

“IN A NEW NORMAL SITUATION, A NEW APPROACH”: MID-PANDEMIC EFL
TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON IMPLEMENTING TASK-BASED LANGUAGE
TEACHING IN EAP COURSES

By

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ABSTRACT

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Scarce research exists with regards to TBLT implementation in EAP courses, especially those courses held in EFL settings. Hence, this study explores the extent to which EAP teachers from an EFL country, Bangladesh, hold beliefs that align with core TBLT principles, as well as their levels of receptiveness to using *tasks* in the classroom. In this mixed methods study, data was collected from 30 tertiary-level EAP teachers in Bangladesh using a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews. A convergent mixed methods analysis was used to triangulate the data and verify the findings. Results showed that participants agreed with core TBLT principles from a moderate to high level, and consistently favored use of *tasks* over traditional activities. Moreover, teacher beliefs and practices seem to have become further aligned with core TBLT tenets in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shift to online teaching. I conclude the study by highlighting a number of implications for EFL teaching contexts. Additionally, I suggest that teacher and student autonomy need to be nurtured not only during curriculum development and implementation, but also in theoretical and research design.

This thesis is dedicated to my father.
Thank you, *abbu*, for providing me with eternal sustenance, literal and figurative, in my
pursuit of knowledge and growth.

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INTRODUCTION

There are currently an astounding 1.5 billion English-language learners worldwide. Of this group, about 750 million or more are learners from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts (Beare, 2019), i.e., contexts wherein few native speakers of the language are found, or wherein the predominate languages used are not English. Development of effective language teaching methodologies is crucial for learners in this context as their academic, professional, and personal lives are closely intertwined with successful English language learning, despite perhaps a paucity of opportunities for practice. Although the emergence of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research since the mid-19th century has given rise to various popular language teaching methodologies, the philosophical underpinnings of these methodologies are grounded in western educational contexts and often unable to meet the practical realities or existing language teaching principles prevalent in developing EFL countries (Li, 1998; Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Chowdhury & Phan, 2008). Yet, a relatively new language teaching methodology, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), shows promise due to its basis in SLA research and adaptability for differing world-wide learning contexts and EFL and English as a Second Language (ESL) student needs. Recent research by McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007), Chen and Wright (2016), Kim, Jung, and Tracy-Ventura (2017), as well as by Thi, Jaspaert, and Van den Branden (2018) shows positive attitudes towards TBLT in EFL-based teachers and students, especially when they are subjected to long-term exposure to TBLT. Nevertheless, any optimism with regards to positive perceptions of TBLT has to be

cautious, as other studies have shown mixed results (Carless, 2007; Hu, 2013; Zheng & Borg, 2014).

Despite the significant ongoing research into TBLT, very few have directly studied TBLT implementation in English for Academic Purpose (EAP) courses (Douglas & Kim, 2014), with even scarcer literature available with regards to EAP courses in EFL countries. This study aims to fill this research gap by investigating EAP teacher perceptions of TBLT in one EFL context, namely Bangladesh. It is important to investigate this area as positive reforms in this field can lead to meaningful access to higher educational and career-related opportunities for the growing youth populations in developing countries. As TBLT has the potential to offer EAP students from EFL countries the crucial opportunities needed to “transfer the skills garnered in EAP courses to their mainstream studies” more effectively than other approaches (Douglas & Kim, 2014), further attention in this area is necessary.

Likewise, it is necessary to take teachers’ voices and lived experiences into account as part of evaluating the suitability of implementing new teaching approaches in each context as “...the actual implementation of TBLT will succeed only to the extent that it takes heed of practitioners’ current educational beliefs and the context in which they are operating” (Van den Branden, 2016, p. 249). To add, although a number of studies have surveyed TBLT implementation in Asia, research on Asian EFL teacher perspectives on TBLT is still limited (Thi, Jaspaert, & Van den Branden, 2018). As such, the current study explores the extent to which teachers from an Asian EFL country, Bangladesh, are receptive and prepared to implement TBLT in tertiary-level EAP courses. The two main research questions for this study are:

1. How aligned are EFL-based EAP teachers' underlying teaching principles with core TBLT principles?
2. How open and likely are EFL-based EAP teachers to use *tasks* (as defined within TBLT methodologies) in the classroom?

