Interviewee:** D (II)

**Time duration:** 00:17:35

Person	Dialogue
I	The first question is: Do you think implementing TBLT is a challenge to you?
II	Yeah, because I have limited time to prepare. Sometimes I find difficult to conduct in English because some of my students do not understand fully. So, It can be sometimes challenging for me. Sometimes I gave up TBLT because I don't have time to contextualise the tasks and design relevant worksheet for every task for each lesson. I abandoned it and used the drilling exercises given by the school to teach.
I	So, for the problem that you mentioned about English, is it because of your English ability to express what you want to teach or it's just because of the students' ability? They don't understand your English?
II	I think it takes place in both of the students and me. Because I am very experienced in conducting a task for them. So, sometimes, I find myself quite difficult to explicitly explain the steps for them to make them easily understand. On the other hand, some of them do not really comprehend English very well. So, sometimes, I really have to help them to understand step by step what they are doing.
I	What else difficulties that you have encountered?
II	Sometimes, I find difficult to ...because of the limited time in lessons. There is a certain curriculum for me to follow. If I want to make a task for them, it can be difficult because they already have a lot of things to occupy their time in lessons. Maybe to spare one or two lessons for them to do TBLT. It is kind of time consuming. So, maybe it will affect my other teaching sections that I don't think it is most efficient for them to learn the second language.
I	If you don't use the TBLT to teach, what else teaching strategy did you use to match the curriculum?
II	My school developed their own curriculum and worksheets. They had a clear schedule about using what worksheets to teach. I had to follow. Because the school has a planned schedule, they already have some materials, for example, textbooks, wordbook. They are just something very simple like the reading, writing, listening but no speaking task basically. For each chapter, they have two reading passages. I will let them do the basic pre-read task, and prepare them for the lesson. It's difficult to say whether if the reading is the main task in that sense because they don't really have much time for me to draw the attention or to motivate them, engage them into the reading section. So, I don't know whether if that counts for TBLT thing. I will say it's a pretty traditional teaching that I am following in most of my practicum experience.
I	So, the school's materials, is it a kind of like exercise based? I have to finish this exercise and move on to listening exercise and move on to other exercise?
II	Yes, basically. I seldom use textbooks because I think there are not relevant material. I used the school-based materials instead.

I	So, in that case, you have to just give them a bit background of the context instead of modifying into a task, right?
II	Yes, they are basically following what the textbook is telling them to do. I am just like explaining some grammar rules or some difficult words for them. This is what I was basically doing in my practicum.
I	So, I think you have used task based teaching before. What did the process and the preparing look like?
II	For example, I did teach grammar class using the strategy. I was setting a context that was about present-perfect tense. I set a scheduler for them so they could know what they have done already in this period. Then I tried to provide them a context that I don't remember. It's like cartoon characters or something. They can do some speaking task with their partner and also write some sentences to present to the class. So, my preparation stage was to think about the context and some suitable examples for them to understand.
I	Is that base a kind of modification of the textbook?
II	Yes, it's basically a topic that covering the chapter.
I	Then, do you think it is a difficulty that is very hard to modify the textbook because the quality is so low? And you have to think a lot, maybe do a lot of researches.
II	That's true. I think the textbook sometimes do not related to their daily-life. So, they find it kind of doubt to follow. I try to motivate them and engage them by something what they can really see in their daily-life or what they are interested like cartoon characters.
I	What do you think the facilitating factors for implementing TBLT?
II	You mean the situation in classroom?
I	Yes, everything.
II	I think the teachers' experience is really important. Throughout my field experience, even though I have more time to understand the students' ability or the diversity, carrying out the TBLT and doing it well is way more than that. Besides the experience, the ability for the teacher to explain the instructions clearly is also very important. I feel like it's more about the ability of the teacher more or least.
I	What about students' abilities? Do you feel like task based is just a strategy for high ability students but not for low ability students?
II	Sometimes, by my experience, I feel like it's positive because most of the students are used to doing exercise in lessons. They are very discouraged or not very used to speaking or

