

**PERSPECTIVES FROM TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING ON EFL
TEXTBOOK USE: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH STUDY AT A
VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY**

By

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ABSTRACT

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been emphasised in second/foreign language education policy in many Asia-Pacific countries, including in Vietnam where, since 2008, official policy has mandated the use of language learning tasks in foreign language education. Consequently, Vietnamese teachers are expected to adopt task-based, communicative instruction in their classes. However, research to date in Vietnam has reported mixed success in teacher adoption and understanding of TBLT. The two-fold purpose of this study was to first investigate the influence of a textbook on task-based teaching, including how textbook tasks were interpreted and implemented by EFL teachers at a Vietnamese university, and, second, to investigate the impact of professional support on improving their engagement with TBLT. The research adopted an interpretive, qualitative, case study approach combined with Participatory Action Research (PAR). It tracked the use of tasks by three teachers across two research phases: a situation analysis followed by a PAR study. Data for the study included textbook analysis, classroom observations, stimulated recall interviews, semi-structured interviews with the teachers, and focus group interviews with students.

Phase 1 investigated the relationship between the affordances for task-based teaching in the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* and teachers' awareness of and uptake of these affordances. The communicativeness and task-likeness of activities and lesson sequences in the textbook were analysed and compared with the implementation decisions made by the teachers. Findings reveal that while the textbook has a high proportion of activities with low communicative value, many of these activities are either tasks or task-like. Data from classroom observations showed that, in their implementation of the textbook, the teachers consistently reduced the communicativeness and task-likeness of the textbook activities and replaced them with teacher-centred, explicit grammar explanation and drill practice. Interviews revealed the teachers' rationales for their practices, including their belief that tasks are unsuitable for low proficiency students, pressure from exams, limited instruction time, and the teachers' limited understanding of TBLT.

In Phase 2, the three case study teachers participated in two PAR cycles aimed at helping the teachers to adopt TBLT. The PAR involved two professional development and learning (TPDL) workshops, collaborative planning of six task-based lessons (three lessons in each cycle), and subsequent teaching of these lessons. Data for Phase 2 included a descriptive account of the workshopping process, 18 classroom observations, semi-structured teacher interviews, and student focus group interviews. Findings revealed ways in which, over the

two cycles, the teachers' practices increasingly aligned with recognised principles of TBLT, although with each teacher moving along a unique professional trajectory in how they delivered the lessons and in their evolving understanding of TBLT and particular concerns. The study contributes to three intersecting fields of research: the implementation of TBLT in authentic classrooms; the relationship between teachers' beliefs and TBLT practices; and TPDL for TBLT, an under-researched topic.

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DEDICATION

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“I love you and am proud of you, Hung!”

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE THESIS

CEFR	Common European Framework of References for Languages
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
FG	Focus Group
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training (in Vietnam)
NFL	National Foreign Language (project)
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PPP	Presentation-Practice-Production
SRI	Stimulated Recall Interview
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
TBLT	Task-based Language Teaching
TSLT	Task-supported Language Teaching
TPDL	Teacher Professional Development and Learning

TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS IN INTERVIEWS

Symbols	Meaning
FN, L1, P1, Lan's class	My fieldnote during Lesson 1 of Phase 1 in Lan's class
Lan, SRI, P1	Stimulated recall interview 1 in Phase 1 with Lan
Lan, SSI1, P1	Semi-structured interview 1 in Phase 1 with Lan
Lan, SSI1, C1, P2	Semi-structured interview 1 in Cycle 1 of Phase 2 with Lan
Lan, SSI1, C2, P2	Semi-structured interview 1 in Cycle 2 of Phase 2 with Lan
Huy, Lan's class, FG1, P1	Focus group interview 1 in Phase 1 with student Huy in Lan's class
Huy, Lan's class, FG1, C1, P2	Focus group interview 1 in Cycle 1 of Phase 2 with student Huy in Lan's class
Lan, post-C1, RM, P2	Post-Cycle 1 reflection meeting in Phase 2 with Lan

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The influence of task-based language teaching (TBLT) is increasingly seen in second/foreign language curricula (Ahmadian & Long, 2021; Ahmadian & Mayo, 2018; East, 2016, 2021; Lambert & Oliver, 2020; Thomas & Reinders, 2015). Consequently, many teachers, especially those in many Asian-Pacific countries such as Hong Kong, China, and Vietnam are expected to adopt CLT and TBLT (Butler, 2011, 2017; Newton & Nguyen, 2019; Thomas & Reinders, 2015; Tran et al., 2021; Zhang & Luo, 2018). In Vietnam, the government has sought to shift from traditional form-based, teacher-dominated instruction to more student-centred, communicative instruction. This has led to the shift in university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programmes towards textbooks, which focus on communicative and task-based learning. However, the adoption of TBLT in Vietnam has been constrained by factors such as traditional examinations, insufficient support and training for teachers, and lack of appropriate resources. The purpose of the current study is to investigate the affordances for communicative and task-based teaching in a textbook used at a Vietnamese university, and how teachers interpreted and implemented the textbook. The study also aimed to investigate the impact of TPD (teacher professional development and learning) for TBLT on teachers' perceptions and practices over the two cycles of a participatory action research project.

This chapter begins with an overview of recent English language curriculum reform in Vietnam. I will then introduce my personal motivation for conducting the current study. The remainder of the chapter outlines the study's purposes and the thesis structure.

1.2. Recent English education reform in Vietnam

In 1986, Vietnam introduced the economic reform called "Doi Moi" (Renovation) in which it began to build relationships with other countries around the world and called for foreign investments in Vietnam. Within the context of international business cooperation development, English language use increased in importance. As Le (2007) states, "for the first time in the country's many-thousand-year long history, English emerged as the most important foreign language" (p. 172). English started to be widely taught as a compulsory subject in nearly all educational institutions in Vietnam, from primary schools to tertiary institutions. The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) emphasises the

importance of Vietnamese graduates acquiring a level of English proficiency sufficient to communicate effectively in a global working environment (MoET, 2003).

However, English language teaching and learning in Vietnam has failed to meet the needs of either the government or businesses, as learners have often failed to develop their communication skills (Tomlinson & Dat, 2004). According to the 2005 MoET report, after years of learning English at schools and universities, many students were still unable to communicate or use English in their studies or at work. MoET (2005) identified outdated curriculum and teaching methods as the primary causes of the situation, citing a curriculum that was content-heavy and lacked communication skill development, and teaching methods that were excessively teacher-centred and exam-focused, with an emphasis on grammar and translation.

To respond to these issues, the Vietnamese government has set out policies and initiatives to improve the quality of EFL teaching and learning in the Vietnamese education system, with the goal of raising standards of communicative English. One notable initiative is a national project issued in 2008 named “Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Formal Education System in the period of 2008–2020” (National Foreign Project 2020). The project envisions that:

By 2020, most Vietnamese students graduating from secondary, vocational schools, colleges, and universities will be able to use a foreign language confidently in their daily communication, their study, and work in an integrated, multicultural and multilingual environment, making foreign languages a comparative advantage of development for Vietnamese people (MoET, 2008, p. 1).

To accomplish these goals, MoET has reformed curriculum and teaching and learning methods, introduced English at a younger age, increased instructional time, trained and retrained English teachers, and created new sets of textbooks. A significant feature of the curriculum reform is that “a learner-centred, communicative task-based approach must be a priority” (MoET, 2008, p. 14). Within the CLT and TBLT approaches, the *Tieng Anh* (*English*) textbooks have been published and widely used at elementary schools (since 2010) and at secondary schools (since 2006, then revised in 2016). For example, the *Tieng Anh* textbooks published in 2006 were claimed by its authors to “adopt the two currently popular teaching approaches, i.e., the learner-centred approach and the communicative approach. A focus is on task-based teaching as the leading methodology” (Van et al., 2006, p.

12). The NFL project also emphasises the outcome requirements to assess students based on the six-level Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as follows:

- Primary school students must achieve level 1 (A1).
- Lower secondary school students must achieve level 2 (A2).
- Higher secondary school, non-English college, and university students must achieve level 3 (B1).
- English major students from three-year colleges and four-year universities must achieve level 4 (B2) and level 5 (C1).

The adoption of the CEFR assessment framework demonstrates that MoET recognises the importance of assessing students' ability to use the language for communication rather than their knowledge of the language.

The NFL 2020 project has also put pressure on all higher education institutions in Vietnam to increase the quality of English teaching and learning. Yet, unlike in elementary and secondary schools, tertiary students have not had access to a set of English textbooks. This gives tertiary institutions flexibility, but it also puts pressure on them to select appropriate materials to promote students' communication skills. Most colleges and universities in Vietnam have attempted to change and renew their English Language Curriculum to meet the Project's goals as well as the requirements of Vietnam's economic and social development.

Despite those efforts, in 2017, the Minister of Education and Training announced that "the government had failed to meet the goals of the NFL scheme for the 2008–2020 periods" (MoET, 2017). The biggest failure was that the outcomes of improving English language teaching quality and enhancing students' English language proficiency levels were not achieved (MoET, 2017). For example, studies by Mai and Iwashita (2012) and Tran (2013) showed that many graduates still could not use English to communicate effectively in the workplace, or even in job interviews in English, despite studying English for seven years at school and four more years at university. Ngo (2015) found that graduates from six Vietnamese universities had low English language proficiency, especially in communication, which was considered one of the obstacles to employment in companies where English is used. For this reason, the Vietnamese Government decided to extend the NFL Project to the second phase 2017–2025 to facilitate the achievement of the established goals. Educators and researchers have noted a variety of barriers to the national curriculum reform in Vietnam

posed by various stakeholders. Among these stakeholders, teachers are found to be critical to the success or failure of the planned innovation (Van den Branden, 2016) as they are the decision-makers in their classroom where the intended innovation is actually implemented. As a result, more research on “how teachers implement the innovation behind the closed doors of their classrooms” (Le & Barnard, 2009, p. 21) is needed to find solutions to improve the effectiveness and quality of English language teaching and learning at all levels of education, including tertiary institutions. The current study aims to contribute in this area and help the Government to advance its reform.

1.3. Personal motivation

I started learning English in 1997 as a compulsory subject in secondary school. As a secondary school student, I never received any speaking or listening instruction other than to read the textbook conversations aloud or to respond to teachers’ questions. My friends and I simply copied the grammatical structures that our teachers wrote on the blackboard, did exercises in the textbook, or rewrote the given sentences in a variety of ways during our regular lessons. These activities reflected what we had to do in the mid-term and final exams. Therefore, I spent a lot of time memorizing the structures and practising the exercises in the textbook, which ensured that I consistently earned high grades on these exams, including a good score on the university entrance exam.

When I began my bachelor’s degree in English at a university, almost everything was unfamiliar to me. At first, I struggled to respond to my American teachers’ questions because I did not understand them and was unable to communicate effectively with them due to my mispronunciation. I was unable to express my thoughts clearly during group discussions or pair work. Being proficient in grammar in high school and on the university entrance exam could not help me in this situation. Fortunately, our American teachers’ lessons were extremely beneficial because they frequently included communicative activities to encourage us to interact, such as role-plays, bingo, argument activities, and information-gap tasks. From a learner’s perspective, these activities motivated me to learn by activating my language skills and fostering collaboration between my friends and me. Gradually, my ability to communicate in English improved significantly. Now that I look back, I see that those activities were actually tasks. This is how I first became aware of the value of interactive activities.

My interest in TBLT research developed during my career as a language teacher. Following graduation from university, I worked as an English teacher until pursuing a PhD in New Zealand. I was fully aware of the difficulties faced by EFL students, particularly the limited exposure to English in this environment. I implemented a variety of interactive activities that my American teachers taught me. I also wished to develop my teaching ability, so I earned a Master's degree in TESOL. Throughout the master's course, I focused on the topic of role-play. I conducted an action research project in which I examined the effects of role-play on my students' engagement and learning. Through reading reviews of the literature, I learned that role-play is a common activity that supports communicative language teaching and TBLT. My action research project was successful in the way that my students adored the role-play and they perceived that the activities helped them to communicate confidently with their friends. After that, I started to develop an interest in CLT and TBLT and wanted to gain more understanding about this approach, which incorporates various activities such as role-play. My experiences as an EFL learner, an EFL teacher, and a researcher motivated me to pursue a PhD in TBLT.

1.4. The purposes of the study

The overall aim of the current study is to investigate Vietnamese tertiary teachers' ability to implement TBLT in their classes and reflect on this teaching experience. The research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 studied the relationship between the affordances for task-based teaching in the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* and the teachers' awareness of and uptake of these affordances. Five research questions guided the investigation:

RQ 1. How communicative and task-like is the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary*?

RQ 2. In what ways does the implementation of the textbook by the three teachers converge or diverge from its communicative and task-like qualities?

RQ 3. What reasons do teachers give for their textbook implementation decisions?

RQ 4. What are teachers' stated beliefs about and knowledge of TBLT?

RQ5. What do students report about their experience of lessons from the textbook?

Based on the findings in Phase 1, Phase 2 involved the teachers in the professional learning workshops and was expected to raise the teachers' awareness of TBLT and provide them with practical expertise to design and implement task-based lessons. The outcomes of Phase 2 are

intended to provide context-relevant recommendations for adopting TBLT and implications for teacher professional development in the Vietnamese context. The overarching question that Phase 2 addresses is:

What impact did the participatory action research (PAR) project have on the teachers' practices, beliefs, and knowledge of TBLT, and on the reported experience of students?

This broad question is captured in three research questions:

RQ6. Across the two PAR cycles, what changes occurred in the teachers' implementation of the task-based lessons?

RQ7. What changes occurred in the teachers' understanding of TBLT?

RQ8. What changes occurred in the students' reported experience of the task-based lessons?

1.5. The significance of the study

This study is important for the following reasons. First, there is, to date, little textbook analysis from a task-based perspective (Butler et al., 2018). Understanding how widely used commercial textbooks such as *New Cutting Edge* (Moor et al., 2005) align or misalign with TBLT principles provides a starting point for better understanding the affordances for teaching with tasks available to teachers when using such textbooks (e.g., Cao & Newton, 2021).

Second, the analysis will employ two frameworks (Littlewood's (2014) continuum of communicative activities and Ellis's (2018) set of criteria for tasks) to analyse the communicativeness and task-likeness of textbook activities of the textbook and the teachers' classroom practice. Using both frameworks is a novel approach that has not previously been taken and can provide insights into where communicativeness and task-likeness overlap and differ (See Section 4.2 in Chapter 4), thus countering the mistaken assumption that the two terms are synonymous.

Third, the focus of the study on how university teachers implement EFL textbooks offers teacher educators, curriculum designers and textbook writers empirical evidence for how teachers are interpreting textbook materials. Given that the challenges with the adoption of TBLT in EFL contexts are widely acknowledged (Butler, 2015; Adams & Newton, 2009;

Van den Branden, 2006), these findings will have broad application to other EFL contexts. In Vietnam it may offer insights to guide the ongoing implementation of the National Foreign Language Project 2008-2025.

Finally, the findings from this study will have direct implications for improving the quality of EFL teaching in the programme from which the data were collected.

1.6. Organization of the study

The thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 (Introduction) summarises the overview of the whole thesis, presents the motivation of the researcher and research context, and introduces the research objectives and research questions. Chapter 2 (Literature Review) discusses the theoretical research literature on task-based language teaching with specific and teacher-related research on the implementation of TBLT. Gaps in the literature are identified and linked to the current study throughout the chapter. Chapter 3 (Methodology) describes the research paradigm, the methods of research design, and the relevant data collection methods. It also provides a detailed account of the research settings, participant selection, ethical issues, and the procedures used for the pilot study, main data collection, data analysis, data validity, and trustworthiness, as well as challenges and potential limitations related to the methods and circumstances surrounding data collection. Chapter 4 (Phase 1 findings and discussion) presents the findings in four areas concerning textbook analysis, teachers' use of the textbook, teachers' perception of the textbook and TBLT, and students' perception of the lessons. Chapter 5 (Phase 2: Participatory action research cycles) presents the findings of the PAR project in which the teachers and the researcher worked collaboratively to design, implement, and reflect on task-based lessons based on the textbook. Chapter 6 (Discussion) discusses the findings in relation to the research questions with reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter 3. Chapter 7 (Conclusion) discusses the implications and recommendations for theory, research, and pedagogy. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the current research, as well as future research directions and suggestions.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the theoretical foundations and previous research that motivates the current study. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section focuses on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the framework for communicativeness analysis that was adopted in the current study. The second section focuses on Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) with respect to its definition, task types, TBLT framework, and the roles of teachers in TBLT pedagogy. The third section presents the research related to factors influencing the implementation of TBLT, the role of textbooks in TBLT, teachers' cognition and practices of TBLT, teacher education of TBLT, and TBLT implementation in Vietnam. The chapter concludes with the research questions for the current study.

2.2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

TBLT is viewed as a continuation of CLT and shares many common characteristics with it (East, 2018; Littlewood, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). As Nunan (2005, p. 10) puts it, CLT represents a “broad, philosophical approach to language curriculum that draws on theory and research in linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and sociology” while “task-based language teaching represents a realization of this philosophy at the levels of syllabus design and methodology” (p. 10). Thus, an understanding of CLT is helpful for understanding TBLT.

CLT emerged as a response to calls for greater emphasis on genuine communication in second language (L2) classrooms (East, 2021). It is an approach to language teaching that focuses on developing the communicative competence of students by helping them to develop their ability to use the language both “interactionally” (establishing and maintaining contact with others) and “transactionally” (using language referentially to exchange information) (Ellis, 2003, p. 27). As its name suggests, CLT emphasises communicative language use, fluency development, and learner-centeredness (Savignon, 2008).

CLT draws on the work of many scholars such as Canale and Swain (1980), Halliday (1970), Hymes (1972), and Wilkin (1976). Hymes's (1972) notion of communicative competence served as the theoretical foundation for CLT. Hymes (1972) argued that knowing a language required more than knowledge of grammatical forms and that knowledge of how to put those

forms to use according to the particular context was also crucial. Halliday (1970) distinguished seven basic functions of language: the “instrumental”, “regulatory”, “interactional”, “personal”, “heuristic”, “imaginative”, and “representative” functions (pp. 11-17). Together with Hymes’ theory of communicative competence, Halliday’s view of language is of profound influence on many subsequent works on CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Wilkins (1976) drew on Halliday’s theory of language functions to propose a notional syllabus to replace the structural syllabus. In the notional syllabus, learners are supposed to gradually accumulate the linguistic resources required to perform the various notions, which consist of language functions (e.g., expressing agreement or disagreement), semantic-grammatical categories (e.g., expressing time, quantity, and space), and modal-meaning categories (e.g., expressing certainty and commitment). Wilkins’ notional syllabus was designed to help learners to communicate from the start by building the syllabus around learners’ communicative needs (Ellis, 2018a). Canale and Swain (1980) developed their views of communicative competence from the pioneering work of Hymes (1972) and suggested four types of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. *Grammatical competence* includes linguistic knowledge of lexicon, grammar, and phonology. *Sociolinguistic competence* is sociocultural rules of interaction and rules of discourse that would enable speakers to appropriately interpret utterances in a specific social context. *Strategic competence* is the ability to use verbal and non-verbal strategies for communication, such as how to start, maintain, and terminate a conversation. *Discourse competence* entails the understanding of a single message concerning its representation utilizing text and discourse. Canale and Swain (1980) suggested that these four types of competence should be considered in developing a CLT curriculum.

CLT is an approach rather than a method (Ellis, 2018a). Howatt (1984) distinguished CLT into weak and strong approaches. The weak version of CLT is based on the position that language can be learned through communicative classroom activities in which lexical and grammatical items are taught systematically. In practice, this version is mostly reflected in the PPP model (Presentation-Practice-Production) in the way that language items are first taught by the teachers, followed by extensive controlled practice such as drills, and lastly by a freer production activity where learners are required to use the language introduced to talk/write about something (Klapper, 2003). As such, the main purpose of the communicative activity was to utilise the practiced rule (East, 2021). The strong version of CLT, by contrast,

is reflected in the provision of activities and tasks that give learners the opportunities to use the language in communication, where explicit attention to grammatical features arises only incidentally (Howatt, 1984). In the strong version of CLT, learners do not first acquire language as a structural system and then learn how to use this system in communication but discover the system itself in the process of learning how to communicate (Ellis, 2003).

Over time, weak CLT (i.e., the PPP approach) has been more popular than strong CLT (East, 2021). As Widdowson (2003) states, “PPP has endured because teachers genuinely believed in it and found some basis of their beliefs in their classroom experience” (p. 131). Teachers believe that PPP helps them better control the pace of the lesson (Carless, 2009), minimise chaos and disorder in the classroom (Herazo et al., 2009), and can reinforce their authority in the classroom (Skehan, 1998). However, PPP has received substantial criticism from scholars too (Carless, 2009; East, 2021; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996). For example, Carless (2009) claims that PPP is too linear and behaviourist in nature. Skehan (1998) points out that PPP is based on the premise that students will learn what is taught in the same order in which it was taught, but there is no evidence to prove that learning occurs in this way. Both Willis (1996) and East (2021) point out that PPP leaves few opportunities for creative use of language outside the confines of the previously practised language.

Not only the weak version of CLT, but also the strong version has been criticised. As East (2021, p. 21) argues, while weak CLT controls the language that learners use and limits their opportunities to be creative with language as part of their own self-efficacy, “strong CLT is not necessarily a solution because it takes no account of any place for instruction” (p. 21). In addition, Long (2015, p. 20) puts it that “the two versions of CLT were excessively interventionist, on the one hand, and irresponsibly, wholly non-interventionist, on the other” (p. 20). Other scholars also argue for the limitations of CLT in general. For example, Richards and Rodgers (2014) asserts that CLT is not built on well-articulated grounds of second language acquisition (SLA) theories. Ellis (2018a, p. 6) claims that “as its influence has spread, however, CLT has become increasingly less well-defined”. Littlewood (2014, p. 350) points out that CLT is a vague concept that simply means “teachers include communicative activities in their repertoire” (p. 350). The dissatisfaction with CLT and the drawbacks of PPP offered space for alternative ideas of language teaching such as TBLT to emerge. As Carless (2009) argues, TBLT receives part of its legitimacy from the limitations of PPP.

2.3. Task-based language teaching (TBLT)

TBLT is a further development of CLT (Littlewood, 2007). TBLT is an approach in which the process of using language in communication plays a more important role than the mere production of correct language forms (Prabhu, 1987). TBLT does not take pre-selected language items as the starting point for teachers to teach and for students to master one by one in accumulation (Allwright, 2005; Willis, 2007). Instead, TBLT creates opportunities for students to act as language users during the completion of tasks. As Ellis (2015, p. 2) puts it:

The theoretical rationale for TBLT lies in the claim emanating from SLA that language learning is best achieved not by treating language as an object to be dissected into bits and learned as a set of accumulated entities but as a tool for accomplishing a communicative purpose (p. 2).

Thus, TBLT shares some characteristics of strong CLT in that both TBLT and CLT emphasise meaning, genuine interaction, and learner-centeredness (Ellis, 2015; Littlewood, 2014).

2.3.1. What is a task?

From a TBLT perspective, a task is a primary unit for designing language programmes and planning lessons (Ellis, 2009). However, one issue that emerges from a consideration of the literature on TBLT is that the construct of task has been subject to a range of definitions over the years (East, 2021). Tasks can be viewed as the real-world uses of language beyond the classroom. For example, Long (1985) lists a range of everyday tasks such as painting a fence, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation or taking a driving test. Tasks are also viewed as significant research tools and the basis for language instructional approaches (Richards & Rodgers, 2001a). For example, Nunan (1989, p. 10) defines a task as “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is primarily focused on meaning rather than form” (p. 10). Van Den Branden (2006, p. 4) defines a language task as “an activity in which a person engages to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language” (p. 4). Bygate et al. (2017) viewed that the features of a task vary depending on the pedagogical and research purposes, as well as depending on users and contexts. As such, the authors propose a task as “an activity, influenced by learner choice, and susceptible to learners’ interpretation, which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective” (Bygate et al., 2017, p. 12). These definitions all

share a primary focus on meaning and outcome of a task. Yet, this plethora of task definitions let Ellis (2003) argue for a generalised definition that reflects “essential commonalities in tasks” regardless of their actual use (p. 9). Ellis (2003), thus, proposed six key features of a task, to evaluate the extent to which an instructional activity is a task.

1. A task is a work plan for learner activity.
2. The primary focus is on meaning. To this end, a task will incorporate some kind of gap (i.e., an information, reasoning, or opinion gap) to motivate learners to use language to communicate meanings.
3. A task performance reflects real world processes of language use.
4. A task can involve the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.
5. A task engages cognitive processes (which in turn influence language demands) such as selecting, reasoning, describing, distinguishing etc.
6. A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome.

(Ellis, 2003, p. 9-10)

More recently, Ellis (2018a) has refined this set of features and made a distinction between task-as-workplan and task-in-process. A task-as-workplan takes the form of material for teaching language, typically involves some input (i.e., information that learners are required to process and use), and some instructions related to what outcome the learners are supposed to achieve (Ellis, 2018a). Task-as-workplan may or may not accord with task-in-process, that is, the activity that transpires when learners in a particular setting perform the task (Breen, 1989). The definition of task as a workplan was proposed in Ellis (2018a, p. 12) as in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1.*Criteria for defining a task-as-workplan (Ellis, 2018a)*

Criteria	Description
The primary focus is on meaning	The workplan is intended to ensure that learners are primarily concerned with comprehending or/and producing messages for a communicative purpose.
There is some kind of gap	The workplan is designed in such a way as to incorporate a gap that will need to be closed when the task is performed. The gap creates a need to convey information, to reason or to express an opinion.
Learners rely mainly on their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources	The workplan does not include any presentation of the language needed to perform the task, although it may supply input that can be “borrowed” during the performance of the task. Learners need to draw on their existing linguistic resources (potentially both L1 and L2) and their non-linguistic resources (e.g., gesture; facial expressions) for comprehension or/and production.
There is a clearly defined communicative outcome	The workplan specifies the communicative outcome of the task. Thus, task accomplishment is to be assessed not in terms of whether learners use language correctly but in terms of whether the communicative outcome is achieved.

The current study adopted these criterial features of a task for the purposes of identifying tasks in the EFL textbook and for designing task-based lessons. These features mirrored all the main features of tasks as shown in Ellis’s (2003) version, but were more thoroughly explained, making them clearer and more workable for coding purposes in the current study. They were also chosen because they are widely cited and used in TBLT research (e.g., Butler et al., 2018; Erlam, 2016; Jaruteerapan, 2020; Seals et al., 2020).

2.3.2. Task types

Various frameworks have been proposed for distinguishing different types of tasks. For example, Willis (1996) proposes a pedagogical classification of tasks that reflects the kinds of operations that learners should perform when completing tasks in the classroom, namely listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks. Prabhu (1987) distinguished three types of tasks based on cognitive procedures: information-gap task, opinion-gap task, and reasoning-gap task. An information-gap task requires an exchange of information among students. One example of an

information-gap activity is pair work in which each member has some unique information and tries to convey it verbally to the other (Prabhu, 1987). An opinion-gap task requires students to give their personal preferences, feelings, or attitudes. One example is students taking part in discussion of a social issue. A reasoning-gap task requires students to derive new information by inferring it from given information. One example is students working out a teacher's timetable based on given class timetables (Prabhu, 1987). Ellis (2003) classified tasks into unfocused tasks and focused tasks according to the focus on meaning or focus on form of the tasks. Unfocused tasks encourage learners to use English freely without concentrating on just one or two specific forms (i.e., a replication activity). By contrast, focused tasks aimed to induce learners to process target linguistic features. Ellis (2012) also classified tasks into input-based tasks and output-based tasks according to the focus on comprehension or production of the tasks. An input-based task "includes the control of the input that students are presented to or are required to process" (Ellis, 2012, p. 285). Input-based tasks also need to meet Ellis's four defining criteria for a task listed above. Output-based tasks are tasks that require production from the learner, either in oral or written form (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 139).

Distinguishing types of tasks was an important component of the current study. These different types of tasks were introduced to the three participating teachers in the TPDL workshop in Phase 2 of the study to raise their awareness of the tasks in their textbook and help them select and sequence tasks. In planning the lessons collaboratively, we drew on these task-type frameworks to incorporate a range of task types so as to make the lessons interesting. We were, however, constrained by the syllabus, which assigned textbook sections and target linguistic features (e.g., past simple negative and present continuous) to each lesson. This required us to use both focused and unfocused tasks. Although both Long (2016) and Skehan (1998) oppose the use of focused tasks, Ellis contends that the use of both focused and unfocused task types is appropriate in a balanced task-based curriculum (Ellis, 2017). He contends that focused tasks encourage learners to use the language communicatively while also ensuring a focus on the syllabus's target grammatical structures. Additionally, input-based tasks were often utilised and placed at the beginning of each task-based lesson to accommodate the low proficiency level of the students and to provide them with ready-made schemata that they could use when performing the main tasks (Skehan, 1998).

2.3.3. The TBLT curriculum and design of TBLT lessons

A TBLT curriculum takes tasks as the starting point to build its content (Ellis, 2018a) but appears in two main versions. In the strong task-based version, tasks define the content of the syllabus while in the weak task-supported version, “tasks are simply methodological devices for practicing specific structures” (Ellis, 2018a, p. 455). Ellis argues that both versions are valid pedagogically, depending on the context in which they are applied. Long (2015) on the other hand, claimed that task-supported language teaching (TSLT) and TBLT are incompatible because they are based on different psycholinguistic theories. He argues forcefully for a strong TBLT syllabus in which only unfocused tasks are used together with focus on form. Such a syllabus is built up through needs analysis of target tasks, task development, task implementation, and assessment. Although this is “the most fully worked out account of a TBLT curriculum” (Ellis, 2021, p. 26), it is best suited to programmes for students who have clear and immediate target tasks such as travel and tourism, foreign language programmes for missionaries and volunteer organizations, and immersion/ bilingual schools. For this reason, Long’s proposal does not fit well with the educational needs of most of the world’s language learners (Ellis, 2021).

However, hybrid TBLT curricula are also possible (Ellis, 2017). As Ellis argues, TBLT even with the focus on form is unlikely to ensure that learners acquire high levels of grammatical accuracy, and so an explicit structural component is needed to complement the task-based component. This hybridity is seen in Brumfit’s (1984) model in which accuracy has priority in the initial stages with fluency gradually assuming more space in the curriculum over time. Ellis (2019), by contrast, proposes a modular TBLT curriculum in which the initial focus should be on fluency rather than accuracy and, therefore, the task-based module should take precedence over the structure-based module in the early stages. Ellis (2019) argues that his modular task-based curriculum is ideally suited to the full range of learners in state education systems including young learners and ESP students. In short, a task-based curriculum can be in different forms and the choice of what version is best suited to a particular context is determined by environmental factors (Ellis, 2021). As Samuda and Bygate (2008) remark, opinions vary widely on the role of tasks in school curricula and, ultimately, the form a task-based approach takes will rest on the individuals responsible for syllabus design and their perspectives on how tasks can facilitate learning.

As Ellis (2009) points out, “there is no single way of doing TBLT” (p. 224), a point we see reflected in various models for task-based lesson design (e.g., Ellis, 2003, 2009; Long, 1985; Nunan, 2005; Prabhu, 1987; Willis, 1996). For example, Prabhu (1987) proposed a lesson design consisting of a pre-task phase in which the teacher performs a task with the whole class, a main task phase in which students perform a similar task individually, and a post-task phase in which students attend to forms. Willis (1996) proposes a lesson format consisting of pre-task, a task cycle, and language focus. Ellis’s (2003, 2009) format consists of pre-task, during task, and post-task phases. Despite the apparent differences, these formats are similar in that they all consist of a pre-task phase, a main task phase, and a post-task phase. To Ellis (2003), the task is the core and compulsory part, while the pre-task and post-task phases are not obligatory. However, Ellis also notes that the pre-task and post-task phases “serve a crucial role in ensuring that the task performance is maximally effective for language development” (p. 243). Similarly, Skehan (2014) argues forcefully for the importance of the pre-task phase for boosting the students’ task performance, and the role of the post-task phase to study and practise the language forms that arise out of the performance of the tasks. The following paragraphs describe the typical content of each task phase.

In the pre-task phase, the teacher typically introduces the topic and helps students prepare for task performance. The purpose of the pre-task phase is to “reduce cognitive complexity ... to ease the processing load that learner[s] will encounter when actually doing a task, releasing more attention for the actual language that is used” (Skehan, 1998, p. 54). According to Willis (1996), the teacher “should not teach large amounts of new language and certainly not teach one particular grammatical structure” (p. 43). However, Ellis (2018a) believes that the pre-task phase offers rich opportunities for introducing a focus on form. Ellis (2016) suggests four options for this phase:

1. Supporting learners in performing a task similar to the task that will be performed in the during task phase of the lesson.
2. Asking students to observe a model of how to perform a task.
3. Engaging learners in non-task activities designed to prepare them to perform the task.
4. Strategic planning of the main task performance.

During the main task phase, the task can be carried out by students in pairs, groups, individuals, or as a whole class. In the Willis (1996) framework, the main task phase typically consists of three stages: performing, planning, and then reporting. In the performing stage,

learners perform the task in pairs or groups. They then plan and rehearse a report or presentation, which they present to the class in the third stage. This concludes the main task phase. Willis (1996) argues that learners should feel free to use language without fear of making errors, so she advised teachers not to provide any language support or correct learners' production during the performance of a task but to "stand back" and "let the learners get on with the task on their own" (p. 54). However, Prabhu, Long, and Ellis all favour focus on form while a task is being performed. The main ways of engaging learners in a focus on form is through negotiation of meaning and corrective feedback. To Prabhu (1987) and Long (2015), focus on form should be implicit and initiated reactively in response to communication problems. Ellis (2016), however, argues that focus on form can be both reactive and pre-emptive (e.g., when a teacher or student anticipates the need for a specific linguistic item as they perform the task), implicit and explicit.

In the post-task phase, learners shift their focus to noticing language patterns "to counter the danger that students will develop fluency at the expense of accuracy" (Ellis, 2015, p. 95). Skehan (2014) and Willis (1996) both saw that this phase is a good time for the teacher to implement form-focused activities. For Ellis (2005b) the post-task phase has three main objectives:

1. To provide an opportunity for a repeat performance of the task.
2. To encourage reflection on how the task was performed.
3. To encourage attention to form, and especially those forms that were difficult for the learners when they performed the task.

The design of task-based lessons in the current study adopted the three-phase framework of pre-task, main task, and post-task.

2.3.4. The task-likeness and communicativeness of activities

The current research drew on two frameworks for analysing and categorising textbook and classroom activities: Ellis's (2018a) four task criterial features to evaluate the task-likeness and Littlewood (2014) communicativeness continuum to evaluate the communicativeness of the activities.

2.3.4.1. Task-likeness of activities

The four task features proposed by Ellis (2003, 2009, 2018a) provide a set of criteria that can be used to distinguish a task from a situational grammar exercise. However, this is often not

a binary distinction (Willis & Willis, 2007, pp. 12-13). As Ellis (2003) states, activities can be classified as tasks or task-like depending on the extent to which they satisfy these task criteria. Using these criteria, several studies have adopted the concept of tasks to evaluate textbook activities or classroom activities (Bui, 2019; Butler et al., 2018; Erlam, 2016; Jaruteerapan, 2020). For example, Bui (2019) used Ellis's four task features to evaluate activities implemented by teachers at a primary school in Vietnam. She found that the teachers frequently added task-like activities to the presentation and production phases of their lessons. Jaruteerapan (2020) adopted Ellis's four task criteria to evaluate the task-likeness of the activities used by pre-service teachers at a Thai university. She found that the teachers implemented a range of task-like activities that exhibited some but not all the four task features. Erlam (2016) investigated how well teachers were able to design tasks that fulfilled Ellis's four criteria after a year-long professional development programme in New Zealand. She found that 47% of activities designed by the participating teachers were tasks and 35% of activities were task-like, which fulfilled three task criteria. Butler et al. (2018) also adopted Ellis's (2003) task features to analyse a series of textbooks used at primary schools in China and South Korea. The authors found that only a small proportion of the activities in the textbook were tasks according to these criteria.

These studies show that, for the practical purpose of analysing tasks in the real world, a task is not an all-or-nothing construct. As East (2021) puts it, "it is not simply a question of one activity being a task and another not being a task, rather an important question is how task-like an activity is" (p. 91). Similarly, Willis and Willis (2007) state that the task-likeness of an activity should be evaluated against a set of criteria, and "the more confidently we can answer yes to each of these criteria, the more task-like the activity is" (p. 13). Ellis (2009) also acknowledges this problem. He initially argued that the two task criteria of a focus on meaning and a communicative outcome are the most important for distinguishing a task from a situational grammar exercise. His reasoning is that while a grammar exercise may satisfy criteria two (some kind of gap) and three (students' own resources), it will not satisfy criteria one (a focus on meaning) and four (a communicative outcome). This is because the learners are likely to be focused on practising correct language rather than on processing messages for meaning, and the outcome is simply the use of correct language and so is not communicative. More recently, Ellis (2018a) changed his mind and has argued that it is criteria two and three (a gap and a learner's own resources) that are the most important criteria for distinguishing a task from a grammar exercise. This change confirms Nunan's (1989) view that when

evaluating an activity according to task features, “making decisions will always be partly intuitive and judgmental” (p.11). Therefore, in textbooks and in classroom lessons, there will always be degrees of fidelity to definitions of tasks such as that proposed by Ellis (2018a).

In the current study, rather than adopt a binary distinction between tasks from non-tasks, the activities implemented by the teachers and those in the textbook *New Cutting Edge* were evaluated according to their task-likeness.

2.3.4.2. The communicativeness of activities

Ellis’ four task criteria describe important features of communication, but these features are somewhat underplayed in the Littlewood (2004) continuum of communicativeness (see Table 2). Littlewood (2007) argues that the distinction between a task and a grammar exercise should be “continuous” rather than “dichotomous” because “the oversimplified division of tasks and non-task (exercise) is an obstacle both to conceptual clarity and to effective implementation” (Littlewood, 2007, p. 247). This point captures the notion of task-likeness discussed above. Littlewood’s (2004) continuum consists of five broad categories of language learning activities. The first category is non-communicative learning activities, which strongly focus on forms. These are what Ellis (2003) refers to as “exercises”, and what Estaire and Zanón (1994) refer to as “enabling tasks”. The second category is pre-communicative language practice. This involves activities, which focus primarily on formal language features but also orient towards meaning. The third category is communicative language practice activities in which learners work with a predictable range of language but use it to convey information. The fourth category is structured communication, which focuses mainly on communicating meanings with careful teacher guidance. The fifth category is authentic communication, which involves the strongest focus on the communication of messages and in which the language forms are correspondingly unpredictable. The activities in this fifth category are equivalent to “tasks” (Ellis, 2003) or “communicative tasks” (Esaire & Zanon, 1994). The continuum in Table 2 provides detailed examples of each category.

Table 2.

Continuum of communicativeness of activities (Littlewood, 2004, p. 322)

Focus on form			Focus on meaning	
Non-communicative learning	Pre-communicative language practice	Communicative language practice	Structured communication	Authentic communication
Focus on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean, e.g., substitution exercises, ‘discovery’ and awareness-raising activities	Practising language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others, e.g., ‘question-and-answer’ practice	Practising pre-taught language in a context where it communicates new information, e.g., information-gap activities or ‘personalised’ questions	Using language to communicate in situations that elicit pre-learned language, but with some unpredictability, e.g., structured role-play and simple problem-solving	Using language to communicate in situations where the meanings are unpredictable, e.g., creative role-play, more complex problem-solving and discussion
‘Exercises’		(Ellis)	‘Tasks’	
‘Enabling tasks’		(Estaire and Zanon)	‘Communicative tasks’	

Two studies of which I am aware have used the continuum to evaluate the communicativeness of language activities. Deng (2011) used the continuum to evaluate teachers’ classroom activities in Hong Kong secondary school classrooms. The author found that teachers mainly implemented the activities on the left-hand side of Littlewood’s (2004) continuum, which were mainly focus on forms rather than focus on meaning. Based on the small percentages of communicative activities defined by Littlewood (2004), Deng (2011) concluded that little TBLT was implemented in the researched school. Chen and Wright (2017) used the continuum to investigate the extent to which the classroom activities implemented by four Chinese secondary school teachers resembled TBLT. The authors claimed that locating the learning activities on the communicative continuum gave them a powerful tool to observe the taskness of the teaching practice of each teacher. Overall, they found that the teachers spent half of the classroom time on authentic communication activities and approximately 15% on non-communicative learning or pre-communicative practice.

A limitation of Littlewood’s (2004) framework is that it assumes that communicativeness is equivalent to taskness, and that the degree of focus on meaning vs form is the sole criteria for identifying tasks. But this is not necessarily the case. For example, while Chen and Wright

(2017) classify activities such as teachers giving instructions or providing feedback as authentic communication, these are not tasks.

Moreover, the continuum focuses primarily on the communicativeness of verbal activities (speaking), leading to the assumption that non-verbal activities (listening, writing, and reading) are not communicative. We see this in that all the examples of communicative activities provided by Littlewood (2004) are speaking activities. Thus, by implication, those that do not require learners to verbally communicate are considered to have low communicative value. In this sense, Littlewood's communicativeness continuum undersells the task-likeness of many activities, and especially input-based activities and tasks such as those described by Erlam and Ellis (2018). One such activity is a bingo game in which the teacher reads out the items (for example, clothing items) while the students draw a cross over the corresponding item. The first student to cross out all pictures correctly is the winner. In keeping with this emphasis on spoken communication in Littlewood's framework, Deng (2011) also concluded that "receptive activities that require students to pay some attention to meaning without language production" have low communicative value (p. 200). For example, activities like "listen and draw" and "listen and do" were classified as pre-communicative (Deng, 2011, p. 202), although they could be considered to be tasks as they focus on meaning, have a gap, require students to use their own resources, and have an outcome. Thus, while it is true that, by definition, input-based activities may not require learners to produce communicative output (speaking), they can nevertheless engage learners in rich sense-making and noticing how meaning is communicated.

These weaknesses in Littlewood's (2004) continuum raise the question of whether it is a useful analytic tool and whether it adds anything to an analysis that uses Ellis's four task features framework. For the current study, I found it useful, despite its limitations, because it allowed me to evaluate the different levels of interaction and oral communication in a lesson. This information is not revealed using Ellis' task features analysis. Thus, I consider the two frameworks to be complimentary and to reveal insights into both communicativeness and task-likeness.

To summarise, Section 2.3 discussed the conceptual underpinnings of TBLT, the definition of a language learning task, task types, task-based curricula, frameworks for task-based lessons, and the task-likeness and communicativeness of an activity. These topics are explored in the current study, which examines how a group of teachers in Vietnam responded to professional guidance aimed at assisting them in implementing TBLT in their classrooms. The following

section examines empirical research on how teachers perceive and practise TBLT in a variety of contexts.

2.4. Teacher cognition

Hattie (2012, p. 169) referred to teachers as "the dominant source of controllable variance" and "the major players in the educational process" in education systems (p. 25). Thus, it is essential to understand teacher cognition in order to understand their teaching procedures, i.e., the methods and strategies they employ in teaching contexts (Borg, 2006; Yook, 2010, Macalister & Nation, 2019). As theorised by Borg (2015), teacher cognition is comprised of beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, assumptions, conceptions, and principles. Research on teacher cognition helps to understand discrepancies between theoretical recommendations based on research and classroom practices (Borg, 2006) and is thus useful for improving teacher education and promoting teacher development, with the ultimate goal of improving teaching and learning (Johnson, 2006; Borg, 2006). As Johnson (2006) explains:

This research has helped capture the complexities of who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers. (p. 236)

As a result, teacher cognition is increasingly recognised as a central aspect of language instruction research. One of the factors that shapes teachers' cognition is prior educational experience, which Borg (2015) refers to as schooling and which Lortie (1975) refers to as an apprenticeship of observation. As Darling-Hammond (2006, p.36) claims, countering the influence of the apprenticeship of observation may be one of the most powerful challenges in learning to teach. Lortie points out that teachers have spent thousands of hours as students observing their teachers' classroom activities. Throughout this process, they learn from their teachers and, once they become teachers, replay their teachers' actions. (See also Kennedy, 1991; Mattheoudakis, 2007; Li, 2013).

Research on teachers' apprenticeship of observation has shown how it influences their cognition and classroom practices. Nishino (2012), for example, investigated the relationship between Japanese high school teachers' beliefs, practices, and socio-educational factors regarding CLT using a multi-method approach that included a survey, interviews, and class observations. The study found that teachers who experienced teacher-centred, grammar-based teaching in their apprenticeship of observation, taught in a similar way and were resistant to adopting CLT. Similar results were found by Farrell and Lim (2005) in relation to the beliefs

and classroom practices of two experienced teachers at a primary school in Singapore. Woods and Çakır (2011) examined the development of knowledge and beliefs regarding communicativeness in language teaching among six newly graduated language teachers in Turkey. The study found that these teachers' initial beliefs about language teaching and learning derived from almost ten years of grammar-based education, and so they saw the communicative approach as unfamiliar. Nguyen (2022) used in-depth interviews, classroom observation, and a reflective journal to examine the beliefs and practices of nine tertiary EFL teachers at a university in Vietnam, as well as how these beliefs were formed and developed over time. One-third of participants remained committed to their previous learning experience, which emphasised grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, they spent the majority of class time teaching grammar and drills, which appeared to contradict the National Foreign Language Project 2020 goal of communicative and task-based instruction. The findings of these four studies support Kennedy's (1991) claim that teachers' prior language learning experiences as learners make them resistant to changing their classroom practices as teachers, which explains why teaching often remains resistant to innovation.

2.5. Teacher-related research on the implementation of TBLT

As discussed in the previous section, teachers' classroom actions are influenced by their perceptions of language teaching and apprenticeship of observation, among other factors (Borg, 2015; Van Den Branden, 2006). Similarly, teacher cognition is an influential factor in TBLT implementation as reflected in the growth in the number of studies investigating teachers' perspectives on tasks (Deng, 2011; East, 2012; Zhu, 2020).

In this section, I critically review TBLT research that focuses on teachers and teaching. The review begins with research on the relationship between TBLT, textbooks and how teachers perceive and implement textbooks. The review then discusses the roles of teachers in TBLT, the relationship between teachers' cognition and pedagogical practices, and research on teacher education for TBLT. The section ends with a focus on teacher-related research on TBLT in Vietnam.

2.5.1. TBLT, textbooks, and teachers

Textbooks have a strong influence on instructional practices in language classrooms (Macalister, 2016; Tomlinson, 2012). This is especially true in contexts such as Hong Kong, China, and Vietnam where teachers are required to adhere closely to their textbooks in

national education systems where the textbook is a mandated part of the curriculum. Growth in popularity of CLT and TBLT has put pressure on textbook writers to make their textbooks more communicative and incorporate features of TBLT in textbook design (Zhang, 2015). As far back as 2004, Littlewood pointed out, “publishers almost everywhere are referring to their textbooks as task-based” (p. 319).

We see this in commercially produced textbooks that have sought to adopt aspects of communicative language teaching (CLT) and, to a lesser extent, TBLT. For example, the *New Cutting-Edge* series by Moor et al. (2005, p. 5) claimed to “integrate elements of a task-based approach into its overall methodology” and that “structured speaking tasks form a central part of each module” (p. 5). Similarly, *New Headway, Intermediate* by Soars and Soars (2003, p. 7) is claimed by the authors as using “an authoritative integrated syllabus, motivating topics, and clearly focused tasks combine with a real understanding of what works in the classroom” (p. 7). A much stronger example of a task-based textbook is the *On task* series by Harris and Leeming (2016), described as “a unique textbook, with tasks forming the central part of each unit” (p. 3). These trends are also evident in locally published EFL textbooks mandated by governments in Asian countries to meet the needs of local elementary and secondary schools. One of the first such cases was Hong Kong in 2002 when the government authorised the publication and use of 14 task-based textbooks in primary and secondary schools (Carless, 2009). In Vietnam, in 2006, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) introduced a series of upper secondary school textbooks called *Tieng Anh*, which were developed with a variety of tasks and communicative activities to correspond to the new curriculum that promotes the use of TBLT. In 2016, a new series of *Tieng Anh* textbooks were published that placed greater emphasis on communicative activities.

However, Long (2016) argues that most task-based textbooks do not conform to his strict interpretation of TBLT. Similarly, Lai (2015) argues that “a scarcity of genuine TBLT textbooks” persists (Lai, 2015, p. 17). Several textbook analyses have confirmed this view. For example, Butler et al.’s (2018) analysis of mandated primary school textbooks in China and South Korea revealed that most activities were classified as non-tasks. An analysis by Tran et al. (2021) showed that most of the so-called tasks in the *Tieng Anh* textbooks introduced in Vietnamese high schools in 2006 were simply reading or listening comprehension activities labelled as ‘tasks’. This corroborates Long’s (2016) assertion that “in some textbooks, *task* simply refers to a traditional, linguistically focused exercise or

activity relabelled to keep up with language teaching fashion” (p. 1). Even in the 2016 new edition of *Tieng Anh*, Cao and Newton’s (2021) analysis revealed that almost 50% of the activities in the textbooks were non-tasks, 23% were task-like, and 21% were tasks.

Moreover, the sequences of activities follow a PPP approach, albeit with each unit finishing with a substantive project that reflects all the qualities of a language learning task from a TBLT perspective. Similarly, the EFL textbook *Touchstone*, which is used widely in Japanese universities, claims to be task-based. However, an analysis by Harris (2016) revealed that it is structured around a PPP progression, with vocabulary and grammar presented first and meaningful communicative activities/tasks relegated to the end of each lesson. This confirms Ellis’s (2003) claim that “some methodologists have simply incorporated tasks into traditional language-based approaches to teaching” (p. 27).