Furthermore, as the study was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic during its design phase, a sub-topic included in this paper is the transition of EFL-based EAP courses to an online format, and the ways that this impacted teaching approaches implemented in those courses. Lastly, EAP teachers' willingness to adopt a new teaching method, taking institutional and practical constraints into account in an EFL context, is also briefly surveyed in this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Core Principles Of TBLT

TBLT is an evidence-based language teaching approach that is rooted in theories and research from psycholinguistic and sociocultural fields (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol (2007). First and foremost, it takes *tasks*, i.e., contextual, relevant, goal and meaning oriented activities that facilitate L2 learning (see Long, 2015; Skehan, 1996) as the core organizational unit for curriculum development (Kim, Jung, & Tracy-Ventura, 2017). TBLT, therefore, provides the chance for language learners to use the target language authentically in the classroom using the vehicle of *tasks* (Erlam, 2016; Douglas & Kim, 2014). It is different from *synthetic approaches*, which present language through discrete items one at a time to learners, and instead follows an *analytic approach* (Long, 2009) where holistic presentation and use of language is the norm (Kim, Jung, & Tracy-Ventura, 2017; Thi, Jaspaert, & Van den Branden, 2018).

To add, learner needs are central to the TBLT approach (Van den Branden, 2016), which are to be taken into account during both curriculum development and in the implementation phase, ideally using a multi-pronged needs analysis combining contextual factors related to target use, expert opinions, and learners' experiences and future needs (Avarmaet & Gysen, 2006). Learners continue to hold a central role in their own learning, even during the classroom implementation phase (Révész & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2016; Kim, Jung, & Tracy-Ventura, 2017; Thi, Jaspaert, & Van den Branden, 2018) as they actively *learn-by-doing* and enjoy higher levels of autonomy in general (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007).

Long (2009) further outlined principles of TBLT by summarizing them in the form of ten core methodological principles (MPs), which he defined as “universally desirable instructional design features, motivated by theory and research findings in SLA, educational psychology, general curriculum design, and elsewhere, which show them to be necessary for SLA or facilitative of it” (p. 376). These MPs, therefore, are grounded on theories and research from the various listed fields and are known to promote L2 learning. The ten MPs outlined by Long (2009) are provided in Table 1 and provide the theoretical framework for the first research question asked in this study.

Table 1

List of Methodological Principles (Directly adopted from Long, 2009)

Methodological Principle (MP)	
MP1	Use task, not text, as the unit of analysis.
MP2	Promote learning by doing.
MP3	Elaborate input (do not simplify; do not rely solely on "authentic" texts).
MP4	Provide rich (not impoverished) input.
MP5	Encourage inductive ("chunk") learning.
MP6	Focus on form.
MP7	Provide negative feedback.
MP8	Respect "learner syllabus"/developmental processes.
MP9	Promote cooperative/collaborative learning.
MP10	Individualize instruction (psycholinguistically, and according to communicative needs).

Definition of Task

As *tasks* are central to the TBLT approach, any understanding of TBLT requires clarity regarding what constitutes a *task*. Many definitions have been proposed over time, but the core principle is the same in all given definitions: a task involves learners using the language meaningfully to achieve a goal (Van den Branden, 2016). They are activities where learners do something with the language, usually with a communicative purpose: “[A *task* is] a piece of classroom work that involves learners in

comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form” (Nunan, 2004, p. 4, as cited in Hu, 2013).