	more active teaching situation. They are like I don't really know what is happening. They don't like to talk with the partners. Sometimes, I find it very difficult for carrying out this kind of lessons. Even though I know that they understand what I was talking about but they can't do it themselves because it's about their habits. They know maybe that's not included in their exams or dictations so they are not really motivated to do so.
I	So, you mean when you were carrying out TBLT, during the process, they were not willing to talk to each other in English, right?
II	Yes, I feel like the class combination is also a difficulty. Because most of the smart students are paired with those with very poor ability. For example, they can't really understand one single word in English, not even clearly in cantonese as well. So, they cannot really do it if they are in pair work. But if it's difficult in pair works, it's more difficult in group works. If I just teach those who are smart, that is useless for the rest of the class. You are like discouraging or you are not engaging the whole class. So, it's kind of difficult for me.
I	So, task based is not a good approach to cater for learner diversity. Do you feel like that?
II	I feel like you can always do some moderation to make it better but it really do engage a lot of effort because some of them can't really produce very (?) English by themselves. If you can give them some guidance, they can do it for sure. But it needs more time. Not only in the class, but also for the preparation. It's like a process that if they do it continuously, they can do it better.
I	So, you've just mentioned about teachers' experience, right? How does it facilitate TBLT? Is it because if you are experienced then you need less time to prepare?
II	If you are experienced, you know to what extend the students can actually produce something like how many input they need and how many demonstration they need. So, by that process, you know how can you really prepare them for the tasks but not assist them individually during the tasks. Because, sometimes, if they have individual help, they can do it. But it's not very efficient in terms of time.
I	Do you mean that when teachers are experienced, they are faster to know the learning characteristics of students?
II	Yes, it depends on individual learning style of the students and how do you cater them by adjustment.
I	After your field experience, do you think pre-service teachers need more training on TBLT?
II	Yes, Because I feel like it's not really something that is frequently talked about in the school. Even though we know that it is better for the students to learn in some sense, it is still difficult. What I have in mind before my practicum is that they understand some basic English. So, I can do the things that I was taught in University. But they don't really understand what is happening. I mean sometimes it's easy to say it in theory but it's difficult implement. I think it's not something that can be improved only by institutional teaching but also your own teaching experience. I am not sure whether if the university should provide

	more lessons for that or it's more about your personal experience.
I	What if the university gives you more real classroom experience on teaching different students with task based. Do you think it helps more than just giving you a lot of theories?
II	Yes, Because even if when you are doing micro-teaching, it's not something very authentic. I feel like I am not ready for a class with students that have different learning styles. Some of them with quite low English ability, they don't really understand. You have to control some of them. It's a lot about classroom management. I think it's a lot going-on. If the university can do something to prepare the undergraduate teachers to do so, maybe it would not become something like disasters in some sense.
I	Do you have final reflections? Do you think it was effective in your field experience like to achieve learning outcomes?
II	In a sense of TBLT, right?
I	Yes.
II	I don't know. I can't cast all those responsibility to students because they are not experienced with those kind of teaching in the past. When I am observing my supporting teachers doing the teaching, the person is basically reading aloud the book or just explaining the workbook as their homework. So, I find it frustrating at the beginning because I am not sure if I can make them lively in class anymore. Because they are so used to it. They are just sitting down, trying to (ticking?) something when they are in English class. To maximize the outcome of doing TBLT lessons, I think it's very important for the students to make it as a cohesive practice. I mean if they are used to it, then they can do it better. It's not like focusing on exercise and then suddenly changing to conduct a TBLT lesson. It's really not working.
I	Did your supporting teacher have a negative attitude towards TBLT?
II	My supporting teacher only observed for a few times at the beginning. She never commented on my teaching after that.

**Interviewer:** Ip Hoyl Shan (I)

**Interviewee:** E (II)

**Time duration:** 00:19:37

Person	Dialogue
I	Do you think implementing TBLT is a challenge to you?
II	I think it is a kind of happy thing to me because the students are very motivated when they are given a context or a certain activity to do or play with. When I see the students are immersed in that I would be very happy. So, from my point of view, it's a happy challenge for me.
I	So, you mean it's happy because you feel like students are motivated in learning because of using those tasks. At the same time, it's still challenging to you, why?
II	For me, I usually adopt group tasks in TBLT and I want them to work in a group. So the problem would be every group having different learning levels. Usually, I would change some group members to reach the situation in which every group has the same or similar level. So, they could finish the task in similar length of time. This is a of the challenges for me. Every time when you have to think of how to combine the language target with a kind of task, you have to prepare so much more than normal teaching. Because you have to set a total, authentic and natural environment for them to devote themselves in that situation.
I	So, we go back to arranging students to different groups. How did you do that? How did you realise the students' needs to go to groups with similar students?
II	Yes, I know what you mean. I would observe my students in every lesson. During the first time I tried TBLT in my class, It's very obvious that some of the group can really finish the task in a very short period of time and they have nothing to do. So, I realise that if TBLT is implemented in a group size, it's very important for them to have similar level of speed to finish the tasks. So, after observation, I chose the smartest student to be the leader. If one group has two smart students, I would pick one and tell him or her to go to another weaker group to be the leader. This is how I arrange them to make sure that every group is similar.
I	I see. Let's go to preparation. You said TBLT needs a lot of preparation time and effort. So, what makes you feel like that?
II	For example, I was teaching fact sheet in my p.3 class. Actually the textbook only has one page talking about fact sheet. For example, it has a table. It has some point forms. But if you only teach those things that appear in the textbook, they would think it's very boring and would hardly be motivated to learn those boring things. So, I prepared a scenario for