The issues raised in these studies on alignment between textbooks and TBLT highlight the distinction between strong and weak forms of TBLT. In all cases except for *On task*, the textbooks in question are structured around PPP lesson progressions, or what Ellis (2018a) refers to as task-supported language teaching (TSLT). According to Ellis, PPP or TSLT draws on skill-learning theory, which claims that learning begins with a representation of a linguistic feature that is then proceduralised and automatised through practice. While Ellis (2018a) recognises that such an approach does not align with a strong version of task-based teaching, he acknowledges that task-supported textbooks are valuable in that they include tasks and thus provide models that prepare learners to learn through doing tasks. Similarly, Shehadeh (2005, p. 7) acknowledges that TSLT may serve “as a bridge between traditional synthetic syllabi and genuine task-based approaches” (p. 7). So, even if textbooks that claim to be task-based are, in reality, task-supported, they at least introduce teachers to some basic models of tasks and with opportunities to implement tasks in their classrooms.

English foreign language policy and curriculum reforms in Asia typically involve introducing new textbooks and as discussed above, these textbooks have become increasingly communicative and task-based in intention and design. Despite these positive trends, research shows that teachers often resist these changes (Carless, 2009, 2012; Deng & Carless, 2009; Lai, 2015; Zhang & Luo, 2018). For example, Lai (2015) reported that Chinese primary school teachers frequently avoided textbook tasks in favour of grammar-based instruction, which they find easier and more familiar. Deng and Carless (2009) examined how primary school teachers implemented a series of new textbooks that were created to be compatible with China’s 2001 task-based curriculum innovation. Despite the innovative textbook, the

classroom observation data revealed that teachers' lessons were dominated by non-communicative activities. G. V. Nguyen (2013) and Tran (2015) described how Vietnamese high school teachers used the 2006 textbook for high school students. Both authors noted that participating teachers frequently substituted the prescribed textbook communicative tasks with form-focused teaching activities. These studies raise the question of what can be done to increase the impact of a textbook that includes some affordances for task-based instruction in an environment where TBLT is not well-established or well-known. One way is to raise the teachers' awareness of the communicative approach included in a textbook through teacher education programmes. Studies by McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) and Zhu and Shu (2017) have shown that task-based materials need to be accompanied by expert guidance and ongoing support for the innovation. In a broader sense, teacher education is a critical factor in successful adoption of TBLT (East, 2021; Pica, 2013; Van den Branden, 2009).

2.5.2. The roles of teachers in TBLT

A key feature of TBLT is student-centredness (Van den Branden, 2009) and a focus on learners as active agents in their learning (Breen, 1989). Moreover, one of the important features of tasks is that learners use their own resources to achieve the task outcome (Ellis, 2018a). In relation to these features, critics have argued that TBLT downgrades the role of the teacher to that of facilitator or overseer of classroom activities. We see this in the criticism by Swan (2005, p. 391) about the facilitator role of the teacher in the task-based classroom. As he states, "the thrust of TBLT is to cast the teacher in the role of a manager and facilitator of communicative activity rather than an important source of new language" (p. 391). Similarly, Bruton (2005) claims that, "probably the most notable defects of strong TBLT are the lack of importance given to input, the lack of clarity on language development and the exclusion of the communicative role of the teacher" (p. 65).

In response to these criticisms, TBLT scholars have pointed out that not only is facilitation an important teaching skill but that it is by no means the only role of the task-based teacher. Ellis (2009), for example, argues that in addition to the roles of facilitator and manager of tasks, the teacher "needs to adopt other more teacherly roles of the kind that Swan feels are needed" (p. 237) such as the role of a communicator and feedback provider during the performance of tasks. Similarly, Long (2015) argues that criticisms such as those by Swan and Bruton "really undermine the teacher's creativity and decision-making role" (p. 25). As Long points out, teachers' creativity and decision-making role are reflected in the way they

tailor input and provide corrective feedback to individual learners. Willis and Willis (2007) also emphasise the range of roles that the TBLT teacher plays, including their traditional role of language knower and advisor, a leader and an organiser of discussion, a manager of group work, and a motivator of student participation. Samuda (2001) identifies a similar set of seven roles of the teacher: advisor, chairperson, monitor, language guide, facilitator, bystander, and co-communicator. Van den Branden (2009) also notes the importance of this role of the teacher as co-communicator in the TBLT classroom, as does Jacobs (1998) who states that teachers should intervene in group work when learners experience difficulties and play as a task participant, sitting alongside students to complete the task. Overall, a strong case can be made for the centrality of the teacher in the TBLT classroom.

Returning to the role of teacher as facilitator, it is a mistake to dismiss this role as simply standing back and overseeing activities. One way we can highlight the value of this role is to draw on Ellis's (2003) eight principles of task-based teaching listed below, all which involve facilitation:

1. Ensure an appropriate level of task difficulty.
2. Establish clear goals for each task-based lesson.
3. Develop an appropriate orientation to perform the task in the students.
4. Ensure that students adopt an active role in task-based lessons.
5. Encourage students to take risks.
6. Ensure that students are primarily focused on meaning when they perform a task.
7. Provide opportunities for focusing on form.
8. Require students to evaluate their performance and progress.

We can see from Ellis's list and other scholars' views that the role of the teacher in TBLT is rich and nuanced and requires considerable expertise and resourcefulness from teachers. However, to date, there has been limited in-situ research that provides empirical evidence of the roles of teachers being adopted in real classrooms. As Van den Branden (2016) puts it, "both in the research literature on tasks and second language learning and in the pedagogical literature on task-based language teaching, the role of the teacher has received scant attention" (p. 164). The current study addresses this gap.

2.5.3. Teacher cognition of TBLT in the classroom

TBLT research has until relatively recently been dominated by experimental or quasi-experimental research (Van den Branden, 2016). But as Samuda and Bygate (2008) point out, these ways of researching tasks do not correspond to the ways they are typically used in classrooms. Consequently, a growing body of TBLT research has adopted more qualitative contextually sensitive approaches to describe and understand how tasks are implemented in intact classrooms in specific contexts (Byrnes, 2015; Kim et al., 2017; Newton, 2021; Riestenberg & Sherris, 2018). Given teachers' critical roles in classrooms, their cognition, as manifested in attitudes, understanding, and beliefs, is important in shaping their teaching practices (Borg, 2009). As Cuban (1993 as cited by Le, 2011) asserts, "teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes shape what they do in their classrooms and explain the fundamentals of instructional practices" (p. 256).

Studies have been undertaken to explore how teachers respond to task-based curriculum reforms in both foreign language and second language contexts. Most of them were small-scale, using data from teachers' self-reflection and self-reports (Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Lin & Wu, 2012; Oliver & Bogachenko, 2018; Xiongyong & Moses, 2011; Zhang & Luo, 2018; Zheng & Borg, 2014). These studies indicate that teachers often lack an understanding of tasks and TBLT. For example, in the EFL context, Zheng and Borg (2014) conducted semi-structured interviews with three secondary school teachers in China to ascertain their understanding and implementation of TBLT in the EFL context. They found that the teachers defined TBLT narrowly and strongly associated it with communicative activities, particularly oral work in pairs or groups. Zhang and Luo (2018) conducted an interview with 35 Chinese as a second language teachers at a secondary school to examine their attitudes towards TBLT. The researchers found that the teachers lacked a thorough understanding of TBLT and did not believe in its feasibility for their students. The teachers also discussed factors that influenced their implementation of TBLT, such as the cultural diversity of learners, materials, class size, teaching schedule, and examination. Similar findings have been seen in the ESL context. For example, Oliver and Bogachenko (2018) surveyed Australian teachers in 18 primary and secondary schools about how they perceived, designed, and assessed tasks. They found that very few teachers demonstrated a thorough comprehension of tasks. Although most teachers demonstrated an awareness of tasks as goal-oriented and allowing for freedom of language choice, they largely ignored other critical task characteristics such as the centrality of meaning and a focus on form. Similarly, Farias and D'Ely (2020) used questionnaire and

written self-reports from Brazilian elementary school teachers and found that they frequently struggled to comprehend the features of TBLT and choose suitable task types for their beginner students. In short, these studies have shown that there is typically quite a large gap between teachers' understanding of TBLT and TBLT principles derived from research and SLA theory.

In addition, studies have revealed inconsistency between teachers' reported cognitions and practices. For example, Jeon and Hahn (2006) surveyed 228 secondary school teachers in 38 middle and high schools in Korea. They found that most teachers recognised that the task has a communicative goal, a primary emphasis on meaning, and a clearly defined outcome. They also believed in the relevance of task-based instruction and communicative language teaching, were committed to student-centredness, and were aware of three stages of a task-based lesson including pre-task, task implementation, and post-task. Despite the high level of understanding of TBLT, half of the teachers reported not using tasks in class. The reasons the teachers gave were a lack of confidence in implementing them and perceived disciplinary problems in the classroom. Using a questionnaire adapted from Jeon and Hahn (2006), Xiongyong and Moses (2011) examined the understanding of 132 Chinese secondary school EFL teachers about TBLT and found similar results to those in Jeon and Hahn (2006). According to Xiongyong and Moses, an overwhelming proportion of teachers demonstrated a strong grasp of task features (a task has a communicative purpose, a primary focus on meaning, and a clearly defined outcome). However, teachers reported that they did not implement TBLT regularly and effectively due to large class sizes and the difficulty of assessing learners' performance. These results indicate that the link between teachers' cognition and their actual practice of TBLT is not consistent; rather, it varies based on the constraints that teachers face in the classroom.

The studies discussed above have methodological limitations. First, the design of questionnaires and multiple-choice questions with pre-conceived categories in the survey research frequently represents a biased and oversimplified view of reality (Creswell, 2013). These studies often required clear-cut answers to complex issues and so the teachers' responses frequently lack depth. This undermines the reliability and validity of such data. Second, even with the studies that included interviews with teachers, there is often a lack of evidence from classroom observations. That said, other qualitative research has addressed these limitations by collecting rich triangulated data from both classroom observations and self-reports to provide valuable insights into how teachers make sense of teaching. Carless

(2003), for example, examined the understanding of TBLT and the factors influencing its implementation in the classrooms of three elementary teachers in Hong Kong. Carless collected data from attitude scale surveys, focused interviews, and classroom observations. He found that two of the three teachers had a strong grasp of TBLT principles, expressed favourable attitudes towards TBLT and used tasks effectively in their teaching. Based on these findings, Carless identified six factors that influence teachers' adoption of TBLT in the classroom: understanding, beliefs, availability of time for the textbook, task topics, availability of resources, and students' language proficiency. In another study that drew on multiple data sources, McDonough and Chaikimongkol (2007) described an innovative task-based EFL course at a university in Thailand. The course was developed by the programme's teachers to replace a traditional form-focused course. Data was collected from student notebooks, classroom observation, interviews with students and teachers, and fieldnotes written by teachers. The findings showed that the course was well received by both teachers and students who all reported that the course met the students' academic needs and increased student independence. Although both teachers and students initially complained about the lack of grammar instruction in the course content, this concern faded by the end of the semester. The authors argue that the success of the course was attributed to the support provided to teachers in their transition from traditional teaching methods to task-based learning. Hu (2013) examined the responses of 30 Chinese teachers to TBLT interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The findings indicated that approximately half of the teachers had a favourable attitude towards TBLT and were actively implementing it in their classrooms. They agreed that TBLT fostered an environment that was interesting, meaningful, and practical. Several of these studies reported on the efficacy of TBLT in practice (Carless, 2004; Carless, 2003).

In comparison, studies have also found that teachers frequently resist the TBLT curriculum by adapting it to the PPP approach (Andon & Eckerth, 2009; Carless, 2009; Chen & Wright, 2017; Nishimuro & Borg, 2013; Plews & Zhao, 2010). For example, Carless (2009) examined the relative advantages of TBLT and PPP, as well as the rationales that secondary teachers and teacher educators in Hong Kong gave for their preference for TBLT or PPP. Most teachers indicated that they preferred and primarily used PPP in their classroom instruction. Additionally, they recognised that TBLT was complex and frequently difficult to implement in school classrooms, whereas PPP was simple to organise and helped prepare students for examinations. Nishimuro and Borg (2013) report similar findings in a study,

which investigated the classroom practices and beliefs about grammar instruction of three Japanese high school teachers as they implemented a task-based curriculum. While participants acknowledged the importance of communication in teaching English, they emphasised the critical role of grammar in student language development and the suitability of PPP for grammar instruction as well. They also identified examinations and a lack of classroom time as reasons for not adopting TBLT and were seen to frequently use PPP in their classrooms. Chen and Wright (2017) examined the beliefs and practices of eight teachers regarding TBLT in a private secondary school in China. The researchers found that, despite the context's strong commitment to task-based instruction, most of the teachers lacked confidence in using tasks in their classrooms. Thus, they used tasks only as an "add-on" to non-communicative and form-focused activities in which students practiced linguistic structures.

In summary, three themes recur in the studies discussed in this section. First, there is often a gap between the intended emphasis on communication and tasks in the curriculum and the teachers' implementation of it. Second, teacher cognition plays a crucial role in the uptake of task-based practices; teachers' positive attitudes towards and understanding of TBLT have been found to underpin cases where task-based curricula have been successfully implemented at the classroom level. Third, contextual factors such as grammar-based examinations, large class, students' English proficiency, and limited classroom time have a strong influence on teachers' beliefs and willingness to adopt TBLT in their classroom practice. These three themes have yielded valuable insights into how teachers teach with tasks in various settings, as well as into the various factors that impede or facilitate the implementation of TBLT. These issues are all currently in focus in EFL in Vietnam, where government mandated curriculum change over the past ten years has explicitly drawn on principles of TBLT, and yet has struggled to achieve its intended goals.

2.5.4. The implementation of TBLT by Vietnamese teachers

Recently, there has been a growing interest in Vietnam in EFL on teachers' understanding of TBLT and on whether and how they put it into practice. In this section, I review studies on teacher cognition and classroom practices in relation to the task-based curriculum in Vietnam. Most of these studies have been conducted in secondary and elementary schools where teachers and students are expected to follow the official curriculum and textbooks,

which are oriented towards communicative and task-based teaching (e.g., Bui, 2019; Le, 2014; Le, 2011; Le & Barnard, 2009; B. T. Nguyen, 2013; G. V. Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2015).

Like many studies in the Asian context, research in Vietnam has shown that teachers often resist communicative and task-based curriculum reforms. At the secondary school context, Le and Barnard (2009) used classroom observations and in-depth interviews to investigate three secondary school teachers' understanding and attitudes towards communicative and task-based approaches as curricular innovation in Vietnam. The findings showed that teachers maintained a grammar-based and teacher-centred approach to instruction, in which discrete grammar rules were explicitly provided and almost always in Vietnamese. The interview data revealed that although the teachers expressed positive attitudes towards innovation, they lacked a thorough understanding of communicative and task-based teaching approaches.

Other studies in this context have adopted a more in-depth qualitative case study methodology. For example, both Le (2011) and G. V. Nguyen (2013) investigated the beliefs and practices of EFL teachers at secondary schools through multiple case studies involving classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and stimulated recall interviews. Both studies found that the teachers' beliefs were not consistent with task-based principles. The teachers believed strongly in the value of rote-memorization of grammatical rules and controlled grammar exercises for learning English and preparing for examinations. Consequently, they almost exclusively used non-communicative and form-focused activities in their classrooms. In a case study of six teachers at a secondary school in the centre of Vietnam, Tran (2015) extended the scope of study to include curricular content, teaching pedagogy, and learner assessment as they relate to TBLT. Regarding curriculum content, the teachers paid minimal attention to topic-based content and conceived the topic-based content in terms of discrete linguistic items. Regarding teaching, most teachers focused on vocabulary-based, closed-ended, and form-focused activities even when the textbook activities did not require them to do so. Regarding assessment, the tests the teachers used focused mainly on discrete linguistic items and the accuracy of written language production at word and sentence levels. Their findings show that in all three dimensions, TBLT was rarely in evidence.

At university level, Nguyen and Franken (2010), explored six teachers' understandings of the roles of input, output, and interaction in TBLT through interviews and classroom observation. The researchers found that the tasks and activities designed by the teachers created contexts

for practising linguistic items rather than for meaningful communication in English. The six teachers consistently delayed communicative tasks until their students had extensively practised the language forms that were the primary focus of the lessons.

The studies discussed above all show a gap between reforms designed to increase communicative content in the curriculum, and the understandings and willingness of teachers to implement these reforms. However, other studies paint a more positive picture. For example, Nguyen et al. (2015) investigated speaking classes taught by nine experienced teachers at a high school in the centre of Vietnam. The findings showed that the teachers adapted or replaced many of tasks in the prescribed textbook with more open-ended tasks that engaged students with topics that were more interesting and directly relevant to the students' lives. Interview data revealed that the teachers had clearly articulated beliefs about the value of communicative tasks and especially tasks that gave learners opportunities to talk about their own lives. One likely reason for the positive uptake of tasks in this school in comparison with the schools investigated by Tran (2015) and G. V. Nguyen (2013) is that this was a school for gifted students who had a higher proficiency. This difference shows that factors such as motivation and the background of students in different contexts influence teachers' willingness and capacity to engage with innovation. These contrasting findings show that more research is needed to capture the diverse and complex ways in which context informs the extent to which teachers are willing to engage with TBLT. The current study addresses this point by investigating use of tasks by university EFL teachers teaching non-English major students, whose proficiency is typically low.

Another successful story is reported in Newton and Bui (2017), who investigated the implementation of TBLT by seven primary teachers. The interview data showed that although some of the participants appreciated the value of PPP since this approach provided a clear lesson structure for low-level students, others were strongly critical of it. They saw the benefits of tasks for promoting their students' engagement and thus wanted to teach more communicatively. All seven teachers were given guidance in how to teach the textbook PPP lessons in a more task-based way. Subsequent classroom observations showed how the teachers all successfully implemented the textbook following a task-based approach. This included giving clear instructions and handling all phases of the lessons despite the large class sizes and mixed proficiency levels. Together with the study by Nguyen et al. (2015), the findings in Newton and Bui (2017) suggest that teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and understandings of TBLT play a critical role in the successful implementation of the task-

based curriculum. Recently, Nguyen et al. (2018) found encouraging results from a survey of 62 EFL teachers working at different universities. The researchers found that most of the participating teachers generally had a high level of understanding of tasks and the main TBLT concepts. Moreover, the teachers also had positive attitudes and strong beliefs in the benefits of task-based learning for their students. They were willing to play the role of a facilitator rather than a controller in their classroom.

As with other contexts, particularly those in Asia, an important theme emerging from research in Vietnam is that teachers' implementation of TBLT is contingent on their understanding and beliefs about the approach as well as contextual factors. This substantiates the following five principles proposed by Ellis (2009) for mitigating the difficulties inherent in implementing TBLT:

1. The tasks must be tailored to the proficiency levels of the students.
2. Tasks need to be trialled to ensure that they result in appropriate L2 use and revised in the light of experience.
3. For TBLT to work, teachers need a clear understanding of what a task is.
4. Teachers and students need to be made aware of the purpose and rationale for performing tasks.
5. Ideally, the teachers involved in teaching a task-based course must be involved in the development of the task materials (p. 240).

The findings also indicate that the top-down attempts to adopt TBLT have been shown to give insufficient attention to teacher training and professional development including teacher knowledge, procedural awareness, disposition, and teacher identity (Kiely & Askham, 2012). This highlights the need for teacher education to increase teachers' awareness of and ability to implement TBLT in their classrooms. Nonetheless, most of the studies conducted in Vietnam to date have not taken an in-depth look at this subject. The current study sought to address this gap.

2.5.5. Teacher education for TBLT

Teacher education in both pre-service programmes and in-service TPLD is designed to enhance teachers' professional knowledge, teaching skills, and attitudes with the goal of improving students' learning (Guskey, 2002). As Guskey (2002) claims, "notable

improvements in education almost never take place in the absence of teacher professional development” (p. 4), although Borg (2015) points out that more research is needed on the connection between language teacher education and teachers’ actual implementation in their classrooms. Similarly, in the TBLT field, East (2021), Long (2016) and Ellis (2018b) all agree that the need for teacher education for TBLT remains one of the “real issues” for TBLT and emphasise the need for more research on this topic. The wider literature has identified several key features of effective TPD, which provide a useful benchmark for evaluating TBLT studies focused on teacher education. These features include context sensitivity and in-situ practice-based TPD, reflection, and a duration that extends beyond single workshops (Crandall, 2000; Ellis, 2018a). I will discuss TBLT studies in this section with reference to these features.

Crandall (2000) states that practical experiences and critical reflection on experiences help teachers develop more informed practice, articulating what teachers know and leading to new ways of knowing and teaching. Two recent studies, Zhu (2020) and Ariatna and Ellis (2021) illustrate this view. Zhu (2020) described a six-week action research project at a Chinese primary school in which a secondary school teacher designed, implemented, and evaluated two task-based lessons with the assistance of a teacher educator. The findings showed that the teacher initially struggled to effectively design and teach using tasks. However, over the duration of the project she improved her understanding and skill in teaching with tasks by participating in the design and teaching of task-based lessons and reflecting on them through her field-notes, student responses, and peer and teacher feedback. Evidence of improvements in her capacity to teach with tasks was seen in improvements from the first to second lesson that she taught during the study. The improvements included using English more authentically, providing tasks pitched at the right level for her young students, and giving students more opportunities to speak in class. Zhu (2020) concluded that the teacher’s active participation in designing and teaching lessons, her teacher self-reflection, and timely reflective feedback from colleagues, students, and the expert contributed to the success of this teacher training course.

Similarly, Ariatna and Ellis (2021) reported on how an Indonesian secondary school teacher implemented task-based teaching in her own classroom with help from a teacher educator. The findings revealed that the teacher was successful in implementing the tasks and maintaining a primary focus on meaning during the lessons through two cycles of designing lesson plans, teaching the lesson plans, receiving feedback from an expert, and making

changes. Additionally, she gained an understanding of what a task was and what the teacher roles were in TBLT over time. Although the teacher occasionally reverted to her more traditional form-focused approach and continued to behave as a traditional instructor, the authors concluded that she had been able to “make a good start in working with TBLT” (Ariatna & Ellis, 2021, p. 154). Notably, in both studies, the teacher participants had received no prior exposure to TBLT theory or practice during their university education or work as teachers. Both teachers were also initially concerned about incompatibility between TBLT and traditional, grammar-based exams. The findings in these studies demonstrates that reflection on actual classroom practice and ongoing support from teacher educators can assist teachers in transitioning from a philosophy of teaching and learning developed during their early years as a learner to a philosophy of teaching that is consistent with their emerging understandings of language learning and teaching processes. These two studies also show that when teachers are responsible for task development, they are more likely to take ownership and gain a deeper understanding of TBLT (Vandommele et al., 2018). Thus, teacher education must “assist participants in making explicit their existing beliefs and enabling them to critically reflect on and modify them” (Ellis, 2018a, p. 108).

In contrast to the short-term, in-situ nature of the two studies discussed, Erlam (2016) reports on a one-year teacher professional development course in New Zealand designed specifically for in-service foreign language teachers. The teachers were first introduced to TBLT theory, then asked to create their own tasks and evaluate them using four criteria proposed by Ellis and Shintani (2014). Finally, they were asked to translate what they learned during the training course into their own classes. The teacher trainers who delivered the course observed and evaluated the teachers four times throughout the year. They found that most teachers used tasks frequently and that their instruction had become more learner-centred and motivating. However, they stated that they lacked a firm understanding of the four characteristics of tasks, particularly feature two (some kind of gap). Additionally, they encountered difficulty selecting appropriate tasks for their students. Erlam (2016) concluded that the teachers demonstrated significant learning about TBTL, although she notes that they would need additional ongoing assistance from experts to address some persistent misunderstandings and to strengthen their use of tasks in the classroom.

In addition, research has demonstrated the efficacy of collaborative learning among teachers in teacher professional development (e.g., Bryfonski, 2021; Chen, 2016). Chen (2016), for example, investigated how three teachers at a secondary school in Taiwan developed their

practitioner knowledge in communicative and task-based approaches through five action research cycles. The main findings from the interviews and observation data revealed that the teachers initially did not have a good understanding of these approaches and frequently implemented activities to practise language forms. The teachers were then introduced to the theory of CLT and TBLT in a workshop and applied what they learned in their own classes. Throughout this process, they observed and provided feedback on each other's lessons. Together with the researcher/ 'expert', the teachers identified the strengths and weaknesses in their own and other teachers' lessons and improved the subsequent lessons in subsequent cycles. The author concluded that this type of teacher education facilitated the development of teachers' practitioner knowledge of CLT and TBLT. Bryfonski (2021) investigated the effectiveness of a teacher training course for bilingual schoolteachers in Honduras. The findings from post-training interviews and surveys showed that most of the teachers stated that collaboration with other teachers, along with practice-based nature and ongoing support from experts, was one of the three most beneficial features of the training programme. They stated that mentorship from more experienced teachers and peer collaboration continued to be useful to them in their daily teaching after the training was completed.

Some success in introducing TBLT in pre-service teacher education programmes has also been reported. For example, East (2018) investigated how seven pre-service teachers designed and implemented tasks within a teacher education programme in New Zealand. Data was collected from teachers' self-reflection notes and interviews. The study showed that teachers reported frequently using tasks in their classroom. Notably, they designed tasks based on their beliefs about what worked well in their classrooms, rather than strictly adhering to the theoretical definitions of tasks introduced during the programme. The study emphasised the value of reflective practice in actual classrooms in helping teachers evaluate their tasks critically in light of theory and practice. Jaruteerapan (2020) investigated the impact of introducing a TBLT module in a pre-service EFL teacher education course at a Thai university. The teachers were introduced to TBLT in the coursework component of the programme. However, at the beginning of their teaching practicum in the final semester, Jaruteerapan found that the teachers had a very limited understanding of TBLT, and it was largely absent from their classroom practice. Over the remainder of the practicum, she worked with the teachers to develop lesson plans, implement the lesson plans, and reflect on the lessons. During this time, she found that the teachers expressed a more favourable attitude towards the feasibility of TBLT for their students and more effectively planned and

implemented task-based lessons. Jaruteerapan (2020) concluded that the course's practice-based and reflective nature, as well as the critical role of the expert were invaluable in ensuring successful uptake of TBLT. Both studies by East (2018) and Jaruteerapan (2020) demonstrate that teachers tend to develop their own set of beliefs and practices based on what they perceive to be contextually appropriate instructional practices. These studies illustrate the point made by Van den Branden (2016) that:

...Most teachers are inclined to implement TBLT in ways they see fit. As such, they aim to give shape to an approach to language learning that is not only consistent with a particular view of language learning or with specific pedagogical guidelines but that they themselves also experience as practicable, feasible and appropriate for the particular context in which they are functioning (p. 167).

One feature we see in the studies reviewed above is the value of practice-based, in-situ teacher education. This point is further illustrated in a study by Van den Branden (2006) in which he compared two phases of a TBLT teacher education project in Flanders, Belgium, one with and one without actual teaching practice. The first phase without teaching practice was ineffective due to key trainers simply presenting and transferring theoretical principles and pedagogical implications to teacher trainees. While teacher trainees expressed positive attitudes towards the new ideas presented during the training course, they did not implement them once they returned to their classrooms. In comparison, the second practice-based phase demonstrated positive results when teacher trainees were involved in teaching with tasks in their own classes, reflecting on their own lessons, and getting feedback from trainers. Van den Branden's (2006) findings corroborate Ellis's (2020) assertion that "crucial to the success of a teacher preparation programme is the nexus between theory and practice" (p. 108), and thus that this nexus should inform the design and delivery of any teacher education programme.

In contrast, Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) examined the effects of TBLT education for 12 pre-service teachers at a Canadian university. Pre-service teachers were required to complete a theoretical course prior to beginning the teaching practice component of the programme in actual classrooms. However, because the course instructors were not directly involved in the classrooms, they were not able to provide support. The findings showed that, while the course improved teachers' attitudes towards TBLT, the positive attitudes did not translate into actual use or implementation during the practicum, as teachers continued to struggle with comprehending and implementing tasks in their classrooms. Similar results are reported by G.

V. Nguyen (2013) and Nguyen (2018) who both showed that short training workshops (two days and one-off respectively) without classroom practice and expert support were ineffective. G. V. Nguyen (2013) found that after two short training workshops about TBLT, the in-service secondary school teachers in Vietnam were still resistant to changing their regular teaching practices. They frequently focused students' attention on linguistic items although the textbook activities did not require or suggest them to do so. Nguyen (2018) led a one-off TBLT training programme for three university teachers. He found that two out of three participating teachers failed to adopt TBLT teaching principles and teacher roles in TBLT. G. V. Nguyen (2013) and Nguyen (2018) noted that these short teacher education programmes were not enough to improve their teachers' accountability and understanding of TBLT and so could not help them make any crucial changes in their classroom-based approach. These studies indicate that one-off teacher education programmes or those lacking ongoing expert support have often had little impact on teachers' beliefs about and practices of TBLT.

According to Darling-Hammond (2006), the way teachers learn is sensitive to context and influenced by various factors such as policy, materials, colleagues, and students. For this reason, teacher education for TBLT needs to account for the “multidimensionality and unpredictability” of the classroom environment (Crandall, 2000, p. 35) by making links to or being embedded in the kinds of classrooms in which teachers will be translating their learning into practice. In addition, Freeman and Johnson (1998, p. 401) argue that “teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills but have their own beliefs and understanding that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in the classrooms”. The reviewed studies have shown that appropriately structured teacher education programmes provide important opportunities for teachers to improve their understanding and skills for adopting TBLT in their classrooms. These studies highlight features that should inform the design and delivery of teacher education programmes: context sensitive, practice-based, reflective, and ongoing support (Ellis, 2020). In the current study, these features were carefully considered and applied in the planning and implementation of TPD.

2.6. Summary of the chapter

This chapter began by reviewing CLT – the background of TBLT, and theoretical concepts of TBLT including task definition, task types, and TBLT curriculum and frameworks. The

chapter then reviewed the role of teachers and the role of materials in TBLT, research on how teachers in various contexts perceived and practised tasks, and particularly in the Vietnamese context. The final part of the chapter focuses on the research on teacher education about TBLT.

This review suggests that to date, there has been a relevantly modest number of published studies on teacher cognition of TBLT and teacher education for TBLT. However, at least the positive side is the upswing in the interest in this topic over the past ten years. The literature review in this chapter shows that there are several gaps in the body of research on teacher cognition of TBLT. First, the review shows that many of the studies on teachers' perceptions employed self-report methods such as questionnaires or interviews without access to direct data on classroom practices. Given the complexities of teachers' beliefs and practices (Borg, 2015), more in-depth qualitative studies are needed to uncover such complexities of what is happening in the classroom.

Second, the review of research on TBLT implementation in Vietnam reveals that most of the studies were conducted at low-level institutions such as elementary and secondary schools where teachers and students are currently using official task-based textbooks as an innovation in their curriculum (Le, 2014; Le, 2011; Newton & Bui, 2017; B. T. Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2015). However, the context in universities is quite different in that there is no standardised textbook and teachers have more autonomy in selecting materials as well as teaching approaches. Hence, more research is needed to examine Vietnamese university teachers' cognition and practice of tasks to know whether TBLT has been really implemented at this educational level.

Lastly, studies have reported that the key difficulty that teachers may experience with implementing TBLT in their classrooms is their vague understanding of what a task really is, and how to implement a task-based approach in a particular context. This raises the question of how current theoretically derived task definitions can be translated into practice. This finding also highlights a need for further studies to explore how TBLT can be supported, sustained, and developed through teacher education. Nevertheless, very little has been reported about teacher education endeavours adopting a school-based, ongoing, and practice-oriented approach (Van den Branden, 2006). As Ellis (2020) suggests, there is a need for more studies that examine what is translated into classroom practices from teacher education. Especially, in Vietnam, very few studies on teacher education for TBLT have been conducted so far.

The current study sought to fill these gaps by investigating the perspectives and teaching practices of three EFL teachers at a university in Vietnam who were using a textbook that claims to integrate task-based principles in relation to in-situ professional learning on TBLT. The study was conducted through two phases and set out to answer the following research questions (RQ):

Phase 1.

- RQ 1. How communicative and task-like is the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary*?
- RQ 2. In what ways does the implementation of the textbook by the three teachers converge or diverge from its communicative and task-like qualities?
- RQ 3. What reasons do teachers give for their textbook implementation decisions?
- RQ 4. What are teachers' stated beliefs about and knowledge of TBLT?
- RQ5. What do students report about their experience of lessons from the textbook?

Phase 2.

An overarching research question: What impact does a TBLT-focused PAR project have on teachers' practices, beliefs, and knowledge of TBLT, and on the reported experience of students in the PAR classes?

Specifically, Phase 2 aimed to address research questions 6–8:

- RQ6. What changes occurred in the teachers' implementation of the task-based lessons?
- RQ7. What changes occurred in the teachers' understanding of TBLT?
- RQ8. What changes occurred in the students' reported experience of the task-based lessons?

The next chapter describes the research design and the methods used to gather and analyse the data for the current study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology and data collection methods used in the current study. It begins with the rationale for the choice of research paradigm, qualitative research, and participatory action research (PAR). The subsequent sections describe the research design including the setting, participants, the process of data collection and data analysis, ethical issues, and the issues of assuring the quality of the research.

3.2. Research paradigm

A research paradigm is defined as a set of assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the nature and conduct of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 24). It influences the methodology chosen by researchers, which in turn influences their choice of appropriate methods and procedures (Creswell, 2013). A research paradigm not only encapsulates fundamental beliefs and attitudes about the world, but also provides an interpretive framework within which the world can be understood and studied (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). A research paradigm is comprised of ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs (Hesse-Biber, 2017). Ontology refers to the nature of social reality, or “what is known and how it is known” (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 6). Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge, or “what and how do we know about it?” (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 7). The researchers’ ontological and epistemological assumptions determine the methodology of a study (Hesse-Biber, 2017).

Guba and Lincoln (2005) identified four fundamental paradigms: post-positivism, constructivism, transformative, and pragmatic paradigms. Among these, constructivism is the most appropriate for the current study because its central belief of ontology and epistemology aligns with my perspective. The core assumption of social constructivism is to comprehend rather than to explain social phenomena, and this comprehension should be gained through direct contact with people and from within (Cohen et al., 2002).

Constructivism seeks to gain access to people’s perceptions of their situations and justifications for their own actions, and to form understandings based on those perceptions (Cohen et al., 2002). The constructivist ontology belief presupposes that the nature of existence is socially constructed (Cohen, et al., 2002), emphasizing the significance of the individuals who perceive, participate in, and experience reality. At the level of

epistemology, constructivists assume that data, interpretations, and outcomes are grounded in contexts and individuals other than the researchers. In the current study, I held a constructivist position of ontology and epistemology, believing that classroom realities are co-constructed by the teacher and students, and so I sought knowledge from the teacher participants' interpretation and their interactions within their context. When conducting an in-depth investigation, I gained a better understanding of the teachers' current state of TBLT implementation and their perceptions and interpretations of their teacher professional development experience. I also gained better understanding of the students' perspectives.

In the constructivism paradigm, qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and document reviews are prevalent. These are used in accordance with the social construction of reality assumption, which states that research can only be conducted through interaction between and among investigator and respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The current study, guided by the constructivism paradigm, used qualitative case study and participatory action research to address the research questions, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.3. Qualitative research

Qualitative research is holistic, descriptive, interpretive, and emphatic (Creswell, 2013), and, as Hancock and Algozzine (2017) note, is particularly suited to “understand the situation under investigation primarily from the participants' and not the researcher's perspective” (p. 8). As such, it suited the goal of the current study.

Within qualitative research, case study was deemed appropriate for this study because it allowed for the conduct of the research in the everyday context of EFL classes at a Vietnamese university. As Robson (2002, p. 146) defines it, a case study is “a strategy for doing research which involves an investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence” (p. 146). In this thesis, multiple case study design and analysis were used to explore the ways in which a textbook that focuses on communicative and task-based learning was implemented by three teachers in a Vietnamese university. A cross-case methodology allowed for the identification of patterns and the elucidation of possible differences or similarities between cases (O'Kane, 2004, p. 310). While case studies cannot guarantee generalizability, they can serve as a foundation for transferability (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, Simons (2009) emphasises how case study findings can help readers reflect on their own circumstances and draw comparable lessons. In

qualitative research, the researchers can use different qualitative data collection methods to explore meanings and insights in a given situation (Levitt et al., 2017). With this in mind, the current research was conducted in the natural classroom setting and used five main data collection tools: classroom observation, field notes, stimulated recall interviews, focus groups, and reflective journal. This range of data sources allowed for multiple perspectives on the teachers' and students' experiences and perceptions of the textbook and the task-based pedagogy underlying the textbook.

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research focuses on “the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014, p. 8). In addition, the methodology also observes the world in its natural setting, interpreting situations for understanding the meanings that people make (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014, p. 8). Qualitative research, therefore, seeks answers to questions of “what”, “why”, and “how”, rather than the “how often” or “how many” typical of quantitative research. However, for this feature, a common criticism of qualitative research is that it lacks rigour or reliability due to the absence of statistical or numerical data, and that the data extracts might be cherry-picked. However, the counterargument is that in qualitative research, reliability and scientific values are ensured through a thorough documentation of all procedures (Creswell, 2013). Being aware of this issue, in this study, I ensured the reliability of my qualitative research by checking and rechecking the transcripts for errors, cross-checking coding with another PhD student to avoid drift, and carefully comparing the results and interpretation of the data with the methodological framework (Creswell, 2013).

3.4. Participatory Action Research (PAR)

3.4.1. Definition and characteristics of PAR

PAR is a subset of action research distinguished by its emphasis on participation and collaboration. According to Kemmis et al. (2014), PAR “offers an opportunity to create forums in which people can join one another as co-participants in the struggle to remake the communities in which they interact” (p. 563). In other words, PAR is a social process of collaborative learning in which a group of people interacts in a shared context to critically examine and change their practices. It is important to highlight that PAR involves the investigation of actual practices not abstract practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). This means that

PAR “involves learning about the real, material, concrete, and particular practices of particular people in particular places” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 277).

Kemmis et al. (2014) position PAR as a progressive and cyclic process in which participants are involved in decision making, action taking, and the reflection process, and so they are gradually equipped with knowledge and skills during the research process. PAR thus often involves four key stages: Observing, Planning, Acting, and Reflecting (Kemmis et al., 2014). However, while action research focuses on personal reflection, PAR involves participation from all members of the educational community and so it is increasingly used in educational research to achieve good communication, cooperation, collaboration and trust between stakeholders (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013). As stated by Pellerin and Paukner Nogués (2015), “the value of having teachers connect, talk about their own classroom experiences, and grow together professionally has gained ground over the last two decades” (p. 49). PAR encourages teachers to be open-minded to other perspectives and to share their experiences so that they can recognise their own strengths and weaknesses, and in so doing to bring about transformation in their professional activities and in their context of action.

As Kong (2014) states, the nature of PAR is practice-led, rather than practice-based, and so contrasts with traditional scientific research where participants are objects of the study. PAR challenges the traditional positivistic subject-object dualism, preferring a collaborative relationship between the researcher and the researched to open a new space for communication. In the current study, the teacher participants and I as the researcher worked together to identify their problems in teaching from a textbook, develop a plan, and then implement and evaluate it. This ensured that the teachers should be “empowered to contribute to the development of knowledge through theory-driven practice”, and that collaboration was “a reciprocal and recursive venture where we work together to achieve a shared aim by sharing the learning experience, knowledge, and expertise” (Bevins & Price, 2014, p. 271)

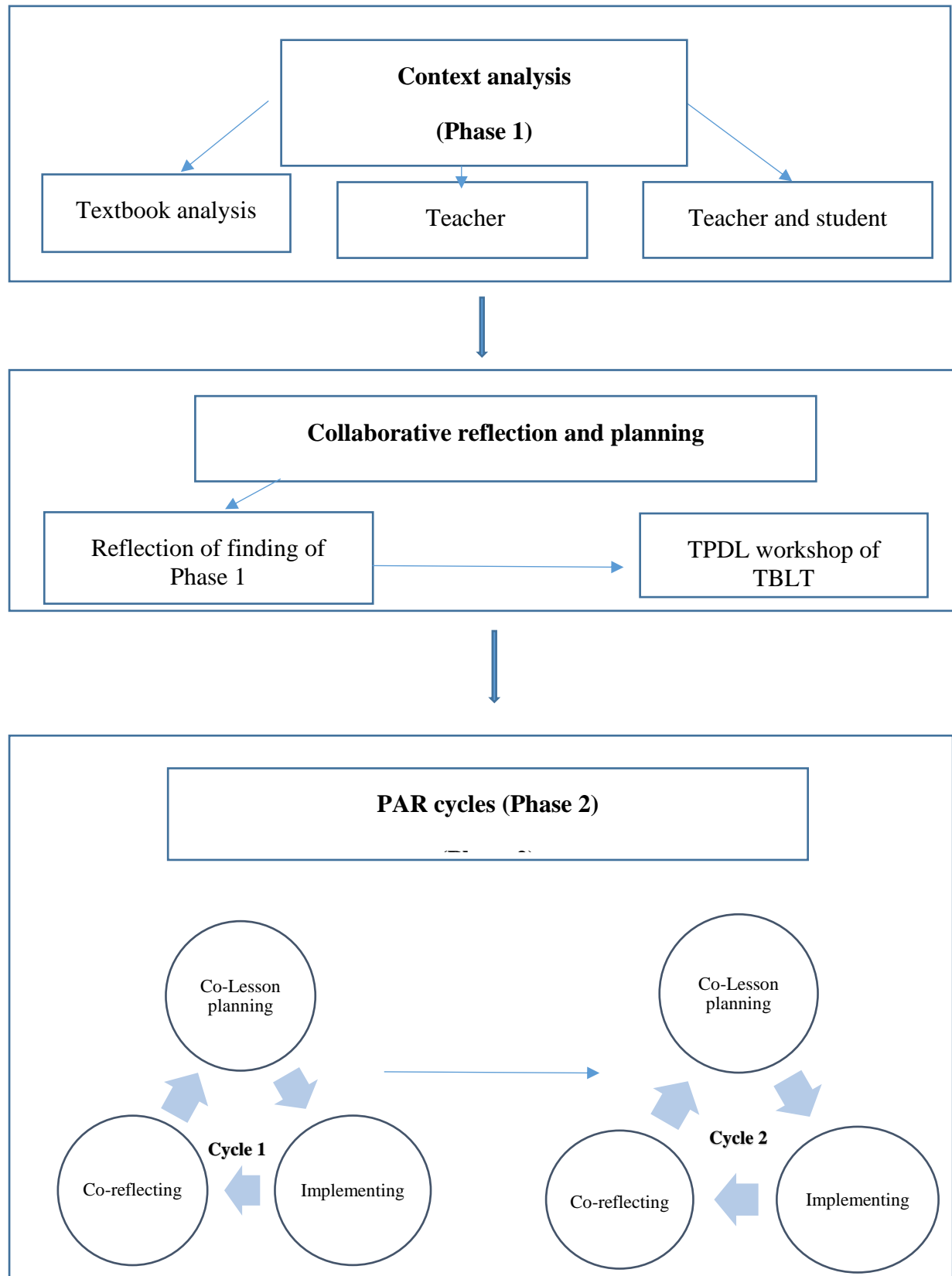
I chose to use PAR to implement the study since it provides a means for collaboratively working to identify and investigate the specific problems and insights that people encounter within their own setting and to collaboratively develop practical strategies to overcome, or at least reduce these problems (Kemmis, 2008). It is important to note that I do not consider this to be a strict PAR project in that the research followed a prior agenda, which I introduced to the cooperating teachers and which they then agreed was one that they wanted to be a part of. However, I made the choice of PAR as the methodological framework for two reasons.

First, the cyclical nature of PAR provided the participating teachers with opportunities to reflect upon their teaching innovation (i.e., TBLT) and improve their delivery of lessons. This was essential for the teachers as Van den Branden (2016) argues, “the implementation of TBLT is a gradual process of learning which needs to go through repeated cycles of trying out, reflecting, revising, and trying again” (p. 175). Second, the implementation of PAR requires active involvement and collaboration of the teachers as participants in a facilitative style of curriculum delivery. Through this collaboration, the teachers could receive feedback from their peers to improve their weaknesses and promote their strengths and modify their lesson design to adapt to their students’ needs (Chow et al., 2015). The active involvement of the teachers in this PAR had potential for their professional development because it required critical reflection on their practices and facilitated knowledge renewal.

3.4.2. PAR in the current study

The current study consisted of two main phases, which were informed by PAR and reflected Kemmis et al.’s (2014) four stages of observation, planning, action, and reflection. In the first phase, observing and planning, I “observed” the context by first analysing the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* from a task-based and communicative perspective. Then, I examined how the three participating EFL teachers implemented the textbook, their perceptions of teaching with the textbook, and their students’ perceptions of the lessons. After that, I discussed the findings with the participating teachers to help them reflect on and identify emerging issues in their classrooms. We then discussed the action plan to address the issues.

In the second phase, acting and reflecting, I first hosted a TPDL workshop on TBLT to increase teachers’ understanding of the approach and to equip teachers with strategies for more effectively incorporating tasks into their regular lessons. Then, I organised two PAR cycles, which can be considered professional opportunities for the teachers to learn, act, and reflect. Each cycle began with a workshop on lesson planning, followed by three classroom observations, student interviews, and then a reflection workshop. These important components are illustrated in Figure 1 below and discussed in greater detail in Section 3.7 on the research procedure and data collection.

Figure 1*The PAR project*

3.5. The role of the researcher as an insider and outsider

My role was multifaceted throughout the PAR project. On the one hand, I played the role of an outsider who investigated the teachers' context to obtain a holistic understanding and teaching practices of the teachers. For example, during Phase 1, I undertook a non-participant role in the classroom observations, looking at the way the teachers and students interacted with each other and with the textbook. This position enabled me to capture the nature of the teaching and learning context that the participants were working in. In my outsider role, I also proposed options for addressing the problems the teachers identified as well as providing information on TBLT for the TPD session.

On the other hand, I was also an insider in that, as a fellow teacher, I shared the same culture, education context, and teaching context as the teacher participants. This allowed me to easily establish trust with the teachers, which was an essential factor when doing PAR (Kemmis et al., 2014). As Crane and O'Regan (2010) emphasise, trust is easily gained among those who share understanding within a particular local and community context. I earned a bachelor's degree in the same faculty at the same university as the three participating teachers. I had also been their colleague for around five years before this study began. When I emailed to inform the teachers about my project and to invite them to join, they were willing and supported me a great deal during the data collection phase. My experience and knowledge of the local situation gave me an insider's perspective that aided in the development and maintenance of rapport with the teachers.

3.6. Research setting

The research was conducted at one of the country's largest public universities, with approximately 17,000 students. It possesses all the characteristics of a typical Vietnamese public university, operates within the guidelines of the MoET, and recruits students through a national entrance exam. This university offers undergraduate programmes in 10 languages (English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese) to both domestic and international students. Since 2002, the university has also offered Bachelor of Science degrees in business administration, tourism and hotel management, accounting, information technology, and banking.

The research site is a university educational centre. The centre provides a learner-friendly environment with well-equipped classrooms, group study areas, and workshop space. Along with the University Main Library, the centre has its own private library, which contains

resources for students majoring in business, hotel management, banking, or accounting. This centre offers ELICOS (English language intensive courses for international students) training to students enrolled in transitional bachelors' programmes in business administration, tourism administration, and accounting. These programmes are offered in collaboration with universities in Austria, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Prior to the beginning of their bachelor studies, all students are required to join the ELICOS programmes, which includes 3 courses: (1) ELICOS 1, a 14-week course using the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary*; (2) ELICOS 2, a 14-week course using the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Intermediate*; and (3) ELICOS 3, a 23-week course of intensive IELTS training and ESP (English for Specific Purposes). At the end of each course, the students are assessed on the four skills using communicative, task-like tests, including some that are designed to approximate the IELTS test and that relate to the topics in the textbook. This study was conducted during ELICOS 1.

3.7. Participants

3.7.1. Recruitment of the participants

To begin the recruitment process, I wrote a formal letter to the rector of the university, outlining the study's purpose and requesting permission to conduct it. The university rector then informed the director of the centre where I conducted my study about the project. Both the university rector and the director of the centre agreed without hesitation, stating that they believed my research would benefit their faculty and students. After I obtained permission from both the university rector and the centre director, I recruited teachers and students as described in the next section.

3.7.2. Teacher participants

I considered that I needed a minimum of three teachers to participate for the research to be viable. For case study research such as this, three case teachers can provide sufficient data for rich description and for comparing and contrasting each case teacher's experience.

I recruited teacher participants while in New Zealand through an invitation email to all the fifteen full-time teachers at the center. The email included an information sheet which explained to them the purpose and nature of my research. All fifteen teachers were my colleagues. We had worked at the same institution for at least four years and were therefore familiar with each other and had a good rapport. All of them replied, with four agreeing to

participate and the others declining. My relationship with these four teachers was the same as with the other eleven. These four teachers participated in my PhD study voluntarily, without being coerced, simply because they were able to arrange time for participation, were willing to undergo training and experiment with new approaches in their classrooms and were particularly interested in the topic of my research. Teachers were not paid for their participation.