On top of this focus on meaning, *tasks* are usually reflective of activities that are carried out in the real world, and hence have a non-linguistic outcome or goal (Ellis, 2003, as cited in Comer, 2007). Ellis (2009, as cited in Douglas & Kim, 2014, p. 4) stressed the presence of an outcome other than target language usage when defining *tasks* : “A task has a primary focus on meaning, a ‘gap’, which motivates a need to exchange information or give an opinion, and a clearly defined outcome other than use of language that is reached by the students using their own language resources.” Samuda and Bygate (2008) echoed this definition in their own: “a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning” (p.69). Long (2016) underscored the authentic, real-world like nature of *tasks* when he defined *tasks* as “real-world communicative uses to which learners will put the L2 beyond the classroom—the things they will do in and through the L2.” In this way, various experts have defined *tasks* to include their authentic, communicative, and goal-oriented nature.

TBLT vs TSLT

Due to the myriad of challenges in adopting TBLT in EFL settings (see the “Benefits and Advantages” section below), the approach is often adapted into a weaker version to address students’ context specific needs more successfully (Carless, 2007; Chen & Wright, 2016; Kim, Jung, & Tracy-Ventura, 2012). This adapted version, which

uses *tasks* as supplementary activities in the curriculum rather than as the main organizing element, is sometimes known as Task-Supported Language Teaching approach (TSLT) (Ellis, 2003 as cited in Hu, 2013; also see Skehan, 1996). In this localized version of TBLT, “*tasks* become communication activities, used as a class-based adjunct to a more explicit structure-based syllabus” (Chen & Wright, 2016). Whereas some proponents recommend a hybrid syllabus that combines both TBLT and TSLT in order to overcome the challenges related to accuracy and form (Ellis, 2017), others are staunchly against it: “The task syllabus stands alone, not as one strand in a hybrid of some kind” (Long, 2016, p.6). For this study, I followed the framework of the strong TBLT approach, where *tasks* are the main organizational element in a lesson plan.

Benefits and Drawbacks

As an approach that aims to be research-based (Van den Branden, 2016), TBLT can be seen as being flexible and adaptable to cater to any groups of learners or teaching contexts (Ellis, 2003, as cited in Douglas & Kim, 2014). It is shown to be more practical and effective, student needs-oriented, effective in developing all four skills, and allowing balanced teaching which focuses on both meaning and form (Douglas & Kim, 2014). Furthermore, it has been shown to sustain higher motivation and interest in learners (Light & Ranta, 2016; Kim, Jung, & Tracy-Ventura, 2017). Again, Erlam (2016) notes that TBLT is relevant for EFL students as they provide opportunities to practice communicating in the target language in the classroom, which is not feasible outside the classroom in an EFL context.

To add, as a learner centered approach, TBLT is known to increase student autonomy (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007) and create increased opportunities for learners to exercise their creativity, critical thinking, and analytical skills (Light & Ranta, 2016). Again, Comer (2007) notes that students can reflect on aspects of culture, use all four language skills as well as pragmatic skills, and communicate personalized meanings using the target language in TBLT classrooms. Last but not the least, TBLT allows students opportunities to practice existing language skills and knowledge through meaningful interaction in the classroom (Douglas & Kim, 2014).

On the other hand, several drawbacks of TBLT, especially in Asian/EFL contexts, have been identified by researchers, including difficulties in implementing TBLT in large class sizes, exam-oriented teaching and syllabus designs that cannot accommodate *tasks* in the classroom, lack of clarity amongst teachers about TBLT and *tasks*, the time-consuming nature of TBLT implementation, lack of proper teacher training, issues related to assessment, and lack of motivation and need for students to use the language outside the classroom (Zheng & Borg, 2014; Van den Branden, 2016; Douglas & Kim; 2014, Chen & Wright, 2016). There is also a belief that TBLT focuses on developing fluency, but neglects accuracy (see Skehan, 1996). Hu (2013) further mentioned that there is limited access to contextual and authentic *tasks* that are needed outside the classroom in such contexts, and such approaches may clash with traditional beliefs about teaching prevalent in Asia.