	<p>them. It is if they are the workers in an adoption center. For example, some customers would like to adopt some small animals like hedgehogs, hamsters, like what, what, what. But the customers would not have time to read a long paragraph like wikipedia to know about that kind of pet. If you are the workers there or you are the shop assistants there, you have to know how to present precise information in a form of fact sheet. So, they have a context and a task to introduce different pets to the customers. So, they are very motivated. This means that I have to find many kinds of pets to introduce to them. And I have to make a Powerpoint and put images of adoption centers and design some other tasks. I mean a full set of language pattern practices for them.</p>
I	Did your idea about pet shop come from the textbook or it just pop up in your mind?
II	It took time to pop up in my mind.
I	So you need to do research?
II	I don't need to do research but I just sit there and think for a half an hour how can I make it into a task that is more interesting for them. And like pets, adoption, adoption center, oh, workers in adoption center. The effect turned out to be very good. They are very happy about adopting different pets and introducing different pets in the form of fact sheet.
I	When you compare TBLT with other teaching strategy that you have used, can you name some other teaching strategies that you have used like drilling?
II	Yes, it has to do with my first supervisor. I know everyone has different teaching styles so I tried some of the teaching methods that she recommended me to do which is drilling. I think children nowadays cannot be attracted by traditional way of teaching like drilling. So, when I drill them, they sometimes chated. They looked at other places. They thought that was so old-school. Even one of the students told me it was so boring.
I	Is that kind of drilling like repeating a lot of things, like "Have you eaten something, something."
II	Even worst. I tried the phrase repeating like "Pack the basket, pack the basket, pack the basket." So boring. So, Task-based learning is definitely better in motivating students to learn.
I	What about the learning outcomes?
II	Learning outcomes? Let me think. Give me five seconds.
I	Which one is better?



II	I think it depends on different school and different style. Because in my school, my school is a half international school. The students' ability of English is relatively higher. They would like me to adopt versatile methods to teach them instead of drilling. But, for some very traditional schools in which some students' parents are very conservative, I think that the kids would buy that kind of drilling method.
I	Can I say that using Task-based is suitable for students with high ability of English proficiency.
II	Yes, the effect would be very obvious if they have high ability..
I	Have you had any experience of implementing TBLT to low ability students? Is there any comparison?
II	No, I haven't, sorry.
I	Okay.
II	There are different level of classes in my practicum school. The two classes I taught are top classes so I can't tell the difference.
I	You've just mentioned about most of your students were native, right?
II	Half half.
I	Do you feel like your non-native identity somehow affected you to implement TBLT?
II	I don't think so because the contexts that I gave them were all from our daily life. Since we all live in Hong Kong, I don't think my non-native identity would affect any teaching process. Because they live in Hong Kong too, I am not teaching English in Japan or somewhere else that I am not familiar with.
I	Some pre-service teachers mentioned that when they were implementing TBLT in class, students challenged them. And they didn't really know how to answer that question. Do you have this kind of experience because of your non-native identity?
II	First I think it has hardly anything to do with non-native identity. I don't really think I have encounter such kind of problems because everytime I prepare any task-based learning activities, it took me so long time to think whether it is suitable for the level or authentic from daily life. For example, I have some teaching activities with going from place A to place B with reference to maps. These are really simple and natural things for them. So, they do not challenge me for that. So, I think the selection of the tasks matters pretty much.