After three lessons in Phase 1, one teacher informed me that she would no longer be able to participate because she had been assigned to a class with a different programme. As noted above, the remaining three participating teachers provided a sufficient basis for the research. To maintain confidentiality, teachers were assigned pseudonyms (i.e., Lan, Huong, and Minh). Their profiles are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3

Participating teacher profiles

Teacher	Gender	Age	Qualification	Years of teaching	Professional development background
Lan	Female	33	MTESOL C1-CERF	08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English Language Teacher Training Workshop funded by the US Department of State - ELT (English-for-Teaching) course funded by National Geographic Learning - Cengage Learning - Workshop for integrating technology into teaching English funded by National Geographic Learning - Cengage Learning - Training course for teaching speaking
Huong	Female	30	MTESOL C1-CERF	05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ELT (English –for –Teaching) course funded by National Geographic Learning - Cengage Learning - Training course for teaching speaking
Minh	Female	33	MTESOL C1-CERF	09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training course for curriculum design - Training course for teaching speaking - Workshop for integrating technology into teaching English

As shown in Table 3, all the participating teachers obtained bachelor's degrees in English and master's degrees in TESOL (Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages). They all had obtained C1-CEFR in order to qualify for teaching English at universities (MoET, 2017). Their qualification status is typical of EFL teachers at public universities in Vietnam who are required to have at least a master's degree and were evaluated based on their English language proficiency. They all were experienced teachers with 5–9 years of teaching experience, which was a standard requirement for lecturers. All teachers were females and in their 30s, which is fairly typical of the gender split in EFL teaching in Vietnam.

Regarding their professional development background, all teachers had opportunities to attend various TPDL workshops or short courses such as English Language Teacher Training Workshops funded by the US Department of State, or an ELT (English-for-Teaching) course funded by National Geographic Learning - Cengage Learning, or workshops for integrating technology into teaching English. None of them, however, had attended a workshop or short course on TBLT prior to participating in this study.

3.7.3. Students

Recruitment of students was done in Vietnam. Through the participating teachers, I sought consent from the students in their classes by going to the classes and introducing them to my research before handing out consent forms to every student to gain their permission for observing their classes, collecting their reflective feedback after each lesson, and conducting focus groups. All the students in the four teachers' classes agreed to participate and signed the consent forms. However, as previously noted, one teacher quit early, resulting in the discard of all the data collected from her students as well.

Students in the university are either English majors or non-English majors. The current study took place in classes for non-English majors. For these students, English is a compulsory subject in the first year, at the end of which they need to pass an IELTS-like examination with a score of at least 5.0 on the IELTS band scale. The students were between 18 and 19 years of age and were a mix of male and female students. They had studied English in secondary schools for seven to twelve years, but their English proficiency was at beginner or pre-intermediate levels. All these characteristics are common among non-English majors at Vietnamese universities. The details of the student participants are described in Table 4 below.

Table 4*The student profiles*

Class	Number of students	Age	Majors of the students
Lan's class	23	18-19	Accounting
Huong's class	25		Business Management
Minh's class	25		Tourism Management

3.8. Data collection procedure and data collection methods

To obtain answers to the research questions outlined in Section 2.5, care was taken to ensure that data sources and data collection methods corresponded to the research questions (Richards, 2003). As previously discussed in Section 3.3, the current study adopted a qualitative case study approach as the appropriate methodology for its design. Within this qualitative approach, data was collected through multiple methods. The data collection procedure and data collection methods are described in Table 5 below.

Table 5*Summary of data collection procedure*

Time	Data collection process	Content
17–25 Sept 2018	Pilot study	Pilot interview questions and pilot observe module 3 in each of the teachers' classes.
Phase 1 (Examining context)		
10-27 Sept	Textbook analysis	Analysing activities in Module 4, 5, 6, 8
27 Sept–29 Oct 2018	Teachers teaching modules 4, 5, 6	- Observe the participants' natural classes (modules 4, 5, 6) - Self-reflection journal by all participants and the researcher
28 Sept–31 Oct 2018	Stimulated recall interviews (SRIs)	SRIs with teacher Lan, Huong, Minh
1–2 Nov 2018	Semi-structured interviews (SSIs)	SSIs with Lan, Minh, Huong
2–3 Nov 2018	Focus group interview (FGI) with the students	FGIs with the students
Phase 2 (Planning, Acting and Reflecting)		
4 Nov 2018	PAR meeting 1	Discussion of important issues, priorities, and solutions to address the issues
6 Nov 2018	PAR meeting 2	TPD workshop on TBLT
Participatory cycle 1		
8 Nov 2018	PAR Meeting 3	Design lesson plan for Module 8
12–15 Nov 2018	- Classroom observation - Self-reflective journals	- Observation of the teachers teaching module 8 in task-based learning approach - All participants wrote self-reflective journals
13–18 Nov 2018	SRIs	SRIs with Minh, Huong, Lan
21 Nov 2018	PAR Meeting 4	Reflection on teachers' lessons of module 8
Participatory cycle 2		
30 Nov 2018	PAR Meeting 5	Design lesson plan for module 10
7–15 Dec 2018	- Classroom observation - Self-reflective journals	- Observe the teachers implementing lesson plan for module 10 - All participants wrote self-reflective journals
8–18 Dec 2018	SRIs	SRIs with Lan, Huong, Minh.
19–20 Dec 2018	FGIs with the students	FGIs with the students
20 Dec 2018	PAR meeting 6	Reflection on teachers' lessons of Module 10
22 Dec 2018	PAR meeting 7	Reflection on the entire PAR project

Each of the data collection methods shown in Table 5 is described in detail below.

3.8.1. Classroom Observation

In qualitative research, observation has been characterised as “the fundamental base of all research methods” (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 389). In this study, naturalistic observation was adopted in normally scheduled lessons (Cohen et al., 2002). This allowed me to investigate actual practices of teachers and students without interfering with the natural process of teaching and learning (Borg, 2013). The purpose of the observation sessions was to gain familiarity with the teaching environment and teaching practice, as well as to identify critical incidents that could be discussed with the teachers in an after-class discussion.

I was concerned about the “Hawthorne” effect which refers to the possibility that teachers and students may have acted differently than they normally would to demonstrate an ideal lesson to visitors (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 53). To mitigate the “Hawthorne” effect, I encouraged the participants to teach normally and reassured them that I was not conducting assessments or inspections. I also attempted to convey to them that authentic and candid responses were crucial to my study’s integrity and their professional development.

Observational data, which included field notes, video, and audio recordings, not only supplemented stimulated recall sessions, but also enabled me to view recorded lessons repeatedly during data analysis to check for emerging themes in teachers’ practices. To minimise the disruptive effects of video recorders on lessons, I conducted pilot observations using the recording equipment prior to the main observation sessions to familiarise participants to my presence and the equipment. Additionally, I positioned the equipment in an unobtrusive location near the back of the classroom, where I sat. Teachers and students appeared to adjust quickly to my presence and ignored me and the recording equipment.

I observed a total of 20 lessons taught by three teachers during Phase 1 of data collection. In Phase 2, I observed nine lessons being taught in each participatory cycle by three teachers (three lessons per teacher). As a result, I observed 18 lessons throughout two cycles of Phase 2. The observations are detailed in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6*Phase 1 observations*

	Module 4			Module 5			Module 6		
	Week 1			Week 2			Week 3		
Lesson	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Lan	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Huong	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Minh		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 7*Phase 2 observations*

	Module 8			Module 10		
Lesson	1	2	3	1	2	3
Lan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Huong	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.8.2. Stimulated recall interviews

The video stimulated recall interview (SRI) is a research technique in which participants view a video sequence and are then asked to reflect on their thoughts while watching the videoed event (Dempsey, 2010). In general, the technique allows participants to see themselves in action to aid them in recalling their thoughts about the events depicted in the video. The purpose of using stimulated recall interviews in this study was to retrospectively capture the participants' thoughts and decision-making processes (Borg, 2013).

Most of the SRIs took place one or two days after the lesson was taught, as I needed time to re-watch the video and determine which critical points I needed them to clarify.

Throughout the SRI, I played the video recording and paused it at predetermined points to ask them to recall the action and the rationale for it. I paused the video at various points based on my observation notes. This saved the teachers' time by removing the requirement for them to view the entire video recording. Moreover, to elicit additional explanations from the teachers,

I prompted them with questions such as “What were you thinking during this activity?”, “Can you explain why you did this?”, “Could you elaborate on this part?”, and “What was your objective when you did this?” Due to the time constraints, each SRI session lasted approximately 30 to 35 minutes and was conducted in Vietnamese.

3.8.3. In-depth semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews enable the interviewer to gain a clear picture of the issues to be examined while allowing for unexpected directions and the exploration of new areas (Richards, 2003). In this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the teachers as soon as all SRIs were completed. The interviews enabled me to gain a better understanding of the relationships between teachers’ beliefs about language teaching and TBLT and their actual classroom practices. Additionally, they enabled me to crosscheck information with what I had previously obtained from the SRIs.

In conducting the interviews, I followed three procedures, as advised by Cohen et al. (2002; 2017). To begin, I engaged in a quick casual conversation with the teachers to put them at ease. Second, I briefed the teachers on the interview’s purpose and procedures. Third, I requested their permission to record the interview on audiotape. I used a semi-structured format with open-ended questions to allow interviewees to express themselves freely. Each interview was approximately 30 minutes in duration and conducted in Vietnamese. I created a series of predetermined questions based on the research questions to ensure that the information gathered during these interviews was relevant to the research purpose. Appendix 2 contains a list of questions. However, I did not use all the predetermined questions or ask them in order during the interview, but rather tailored the questions to the interviewees’ responses. As Rubin and Rubin (2005) put it, “interviewing is intended to communicate that qualitative interviewing is dynamic and an iterative process, not a set of tools to be applied mechanically” (p. 15). During the interviews, I was cautious to seek clarification to avoid making assumptions based on my own bias. At the conclusion of the interviews, I summarised what I had taken away from the conversations and double-checked what the participants had said or meant, so that they could confirm that I had understood their comments.

3.8.4. Student focus group interview

Focus groups are socially oriented with the essential feature that the “interaction is the sharing and comparing that goes on in the group discussion” (Morgan, 2012, p. 164). A focus

group consists of a small group of individuals who share certain characteristics relevant to the focus of the study. This interview type facilitates an environment for optimal communication among all participants and provides researchers with “insight into not just what participants think but also why they think the way they do” (Flick, 2018, p. 374). In the current study, focus group interviews were conducted three times. The first time was in Phase 1 of data collection to allow the students to express their opinions on their regular lessons, the value of the textbook and textbook tasks. The second and third times were conducted at the conclusion of each participatory cycle in Phase 2 to elicit students’ perceptions of the task-based lessons implemented in their classes by the teachers.

Each time I conducted a focus group interview, I invited all students in the three classes and selected 10-12 willing participants from each class. In total, I conducted nine student focus group interviews across all three classes (three–four students per group) each time. I was aware that when asking for student volunteers to join FGs, it was likely that more motivated or outgoing students would respond. During the focus group interviews, I played the role of a facilitator who asked the questions and allowed the students to respond freely. The sets of interview questions are presented in Appendix 5 and 6. The focus group interview data consisted of the audio recording and my field notes. The focus group interviews were conducted as soon as all semi-structured interviews with the teachers were completed. Due to time constraints and a busy class schedule, each interview lasted approximately 25–30 minutes and was conducted in a self-study room in the centre library.

I served as a moderator during the FGIs, facilitating the students’ discussions. I attempted to create a friendly and relaxing environment in which students would feel at ease expressing their opinions. I did not attempt to coerce them into providing the responses, nor did I make any comments on their responses. Nonetheless, mindful of the possibility that some students would dominate the interview, I tried to encourage each student to take a turn to speak. As with the teacher interviews, I sought clarification from the students and double-checked the accuracy of what they said or meant.

3.8.5. Notes from PAR meetings

In addition to the above main data collection methods, I also met weekly or fortnightly with the three teachers to discuss the data collected and to make decisions about lesson planning, delivery, and adjustments to subsequent lessons throughout the project. I took a reflective journal during these meetings with the goal of documenting team interactions, reports on

students' participation in tasks, emerging issues, and meeting outcomes from decisions. We communicated primarily in Vietnamese during the meetings. All meeting sessions were audio-recorded. Because the teachers did not have a lot of time for meetings, they were scheduled during lunch. This type of working lunch contributed to the establishment of a relaxed work environment. We were quite familiar with working lunches like this during our years together at the same institution, and we found them to be quite effective. Each session lasted approximately 30–40 minutes. Table 8 summarises the meeting schedule.

Table 8

Schedule of meetings with the teachers

PAR meeting	Meeting content	Time
Meeting 1	Discussion of important issues, priorities, and solutions to address the issues	4 Nov 2018
Meeting 2	TPD session about task-based learning approach	6 Nov 2018
Meeting 3	Lesson planning session (for Module 8)	8 November 2018
Meeting 4	Reflection on Module 8	21 November 2018
Meeting 5	Designing lesson plan for the next module (Module 10)	30 November 2018
Meeting 6	Reflection on the implemented module (Module 10)	20 December 2018
Meeting 7	Reflection on the whole project	22 December 2018

The first meeting was organised with three clear purposes:

1. To present the themes that emerged from the context analysis.
2. To identify priorities and urgent issues.
3. To develop an action plan to address the issues identified.

In this meeting, I was the person who pointed out the tasks in the textbook and proposed the priority of focusing on teaching the textbook tasks. The teachers all agreed with my opinions.

The second meeting served as a TPD session to help teachers learn about tasks and TBLT. This meeting lasted two hours and was conducted in a classroom where projectors and a desktop computer were available. I was responsible for delivering this session and focused on a definition and principles of TBLT illustrated with some easy tasks for low-level students and with examples of adapting tasks from exercises. After that, the teachers practised distinguishing between tasks and exercises and adapting exercises into tasks.

In the third meeting, we designed a lesson plan for one module in the textbook (Module 8) based on the principles of TBLT. In the three subsequent meetings, we reflected on how the teachers implemented the lessons, and then designed lesson plans for the next module. To save time, each of us identified issues that we could find from the implemented lessons and prepared some ideas for the next module's lesson plan at home. We, then presented our ideas in the meeting to contribute to the shared lesson plans. Finally, in the last meeting, we reflected on the entire PAR project that we had been working on together for eight weeks.

3.8.6. Self-reflection journal

The self-reflection journal is essential in this study. According to Kemmis (2008), reflection is “the heart of PAR ... which is a tool for action and change because it helps enhance self-awareness of experience” (p. 50), and that all members of the action research group should keep a diary or journal in order to steer the process of learning. As a researcher, I kept my own journal in which I took notes about what happened in class, during the interviews, and in meetings with teachers. Journal data allowed me to reflect on the research process and my interpretations of the events (Cohen et al., 2002).

The participating teachers were invited to write a self-reflection journal in which they could record anything related to their experience or to highlight significant events. Their journal entries were made immediately following each lesson to ensure that the teachers' memories of the classroom events remained fresh. Self-reflection journals gave the teachers opportunities to construct narrative accounts of their professional reflection on practice (Mertler, 2009). The teacher journal addresses the following four points:

1. What happened in the classroom?
2. What changes did I make compared with the lesson plan? Why?
3. What did I notice about the students' learning?
4. What difficulties did I encounter during the lessons?

Additionally, the participating students were invited to write a brief reflective journal in the final five minutes of each lesson to reflect on their experiences. Due to their limited English proficiency, they were permitted to write their journals in their mother tongue (Vietnamese), which they then handed in to me. This data source was potentially important for enabling me and the teachers to identify the students' needs and problems. Student journals addressed the following four points:

1. Which learning activities they really liked in the lesson.
2. Which learning activities they disliked about the lesson.
3. How they felt about the lesson overall.
4. Some expectations or suggestions that they would like to tell the teachers.

3.9. Pilot study

Pilot studies aid in the formulation of research questions, the collection of background data, the refinement of a research approach, and the development of effective research instruments (Neuman et al., 2011). In the current study, I conducted a pilot study to identify potential problem areas and deficiencies in the research instruments and protocols, especially concerning data collection. The pilot study was conducted from 17–25 August 2018, one week prior to the start of the main data collection. I conducted semi-structured interviews with two non-participating teachers who also taught English to non-English major students at the institute to ensure that my interview questions were comprehensible and generated useful data. Additionally, I evaluated the interview procedure to determine if anything needed to be improved. I made no revisions following these interviews because all the non-participating teachers understood the interview questions and the interviews proceeded smoothly and on time.

Following that, I conducted three pilot observations (one in each participating class) to evaluate the recording quality and the experience of observing and taking field notes. Additionally, piloting familiarised teachers and students to the equipment and to my non-participant presence in the classroom (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The pilot observations also helped determine the best location for the camera to capture the teaching and learning procedures.

I also conducted pilot stimulated recall interviews with the three teachers. After being briefed on the interview process, they viewed a video session and took part in a SRI. The interview

was conducted in Vietnamese. These pilot SRIs identified some limitations. For instance, one teacher concentrated on describing her activities rather than explaining them. She also discussed something else, not directly related to the events. Another teacher simply watched the video and spoke only when she was asked. The teachers then reported that it was difficult to recall their thinking while simultaneously watching the video. Additionally, they stated that they were stumped for words or had difficulty recalling their thoughts while watching the video concurrently. To address these issues, I chose not to use the pure form of SRI. Rather, I selected some key excerpts from the video recordings to show to the teachers accompanied by questions that prompted them to recall their thinking processes during the incidents. This approach gave teachers additional time to reflect on the events as they watched the video.

3.10. Ethical issues

The current study followed human ethics procedures for gaining access to and obtaining informed consent from participants. After receiving approval from Victoria University of Wellington's Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics approval number 0000026066), I went back to Vietnam to collect data. I visited various classes and met with teachers and students face to face to provide detailed information and documentation about the project and to explain what the research involved so that they could decide whether to participate. After carefully explaining my research to them, I invited participants to sign consent forms if they agreed to participate in the study. They were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time during or after the data collection process without providing a reason.

Throughout the data collection process, I made every effort to minimise my intervention and interruption of their daily work. I made it clear to teachers and students that their identities would be protected, as any information gathered through observation and other sources of data would be seen only by me and my supervisors, and that the data would be used solely for research purposes. They were assured that any public reporting of data relating to individuals would ensure their anonymity and that they would be unable to be identified in any type of report due to the use of pseudonyms or numbers in place of their real names. To ensure validity and reliability, data extracts were given to two additional PhD students for inter-rater coding. The extracts were returned after inter-rater coding was completed.

To summarise, this study was conducted in accordance with Victoria University of Wellington's Human Research Ethics Committee's ethical guidelines, and each step of data

collection, analysis, and presentation was carefully implemented to avoid posing any risk to participants.

3.11. Data analysis

There is no widely accepted single qualitative data analysis approach (Neuman et al., 2011). Nonetheless, it is commonly agreed that four basic stages in analysing qualitative data are transcribing, coding, categorizing, and identifying emergent themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013). The ways in which each of these steps were carried out in the current study are outlined below.

3.11.1. Data transcription

Transcription of the audio data is a powerful act of representation that can affect how data are conceptualised (Oliver et al., 2005). I was the sole transcriber of data in this study because it allowed me to become deeply familiar with the data (King et al., 2018). I created a verbatim transcript of each recording for five main types of data: (1) Classroom observation, (2) Stimulated recall interviews, (3) Semi-structured interviews, (4) focus group, and (5) PAR meeting.

Following completion of the transcription, I reread the transcripts several times to become familiar with the content. The more I read and re-read the data, the clearer the information provided by the participants became to me (Creswell, 2013). Each time I read, I made notes on notable information in the raw material. These served as useful preparation for the subsequent coding stage.

3.11.2. Coding

This step is frequently referred to as categorizing and labelling text to derive themes from the data (Creswell, 2013). The review of the literature and the theoretical framework assisted me in the establishment of the codes. To assist me in distinguishing between participants and data types, as well as for confidentiality purposes, abbreviations and pseudonyms were used. I did not use all the data collected but rather chose those that were relevant to my research topic. Unclassifiable data that had no relevance on the subject discussed during the interview or meetings were removed (Theron, 2015). For instance, during the interview, rather than discussing the subject, the interviewees inquired about my daily life in New Zealand. This was a side note to the study's purpose and produced no pertinent data. The selected data were

then transcribed and translated into English. The details of coding each type of data for each phase of the PAR project are included below.

3.11.2.1. Analysis of textbook activities

To address Research question 1, the activities in four modules in the textbook (Modules 4, 5, 6, and 8) were selected for analysis. These modules were chosen randomly to make the analysis results more generalizable, to ensure that the chosen samples were representative of the other modules (Dammak, 2015). To analyse for communicativeness, all activities were coded using Littlewood's (2004) continuum of communicativeness (See Table 2). While this framework has limitations, which are discussed in Section 2.3.4.2, it provided useful criteria for coding the communicativeness of the textbook activities. For the sake of easy comparisons and to make the results of the analysis more salient, in Table 12 the activities in categories 1 (Non communicative) and 2 (Pre communicative) in the continuum are collapsed into a single category of low communicative value activities (LCV) while those in categories 3-5 (names) are collapsed into a single category of high communicative value (HCV).

To evaluate the task-likeness of the textbook activities, all were coded for the presence or absence of the four criterial features of tasks proposed by Ellis (2018a), which are presented in Table 1. Activities that fulfilled all four criteria were coded as tasks. Those that fulfilled three of the criteria were coded as task-like, and those that fulfilled one, two, or none of the criteria were coded as non-tasks. In the past, researchers have reported difficulties coding activities with earlier versions of these criteria (e.g., Butler et al., 2018; Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Erlam, 2016). However, the revised set of task features in Ellis (2018a) are elaborated more thoroughly, which makes them clearer and more workable for coding purposes. In my opinion, this framework is superior to others for four reasons. First, in presenting this revised list, Ellis makes a crucial distinction between "task-as-workplan" as an educational unit of planning (task-as-workplan) and "task" as the activity that learners engage in (task-in-process). The current study treats the textbook activities and the teachers' presentation of them in the classroom as manifestations of the task-as-workplan.

Second, the task criterion "focus on meaning" frequently present difficulties for coders because "meaning" can be semantic (that is, the specific lexical and grammatical meaning encoded by words and grammatical structures) or pragmatic (that is, the functional meaning that emerges when language is used to describe, request, or apologise) (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 136). However, with Ellis's (2018a) explicit elaboration of this criterion, "learners

are primarily concerned with comprehending or/and producing messages for a communicative purpose," it is clear that a task should prioritise pragmatic meaning. Thus, in the current study, I defined an activity as a task only when it is primarily concerned with pragmatic meaning. As a result, activities that require students to focus exclusively on semantic meaning, such as matching vocabulary to associated meanings or images, do not satisfy the "focus on meaning" requirement.

Third, the task criterion, "some kind of gap", frequently contributes to misunderstandings. For example, Erlam (2016) showed that the teachers in her study often misinterpreted the gap in language knowledge as a communicative gap. Nonetheless, given Ellis's (2018) explicit elaboration of this criterion, namely that "a gap will be closed when the task is completed" and that "the gap creates a need to convey information, reason, or express an opinion," it is clear that "some kind of gap" is a communicative gap. To meet this criterion, an activity must require learners to communicate the information they receive/possess, or to justify their ideas, or to express an opinion, or to deduce meaning in order to close gaps.

Fourth, Ellis (2018a) explained clearly what it means by students' own resources, that is

"the workplan does not include any presentation of the language needed to perform the task, although it may supply input that can be "borrowed" during the performance of the task. Learners need to draw on their existing linguistic resources (potentially both L1 and L2) and their non-linguistic resources (e.g., gesture; facial expressions) for comprehension or/and production".

In the current study, however, one adaptation for the purpose of coding was to treat the nature of each activity as distinct from the sequencing of activities. For this reason, the first sentence in criterion 3, which addresses the overall sequencing of activities rather than the intrinsic nature of each activity was not applied in the activity coding process. The sequencing of activities is central to TBLT, so this issue is discussed elsewhere in this thesis in relation to the way language-focused activities precede the main task in each module in this textbook.

3.11.2.2. Analysis of teachers' teaching practices (Phase 1)

The coding of how the teachers' practices aligned with or diverged from the textbook activities was entered into a separate table for each teacher as seen in Table 9, which is a small sample of the analysis of Lan's lessons. The design of the table allowed for an analysis of each textbook activity and what each teacher did with it. Coding the observational data involved the following steps:

Step 1. Construct initial descriptions of observed activities. The recording of each lesson was viewed several times to produce brief written descriptions of each activity (see column 3 in Table 9).

Step 2. Code for adherence to the textbook. The teachers' activities were coded as to whether they retained, adapted, added, or removed textbook activities (see column 5 in Table 9). These coding categories were developed by G. V. Nguyen (2013).

Step 3. Code for communicativeness and task-likeness of activities. The teachers' activities were coded using Ellis's (2018a) four task criteria (see Table 1) and Littlewood's (2004) continuum of communicativeness (see Table 2). This provided information on the extent to which the teachers' practices strengthened or weakened the communicativeness of the textbook. Columns 2 and 4 in Table 9 illustrate this coding step.

Step 4. Quantify the data. The coded data from steps 1–3 was converted into numerical data to allow for comparisons between the teachers and between the textbook and the teachers, as seen in Tables 15–17 in Chapter 4.

Table 9

Analysis of Lesson 1 from Module 6: Lan

Textbook activities		Teacher practices		
1. Description	2. Analysis	3. Description	4. Analysis	5. Action
Language focus 1				
1. Ss listen to eight statements about the picture and decide if the statements are true or false	Pre-com	---	---	Remove
2. Ss read the grammar summary about the rules for "there is"/ "there are"	Non-com	T explained rules for <i>there is/there are</i>	Non-com	Retain
---	---	Ss made examples with <i>there is/there are</i> . Then read them aloud for T to check.	Non-com	Add
---	---	Ss did extra <i>there is/ there are</i> gap-fill exercises.	Non-com	Add
3. Ss read the tape scripts of listening activity and practise the pronunciation	Non-com	---	---	Remove
4. Ss write five true sentences and four false sentences about the given picture using <i>there is/there are</i> .	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retain
	Pre-com		Non-com	

(b) Ss test a partner with the sentences		Ss read aloud their sentences for the T to check for grammatical accuracy		Adapt
5. Ss tick true statements and correct false statements about their school	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retain

3.11.2.3. Analysis of teachers' implementation of task-based lessons (Phase 2)

Phase 2 involved the three teachers implementing six task-based lessons over the two PAR cycles (three lesson each). The analysis of observation data included a description of each of the three case teachers' classroom practises. Classroom episodes were chosen to demonstrate various ways of implementing lessons by the teachers. Analysing the data required me to replay each videotaped lesson until I had a clear picture of each implementation. Because each teacher's practices were consistent across three lessons in each cycle, rather than describing exactly what each teacher did in each lesson, I identified and described the outstanding practices that each teacher engaged in across three lessons. This enabled me to minimise information overlap and emphasise each teacher's unique tendency and perception in each cycle. Throughout this process, I frequently compared the description to its field note summary to double-check and ensure the accuracy of the description.

3.11.2.4. Analysis of interviews

In both phases, the recorded interviews were transcribed, and the accuracy of the transcriptions was cross-checked against the original recording before being sent to the three teachers for member-checking. In the SRI data, key content words and phrases such as "weak", "passive", or "lazy", which the teachers used to describe their students, were first coded on each interview transcript. These codes were then collated into thematic categories that captured the rationales of each teacher. This process identified similarities and differences across the teachers' explanations for their implementation decisions. Table 10 illustrates how a part of Lan's SRI data was analysed.

Table 10*Analysis of SRI data from Lan*

Excerpts	Codes	Categories	Themes
Học sinh các em ấy yếu lắm, không biết gì nhiều từ vựng ngữ pháp đâu (The students are weak; they did not know much vocabulary and grammar)	Weak	Students' low English proficiency	Student characteristics
Học sinh lớp tôi toàn đợi tôi chỉ đến tận nơi mới làm, bị động lắm (The students in my class were quite passive; they often waited until I provided them with the necessary language then they did the activity)	Passive	Students' affective states	
Họ rất lười, thường ngủ gật trong lớp (They were quite lazy and often dozed off during the lessons)	Lazy		

For the semi-structured interviews, initial coding involved identifying repeated words/phrases relevant to the research questions. These codes were then collated to identify patterns and themes for each teacher and across the three teachers.

3.12. Validity and reliability of the study

Lewis (2010) states that a good qualitative research design generates data that is valid and reliable. In qualitative data, validity involves the principles of natural settings, context-boundedness and thick description, and socially situated data. These principles further include descriptive data, participants' viewpoints, the inductive way to analyse data, the way to present data, and the researcher's role (Cohen et al., 2017). Reliability is concerned with the "consistencies of data, scores or observations obtained using elicitation instruments, which can include a range of tools from standardised tests administered in educational settings to tasks completed by participants in a research study" (Chalhoub-Deville et al., 2006, p. 2). This means whether the findings would be consistent if another study, using the same or similar methods or instruments, was implemented (Spencer et al., 2004).

In this study, I employed four strategies to enhance research validity and reliability. First, I employed multiple methods to collect data that allowed for multiple perspectives on the issues. I was aware that observations relied more exclusively on my own perceptions, and thus were more vulnerable to bias from the subjective interpretation of the situation

(Creswell, 2013). To compensate for this limitation, I supplemented the observation data with data from other sources, such as the teacher journal, the student journal, and interviews, to solidify and confirm my analysis (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, during the reflection workshops, teachers had the opportunity to view each other's lesson videos, which aided in their professional development and increased the validity of this study. Second, as an insider, I was familiar with the academic context of the study and described it succinctly so that readers could determine how closely their circumstances resembled the research situation. Thirdly, because the data for this study were generated in Vietnamese and translated by me, several translation techniques such as back translation or consultation with other Vietnamese English teachers were used to avoid researcher bias. I cited both the Vietnamese and English versions of direct quotations. Fourth, when coding the data, I also invited a PhD student to code the data as an inter-coder. We independently coded 45 activities (30% of the data). Inter-coder reliability scores were calculated for coding the communicativeness and task-likeness of the activities using both percentage agreement and Cohen's kappa co-efficient (κ). The percentage agreement when coding with Littlewood's (2004) framework was 91% with κ being 0.8. The percentage agreement when coding with Ellis's (2018) framework was 93% with κ being 0.84. These results show satisfactory reliability. Consensus on all remaining items was achieved through discussion between the raters. In short, I perceive that these four strategies confirmed the quality of the case study data.

3.13. Summary of chapter

In this chapter, I have outlined the methodology used to conduct the research. I referred to constructivism as the research paradigm that underpins this study. I then discussed the research design, the research objectives and questions, the researcher's role, trustworthiness strategies, and ethical considerations. The following chapter will report on and discuss the findings regarding teachers' current teaching practices and perspectives of TBLT.

CHAPTER 4. PHASE 1 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

Phase 1 of this study investigated the relationship between the affordances for task-based teaching in the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* and the teachers' awareness of and uptake of these affordances. Research Questions 1–5 guided the investigation.

RQ 1. How communicative and task-like is the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary*?

RQ 2. In what ways does the implementation of the textbook by the three teachers converge or diverge from its communicative and task-like qualities?

RQ 3. What reasons do teachers give for their textbook implementation decisions?

RQ 4. What are teachers' stated beliefs about and knowledge of TBLT?

RQ5. What do students report about their experience of lessons from the textbook?

This chapter reports and discusses the findings to these research questions. The chapter comprises four main sections: (1) the analysis and evaluation of the textbook, (2) teachers' implementation of the textbook, (3) teachers' perspectives, and (4) students' perspectives.

4.2. Findings: (RQ1) Textbook analysis

I begin this section with a brief overview of the textbook and then analyse it from both TBLT and CLT perspectives. In response to the call for communicative language teaching and task-based approach from the Vietnamese Government, the textbook series *New Cutting Edge* was chosen by the Board of Directors of the researched site and has been in use there since 2015 to replace the old textbook series *New English File*. In the current study, *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* was chosen for use in ELICOS 1. When using this textbook, the teachers could adapt it and decide on what needed to be covered in class and what could be assigned for self-study or homework as long as they could complete modules on schedule.

The textbook contains 15 modules based on various topics such as eating and drinking, buying and selling, and street life. Each module contains 36–39 activities in six main sections: Vocabulary, Language Focus, Listening, Reading, Task, and Further Skills (Real Life). All modules end with a section called Study-Practise-Remember, which is designed to cover the main lexico-grammatical content in the module. The textbook writers describe the textbook as

giving “special emphasis on communication” and integrating “the elements of a task-based approach in the overall methodology” (Moor et al., 2005, p. 5). The results of my analysis of the textbook below provide further details of its content and of whether these claims are justified.

To address research question 1, I conducted an analysis of four modules (4, 5, 6, and 8). Table 11 compares three characteristics of these modules: the number of activities, the communicativeness of the activities, and their task-likeness. The number of activities in the modules ranged from 37 to 39. The proportion of activities in each of the remaining categories is nearly identical across the four modules, with no more than 3% difference.

Table 11

Features of four textbook modules

Module		Module 4		Module 5		Module 6		Module 8	
1. Number of activities		37 (100%)		37 (100%)		39 (100%)		39 (100%)	
2. Communicativeness									
Low communicative value	Non-com	11	62%	10	62%	9	61%	11	61%
	Pre-com	12		13		15		13	
High communicative value	Com	9		9		9		8	
	Struc-com	1	38%	1	38%	1	39%	0	39%
	Auth-com	4		4		5		7	
3. Task-likeness									
Non-task		12	31%	12	31%	11	29%	12	30%
Task-like		14	39%	14	39%	17	42%	16	40%
Task		11	30%	11	30%	11	29%	12	30%

Since the analysis of the four modules revealed that they were nearly identical in the way they were structured, the deeper analysis focused only on Module 6 on the assumption that this analysis will generalise to the other units. This is also the module for which classroom observation data is reported. Yet, the analysis of other modules can be seen in Appendices 7, 8, 9. Table 12 presents the analysis of the communicativeness of the 39 activities in Module 6. The analysis shows that 24 (61%) have low communicative value (LCV), and 15 (39%) have high communicative value (HCV).

Table 12*The communicativeness of activities in Module 6*

Low communicative value (LCV)		High communicative value (HCV)			Total
Non-com 9	Pre-com 15	Com 9	Struc-com 1	Auth-com 5	
24 (61%)		15 (39%)			39 (100%)

This analysis suggests that the textbook might be out of step with the claim it makes that it “gives special emphasis on communication” and “integrates the elements of task-based approach in the overall methodology” (Moor et al., 2005, p. 5). However, a further analysis of the extent to which the 39 activities displayed Ellis’s (2018a) four criterial features of tasks, as presented in Tables 13 and 14, gives greater credence to the writers’ claims. Table 13 presents the analysis of the 15 HCV activities. Nine of these activities met all four task criteria and the remaining six met three criteria except Criterion 4, a communicative outcome.

Table 13*The task-likeness of high communicative value activities in Module 6*

Activities	Four task criteria				Task-likeness	Communicativeness
	C1	C2	C3	C4		
1. Ss ask and answer questions about their lifestyle	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
2. Ss discuss the answers for the questionnaire	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
3. Ss ask and answer questions about their favourite foods	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
4. Ss ask and answer questions about their favourite restaurants	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
5. Ss discuss which food contains minerals, protein, calories	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
6. Ss write about their normal meals	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
7. Ss work in pairs to remember and list 10 things Katie buys	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
8. Ss ask and answer to find 10 differences between two pictures	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
9. Ss work in pairs to match the ideas with the corresponding paragraphs	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
10. Ss work in pairs to do role play	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Struc-com
11. Ss report to the class if their partners have a healthy lifestyle	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
12. Ss discuss which foods that Katie buys are healthy and unhealthy	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com

13. Ss talk about their breakfast and compare with people in a listening text	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-Com
14. Ss guess if the given statements are true or false then compare with their friends	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
15. Ss discuss to make a list of eight healthy and eight unhealthy foods	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com

Table 14 presents the analysis of the 24 LCV activities. Eleven of these activities did not fulfil any of the four task criteria and so can be considered to be non-tasks. However, the 13 activities coded as pre-communicative met all or some of the task criteria. Two met all the criteria and so can be considered tasks, and the remaining 11 met three of the criteria, and so can be considered to be task-like in some way.

Table 14

The task-likeness of low communicative value activities in Module 6

Activities	Four task criteria				Task-likeness	Communicativeness
	C1	C2	C3	C4		
1. Ss read grammar summary about the rules for <i>there is/there are</i>					Non-task	Non-com
2. Ss complete gap fill exercises with <i>some/any</i>					Non-task	Non-com
3. Ss read the tapescript of listening text and practise the pronunciation					Non-task	Non-com
4. Ss read grammar summary about the rules for <i>some/any</i>					Non-task	Non-com
5. Ss practise pronunciation about sentence stress					Non-task	Non-com
6. Ss read grammar summary about the rules for <i>How many/ How much</i>					Non-task	Non-com
7. Ss practise pronunciation about intonation					Non-task	Non-com
8. Ss do gap-fill exercise with <i>how much/how many</i>					Non-task	Non-com
9. Ss categorise words into countable/uncountable nouns					Non-task	Non-com
10. Ss match the foods with the pictures					Non-Task	Pre-com
11. Ss match the words with the things in the given picture					Non-Task	Pre-com
12. Ss tick true statements and correct false statements about their school	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
13. Ss remember the picture and test each other about the things in the picture	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
14. Ss decide if the sentences are true or false to the previous reading text	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
15. Ss decide if the meal in the picture is breakfast, lunch, or dinner	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
16. SS match the things in the box to the picture		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com

17. Ss listen to eight statements about the picture and decide if the statements are true or false	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
18. Ss write five true sentences and four false sentences about the given picture using <i>there is/there are</i>	✓	✓		✓	Task-like	Pre-com
19. Ss listen and take notes of what people have for breakfast	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
20. Ss listen to three conversations and answer the questions	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
21. Ss listen to conversations and complete the missing information	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
22. Ss check if their matching is correct with the information in the reading text and answer which information make them surprised	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
23. Ss listen to someone describing picture and number things in order	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
24. Ss put the scrambled conversation in the correct order	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com

In summary, the analyses in Tables 13 and 14 show that of the 39 activities in Module 6, 11 were tasks, 17 task-like activities, and 11 non-tasks. These figures suggest that Littlewood's (2004) communicativeness continuum undersells the task-likeness of many activities, and especially those that are input-based (Erlam & Ellis, 2018). While it is true that input-based activities may not require learners to produce communicative output (speaking or writing), they nevertheless often engage them in responding in task-like ways (e.g., matching or sequencing pictures, listening and labelling a diagram or map) to the message in meaning-focused reading or listening. Thus, although there were more LCV activities than HCV activities (61% compared with 39% in Module 6), most LCV activities had some features of tasks (11) or were in fact tasks (2). For example, Activity 23 in Table 14 requires students to listen to a person describing a picture and number the things mentioned in the correct order. In Littlewood's framework, this is categorised as pre-communicative language practice. However, it clearly contains all four task features: a focus on meaning, a gap, learners using their own resources, and a non-linguistic outcome. Overall, our analysis confirms comments made by Ellis (2018a) about *New Cutting Edge* that, despite the overall sequence of activities reflecting a task-supported (i.e., PPP) rather than a task-based approach, nevertheless, "it provides models which prepare learners to do tasks", and "teachers could do these without first doing the preparatory exercise-type activities" (p. 269). The question of the extent to which the teachers followed or diverged from the textbook is addressed in the following section.

4.3. Findings (RQ2): Teachers' implementation of the textbook

In response to RQ2, this section reports on the analysis of the three Module 6 lessons taught by each of the three teachers and the extent to which their practices aligned with or diverged from the textbook activities. The results are reported separately for each teacher.

4.3.1. Lan

4.3.1.1. Lesson 1

Lesson 1 consisted of three sections (vocabulary, language focus 1, and listening) and aimed to introduce language about various types of food and the structures of “there is/there are”.

Lan began the lesson with the Vocabulary section by translating the meaning of the food vocabulary into Vietnamese, followed by an explanation of the differences between countable and uncountable nouns. She then drew a large table on the whiteboard and asked the students to categorise different foods into countable nouns and uncountable nouns. The students worked in silence until Lan called one student at a time to go to the whiteboard and place one food in the appropriate column. After that, Lan distributed a worksheet about countable and uncountable nouns that she had downloaded from the internet to help the students better understand the differences between two types of nouns.

In the Language Focus 1, Lan presented the grammar points of “there is/there are” in Vietnamese and provided some examples to illustrate her explanation. Then she asked the students to write down two examples with “there is” and two examples with “there are” in their notebooks. After that, she asked some students to read their sentences aloud to check the grammatical accuracy before moving to the pronunciation activity. Then Lan distributed handouts of two gap-fill exercises to the students to give them more opportunities to practise using the structures. Lastly, she asked students to work individually to tick the statements that are true about their school and correct the false one, using the structures.

The class then moved on to the Listening section. Lan introduced the students to the recording's content and explained the meaning of some words and expressions that she assumed were unfamiliar to the students before they began the listening activity. The students wrote the words down in their notebooks and then practised pronouncing them by repeating after the teacher. Following that, the students listened to the recording and responded to the comprehension questions in the textbook. To conclude the lesson, the students were asked to

write about their daily meals. Table 15 presents a more detailed analysis of Lan's implementation decisions in Lesson 1.

Table 15

Analysis of Lesson 1 – Lan

Textbook activities	Communi cativeness	Teacher activities	Communi cativeness	Action
Vocabulary section				
Ss look at the picture and decide if the meal is breakfast, lunch, or dinner	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss match the words and the pictures	Pre-com	T showed the things in the pictures and explained the meaning of the words.	Non-com	Adapted
---	---	T explained the rules of countable and uncountable nouns with examples.	Non-com	Added
Ss categorise the given words into countable and uncountable nouns.	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
---	---	Ss did controlled practice exercises about countable and uncountable nouns.	Non-com	Added
Language Focus 1 section				
Ss listen to eight statements about the picture and decide if the statements are true or false for the picture.	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Ss read the grammar summary of “there is”/ “there are”	Non-com	T explained the rules of structures with “there is”/ “there are” with some examples.	Non-com	Retained
---	---	Ss did extra practice gap-fill exercises about “there is”/ “there are”.	Non-com	Added
Ss look at the tape scripts of the previous listening activity and practise the pronunciation	Non-com	---	---	Removed
Ss write five true sentences and four false sentences about the given picture	Pre-com	Ss wrote five true sentences and four false sentences about the pictures using the structures of “there is”/ “there are”. Then they read aloud	Non-com	Adapted

		their sentences for the T to check the grammatical accuracy.		
Ss remember the picture and test each other about the things in the picture	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Ss tick the statements that are true about their school and correct the statements that are false.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained

Listening section

---	---	T explained the meanings of the words and structures in the recording.	Non-com	Added
Ss listen and take notes of what people in the recording have for breakfast.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss discuss with their friends about their breakfast and compare with the breakfast of the people in the recording.	Auth-Com	---	---	Removed
Ss write about their normal meals.	Com	Same	Com	Retained

4.3.1.2. Lesson 2

Lesson 2 consisted of the Reading and Speaking section, and the Language Focus section, with the goal of introducing the learners to more reading input about the food topic, as well as the use of “some/any” and “how much/how many”. To begin the Reading section, Lan explained the meaning of all words in the box and showed the corresponding foods in the pictures. She then drew a two-column table on the whiteboard with the headings “healthy” and “unhealthy”, then asked random students, one at a time, to give her examples of each food type to put in the columns. Moving on to the main reading activity, Lan instructed the students to skim the headings and reading text for unfamiliar words so that she could explain the meaning in Vietnamese. The students read the text individually and matched the headings with the corresponding paragraphs. Lan asked some students, one at a time, to stand up and

read aloud a section of the reading text and translate it into Vietnamese in order to check the students' comprehension of the text.

In the Language Focus 2, Lan explained the meaning and use of “some/any” in Vietnamese, illustrating with numerous examples, and assigning extra exercises about this grammatical item. Next, she asked students to read the shopping list of a textbook character Katie in two minutes, then the whole class closed their books and told Lan the things in the shopping list that they could remember. They then looked at what Katie bought and decided if she had a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle.

The class then moved on to Language Focus 3, which focused on the grammatical structure, “How many/how much”. First, Lan wrote these two structures on the whiteboard, explained their use, and provided some examples for illustration. Next, Lan read aloud each question in the textbook questionnaire and assigned a random student to respond. Lan finished the lesson by asking the students to complete the questions with either “How much” or “How many”, then asked one student at a time to read aloud their questions for her to check for grammatical correction. Lan's implementation decisions in Lesson 2 are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Analysis of Lesson 2 – Lan

Textbook activities	Communi cativeness	Teacher activities	Communi cativeness	Alignment
Reading and Speaking section				
---	---	T explained the meaning of the words in Vietnamese	Non-com	Added
Ss match the foods and the pictures	Pre-com	Teacher showed the things in the pictures and explained the meaning of the words.	Non-com	Adapted
Ss discuss to find foods that contain minerals, protein, calories	Com	---	---	Removed
Ss work in pairs to make a list of eight healthy and eight unhealthy foods.	Auth-com	T asked individual students to tell her some healthy and some unhealthy foods.	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss work in pairs to discuss if the heading statements are true or false.	Auth-com	T explained the words and structures in the heading and in the reading text. Then the students did the activity individually	Pre-com	Adapted

Ss work in pairs to read the text and match the heading statements with the corresponding paragraphs.	Com	Ss worked individually to match the headings with the paragraphs.	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss check if their matching is correct and answer which information is surprising to them	Com	T asked students how many correct answers they had	Pre-com	Adapted
T asks Ss some personalised questions about the food they like and dislike	Com	Same	Com	Retained
---	---	Ss read sentences in the reading text and translate them into Vietnamese.	Non-com	Added

Language Focus 2 section

Ss read the summary about the rules for “some”/ “any”	Non-com	T explained the rules for “some”/ “any”.	Non-com	Retained
Ss do gap-fill exercises with “some”/ “any”	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
Ss decide if the sentences are true or false according to the previous reading text.	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Ss practice pronunciation about sentence stress.	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
Ss read the shopping list of a textbook character Katie and then work in pairs to remember 10 things in the shopping list.	Com	Ss read the shopping list of Katie, then T asked the whole class to tell her about the things in the shopping list.	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss look at the things Katie bought and figure out which things from the list she has and has not got. They also decide if Katie has a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle.	Auth-com	Same	Auth-com	Retained

Language Focus 3 section

Ss work in pairs, read the questionnaire and discuss the answers.	Com	T asked the whole class the questions in the questionnaire and waited for voluntary answers.	Pre- com	Adapted
Ss read the grammar summary about the structures of “how many”/ “How much”.	Non-com	T explained the rules for “how many”/ “how much” with some illustrated examples.	Non-com	Retained

Ss complete the questions with either “how many” or “how much”	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
Ss work in pairs to ask and answer the questions about their lifestyle.	Com	Ss finished the questions with “how much”/” how many”, then read out loud for T to check grammar mistakes	Non-com	Adapted
Ss report to the class if their partners have a healthy lifestyle.	Auth-Com	---	---	Removed

4.3.1.3. Lesson 3

Lesson 3 consisted of two sections: Task and Real Life. The main goal of Lesson 3 was for the students to use the language they had learned in Lessons 1 and 2 in various communicative activities (i.e., information-gap task and structured role-play). First, Lan explained the meaning of the words in the box and showed the corresponding things in the picture. Then she asked the students to listen to the recording and number the things in order. Next, Lan explained the structures and vocabulary in the Useful Language box and provided the students with vocabulary necessary for describing the pictures before giving them 10 minutes to work in pairs to complete the task. The students worked in pairs to describe the two pictures and identify the differences between them. When the time ran out, Lan asked some students to share what they had found with the rest of the class.

In the Real Life section, Lan had the students practise pronouncing the words from the textbook and asked them some personalised questions such as “Do you like burgers?” and “Which is your favourite pizza restaurant in Hanoi?” The students then listened to a recording of people ordering and selling food in restaurants and answered comprehension questions. Lan double-checked their answers by replaying the recording, pausing at each sentence, and asking the class to repeat and translate it into Vietnamese. The students then worked in pairs for about 10 minutes on role-playing. Lan’s implementation of Lesson 3 is shown in Table 17.

Table 17*Analysis of Lesson 3 – Lan*

Textbook activities	Communi cativeness	Teacher activities	Communi cativeness	Action
Task section				
Ss look at the given picture and match the words with the things in the picture	Pre-com	T explained the meanings of the words and showed the things in the picture	Non-com	Adapted
Ss listen to a person describing the picture and number the things in the picture as she describes.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
---	---	T explained the rules for the structures in the Useful Language box in the textbook. Then she asked the Ss to practise making sentences with the structures.	Non-com	Added
Ss work in pairs to exchange information and find out ten differences between two pictures.	Com	Same	Com	Retained
Real life section				
T asks Ss some personalised questions about their favourite food and restaurants.	Com	Same	Com	Retained
Ss put the conversation in the correct order	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss listen to three conversations and answer the questions.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss listen to the conversations again and complete the missing information.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss practice pronunciation about intonation.	Non-com	---	---	Removed
Ss work in pairs to do role-play, one as a customer ordering the foods, one as a seller taking the order and telling the price.	Struc-com	Same	Struc-com	Retained

4.3.1.4. Summary of the three lessons taught by Lan

Table 18 reports the analysis of Lan's teaching. Of the 24 LCV activities in the textbook, Lan retained 15 (row 1), added six more (row 2), and removed five (row 3). Of the 15 HCV activities, she retained six, removed five (row 3), and adapted four HCV activities by reducing their communicativeness (row 4a), and so made them into LCV (row 4b). Overall, most of the activities in Lan's three lessons were LCV (30 activities or 83%, compared to six HCV activities or 17%).