TBLT in EFL Contexts

Several studies have been conducted on TBLT implementation and effectiveness in EFL contexts from both student and teacher perspectives. Many of the

earlier teacher-perception studies, which were short-term in nature, found negative or mixed views about TBLT. Carless (2007), for instance, examined the extent to which TBLT is fit for use in an EFL school context in Hong Kong. Using interviews of 21 teachers and educators as the main source of data, the author concluded that a weak version of TBLT (see the 'TBLT vs TSLT' section outlined above) is more appropriate for EFL schooling contexts, especially given the cultural norms, student needs related to examinations and knowledge about explicit grammar, as well as skills related to writing. Similarly, Chen and Wright (2016) researched teacher beliefs and practices in a Chinese secondary school. They examined the extent to which TBLT can be contextualized while remaining in its original form. Through interviews with four teachers and an administrator, class observations, and teaching materials, the authors deduced that there was strong institutional support conducive to TBLT styled teaching in the setting of the study. Yet, their findings also revealed that there was high variability when it came to actual implementation, with many teachers using *tasks* as supplementary, end-of-class activities, using TSLT rather than TBLT in their courses. The authors concluded that this was partially due to a lack of teacher autonomy, and the authors recommended that building teacher autonomy is imperative to implementing TBLT successfully in the EFL classroom.

Also looking at teachers' views on TBLT-implementation, Barnard and Nguyen (2010) conducted a qualitative study where they analyzed reflective comments from 23 teachers to evaluate teacher beliefs and practices regarding TBLT at a secondary school level in Vietnam. The results highlighted that even though teachers seemed to value communicative activities, their allegiance still lay with traditional

approaches which focused on form and explicit instruction of grammar. The authors speculated that this discrepancy was due to the teachers' lack of training which did not allow them to implement a TBLT curriculum successfully despite their willingness to do so. In a similar vein, Hu (2013) found mixed results in her empirical study of teacher perspectives and practices of TBLT based on 30 teachers from different Chinese public schools. The results showed mixed reactions of teachers towards TBLT, ranging from "negative denial, passive acceptance, to active application" (p. 1). Moreover, the teachers' understanding of tasks also varied, and the weak form of TBLT was often the observed variant seen in action. Another study that yielded mixed results was a qualitative study by Zheng and Borg (2014). The authors used classroom observations and interviews with three focal teachers in China to explore underlying teacher beliefs about TBLT, as well as the extent to which it is implemented in the classroom, and related factors. The results of the study illustrated that the teachers' overall understanding of *tasks* was narrow, and the extent of their implementation of TBLT varied based on the teachers' strength of belief in the approach as well as their overall beliefs about language teaching and learning. Of note, age seemed to be a related factor, with senior (older) teachers preferring structure-oriented lessons, whereas the youngest participant showed higher faithfulness to tenets of TBLT. This, most likely, reflected trends in language-teacher education, with TBLT filtering in the profession bottom up, that is, through the training of new (who also happen to be young) language-teaching professionals.

Kim, Jung, and Tracy-Ventura (2017), in an effort to fill the gap of scarce longitudinal research on TBLT implementation in EFL contexts investigated the

development and implementation of a localized TBLT curriculum in South Korea. The researchers were particularly interested in how students' perceptions about a TBLT course varied over time. They analyzed pre and post treatment student-survey data at different stages of the experiment and looked at qualitative data from a focal participant via her portfolio entries. The results showed that student interest and enjoyment of *tasks* changed positively over the course period, although their opinion of the usefulness of TBLT remained neutral. The authors concluded that TBLT can be successfully implemented in EFL contexts if developed based on learners' contextual needs, although both teachers and students might require time to adjust to this approach. Other relatively recent student-focused studies have painted TBLT in a positive light as well. For instance, Huang (2016) used a mixed-methods research design to study the ways TBLT could benefit college level Chinese students in his own class. The results were substantially positive and in favor of TBLT, showing that TBLT led to higher student motivation, proficiency in productive and other related skills, as well as acquisition of target-language cultural norms.