I	So, your tasks will mostly be based on daily life instead of argumentative things?
II	Yes, for example, ordering food or drinks in a restaurant.
I	Okay, those are very straightforward.
II	Yes, straightforward and a complete task.
I	What do you think the facilitating factors for implementing TBLT?
II	I think the facilitating factors mainly lie in the students' motivations because I feel being more motivated to design some better or happier tasks for students if they like them. It's like a mutual positive process. If the school has free environment for students or give students certain flexibility to try something new, it will be an encouraging factor for me to implement TBLT. Because, so far, it's not the main teaching method in Hong Kong.
I	Did your school give you a lot of guidelines or worksheets or tailor-made curriculum for you to follow to teach?
II	They didn't give me much documents or guidelines for me but it was me and my partners. We really like to try new things. And the school didn't hinder us to do so. That's why we can do so much and try so much. Also, we failed sometimes.
I	What kinds of failure?
II	For example, the Map is a little bit failure because, at that time, some smart students were in the same group like I mentioned before. You know what I mean. They almost finished all the questions but some other groups only finished one. You need to try more to ensure that the outcome is good.
I	You've mentioned that students' diverse learning ability is a challenge to you and preparation effort and time. What else difficulties you have encountered?
II	So far, I couldn't think of anything.
I	You have just mentioned textbook, right? Is textbook a kind of like..
II	Restriction?

I	Yes, for you.
II	I think it has to do with my freedom that we were given from the school. Because the school didn't want us to be restricted by the textbooks. Actually, our supporting teacher always remind us that the textbooks are not the profession, you are the professional one who teach language by person. So, you have to utilize the things that you experienced in your daily life instead of giving some dead knowledge from the wooden paper.
I	Let's compare the preparation time between drilling and task-based. In a rough sense, how much time?
II	For drilling, it takes me one second maybe because I know what I am going to teach and I just repeat them.
I	Do you use Powerpoint?
II	I use Powerpoint.
I	Your just type down the structure and then..
II	And then read. So, it takes not more than ten minutes for me to prepare that kind of Powerpoint. But for task-based learning, wow. Two hours.
I	Ten times more.
II	Ten times more. Even more, maybe twenty times more.
I	Okay. Do you think pre-service teachers need more training on TBLT?
II	I don't think it's a necessity but it will be better for we, the latest generation of new teachers, to have some knowledge about TBLT. Because the kids like new things. When they see some new faces, they would express some new things too. If there is any training on TBLT, I would definitely go. Because it really takes time for me to think of the TBLT content or the way that I have to carry it out. If there is a class or a curriculum that can give me some inspirations in advance, it would help me a lot and save my time when I am preparing the teaching.
I	It's basically the things about modifying textbooks. It takes a lot of time. If the training goes on giving your a lot of examples of how to modify the textbooks, that would be good, right?
II	Maybe not modifying textbooks... maybe YES.

I	Do you have final reflection regarding the implementation of TBLT and do you feel like it was effective to you?
II	For the reflection, I think practice makes perfect. No one would be successful when they first try to use TBLT. But when you practise more, you try more, you'll know how to carry it well in a more smooth way. You would see the effect is really huge because students know that when you come, you are bringing some very interesting tasks for them to do and they are all like "We are ready, we are ready to face new challenges." They will be very happy and motivated to learn. They would not think this is an English lesson. They would think "I am going to do something. I would be able to finish some tasks with my friends." They would use the language naturally. I would say that when I see some students who are not very motivated in class, then they are motivated when they have certain task to do, I would be very grateful. All the time I spend on preparing is worth it.
I	The final question is: Are your students used to this kind of activity-based teaching style? Your supporting teacher also use this kind of style to teach them?
II	Because, before we taught, we only had one chance to look at how they taught. Only one lesson, I don't know. But I can feel that they encourage us to try new things. The students are very active and outgoing. This is why we do so many TBLT.
I	Do you have any opinions about the challenges mentioned in the questionnaire for example, limited preparation time, low confidence due to identity, the supporting teachers attitude towards TBLT?
II	I think in terms of limited preparation time, there are three stages in TBLT like pre, during and post. They include a lot of materials. For example, when I taught the topic about pet shop. I need to modify the textbook, prepared powerpoint slides, redesign the contexts, factsheets for purchase pets. These are the materials needed for only one task. There's a lot to do for TBLT. And for low confidence due to non-native identity, the contexts I created are the real-life experience. They are every simple. And I don't think my supporting teacher give me pressure.

#### Appendix 4 : Content forms