Table 18

Lan's teaching of Module 6

	LCV		HCV			Total
	Non-com	Pre-Com	Com	Struc-Com	Auth-Com	
<i>Textbook activities</i>	9	15	9	1	5	39
1. Retained	7	8	4	1	1	
2. Added	6	0	0	0	0	
3. Removed	2	3	1	0	1	
4a. Adapted	0	4	4	0	3	
4b. Adapted into this category	5	4	0	0	0	
5. Total = (1) + (2) + (4b)	18 (50%)	12 (33%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	36
	83%		17%			100%

4.3.2. Huong

4.3.2.1. Lesson 1

Huong began Lesson 1 by checking the students' memory about vocabulary and grammar from the previous lesson for about 20 minutes. Following that, she introduced the new lesson topic and asked her students three personalised questions from the textbook as a warm-up. She then quickly moved on to the second activity, finding things in the picture, in which Huong had the students scan the words in the given box and report any words that they did not know so that she could tell them what they meant. The following activity involved categorizing different nouns into uncountable nouns and countable nouns, so Huong instructed her students to turn to page 153 of their textbooks and read the language summary about these two types of nouns before beginning the activity.

Huong skipped the information transfer activity in the textbook that required students to listen and answer true/false questions, but carefully explained the use of “there is/there are” demonstrated by some examples. After that, she asked the students to complete 15 sentences using either “there is” or “there are”. Then the students were taught how to pronounce the sentences by listening to the teacher and repeating after her. Huong also skipped some meaningful communicative activities in the textbook and only implemented two activities, which involved students ticking off statements that were true for their school and writing true sentences about their hometown.

In the Listening section, before the students listened to the recording, Huong wrote five new words on the whiteboard and explained that those were the ones the students would hear from the recording. Following that, the class spent 20 minutes listening to the recording three times and taking notes on what the people had for their meals. Huong skipped the discussion activity after the listening part but played every single sentence in the listening recording again for the students to repeat and translate into Vietnamese. Finally, she spent the rest of classroom time for students to write a paragraph about their daily meals. Huong’s implementation decisions in Lesson 1 are summarised in Table 19.

Table 19

Analysis of Lesson 1 – Huong

Textbook activities	Communicativeness	Teacher activities	Communicativeness	Action
Vocabulary section				
---	---	T checked Ss’ memory of grammar and vocabulary taught in the previous lesson.	Non-com	Added
Ss look at the picture and decide if the meal is breakfast, lunch, or dinner	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss work in pairs to match the words and the pictures.	Pre-com	T showed the things in the pictures and explained the meaning of the words.	Non-com	Adapted
Ss categorise the given words into countable and uncountable nouns.	Non-com	Ss individually categorised the given words into countable and uncountable nouns.	Non-com	Retained
Language Focus 1 section				

Ss listen to eight statements about the picture and decide if the statements are true or false.	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Ss read the grammar summary of “there is”/“there are” at the end of the textbook.	Non-com	T explained the rules of structures with “there is”/ “there are” with some illustrated examples.	Non-com	Retained
---	---	Ss did extra practice gap-fill exercises about “there is”/ “there are” in the Study-Practise-Remember section.	Non-com	Added
Ss look at the tape scripts of the previous listening activity and practise the pronunciation.	Non-com	---	---	Removed
Ss write five true sentences and four false sentences about the given picture	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Ss remember the picture and test each other about the things in the picture	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Ss tick the statements that are true about their school and correct the statements that are false.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained

Listening section

---	---	T explained the meanings of the words and structures in Vietnamese.	Non-com	Added
Ss listen and take notes of what people in the recording have for breakfast.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
---	---	T asked Ss to translate sentences in the listening recording into Vietnamese	Non-com	Added
Ss discuss with their friends about their breakfast and compare with the breakfast of the people in the recording.	Auth-com	T asked Ss which food they have for breakfast	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss write about their normal meals.	Com	---	---	Retained

4.3.2.2. Lesson 2

Lesson 2 consisted of a Reading and Speaking section and Language Focus 2 and 3. In the Reading and Speaking section, Huong first gave her students about 10 minutes to do the pre-reading activities individually. She explained the meaning of some words in Vietnamese and told the students that these words would appear in the later reading text. Huong skipped the next activity, which required the students to work in pairs to list eight unhealthy and eight healthy foods. Instead, she said six types of food and asked the whole class if they were healthy or unhealthy. In the main reading activity, the textbook required the students to work in pairs to discuss some ideas about healthy eating habits, then to match such ideas with different paragraphs of the reading passage. However, Huong modified the activity by reading each of the ideas aloud and translating them into Vietnamese before giving the students about 10 minutes to match the ideas with the corresponding paragraphs individually.

In the Language Focus 2 section, Huong focused the students on the language summary on page 153 in the textbook in which the rule of using “some” and “any” was introduced, then she wrote the structures on the whiteboard and explained them in Vietnamese. She subsequently asked some students to make sentences with “some/any” and read their sentences aloud. To practise the linguistic items more, the teacher asked her students to do a gap-fill activity in the textbook. Then she retained the pair work textbook activity in which the students were required to remember the shopping lists of the textbook character.

Language Focus 3 section was about the questions with “how much”/ “how many”. First, Huong wrote the structures on the whiteboard, explained it in Vietnamese, then called on some students to give her some examples of the structures. After that, the students practised the structures by answering the questionnaire in the textbook as a whole-class activity and did the gap-fill exercise individually. She removed an authentic communication activity in the textbook, which required students to ask and answer questions about their lifestyles and decide who had a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle. The summary of Huong’s activities in Lesson 2 is presented in Table 20.

Table 20*Analysis of Lesson 2 – Huong*

Textbook activities	Communi cativeness	Teacher activities	Communi cativeness	Action
Reading and Speaking section				
Students work in pairs to match the words and the pictures.	Pre-com	T translated the meaning of the words in Vietnamese then let Ss match the words to the pictures individually	Non-com	Adapted
Ss discuss which food contains minerals, protein, calories.	Com	---	---	Removed
Ss work in pairs to discuss a list of eight healthy and eight unhealthy foods.	Auth-com	T told the class six foods and asked the whole class if they were healthy or unhealthy.	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss work in pairs to discuss if the heading statements are true or false.	Auth-com	T explained the words and structures in the heading and in the reading text. She also translated the headings into Vietnamese	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss in pairs read the text and match the heading statements with the corresponding paragraphs.	Com	Ss read the text and match the heading statements with the corresponding paragraphs individually	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss check if their matching is correct and answer which information is surprising to them	Com	---	---	Removed
T asks Ss some personalised questions about the food they like and dislike	Com	Same	Com	Retained
Language Focus 2 section				
Ss read the summary about the rules for <i>some/any</i> .	Non-com	T explained the rules for <i>some/any</i>	Non-com	Retained
Ss do gap-fill exercise with <i>some/any</i> .	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
Ss decide if the sentences are true or false according to the previous reading text.	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Ss practise pronunciation about sentence stress.	Non-com	---	---	Removed

Ss read the shopping list of a textbook character Katie and then work in pairs to remember things in the shopping list.	Com	Same	Com	Retained
Ss look at the things Katie bought and figure out which things from the list she has and has not got. They also decide if Katie has a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle.	Auth-com	Same	Auth-com	Retained

Language Focus 3 section

Ss work in pairs, read the questionnaire and discuss the answers.	Com	T asked the whole class the questions in the questionnaire and waited for voluntary answers.	Pre- com	Adapted
Ss read the grammar summary about the structures of “how many”/“how much”.	Non-com	T explained the rules for “how many”/ “how much” with some illustrated examples.	Non-com	Retained
Ss complete the questions with either “how many” or “how much”.	Non-com	Ss completed the questions with either “how many” or “how much”, then T asked one student at a time to read aloud the question to check for grammatical correction.	Non-com	Retained
Ss work in pairs to ask and answer the questions	Com	T asked one S at a time to finish a question with “how much”/” how many” then answer such question	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss report to the class if their partners have a healthy lifestyle.	Auth-com	---	---	Removed

4.3.2.3. Lesson 3

Lesson 3 consisted of the Task section and Real-Life section. First, Huong adapted the input-based listening task by playing the recording and paused at the targeted words to explain the meaning instead of letting the students listen and figure out the words in the picture themselves. Huong then focused the students on the useful language box and explained the structures that she asked them to use while carrying out the task. She spent about 15 minutes talking about the rule of the question “Have/has + Subject + got something?” and compared it with the question “Do/does + Subject + have something?” The students then did one extra exercise to become familiar with the two types of questions. Turning to the main information gap task, Huong asked the students to work in pairs to exchange information and find ten differences between the two pictures.

In the Real-Life section, Huong asked students several personalised questions about the restaurants they liked and the types of food they often ordered when they got there. Subsequently, she taught the class how to pronounce different foods that would be mentioned in the subsequent listening activity. During the pronunciation practice, the teacher also translated meaning of the words into Vietnamese and spent about 10 minutes explaining how to talk about prices in English. After that, she asked the students to put a scrambled conversation in correct order. She then played the recording three times so that the students listened to and answered the three comprehension questions and filled in the sentence gaps with the missing words from the recording. Subsequently, Huong asked the students to do a structured role-play activity, in which one student acted as a customer, one as a waiter/waitress, using the given menu to order food and asking about the cost. However, before the students did so, she wrote some questions and the answer models on the whiteboard so that the students could replace the foods and prices in the menu and complete their conversation. The summary of Huong's implementation of Lesson 3 is presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Analysis of Lesson 3 – Huong

Textbook activities	Communi cativeness	Teacher activities	Communi cativeness	Action
Task section				
Ss look at the given picture and match the words with the things in the picture.	Pre-com	T explained the meaning of the words in Vietnamese and showed the things in the picture	Non-com	Adapted
Ss listen to a person describing the picture and number the things in the picture she describes.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
---	---	T explained the rules for the structures in the Useful Language box in the textbook.	Non-com	Added
---	---	Ss did practice exercise about “has got/have got”.	Non-com	Added
Ss work in pairs to exchange information and find out ten differences between two pictures.	Com	Same	Com	Retained
Real life section				

T asks Ss some personalised questions about their favourite foods and restaurants.	Com	Same	Com	Retained
Ss put the conversation in order.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss listen to three conversations and answer the questions.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss listen to the conversations again and complete the missing information.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss practise pronunciation about intonation.	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
Ss work in pairs to do role play, one as a customer ordering the foods, one as a seller taking the order and telling the price.	Struc-com	T wrote the conversation samples on the whiteboard, Ss did role-play by replacing the names of foods and prices in the conversation sample.	Non-com	Adapted

4.3.2.4. Summary of the three lessons taught by Huong

Table 22 shows a similar pattern in Huong's teaching. Of the 24 LCV activities in the textbook, Huong retained 15 (row 1) and added four more (row 2). Of the 15 HCV activities, she retained six, removed two (row 3) and adapted seven HCV activities by reducing their communicativeness (row 4a), and so made them into LCV (row 4b). Overall, most of the activities in Huong's three lessons were LCV (30 activities or 84%, compared to six HCV activities or 16%).

Table 22

Huong's teaching of Module 6

	LCV		HCV			Total
	Non-com	Pre-Com	Com	Struc-Com	Auth-Com	
<i>Textbook activities</i>	9	15	9	1	5	39
1. Retained	7	8	5	0	1	
2. Added	6	0	0	0	0	
3. Removed	2	4	1	0	1	
4a. Adapted	0	3	3	1	3	
4b. Adapted into this category	4	6	0	0	0	
5. Total = (1) + (2) + (4b)	17	14	5	0	1	37
	(53%)	(31%)	(14%)	(0%)	(2%)	
	84%		16%			100%

4.3.3. Minh

4.3.3.1. Lesson 1

Minh started the lesson by introducing the topic of the module about Eating and Drinking and asked the students some personalised questions about their favourite foods and drinks. After that, Minh asked the students to individually match the given words with the things in the picture. The next activity was to classify these words into countable nouns and uncountable nouns, so Minh explained the differences between these types of nouns and illustrated her explanation with some examples. After that, she asked the students to work individually, practising what the teacher had just taught by putting the words into two groups of countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

When it came to Language Focus section about the use of “there is/there are”, Minh explained the rule of these structures in Vietnamese and simultaneously wrote them all on the white board. After that, she added a game named “In my house” as the drilling activity so that the learners could have more chances to practise the structures in a fun, motivating way. She divided the class into two teams, then one student in a team had to stand up and said one sentence with “there is” or “there are” (e.g., In my house, there is a cat). The person next to him/her had to listen and remember it, then stood up and repeated the sentence, then added his or her own sentence. For example: “In my house, there is a cat, and there are two apples”, etc. The game took quite a lot of time, so Minh skipped some meaningful interactive activities in the textbook.

In the Listening section, first, Minh introduced the main content of the recording, then wrote on the whiteboard some words and expressions from the recording and explained their meanings and pronunciations. The students took notes and repeated the words after the teacher before listening to the recording to answer the questions. The students had three chances to listen and answer comprehension questions related to the recording. With the discussion questions following up the listening activity, the students should have worked in pairs and shared their ideas with each other. However, Minh asked the whole class the questions, waiting for someone to voluntarily respond. Finally, she left the rest of the time for the students to write about their meals. When the students finished their work, the class monitor collected all the class’s papers and gave them to Minh. The summary of Minh’s implementation decisions in Lesson 1 is presented in Table 23.

Table 23*Analysis of Lesson 2 – Minh*

Textbook activities	Communi cativeness	Teacher activities	Communi cativeness	Action
Vocabulary section				
Ss look at the picture and decide if the meal is breakfast, lunch, or dinner	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss match the words and the pictures.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
---	---	T explained the rules of countable nouns and uncountable nouns.	Non-com	Added
Ss categorise the given words into countable nouns and uncountable nouns.	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
Language Focus 1 section				
---	---	T pre-taught the meaning of the words and structures in the recording.	Non-com	Added
Ss listen to eight statements about the picture and decide if the statements are true or false.	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Ss read the grammar summary of “there is”/“there are” at the end of the textbook.	Non-com	T explained the rules of structures with “there is”/ “there are” with some illustrated examples.	Non-com	Retained
---	---	Ss played a memory game called <i>In my house</i> to drill practice the structures of “there is”/ “there are”.	Pre-com	Added
Ss look at the tape scripts of the previous listening activity and practise the pronunciation.	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
Ss write five true sentences and four false sentences about the given picture	Pre-com	Ss wrote five true sentences and four false sentences about the pictures using the structures of “there is”/ “there are”. Then they read aloud their sentences for the T to check the grammatical correction.	Non-com	Adapted
Ss remember the picture and test each other about the picture	Pre-com			Removed

Ss tick the statements that are true about their school and correct the statements that are false.	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
Listening section				
---	---	T explained the meanings of the words and structures in Vietnamese.	Non-com	Added
Ss listen and take notes of what people in the recording have for breakfast.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss discuss with their friends about their breakfast and compare with the breakfast of the people in the recording.	Auth-com	T asked Ss some personalised questions about what they had for breakfast.	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss write about their normal meals.	Com	Same	Com	Retained

4.3.3.2. Lesson 2

The lesson started with the Reading and Speaking section. The first pre-reading activity was to match the words given with the things in the picture. Minh implemented this activity by explaining the meaning of the words and found the things in the pictures with the students. In the second pre-reading activity, the teacher asked the students to work in pairs to make a list of eight unhealthy foods and eight healthy foods, and then share with the class. Turning to the reading activity, Minh skipped the pair work discussion activity in the textbook, which required the learners to discuss if the heading statements were true or false. She just let the students read and try to understand the meaning of the headings, then she asked some students to read the headings aloud and translate them into Vietnamese. Subsequently, the students matched the heading with the corresponding paragraphs individually and answered the comprehension questions in silence. Finally, she asked them if there were any words or phrases in the reading passage that were new to them and explained those in Vietnamese before turning to the next section in the textbook. Minh skipped the last two question-answer referential activities in this section.

In the Language Focus 2, Minh first carefully introduced the uses of “some” and “any” in Vietnamese, wrote the rules on the whiteboard, and modelled them many times for demonstration. She then asked the students to do practising exercise 1 in the textbook. After

that, she turned to activity 2 in which the students worked in pairs, remembering a shopping list and writing it down. This textbook activity was adapted in a way that the teacher simply asked the whole class what was included on the list, and different students gave the answers at the same time. Finally, the class implemented activity 3, which required the learners to do pair work to ask and answer which things the textbook character Katie has got on the list, and which things she has not got. However, Minh adapted this activity by explaining the meaning of “has got”, how to use that structure, and then asking the students the questions and called on some students to answers, using the structure “has got”.

In the Language Focus 3, Minh focused the students on the use of the questions with “how much” and “how many”. She wrote the structures on the whiteboard and thoroughly explained the rules in Vietnamese. After that, she asked the students to write down in their notebooks three examples with “how much” and three with “how many”. She organised a game for students to practise the use of these structures. The class was divided into two big teams, queuing in two lines towards the whiteboard. When the teacher said a thing, one student of each team made a question with that thing using “how much”/“how many”. For example, when Minh said “cats”, the students wrote “how many cats are there in your house?” etc. Subsequently, Minh gave the students five minutes to do a gap-fill exercise in the textbook. Regarding the follow-up activity that required the students to work in pairs to ask and answer the questions that they had just completed, Huong skipped this activity because she ran out of time. Table 24 summarises Minh’s Lesson 2 as below.

Table 24

Analysis of Lesson 2 – Minh

Textbook activities	Communicativeness	Teacher activities	Communicativeness	Action
Reading and Speaking section				
---	---	T explained the meaning of the words in Vietnamese.	Non-com	Added
Students match the words and the pictures.	Pre-com	Teacher showed the things in the pictures and explained the meaning of the words.	Non-com	Adapted
Ss discuss which food contains minerals, protein, calories.	Com	Same	Com	Retained

Ss work in pairs to make a list of eight healthy and eight unhealthy foods.	Auth-com	Same	Auth-com	Retained
Ss work in pairs to discuss if the heading statements are true or false.	Auth-com	T pre-taught the words and structures in the heading and in the reading text.	Non-com	Adapted
Ss in pairs read the text and match the heading statements with the corresponding paragraphs.	Com	Same	Com	Retained
Ss check if their matching is correct and answer which information is surprising to them	Com	---	---	Removed
T asks Ss which food they like and which food they dislike	Com	Same	Com	Retained

Language Focus 2 section

Ss read the summary about the rules for “some”/ “any”.	Non-com	T explained the rules for “some”/ “any” with some illustrated examples.	Non-com	Retained
Ss do gap-fill exercises with “some”/ “any”, then they decide if the sentences are true or false according to the previous reading text.	Non-com	Same	Non-com	Retained
Ss decide if the sentences are true or false according to the previous reading text	Pre-com			Removed
Ss practise pronunciation about sentence stress.	Non-com	---	---	Removed
Ss read the shopping list of a textbook character Katie and then work in pairs to remember things in the shopping list.	Com	Ss read the shopping list of Katie, then T asked the whole class to close the book and tell her about the things in the shopping list.	Pre-com	Adapted
---	---	T explained the rules of “has got”/ “have got” and asked students to make some sentences with the structures.	Non-com	Added
Ss look at the things Katie bought and figure out which things from the list she has and hasn’t got. They also decide if Katie has a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle.	Auth-com	Same	Auth-com	Retained

Language Focus 3 section

Ss work in pairs, read the questionnaire and discuss the answers.	Com	T asked the whole class the questions in the questionnaire and waited for voluntary answers.	Pre-com	Adapted
Ss read the grammar summary about the structures of “how many”/ “How much”.	Non-com	T explained the rules for “how many”/ “how much” with some illustrated examples.	Non-com	Retained
---	---	Ss played a game to drill the structures of “how much”/ “how many”.	Pre-com	Added
Ss complete the questions with either “how many” or “how much”	Non-com	---	---	Removed
Ss work in pairs to ask and answer the questions using the questions from previous activity.	Com	---	---	Removed
Ss report to the class if their partners have a healthy lifestyle.	Auth-com	---	---	Removed

4.3.3.3. Lesson 3

Lesson 3 started with a Task section. For the task preparation, Minh let the students look at the picture and asked them to call out different things they saw in the picture in English words. She wrote all the English words and their corresponding Vietnamese meanings on the whiteboard. The subsequent meaningful listening activity was removed.

Then, Minh pre-taught some grammatical points in the Useful Language box in the book that were useful for the students to carry out the task. When she was sure that the students were provided with enough vocabulary and structures necessary for the task, Minh asked the students to work in pairs to do the information gap task of finding ten differences between two pictures in ten minutes.

The class then turned to the Real Life section. Minh skipped the first activity in this section on asking and answering the personalised questions, but instead focused the students on practising the pronunciation. After that, the students did the listening activities in which they listened to three conversations then answered the follow-up questions and filled in the blanks to complete ten sentences. The teacher wrote on the whiteboard and explained the meaning of some phrases or words that she thought were new to the students; meanwhile the students took notes of those words in their notebooks. The students had three chances to listen to the

recording and answer the questions. When Minh checked the students' answers, she paused at every sentence in the recording, and translated them into Vietnamese.

Finally, Minh focused the students on page 138 to use the menu and do a role-play activity. She gave them ten minutes to write down their conversation scripts and another five minutes to practise talking based on such a written script. Minh asked the students to go to the board and perform their conversation in front of the class. When giving feedback, she corrected their grammatical and pronunciation mistakes. Table 25 summarises Minh's implementation decisions in Lesson 3.

Table 25

Analysis of Lesson 3 – Minh

Textbook activities	Communi cativeness	Teacher activities	Communi cativeness	Action
Task section				
Ss look at the given picture and match the words with the things in the picture.	Pre-com	T explained the meaning of the words and showed the things in the picture	Non-com	Adapted
Ss listen to a person describing the picture and number the things in the picture she describes.	Pre-com	---	---	Removed
---	---	T explained the rules for the structures in the Useful Language box in the textbook. Then she asked the Ss to practise making sentences with the structures.	Non-com	Added
---	---	Ss worked in groups to play a game to practice the structures "has got"/ "have got"	Pre-com	Added
Ss work in pairs to exchange information and find out ten differences between two pictures.	Com	Same	Com	Retained
Real Life section				
T asks Ss some personalised questions about their favourite foods and restaurants.	Com	---	---	Removed
Ss put the conversation in order.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained

Ss listen to three conversations and answer the questions.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
Ss listen to the conversations again and complete the missing information.	Pre-com	Same	Pre-com	Retained
---	---	T played every sentence in the recording and let the Ss to repeat and translate it into Vietnamese	Non-com	Added
Ss practise pronunciation about intonation.	Non-com	---	---	Removed
Ss work in pairs to do role-play, one as a customer ordering the foods, one as a seller taking the order and telling the price.	Struc-com	Same	Struc-com	Retained

4.3.3.4. Summary of the three lessons taught by Minh

Table 26 shows a similar pattern in Minh's lessons compared with Lan and Huong. Of the 24 LCV activities in the textbook, Minh retained 13 (row 1), added nine more (row 2), and removed seven (row 3). Of the 15 HCV activities, she retained eight, removed three (row 3) and adapted four HCV activities by reducing their communicativeness (row 4a), so made them into LCV (row 4b). Overall, most of the activities in Minh's three lessons were LCV (30 activities or 79%, compared to eight HCV activities or 21%).

Table 26

Minh's teaching of Module 6

	LCV		HCV			Total
	Non-com	Pre-Com	Com	Struc-Com	Auth-Com	
<i>Textbook activities</i>	9	15	9	1	5	39
1. Retained	6	6	5	1	2	
2. Added	6	3	0	0	0	
3. Removed	3	5	2	0	1	
4a. Adapted	0	4	2	0	2	
4b. Adapted into this category	5	3	0	0	0	38
5. Total = (1) + (2) + (4b)	17 (45%)	13 (34%)	5 (14%)	1 (2%)	2 (5%)	
	79%		21%			100%

4.3.4. Summary of the three teachers' practices

In summary, the consistent practice for all three teachers was to dramatically reduce the communicativeness and task-likeness of the textbook activities. They did this in three ways. First, they retained almost all the existing non-communicative activities and added many more. This reveals a strong preference for explicit, decontextualised, teacher-centred grammar teaching. This preference reflected a “get it right from the beginning” (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006, p. 154) approach in which learners are seen to accumulate and master one grammatical form after another rather than “learning by doing” (Long, 2016, p. 7), which is a fundamental feature of TBLT.

Second, the teachers typically reduced the communicativeness of the activities by replacing purposeful, meaningful interaction between students, as stipulated in the textbook, with teacher-fronted whole-class work or individual work. Consequently, there was minimal evidence of the students' exchanging information or negotiating meaning with each other or even with the teacher.

Third, when communicative activities were present in the lessons, they were always preceded by explanations from the teachers of linguistic patterns and drill-type practice activities. In most cases, these activities were added by the teachers. In addition, because these activities took a lot of lesson time, there was usually insufficient time to implement the textbook tasks.

These three features of the lessons are in line with findings from other studies in the Asian context, such as Lai (2015), Nguyen et al. (2015), and Tran (2015). In all these studies, the teachers also consistently selected activities with low communicative value and avoided tasks that were provided in the textbook. To understand the implementation decisions in the current study, the next section reports on findings from the SRIs.

4.4. Findings (RQ3): Reasons behind the teachers' practices

This section reports on findings from the nine stimulated recall interviews (SRI) and addresses RQ3, which concerns the reasons the teachers gave for their implementation decisions. The analysis revealed three main reasons for the teachers' implementation decisions. First, all three teachers frequently cited their students' low English proficiency and

their affective states when justifying their teaching practices, as seen in the following quotes from Huong, Lan, and Minh.

I spent much time on teaching and practising grammatical structures with the students because their knowledge of English is limited. (Huong, SRI1)

Now they [the students] are still at the low level so they need to focus on practising the grammar and structures until they get used to them. When they move to a higher level, they can spend more time on using such structures in communication. I think if I ask them to do communicative activities now, it will be very hard for them. (Lan, SRI1)

I think without grammar and vocabulary, the students can hardly do the activities because their knowledge of English is very limited. In this listening activity, I elicit the linguistic items that I think are new to them so that the students can realise them when they listen to the texts. If they listen and do not understand anything, they will feel bored soon. Therefore, I just want to make it easier for them. (Minh, SRI1)

The teachers also reported that the students' attitudes and emotions influenced how they implemented the textbook. They used various adjectives such as "dependent", "inactive", "lazy", "not enthusiastic", "reluctant", and "shy" to describe the students' affective states. For example, when asked why her students were often assigned individual work instead of pair work as suggested in the textbook, Lan responded:

I saw that the students were rather reluctant and not enthusiastic when working in pairs or in groups. I remember that I asked them to ask and answer what food they liked and disliked, but most of the pairs just asked one or two questions and then started to talk in Vietnamese, use mobile phones, or even say nothing. Therefore, I minimised the pair work time, let students do the activities on their own. (Lan, SRI1)

Similarly, Huong said:

In this activity, I was asking the students to tell me different healthy foods and unhealthy foods. Here, in the book (showed the textbook activity), the students should work in pairs to make a list of eight healthy and eight unhealthy foods. However, I thought it was not necessary to do so. I wanted them to work individually so that they had to think of the problems themselves and contributed their answers to make a common list with the whole class. If they worked in pairs, they might be dependent, they wait until their partner had the answers while they did nothing or rarely did anything. (Huong, SRI1)

When asked why she spent much time explaining the meaning of the words and translated the reading text into Vietnamese, Minh commented:

It is likely that some of the students did not understand the listening or reading texts, or they did not know how to express their ideas, but they were too shy to ask or raise questions. Therefore, I explained everything clearly for them, I translated into Vietnamese for them to make sure that they understood the lessons. (Minh, SRI1)

In short, the three teachers perceived that their students were not motivated enough to engage with communicative tasks and that communicative tasks were not suitable for such low-proficiency students. This perception is a common misunderstanding about TBLT (Ellis, 2015a, 2018a). Arguing against this misconception, Ellis (2018a) claims that task-based

learning is in fact especially beneficial for lower-proficiency students since it is well suited to helping them become fluent in using lexicalised chunks of language. Evidence from studies by Shintani (2016), Erlam and Ellis (2018), and Newton and Bui (2017) supports this claim and highlights the affordances of implementing task-based learning for low- proficiency learners.

The second reason all three teachers gave for their teaching practice was examination pressure. They all believed that explicit grammar explanation and controlled practice rather than communicative activities were priorities for helping their weak students succeed in the exams.

The reason why I spent much time explaining things clearly for the students and let them practise the grammar items is that I want them to get familiar with the structures. They need to pass the exam next year. That is their ultimate goal now. I believe once they know and remember the structures or words, they can understand the texts or speak and write the sentences which are grammatically correct. (Lan, SRI1)

I don't deny the advantages of these communicative activities for the students, but I think these activities are just good for improving students' speaking skill. If the students just focus on carrying out these activities, then I think it is not really useful for them to do well in the exam. That is the reason why I skipped some textbook activities and handed out exercises for the students to practise instead. (Huong, SSI1)

Previous research in Asian contexts has also found that teachers often prioritise teaching grammar structures to prepare students for examinations, which have traditionally emphasised testing of linguistic knowledge (Adams & Newton, 2009; Deng & Carless, 2009; Zhang, 2015). As G. V. Nguyen (2013) notes, this belief reflects a Confucian ideology about education that “knowledge should be accurately provided by the teachers and memorised by the learners so that no errors may occur when this knowledge has to be returned, such as in examinations” (p. 273). Interestingly, however, in the context of the current study, the mid-term and final term tests resemble the IELTS exam and so emphasise communicative reading, writing, speaking, and listening. As Carless (2007) argues, “it may be teacher beliefs and school practicalities rather than examinations that are a more significant barrier to task-based approaches” (p. 605).

The third impediment to implementing TBLT that all teachers identified was limited instructional hours. As Minh explained:

If I had had more time, I would have organised a group discussion in this part. ... But I needed to teach the structures, the vocabulary, then I needed to translate the text into Vietnamese to make sure that all the students understood the content of the text ... So I did not have enough time for group discussion ... I think that since the time was limited, we teachers could not always do properly what we wanted to do. (Minh, SRI1)

Lan also mentioned time as the factor that affected her decision making.

When I asked my students to do the activities in the book such as discussing some ideas, they did not talk much ... They had to look up the meaning of the words and this took them a lot of time. However, we did not have much time, you know. Therefore, I decided to pre-teach them ranges of vocabulary so that they could use it in doing the tasks. (Lan, SRI1)

The problem of limited classroom time is predicated on the assumption as stated by Minh that target structures must be thoroughly taught before tasks are introduced. However, as Ellis (2018a) argues, if the aim is to develop interaction competence and communicative L2 use, then this cannot be achieved by reliance on grammatical structure teaching. This argument applies to the current programme where the goals are for students to pass the communicatively oriented IELTS exams and to prepare for their major subjects through English. To gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' decision-making, the next section reports on findings from follow-up SSIs.

4.5. Findings (RQ4): Teacher perspectives on TBLT

This section draws on semi-structured interview (SSI) data to address RQ4, which concerns the teachers' knowledge and beliefs about TBLT. First, the teachers were shown the various tasks in the textbook and asked what they understood about the term "task", which was used in each module, and about the term "TBLT". All three teachers said that they were not aware of the presence of tasks in the textbook as distinct from other activities, and so saw no differences between this textbook and other commercial textbooks.

I did not reckon that the book integrates task-based element[s] as they [the book writers] said here. I heard this term before, task-based language teaching, but don't know much about it. (Huong, SSI, P1)

If you did not tell me, then I would not know that. I simply think that this book is like the other commercial textbook like New Headway, or New English Files. This is because I did not care much about the names of different teaching approaches. I just teach my students in a way I personally think is good for them. (Lan, SSI, P1).

No, I did not notice the presence of tasks in the book. I thought it is just a name, like task, project, activity etc. Different textbook writers use different ways to name the activities in their textbooks. (Minh, SSI, P1)

The teachers also frankly explained that their lack understanding of tasks or the task-based learning was due to the lack of teacher education about this approach. For example, Huong said:

I have attended different workshops or short teacher training courses so far such as integrating ICT into teaching English, or material evaluation, etc. but I have not been in any workshop about task-based learning before. (Huong, SSI, P1)

Lan added:

I remember that long time ago when I learnt English at high school, there was a teaching approach called grammar-translation, that's all. Now, there might be different teaching approaches but to be honest I do not know much about them. (Lan, SSI, P1)

Minh said:

I have never been in a training workshop about TBLT before, so I have not had a clear understanding about it or how to implement it properly, so I do not have much to say about this approach. (Minh, SSI, P1)

Thus, not surprisingly, when asked what they understood as language learning tasks, answers by Lan and Minh show that they had little understanding of tasks.

I always think all pieces of work that the students are required to complete are tasks (laugh). (Lan, SSI, P1)

I think that tasks should be something...big, something important like role-play or [an] assignment. (Minh, SSI, P1)

On the other hand, Huong provided a more accurate definition by highlighting some key features of a task such as “interact with each other” or “exchange information”.

To me the tasks are activities designed to encourage learners to interact with each other, to improve their speaking skill. I remember that in the textbook, there are many speaking tasks in which the students have to exchange information with each other. (Huong, SSI, P1)

However, Huong associated TBLT only with spoken communicative activities, which is a widespread but rather narrow view of TBLT (Erlam & Ellis, 2018).

Next, when asked to identify differences between the tasks and other activities in the textbook, all three teachers viewed the tasks not as opportunities for genuine communication in English, but as “drill practice” focused on target linguistic forms. For example, Minh said:

I think that the tasks are of no difference with the other exercises which aim to provide students with opportunities to practise certain language and structures (Minh, SSI, P1)

When asked how they valued the communicative tasks in the lessons, the teachers saw the tasks as optional and a much lower priority than grammar learning. For example, Lan stated that she paid little attention to the tasks in the textbook and sometimes skipped them altogether.

To be honest, I thought these activities were good and interesting. However, I did not always implement all tasks because I thought they were not so important to my students if they were not taught grammar and vocabulary in advance. (Lan, SSI, P1)

Similarly, although Huong and Minh saw value in the communication tasks, their priority was to explicitly teach students linguistic forms.

These tasks are good for the students to communicate in the classroom but before that, they need to have “something” to say. So, it is important for them to be taught some knowledge

first, then they will practise what they learned through the tasks. However, I did not follow all the sequences in the task section; I made some adjustments to fit my situation. (Huong, SSI, P1)

To do the tasks, first of all, the students should be taught relevant language then they will do the tasks to practise such language and to remember it more. (Minh, SSI, P1)

As Van den Branden (2016) argues, the implementation of TBLT only moves forward if teachers are convinced that the approach is beneficial for their learners. For the teachers in the current study, their strong commitment to teaching vocabulary and linguistic structures to low-proficiency students overrides the affordances in the textbook to teach in ways that are more congruent with TBLT.

4.6. Discussion of the teachers' practices and cognition

Findings from the teacher interviews and classroom observations show congruence between the teachers' cognition and their classroom practices across all lessons in Phase 1. The teachers all favoured a deductive approach to grammar instruction and strongly believed that their primary responsibility was to instruct students in grammar and ensure that they engaged in multiple form-focused practise exercises. Holding such beliefs, the teachers devoted most class time to teaching discrete linguistic items, followed by drills. These practices may be explained with reference to the teachers' apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). As Lan recalled in the interview, when she was a high school student, the only approach she experienced was grammar-translation. This is likely to be common to the other teachers. The ongoing influence of such traditional language teaching methods is a barrier to the successful uptake of the communicative and task-based pedagogical reforms being undertaken through the Project 2020.

The interviews also showed how the teachers' beliefs were influenced by three main factors. The first factor is time; although the teachers liked the appearance of the tasks in the textbook, they stated that they rarely had the time to complete them. The second factor is the students; the teachers believed that the textbook tasks were not appropriate for low-proficiency students, particularly those with low motivation. The third factor is examinations; the teachers believed that their current grammar-based practices help prepare students for exams. For these reasons, the three teachers consistently removed the communicative task-like or tasks from the textbook and focused on the non-communicative activities and non-tasks. In this way, the teachers' implementation of the textbook was shaped by their personal pedagogical preferences and perceptions of students' needs.

In contrast, the communicative and task-based aspects of the textbook did not align with the teachers' existing beliefs; consequently, these features were met with resistance and were not adopted in their classroom lessons. This result supports Borg's (2006) assertion that teachers' beliefs serve as a mediator between intended curriculum goals and their actual practices. Thus, only when teachers' beliefs about a pedagogical issue are considered can the intended goals of a curriculum be realised more fully (Barnard & Nguyen, 2010).

Underlying those beliefs was a limited understanding of TBLT and little awareness that the design of their textbook drew on, to some extent, the principles of TBLT. The Project 2020, which was released in 2008, advocates strongly for task-based instruction and advises teachers to implement task-based approaches in the classroom in order to fully develop students' language skills. However, the Phase 1 findings of this study provide evidence that after ten years of being promoted, these goals are not being achieved. Possible explanations for the teachers' limited understanding of TBLT and their corresponding classroom practices may be that, although communicative and task-based instruction is included in the educational policy, it was not made an explicit learning objective in the curriculum, nor were the teachers provided with adequate training or clear teaching guidelines to support their classroom practices. In fact, the teachers themselves also reported that they lacked professional development experiences in CLT or TBLT during their pre-service and in-service education. These findings are consistent with several other research studies of Vietnamese classrooms, for example Nguyen (2013), Vu et al. (2020); Nguyen et al. (2018); Tran et al. (2021). As Le (2011) points out, policy in Vietnam advises teachers to follow a communicative, learner-centred, and task-based approach but fails to provide much guidance on how to implement the approach in the classroom. Similar findings were reported in studies of other contexts such as Chen & Wright (2017); Nishimuro & Borg (2013); Plews & Zhao (2010). The findings generated from the current study confirm the findings from these studies, namely that there is a substantial gap between the intended communicative task-based curriculum and teachers' cognitions and actual classroom practice.

Overall, the results of the current study confirm Macalister's (2012) claim that "the knowledge and beliefs that teachers hold are an important determiner of what happens in the classroom" (p.99). Moreover, the factors that had shaped the teachers' beliefs and pedagogy in this study, such as their apprenticeship of observation, teaching experiences, and contextual variables offer insights into how to design professional development approaches that can contribute to the improvement of classroom practises.

In addition to the teachers' practices and perceptions, it is equally important to investigate the students' perceptions in order to develop a holistic picture of the current context. The next section will present the findings from the focus group interviews with the students.

4.7. Findings (RQ5): Student perspectives

To address Research Question 5 (What did the students say about learning with the textbook?), I analysed the data from focus group interviews (FGI) with 24 participating students (two groups in each class; four students in each group). The interviews focused on four main issues: (1) perception of their regular lessons, (2) attitude towards the textbook, (3) perception of communicative tasks, and (4) their expectations for the following lessons. The value of understanding students' perspectives is captured in Kumaravadivelu's (1991) claim that "the more we know about the students' personal approaches and personal concepts, the better and more productive our intervention will be" (p. 107).

Regarding the first theme, most of the students in the interviews in Lan and Huong's classes (12 out of 16 students) did not have a positive feeling about the lessons. Adjectives such as "sleepy", "boring", "bored", "quiet", "inactive", and "not happy" were frequently captured in their feedback. The following excerpts illustrate this:

We just answered when the teacher called our name. Otherwise, we just sat and said nothing. This made the class boring and sleepy. (Huy, Lan's class, FG1, P1)

I feel that the lessons are quiet because we just listen and take notes of what the teacher says. I don't mean that what the teacher says or teaches is useless, it is useful actually. But learning this way makes me feel a little bit bored, I mean, it is not really interesting. (Mai, Huong's class, FG1, P1)

Although the students in Minh's class embraced a more positive attitude towards their teachers' lesson, they did show different feelings between the time they studied with games or communicative tasks and the time they did the grammar exercise. To them, doing a grammar exercise was not exciting, while joining the games was fun and gave them motivation to learn. The following excerpt illustrates such an idea:

They [the lessons] are ok. Especially when I and my friends played the games, trying to be the winners, it was so fun. However, there were not many chances like that in the whole lessons; I am not very interested in doing exercises like using correct verb tenses, something like that. (Nhài, Minh's class, FG1, P1)

When it comes to the students' attitude towards their current textbook, the students knew the textbook contained many communicative activities and they expressed a positive attitude toward such activities. Following are some of their comments about the book:

This book contains many pair work activities. I think that is a good point to help us improve our communication skills. If we do grammar exercises only, it is a little bit boring. But I don't say we don't need grammar. (Nhài, Minh's class, FG1, P1)

I think that the book teaches us the knowledge useful for daily life communication. The book also contains the knowledge of grammar. So I think that is good. (Linh, Lan's class, FG1, P1)

The book has many interactive activities and requires us to work in pairs so we have more chances to interact with each other and use English more. (Luong, Huong's class, FG1, P1)

The students also mentioned the presence of integrated skills as a good point of the textbook. As such, the book was said to help them improve various needed skills for communicating.

Although we did not implement all the activities in the textbook, I can see that the book contains different activities related to different skills such as Writing, Listening, Reading, and Writing, ah no, Speaking. There is also pronunciation part. Thus, this can help us develop our basic knowledge of English. (Hung, Lan's class, FG1, P1)

I also have not much idea about the book that we are using now. However, to me, it is good. Why is it good? I cannot tell clearly. Maybe, it is good because it was designed with many activities related to different skills so the students could practise their skills. (Tuyen, Huong's class, FG1, P1)

However, some students (3/24) were not able to articulate clear opinions on the value of the textbook, so they just gave general thoughts or repeated their friends' ideas. These students stated that due to their limited English ability, every English textbook was the same to them and they could not tell the difference among the books. Thus, although these students stated that the book was interesting or good, their ideas may have reflected the ideas of the people surrounding them. Interestingly, these comments are consistent with the teachers' viewpoints on the textbook reported in Section 4.5. Some of the following examples illustrate this:

I have the similar idea like Hung, which means I think the book is rather interesting. I am not good at English so to me every English book is not so different. (Hien, Lan's class, FG2, P1)

I have the same ideas like Nhài, I think the book is good. But I cannot tell you clearly why it is good. (Quy, Huong's class, FG2, P1)

To me, all the textbooks that I have learned so far seem to have the similar design, meaning that all them contain speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities, vocabulary, pronunciation sections ... etc. Unfortunately, I cannot remember them well after I study them. So to me, this book is as good as the other books. (Thuy, Minh's class, FG2, P1)

Regarding the third theme, which is about the students' perception of the textbook tasks, all 24 interviewees had positive views toward the tasks regarding the fact that the tasks pursue the learners' development of various skills.

These tasks? I think they are good. I think this is a good, fun way to improve the Speaking skill and Listening skill too. (Huy, Lan's class, FG1, P1)

By implementing these tasks, we can practise different skills such as Listening, Speaking, and Writing. We can learn something new and close to our daily life such as writing email[s],

talking about family tree, talking about ourselves etc. These things are useful for us not only in the exam but also in our daily life. (Mai, Huong's class, FG1, P1)

In these tasks, we not only need to listen, or read, but also speak and write. Like this task [Pointing at module 5, p. 48, task: Complete a survey about transport]. I can see different skills are integrated in this part, so I think that is good. (Thu, Huong's class, FG2, P1)

In addition, most students also stated that they find the tasks interesting and fun, so that helped create a relaxing atmosphere in the class:

I think these tasks create a relaxing and happy atmosphere for us students to work with each other. I and my friends laughed a lot when we tried to explain [to] each other during the tasks. We did not do it well but that was fun. (Huyen, Minh's class, FG1, P1)

Yes, these activities are different from the exercise we often do. It is hard to explain. I think they are different in way that we don't do something like filling in the gaps, or using the correct words, instead the tasks are just like the games, so they are interesting. For example, we found the differences between two pictures, I liked it. To me that is funnier and useful for me. (Ha, Huong's class, FG2, P1)

Notably, a small number of students (4/24) mentioned that they thought the tasks were "good" and "useful" in offering opportunities to use the linguistic items in specific meaningful contexts. As such, this way could help them better remember and understand the language. For instance, Linh, a student in Huong's class stated that:

In this part (task section), we can exchange information or talk to each other in English in different real situation[s]. To me this is a good way to practise and remember the language better. Such contexts could happen in our real life so ... I mean in the future I might use the knowledge to interact with other people in similar contexts. (Linh, Huong's class, FG1, P1)

When asked whether the tasks were challenging for them to implement, there were two different ideas among the students. While about 40% of the students reported that the tasks were not too hard for them to do, the rest felt it was challenging to interact with other people while carrying out the tasks. First, 10 out of 24 students showed confidence that they were able to do the tasks if they followed the instruction of the teachers. They were also aware that the tasks were simple since they were especially designed for low-level students like them as in the comments below:

I think the tasks are not too challenging, maybe this is because they are designed for the low-level students like us. If we try our best, have motivation, and [are] hard-working, I think we can do them. (Huy, Lan's class, FG2, P1)

These tasks are not easy, but they are not too difficult for us to do. I think so. I can use the structures to ask and answer the questions with my friends. I follow the instruction of the teacher. Yeah, it is not too hard. I can complete the task. (Nga, Minh's class, FG2, P1)

In contrast to these students, 14 students admitted that although the tasks were simply designed for a low level, they had to struggle to complete them as commented by some students in all three classes:

The tasks might not be too hard for my friends, but to me, they are not easy. I often speak and write more slowly than them so when doing the tasks, we don't exchange much information. We don't talk much. I am ashamed when my friends have to wait for me for long. (Hai, Lan's class, FG1, P1)

I think that some tasks are easy, some tasks are difficult. For example, this task requires us to work in groups to exchange the results of the survey. I am not confident about my speaking skill. I speak slowly and can't express clearly enough for my friends to understand. (Ngoc, Huong's class, FG1, P1)

My situation is like Tue's, meaning that there are some tasks I could do, and some I couldn't. Anyway, we did not implement all the parts in the tasks. Most of the time, we focused on this part [Useful language section] then we wrote some sentences using such language, then the teacher asked, and we answered. If we just do such things, then I think it is not too difficult, it just took time. (An, Minh's class, FG2, P1)

The students also showed specific difficulties facing them when doing the tasks. These difficulties focused on three major issues: bad pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and lack of ideas. For example, half of the students reported that their pronunciation was unclear and incorrect, so their speaking became hard to understand, which made them hesitate to express their ideas when working in pairs or groups.

My difficulty when implementing these tasks is my speaking skill, my pronunciation is bad, and I make a lot of grammatical mistakes. It took me a lot of time to express my ideas. (Luan, Lan's class, FG2, P1)

Most of the interviewees (20/24) highlighted their limited vocabulary as one of the problems that hindered their completion of tasks. To these students, although they had the ideas in their minds, they found it hard to find words to express such ideas.

My difficulty is about vocabulary. I have some ideas in my head but don't have enough vocabulary to express them. I often use wrong words, so my friends often misunderstand me. (Nhai, Lan's class, FG1, P1)

12/24 students stated that when being required to join in some tasks like discussion, role-play, or writing they did not have plenty of ideas to lengthen the conversation or the discussion; therefore, the interaction with their partners often ended after a short time. For example, Thanh, a student in Minh's class said:

I don't have many ideas to talk. For example, when the teacher asked me and my friends to do role-play, greeting each other, we did not talk much, just two or three short sentences, then nothing else. (Thanh, Minh's class, FG1, P1)

Finally, the last theme in the students' data presents their expectations of changes in the following lessons. Despite the different expressions in their statements, two common needs

identified were: (1) Additional enjoyable and interesting activities to promote language form learning, and (2) increased opportunities to communicate in English. Regarding the first need, the students stressed the importance of grammar and vocabulary teaching in the lessons, but they expected to learn such knowledge in a more interesting and fun way so that they had motivation to attend to the activities.

Sometimes, I saw that many of my friends just focused on the cell-phone and almost ignored me, so I felt a bit disappointed. I think the teachers should find ways to encourage them to get more involved in the lessons, like, we have more motivation to study. (Hoang, Minh's class, FG2, P1)

I think the lessons were not so interesting and happy enough. I don't have much idea about how to make them better, but I think the teacher should add games in the lessons. (Thi, Lan's class, FG1, P1)

As regards the second need, 12/24 students expressed that they hoped to have chances to practise speaking skills. To these students, the current lessons were not interesting enough to promote their involvement and contribution.

My difficulties are my limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, especially vocabulary. I have some ideas inside my mind but often have not enough vocabulary to express my ideas to make my friends understand me. So I expect that the teacher should design useful activities to help us improve our speaking skill, and in such activities, we can use grammar and vocabulary frequently in certain contexts. By doing this, I think we can improve our reaction in speaking. (Luong, Huong's class, FG2, P1)

As I said earlier, although I learned these structures at high school, I could not do the grammar exercises that the teachers assigned us correctly. When I also found it hard to talk to my American teacher. I think in addition to grammar exercises; we also need to have more chances to practise interacting with other people in English. (Lich, Lan's class, FG2, P1)

In general, the students' comments in the interviews indicate a favourable attitude towards the textbook and a keen awareness of the importance of the communicative activities assigned during the lessons. While the students recognised the importance of grammar and vocabulary instruction, they expressed concern about the lack of opportunities for interaction in their current lessons. They expected to have more opportunities to interact with others in English and believed that textbook communicative activities would be useful for them in doing so. This finding is consistent with previous research, such as that conducted by Nguyen et al. (2015), McDonough & Chaikitmongkol (2007), and Jaruteerapan (2020), which reported that students inferred similar benefits from communicative tasks. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007), for example, reported that students at a Thai university recognised the utility and relevance of communicative activities in their real-world and academic lives, and thus had a favourable attitude towards such tasks.

Surprisingly, in the current study, what the students believed and perceived was, to some extent, inconsistent with what their teachers did, because the teachers perceived that their students were not proficient or enthusiastic enough to participate in communicative tasks. This difference may reflect the different goals of the teachers and students. The teachers' primary goal was to prepare students for exams, whereas the students' primary goal or expectation of the English lessons was to prepare themselves for future learning and daily communication. This is not to say that teachers did not see the value of giving learners communicative opportunities. They did, but they believed that students needed to rote learn grammar and vocabulary before they could communicate fluently in English. As Huong stated during the Phase 1 post-interview:

These tasks are good for the students to communicate in the classroom but before that, they need to have “something” to say. So it is important for them to be taught some knowledge first. (Huong, SSI, P1)

Due to this difference in perception, the teachers' teaching practices fell short of meeting the students' needs and expectations.