TBLT in EAP Courses

EAP courses are driven by the specific needs of learners for specific practices and contexts (Light & Ranta, 2016). Therefore, EAP classes have been known as “a natural fit for task-based language teaching (TBLT) because it allows the students to use language and skills in situations they will face in their academic lives” (Douglas & Kim, 2014, p. 2). This approach seems to allow students opportunities to practice authentic activities that mirror tasks they might need to carry out in the outside world: “To prepare for full integration in the academic and social environment of the university

in which EAP graduates will be called upon to carry out a wide range of communicative acts, students need to experience activities and assignments beyond the tried- and-true types of EAP *tasks* such as the academic essay and the academic presentation” (Light & Ranta, 2016, p. 60).

Recent studies focusing on TBLT in conjunction with EAP have yielded mainly positive results. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007), for instance, conducted a qualitative study investigating a task-based course at a Thai University. Using multiple data sources, the authors sought to record 13 teachers’ and 35 students’ reaction to a TBLT course. According to the results, teachers reported students gained skills they could use in other academic courses. Moreover, the course allowed learners to think by themselves, solve problems, and manage their learning, therefore visibly increasing their autonomy. Although both learners and teachers took time to adapt to this new method and needed to be primed with an introductory unit on TBLT, the overall findings suggested that TBLT is highly successfully in addressing students’ real-world academic needs.

In a similar thread, Douglas and Kim’s (2014) study, which I have mentioned briefly above but have not discussed in depth, was rooted in the context of EAP in Canada and examined 42 EAP teachers’ perceptions and current practices with regards to TBLT. The authors explored this area by asking the Canadian EAP teachers the extent to which they used TBLT in their classrooms, by asking them for examples of *tasks* that they think are effective for TBLT learners, and also by asking about the benefits and drawbacks of the TBLT approach according to them. The 42 teachers participated in the study through an online survey, and the data was analyzed both

quantitatively and qualitatively. The results showed that presentations were considered the most representative choice for a TBLT activity in an EAP context. Furthermore, 69% of the teachers reported that they were using TBLT activities in more than half of their lessons. Also, an astounding 86% of teachers said that TBLT activities are appropriate for EAP contexts. The most common *tasks* assigned by teachers in Canadian EAP classes were presentations, essays, and interviews, all three of which are directly related to EAP students' continuing studies in the academia. The most reported advantages of TBLT cited by the participants included practicality, effectiveness, and learner-centeredness, whereas the most cited disadvantages were discrepancy with student expectations, lack of classroom time, and extensive preparation required of the teachers.

One of the more recent studies conducted in this area of inquiry was by Thi, Jaspeart and Van den Branden (2018). The authors examined 62 Vietnamese teachers' perceptions of TBLT and the challenges of TBLT implementation. The 62 EFL teachers, who were working in different universities in Vietnam, were invited to Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in groups of three to four participants. The data was then transcribed and coded on a pre-developed Likert-type scale. Therefore, the authors collected qualitative data and then quantified the data using a mixed methods approach. The results showed that teachers had a good understanding of TBLT and had positive attitudes towards implementing it. Regarding the difficulties of implementation, they cited discrepancy between planned policy reform and existing policies, large class sizes, as well as students' negative learning attitudes, and shortages of time. The authors concluded by providing some important recommendations, including

suggestions for assessment reform, extensive teacher training, as well as textbook revisions. Overall, the research showed that the TBLT course helped learners become more independent and addressed their real-world academic needs.

The Need for This Study

As a language-teaching professional from Bangladesh, I am keen to understand Bangladeshi teachers' perceptions of TBLT, and whether they believe it can be well implemented in English language programs in Bangladesh. I am interested in this topic for two reasons. One reason, which I have laid the groundwork for above in the literature review, deals with the gaps in the research in the field: TBLT has real promise as an English language teaching method, particularly in EFL contexts, due to its basis in SLA theory and research, and because it promotes autonomy, increases motivation, and is based on students' needs (Chen & Wright, 2016; Kim, Jung, & Tracy-Ventura, 2017; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Thi, Jaspaert, & Van den Branden, 2018). However, research on TBLT implementation has not been done in Bangladesh, a populous and important EFL country, and I seek to fill that gap by conducting a study on Bangladeshi English language teachers' beliefs and positions toward TBLT implementation.