However, the students' perceived difficulties with tasks were consistent with teachers' perceptions. They admitted that they lacked the necessary vocabulary and grammar to complete communicative activities effectively. This raised the question of how to address these challenges while still meeting students' desire for more opportunities for interaction in the classroom, which we would discuss later in our post Phase 1 reflection meeting.

4.8. Reflection on Phase 1 and planning for Phase 2

After collecting data for Phase 1, which included observation of classes and interviews with teachers and students, I convened a post-Phase 1 reflection meeting with the three teachers to discuss the implications of the findings and to develop an action plan for Phase 2. I introduced the meeting's objectives and then explained what the teachers and I needed to do. I invited each teacher to present their perspectives first, and then added my thoughts to the discussion.

We began by synthesizing and summarizing the findings from classroom observations and interviews. Classroom observation data showed that teachers placed a priority on teaching and practising language forms, as evidenced by their consistent retention of non-communicative activities in the textbook, addition of drill exercises, and adaptation of communicative tasks into individual or teacher-led work. The interview data showed that the teachers believed in the value of explicit teacher-centred grammar explanations, which they

perceived to be appropriate for low-level students and examination preparation. Additionally, they lacked the necessary practical abilities and knowledge to deal with student communication. Students' focus group interviews revealed that, while they recognised the importance of grammar and vocabulary instruction, they were bored with doing many grammar exercises. Moreover, they expected that their learning would be enriched by communication skills.

By synthesizing and reflecting on the findings, the teachers recognised the weaknesses in their lessons and the importance of adopting a different approach that enabled their students to develop the ability to communicate more effectively in English. The teachers were concerned, however, that the students were at a low level and would still need to learn language forms, so they asked me which approach I would recommend to address these concerns. To address the teachers' worries, I suggested incorporating TBLT into their classrooms. I explained the point made by Willis (2004) that a TBLT classroom meets three conditions: "providing exposure to the target language; providing opportunities for learners to use the target language in authentic communication; and providing learners with motivation to engage in the learning process" (p. 19). I also informed the teachers about two affordances that influenced TBLT adoption in their context. First, the use of TBLT was in line with the government's curriculum reforms. Second, the textbook analysis revealed that *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* allowed teachers to employ communicative and task-based instructional strategies. As a result, teachers were not required to create tasks from scratch. According to Ellis (2020), *New Cutting Edge* provides a task model for teachers, particularly those with little or no TBLT expertise. My suggestion to incorporate TBLT into their teaching was well received by all the teachers, and they expressed an eagerness to try it into their upcoming lessons. Phase 2 of the study provides an account of the teachers' attempts to do so.

All the teachers and I were aware, however, that they lacked a thorough understanding of TBLT and had never attended a TBLT course/workshop or taught using this approach before. As a result, we all agreed that they needed to attend a TPDL workshop on TBLT. This workshop would be designed with the teachers' stated constraints, professional goals, and knowledge gaps in mind. Following this reflection meeting, we scheduled another meeting for the TPDL workshop, in which I aimed to raise teachers' awareness and knowledge of TBLT.

4.9. Summary of chapter

In summary, this chapter explored how the teachers implemented a textbook from communicative and task-based perspectives through three main sources of data: observations of teachers' teaching practices, post-observation teacher interviews, and student focus groups. Data analysis identified traditional teacher-centred and form-focused instruction in the lessons taught by the three teachers. They also believed that they needed to provide their students with grammar and vocabulary to practise language. Such practices and beliefs prevented the teachers from developing students' capacity in communicating meaningfully in English. The findings indicate the gaps and affordances for adopting TBLT in the current context. Drawing on the findings, the teachers needed in-context professional learning that would equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach more communicatively through the TBLT approach. In the next chapter, I show the teachers' emerging understanding and practices of TBLT through two PAR cycles.

CHAPTER 5. PHASE 2: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH CYCLES

5.1. Introduction

This chapter reports on Phase 2 of the study, which consisted of two participatory cycles and was built on the findings from Phase 1. Cycle 1 of Phase 2 began with a teacher professional development and learning (TPDL) workshop to raise the teachers' awareness of TBLT, followed by a lesson planning workshop for the teachers and me to work collaboratively to design three task-based lessons for Module 8 in the textbook. I observed the teachers implementing these lessons in their own classes and after the third lesson we met to review how the teachers taught the module. Observing three consecutive task-based lessons in each cycle enabled me to identify patterns in each teacher's teaching practice. Cycle 2 began with a review of Cycle 1 after which we repeated the process for three Module 10 lessons. This chapter reports on and discusses the findings related to an overarching question:

What impact does a TBLT-focused PAR project have on teachers' practices, beliefs, and knowledge of TBLT, and on the reported experience of students in the PAR classes?

Specifically, Phase 2 addresses the following three research questions:

RQ6. Across the two PAR cycles, what changes occurred in the teachers' implementation of the lessons?

RQ7. What changes occurred in the teachers' understanding of TBLT?

RQ8. What changes occurred in the students' reported experience of the lessons?

This chapter first describes how TPDL worked in the current study, how the TPDL workshop was conducted, and how the teachers collaborated with me to design the lesson plans. It then reports on the findings of each teacher case in both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2.

5.2. Teacher professional development and learning (TPDL)

As reported in Phase 1, the teachers had a limited understanding of TBLT and expressed a desire to learn more about it, so the first session we conducted in Phase 2 was a TPDL workshop on TBLT. The following sections discuss the characteristics of the TPDL project in general and the TPDL workshop procedure.

5.2.1. The features of the TPDL project

A one-off training programme that is run outside of the teaching context has been shown to be only marginally effective in helping teachers make changes in their classroom practices (Chappell & Benson, 2013; Kennedy, 2014; Stanley, 2011; Van den Branden, 2016). To address this issue, the TPDL in the current study extended over two PAR cycles to provide sustained support to the teachers and was conducted in their own institution. The teachers first participated in an interactive TPDL workshop on TBLT and then used what they had learned to create lesson plans and to teach the lessons they planned. Collaboration between the three teachers and myself, as a researcher/teacher educator occurred throughout the project. Following each module taught, we discussed the teachers' experiences teaching with tasks, reflected on each teacher's lessons, and collaborated to plan subsequent modules. As Fraser et al. (2007) argue, TPDL that is based on collaboration is most likely to lead to transformative educational practice.

According to Desimone (2009), one of the most important features of TPDL is content focus. Content-focused TPDL generally means that it focuses on a specific curriculum or the content that teachers teach. As Desimone (2009) puts it, content-focused TPDL is "job-embedded, meaning that the TPDL is situated in teachers' classrooms with their students, as opposed to generic TPDL delivered externally or divorced from teachers' school or district contexts" (p. 5). In the current study, the content that the TPDL project focused on was the TBLT curriculum promoted by the Vietnamese Government and the textbook that the teachers were using for their students, which reflected, to some extent, the principles of TBLT. The current TPDL also set a clear goal, which was to encourage the teachers to change their teaching behaviours such as a shift to meaning-focused and interactive activities, making better use of the textbook, adopting a new role of the teacher as a learning facilitator, and valuing the students' communicative accomplishments rather than the achievement of grammar accuracy. With my guidance, the teachers evaluated their teaching performance over the two cycles with reference to these points.

TPDL is regarded as collaborative work between the researcher and teachers to bring some pedagogical ideas into the classrooms and reflect on them as in action research (Cohen et al., 2004). Action research as a model of TPDL has been acknowledged as being successful in allowing teachers to ask critical questions of their practice and has significant capacity for transformative practice and professional autonomy (Kennedy, 2014; Sachs, 2003). In this

study, after every three lessons (one module) taught, we had a collaborative meeting to review what had been going on. The teachers were invited to self-evaluate their teaching performance from their lesson videotapes regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and difficulties of the lessons. We then together worked out the solutions and action plans for the subsequent lessons.

In summary, the TPDL in the current study was practice-based, collaborative, reflective, and goal-oriented, with ongoing support from the researcher as an “expert”. It aimed to raise the teachers’ awareness of TBLT and encourage them to use it in their own settings.

5.2.2. The TPDL workshop on TBLT

The TPDL workshop on TBLT was conducted one week after Phase 1 was completed. The workshop lasted for two and a half hours and aimed to raise the teachers’ awareness and understanding of the principles of TBLT. I acted as a teacher educator in the workshop. The content of the TPDL workshop focused on four main parts: the definition of tasks, types of tasks, framework of TBLT, and the roles of teachers and students in task-based lessons.

To begin, I introduced the teachers to a definition of tasks. This provided a practical starting point and was designed to assist the teachers in designing and developing confidence in using tasks in their classrooms. This introduction modelled task-based learning by giving the teachers the following task to do. First, I showed the teachers five activities, which included tasks and non-tasks (See Appendix 11) and asked them to collaborate on identifying the distinctions between these activities and to guess which ones were tasks. Following that, I introduced Ellis’s (2018a) task definition. I chose this because it is widely accepted in the literature and was used as a coding tool to analyse textbook activities and teachers’ practices in Phase 1. Together with the teachers, we evaluated the five activities using Ellis’s four task criteria.

I continued the workshop by introducing different types of tasks and ways to categorise tasks so that teachers had a variety of task choices for their students. First, I discussed the following seven task types proposed by Willis and Willis (2007): listing; ordering and sorting; matching; comparing and contrasting; problem-solving tasks and puzzles; projects and creative tasks; sharing personal experiences; and story and anecdote telling. Then I introduced three task types by Prabhu (1987): information-gap, reasoning-gap, and opinion-gap tasks. The task types proposed by Willis and Willis (2007) and Prabhu (1987) were introduced to the teachers because they appear frequently in the textbook *New Cutting Edge*,

Elementary. I also demonstrated to the teachers the difference between input-based and output-based tasks to address the teachers' misconception that tasks must always involve students producing language. We then worked together to categorise all 15 major tasks in the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* into the different task types discussed in the workshop. The teachers and I then had a 15-minute tea break.

Prior to introducing a task-based lesson framework and discussing the roles of teachers and students in task-based lessons, I handed out two lesson plans to the teachers, one using a PPP approach and the other using a task-based approach and asked them to identify the differences between the two. After listening to each teacher's perspective, I showed the teachers Willis's (1996) task-based lesson framework, which is presented in Appendix 10. This framework provides guidance on what teachers and students should do at each stage of a lesson; thus, it is useful for those who are just beginning to learn about TBLT, such as these teachers. During the TPDL workshop, the three teachers participated actively and enthusiastically, discussing ideas, expressing their opinions, and asking questions relevant to their teaching.

5.3. Collaborative lesson planning

To provide additional opportunities for the teachers to apply what they learned during the TPDL workshop on TBLT, they participated in two PAR cycles, which included developing task-based lesson plans, teaching the lessons, and reflecting on the lessons. These two cycles were conducted one week after the TPDL workshop. We redesigned the textbook lessons for two reasons. First, while the textbook included many task-like activities and tasks, non-tasks/non-communicative activities were frequently presented prior to tasks. As a result, teachers often spent too much time on non-communicative tasks and not enough time on tasks or task-like activities. Second, as specified in the teachers' syllabus, one textbook module was to be implemented over three 90-minute lessons, which meant working through about three textbook pages in each lesson. However, the textbook lacked a clear division between lessons, instead consisting of a series of discrete activities, which made it difficult for teachers to envision the format of a task-based lesson. Creating lesson plans addressed this problem.

The design of lesson plans was collaborative and participatory in nature and gave the teachers a chance to demonstrate their understanding of the task-based approach. Notably, to ensure that the planning session was as participatory as possible, I encouraged teachers to express

their ideas first, while I acted as both an outsider who listened to and recorded their opinions about how to use the textbook activities and an insider who contributed my opinions to the lesson planning process as needed.

Each task-based lesson that we planned consisted of three main phases: pre-task, main task, and post-task. We made choices about where to relocate, add, adapt, and replace activities in the textbook to ensure the activities were relevant and aligned with the objectives of each phase. For example, in the pre-task phase, being aware that the students were at a low English proficiency level, we “primed” them with linguistic items through two or three meaning-focused activities or input-based listening tasks. In the main task phase, we added more tasks or turned task-like activities into tasks to offer students more opportunities for meaningful communication. We moved the textbook grammar summary and gap-fill practice exercises to the post-task phase and included additional consciousness-raising activities to help students gain a better understanding of the target structures. Because each unit concluded with Task and Real-life sections, these sections, which constituted the third lesson did not require many changes. Additionally, all writing activities were removed from lessons and assigned as homework because they took a lot of classroom time and because there was a separate writing lesson each week.

Lesson planning sessions were held twice, once at the start of Cycle 1 following the TPDL workshop to design the lesson plan for Module 8, and once at the start of Cycle 2 for Module 10. The reason why these two modules were chosen was because they fitted the teachers’ rigid schedule. That is, after the teachers completed Module 6 in Phase 1, we had one week to reflect on all Phase 1’s findings and then to develop a plan for Phase 2, and another week to think about and design lesson plans for the new module. And it was in Module 8 that this occurred. A similar situation was applied for Module 10.

Two days after the TPDL workshop, the three teachers and I worked together to create the three lesson plans for Module 8. The lesson planning session lasted for about two hours with a 15-minute tea break in the middle. Figures 2, 3, and 4 below show the lesson plans designed for Lessons 1, 2, and 3 of Module 8.

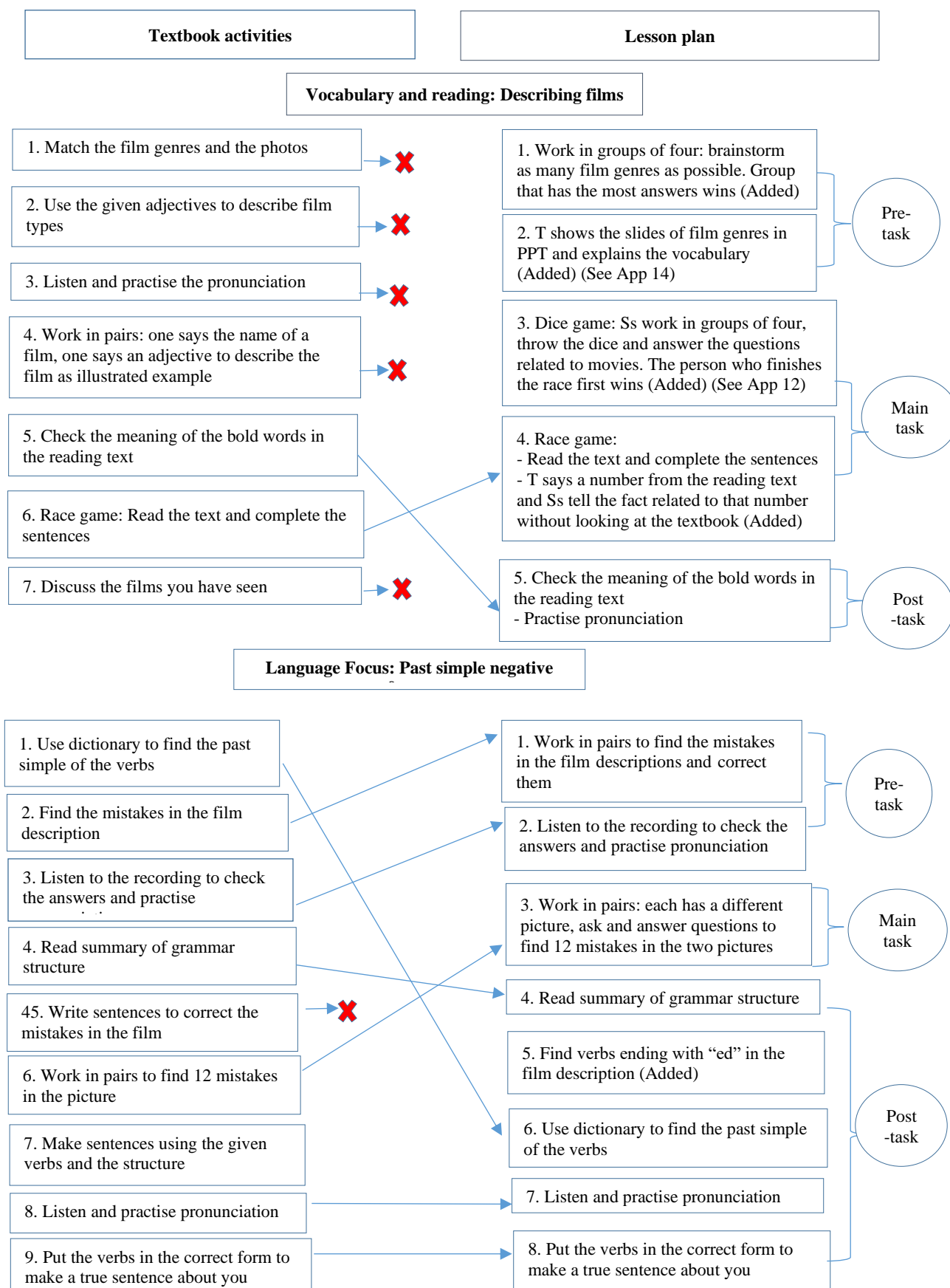
Figure 2.*Lesson 1 – Module 8*

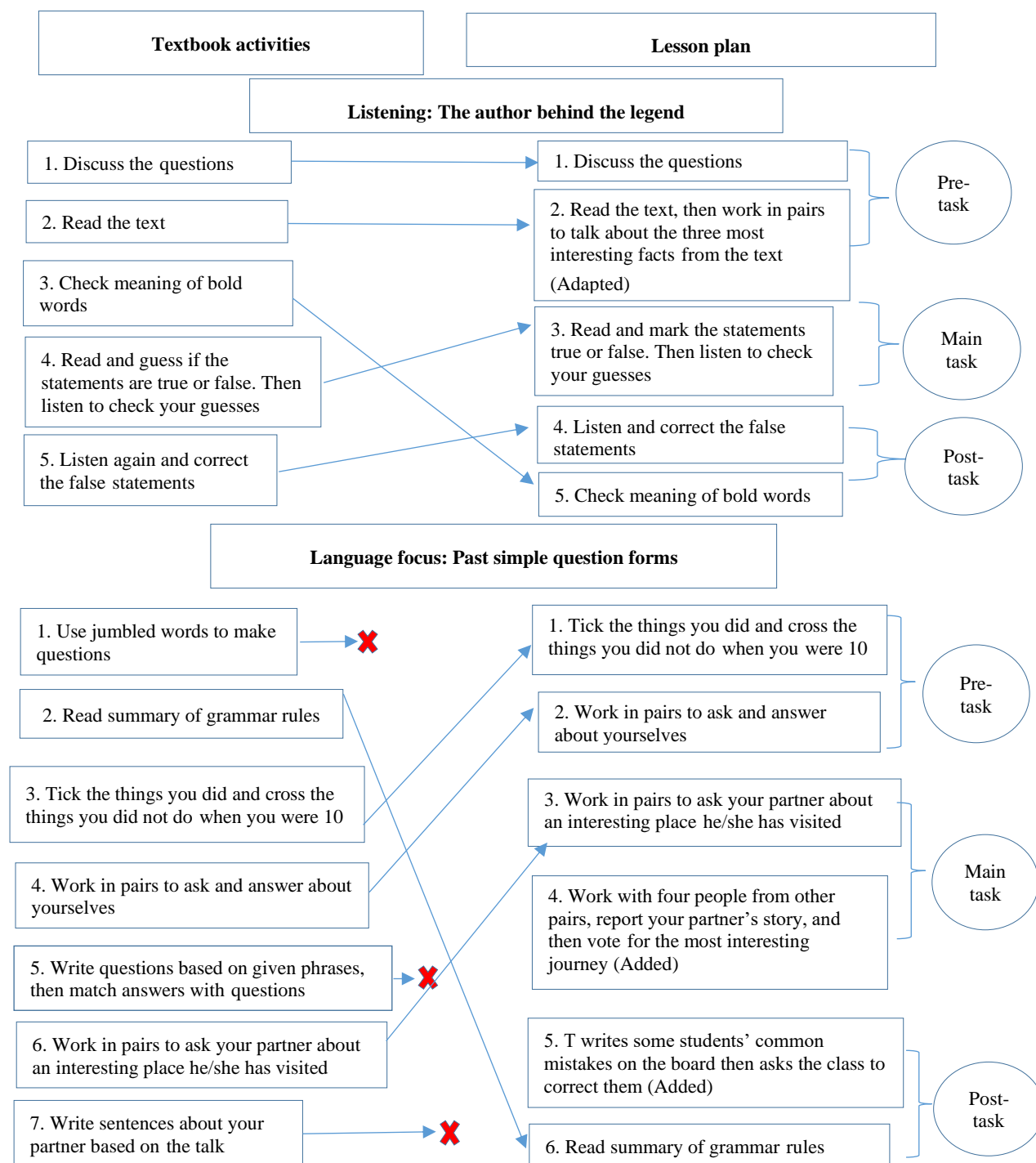
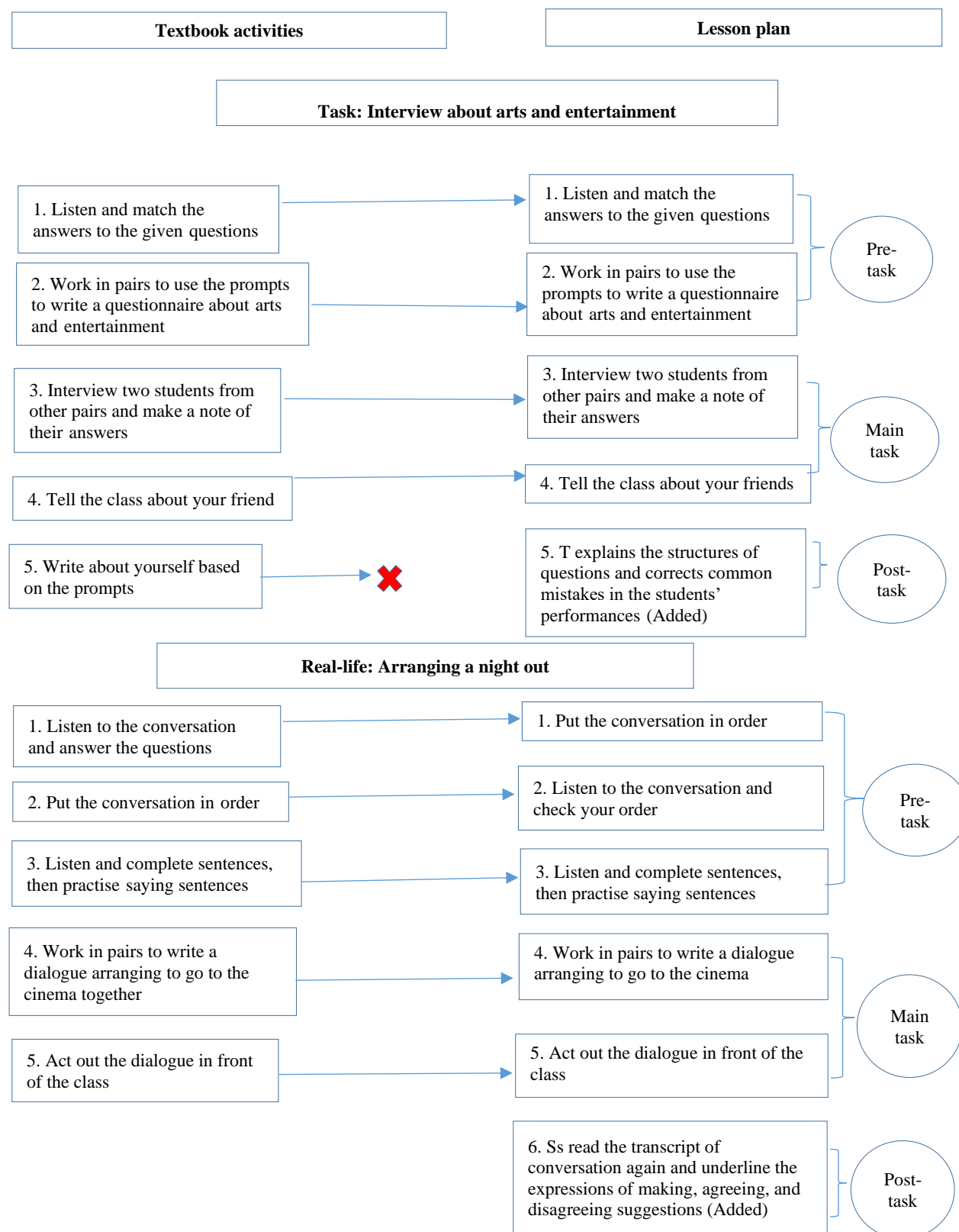
Figure 3.*Lesson 2 – Module 8*

Figure 4*Lesson 3 – Module 8*

After the teachers completed teaching all three Module 8 lessons, we convened a collaborative reflection meeting to reflect on the taught lessons and collaborate on Module 10 lesson plans. During this meeting, the teachers shared how they struggled with time constraints when implementing the lessons. They proposed reducing the number of activities in the next module, which we did by examining textbook activities that were similar and allowing teachers to choose between them. For example, Activities 2 and 3 on page 88 were quite similar in that the former required students to describe one person in the photographs and then let their partner guess, whereas the latter required students to describe one person in the class and then let their partner guess. Another example is that Activity 2 on page 89, which requires students to use the present continuous tense to describe the actions of the people in the pictures, is similar to Activity 3 on the same page, which requires students to use the present continuous tense to describe their actual classroom situation. With such similar activities, teachers could choose which one to use on their own. Although doing both offers an important opportunity to consolidate learning and to move from a simpler to a more demanding version of the same task, it would be time consuming. Module 10 Lessons 1, 2, and 3 are illustrated in Figures 5, 6, and 7.

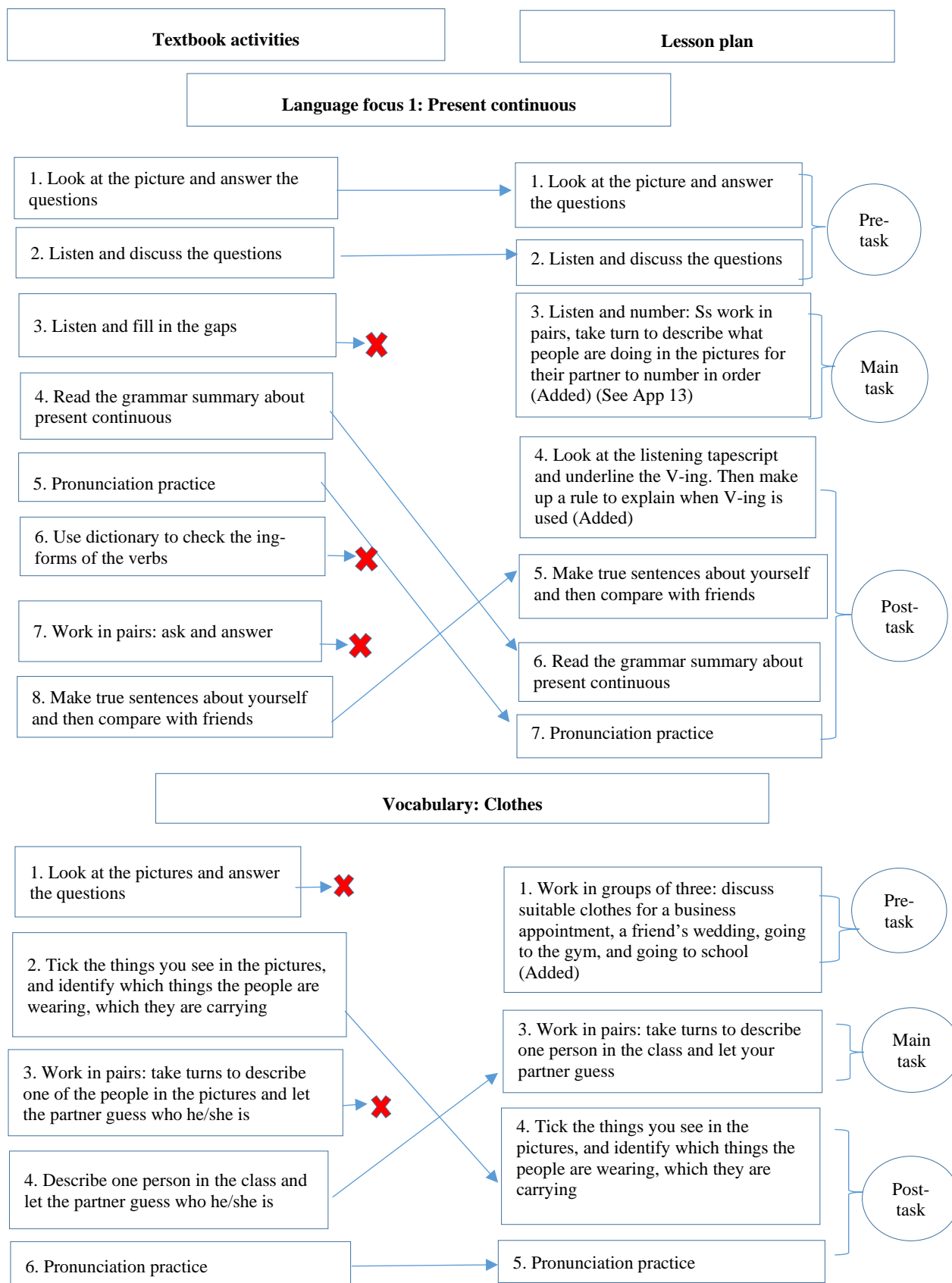
Figure 5*Lesson 1 – Module 10*

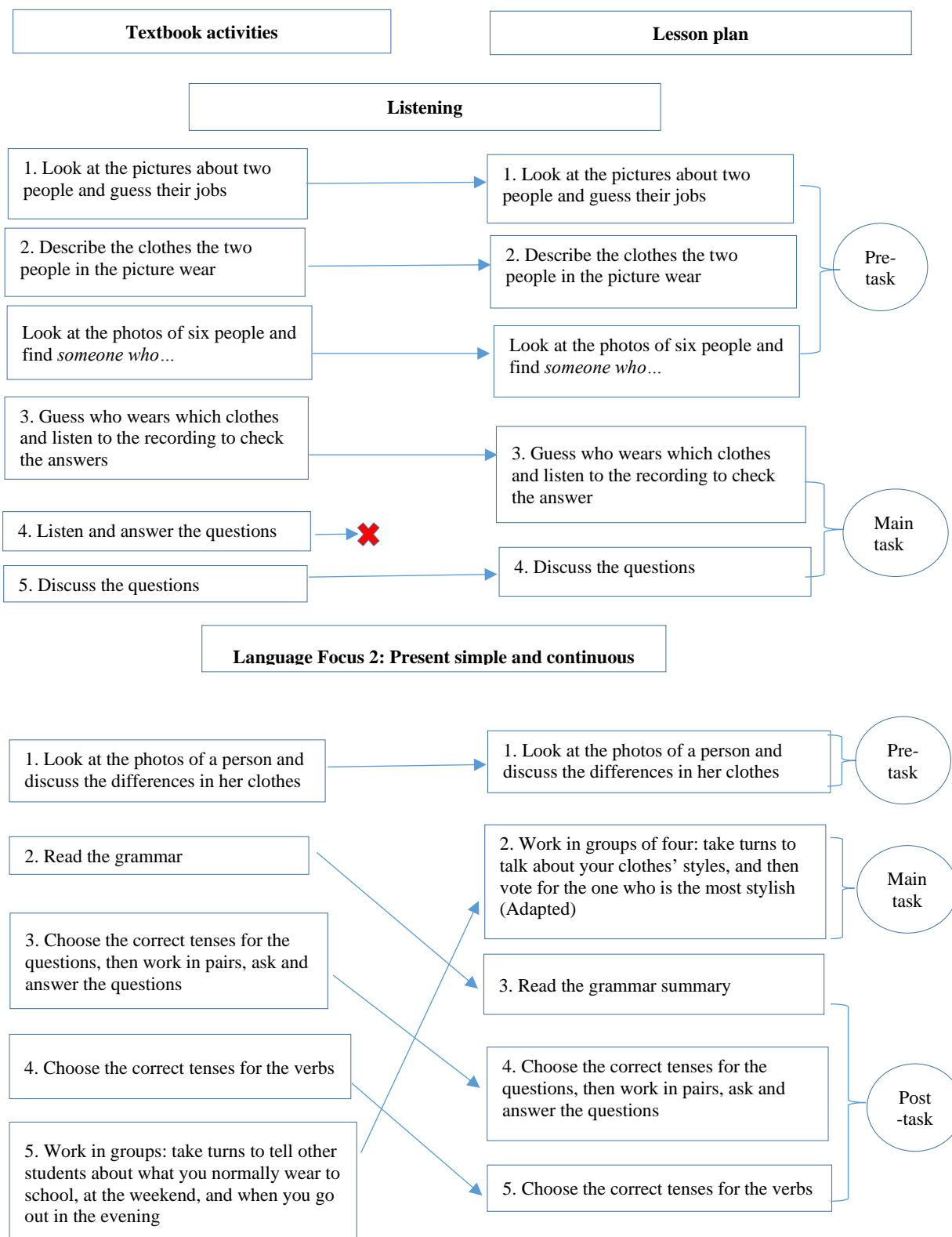
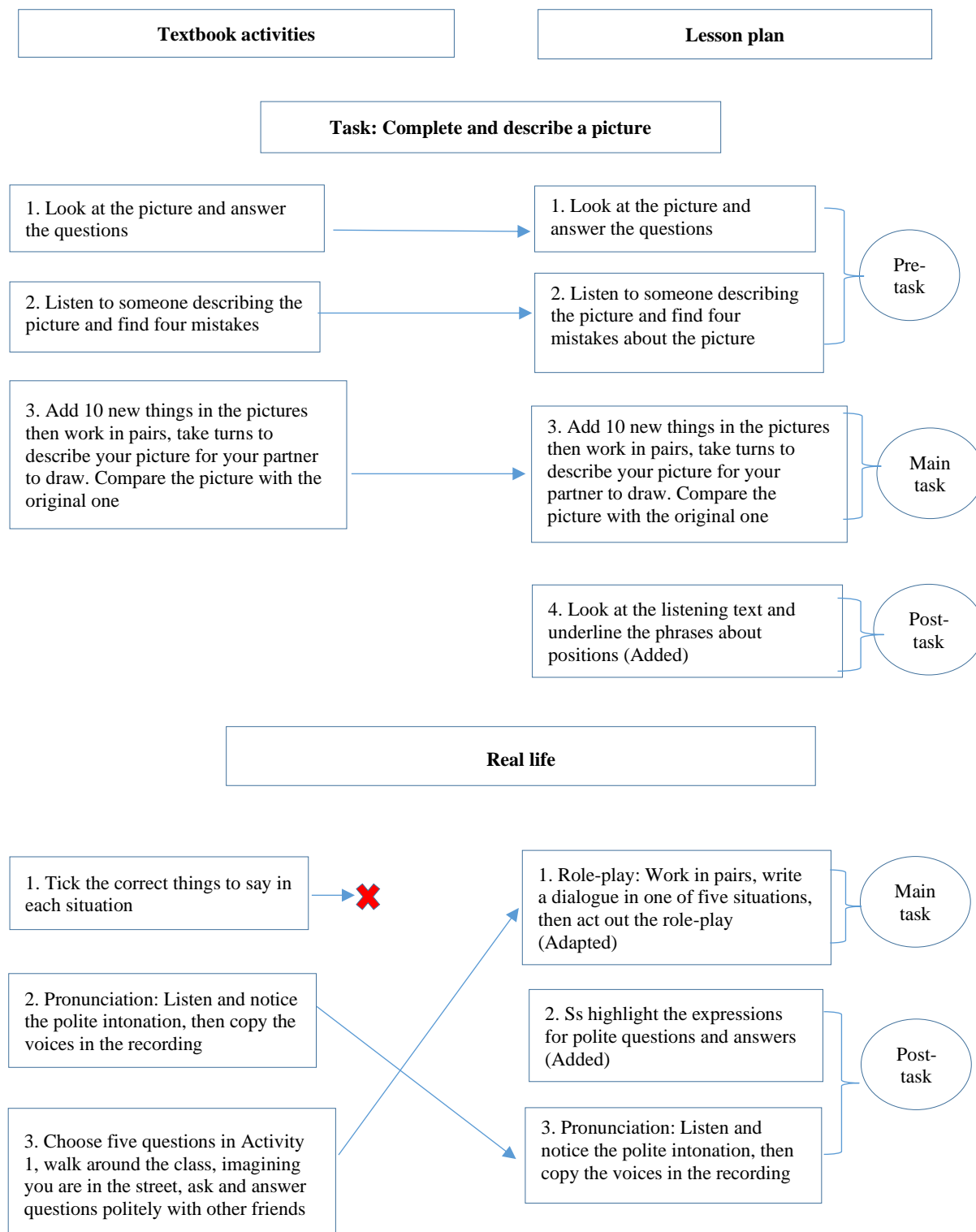
Figure 6*Lesson 2 – Module 10*

Figure 7*Lesson 3 – Module 10*

5.4. A case-study perspective on each teacher in the task-based lessons

Since the teachers' schedules did not overlap, I was able to observe all nine lessons taught by the three teachers. The teachers did not observe each other because I wanted to examine their own understanding and practices of TBLT after the TPDL workshop without them being influenced by each other. While teachers retained the activities and followed the lesson plans' sequence, they each implemented the lessons differently in light of their newfound understanding of TBLT following the TPDL workshop. The following sections describe each teacher's case, in which I report on a set of data for each, including their implementation of the lessons, their perspectives, and their students' perspectives over the two cycles. For the data on teacher perspectives, the following four major themes were identified, and findings will be presented in relation to these:

- Understanding of TBLT.
- Challenges in teaching TBLT.
- Perception of student learning in task-based lessons.
- Attitude toward TBLT.

5.4.1. Lan

5.4.1.1. Cycle 1

5.4.1.1.1. Implementation of the lessons

In three Cycle 1 lessons, Lan enthusiastically facilitated student collaborative learning, as evidenced by the way she encouraged students to participate in the conversations, responded to their questions, and provided corrective feedback. Specifically, when she observed a lack of cooperation and interaction during communicative work, Lan frequently reminded the students to interact with each other by saying sentences like "Pair work, not individual work, class", "Discuss with your friends, please", "Why don't you talk to each other?", and "What's the problem?" She stood near each pair and observed their conversation for a while to ensure that they were engaged in the tasks and interacting with each other. Lan also approached the weakest students and asked them if they understood what they were supposed to do and if they needed her assistance. She spent more time explaining to and guiding these students. In

general, Lan's assistance allowed the students to continue interacting with each other. In my field notes in Lesson 3, I noted the change of students' interaction as below.

At first, most of the students were not very active and did not speak much. Lan then helped them by approaching everyone in the class and encouraging them to speak up so that they could become more involved in the interaction. Lan appeared to have played an important role in promoting collaborative learning among the students. (FN, L3, P1, Lan's class)

Second, Lan frequently provided translation and grammar explanations in response to the students' questions. Specifically, during the activities, students frequently asked Lan questions about vocabulary or how to express their ideas in English from Vietnamese.

Lan translated the phrases into English and occasionally explained grammatical forms to help them. The students then used the translated phrases/sentences in their conversations with their classmates.

Third, Lan typically provided corrective feedback in the form of explicit error correction to assist students in saying grammatically correct sentences. When the students were doing the tasks, for example, her assistance usually consisted of stopping at each pair for one or two minutes to listen to the conversation and interrupting them to correct grammatical or lexical errors. Before continuing their conversation, the students had to correct their mistakes. She then moved on to other pairs and repeated the process. Furthermore, when the students responded to Lan's questions or presented their work, she seemed to be more concerned with the linguistic errors than with the messages they wanted to convey. Lan corrected the students and asked them to repeat the correct sentences most of the time when they made grammatical errors in their sentences. As a result, the time allotted for checking students' work grew longer, and so she only had enough time to check the work of one or two pairs.

5.4.1.1.2. Lan's perspectives

Lan was interviewed after the third lesson of Cycle 1. Findings are discussed in relation to the four themes listed in section 5.4 above.

Lan's understanding of TBLT

Lan's practice in the observed lessons was consistent with her stated understanding of TBLT in the interview. Lan assumed that TBLT meant more interaction in the classroom. As she put it:

Obviously, students are required to communicate more in task-based lessons. As far as I understand, TBLT means more time for interaction and less time for grammar instruction.

When I assign pair work or group work activities, the students must communicate with one another. If they don't, it means my lessons were a failure. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

As a result, she stressed that the primary role of teachers in task-based lessons was to assist students in becoming more interactive. As she said:

Honestly, I was under pressure and worried when not many students talked during the pair work, so I told myself that I must support them as much as possible to make the interactions happen. Teachers' primary role in TBLT, in my opinion, is to promote student interaction in the classroom. I don't think the students will be able to complete the tasks without my assistance, especially given their limited English proficiency. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

Second, Lan focused not only on the quantity but also on the quality of interaction in TBLT. Lan explained why she corrected students' errors so frequently:

I wanted to focus on the quality of the interaction, for example, students should say correct sentences, or use good word choice[s], or the sentences should be meaningful ... Perhaps it is unrealistic for the students at this time to do so, but I was concerned that they would repeat the same mistakes in the future, so I tried to focus them on the errors and encouraged them to express their ideas in grammatically correct ways. I believe that showing the errors to the students helped them remember the structures better. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

Notably, Lan was also aware that she needed to return to her usual approach of explaining vocabulary and grammar to help the students to complete the tasks. As she said:

I know I still explained linguistic structures to the students. All I wanted to do was to make it easier for them to interact with each other. If they had ideas but didn't know how to express them, I'm sure they just sat there and didn't say anything to each other. Because our ultimate goal is to increase student interaction, I believe it is appropriate to occasionally tell them the meaning of the words or explain the grammar structures. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

In summary, Lan's responses show that she valued student interaction in task-based lessons and saw interaction as the most important criterion for determining the success of the lessons. Despite this, she reverted to her traditional strategy of explicitly explaining the meaning of discrete words and correcting grammar errors so the students could keep their conversations flowing and produce accurate sentences. Although Lan was aware of her return to her regular teaching approach, she felt it was appropriate for her students' situation.

Challenges of adopting TBLT

Lan stated that she encountered three major challenges while teaching the three Cycle 1 lessons. First, she found it difficult to complete all the activities in the time allotted in the lesson plans, so she stated that she needed more time in the following lessons. As Lan asserted:

One of the constraints I faced while teaching these lessons was the time constraint. I was tempted to run the marathon [laugh]. Next time, we should reduce the number of activities

and increase the amount of time allotted to each activity so that I have more time to exploit them and check students' work. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

Lan's struggle was reflected in the fact that she had to use some of her break time to finish her lessons, and she frequently appeared confused and rushed when implementing the last two activities of each lesson. At the time, the students were also disinterested in the activities because they were eager to take a break.

Second, Lan stated that she struggled to keep the class under control during the communicative activities. As she said:

As you know, the student's English proficiency was quite limited, and they were passive, so every time the tasks were carried out, I had to go to each student's location to support them and ensure they were engaged in the tasks. While I was assisting this group, perhaps the other groups were not paying attention to the tasks at hand, or they were waiting for me to assist them. I couldn't control the entire class at once, or perhaps I didn't have enough experience controlling a task-based learning class. For the time being, I'm just doing my best. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

As a result, she continued, "this made me more tired than the normal lessons" (Lan, SSI, C1, P2). Her response indicates that she was aware of additional teacher roles in task-based lessons, such as controlling the class and ensuring that students were truly engaged in the tasks. However, because she lacked prior experience, she found the multiple tasks challenging and exhausting.

Finally, Lan stated that designing task-based lessons was difficult and time-consuming for her.

The task-based lessons were extremely time-consuming and difficult to prepare. In our lesson planning session, I had to think a lot about how to use the textbook effectively and in a task-based approach. I wanted to keep all the activities in the textbook at times, but I also thought they were unnecessary. Which ones to choose and which to adapt are hard choices. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

Lan also revealed the challenges of designing task-based lessons in an unofficial meeting with me. As she said:

While we were fortunate to have this textbook with a lot of tasks and communicative activities, we still needed to make many changes, such as adding this, removing that, and trying to make them fit the TBLT framework and suit our context. I imagine that if I had to design the lessons from scratch, it would be very time consuming and difficult to design the tasks related to the target structures, to design the pre-task activities to prime the students with structures, and then to design the post-task activities to raise students' consciousness of the structures in a meaningful way, and so on. This isn't going to be easy. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

In short, Lan encountered three major difficulties in Cycle 1 of the PAR: time constraints to implement the lessons, increased effort required to manage the entire class's involvement in the tasks and designing task-based lesson plans.

Perception of students' learning

Lan was satisfied with her students' improvement in interaction and engagement in the lessons. As she said:

I think although the students did not interact with each other as much as I had expected, at least they interacted more than in Phase 1. That is the thing we need to agree with each other. So I was still happy with their improvement regarding engagement and interaction compared with Phase 1. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

As most of the activities were communicative so the students had to exchange information or ideas with each other, and so they did not have many chances to doze off during the lessons as usual [Laugh]. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

However, Lan did not think that her students' language proficiency improved. As she said:

I need to say that I was quite concerned about the grammatical mistakes they made. When carrying out the tasks, the students still made many grammatical mistakes, the range of vocabulary was simple although at least they tried to speak out their feelings, opinions, and ideas. I did not see any changes in their reading, listening, and writing skills as well. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

These comments demonstrate Lan's continued perception of language learning success as correct use of language forms. They also demonstrate that, while Lan was concerned about the number of mistakes students made, she saw that they had more opportunities to interact with one another and were more engaged in the lessons than in Phase 1.

Attitude toward the adoption of TBLT

Lan had a positive attitude toward TBLT. She stated that what she learned about TBLT from the TPDL workshop and from the collaborative lesson planning sessions. In an informal meeting, she wanted me to share with her more strategies or documents related to TBLT. As she said in the interview:

I really like this approach [TBLT]. When I worked with you and other teachers in the TPDL workshop and in designing lessons together, I could learn many useful things such as how to make the lessons more effective, which activities to choose to make the students more active etc. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

In addition, Lan confirmed that despite some challenges facing her, she was willing to continue to adopt a task-based teaching approach with her students in the next lessons and in the future. She said:

I will adopt it [TBLT] for my students in other classes from now on. This time, I have gained some experience, there was still some confusion, but I hope that I will do better in the next three lessons and in the future. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

Finally, Lan reported that her task-based lessons in Cycle 1 were fun and successful to some extent.

About the task-based lessons, I think they were quite successful. Why? Because I could see the students were more engaged in the lessons than they used to be. Maybe this approach brought something new in the class, they [the students] found it interesting and new, and so they were involved in the lessons more than Phase 1. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

In general, Lan's attitude towards TBLT and task-based lessons was generally positive, as she expressed her willingness to use TBLT and recognised some of the benefits that the approach brought to her students.

5.4.1.1.3. Student perspectives on Lan's lessons

Six students were invited to participate in the focus group interviews (three students per group). The interview data reveals two major themes regarding the value of task-based lessons and the level of difficulty of the activities. First, all six students stated that they enjoyed the lessons because they were fun, interesting, and relaxing. The following excerpts demonstrate these points of view:

We did have a lot of fun together. For example, when we discussed making up the conversation, we laughed a lot. My friend had very funny ideas and we could freely make up the content in our way. (Hiep, Lan's class, FG1, C1, P2)

The lessons had many games and I liked them very much. They helped us to have a relaxing time and could learn useful things. (Hoa, Lan's class, FG2, C1, P2)

Furthermore, they all agreed that working in pairs or groups helped them improve their communication skills, motivating them to learn and practise the language in specific contexts. For example, they stated:

The thing that I liked most about the lessons was that they were very useful. They were useful because I had the feeling that my speaking skill could be improved. Previously, I did not talk much, but now I could exchange information with my friends. Most of the time, this was not easy, but at least I could make my friends and my teacher understand what I said a little bit. (Hue, Lan's class, FG1, C1, P2)

Working in groups or pairs was not as scary as I used to think because my teacher helped me a lot. When I did not know something, I just simply asked her, and my friends helped me too. This encourages me to talk more even though I know that my English is still limited. (Hoa, Lan's class, FG2, C1, P2)

Regarding the student perception of task difficulty, half of the students interviewed stated that the tasks were challenging for them. For example, they stated:

The tasks were not simple. For example, when I was exchanging information with my friends to finish the table, I didn't know how to say the entire sentence, so I just read one or two words from my table for her. It was also difficult for me to describe the picture to my friend. Or, when I asked her the questions, she didn't understand what I was saying, so I had to speak in Vietnamese. I don't think the tasks were particularly difficult with other people, but my English proficiency was insufficient, and I didn't know many English words, so they were difficult for me. (Ly, Lan's class, FGC1, P2)

Yes, I agree, the tasks were not easy for me too. (Khanh, Lan's class, FGC1, P2)

Another half of the students (3), on the other hand, stated that the tasks were appropriate for their skill level and that they could complete them with teacher assistance.

I think the tasks were not so difficult. I could do them. When there was something that I did not understand or did not know, I asked for my teacher's help. Yes, I could complete the tasks. (Hung, Lan's class, FG1, C1, P2)

Yes, I think the tasks were normal, not so difficult. When I could not express my ideas, I looked up the words in the e-dictionary or asked my teacher. Ah, I also think that we could use the given words in the textbook to complete the tasks. They were very useful. (Hiep, Lan's class, FG2, C1, P2)

To me, the tasks were so so. My friends and I could complete them. But with the discussion activities in the lessons, we had to use our mobile phone to search for ideas or vocabulary, or we asked our teacher some new words and expressions. Finally, we could do them. (Hoa, Lan's class, FG2, C1, P2)

The perspectives of the students are summarised in Table 27 below.