Second, I am interested in this topic because I am an English-teacher-educator who has learned extensively about TBLT in an advanced graduate program in the United States, a program that focused on TBLT implementation and research. I plan to return to Bangladesh to teach and implement TBLT principles and methodologies. Thus, as part of that future work, I need to start learning more about how TBLT fits into the already-existing English language curricula in Bangladesh, and uncover first-hand

how teachers position themselves in relation to TBLT implementation. To reiterate from the introduction section of this paper, my research questions are the following:

1. How aligned are EFL-based EAP teachers' underlying teaching principles with core TBLT principles?
2. How open and likely are EFL-based EAP teachers to use *tasks* (as defined within TBLT methodologies) in the classroom?

METHODS

Participants

A convenience sample of 41 EAP instructors from seven different private universities in Bangladesh were used in the study (Appendix A). The research participants had at least 1.5 years of teaching experience, with the average length of teaching experience being 5.66 years. The mean age of the participants was 33.7 years, with a range of 27 to 60 years. Out of the 37 participants who filled out the background information part of the questionnaire, 24 were female and 13 were male. All the teachers who participated had at least a master's degree in TESOL, or a related field, and were familiar with various teaching methodologies. The majority of the teachers (n=30) indicated that they were familiar with TBLT, although a small portion (n=7) indicated that they were not. An overview of the participant details is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Profile Summary

n ^a	Mean Age (in years)	Mean Teaching Experience (in years)	Gender		Familiarity with TBLT		Educational Background		University Affiliation ^b						
			Female	Male	Yes	No	MA	PhD	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
37	33.7	5.66	24	13	30	7	36	1	21	7	4	2	1	1	1

^a Only 37 of the total 41 participants filled out the background information section.

^b Names of universities have been replaced with alphabetical symbols to maintain their anonymity.

Study Context

The study was conducted amongst university teachers currently teaching in the private sector in Bangladesh. Private universities cater to almost half (45%) of all tertiary level enrollments in Bangladesh, which amounted to approximately 1.53 million

students in 2017 alone, according to a report published by The World Bank (2019). For this study, teachers from 7 different top-tier private universities from the capital city, out of a total 148 universities present in the country (Jamil & Rahman, 2021), were asked to participate.

Private universities in Bangladesh generally host departments or language institutes which cater to oncoming students' EAP needs. As there are no mandated guidelines for these courses from the national board overseeing their operations, there is "a diversity in the naming, educational objectives, content choice, and pedagogic procedures" of these EAP courses (Jamil & Rahman, 2021, p. 98). However, these universities typically follow the American educational model of semester or trimester system, CGPA grading style, and maintain comparatively low student numbers in each class, with an average teacher: student ratio of 1:27 as opposed to 1:40 in public universities (The World Bank, 2019). According to my experience, a typical EAP classroom in a private Bangladeshi university will enroll 30-35 students in each class, though the number may climb to 40 during busy semesters.

Questionnaire

All participants filled out a Qualtrics questionnaire that I distributed to them using an anonymous link through email or social media. The questionnaire (Appendix D) had three main parts including: 1) Likert-Scale Survey, 2) Preferred Activities Survey, and 3) Background Information.

Likert-Scale Survey

The 7-point Likert-Scale Survey consisted of fifteen "I believe..." type statements to gauge the extent to which participants beliefs about language learning

and teaching conform to TBLT principles. A 7-point scale was used because they have been shown to be “more accurate and the easiest to use” (Finstad, 2010). Furthermore, the survey items corresponded to TBLT methodological principles (MPs) as outlined by Long (2009), and as reviewed in the literature review section of this paper. The MPs used in the survey were selected based on relevance to the teaching and learning context in which the study was conducted. The relevant MPs along with the corresponding Likert-Scale statements are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Methodological Principles (MPs) and Corresponding Survey Statements

MPs Relevant to the Current Study (adopted from Long, 2009)	Corresponding Survey Statements
Activities: MP1: Use task, not text, as the unit of analysis; MP2: Promote learning by doing.	#I believe that language learning takes place when learners actively do something with the target language. #I believe that lesson plans should be developed with communicative tasks or activities as the core units. #I believe that students should be made to carry out tasks in the classroom which resemble tasks that they are likely to do in the real world.
Input: MP3: Elaborate input (do not simplify; do not rely solely on "authentic" texts); MP4: Provide rich (not impoverished) input.	#I believe I should expose students to authentic samples of the target language. #I believe that I need to provide rich input to my learners from an early stage. #I believe that authentic input is effective input.
Learning Processes: MP6: Focus on Form.	#I believe it is important to focus on grammatical errors incidentally as they occur rather than pre-selecting a set of grammar rules to teach. #I believe I should address my students' recurring errors related to accuracy collectively rather than addressing them individually. #I believe in explicitly teaching certain grammar structures with which my students seem to be struggling.
Learning Processes: MP9: Promote cooperative/ collaborative learning.	#I believe that pair and group work are important for language learning. #I believe that language is learnt in the classroom through collaboration with other learners. #I prefer to make my students work in small groups or pairs in the classroom.
Learners: MP 10: Individualize instruction (psycholinguistically, and according to communicative needs);	#I believe that instruction should be customized according to learners' communicative needs. #I believe that a language curriculum should be developed keeping the students' future needs in mind. #I believe that before teaching a class, it is important to conduct a needs analysis in order to identify why students need/want to learn the target language.

Preferred Activities Survey

The Likert-Scale Survey was followed by a Preferred Activities Survey in which the participants were asked to rate two different lesson plan approaches for the same topic. One approach followed TBLT principles, and the other followed traditional approaches typically used in EAP classrooms in EFL contexts. The topics included in the Preferred Activities Survey are commonly found topics in tertiary-level EAP courses: Persuasive Paragraph Writing, Report writing, and Informative Presentations. The survey left room for participants to rank how likely they are to use each approach in their teaching context, as well as elaborate on their selection.

The outlines for TBLT-oriented lessons were developed ensuring that the four key characteristics of *tasks* as compiled by Comer (2007) are integrated into them. Following characteristics of pedagogic tasks as outlined by Comer (2007), I ensured that each task given in the survey involved the learners doing something with the language using both their receptive and productive skills; that the task focused on communicating meaning, rather than focusing on form; and that the tasks incorporated a non-linguistic outcome or purpose mirroring real-world language use. For instance, according to the TBLT-oriented Persuasive Paragraph Writing outline, the learners would read reviews on the movie review website Rotten Tomatoes, compile a movie review themselves, and post it on to the website's movie review board, and in doing so try to either convince audiences to watch a movie or otherwise. Therefore, such a task would require learners to use the language meaningfully with a real-world-like purpose, and a non-linguistic outcome (i.e., the post on the Rotten Tomatoes website). Furthermore, group-work and pair-work is highlighted in all the TBLT outlines to

highlight the TBLT tenet of cooperative and collaborative learning.

For the traditional lesson outlines, I relied on my own experience as a Bangladeshi EFL student as well as an EAP teacher to highlight common practices in EAP classrooms. Therefore, the outlines followed the PPP method, i.e. 'Present', 'Practice', and 'Produce'. For example, in case of Persuasive Paragraph Writing using the traditional approach, the students would be presented with sample persuasive paragraphs, and then practice generating ideas to support their opinion for a given topic, before moving onto production and writing a persuasive paragraph themselves. These traditional outlines incorporated minimum group or pair work to mirror traditional EFL classrooms which do not make extensive use of collaborative and cooperative learning.

Background Information

This part of the survey asked participants to fill out information related to their background, such as age, gender, years of teaching experience, highest achieved educational degree/qualification, and name of the university to which they are affiliated. Apart from these details, the participants were also asked questions related to language teaching methodologies, such as the ones that they use in their classrooms, and whether/to what extent they are familiar with TBLT. Moreover, their perception regarding the viability and willingness to adopt a new language teaching methodology was explored in this part of the survey. The last few questions centered around the teachers' experiences shifting to a virtual classroom format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ways in which this disruption impacted their teaching methodology and style.