Table 27

Students' perspectives of Lan's lessons

Students' views	Number of students (6)
1. Lessons are fun and interesting	6
2. Lessons help to improve speaking skill	6
3. Tasks are difficult	3
4. Tasks are suitable for their proficiency	3

5.4.1.2. Post-cycle 1 reflection meeting

We discussed the current issues and reflected on what each teacher had done in the three Module 8 lessons during the post-Cycle 1 meeting. On the projector screen, I showed the teachers excerpts from videos of their lessons, as well as a summary of their perspectives and student perspectives. With Lan, I identified some positive aspects of her practises compared to Phase 1, as well as some issues that she should address in the following cycle. With respect to positive points, we agreed that she should continue to provide students with various opportunities to interact in the classroom, such as through pair and group work, or through teacher-student asking and answering personalised questions. Her assistance to students

during the implementation of communicative activities should be maintained as well because it encouraged students to continue working on their tasks. She should, however, take a more student-centred approach to support the students rather than providing them with the answers they required right away. Furthermore, I suggested that she be more tolerant of the students' mistakes and refrain from interfering in their conversation to correct grammatical errors because it did not always result in grammatical accuracy in their utterances but instead disrupted the flow of the students' turns and conversation. Another point I suggested was how she organised pair/group work, though this was not a critical issue. She should encourage students to move more and work with different people rather than allowing them to sit still and work with the students next to them throughout the lesson. At this point, I invited Huong to share her experiences with Lan and Minh in grouping students. We all agreed that Huong's experiences were fascinating and that they should be learned or modified in all three classes in the following cycle. Lan recognised the issues and agreed with me on the points I raised.

5.4.1.3. Cycle 2

5.4.1.3.1. Implementation of the lessons

Lan's Cycle 2 lessons saw three significant changes. These included how students were grouped, how students were supported, and how corrective feedback was given. First, in terms of student grouping, Lan adopted Huong's ideas from the post-Cycle 1 meeting to encourage greater student engagement in the interactive tasks. As such, the students were divided into groups and worked with various partners. In the first two communicative activities of Lesson 1, students appeared hesitant to switch places to work with those they were unfamiliar with. However, they appeared more at ease and engaged in the tasks throughout the rest of Lesson 1 and the next two lessons (Lessons 2 and 3). As I mentioned in my field note:

The students knew what to do when the teacher requested them to work in pairs. They quickly stood up, walked around to find their partners, and looked happy. Notably, they moved around in the classroom, working with various people at the teacher's request. (FN, L3, C2, P2, Lan's class)

Second, with respect to providing support, Lan took a much more student-centred facilitating approach. Instead of just translation and grammar explanation, I noticed that she used a variety of techniques to assist students. For example, as shown in Extract 5.1, she co-constructed the sentences with the students and provided them with prompts.

Extract 5.1*Lan co-constructing sentences with students*

Turns	Interlocutor	Conversation
1	S	Cô ơi em muốn nói người bán báo đang ngủ gật thì như thế nào hả cô? (Teacher, how can I say: the newspaper seller is dozing?)
2	T	<i>Báo</i> nói thế nào nhỉ? (How can you say <i>newspaper</i> ?)
3	S	Newspaper
4	T	Ok, <i>bán</i> là...? (How to say <i>sell</i> ?).
5	S	Sell, buy, à không (oh no), sell.
6	T	Right, seller, newspaper seller, sleep sleep ... is ... hiện tại tiếp diễn nào (present continuous tense please) ...
7	S	Newspaper seller is sleeping
8	T	Good, make it simple like that. Miêu tả tiếp cho bạn vẽ đi (Keep describing your picture for your partner to draw)

In this extract, Lan tried to help the student to make his own sentence based on his existing knowledge. Thanks to her prompts (turns 2, 4, and 6), her co-construction and metalinguistic guidance (turn 6), the student finally could express his idea (turn 7). This way of facilitation helped to activate the students' existing knowledge and required their contribution to produce the utterances instead of depending too much on the teacher as in Cycle 1.

Third, with respect to providing feedback, Lan no longer interrupted students to explicitly correct grammar errors unless they made the same errors repeatedly. Lan checked the students' work after they completed the activities by asking them to stand up and present their findings. This time, Lan seemed to ignore the students' minor errors in word choice or word order, allowing the students' utterances to continue without being interrupted by grammar correction. Extract 5.2 from Lesson 2 illustrates this.

Extract 5.2*Lan checking students' work*

Turns	Interlocutor	Conversation
1	T	Ok, giờ các em nói về khả năng đặc biệt của bạn mình nhé. Now you talk about your friends' special ability, ok? Is there anyone with special abilities in our class, Sinh?
2	S	Yes, yes, first is Loan can cook cake ... very good cake. Loan always cook the cake for her mother, her mother and her sister birthday.
3	T	Uh-huh [nods her head]
4	S	She the same with me because I always can cook beautiful cake.
5	T	Oh! Really, good.
6	S	And Han can yoga ... do yoga? ... play yoga? So good a long time ago.
7	T	Yes, Han can do yoga very well and she has done it for long time. Ok, ok.
8	S	Yes, she can do yoga well and last Binh can play flute /fljut/...
9	T	Play what? what is /fljut/?
10	S	Chơi sáo đây cô (play flute, teacher)
11	T	Ah ok, Binh can play /flu:t/. Excellent! Thank you very much, Sinh. Good job!

In Extract 5.2, Lan did not correct student Sinh's grammatical mistakes but focused on the messages in his sentences. She frequently used backchannels such as "Uh huh", "good", "Ok", "Yes" to signal that she understood and focused on his utterances. The backchannel technique also motivated Sinh to keep speaking in this case. When Sinh was confused with the word choices and sought teacher feedback by raising intonation (Turn 6), Lan did not explicitly explain the item as she usually did in Cycle 1 but responded to him with a recast (Turn 7). This way of scaffolding students helped the conversation keep going forward and remain smooth.

In summary, Lan's practice of three task-based lessons in Cycle 2 reflected three major significant changes, all which were also better points in comparison to Cycle 1. First, she had more experience organizing groups or pairs by encouraging students to collaborate with various partners. Second, she used a variety of methods to assist facilitate students while they were carrying out the activities. Third, she no longer interrupted the students to correct their errors, instead focusing on the messages or meaning in their utterances. As a result, the three

lessons in Cycle 2 appeared to be more effective than those in Cycle 1 because the students appeared to be more active in interacting with each other, felt free to express their ideas, and did not rely as heavily on the teacher.

5.4.1.3.2. Lan's perspectives

Understanding of TBLT

In Cycle 2, one point in Lan's understanding of TBLT remained the same as in Cycle 1, and two points changed. What remained the same was her belief that TBLT meant a lot of interaction in the classroom.

To me, I still think that TBLT means more student interaction, more chances for them to talk in the classroom rather than doing grammar exercises. TBLT focused on the communicative skill of the students. This is a good point of TBLT as I said before. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

The first point that changed was that she now saw how TBLT focused on fluency rather than accuracy. This made her more tolerant of the students' mistakes as seen in the classroom observation data. She realised that it was not realistic to expect her students to focus on interaction and accuracy at the same time.

Ok, as you can see, I did not correct the students' linguistic mistakes too much as in Cycle 1. I now wanted them to feel free and comfortable to express their ideas and opinions, whatever they wanted to say as long as they were on task and engaged in the interaction with each other. At their proficiency level, it is hard to ensure both accuracy and fluency, as we both know the students still made many grammar mistakes. So now I gave priority to fluency. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

The second point that changed was Lan's perception of teacher roles in TBLT compared to Cycle 1. As she said:

I realise that the students could express their ideas or opinions in their own way, yes, it is not impossible, as long as I supported them. You are right, I did not have to give them straight answers but let them think and construct the sentences with me. Or sometimes, I just told them what types of tense to use, for example, I just said "use present continuous tense", then they knew how to say. So the point is teachers should find ways to help the students to make use of their own existing knowledge. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

According to her response, the role of teachers in task-based lessons is not only to encourage students to interact with each other, but also to activate their prior knowledge and assist them in becoming more self-directed learners. This realisation explains why she began to use a more student-centred approach to facilitating students, such as co-construction, when responding to their questions.

Challenges in implementing the task-based lessons

Lan stated that the biggest challenge for her after six lessons in two cycles was not reverting to the traditional method of teacher-centred linguistic explanation, which she felt tempted to do to assist the students during the tasks. She stated:

The difficulty for me is still distinguishing between what you call priming and explicitly teaching the structures for the students. Why? For example, this activity, here ... I show you [turns the book and points at a textbook activity], I primed the students with the vocabulary of appearance by matching the words and the meanings. So of course, I needed to explain for them the meaning of the words even after they did the matching. You know what I mean? It is very tricky not to return to my familiar way of teaching structures. I was sometimes still confused about this. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

She went on to say that she was still perplexed by Ellis's (2018a) third principle, which states that students should rely on their own resources to complete tasks, but that teachers' role is to assist students in completing the tasks.

You told me that Ellis's principle 3 is to let the students solve the tasks themselves. Then in the last collaborative meeting, you also said to Minh that teachers are encouraged to facilitate students during the task process. I think two things were in contrast to each other, and this makes me so confused. Honestly, I was still not so sure about this. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

Lan's responses indicate that her main challenge in implementing TBLT was her lack of experiences and knowledge of TBLT.

Perception of student learning

Lan perceived that the communication skills of the students had improved.

Over the past six task-based lessons in both cycles, the students gradually became more involved in the tasks, and they were more and more familiar with the collaboration working with each other. This is a good sign. They gradually interacted more, talked more, and were more enthusiastic. You could see that I did not have to frequently remind them to interact with each other. To me, that is a good sign. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

However, Lan saw that the students still needed to work on grammatical and lexical mistakes in their utterances, and that their reading and listening skills were still limited.

I'm happy to see the students talking more in class. I thought they liked the lessons, and at least, they became more confident to speak English. To be honest, I'm still concerned about the mistakes they made in the lessons. Raising their awareness of linguistic structures at the end of the lessons did not appear to be sufficient. Maybe I'll give them grammatical exercises as homework so they can practise the structures more, and I'll spend a certain amount of time in each lesson checking it before I teach them using this task-based approach. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

As I stated in Cycle 1, I cannot tell much about their English proficiency improvement after only a few lessons because their starting point is quite low. I could still see many errors in their sentences, and their word choices were still confusing and incorrect. They still struggled to finish a listening or reading activity. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

Attitude towards the task-based lessons

In Cycle 2, Lan was still positive about TBLT, as she said:

The more I teach TBLT, the more interesting things I find. Some students, for example, who were previously reticent, became more involved in discussions with their peers. Alternatively, some students have a very low English level but had many interesting and creative ideas to share with their classmates during the tasks, despite the fact that they used much Vietnamese in their sentences. Some students who were previously passive could now look up fancy words in the dictionary and use them in carrying out tasks, which was very good because they made an effort to use new words in contextualised situations. Of course, such words were not always appropriate and were used incorrectly, but they at least attempted to use them.

After all, they started to talk more, try using more new words in contexts, and have more fun in learning. I think that is what TBLT brings to them, and I can see the clear changes. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

Lan also experienced better rapport with her students in the task-based lessons. As she said:

I feel that the students become closer to me, and they are more comfortable when asking me. They did not feel shy when asking questions. They did not hide their lack of knowledge. It is because they know that I am always willing to help them. The classroom atmosphere is very relaxing and friendly. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

Consequently, Lan was keen to continue using tasks in her future lessons after the current study:

In the future, I will continue using TBLT for my students although maybe my lessons are not perfectly task-based, they do not strictly follow the task-based framework as what we had designed together in this study. At least I will implement communicative tasks rather than assigning students written grammatical exercises as I used to do. I intend to apply for a PhD course next year, and now I think TBLT is my interest and might be an interesting topic for my PhD in the future. If possible, can you share with me more materials related to TBLT? (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

Three months after the current project, I contacted the three teachers to ask about how they used the textbook and TBLT in their classroom. Lan responded that she often used tasks for her current students, and for the extra classes in some English education centres. She reported that she was motivated to do so because the students seemed to enjoy her lessons more.

5.4.1.3.3. Student perspectives on Lan's lessons

In two groups, seven of Lan's students took part in the focus group interviews (one group of three, one group of four). Five had been in FGs in Cycle 1, and two were new. The interviews revealed their positive attitudes towards the task-based lessons and the challenges they faced. First, all seven students agreed that they were more familiar with and interested in communicative activities. The excerpts below demonstrate this.

I feel that in the recent lessons our teacher focused much on communication as she asked us to interact with each other or talk much. I really like this idea because it is very useful for us.

Moreover, the activities were very interesting, so my partners and I had a lot of fun. (Ly, Lan's class, FG1, C2, P2)

I worked with my friends, and we had fun together. We are gradually familiar with these group work or pair work. We did not feel bored or shy any more. (Hung, Lan's class, FG2, C2, P2)

The more we did the pair work or group work activities, the more familiar we were with them. We could freely move around the classroom to choose the place to work. I could feel the classroom atmosphere was very lively, so I liked it. (Hoa, Lan's class, FG1, C2, P2)

Regarding challenges, the students reported two main issues: their shyness when performing the tasks in front of the class and working with their partners, and their difficulty in expressing their ideas. As two students said:

Honestly, I was quite shy when I stood in front of the class. I remember that I had to do miming for my friends to guess my action. At that time, I was so shy. (Ly, Lan's class, FG1, C2, P2)

Yes, I agree. With me, I was even shy with my partner as I was much more stupid than him. I tried to express my ideas, but he did not understand, and this wasted his time. I thought so, so I was ashamed. (Hiep, Lan's class, FG2, C2, P2)

Concerning the difficulty of the tasks, three students stated that they still had difficulty in expressing their ideas clearly so that their partners could understand them.

But to me, the tasks were still challenging as my friends still could not understand my description for her to guess. I wanted to look at the textbook, copy the words from it, and write down my description in the notebook and then read it for my friend. But I did not have enough time to do so, and my teacher said that we should not write it down. (Hung, Lan's class, FG1, C2, P2)

The tasks were not so easy. I did not know many words, so I found it really hard to explain what I wanted to say. (Hoa, Lan's class, FG2, C2, P2)

I think if I had to talk in English all the time, it would be very difficult for me. I think, difficult for the whole class. But I often used gestures to explain for my friends and teacher to understand me. I think I had to learn more new words at home. I had many ideas inside my head, but I found it hard to express them. Maybe, this is one of the most challenging issues for me when I have to interact with my friends. (Khanh, Lan's class, FG1, C2, P2)

The other four students reported that the communicative activities were suitable for them, and they could complete them in the assigned time.

I think the tasks were not so hard. I described the picture and a famous person for my friend to guess. They could understand me and easily found out who the person was. When I did not know the words, the teacher helped me, or I checked them in the dictionary. Not so hard. (Hoa, Lan's class, FG2, C2, P2)

I also think the tasks were suitable for us. (Ly, Lan's class, FG1, C2, P2)

5.4.2. Huong

5.4.2.1. Cycle 1

5.4.2.1.1. Implementation of the lessons

The three lessons in Module 8 taught by Huong had two notable features. First, she grouped students in interesting ways for communicative activities. For example, in the task in Lesson 1, Module 8, she allowed each student to choose one piece of folded paper on which a number of pairs was written (i.e., A1, A2, B1, B2, etc.). The person who selected A1 was paired with A2, and so on. The students appeared eager and curious to learn who their partners were. In Lesson 2, Module 8, she counted the students from 1 to 8 and asked them to pair up with those who had the same number (e.g., all students with number 1 worked in Group 1, all students with number 2 worked in Group 2, etc.). When the students moved around to find the members of their groups, they raised their hands and appeared excited. This made the classroom livelier, and the students appeared eager to participate in the tasks assigned to their groups.

The second common feature of the three lessons was that Huong only helped the students when they asked her to. This meant that if the students did not ask for her assistance, she let them complete the tasks on their own. Huong simply walked around the classroom checking on their progress and taking notes in her notebook while they completed the tasks. Many students, particularly the weakest ones, were observed not interacting much with one another and instead looking up the meanings or structures of words on their mobile phones. Overall, there was not much interaction between students in her class.

When the students were unable to express themselves, they turned to Huong for assistance, asking her how to express words and ideas in English or what sentence structures they should use. Huong seemed hesitant at first, looking at me and signalling whether she could answer them. Then I nodded, and she felt more at ease helping them by explaining grammar structures or translating their ideas into English.

Regarding corrective feedback, Huong always took notes while the students were carrying out the tasks or performing the tasks in front of the class. She did not interrupt the students to correct their mistakes except when she did not understand their utterances. She waited until the students finished talking and then she looked at the notes and gave feedback on both content and grammar mistakes in the students' work.

5.4.2.1.2. Huong's perspectives

Understanding of TBLT

In the interview, Huong showed understanding that TBLT meant student-centredness.

I understand that in the task-based lessons, the students should be more independent and responsible for their learning. The class was more student-centred. They become more active, more proactive rather than passively looking at the whiteboard and taking notes in their notebook. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

She was also aware that student-centredness did not mean that students had to solve problems on their own, but that they still needed support from the teacher. As a result, Huong saw the teacher's role in TBLT as promoting student-centredness while also supporting students when necessary. As she said:

I always encouraged the students to work on their own. I think student-centredness is very important in TBLT. But these students still needed help from me to complete the tasks because they are just beginners. Sometimes, they had ideas, very good ideas in their mind but did not know how to express them in English. At that time, I needed to help them so that they could complete the task on time. At first, I hesitated a bit to help them, but you said yes, so I thought this was the right and necessary thing to do in TBLT. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

We see that Huong was aware that the students were at a low level and still needed support from the teacher, and so she was willing to help them when they asked her. However, she emphasised student-centredness and wanted to encourage them to do the tasks independently. This perception explained why, in the observed lessons, Huong only supported the students when they asked her to, although she saw that the students did not talk much with each other. For this reason, she did not proactively ask them about their problems and intervene in their work as much as Lan did.

Challenges in implementing the lessons

Huong mentioned two main difficulties when teaching the task-based lessons. First, like Lan, Huong reported that the time pressure was a challenge for her. As she said:

I found it really hard to implement all the activities in the lesson plans within 90 minutes. As you could see, I often had to use the break time to finish the lessons. Sometimes, I wanted to check all the students' performances, but time did not allow so I just could check two or three pairs or groups, then quickly turned to the subsequent activities. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Second, Huong perceived that the main challenge for her was her limited understanding of TBLT. This sometimes made her confused when delivering the lessons. As she stated:

There were many times the students did not talk much in pair work or group work because they did not know the vocabulary to express their ideas, or they did not have ideas to do the activities. Half of me wanted to help them, half of me was afraid that I was contradicting the task-based principles. So I felt a little bit confused. If I understood the approach more, I would have been more confident and more successful. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Huong's response revealed the importance of teachers' needing a good understanding of TBLT if they are to be confident to make decisions in different situations in the classroom.

Perceived student learning

Huong recognised that the students were more engaged in the task-based lessons than the lessons in Phase 1. As she stated:

Obviously, the students engaged in the lessons more than in Phase 1. Although not all students really interacted due to some factors like their ability, their interest, their attitude towards the study, I think, generally speaking, they obviously interacted and spoke English more in the lessons. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Huong especially noticed that the students' use of vocabulary was better than before. As she said:

As you can see, the students' language used in the communicative tasks was much better than before. This was because they copied and learned from the samples of listening and reading texts in the pre-tasks or they looked them up in the dictionary. Sometimes, I was surprised with the word choice of the students although their choices were not always right. But at least they searched and were confident to use new words. This made me happy. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Huong did acknowledge, however, that students' learning gains were limited.

The students still made many grammar mistakes. Their listening skills still did not improve. But this is easy to understand because it is impossible to make them quickly better after just one or two weeks. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Attitudes towards TBLT

Like Lan, Huong had a positive attitude toward TBLT. First, she perceived that the task-based lessons in Phase 2 were more organised than her lessons in Phase 1:

To be honest, previously, what I often did with this textbook was to choose the parts that I perceived to be easy and necessary for the students. I did not follow any specific formats, or as I said in the last interview, I did not name the teaching method or style I taught. But now when I taught task-based lessons which were designed with very clear phases like this, I feel that it was rather easy to follow. My lessons were not messed up anymore, they had a clear organization, clear purposes in each phase. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Second, she saw that the task-based lessons were more student-centred and so the students were more responsible for their work rather than passively waiting for the answers from the teacher.

When we teach this way [TBLT], I think the important and good thing is student-centredness. The students became more independent to do the activities. They worked with each other more than with me. That is the advantage of this approach, I think. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Third, Huong commented on the positive classroom atmosphere in the TBLT lessons.

The class atmosphere seemed to be a bit more exciting and happier. I had the feeling that the students were interested in the game-like activities in the lessons. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Finally, Huong expressed her optimism about the long-term effects of TBLT on students' learning.

It is quite promising. It is not too bad as I imagined before [laugh]. If we continue to use tasks in the classroom like this, the students will gradually learn the skills of working collaboratively, and so their communication skills will gradually improve. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Overall, Huong valued TBLT and was motivated to continue using the approach.

5.4.2.1.3. Student perspectives on Huong's lessons

Six students (two groups of three) participated in the focus group interviews on the same day as the teacher interview. The focus group interview revealed two main themes regarding the students' attitude toward the task-based lessons and the challenges they encountered when carrying out the communicative activities. Regarding their attitudes, all six students stated that they enjoyed the lessons but for different reasons. Three students stated that the lessons gave them more opportunities for interaction than their last lessons and that this gave them confidence to speak English. The following excerpts illustrate this:

I like the lessons because they helped me speak more and gain more confidence. At first, I felt very shy when talking in front of the whole class. However, gradually I realised that we students were not so different from each other, I mean we were all weak students. Some of my friends talked even worse than me, but they were not shy at all. So I copied their attitudes. After about three or four times presenting to the class, I gained confidence. (Viet, Huong's class, FGC1, P2)

Yes, that is right. Same with me. After talking in front of the class for several times, I gained confidence. I was not scared anymore when I was assigned as a reporter. (Hang, Huong's class, FGC1, P2)

The other three students said that they liked the lessons because they had interesting tasks they called "games". For example, student Bien and student Ha said:

The lessons were fun. I think I moved a lot during the games. I worked with different friends and we had a lot of fun. (Bien, Huong's class, FGC1, P2)

That's right. The teacher implemented many games that were very fun and useful for us. That is what I like from the lessons. I don't want to learn grammar by doing grammar exercises. I like these recent lessons more. (Ha, Huong's class, FGC1, P2)

All six students reported that the tasks were suitable for them. The following excerpts illustrate this view.

I think the tasks were suitable for us. My friends and I could do them together. (Hang, Huong's class, FGC1, P2)

The tasks were not so difficult to me, but the problem is when I did them with my friends, they did not really get involved, and so sometimes I could not talk much with them in English. (Ha, Huong's class, FGC1, P2)

In summary, Table 28 demonstrates the students' perspectives on Huong's lessons.

Table 28

Students' perspectives of Huong's lessons

Students' views of the lessons	Number of students (6)
1. Lessons are fun and interesting	3
2. Lessons help to improve speaking skill	3
3. Tasks help to boost confidence	3
4. Tasks are difficult	0
5. Tasks are suitable for their proficiency	6

5.4.2.2. Post-Cycle 1 meeting

In the meeting, I first let Huong watch some extracts from her lesson videos and encouraged her to reflect on her own practices. She did not provide many responses but lamented the lack of interaction between students and her concern about disobeying TBLT principles when she answered students' questions while they were completing tasks. I then shared with Huong two points she should address in Cycle 2. First, I encouraged her to help students when they were doing the tasks. I told Huong and Minh that Lan helped her students, and as a result, they interacted more than their fellow students.

Second, while she emphasised the importance of student-centredness in TBLT, the way she supported the students was teacher-centred, as she simply translated the students' ideas into English, making them ready for use. This approach did not assist the students in activating their existing knowledge or creativity in expressing their ideas. I advised Huong to take a more student-centred approach when helping the students such as negotiation of meaning, co-construction, and metalinguistics. Huong agreed with me on both points and said she would

look into more techniques to help students, which she would share with us in the next meeting. She even stated that she was excited to put the Cycle 2 lessons into action to see if there were any changes in student learning.

5.4.2.3. Cycle 2

5.4.2.3.1. Implementation of the lessons

Huong's teaching in Cycle 2 changed in two main ways as compared with Cycle 1: The way she encouraged students to work in pairs/groups, and how she gave corrective feedback. With the activities that potentially "pushed" the students to interact like information-gap tasks, the students exchanged information with each other more. However, with the discussion activities, they seemed not to interact much and so Huong came to each pair/group and encouraged them to speak out. She spent more time giving instructions, providing prompts or cues when the students could not think of the answers, and trying to help the weakest students to interact with their friends. This contrasts with her support in Cycle 1, which only involved translating students' ideas into English or Vietnamese. For example, when the students asked her about the meaning of a word, she explained the word in English and used it in a specific context for them to understand. Alternatively, when they wanted her help to express a sentence, she co-constructed or gave them prompts to encourage them to produce the sentence themselves. Extract 5.3 below illustrates this.

Extract 5.3

Huong co-constructing sentences with students

Turns	Speakers	Conversation
1	S	Cô ơi, em muốn nói là tôi không thích xem phim kinh dị vì nó làm tôi bị ám ảnh thì nói thế nào hả cô? (Teacher, how can I say this: I do not like to watch horror films because they make me obsessed?)
2	T	Phim kinh dị là gì nhỉ, chúng ta vừa học xong? (How can you say <i>horror film</i> in English? You have just brainstormed it)
3	S	Horror film
4	T	Tôi không thích (I don't like)... I don't...?
5	S	Want? Don't want watch horror film?
6	T	That's alright. I don't want to watch or I don't like to watch horror film because...ám ảnh là obsessed nhé (obsessed means ám ảnh) [write the word in the whiteboard]. Vậy nói thế nào đây? (So how can you say?)
7	S	I am obsessed ha cơ? (Is it "I am obsessed"?)
8	T	Ok, vậy em nói cả câu là gì nhỉ? Nói cô nghe xem nào? (Ok, so how can you say the whole sentence? Tell me)
9	S	I don't like horror film because I am ob...
10	T	Obsessed, obsessed. Hoặc là scared (Or scared).
11	S	Vâng (yes), I don't like horror film because I, I am scared.

Extract 5.3 is typical of how Huong assisted students during group discussion. She helped the students to make best use of their own resources to express their ideas instead of simply giving them the language they needed. This was a marked increase compared to Cycle 1.

With respect to providing corrective feedback, when the students performed the task, she first asked other students to give comments on their friends' performances, and then only gave her comments based on her notes. She also used various techniques to give corrective feedback when checking their answers such as confirmation checks, clarification requests, recasts, and metalinguistic information (Lyster et al., 2013). Extracts 5.4 and 5.5 illustrate this.

Extract 5.4

Huong checking students' answers

Turns	Speakers	Conversation
1	S	This person is wear a /zumpə/ and a black shoes.
2	T	Present continuous tense, the person is...? (Metalinguistic)
3	S	Continuous? person is wearing a /zumpə/ and black shoes
4	T	A what? /zumpə/? /dʒʌmpə/?/dʒʌmpə/. (Clarification)
5	S	Yes, yes.

Extract 5.5

Huong checking students' answers

Turns	Speakers	Conversation
1	S	I do not wear uniform at school because school don't have to wear.
2	T	Yes, because the school does not ask you to wear a uniform, right? (Clarification)
3	S	Yes, uniform is not comfortable, and I don't wear many clothes I have at home. Now I can wear clothes I like at school. So wear uniform is not good.
4	T	Ah, so you mean you have a lot of clothes at home? (Confirmation)
5	S	Yes. I have many clothes, many many.
6	T	And so if the school requires you ... asks you to wear a uniform, you can't use the clothes you have. (Clarification)
7	S	Can't use? can not, yes, yes
8	T	Right. Ok. Thank you Kien. So class, to Kien's group, wearing a uniform is not a good idea. Who has another opinion? Thao please. (Recast)

As demonstrated in these extracts, when giving feedback on the students' answers, Huong did not simply correct their grammar mistakes explicitly but used various ways to negotiate meaning and form to help them realise the errors and at the same time kept the conversation going.

5.4.2.2.2. Huong's perspectives

Understanding of TBLT

Huong's understanding of TBLT in Cycle 2 remained unchanged from Cycle 1. She still confirmed that student-centredness was important in TBLT, and so teachers needed to boost the students' responsibility, independence, and proactiveness when they were carrying out tasks.

I still think that in TBLT, the student-centredness is of most importance. And this makes the task-based lessons different from the traditional lessons. The students should be more proactive, more independent, and more responsible for their tasks. And the main role of teachers is to boost such good characteristics inside them. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

She also emphasised that teachers still needed to support students. As she said:

But I still stand with my view that teachers need to provide support for students if they want their lessons to be successful. From our lessons in Cycle 1, the teacher's non-interventionist role did not work, too much teacher's involvement did not work either. TBLT requires balance and skills, and experiences from teachers. The more teachers teach in this approach (TBLT), the more experienced they are, and at that time, they should know how to adjust the approach to make it work the best for their students. At the moment, we are just at a low level of TBLT proficiency [laugh], so we think much about the rules, the principles. We are afraid of this, afraid of that. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Although Huong's perception remained unchanged since Cycle 1, in Cycle 2 she practised a more student-centred approach to help students. In this way, her practices caught up with her perceptions.

Challenges in implementing TBLT

Huong identified three main challenges when she implemented the three Cycle 2 lessons. First, she still had difficulty with controlling time. As she reported, she did not have enough time to support all students and check answers of all students:

Maybe I am too greedy and unrealistic, but honestly, I still feel that I needed more time for the lessons. I wanted to help more students and check answers of all pairs or groups because they might feel that they are cared for by me and they could learn something from the lessons, and they have motivation to try their best to complete the tasks. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Second, when checking the student's performances or answers, she had difficulty with how to focus the class on their friends' answers and give corrective feedback among themselves when various groups were presenting or reporting to the class.

Well, normally, the student[s] just focused on their work when other pairs or groups were performing the tasks or presenting the findings. I tried to encourage them to focus on the other pairs' work, but they did not listen. They wanted to make use of the time to revise or complete their work to make it as good as possible before presenting it to me or in front of the classroom. It is very useful for the students to listen to others' work and give feedback or comments. They could learn and remember many things from each other. Having experiences from this time, maybe next time, I will be stricter with the time. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Third, like Lan, Huong was also confused with how to best support the students without returning to a traditional teacher-centred approach.

It was quite tricky if we strictly followed all principles of TBLT. Although I tried to help the students in different ways, it did not always work. Some students were very weak and so I had to explain the word's meaning in Vietnamese or explain grammar structures for them to understand correctly. So obviously this was not consistent with TBLT principles, right? So I think it is the issue of teacher knowledge and experiences in responding to different situations. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

These challenges were the same that she encountered when implementing task-based lessons in Cycle 1. Her answers once again indicate the importance of teachers' knowledge and experiences of implementing TBLT as they would know how to manage the classroom and respond properly to various situations but still follow the TBLT principles.

Perception of student learning

Huong saw that the students had been better at interactions. As she said:

The students were a little bit better at interacting with each other compared with Cycle 1. They supported each other and were more active in exchanging information with each other. As I said, maybe they were gradually familiar with working in groups or pairs. This is a good sign because they would have to do a lot of pair work or group work when they study their majors next year. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

This included students more actively engaging in peer-correction when they worked in pairs/groups.

There is one important thing I want to tell you, that is the students helped each other during the tasks by correcting grammatical or vocabulary mistakes of each other. When I walked around the classroom, I realised this. So I think that as long as they were really involved in interactions, they could learn the linguistic structures from each other, they did not need me to show them. This made me quite happy. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Moreover, Huong perceived that the students were more creative and better at expressing their ideas.

Some students really surprised me because of their word choices and their effort to express their opinions or ideas in English. When receiving my compliments, they seemed to be more self-confident to express themselves. Obviously, they still made grammatical mistakes but as you said, that is normal in TBLT, so I guess, the students had much progress. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

These comments show that Huong was aware of the positive effects of TBTL in helping her students to be more interactive, proactive, and confident.

Attitude toward the lessons

Huong perceived that the three Cycle 2 lessons were more successful than those in Cycle 1 because the students were familiar with working collaboratively.

I think that the lessons in this cycle were more effective than the ones in the last cycle. I had the feeling that the students started to get used to the way of working together and they appeared willing to do so. Maybe they thought this approach was interesting and brought them much fun. I was satisfied with their engagement. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Even with myself, I feel that I gradually find it interesting. I was happy when the class became lively and noisy because of the students' engagement in the activities. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Moreover, Huong realised that in Cycle 1 she cared too much about the principles of TBLT and this made her inflexible and uncomfortable in making decisions during the lessons. However, in Cycle 2, her lessons were more “natural” as she focused on the student engagement and what they could acquire after the interaction.

In Cycle 1, the approach was still new to me. After one workshop, I could not understand all about TBLT. I was too concerned about this principle, that principle, but forgot that the main goal was to help the students interact in a meaningful context and learn something during that interaction. So in Cycle 2, I was more comfortable to make decisions in the lessons. I did not care much about the strict principles. My lessons, therefore, were more natural and more effective. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Huong also realised that implementing task-based lessons was feasible with the low-proficiency students. In fact, these students appeared more interested in the lessons. This surprised her and motivated her to keep implementing TBLT in the future.

I think I will use tasks frequently in my future lessons because it is interesting. Last time, I did not use this approach because I did not have a good understanding of it, and I always thought that communicative activities were not really necessary and suitable for my low-proficiency students. However, after six task-based lessons, I realised that the students could do the tasks and the important thing is they appeared more engaged and active in the lessons. So this is the motivation for me to frequently use tasks in my future lessons. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Together with Lan and Minh, I emailed Huong three months after the study completed to check on her TBLT implementation. Huong did not respond to my email but instead messaged me on Facebook, where she could show me some new tasks she had created for her

students and tell me different interesting stories in her classes when she used tasks. She appeared to be more interested in and engaged with designing task-based lessons than I expected.

5.4.2.2.3. Student perspectives on Huong's lessons

The same six students in Cycle 1 focus group interviews (two groups of three) attended the focus group interviews in Cycle 2. The Cycle 2 FGI findings show that all them had a positive attitude toward the task-based lessons. They described the lessons as “interesting”, “fun”, and “useful”, and that they were “willing to join the communicative activities without being shy”. The following excerpts illustrate their views.

I like the lessons because they were very interesting. I feel that the classroom atmosphere was happier, and I and my friends were willing to join the communicative activities without being shy. (Viet, Huong's class, FG1, C2, P2)

The lessons were useful because we practised speaking a lot. I talked more than I used to. I like speaking rather than doing grammar exercises. I knew more words when I talked with my friends and my teacher. (Hang, Huong's class, FG2, C2, P2)

The activities were very fun. Although I had difficulty in expressing my ideas for my friends to guess and draw, the activities were fun. I like them. (Ha, Huong's class, FG2, C2, P2)

Moreover, three students confirmed that they gained more confidence when communicating with their friends and teacher in English. For example, Loan and Mao said:

Since the teacher asked us to work in pairs and groups a lot these days, I did not feel shy when talking with others as I used to be. Before that, I had always felt shy, especially when I stood up and presented my work. But now, I feel it is normal. So I think one of the advantages of doing a lot of communicative work for me is to improve my self-confidence. (Loan, Huong's class, FG1, C2, P2)

Right. I agree. This is the thing I like most in the lessons. The more I talk, the more confident I am. I now even like speaking the most. (Mao, Huong's class, FG2, C2, P2)

All six students hoped to have more task-based lessons in the future so that they could keep practising their speaking skill. As they said:

I wanted to have more lessons like this in the future. (Loan, Huong's class, FG1, C2, P2)

Ok, I agree. I want to play games like this. (Mao, Huong's class, FG2, C2, P2)

I want to learn grammar in this way. We used the structures and vocabulary during the time we were carrying out the activities. The teacher also explained for us so I still learned many things. I think the teacher should continue to teach us this way. (Viet, Huong's class, FG2, C2, P2)

5.4.3. Minh

5.4.3.1. Cycle 1

5.4.3.1.1. Implementation of the lessons

The classroom observation data shows that of the three teachers, Minh gave the students the most independence. This was reflected through the way she grouped students, helped students, and gave corrective feedback to them. First, when pairing or grouping students, Minh let them choose their partners themselves. However, the students frequently worked with the person sitting next to them, and only changed their partners three times during the lessons.

Second, during the time the students carried out the tasks, Minh played a non-interventionist role and usually refused to answer students' questions related to their activities and encouraged them to work all by themselves. She just limited her roles to organizing activities, asking questions, and checking student's answers. For example, when the students asked Minh how to express a word or a phrase in English, Minh rarely gave them the answers. Instead, she encouraged them to find the answers themselves. The students mainly depended on their mobile phones to find the answers rather than discussing or exchanging ideas with each other. Because of this, there was not much noise from the students' discussion. Minh often sat on her chair, observed the class, and wrote something in her notebook, while the students were doing the tasks. When she did not see her students exchanging information with each other, she walked around the classroom to see if they were on task or not. When she saw most of the students engaged in the task by focusing on looking up words from their own mobile phones and writing on their own notes, she seemed to be content and returned to her chair. I noted in my field notes on the third lesson that:

I did not hear the students discussing with each other much. The lack of support and encouragement from Minh led to the fact that the students became more dependent on the mobile phones and less interactive with their friends. This made the communicative tasks less effective in terms of lacking student interaction. (FN, L3, C1, P2, Minh's class)

Regarding giving corrective feedback, Minh often asked the students to give feedback or comments on their friends' work. Specifically, after the set time, Minh asked the class to stop and checked their answers by asking several students to stand up and tell the class their findings or answers. Then, she asked some other students to give feedback on their friends' answers or performance. She was often the last one to give feedback, which she gave on both the message and grammar, and particularly on mistakes that were related to the target

structures of the lessons. She was more tolerant of other mistakes as long as she could understand what the students meant.

5.4.3.1.2. Minh's perspectives

Understanding of TBLT

Minh understood that student-centredness should be emphasised in TBLT, and so she assumed that students should not rely on teachers to solve their problems. As she said:

When I told them [students] to do the task, many of them asked me how to say this, how to say that in English. I did not give them the answers. Instead, I wanted them to work together, looking up the words that they did not know or to ask each other to find the answers. As far as I understand, task-based learning means the students need to depend on themselves to solve the problem and use their own resources. That is feature three, right? (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

Here, she thought that she was following Ellis's (2018a) third criteria that the students had to draw on their own resources and solve the problems themselves. She perceived that teachers should not intervene in this process to ensure the learner-centredness in TBLT.

Challenges in implementing the lessons

Minh mentioned two main challenges when implementing the task-based lessons. First, as with Lan and Huong, Minh felt rushed to implement all activities in the lesson plans. As she said:

I feel that there were too many activities to implement in a lesson. I still implemented them all, but the time was quite rushed. To me all of them were very useful for the students so I did not want to skip any of them. And another reason is that I was afraid that if I skipped any activities, then it might affect the structure of the task-based lessons. (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

Moreover, Minh stated that her biggest challenge was that the students did not really interact during the tasks. As in the observed lessons, they frequently focused on their cell phone to search for information instead of discussing or supporting each other. This made her uncomfortable. As she said:

To be honest, I am still not so sure when and how to introduce or explain the language in the task-based lesson. I did not support the students because I was afraid that if I did so, then it was no different from the traditional approach. But as you can see, it appeared that the students did not talk much when I totally let them do the tasks by themselves. The class was quieter than we expected; they just worked with their cell phones. What a pity! So the challenge for me is how to ensure the principles of TBLT and at the same time have the students really engage in the interaction. That is a big question and a big challenge for me. (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

To her, the difficulty of implementing TBLT was to follow the principle of TBLT, that is for the students to carry out the tasks on their own, but still ensure student interaction in the

classroom. In other words, Minh wanted the students to be independent but also expected that they would talk to each other rather than focusing on their own work or their mobile phones.

Perception of student learning

Minh perceived that her students did not gain improvement in interaction skills. As she said:

As you can see, the students did not talk much with each other in the interactive activities. So I don't think the lessons had a special effect on their communicative skill. Maybe they just started to shift to new methods so they had not been familiar with working collaboratively yet. Let's see what will happen in the next cycle. (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

Minh was not satisfied with the lessons because the students did not interact with each other. Moreover, she also did not see any changes in language proficiency.

In terms of language proficiency, I think we also need longer time to see the changes. It is not an overnight solution so I can't say anything about their changes in language proficiency. Moreover, they hardly talked much but mainly focused on writing down their ideas and searching information on the Internet so it is hard to tell the changes. (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

In short, Minh perceived that TBLT did not have a positive impact on the students' learning outcomes at least after only three lessons. She saw that she needed more time to evaluate the changes in student learning.

Attitude towards TBLT

Minh was not positive towards TBLT as she was still doubtful about the feasibility of TBLT for her students. She even stressed that she preferred her regular approach of explicit grammar explanation and PPP.

I don't think the approach [TBLT] worked well with these students as you can see, they did not interact much in the communicative activities, and we also could not see the clear improvement of language proficiency yet. So I think we still need to use the traditional approach to teach them, like teaching grammar and vocabulary first and then let them practise the structures with the communicative activities. You know, the PPP approach. (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

Well, I think ... I still prefer my regular way but plus more communicative activities. You know what I mean? (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

Moreover, Minh reported that she did not feel comfortable when the students kept silent or spent too much time on their mobile phones instead of interacting with each other:

To be honest, I felt disappointed and uncomfortable when the students were silent during the communicative activities. But I can't complain about this because they were still engaged in their tasks. Just some pairs really discussed with each other, while many others just focused on their own notes, their own mobile phones. This made me feel like I was doing something wrong. (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

Minh's responses indicate that the lessons did not work as well as she expected, which was the main reason why she had a negative attitude toward the lessons.

5.4.3.1.3. Student perspectives on Minh's lessons

Six students were invited to participate in the focus group interviews (three students per group). The findings reveal two main points regarding their attitude toward the lessons, and the difficulty level of the lessons. First, all six students stated that they realised that they did not have to do a lot of exercises about grammar rules during the lessons. Instead, they had many opportunities to learn structures from interacting with their friends and the teacher.

I realised that the teachers did not give us a lot of grammar exercises to do so I did not feel bored. I just did one or two grammar exercises at the end of the lessons, and most of the time I focused on other skills such as reading, listening, or speaking, especially speaking. I think this is ok. (Tuyen, Minh's class, FG1, C1, P2)

Yes, Tuyen is right. I also realised that the teacher did not teach us grammatical patterns in the same way as some previous lessons. I did not feel bored memorizing and doing a lot of grammar exercises anymore. (Tam, Minh's class, FG2, C1, P2)

Interestingly, two students stated that what they liked about the lessons was that they were given time to prepare the tasks themselves instead of being told what language or what ideas to use. These students had the highest scores in the placement tests and were very serious with their study. They perceived that these were the chances for them to activate their own thoughts and responsibility to complete the tasks.

Teaching and learning this way gives me some freedom and I tried my best not to depend on my teachers so much. For example, in some lessons, I asked my teacher quite a few questions about which words or language patterns to use, some ideas to plan the tasks, or how to pronounce certain words. However, the teacher encouraged us to be creative and find the answers ourselves, so I gradually learned to discuss with my friends, or search the answers on the Internet or dictionary. (Trung, Minh's class, FG1, C1, P2)

In the lessons in Phase 1, the teacher wrote all the words or structure on the whiteboard and asked us to use them to exchange information with each other or to do the drilling exercises, I wanted to use some other words, but I was afraid of making mistakes and my friends might think that I was boasting or so. However, with these tasks, the teacher changed to let us solve the problems ourselves, so I could freely try different words or expressions or ideas. If they were wrong, then the teacher would correct it for me so I could know more ways to express the ideas. (Tinh, Minh's class, FG2, C1, P2)

Regarding the difficulty level of the activities, four students found the lessons rather hard for them.

The tasks were difficult for me. I had some ideas but did not have enough vocabulary to express them so I had to search them on the Internet. (Kim, Minh's class, FG1, C1, P2)

The tasks were challenging for me, I think. I spoke in Vietnamese, and she showed me how to say the sentences in English. When I said something wrong, most of the time my sentences were wrong, she helped me. If the teacher required me to use English all the time to complete the tasks, then I think that would be very difficult for me. (Thu, Minh's class, FG1, C1, P2)

It was hard for me to explain or express my ideas into English. When I described my picture for my partner to draw, I sometimes had to show her my picture as I could not make her understand me. Yes, sometimes I cheated. (Kinh, Minh's class, FG2, C1, P2)

Sometimes I did not really understand what to do in the tasks because my teacher gave the instructions quickly or in English. For example, with the task that required me to describe my picture for my partner to draw, when the teacher handed out two sheets of incomplete pictures, both me and my partner thought that we needed to find the differences between the two pictures. Five minutes later, we realised that we misunderstood the requirement of the teacher, so we did not have enough time to complete the task. (Kien, Minh's class, FG2, C1, P2)

In brief, the students' perspectives on the task-based lessons are summarised in Table 29.

Table 29

Students' perspectives of Minh's lessons

Students' views of the lessons	Number of students
1. Lessons are fun and interesting	3
2. Lessons help to improve speaking skill	2
3. Lessons don't contain many grammar exercises	6
4. Lessons make them more creative and independent	2
5. Tasks are difficult because of their lack of vocabulary	4
6. Tasks are difficult because of their misunderstanding of the instruction	1
7. Tasks are suitable for their proficiency	2

5.4.3.2. Post-Cycle 1 meeting

In the collaborative meeting, Minh reflected on her task-based lessons that most of the students did not talk as much as she expected. As she said:

You see, the students did not interact much with each other even though they were engaged in the activities. I wanted them to be independent and solve the problems themselves, but they did not talk much to each other in the pair work and depended much on their mobile phones. I think I will need to help them more in the next lessons. (Minh, post-C1, RM, P2)

Lan, Huong, and I agreed with Minh's opinion. As Lan said to Minh:

In my class, I had to support them a lot so that they could interact with each other. And they did talk more than Phase 1. So I think you also need to support them more. They are still too low-proficient to do the task all by themselves. (Lan, post-C1, RM, P2)

Meanwhile Huong said:

I agree. I also gave them freedom and tried to encourage them to do the activities by themselves. But if they needed me, I was still there to help. But I also think that my students did not interact as much as I expected because I just could help some of them, not the whole

class. So as Lan said, we need to support students more if we want them to talk more.
(Huong, post-C1, RM, P2)

This part of discussion shows that the teachers, especially Minh, realised the importance of teacher facilitation for the low-proficiency students in task-based lessons. According to them, the teachers supporting students during pair/group work could affect the quantity and quality of interaction. Minh stressed that she would make changes in the way of supporting the students in the Cycle 2 lessons. In the post-Cycle 1 meeting, Minh also realised that the way she grouped students was not effective so she said that she would also need to change this by learning from Huong or from the Internet. Finally, in the focus group interview, the students reported that sometimes they did not understand what to do, so I suggested Minh spend more time giving careful instruction to the class to make sure that all students clearly knew their tasks.

5.4.3.3. Cycle 2

5.4.3.3.1. Implementation of the lessons

In the three Cycle 2 lessons, Minh implemented three obvious changes in comparison with Cycle 1 lessons regarding supporting students and organizing pair/group work. First, she used various ways to group or pair the students so that they could work with different partners and change their positions more in the classroom. She learned these ways of grouping students from Huong. Consequently, the classroom atmosphere became more excited as with Lan's and Huong's classes. The students were also curious about their new partners, and Minh appeared pleased with their attitude.

Second, before and during the time the students carried out the communicative activities, Minh often stressed that they needed to interact with each other instead of focusing on their own work. The students seemed to be more familiar with working collaboratively and exchanged ideas more. When they were confused or hesitant, Minh supported them through explaining grammar rules, co-construction, and sometimes translation. This support reduced the time the students focused on their mobile phones and kept their conversation going. As I noted in my fieldnotes:

Minh was much more enthusiastic in facilitating the students. She was back to how she used to be. She looked much more relaxed when answering the students' questions or helping them to find the answers. This made the students more comfortable too. And because Minh continuously reminded them to interact with each other, so I could hear much more noise

from their talk than in Cycle 1. (FN, L3, C2, P2, Minh's class) Third, Minh gave careful instructions to the students both in English and Vietnamese and asked if the whole class understood or not. She also often invited one student to stand up and illustrate the activities with her to make sure that everyone knew what to do. The students were observed to listen to the instruction carefully.

The three lessons in Cycle 2 were more effective than those in Cycle 1 as evidenced in greater student engagement and interaction, and a livelier classroom atmosphere than in Cycle 1. Minh appeared more comfortable when supporting the students and looked happier when seeing them interacting with each other.

5.4.3.3.2. Minh's perspectives

In the post-Cycle 2 interview, Minh's perceptions of the task-based lessons revealed three themes: her attitude towards the lessons, her perceived difficulties, and her perception of the student learning. These themes are presented as below.

Understanding of TBLT

Minh's understanding of TBLT changed in comparison with Cycle 1 and became like both Lan and Huong's understanding. These changes explained why Minh was more supportive and encouraged students to get more involved in interaction. First, she was aware that the non-interventionist role of teacher did not work with her students.

So TBLT does not mean no teacher intervention in the students' work. My last three lessons prove this claim. I gave them a lot of independence, let them solve the problems themselves, but this did not work. I strictly followed the principles, but the three lessons were not so successful in terms of boosting student interaction. (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

Thus, she saw that although the students should be the centre of the lessons, they still needed support from the teachers:

And so student-centredness did not mean that teachers just sit and watch students carry out the activities, and do nothing like what I did [laugh]. Student-centredness in this case means that they get involved in the tasks, do the tasks with each other instead of copying what the teachers teach and write in the whiteboard, but teachers still need to help students. Especially those who are at a low-proficiency level like these students need even more support from teachers, you know, like what Lan did, right? (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

This idea was somewhat like Huong's, who also saw that teachers need to support students even when student-centredness was the central priority in TBLT.

Finally, Minh emphasised that the students should interact more when learning with tasks.

This response was like Lan's idea. As Minh said:

Obviously, we use TBLT because we want the students to interact more in the classroom. So interaction is also very important in TBLT. So in Cycle 2, I always reminded the students to talk to each other, I encouraged them not to use mobile phones, I observed them to see if they really talk about the task or about something else. In general, it was tiring and hard. (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

In short, Minh's understanding of TBLT focused on two main points: student-centredness and student interaction. She was aware that both points require more roles from teachers so that the students can get engaged in the interaction and carry out the tasks successfully.

Challenges in implementing TBLT

For Minh, the big challenge for teachers was to design or select suitable tasks for their students. She emphasised the importance of ready-made task resources:

I think the difficulty for teachers in general and for me in particular is to design or select tasks that require students to exchange information such as describing pictures to draw or describing people to guess like in Module 10. I think such tasks are suitable for weak students. But we cannot always implement such tasks in every lesson and every topic, and every target structure. So the sources of task material is very necessary and useful for the teachers who have just learned about TBLT like me, Huong, and Lan. This textbook is Ok, but we still need more than that. (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

Like Lan and Huong, Minh still wondered how to balance between the teacher's involvement or intervention and the student's independence when implementing task-based lessons:

When comparing between two cycles, the students talked more in Cycle 2 because I supported them more and always reminded them to interact with each other. Without my help, they might be silent and focused too much on their cell-phone as in Cycle 1. So to me, the tricky multiple job of teachers is to scaffold students but still have to ensure their independence and freedom of expressing their ideas, and still have to ensure the interaction happens among them. Wow, that is so difficult, right? (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

In short, after two cycles, Minh's main challenges when working with TBLT were to design suitable task-based lessons for students and how to implement effective lessons without misbehaving TBLT principles.

Perception of student learning

Like Lan and Huong, Minh complimented the students because of their involvement in the interaction.

I am happy with the students' engagement in the tasks this time. They did talk to each other, not to the cell-phones anymore [laugh]. This is an obvious progress of the students. This made the classroom atmosphere noisier. I like this. In Cycle 1, I was shy and so uncomfortable when the students did not talk to each other when I assigned them communicative activities. (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

Minh also stressed that some students had improved their speaking skill. As she said:

Some students were better at speaking. They used words and grammar structures correctly in specific contexts. They could express their ideas in their own ways, which is very good. (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

However, Minh was still unsure about the language learning progress of her students:

However, to be honest, with most of the students, they talked more [but this] did not mean their English got better. Your approach [TBLT] just helped them [get] better at interacting. The low-proficiency students like these ones will need more time to get progress in reading, writing, listening, and even speaking. So let's wait for some more time until they attend the IELTS tests, then I will let you know the result [Laugh]. (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

Attitude towards the lessons

Like Huong, for Minh the three lessons in Cycle 2 were far more effective than those in Cycle 1. As she said:

So in terms of student interaction, obviously, these three Cycle 2 lessons were more, far more successful than those three Cycle 1 lessons. I am quite happy with this. (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

As to whether she would use TBLT in her future lessons, Minh was ambivalent:

Well, I think I might if I have time and enough resources. Or at least, I will use tasks in my lessons but not necessarily follow all principles of TBLT, which is quite hard, you know. Anyway, the tasks, to some extent, are like the games I usually implement for my class, which might bring motivation and fun to the students. Of course, to the low-proficiency students like the current students, I will need to help them and encourage them much to make the interaction happen. (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

Despite these reservations, Minh was manifestly more positive towards TBLT in Cycle 2 than in Cycle 1. In addition, three months after the study's completion, I emailed Minh to follow up on her TBLT implementation. She stated that the students were now using the *New Cutting Edge, Pre-intermediate* textbook. She appeared confident that she could now recognise the tasks in the textbook and utilise them into her lessons, rather than ignoring or removing them. She also stated that she realised some of the games she used to implement in the classroom could be easily transformed into tasks, allowing her students to have fun while also engaging in meaningful language use during lessons.

5.4.4.1.4. Student perspectives on Minh's lessons

In Cycle 2, eight students volunteered to participate in the focus group interviews (four students in each of two groups). Five of them were from the Cycle 1 groups, and three were new. The interview data show that they had a more positive attitude toward TBLT than in Cycle 1. Both groups liked working collaboratively in the tasks:

The activities were very fun. They made me concentrate on the lessons more, and I did not fall asleep. We had to move around the classroom and do activities with my friends. (Tinh, Minh's class, FG1, C2, P2)

I am interested in the lessons. We practised speaking a lot. (Kim, Minh's class, FG2, C2, P2)

I don't know what to say. Yes, I agree that the lessons have a lot of games, which are very interesting and fun. I like the lessons too. (Tuyen, Minh's class, FG1, C2, P2)

Although they had difficulties performing the tasks, five out of eight students said they could complete the tasks with the help from the teacher, the mobile phone, and their partners. This was a good sign because in Cycle 1 only three students confidently stated that the tasks were not too hard for them. For example, two of these students, Tinh and Hoai, said:

Thanks to the teacher's support, I could express my ideas for my friends to understand. I think I could complete the tasks. In the discussion activities, my friend was better than me. I told her my ideas in Vietnamese and she helped me to express them in English. If there were words that she did not know, we asked our teacher or looked it up in the online dictionary. In general, all the activities were doable. (Tinh, Minh's class, FG1, C2, P2)

Yes, the communicative activities were so so. I could do them. If there was something that I did not understand, I could ask the teacher. Last time, she asked us to find the answers ourselves and it was very time-consuming, but recently she helped us and so it was much faster and easier. (Hoai, Minh's class, FG1, C2, P2)

The students' opinions about the difficulty level of the activities indicate that Minh's additional support in Cycle 2 was helpful and encouraged students to become more engaged in the tasks.

5.5. Summary of chapter

This chapter has presented data from the teaching practices and stated perceptions of three case study teachers, and their students' perceptions of the learning experience of the task-based lessons in Phase 2. Analyses used data from classroom observations, teacher interviews, and focus group interviews with students.

These key findings show that while each teacher followed a unique trajectory in their journey towards TBLT, by the end of the project all three teachers were able to effectively deliver task-based lessons. Underpinning these shifts in classroom practice were concurrent shifts in their cognition. These shifts included their understanding of the teacher as facilitator, less negative attitudes towards their students' abilities to communicate in English, a more flexible approach to lesson planning from the textbook and better time management strategies.

Additionally, the students' perceptions also changed more and more positively across the two PAR cycles and compared with Phase 1. Having experienced task-based lessons, the students stated the benefits of the tasks over their past inactive and uncooperative learning. They had

become more confident and more engaged in interactions in the classroom. In the following chapter, I draw together and discuss the key findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 in reference to the literature discussed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Introduction

Chapters 4 and 5 presented the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study. This chapter provides discussion of the key findings with reference to the research question “What impact did the PAR project have on the teachers’ practices, beliefs, and knowledge of TBLT, and on the reported experience of students?”

Phase 1 findings showed that the three teachers had a limited understanding of TBLT, and this was reflected in their lessons, which were largely teacher-centred and focused on teaching grammatical knowledge. However, through their participation in the PAR project, the teachers successfully transitioned to teaching in ways that reflected the principles of task-based (or task-supported) teaching. Evidence of this shift is seen in five areas: their stated beliefs about the relationship between form and meaning, the roles they played in the classroom, how they implemented the textbook, their perceptions of student learning, and understanding of TBLT. Each of these areas is discussed in the sections that follow.

6.2. Beliefs about the relationship between form and meaning

Across the two action research cycles in Phase 2, the teachers’ practices, and beliefs in focus on meaning changed as seen in an increase in their use of meaning-focused activities and in the way they gave corrective feedback. In respect to the meaning-focused activities, the teachers followed the pre-designed lesson plans and implemented meaning-focused activities to implicitly “prime” students to notice and use target linguistic items prior to doing the main tasks (Ellis, 2006, p. 83). Unlike Phase 1, they did not provide extended explanations of grammar rules or vocabulary or translate parts of the texts sentence by sentence. Instead, the teachers implemented activities such as matching words and pictures, brainstorming, and input-based listening tasks to expose students to language forms in context. When asked about these activities in the Cycle 1 lessons, Lan said:

Because I should not pre-teach words or structures prior to tasks, I really like the activities in the pre-task phase as they helped my students to be exposed to the structures that were necessary for them to carry out the task later. The activities were useful and very suitable for my students. The students could do them and know the meaning of the words well. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

Huong commented on one of the pre-task activities as below:

I tried not to spend much time on explaining each of the questions’ structures as you suggested in the workshop. I think that when the students listened and matched the answers

corresponding to the given questions, they could learn something from this activity. For example, in the task performances, I could see that they based on the questions and answers in this pre-task activity to make their own questions. I did not have to explain everything to the students; you are right. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

Minh shared the same idea when she talked about the pre-task activity in which the students raced to match the words about film genres with the corresponding pictures:

Last time, I just simply explained the word's meaning for the students and that's all. Now I think when the students raced in a team and looked up the words themselves, they might have had more motivation and remembered the words longer. I saw that the students rush to use their cell phones to check the meaning of the words as fast as possible because they wanted to be the winners. (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

As these comments illustrate, the teachers now saw that they did not have to teach grammar and vocabulary for learning to occur, but that learning could happen through learners "doing" activities. This belief echoes Long's (2016) claim that "attention to grammar and other code features in TBLT occurs in context, embedded in meaning-based activities, not in separate drill-and-kill sessions" (p. 24). The teachers' comments also indicate that they became convinced about the value of the meaning-focused activities from seeing how well students engaged in these activities and successfully achieved the specified learning outcomes. Similarly, Jaruteerapan (2020) found that pre-service teachers in Thailand changed their perception of the value of tasks when they saw the positive results from implementing these tasks.

In respect to providing corrective feedback, the findings showed the teachers' improvements across two cycles. For example, in Cycle 1, although Lan implemented meaning-focused activities, she still prioritised linguistic accuracy, as seen in her practice of frequently correcting many grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation errors during communicative task performance by pairs or groups of students. Extract 5.6 illustrates this point.

Extract 5. 6*Lan correcting students' grammar errors*

Turns	Speakers	Content
1	S	Coffee and tea are bad for you both wrong and right ... Uhm coffee...
2	T	Ok, the statement is both wrong and right.
3	S	Coffee make me to wake up and to study more, and to work more. Tea also to make me that...
4	T	Good, but you have to say: coffee makes me wake up, makes me work more, ... not to wake up or to work, Ok?
5	S	Vâng cô (Yes, teacher). Tea also the same make me wake up, work more, not to wake up, to work. Drink tea make me, not make me, ... no, drink tea is good for stomach...
6	T	Ôi ôi em nói cái gì đấy? (What what? What are you talking about?) Tea also makes me wake up thôi [only]. Ok? Em nhớ là make somebody do something, nên em chỉ dùng từ make thôi, không được dùng to make. Em hiểu ý cô chưa? [Remember the structure: make somebody do something, so you just use "make", not "to make". Do you get it?]
7	S	Yes teacher.

As in Extract 5.6, Lan noticed a grammatical mistake in the student's first sentence (turn 1). Instead of letting him continue his utterance to explain his opinion, Lan interrupted him to recast his sentence. Turn 4 and turn 6 also show that Lan kept explicitly correcting every grammatical error the student made despite the student's utterances being comprehensible. The evidence shows that these corrections confused the student (turn 5) and in turn 7 he simply said "Yes teacher" without any indication that he had understood the teacher's detailed explanation. This example reflects a pattern in Lan's lessons, and it confirms Skehan's (1982) claim that error correction can "put the students on the defensive" (p. 75). Consequently, students become risk adverse and avoid making errors by choosing not to use complex constructions (Skehan, 1982, as cited in Ellis, 2009).

In the Post-cycle 1 reflection workshop, the three participating teachers and I watched the recorded video of Lan's lessons. As we did so, Lan became aware of this issue, and we all agreed that this kind of corrective feedback was not helpful when given during communicative discussion. This led to her making changes in Cycle 2 when she became more tolerant of students' errors; she no longer interrupted students to correct the errors but gave them more encouragement and compliments when providing feedback. She also used various techniques such as recasting, elicitation, and clarification, with short and quick prompts to help the students express their ideas correctly without interrupting the flow of students'

interactions (Lyster et al., 2013). Lan's evolving awareness is seen in comments she made during the final interview after the last Cycle 2 lesson:

The students seemed to be more confident to express their ideas when I complimented them and did not correct their minor mistakes. Despite this, I have to confess that I still worry about them making a lot of grammar mistakes. (Lan, SSI, C2, P2)

In Cycle 1, Huong and Minh were observed to be more tolerant with the students' errors than Lan in that they did not correct mistakes during interaction between students. However, when checking students work, their feedback still mainly focused on grammatical errors and consisted of giving explicit explanations and asking students to correct their errors. In contrast, because of their participation in the workshop before Cycle 2, the two teachers became even more tolerant of the students' mistakes. Like Lan, they gave more compliments and encouragement to motivate students and used negotiation of meaning (e.g., clarification request or confirmation checks) to give corrective feedback.

These changes appeared to be the result of two key processes: self-reflection and collaborative discussion and feedback (involving me as an "expert"/guide). Regarding self-reflection, through watching recordings of themselves teaching, the teachers became aware of aspects of their practice that previously had gone unnoticed. Similarly, East (2018) showed that when high school foreign language teachers in New Zealand reflected on their practice, they came to their own theory- and- practice-informed conclusions about how TBLT might work in their context. Regarding collaborative discussion and feedback, the workshop after Cycle 1 provided the teachers with the chance to recognise the strengths and weaknesses in their lessons and what should be improved through sharing experiences and suggestions with each other and with me. Consequently, in Cycle 2, all three teachers improved the way they gave corrective feedback. The effectiveness of this kind of mentorship and collaboration has been reported in teacher training courses in Taiwan (Chen, 2016) and Honduras (Bryfonski, 2021) respectively. As Farrell (2015) suggests, mentorship and collaboration are powerful ways to expose teachers to different viewpoints and lead them to make critical changes in their cognition and classroom practices.

Despite these changes, the teachers still expressed concerns about the accuracy of student production. In the interviews, both Lan and Huong commented that the students continued to make many errors that they were probably not aware of and that they would continue to make in the future. This reveals the teachers' remaining concerns that task-based interaction did not help their students to become self-aware of the errors. Many teachers share these concerns

(Ellis, 2015b; Long, 2016). As Macalister and Nation (2019) state, getting teachers to change their beliefs is a long-term process. Similarly, Van den Branden (2006) shows that the adoption of TBLT is not overnight work; rather, it is a gradual process that needs time for teachers to adapt and adopt. In the current study, the teachers had just started to implement TBLT in three Cycle 1 lessons, and thus, their concerns were understandable.

However, Long (2016) claims that these concerns are unfounded and so should be viewed as nonissues. Long argues that limited and ungrammatical task-based interaction “is neither peculiar to task performance, nor task performance its cause, but rather, reflective of the current state of the learner’s interim interlanguage grammar” (p. 23). Moreover, according to Gass and Mackey (2006), interaction between interlocutors may create conversational feedback and promote output modification among learners. Findings from Eckerth (2008), Newton and Bui (2017), and Newton and Nguyen (2019) lend support to this point. Both studies showed that via task-based interaction, students were able to assist each other to correct their errors and then correctly take up the linguistic targets of peer-correction and negotiation for meaning.

In sum, the findings of the current study showed that, over the two cycles, the teachers gradually shifted their beliefs and practices towards meaning-focused instruction by adopting the principles of TBLT. This also reflects a mind shift in that the teachers were at this time perhaps more focused on interaction and less focused on accuracy. This process was not linear or straightforward; in Cycle 1, the teachers held on to some of their traditional practices, and by the end of Cycle 2 they still expressed concern about the students’ grammatical errors.

6.3. The role of teachers

Across two phases, the role of the teachers was seen to shift from that of a knowledge giver in Phase 1 to a facilitator in Phase 2. The Phase 1 classroom observations showed the teachers’ lessons to be strongly teacher-centred, with the teachers taking an active role in presenting the grammar and vocabulary knowledge while the students passively listened and took notes. Before every activity, the teachers fed the students with the target linguistic items. The teachers also frequently turned pair work activities into whole class activities with the teachers in control. In general, the teachers seemed to lack confidence in allowing students to make decisions about their own learning progress. Even in pair and group work, the teachers often intruded in interaction between students to correct errors or explain grammar. This kind

of teacher control was shown to limit the students' creativity and willingness to engage in truly meaningful communication. Instead, they usually restricted themselves to using the language structures provided in a rather mechanical fashion and were dependent on the teacher's guidance. Extract 5.7 illustrates this.

Extract 5.7

Huong explaining vocabulary before implementing a task

Turns	Speakers	Conversation
1	T	Ok, now you do the task. A very fun game. You will work in pairs, one look at picture A, one look at picture B, and describe the pictures for each other to find 10 differences between two pictures. Before you do the tasks, please look at the Useful Language section here. When you want to ask about the differences between two pictures, you should ask, for example, is there a boy in your picture? Is there any flower in your picture? Etc.
2	T	Nào Loan thử hỏi một câu lại xem có nhớ không nào? (Ok, now can you make a sentence with this structure, Loan?)
3	S1	Is there any apple in your picture?
4	T	Good. Hung, please.
5	S2	Is there a house in picture?
6	T	Good, is there a house in your picture nhé. Hoa?
7	S3	Is there any any dog in the picture?
8	T	Good. Các em đã hiểu phải nói thế nào chưa nhỉ? [Do you all understand what to ask?]
9	S4	Yes.

The roles of controller and knowledge giver were partially explained by the teachers' deep-rooted belief that these were the primary roles and responsibilities of teachers. This belief will have been reinforced by their apprenticeship of observation as learners in Vietnam (Borg, 2004; Lortie, 1975) and, as such, may be strongly culture-bound.

In Phase 2, for all three teachers, these roles shifted towards the role of facilitator. This shift was seen in how they used more pair and group work and spent less time pre-teaching grammar and vocabulary prior to tasks. As a result, the students took more control of their learning because they had to complete the activities themselves. For example, the students searched for information on the internet or in the textbook and asked each other or their teacher. They also changed their seats more as they had to work with different peers in different activities rather than sitting still and taking notes from the teachers' monologues or answering the teachers' questions. These changes reveal how the shift in the teacher role led

to corresponding shifts in student roles and to a marked increase in student engagement in the lessons. As Little (2007) claims, when teachers let go of control, students become more responsible for their learning.

Notably, the way the three teachers transitioned into new roles was not straightforward across the two cycles. For instance, in the Cycle 1 lessons, one of the teachers, Minh, interpreted the role shift as requiring complete rejection of her traditional teaching approach and adopting a non-interventionist role. After giving initial instructions, she put learners in groups to complete the task and avoided giving any further assistance beyond checking that the students were on-task. Consequently, because they received no support from Minh, the students turned to their mobile phones to search the information or vocabulary for the tasks and only interacted intermittently. What Minh perceived and practiced reflected the “over-application of theory (assuming that the teacher has no role to play, at least at the task execution stage)” (East, 2017, p. 421). In contrast, in Cycle 1, Lan and Huong, especially Lan, frequently assisted students by providing extended grammatical explanations. This assistance helped to keep their students’ interaction going forwards. In Cycle 2, Minh adopted a more facilitative role, which led to much more student interaction in her lessons. Lan and Huong also adjusted their assistance by using a greater range of strategies to better scaffold student output rather than just providing grammatical explanations. In summary, while there were differences in the ways the teachers adopted new roles over the two cycles, by the end of Cycle 2 all three teachers had successfully embraced the role of a task-based teacher as described by Ellis (2005a), that is, “modelling collaboration, observing and monitoring the students’ performance, and intervening when a group is experiencing obvious difficulty” (p.26).

These findings illustrate how transitioning to task-based lessons does not necessarily require that teachers and learners abandon their traditional roles of expert and novice respectively. Rather than simply replacing one role with another, task-based teachers can continue to draw on their traditional teacher role as required, such as when learners are faced with difficulties in doing tasks. As Willis and Willis (2007) point out, the traditional teacher role of “knower”, who imparts and shapes knowledge, has a legitimate place in the TBLT classroom. Similarly, Long (2016) argues that the teacher role in TBLT is not “downgraded” but “requires greater expertise, and is more important, more demanding, and certainly more communicative” (p. 24).

6.4. Teachers' perceptions of student factors

Across the two action research cycles in Phase 2, the teachers' perceptions of the student factors that made them reluctant to adopt more communicative teaching methods changed dramatically. In the Phase 1 stimulated recall interviews, all three teachers expressed negative opinions about their learners' willingness and ability to cope with tasks. For example, Lan stated that her students were too silent and passive to do any kind of pair or group work. Huong and Minh shared similar concerns and reported that their students' proficiency was too low to do tasks. For these reasons, the teachers felt the need to explicitly explain vocabulary and grammar and remove communicative activities or make them less communicative. Consequently, most classroom time was spent explaining linguistic structures and doing drills. The student factors identified by the teachers in the current study have been consistently reported in other studies on CLT and TBTL in Vietnamese context (e.g., Le, 2011; G. V. Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2015) and other Asian contexts (e.g., Harris, 2018; Lai, 2015). However, according to Ellis (2018b), the view that low-proficiency learners are not able to do tasks is a common misconception of TBLT. He argues that this misconception is due to the unwarranted assumption that tasks must be output-based (i.e., require learners to speak in L2). Ellis claims that tasks can also be input-based, which do not require speaking and so are more suitable for beginners.

By the end of Phase 2, the teachers had embraced a much more positive attitude towards the students. Over the six lessons in this phase, they saw how well the students engaged in tasks and reported notable improvements in the students' learning. Lan stated that most of her students interacted enthusiastically in tasks and willingly expressed their ideas or viewpoints in whole-class discussions. She also noted that as their interaction skills had continued to improve over the six lessons, they were now able to scaffold each other and no longer felt shy when working in groups. Huong was impressed with some students who used to be reticent but now were more confident to join group/pair discussions. She commented that the students used vocabulary or structures that were beyond those provided in the textbook. Similarly, Minh saw that rather than simply copying words from the teacher and textbook, the students had become more creative as they searched the internet for words and then used them in the tasks.

These findings showed that by implementing the task-based lessons, the teachers came to realise that their negative assumptions about their students were unfounded. They now saw

TBLT as feasible for their classes and said they would continue using the approach in the future. For example, Huong said:

I realised that the students could do the tasks and the important thing is they appeared more engaged and active in the lessons. So this is the motivation for me to frequently use tasks in my future lessons. (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Huong's statement confirms Van den Branden' (2009) claim that once teachers believe that an innovation is feasible for their context, they will be more committed to the innovation.

The students' success in carrying out and completing the tasks lend support to other studies that reported how low-proficiency learners in New Zealand, Vietnam, and Japan, respectively were able to work successfully with tasks (Erlam & Ellis, 2018; Newton & Bui, 2017; Shintani, 2016). This again confirms the teaching philosophy of TBLT, that is, that learners acquire language from their actual performances and communication (Ellis, 2013; Van den Branden, 2009). Moreover, the finding that the students actively engaged in the tasks lends support to Lai (2015), who claims that Asian learners are not inherently resistant to TBLT due to culture factors. Similarly, Jaruteerapan (2020) found that secondary school students in Thailand were open and receptive to TBLT.

6.5. Teachers' perception and management of classroom time

Across the two phases, the teachers' perceptions of the time factor and the way they utilised the classroom time changed markedly. In the Phase 1 interviews, all three teachers said that the lack of time was one of the barriers for them to implement a communicative approach. For instance, Huong commented, "if the classroom time was longer, we can implement what we wanted and what we should do". Lan and Minh stated that teaching and practising structures took the most time and so they did not have much time left for communicative activities. The time factor mentioned by the three teachers has also been noted by teachers in other studies as one of the barriers for TBLT implementation (Adams & Newton, 2009; Butler, 2017). However, Long (2016) claims that inadequate instructional time is a problem for all kinds of language teaching, not just TBLT and emphasises the need for teachers to utilise classroom time effectively. The findings of the current study confirmed Long's points.

In Phase 1, classroom observations revealed that the interactive activities could have fitted into the teachers' lessons if the teachers better managed the time by spending less time implementing activities with low communicative value. For example, they often assigned extra gap-fill exercises that they had downloaded from the internet even though these

exercises were quite like those in the textbook. A lot of time was also spent on translating the reading texts in Huong's and Minh's classes, even though they had already spent considerable time explaining grammar and vocabulary and eliciting answers to comprehension questions from their students. Consequently, the interactive activities only accounted for a small percentage of time. The way the teachers distributed time in their lessons showed that they gave priority to form-focused activities and underestimated the role of meaning-focused activities. This indicated that rather than the time factor compromising the teacher's use of communicative activities and tasks, it was their overreliance on grammar and vocabulary-focused exercises that compromised the time available for more communicative activities.

In Phase 2, the three teachers were able to manage the classroom time more effectively. Again, this change was not immediate but was gradual as they actively engaged in planning and delivering the lessons, reflecting on how the lessons went and made adaptations to future lessons accordingly. In Cycle 1 of Phase 2, the teachers spent more time on pair or group work than in Phase 1 and no longer added unnecessary form-focused activities. But in this cycle, a new time-related problem arose; that is, the teachers did not have enough time to implement all the activities that they had planned. All of them were seen to use the break-time to finish their lessons. Extending the lessons in this way was ineffective as the students were usually eager for the break and did not stay focused. In the post-Cycle 1 interviews, Lan commented that she wanted to have more time for the students to carry out and perform the tasks. Huong stated that she did not have enough time to check the students' work more thoroughly. Minh commented that she did not have enough time for implementing all post-task phase activities.

Based on these comments, in Cycle 2, we reduced the number of activities in the lesson plans. In Cycle 1, there were often four to five pre-task activities, two main tasks, and three to four post task activities in each 90-minute lesson. In Cycle 2, the number of pre-task and post task activities was reduced to three of each so that the students could have more time to do the main tasks better and the teachers could provide feedback more effectively. Consequently, in Cycle 2, the teachers completed the lessons on time and in the post-Cycle 2 interviews, they no longer complained about the lack of time to finish the lessons. They were satisfied that the students had more chances to present their work or perform the tasks in front of the class. The adjustment of the lesson plans helped to address the teachers' time issue and helped them to manage the classroom time better. This again showed the importance of the

opportunity to reflect on and adapt the lessons in response to experience. The teachers' better use of classroom time in Phase 2 in comparison with Phase 1 indicates that teachers' common perceptions that there is not enough time to teach communicatively can be addressed through helping them reprioritise how much time they invest in form-focused versus meaning-focused activities.

6.6. The teachers' perception and use of the textbook

The way the teachers perceived and used the textbook in the two phases was different. In Phase 1, the three teachers stated that they were not aware that *New Cutting Edge* provided them with affordances to implement communicative and task-based teaching. They commented that they saw no differences between this book and other commercial textbooks. They also stated that *New Cutting Edge* did not provide their students with enough grammar exercises to practice the target structures. Thus, they often supplemented the textbook with extra grammar worksheets (Lan and Huong) or games (Minh) for the students to practise the structures more. The way the teachers perceived and modified the textbook activities was different from Carless's (2003) findings that Hong Kong secondary teachers strictly followed their textbook. However, in this case, the textbook was already focused on grammar and vocabulary exercises, which the teachers were familiar with, and thus did not see a need to supplement it with further form-focused activities. In contrast, *New Cutting Edge* "gives special emphasis on communication" and "integrates the elements of task-based approach in the overall methodology" (Moor et al., 2005, p. 5), which was unfamiliar to the three teachers. Thus, they added many form-focused non-communicative activities in their lessons to mitigate the perceived weakness of the textbook. These findings were similar to other studies, which also reported that teachers often avoided the tasks found in their textbooks and replaced them with grammar-based instruction (Carless, 2012; Lai, 2015) or considered tasks as lower priority to grammar explanations (Chen & Wright, 2017). As Ellis (2018b) explains, teachers understandably practise the approach they are familiar with and are likely to reject textbooks that adopt a different approach.

During the TPDL workshop and through two lesson-planning sessions, the teachers gradually understood the textbook more and had more positive views about it. They realised that the textbook had many tasks and task-like activities, which provided them with affordances to implement TBLT. For example, Lan and Huong emphasised that thanks to the textbook, the teachers with lack of expertise of TBLT like them could use TBLT in their classrooms

without spending too much time designing their own tasks. Minh made a similar point and asserted that she now could identify the differences between this textbook with the ones that she used to use. These comments reflected the lesson planning session, in which the teachers and I did not have to design completely new tasks. Instead, we reordered the sequence of the textbook activities and adapted some textbook task-like activities to strengthen their task-likeness. These adaptations were like Willis and Willis's (2007) suggestion that, with a little tweaking, teachers could turn task-like activities into tasks and that by rearranging the order of activities could deliver lessons in line with the principles of TBLT. These two ways help to improve the impact of a textbook that offers some affordances for task-based teaching in a context where TBLT is not well established or understood, such as in the current study.

The positive changes in the three teachers' views about the textbook and their better use of it in the Phase 2 lessons indicates that for task-based materials to reach their potential, teachers need expert guidance and ongoing support.

6.7. Teachers' understanding of TBLT

The findings from the classroom observations and teacher interviews showed that over the 12 weeks all three teachers improved in their understanding of TBLT. In the Phase 1 interviews, the teachers all stated that they were unfamiliar with TBLT and could not describe any of the key features of a language-learning task. They said that they heard the term "TBLT" but did not care much about it and so did not have a good understanding of it. Other studies in the Vietnamese context (e.g., G. V. Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2015) and in other contexts (e.g., Chan, 2014 ; Chen & Wright, 2017; Lin & Wu, 2012; Zheng & Borg, 2014) have also reported on teachers' limited understanding of TBLT.

Due to the limited understandings of TBLT by the teachers in the current study, I conducted a TPD L workshop to raise their awareness of the approach. In the TPD L workshop, I introduced a definition of tasks and the four task features proposed by Ellis (2020); that is, a focus on meaning, a gap, students' own resources, and a communicative outcome. In Cycle 1 of Phase 2, despite all three teachers attending the same TPD L workshop, they showed limited awareness of TBLT as seen in the way that each teacher had retained some knowledge of different task features but not of the four features. For example, for Lan, TBLT meant more student interaction; for Minh, TBLT meant student autonomy; and for Huong, TBLT meant student-centredness. These interpretations found expression in the different ways each of them delivered their lessons. The differences in the teachers' interpretations and

practices of TBLT confirmed Bryfonski's (2021) claim that while teachers' beliefs about language teaching can be altered following a training programme, training may not uniformly alter beliefs for all teachers.

Specifically, for Lan, the ultimate purpose of using TBLT was to promote student interaction. Thus, in her classroom, she encouraged students to converse in pairs/groups by providing them with translations and scaffolding their sentences. Consequently, Lan's students actively engaged in interaction and the classroom atmosphere was lively and noisy. However, Lan had not picked up and adopted the other features of tasks, such as students using their own resources. As she commented in the post-Cycle 1 interview:

When I implemented the lesson plans, I strictly followed every activity in the plans. At that time, I did not care much about the principles you told me, and to be honest, I could not remember all the principles. But I know that I did not follow some of the principles you told me. I just tried to help my students complete the activities effectively. The ultimate goal was to help them interact more, speak English more in the classroom, right? So I would rather sacrifice some principles of TBLT as long as the ultimate goal is achieved. (Lan, SSI, C1, P2)

In contrast to Lan, for Huong, TBLT meant student-centredness, so she encouraged the students to be more responsible and independent when carrying out the activities. Thus, she did not offer the students support unless they asked her. Like Lan, Huong reminded students to exchange information and help each other when she saw them focusing on their own notes and not engaging in pair interactions. Consequently, the students were observed to be more independent in carrying out their work than those in Lan's class. What Huong perceived and practised was reflected in her statement in the post-Cycle 1 interview as below:

I always encouraged the students to work on their own. I think student-centredness is very important in TBLT. But these students still needed help from me to complete the tasks because they are just beginners. Sometimes, they had ideas, very good ideas in their mind but did not know how to express them in English. At that time, I needed to help them so that they could complete the task on time. I hesitated a bit to help them, but I thought this was necessary. (Huong, SSI, C1, P2)

For Minh, TBLT meant student autonomy, so in Cycle 1, she relinquished control and avoided intervening to help students during group/pair work. She expected the students to solve the problems themselves without support from the teacher. Consequently, the students were observed spending a lot of time looking up the sentences or ideas on their mobile phones and focusing on their own notes rather than exchanging information or discussing the topic with each other. When Minh saw this, she did not intervene, as she perceived that the students were still engaged in the tasks. In the interview after the

lessons, Minh stressed that she wanted to strictly follow the task feature three, that is, students used their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources to do the task. In the post-Cycle 1 interview, Minh said:

I wanted to strictly follow all four principles of TBLT. You see, I did not pre-teach grammar and vocabulary. The students had to solve the tasks all by themselves. The activities focused on meaning. Everything seemed to be perfect for a task-based lesson. But actually, you see, it did not work well. The lessons did not go as well as I expected. (Minh, SSI, C1, P2)

These limitations notwithstanding, by the end of Cycle 1, the three teachers had a better understanding of TBLT in comparison with Phase 1. Now they perceived that TBLT promoted more student interactions in the classroom and that TBLT was associated with student-centredness and student autonomy. However, the differences in teachers' perspectives and practices of TBLT suggested that the various ways in which the teachers conceived of and adopted a facilitative role led to distinct differences in the quantity and quality of student interaction in each class (Van den Branden, 2016). For example, Minh's absence of facilitation was reflected in a conspicuous lack of student interaction in her classes in Cycle 1. In contrast, Lan's and Huong's active support and frequent encouragement boosted students' interaction and engagement in their classes. Findings from prior studies have also found that teachers' facilitation plays an important role in the students' execution of tasks (Dao & Iwashita, 2018; Iemjinda, 2003). For instance, Dao and Iwashita (2018) found that teachers' assistance and language mediation were instrumental in "driving learners to interact and fulfil the task requirements" (p. 191). The authors claim that without teachers' specific assistance, the learners potentially carried out the task in a way that did not meet the teachers' instructional goals.

In the post-Cycle 1 workshop, the teachers and I reviewed the negative and positive aspects of each of their classes. We agreed on the following list of the principles and practices they should focus on in Cycle 2:

- TBLT promotes student-centredness but still requires teachers' facilitation and scaffolding, especially for the low-level students. In this sense, the teachers need to use various methods to facilitate the students instead of merely explaining structures and translating word by word.
- TBLT promotes more interaction in the classroom so the teachers should use various techniques to promote more student interaction.

- TBLT does not mean the exclusion of focus on form but teachers need to find more effective methods to give corrective feedback effectively or to raise students' awareness and attention to forms in the post-task stage.

These three principles reflect a growing understanding of TBLT by the teachers in Cycle 2 compared to Cycle 1. Consequently, the three Cycle 2 lessons showed a marked improvement in the teachers' practices compared with the Cycle 1 lessons. Part of this improvement was greater consistency in the practices of the three teachers; they followed the lesson plans more closely and avoided the shortcomings of the Cycle 1 lessons such as an excessive focus on accuracy and overly didactic feedback, which denied a role for co-construction of meaning. For example, as discussed earlier in this chapter, in Cycle 2, Lan continued to enthusiastically encourage students to interact, but now she used techniques such as co-construction rather than translation to help the students express their ideas. She not only corrected students' errors, but also used negotiation of meaning, recasting, and prompts. Like Lan, Huong became a more active supporter of her students. Rather than translate sentences for them as she had done in Cycle 1, she co-constructed the sentences with them based on their existing knowledge. Minh no longer acted as a non-interventionist teacher but became more active in supporting the students to carry out the tasks and frequently reminded them to interact with each other rather than focusing on their own notes. These positive changes show how the teachers' understandings and skills concerning TBLT progressed in Cycle 2.

Although the three teachers could now practise better task-based lessons, they were still confused with feature 3 of TBLT, that is, students relying on their own resources to complete tasks. In the reflection workshop at the end of Cycle 2, Minh said:

To me, the tricky multiple job of teachers is to scaffold students but still ensure their independence and freedom to express their ideas, and still ensure the interaction happens. That is so difficult, isn't it? (Minh, SSI, C2, P2)

Likewise, Huong said:

It was quite tricky if we strictly followed all principles of TBLT. Although I tried to help the students in different ways, it did not always work. Some students were very weak and so I had to explicitly explain the word's meaning in Vietnamese or explain grammar structures for them to understand correctly. So obviously this was not consistent with TBLT principles, right? (Huong, SSI, C2, P2)

Lan responded to Huong and Minh's comments:

I agree, the difficulty for me is still distinguishing between what you call supporting or priming and explicitly teaching the structures for the students ... I primed the students with

the vocabulary of appearance by matching the words and the meanings. So of course I needed to explain to them the meaning of the words even after they did the matching ... It is very tricky not to return to my familiar way of teaching structures. I was sometimes still confused about this. (Lan, post-C1, RM, P2)

The teachers' comments showed that feature 3 was the one that they found the most difficult to follow. This finding reflects Erlam's (2016) finding that most of the teachers in her study also found the feature "learners rely on their own resources" the most challenging to fulfil. While Ellis (2021, p. 35) stated that feature 3 is the important criterion in TBLT, he also puts it that, "one obvious way forward is to rethink TBLT in terms of the principles that inform 'induction' (Stenhouse, 1975a) and 'praxis' (Freire, 1970)".

6.8. Summary of chapter

This chapter has discussed the findings of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 from the multiple sources of data. The discussion showed that across two phases, the teachers could gain knowledge of TBLT through direct experience, collaboration, and self-reflection, and that all these processes pivot around guidance from an 'expert' (Ellis, 2020; Jaruteerapan, 2020).

Additionally, the students expressed positive attitudes towards their task-based learning experience, stating that they had more opportunities to interact with one another, gradually gained confidence to speak, and that the lessons were exciting. The findings indicated that implementing a task-based approach in the current university is feasible and well received by teachers and students. The implications highlighted the importance of professional learning opportunities for in-service teachers so that they could align their instructional practices with a more task-based approach.

The subsequent conclusion chapter brings together the findings of the two phases of the research and addresses implications for pedagogy, TPD, and research, as well limitations of the study and future research areas.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

The current study set out to explore how textbook tasks were interpreted and implemented by three EFL teachers at a Vietnamese university across two research phases: Phase 1, a situation analysis, followed by Phase 2, a PAR project. To answer the research questions, I collected data from textbook analysis, classroom observations, stimulated recall interviews, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews. The findings presented and discussed in the preceding two chapters lead to implications and recommendations for EFL teaching and learning at the research site as well as for other similar contexts and to implications for research into TBLT. This chapter discusses these implications as they relate to pedagogy, research, and teacher professional development. It concludes by acknowledging the limitations of the research and offering suggestions for future research. Before considering implications, however, it is worth recapping the main findings of the research, as I do in the next section.

7.2. Summary of the findings

7.2.1. Findings of Phase 1

Phase 1 investigated three topics: how communicative and task-like the textbook was, how the teachers perceived and implemented the textbook, and what the students thought about the lessons. First, the analysis revealed that many activities in the textbook were either tasks or task-like when analysed against the four features of task-as-workplan proposed by Ellis (2018a). For example, of the 39 activities in Module 6, 11 were tasks in that they met all four criteria and 17 were task-like in that they met three of the four criteria. These activities provide learners with opportunities to use English meaningfully and offer teachers, especially those who do not have much expertise in TBLT, examples of tasks.

Second, findings showed that the teachers gravitated towards features of the textbook that conformed to their beliefs and classroom experience but resisted features that did not. Thus, when the teachers used the textbook, they consistently retained all non-communicative activities, added numerous additional non-communicative activities, adapted communicative activities to be less communicative, and eliminated communicative activities. Although students were occasionally given opportunities to work in pairs, these activities typically “became end-of-class add-on activities for practicing oral skills” (Chen & Wright, 2017, p.

17). Consequently, the teachers' classroom practices rarely allowed learners to interact in English and instead the teachers devoted a lot of class time to teaching grammar points and vocabulary items, and drill-based practice. The interview data revealed three primary reasons why teachers prioritised explicit teaching and practice of language forms. To begin, they were motivated to assist their students in becoming more prepared for exams. Their concern for the low level of proficiency of their students and their limited classroom time were the other two factors. The teachers stated that these factors contributed to their sense of conflict between what they desired and what the curriculum required.

The exploration of students' perceptions sheds light on the feasibility of employing TBLT in this context. Students expressed their enjoyment of engaging in interactive games and their boredom with grammar exercises. While the students acknowledged the value of grammar and vocabulary instruction, they stated that their current lessons lacked opportunities for interaction. Interestingly, what students believed and perceived was the opposite of what teachers practised and perceived, as teachers assumed that their students lacked the willingness and commitment to engage in communicative tasks.

To summarise, the findings from Phase 1 suggest that an intervention may be needed to help the teachers make more effective use of the potential language learning opportunities offered by the textbook. Phase 2 of the research, a participatory action research project, was designed for this purpose. Findings from the project are summarised next.

7.2.2. Findings of Phase 2

Following Phase 1, the three teachers and I had a PAR meeting to discuss the findings and collaborated on a Phase 2 action plan. All the teachers acknowledged that their practices had weaknesses, such as a lack of opportunities for their students to interact meaningfully. They were ready to act to improve the situation. The teachers then attended a TPDL workshop where they were introduced to the TBLT principles before participating in the two PAR cycles. During this workshop, the teachers willingly and actively participated in the TBLT content and expressed enthusiasm for the newly introduced innovation. After that, they collaborated on the design of six task-based lessons (three per cycle), which they then implemented in their classrooms. Three case studies revealed that each teacher approached TBLT in their own way.

In Cycle 1, Lan became less of a controller when compared to Phase 1. She included more activities with a high communicative value in her lessons and followed the task-based lesson

structure. Throughout this cycle, however, she maintained some of her traditional practices, such as providing excessive error correction and interfering with students' work. Lan believed that TBLT meant more student interaction in the classroom and that her practices could help students interact with each other successfully. Similarly, Huong implemented more interactive activities, although she frequently reverted to more traditional practices like translation and grammar explanation when assisting her students. Huong interpreted TBLT as a shift towards a more student-centred classroom while still requiring teacher intervention. However, she was unsure whether it was appropriate to respond to students' questions while they were completing tasks. She was also unsure when and how to assist students in task-based lessons without infringing on task-based principles. Unlike the other two teachers, Minh acted as a non-interventionist during Cycle 1, only intervening to provide instruction and check students' work. She was perplexed by the supportive roles of teachers and the autonomy of students in TBLT because she perceived TBLT as requiring students to rely on their own resources to solve problems with minimal teacher assistance.

Following Cycle 1 of Phase 2, the three teachers and I met for another PAR meeting during which we discussed the Cycle 1 lessons, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher's lessons, and then agreed on and planned changes for the following cycle. During Cycle 2, Lan's skills and practices in task-based lessons significantly improved, such that she became more tolerant of students' errors and placed a higher priority on fluency over accuracy in students' language production. Additionally, she assumed a greater variety of roles as a task-based teacher, including facilitator, input provider, and provider of corrective feedback. She utilised a variety of strategies to assist students and deliver corrective feedback. Through reflection and implementation of changes in her classroom practices, she reported improving her understanding of TBLT and her belief that it could be used in this context. As with Lan, Huong acted as a facilitator and other teacher roles such as an interactor and a provider of corrective feedback as students completed tasks. Her cognition and ability to perform TBLT significantly improved from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2, as she gained confidence in assisting her students with strategies other than translation and grammar explanation, such as meaning negotiation and co-construction. Minh, in particular, was now aware that teachers could assist students during tasks by negotiation of meaning and focus on form. As a result, she took an active role in class during Cycle 2, assisting students when necessary, serving as a partner in students' pairs or groups, and encouraging students to interact with one another as much as possible. Overall, the findings from Phase 2 showed that

the teachers' practices had become more aligned with TBLT, as well as that the teachers' understandings and attitudes towards TBLT had improved.

7.3. Implications of the study

The findings of the current study suggest implications in three areas: pedagogy, TPD, and research. These are discussed below.

7.3.1. Implications for pedagogy

The findings summarised in the section above have implications for helping teachers to align their teaching practices with TBLT. The first pedagogical implication concerns the limited role of textbooks in shaping teachers' perception and practices of TBLT. The current study investigated whether a textbook with a communicative orientation and containing many task-like activities and tasks could move teachers away from a traditional teaching approach focused on grammar and towards teaching with tasks. However, in their teaching in Phase 1 (see Section 4.3 in Chapter 4), all three teachers independently stripped out most tasks and meaningful communicative activities and provided very few opportunities for interaction. In fact, they strengthened the PPP features of the textbook, a choice that most likely reflects the teachers' apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) and their strong belief in grammar teaching. As Ellis (2018b) explains, teachers understandably practise the approach they are familiar with and are likely to reject textbooks that adopt a different approach.

This raises the question of what can be done to ensure the greater impact of a textbook that offers some affordances for task-based teaching in a context where TBLT is not well established or known. In this case, a strength of the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* is that many of the activities are meaning-focused, and tasks are relatively frequent, despite the PPP sequencing of activities. Thus, Willis (2007) points out that while this textbook does not follow a TBLT lesson sequence, with "a little tweaking", teachers could turn the task-like activities in it into tasks and rearrange the order of activities to deliver a TBLT lesson. Harris (2016) makes a similar point. However, to utilise or redesign the textbook to reflect principles of TBLT, teachers may need guidance and support. This leads to the implications for teacher professional development and learning discussed in the next section.

Second, the shifts in teachers' roles from Phase 1 to Cycle 1 and then Cycle 2 of Phase 2, as well as the resulting effects on how students conducted communicative activities, demonstrate the pivotal role of teachers in task-based lessons. The findings in Minh's class,

for example, indicated that students did not always participate willingly in communicative activities or in the way the teacher expected, indicating the importance of teachers assuming a variety of roles to facilitate students' learning. Rather than taking on the traditional roles of knowledge provider or non-interventionist, teachers can help their students become more autonomous and engaged in interactions by acting as a learning partner, facilitator, and employing a variety of strategies to promote students' meaning negotiation. This conclusion has been confirmed by other studies, including Van den Branden (2016) and Chen (2016).

Third, during Cycle 1 of Phase 2, the three teachers expressed concern about the lack of explicit grammar explanations, but none of them knew how to address the issue effectively while adhering to TBLT. By contrast, in Cycle 2, they recognised that forms can be effectively learned through corrective feedback and meaning negotiation between the teacher and the students or between the students themselves. As a result, they assisted students in a variety of ways to increase their interaction and awareness of forms without explicitly teaching them. This raises the question of when and how to incorporate a focus on form into task-based lessons. Doughty (2001, as cited in Ellis, 2016) discusses four possibilities of timing to introduce focus on form during task-based lessons:

1. Simultaneous processing (i.e., attention to form and meaning occur conjointly).
2. Focus on form in advance (i.e., priming the learner to attend to specific forms, for example by pre-teaching the forms, prior to their engagement in a communicative task).
3. Shifts of attention during processing (i.e., selective attention is temporarily switched to form).
4. Immediately contingent focus on form (i.e., attracting learners' attention to a specific form in the previous utterance, for example by means of a recast) (p. 14).

As Ellis (2016) puts it, "the emphasis on form strategies must be applied skilfully to ensure that students' primary orientation while performing a task remains on meaning-making rather than accuracy" (p. 9).

7.3.2. Implications for TPD

It is not reasonable to expect teachers who are accustomed to and comfortable with teacher-fronted grammar-based classrooms to shift to student-centred communicative task-based instruction without providing them with the knowledge and understanding of the potential of

this approach. Thus, the need for teacher professional development and learning is crucial. The first implication concerns adopting PAR for teacher professional development. The findings from the study demonstrate the effectiveness of incorporating PAR into in-service teacher professional development. PAR allows teachers to engage in collective, active, reflective, and contextual learning by collaboratively and iteratively developing and implementing lesson plans, reflecting on their teaching, and using these reflections to continue the PAR process.

Integral to this process is opportunities for teachers to reflect on their own teaching and the factors that influence it (Zheng & Borg, 2014). According to Borg (2015), teachers play an important role in curriculum reform due to the fact that their beliefs and attitudes influence their practices, and that teachers have a natural tendency to implement a policy in a way that they believe best fits their contexts, and not necessarily the way the policy maker intended. Thus, TPDL conducted in the form of teachers doing action research can help raise teachers' awareness of how their own beliefs and contextual factors influence instructional decision-making and provide them with space for experimenting with TBLT and critically relating pedagogical theory to their experience (Littlewood, 2007).

Additionally, the participatory nature of action research enables teachers to co-construct knowledge with their colleagues, which encourages teachers to be receptive to each other's perspectives and to share their own perspectives and experiences. The current study showed how, through the PAR process, the teachers were able to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses, learn from each other, and make substantive changes to their teaching practices. As Goodyear (2013) puts it, "in PAR, the pedagogical change is strengthened when it is a participatory, rather than individual endeavour" (p. 246).

The implementation of TPDL for the teachers in this study was not without challenges. Teachers, for example, faced difficulties due to their busy schedules, the large size of the class, and the students' low English proficiency level. Thus, when conducting TPDL workshops, PAR meetings, and collaborative design of lesson plans, all these factors were carefully considered. This implies that TPDL should be contextually relevant so that teachers might be willing to participate and accept the introduced innovation because they believe it will be beneficial to their situation and it will not add more burden or workload for them (Fullan, 1992; Littlewood, 2007; Borg, 2015).

One way to anticipate these challenges is through a preliminary context analysis as carried out in the current study. In the study, this analysis included analysing the textbook, and finding out about teachers' beliefs and understanding of TBLT, and students' attitudes towards regular lessons. This kind of analysis provides a useful initial starting point from which to track progress over the course of the PAR and, longitudinally, beyond it.

The TPDL used in this study was not the kind of training programme that focuses only on theory and leaves teachers to figure out how to put it into practice on their own. Instead, it involved close collaboration between me, as the 'expert', and the teachers, and amongst the teachers. During the PAR project, I took on a variety of roles, including modelling task-based instructional practices, facilitating collaborative reflection and discussion, and providing supportive and constructive feedback. The findings of the study showed that my collaboration and my ongoing support throughout the PAR project assisted the teachers to develop expertise in TBLT. This finding is consistent with earlier research providing evidence that teachers who receive ongoing support from experts are likely to enact desired teaching practices and apply them appropriately (e.g., Jaruteerapan, 2020; East, 2012; Zhu, 2020). The study highlights the important role that external expertise plays in guiding teachers towards TBLT. That said, the intensive investment of my expertise in the current study, afforded through my PhD studies, is not intended as a generalizable or replicable model. This raises the question of where such expertise might come from for larger scale TBLT innovation and how it might be funded on a nation-wide basis. These are not easy questions to answer and lie beyond the remit of my study. Nevertheless, possible alternatives include a network of champion teachers working within a school or across schools in a region. The growing familiarity of teachers with Zoom-based teaching means that such expertise can be delivered digitally to larger PAR communities of teachers, unconstrained by physical location.

In summary, the findings of this study show that through PAR-based TPDL the three participating teachers were all able to make substantial changes to their teaching in directions congruent with TBLT. These findings are consistent with findings from other recent studies that adopt action research to investigate teacher uptake of TBLT (e.g., Zhu, 2020; Ariatna & Ellis, 2021; Jaruteerapan, 2020).

7.3.3. Implications for policy makers

In Vietnam, the Project 2020 pedagogical reform is centralised and "top-down". This leads to the problem of the teachers, who were responsible for implementing the policy, lacking the

necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to successfully implement the reforms (Le, 2011; Tran et al., 2021; Vu et al., 2020). One of the problems with top-down reforms such as this is that policy makers may be unaware of or unwilling to consider the constraints faced by local implementers. Consequently, the preconditions for change are unlikely to be in place and attempts to impose top-down change lead to resistance or, at best, “surface level acceptance” by teachers (Vu et al., 2020, p.38; see also in Littlewood, 2007; Butler, 2015). The success of reforms relies on various stakeholders recognizing the need for change and being involved in shaping the reforms (Morgan, 1992; Fullan, 1994; Waring, 2017). These stakeholders include ministry level education policymakers, district administrators, head of schools, and teachers, who all have a role in planning, promoting, managing, and enacting curriculum change. One reason that Project 2020 has struggled to have an impact is because the planning for change proceeded with lack of the participation of teachers (Le, 2011; Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2021).

It is also worth noting that the textbook plays an important role in the design and implementation of task-based lessons. There are many task-like activities and tasks in the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* that promote the meaningful use of language, thus, when collaboratively designing the task-based lessons in Phase 2, I and the three teachers did not have to create new tasks from scratch but only adapted or sequenced these activities. All the teachers agreed that the textbook tasks could serve as models for them to create similar tasks. They also stated that it would be easier and more motivating to use such tasks in future lessons if they were already created. This finding demonstrates the importance of material development projects in promoting educational innovations like TBLT. Given many teachers' busy schedules and limited access to task materials, such task material sources would be necessary for teachers. The urgent need for task-based materials is also highlighted in other studies, including those of Ellis (2018), Butler et al. (2018); Newton and Bui (2017), and Van den Branden (2006).

7.3.4. Implications for research

The first implication for research concerns the analytic tools available for researchers to analyse textbooks from a task-based perspective. My analysis of the textbook *New Cutting Edge, Elementary* drew on two frameworks for understanding activities from a task-based perspective, one proposed by Littlewood (2004), and the other by Ellis (2018a). As discussed earlier and as reported in other studies (Butler et al., 2018; Chen & Wright, 2017;

Deng & Carless, 2009; Erlam, 2016), both frameworks present challenges when used for coding classroom activities. Littlewood and Swan's (1981) framework defines "communicative" in terms of "functional and social interaction", so undervalues input-based tasks. Ellis's (2018a) four task criteria are useful for establishing a broad concept of what a task is but require some adaptation to address the vagueness in criteria 1 and 3 (a primary focus on meaning and students' own resources). An innovation in the current study was to use both frameworks to analyse the same data to compare and contrast the constructs of communicativeness and task-likeness. This leads to a second implication. Given the likely difficulty many teachers have in distinguishing TBLT from CLT, the dual focus of the textbook analysis in the current study provides valuable evidence for the ways in which these approaches are distinct.

7.4. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

Five limitations to this study need to be acknowledged. First, because case studies are used, the findings are true of the classrooms and teachers they relate to but generalizations beyond these settings must be approached cautiously. As an alternative to generalizability, Richards (2003) argues that case studies should aim for "resonance" (p. 312), allowing other researchers to "share in the researcher's understandings and find instantiations of them in their own professional experience" (p. 266). Holliday (2004) made a similar argument. This study attempted to achieve this goal by providing a rich description of the context and the perspectives of the participants to establish resonance to other similar contexts.

Second, the impact of two-cycle PAR professional learning on teachers' perceptions and classroom practices regarding TBLT was examined over an eight-week period. This time frame is insufficient to capture any sustained transformation in the teachers' cognition and practice, and especially ongoing changes beyond the PAR project. It did, however, follow two complete cycles of action research in which teachers reflected on their lessons, created action plans to address the issues, designed and implemented lesson plans, and then reflected on the lessons again. Additionally, multiple data sources are incorporated into the study's design to ensure that the data is as comprehensive as possible. However, longitudinal research is needed to gain a better understanding of how teachers translate their professional knowledge into their actual instructional practice over time. This may help educational policymakers in devising a more effective strategy for promoting TPD that enables teachers to implement TBLT more effectively in their language classes.

Thirdly, the PAR project is collaborative in nature, requiring collaboration between the researcher and the participating teachers. Thus, the study's design was restricted to the teachers developing lesson plans collaboratively with the researcher's assistance (myself). Future research may extend this study's design to include an additional cycle in which teachers create and teach task-based lesson plans independently. This additional cycle is aimed at evaluating individual teachers' interpretations of what they learned in the TPD and how they apply it in the classroom.

Fourth, findings about students' learning were only based on self-report data and not direct evidence of student learning. This is because the primary focus of the study was on the teachers' engagement with TBLT through a PAR project and so student data was a secondary consideration. Nevertheless, this self-report data was carefully triangulated with data from my classroom notes, video recordings of learners' learning behaviours in the lessons, and discussion and confirmation of the student data with teachers. Future research can delve further into the topic of student engagement by drawing on both self-report and classroom observation data to analyse students' cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioural engagement (Philp & Dutchesne, 2016). This provides teachers with a more nuanced understanding of the effects of tasks on the perceptions and performance of their students.

Despite the valuable insights gained from the student self-report data, a limitation of the study is that no direct evidence of the impact of the PAR on student learning was obtained. This limitation could be addressed in future research by recording and analysing classroom interaction prior to, during, and after the PAR project. Another option is to investigate the extent to which students focus on meaning and/or language forms during task-based lessons. This could be investigated through an exit survey at the conclusion of each lesson asking students what they believed and had learned. The responses from students could provide teachers with interesting and important information about what their students actually pay attention to, thereby possibly encouraging teachers to implement TBLT.

The fifth limitation concerns my close relationship with the teachers. On the one hand, this relationship allowed me to easily invite them to participate in my study, collect data in their classes, and gain their trust, which was crucial when doing PAR (Kemmis et al., 2014). On the other hand, I was always keenly aware of the possibility that my position as a teacher trainer as well as a colleague may result in bias. Teachers may have regarded me as an expert, which may have resulted in a Hawthorne effect, in which they performed better and

attempted to converse their ideal perspectives rather than their actual thoughts to just please me, or to assist me in completing the research. For example, in Phase 2, I was the one who suggested that the teachers use task-based instruction. I was the one who came up with the ideas for the PAR meetings. Although the teachers raised their concerns and ideas, they mostly agreed with my suggestions. This gave me the impression that the changes made could be seen as mine, but not by the teacher participants. To alleviate this limitation, I frequently invited teachers to raise their ideas prior to mine during any discussions. Additionally, I attempted to convey to them that genuine and truthful responses were critical to the integrity of my study, and that their experiences and comments were respected and valued. The teachers all stated that they were not participating in the study or adopting TBLT to make me happy, but because they believed the ideas were sound and wanted to improve their teaching. As Minh said:

Don't worry. I supported you by participating in your research. However, once I accepted, I am very serious. I act as I perceive. Friendship is friendship, work is work. (Minh, post-C1, RM, P2)

For another example, Lan, apart from being guided by the researcher, took the initiative to direct her own learning to search for information about TBLT independently and even expressed an interest in pursuing a PhD in TBLT in the future, discussed task-based lessons with me, and requested additional materials to read about TBLT during our informal meetings. This evidence shows that the Hawthorne effect did not appear to be a strong influence on the three teachers.

7.5. Contribution of the study to TBLT research

The current study contributes to TBLT research in three ways. First, it contributes to a growing body of research on how language teachers engage with tasks in their actual classroom practice. Such studies seek to understand TBLT in relation to the complex world of the classroom, including resources and materials, environmental constraints, teacher beliefs, learner preferences and traditional expectations of teaching and learning. The current study focused on the role of the textbook as one dimension of this complexity.

The second contribution is that this study focuses on the implementation of TBLT by Vietnamese tertiary teachers as part of the EFL curriculum reform proposed by the Vietnamese government. This is a relatively unexplored area in Vietnam, with the majority of research focusing on elementary and secondary school contexts where a series of official innovative textbooks claiming to be task-based are used.

The third contribution is to teacher education for TBLT, an area that has garnered increasing interest from scholars but still requires more research. The current study is among a small number of studies focusing on this topic. The findings of the study pivot around the affordances for task-based teaching in a commercially published textbook and the changes in the way that three teachers interpreted and implemented the textbook throughout the TPD. As discussed above, this has important implications for the professional support and teacher development that needs to accompany the introduction of a textbook if it is to successfully achieve its intended purpose.

7.6. Reflection on the whole project

7.6.1. Reflection with the teachers

After eight weeks of working together, I convened a final meeting with the three teachers as a PAR reflection workshop to evaluate the entire research. The teachers were invited to identify what they believed were the most significant changes throughout the research project. They all agreed on two key changes: (1) there were more interactions in their classrooms; (2) teachers' perspectives on TBLT had shifted positively.

With respect to the first change, during the initial meetings with the teachers prior to the beginning of this project, they frequently complained to me about boredom and dissatisfaction with their lessons, observing that students frequently dozed off or were distracted. They attributed all these problems to their students' inactivity, laziness, and low English proficiency. However, during the final reflection workshop, they unanimously agreed that the students' engagement and interaction increased during the lesson. They perceived that the opportunities for interaction provided by tasks made their classes more energizing and engaging than their regular lessons. Moreover, their perspectives were distinct from those at the outset of the study, as they now believed that communicative activities such as tasks were viable for their students if teachers provided support and encouragement.

With respect to the second change, the teachers enthusiastically stated that they had gained more confidence in implementing tasks in their lessons as a result of gaining a better understanding of tasks and witnessing the benefits that a task-based approach brought to their students. They confirmed that by actively participating in the design, teaching, and reflection on lessons, they gained new skills and experiences with task-based instruction and committed to continuing to use tasks in their future lessons.

I concurred with the teachers' claims. I told them that they had already had reasons to alter their teaching practices, and that they were all qualified teachers with master's degrees. What they lacked was motivation and determination to change. Therefore, what I attempted to bring was the facilitation of a collaborative process that enabled them to maximise their existing capacity. I thanked the teachers for agreeing to step outside their normal protocols, examining their teaching intentions, analysing their students' needs, refining their aims, implementing the changes in their practice, and constantly reflecting on the situation. All these things have brought success to the current research.

Not only are the three teachers' successful paths to TBLT a significant outcome of the project, more than that, it is their willingness to participate in the project to improve their current situation and to develop new teaching skills and knowledge. From the initial position of supporting my PhD, they gradually demonstrated a genuine concern for their teaching and students' learning. They also developed a willingness and practice of sharing and exchanging experiences, perspectives, and materials with each other and with me, and sought guidance and gained increasing autonomy in developing lesson plans and teaching the lessons. By the time I left the project, the three teachers appeared committed and willing to continue using tasks albeit with some ongoing reservation about TBLT and focus on forms and with some variation between the teachers. This pleased me, but also posed the question of how such positive attitudes can become embedded in teachers' practices. I am aware that those who are truly committed will persevere with their new learning for a time but will probably give up at some point. This highlights the importance of continuous TPD.

7.6.2. What I have gained from the research

Throughout the research, I have gained valuable knowledge about collaboration, facilitation, and research strategies. I recognised that for this research to succeed, I needed to take an active role in determining when and how to intervene in the teachers' learning paths, and when and how not to. I gradually realised that if I took control and failed to provide opportunities for teachers to experiment and grow independently, I would merely increase their reliance. I learned how to create an environment in which teachers could accommodate and challenge one another's ideas while also developing their autonomy. Additionally, I learned when and how to collaborate with them, lending my expertise and knowledge as needed.

I myself also gained more knowledge about TBLT in comparison with the outset of the study. Throughout this project, by reviewing the literature on TBLT, conducting the TBLT workshop, and collaboratively designing task-based lesson plans, my theoretical and practical knowledge of TBLT was expanded. More importantly, observing the teachers engaging in designing and implementing TBLT in their actual classrooms helped to expand my perspective on the opportunities and challenges associated with TBLT promotion in the Vietnamese EFL tertiary context. The empirical findings of this study have led me to conclude that TBLT implementation is feasible in the Vietnamese tertiary context with a significant role for TPD.

Before becoming a PhD student in New Zealand, I worked as an EFL teacher, teaching English to non-English major students for nine years. The educational institution where I work uses a textbook that claims to “give special emphasis on communication” and “integrate the elements of a task-based approach in the overall methodology” (Moor et al., 2005, p. 5). As a result, the current study is important to me in terms of expanding my theoretical and practical experience with using and adapting textbook tasks and then using insights from the study to further improve the delivery of EFL in my teaching context. The implications of this research will be most directly applicable to me as an EFL teacher and teacher trainer when I return to the classroom.

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Appendix 1. Approval of Human Ethics Committee



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

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Email Stephen.Marshall@vuw.ac.nz

TO	Hao Dao
FROM	Professor Stephen Marshall, Acting Convenor, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	10 July 2018
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval Number: 26066 Title: ADAPTING TASKS FROM TEXTBOOKS FOR LOW PROFICIENCY LEARNERS IN A VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval is valid for three years. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards,

Prof Stephen Marshall

Acting Convenor, Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee

Appendix 2. Semi-structured interview questions (Phase 1)

I. Length of each interview: 30-40 minutes

II. The following questions to be asked are:

1. So what is the goal you want your students to achieve at the end of this course?
2. Is the time allotted to each module enough for you and your students to achieve the objectives of the course?
3. Do you think the textbook activities are helpful in helping your students to achieve the goal?
4. There are a section called “task” in each module in the textbook. So how do you understand about this term?
5. Did you notice any difference between these tasks with other activities?
6. Did you have challenges of implementing these tasks?
7. Have you ever heard about the terms task-based language teaching? How do you understand about this term?
8. What is your view about the approach that focused students on meaningful communication? Do you think it is feasible for your students?
9. Have you ever attended any special workshop or training course about TBLT before? If yes, can you specify?

Appendix 3. Interview questions in the post-Cycle 1 and post-Cycle 2 Reflection Workshops (Phase 2)

I. Length of each reflection workshop: 30 minutes

II. The following questions to be asked are:

1. What difficulties do you encounter when designing task-based lessons from the textbook?
2. What difficulties do you encounter when implementing the lessons?
3. What do you think are the weaknesses of your lessons?
4. What do you think are the strengths of your lessons?
5. Do you realise any changes in your students' attitudes and learning when you teach this way? Why or why not?
6. Do you suggest any changes in the next cycle?

Appendix 4. Interview questions in the final PAR reflection workshop

I. Length of each interview: 20 minutes

II. The following questions to be asked are:

1. What do you think are the most significant changes in the class that you are teaching?
2. What do you learn and achieve from this PAR project?
3. Do you have any additional comments?

Appendix 5. Focus Group Interview Questions (Phase 1)

I. Length of each interview: 30-40 minutes

II. The following questions to be asked are:

1. What things do you like about the current lessons?
2. Is there anything in the teacher's lesson that you do not satisfy with in terms of the activities, or the teacher instruction?
3. What do you expect to improve in the teacher's lessons in terms of activities and teachers' teaching?
4. There are sections named "tasks" in each module in the textbook, do you enjoy them? Do you think they are difficult for you to carry out? In what way do you think tasks help you improve your communicative competence?
5. If the vocabulary or grammar are not introduced to you in advance, do you think you can carry out the communicative activities?
6. Did you have any difficulties in doing these tasks?
7. What are your expectations of the following lessons?

Appendix 6. Focus Group Interview Questions (Phase 2)

I. Length of each interview: 30-40 minutes

II. The following questions to be asked are:

1. Do you enjoy the current lessons? Why or why not?
2. What can you say about the difference in your teacher's teaching approach at the beginning of the semester and over the past two weeks?
3. Do you encounter challenges with these lessons? If yes, what are the challenges?
4. To what extent do you think you can benefit from these lessons?
5. Do you have any suggestions for the upcoming lessons?

Appendix 7. Analysis of Module 4

Activities	Four task criteria				Task-likeness	Communicativeness
	C1	C2	C3	C4		
1. Ss complete the sentences with the verbs given in the box					Non-task	Non-com
2. Ss read the grammar summary about the present simple, <i>Like+V-ing</i>					Non-task	Non-com
3. Ss look at the listening tapescript, practice the negative and positive verbs in sentences					Non-Task	Non-com
4. Ss check the meaning of the bold words in the text using their own dictionary then scan the text to answer the questions					Non-task	Non-com
5. Ss read the grammar summary about the present simple question					Non task	Non-com
6. Ss use the prompts to make questions					Non-task	Pre-com
7. Ss put the adverbs in the correct place					Non-task	Non-com
8. Ss read the text and choose the correct verb forms to complete the passage. Then listen and check the answers					Non-task	Non-com
9. Ss practice pronunciation about intonation					Non-task	Non-com
10. Ss read the grammar summary about adverb of frequency					Non-task	Non-com
11. Ss write sentences using the prompts					Non-task	Non-com
12. Ss read the email written by Teresa and find out information about her	✓		✓		Non-task	Pre-com
13. Ss look at five conversations and match the given sentences to corresponding conversations. Then work in pairs and practice the five conversations	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
14. Ss skim the reading text and answer the questions. Who has the first and correct answers wins.	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
15. Ss work in pairs ask and answer questions about themselves	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
16. Ss do role-play, take turn to ask and answer politely	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Struc-com
17. Ss match the things in the box to the pictures		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
18. Ss match the words to the thing in the pictures		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
19. Ss work in pairs, ask and answer which things they like or do not like in the pictures	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
20. Ss look at the photos and guess who the people in the photos are	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
21. Ss work in pairs, ask and answer the questions	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
22. Ss write a paragraph about the person that they have just talked about	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Com
23. Ss match the verbs to the nouns as collocation		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Non-com

24. Ss use the given nouns/phrases and match them to the verbs in previous activity		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Non-com
25. Ss work in pairs, one says a verb, one says the collocation of the verb		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
26. Ss use the prompts and write about themselves then hand in the teacher. The teacher read the students' writing to let the class to guess who it is	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Com
27. Ss answer which things from the pictures that they like and don't like, then compare with each other	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
28. Ss work in pairs, think of a famous person and then ask and answer the questions about that person using the give the prompts	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
29. Ss ask and answer questions about their favourite foods, the compare their answer with each other.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
30. Ss listen and match the people mentioned in the recording to the corresponding pictures	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
31 Ss listen to the recording and match the things the people in the recording like or dislike to the pictures	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
32. Ss work in pairs, one say the name of a famous person and one say a sentence following the structure "He/she likes/does not like...."	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
33. T hands out Ss' writings, Ss read their friends' writing and the whole class guess whose they are	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
34. Ss read the sentences and tick the ones that are true to them and cross the ones that are not true to them, then compare the answers with friends	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
35. Ss work in pairs, one has information about Peter and Sophia, one has information about Marina and Joao, then ask and answer question to complete the table	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
36. Ss discuss who might be the best email friend for Teresa	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
37. Ss look at the five conversations in a café, then match the given sentences to each conversation. Listen and check	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com

Appendix 8. Analysis of Module 5

Activities	Four task criteria				Task-likeness	Communicativeness
	C1	C2	C3	C4		
1. Ss read the grammar summary					Non-task	Non-com
2. Ss match the given phrases to the corresponding meanings					Non-task	Non-com
3. Ss read the grammar summary about the articles <i>a/an/the</i>					Non task	Non-com
4. Ss read the text and complete the gaps <i>a/an/the</i> . Then listen and check					Non task	Non-com
5. Ss write the answers to the questions using a phrase with <i>a/an/the/</i>					Non-task	Non-com
6. Ss work in pairs and practice five conversations in the previous activity					Non-task	Non-com
7. Ss check the words they do not know using their dictionary					Non-task	Non-com
8. Ss write the question survey in full sentences using the prompt, then read the questions clearly					Non-task	Non-com
9. Ss read the grammar summary about “can/cannot”					Non-task	Non-com
10. Ss practice pronunciation					Non-task	Non-com
11. Ss read the text about Karen and answer the questions about her	✓		✓		Non-task	Pre-com
12. Ss listen and check the answer then practice the conversation in pairs	✓		✓		Non-task	Pre-com
13. Ss listen to conversations and decide if the sentences are true or false	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
14. Ss complete the text using the given words	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Non-com
15. Ss listen to the recording and tick/cross the things they can/cannot do in New York	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
16. Ss write eight sentences about the things they can or cannot do in their hometown	✓		✓	✓	Task like	Com
17. Ss work in pairs, ask and answer about your partners	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
18. Ss read Karen’s itinerary and decide where she is going to do	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
19. Ss listen to the airport announcement and answer what the problem is with Karen’s flight	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
20. Ss listen to the airport announcement and answer what Karen’s gate number is	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
21. Ss work in pairs, using the prompt to test each other the information about famous people in the reading text	✓	✓		✓	Task-like	Pre-com
22. Ss match the types of transport in the box to the photos		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
23. Ss read the text again and choose the correct words to go together		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
24. Ss work in pairs, one says the verb, one says a sentence following the given example	✓	✓		✓	Task-like	Pre-com

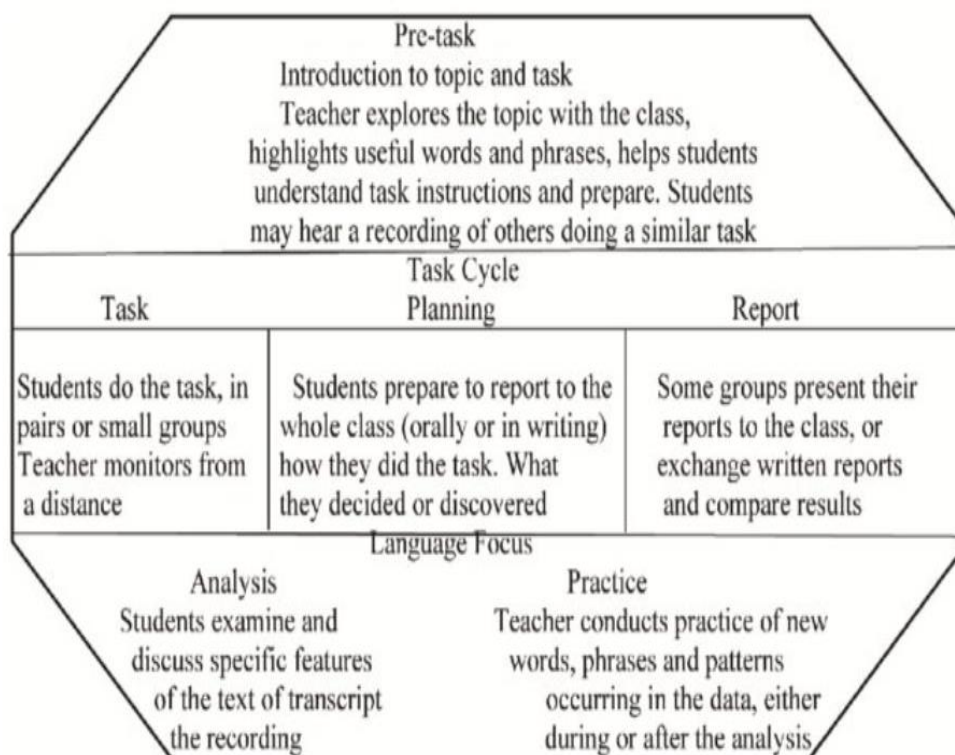
25. Ss answer the questions about the most popular means of transport in their hometown	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
26. Ss match the things to the pictures		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
27. Ss read the text and make a guess of which numbers go to the gaps then listen and check their guesses	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
28. Ss in pairs put the types of transport in order from fast to slow	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
29. Ss read the four ways to get to the JFK airport and complete the information into the table	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
30. Ss work in pairs to discuss which is the best way for Karen to get to the JFK airport	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
31. Ss tick the sentences that are true to their country and correct the false ones. Then compare the answers to their friends	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
32. Ss work in pairs, ask and answer about their hometown, then compare the answers	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
33. Ss work in small groups, answer the quiz's questions	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
34. Ss work in pairs, ask and answer questions in the survey	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
35. Ss work in small groups with other people, then tell the group what they know about their partners in the previous activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
36. Ss put the scrambled conversation in order	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
37. Ss do role play, one acts as a ticket clerk, one acts as a customer, each of them have a different piece of information given	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Struc-com

Appendix 9. Analysis of Module 8

Activities	Four task criteria				Task-likeness	Communicativeness
	C1	C2	C3	C4		
1. Ss read summary of grammar structure					Non-task	Non-com
2. Ss use dictionary to find the past simple of the verbs					Non-task	Non-com
3. Ss practice pronunciation of adjectives					Non-task	Non-com
4. Ss make sentences using the given verbs and the structure					Non-task	Non-com
5. Ss practice pronunciation					Non-task	Non-com
6. Ss read the text					Non-task	Non-com
7. Ss check meaning of bold words					Non-task	Non-com
8. Ss read summary of grammar rules					Non-task	Non-com
9. Ss check the meaning of the bold words in the reading text					Non-task	Non-com
10. Ss listen to the conversation and answer the questions	✓		✓		Non-task	Pre-com
11. Ss listen to the recording and correct the false statements	✓		✓		Non-task	Pre-com
12. Ss write questions based on given phrases	✓		✓		Non-task	Non-com
13. Ss match given answers with questions they wrote from the previous activity	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Non-com
14. Ss listen and complete sentences	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
15. Ss look at the photos of films and match the film genres with the photos		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Non-com
16. Ss do race game, read the text and complete the sentences. Who completes first wins	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
17. Ss talked about the films they have seen	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
18. Ss correct the mistakes in the film	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
19. Ss listen to the recording and decide if the statements true or false	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Pre-com
20. Ss use jumbled words to make questions		✓	✓	✓	Task-like	Non-com
21. Ss tick the things they did and cross the things they did not do when they were 10	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Pre-com
22. Ss work in pairs to ask and answer about themselves	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
23. Ss work in pairs to ask their partner about an interesting place he/she has visited	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
24. Ss write sentences about their partner based on the talk	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
25. Ss work in pairs, using the prompts to write a questionnaire about arts and entertainment	✓		✓	✓	Task-like	Com

26. Ss interview two students from other pairs and make notes of their answers	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Auth-com
27. Ss write about themselves based on the prompts	✓	✓	✓		Task-like	Com
28. Ss find the mistakes in the film description, then listen and check	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
29. Ss decide which adjectives are suitable to describe the film genres, then compare the answer with their friends	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
30. Ss work in pairs, one say a name of a film, one say an adjective to describe the film	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
31. Ss work in pairs to find twelve mistakes in the picture	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
32. Ss put the verbs in the correct form to make true sentence about them, then compare the answer to their friends	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Com
33. Ss discuss the questions	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
34. Ss tell the class about their partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
35. Ss listen and match the answers to the given questions	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
36. Ss tell the class about three things they learn from their friend	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
37. Ss put the scrambled conversation in order	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Pre-com
38. Ss work in pairs to write a dialogue arranging to go to the cinema together	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com
39. Ss act out the dialogue in front of the class	✓	✓	✓	✓	Task	Auth-com

Appendix 10. Willis's (1996) framework for TBLT






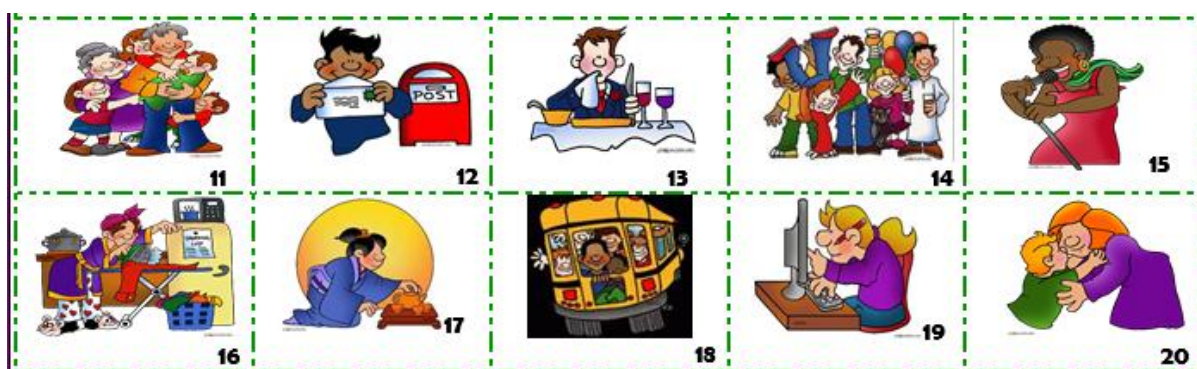
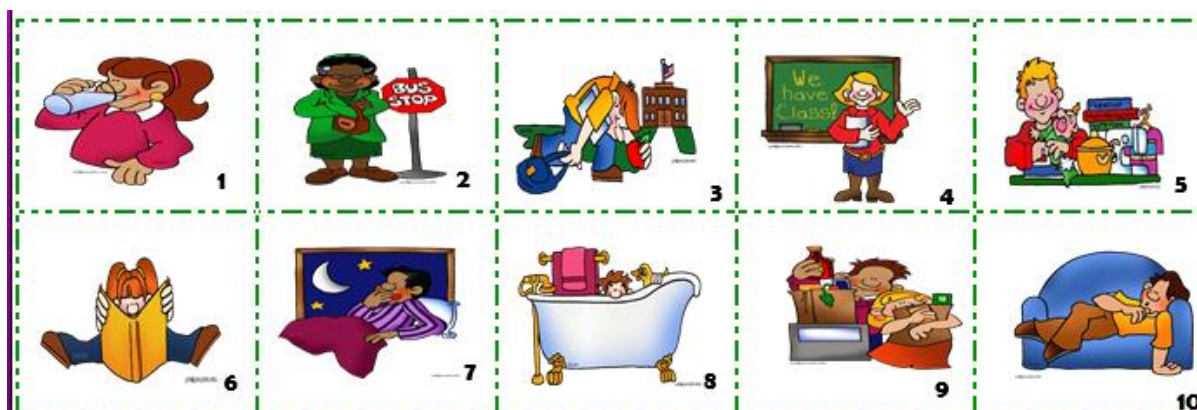
Appendix 11. Six activities to distinguish in the TPDL workshop

1. Students are in a marketing campaign, so they work in a group of three to make an advertisement of one product that they want to sell.
2. Students finish the grammatical exercise in which they need to fill in the blanks with suitable verb forms to complete sentences.
3. Students work in a group of four or six. In each group, they are divided into two teams and have a debate about whether or not home-schooling is better than traditional schooling.
4. Students read a reading passage and answer the questions about that passage.
5. Students listen to a person talking about his summer vacation and match the events in chronological order.
6. Students work in pairs, each of them is given a picture. Students take turn to describe their picture for the partner to draw.

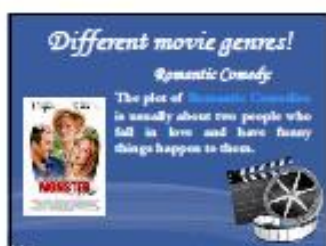
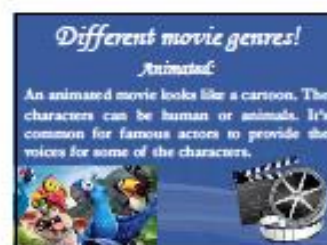
Appendix 12. The dice game (Adapted from <http://busyteacher.org>)

IT'S A MOVIE TIME!

 START	Mention your FOUR favourite movies! (It can be from Vietnam, USA, China, Korea, etc). Use one adjective to describe each of them.	Mention FIVE film genres!	Do you like Vietnamese movies? If so, why? If not, why?
Who is your favourite actor and actress? Why do you like him / her?	When you are watching a foreign movie, what subtitle do you prefer? English or Vietnamese? Why?	Do you like watching horror movies? Mention THREE horror movies that you know!	Tell me the most impressive movie that you have ever watched in your life! And tell me why?
With whom do you usually watch movies?	Where and when do you usually watch movies?	What kind of movie do you like to watch?  Why?	Tell me the title of the movie that you watch for the last! Use some adjectives to describe it!
How often do you watch movie?	Mention TWO good things of watching movie!	What type of movie that is very funny and designed to make us laugh!	What type of movie that has a lot of singing and dancing?
Mention TWO love story movies that you know! Do you like them? Why?	Mention TWO sad movies that you know! Do you like them? Why?	Do you like watching Vietnamese horror movies? Are they scaring and interesting? why? Why not?	Do you like watching action movies? Mention TWO action movies that you know!
Have you ever watched <i>Titanic</i> ? Describe it in three words!	Mention THREE cartoons/ animated films that you know/like? Describe them	Is there a movie you could watch over and over again? Why?	Do you prefer watching movies at home or in the cinema? Why?  YAY!!!

Appendix 13. Worksheet for Lesson 1- Module 10 (Adapted from <http://busyteacher.org>)

Appendix 14. Slides to introduce vocabulary about film genres



Appendix 15. An example of my field note

18/11/2018
 Lan class - lesson 2 - Mod 8
 Some notes: - warm up, group Ss (39:48")
 - L (interfered) Ss' work too much. (57:24")
 L asked Ss to repeat her correction (1)
 before letting them continue the conversatn
 Ss exchanged info w/ each other.
 Ss looked happy and engaged in lessn
 Ss asked Lan many Qs, how to say (2)
 this words / sent. in Eng → Lan translate
 L explained grammar when helping (3)
 L approached weakest Ss → helped
 explained in VNese, Eng, explain Gram (4)
 → go to whiteboard, write structures,
 words, tell Ss to use correct forms (5)
 when talking to each other. (41:23")
 Some Ss near me made short
 conversation, then talked to each other
 about sthng else, not related to the task
 → off task
 L came to me, said that she's (6)
 happy to see the Ss talking to each other,
 but she's tired as having to help many Ss,
 walking around classroom, but happy.
 Ss asked me to help, smiled at me

Appendix 16. Examples of the teachers' journals

TEACHER JOURNAL

Name: [REDACTED]

Lesson: 2

Class: [REDACTED]

Date: 13/11/2018

Details:

1. What happened in the classroom?

The students did not interact much.
They were shy and resistant when I asked them to perform role play in front of the class. I had to encourage them.

2. What changes did I make compared with the lesson plan? Why?

I followed the lesson plan. I think that the lesson plan is good enough.
We have worked together to have it so I wanted to try to implement all of them.

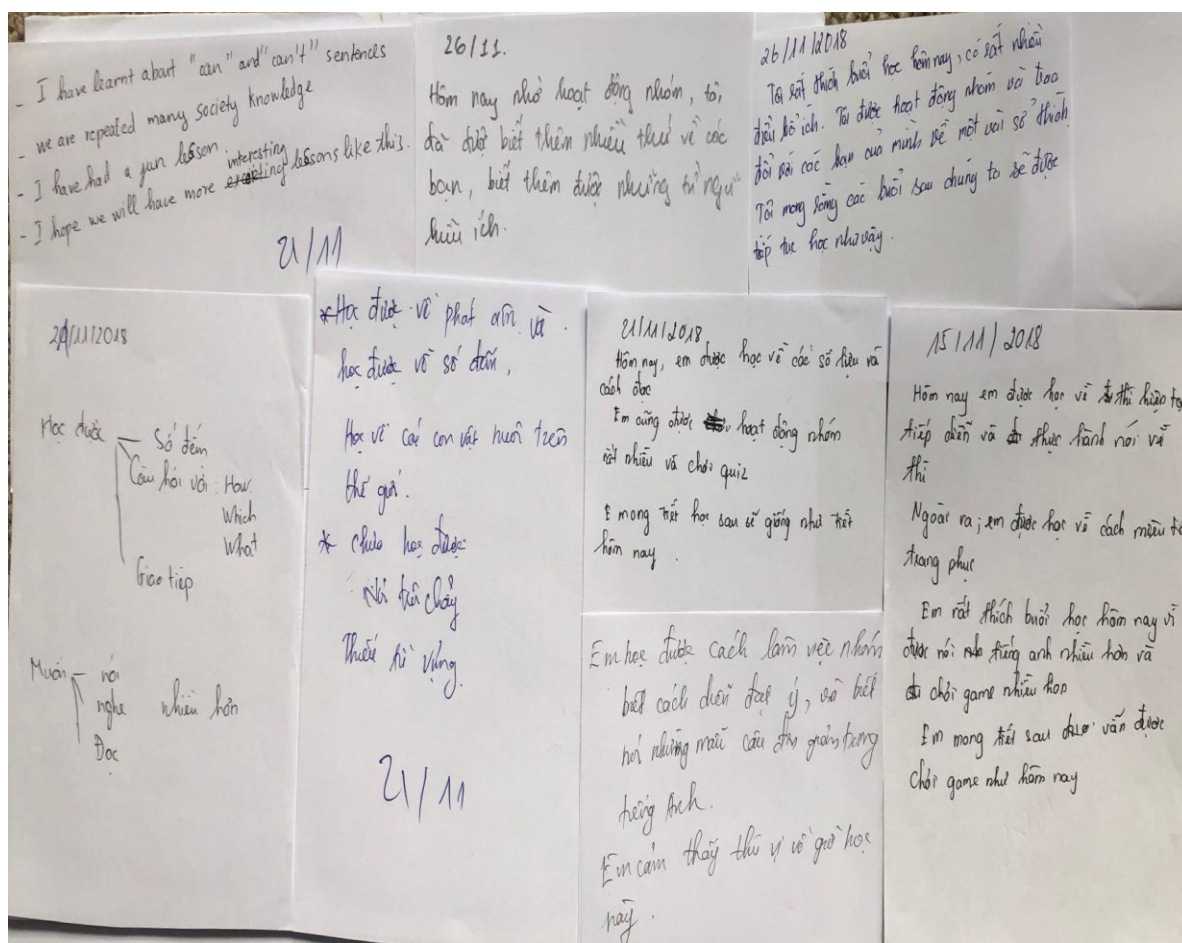
3. What did I notice about the students' learning?

They ^{made} ~~made~~ many mistakes: grammar, word choice
They talked more than previous lessons, maybe because of the nature of the activity (interactive activities).
They used some words that I are not in the textbook.

4. What difficulties did I encounter during the lessons?

Time to Manage the classroom time.
Encourage the students to talk.
Explain the tasks for students.
Very tempted to explain grammar and vocabulary for the students, but afraid to ruin the lesson.

Appendix 17. Examples of the students' feedback in Phase 2



Appendix 18. An example of transcription of Lan's SRI (translated version)

R	Are you ready?
Lan	Yes, let's start now.
R	OK, please watch this part of video and tell me more about that.
Lan	Yes, this is the beginning of my lesson that day. After introducing the title of the lesson, I asked the students a question that is related to the topic.
R	I saw that you only asked them one question and then immediately turned to the other activities in the textbook. Here, you are saying: How many meals do you have a day? And what are they?
Lan	Yes, I asked them one easy question that was very close, I mean familiar to them, and like how many meals do you have a day? What are they? And I thought these questions are easy for them and they could answer these ones.
R	Yes, but here, the students seemed not to pay attention to your questions and just some of them responded, and you had to provide the answers and wrote them on the board yourself. What do you think were the reasons?
Lan	Oh, that was normal. Most of the time, I had to provide them with the answers because their knowledge of English was limited. I mean they did not know much vocabulary or structures so they could not answer me. Or maybe the lesson had just started so they still distracted by something else, they were not ready to study.
R	In this lesson, and the other two lessons, I observed that after introducing the topic of the lessons, you did not ask your students to do any warm up activities like playing games or speaking activities or something like that. Can you tell me more about this?
Lan	Well, because it usually takes time to organise such things. I want to save time to teach them some new words or structures first then I would let them talk later. I think that might be better. You know, the students need to have something before they could speak out. Ah, the lessons themselves were often quite long, you know, with many activities so I had to start the lessons soon and then design some speaking activities for them to talk in order to improve their speaking skill.
R	Yes, and I also noticed that most of the time, you just asked the students to work individually and then when you gave feedback or check their answers, you often asked the questions to the whole class. Like this... and like this...
Lan	Here? Yes,... this one, let me see. Yes, yes, let me see.
R	Yes, in this part, look at this please. And look at the activity in the textbook. In the textbook, there is a pair work, but in your lesson the students just implemented the activity individually. Can you tell me what happened at that time, what you thought or why you changed the activity in your way?
Lan	Well, I asked my students to work individually to write some true sentences and false sentences about the picture. I wanted all of them to do this individually because if they worked in a group or pair, it was likely that only one person in a pair or two persons in a group would do the tasks. The others would just depend on their partners and did nothing. This was a quite simple task so I really wanted them to work by themselves, writing something of their own, you know.
R	Yes, so you wanted your students to work individually because you want them to produce something of their own. You were afraid that some of the students would not do nothing, waiting for their friends to do the tasks for them. You did not want them to be lazy, right? Please keep telling me more about this.
Lan	Yes, then I asked the students to stand up and read their sentence, the rest of the class said true or false. We did not have much time to ask students to work in pairs to

	<p>speak out the sentences and say whether they were true or false. The whole class did together like this would be faster.</p>
R	<p>Yes, so you called each of the students to read their sentences and asked the whole class to response to save time.</p>
Lan	<p>Right.</p>
R	<p>But do you think that by checking or asking the whole class like this could also make the students lazy because they did not necessarily reply your questions. They just waited for their friends to do so, is it right?</p>
Lan	<p>Yes, but before that they worked individually, as I said. So...I don't know. You cannot do thing perfectly [laugh].</p>
R	<p>Next, here, here it is. In this scene, I saw that you were teaching your students the structures of "there is" and "there are". Please tell me more about this.</p>
Lan	<p>Ah this part? That is the thing in the textbook. Here, you see [point to the activity in the textbook] The structure, the exercise. I just taught what was presented in the book. If I did not explain for them carefully, then they would do it wrong. They often said: There has a cat, there have a dog, something like that. It sound very funny.</p>
R	<p>Yes, yes.</p>
Lan	<p>After they knew the grammar, they would work individually and write the true sentences and false sentences about the picture, like you have just asked me. You know.</p>
R	<p>Right, so you elicited the structures to the students, and I noticed that you also told them the meaning of the words in the pictures. Then they would do the task of writing three true things and three false things.</p>
Lan	<p>Right, teaching them everything first then let them practice such things.</p>
R	<p>Ok, can we move to another part of the video? Here this part. Can you please tell me about your teaching Reading section?</p>
Lan	<p>Reading exercise? This one? Let's watch it and see.</p>
R	<p>Yes, after you watch the part, please tell me about it.</p>
Lan	<p>First, like the activities in the textbook, I let the students match the food to the pictures for a while, maybe like in this video, 5 minutes, 3 minutes, maybe... Then gave the answers by showing the things in the picture. For example, what is the carrot, what is the noodle, what is broccoli, etc. Then I asked them which ones contain vitamin, which ones contain mineral, etc. These are all the activities in the textbook, you can see.</p>
R	<p>And then the next task is that the students work in pairs to make a list of eight healthy food and eight of unhealthy food, right, I mean in the textbook the activity should be like that.</p>
Lan	<p>I know, but I just ask the whole class to tell me for convenience. No need eight things for each type of food. Whatever they knew was Ok.</p>
R	<p>Yes I see, that is the reason why on the board, I could see 4 healthy foods and 3 unhealthy foods. But most of the answers were yours, right? I hardly heard the answers from your students.</p>
Lan	<p>Yes, it is not necessary to have the full list like in the book.</p>
R	<p>Then what happened in the main reading task?</p>
Lan	<p>Main task? Ah, I gave the students some time to read the passage about food then they had to match the given statements with the paragraphs. Then I asked them whether the statements were true or false based on the information provided in the reading text. You can see that.</p>

R	Can I ask that why did not you let them work in pair, discuss with each other and guess whether the statement were true or false first, then you asked them to read the text and check whether their guesses were right or not. By doing this way, they could exchange information, negotiate or argue with each other, their communicative skill, therefore, could be improved more. How do you think about this recommendation?
	Oh, that might be a good idea. I did not think about that. Next time, maybe I would do like what you recommend. Right, very good idea, thank you.
R	Yes, thank you.
R	Uhm, in this part, I also saw that you wrote some words on the board, here, “instead”, “calorie”, “portion”, “balanced”, “particularly”. Why?
Lan	Those are the one that might be new to them (the students), so I showed the meaning of these words.
R	You asked some students to read the whole paragraph before matching it with the provided statement. For example, you asked Trang to read the paragraph 1 and tell you which statement was suitable with this paragraph. Can you tell me more about this?
Lan	Oh I asked them to read the paragraph aloud to check their pronunciation, and during their reading, I could also check their understanding of the words by asking them immediately.
R	You check their pronunciation by asking them to read the text?
Lan	Yes, that is right.
R	You also asked them to translate the text that they read. Why?
Lan	Certainly to check their understanding of the text. I often do like that [Laugh]. I even sometimes asked the class to write their translation into their notebook so that they would remember the words or structures more.
R	Yes, I see. Is there anything else that you want to talk about the Reading section?
Lan	No, no more. After they finished their reading exercise. I asked the two questions in the book, that is what their favorite food were, what food they disliked. These ones, you see [Point to the textbook activity]
R	Ok, I see. As in the video, you asked some of the students to stand up and tell you the food they liked and the food they disliked.
Lan	Right, no need for pair work as you often say. Just ask some of the students, especially the inactive ones to stand up and tell about themselves was enough. I often selected the weak and inactive ones, I encouraged them to speak out as much as they could. If I did not called them, then they just said nothing the whole lessons.
R	[Laugh] I see I see.
Lan	What else do you want to know, or that’s all?
R	Oh there is still something that I want you to clarify for me. Look at this scene, the task here [point to the task in the book]. Can you tell me the way you sequence the task?
Lan	Well, as in the book, I asked them (the students) to read the words in the box and find things in the pictures. I needed to explain them the meaning of each words so that all the students knew and could find things. I know that these words were quite simple so I just talked about this very quickly as you can see.
R	Yes, I see. And I noticed that you skipped the listening activity in which they needed to listen and number the things they heard. Why?
Lan	Let me see. Oh I did that because I thought it was not important. The import thing is that they needed to know the meaning of the words. You know, as I said, these words

	were simple so they would realise them (the words) when they heard them. So no need to do the listening activity.
R	And then what did you do next?
Lan	Well, I showed them some questions to ask about the...about, for example, has a boy got a cap. Or the way to describe their pictures such as "there are something" or "there is something".
R	Why did you have to do this?
Lan	Because they could use these expressions in doing the task. They worked in pairs, asking and answering the questions about the two pictures. And they also needed to describe their own pictures, like the requirement in the textbook, you see.
R	Do you think that if you just let them to do the task without teaching them the language like this, they could still do the task?
Lan	Maybe, maybe not. I just wanted to make sure that even the weakest students could do the task so I told them necessary expressions and they could use them with their friends.
R	Alright.
R	And how about this? This is when they finished their task. You checked their answers, oh, maybe it was not you were checking their answers. You were, I guess, giving them the answer of your own. Right? Please tell me about this.
Lan	Oh that is right. At that time, I was giving them the answers, that is, the differences between the two pictures.
R	Why did not you call some of the students in some pairs to stand up and talk about what they had found? Is it better? What do you think?
Lan	I know, I know. But let me see. Why did not I do like what you said? I cannot remember. Let me think for a while.
R	Yes please. Spend as much time as you need.
Lan	Ah maybe at that time, the time for the lesson almost ran out, so I just gave the whole class the answers. I think so, yes, maybe the reason is that.
R	So you mean you showed the whole class the answers to save time?
Lan	Yes, that's it. Ah and I thought that when I said the structures many times like this, they would listen and might remember. I don't know. I just think that.
R	Ok, I see. So I think that is all for the interview today. Thank you very much for sharing me the information about the lessons that you taught. I would watch the video again and again. And if I had further questions, I would ask you later, is it alright?
Lan	Of course. Bye.