Interviews

Five individual online interviews were conducted using Zoom. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, I did not use a fixed pre-selected set of questions, but rather allowed four open-ended questions to guide me through the interview process (Appendix C). The questions touched broadly upon typical classes conducted by the teachers, their preferences regarding pair and group work, their experience transitioning to online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their reaction to the core TBLT teaching principles of interest to this particular study.

Procedure

The primary data collection instrument used was the online Questionnaire because of the ease and efficiency the format provides. Especially, the COVID-19 pandemic posed a challenge for this study as data collection took place in the first half of the year 2021. Given the social distancing advisory in Bangladesh and in most parts of the world, face to face data collection was not a feasible option at this time. Therefore, recruitment for the questionnaire was done through department-wide list-serv emails and personal messages on social media accounts. Given my own experience as an EAP teacher in Bangladesh, I was able to ask teachers that I know personally and request them to spread the word to other teachers in their circle in turn.

The questionnaire was distributed to participants through a Qualtrics link provided through emails and social media messages over a period of 4 weeks in January 2020. The link to the survey took the participants to the consent page where detailed information about the study and the researchers was provided. The participants were asked to read the consent form and click on a button provided below to give their

consent and proceed to the actual survey.

In case of the interviews, participants recruited were volunteers who had indicated on the Questionnaire that they would be willing to participate in a 30-minute online interview. The five teachers were selected from a total of 17 interested participants keeping their gender, age, university affiliation, and personal background in mind to ensure a representative sample (See Table 4). All five interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom and the total interview time varied from 25 minutes to up to 45 minutes, as some participants showed interest to stay on longer and share detailed responses.

Table 4

Profile Summary of Teachers Interviewed

Participant Number	Age (in years)	Gender	Teaching Experience (in years)	Teaching Methodologies Employed	Familiar with TBLT	University Affiliation
3	43	Male	3	GTM; CLT	Yes	University B
4	32	Female	4	GTM; CLT	No	University F
10	40	Female	4	Interactive	Yes	University A
11	30	Male	4	Mixed; CLT	Yes	University A
30	28	Female	3	CLT	Yes	University C

Before the start of each session, I made small talk with the interviewees for 5-10 minutes using Bangla¹ or Banglish (a mixture of Bangla and English) in order to put them at ease. I also assured the participants that this would be an informal, semi-structured interview and that they were free to digress, interrupt, or ask questions in return if they wished. Additionally, the participants were asked for their consent to be recorded during the interview, and their recorded consent has been kept on file. Two of

the participants had requested questions to be sent ahead of the interview to help them organize their ideas. I had complied to reduce participant anxiety, especially given the participants speak English as a second language. Sending the four guiding questions (Appendix C) beforehand did not seem to interfere with the semi-structured nature of the interviews, as there were ample opportunities for impromptu follow-up questions and further clarifications. During the interviews, the participants were asked three broad questions on their day-to-day teaching style, followed by open selection responses to five MPs of TBLT which are under focus for this study. These MPs were showed to the participants using the chat option on Zoom so that they could read them and then respond to two of their choice. The teachers were asked to choose the principles that stood out to them, either because they strongly agreed or disagreed, or because they believed that it was difficult to implement them in the classroom.

Although the interview questions were asked in English, the participants were given the option to respond in Bangla, Banglish, or English. Majority of the participants replied exclusively in English or mostly in English with a few words or phrases added in Bangla. Only one of the participants chose to respond in Bangla/Banglish for most of the session. After the interviews were conducted, transcripts were generated using YouTube's "Add Subtitle" tool. Any parts of the transcript that were in Bangla were summarized by me into English. Likewise, the generated transcripts were cleaned and edited by me to rectify any errors made by the software.

Data Analysis

In this study, I used a convergent mixed methods approach to comprehensively analyze and to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Creswell,

2018). I examined and summarized the quantitative portion of the data deductively using a mixture of descriptive and inferential statistics, whereas I collected and analyzed the qualitative data inductively. The results from both these analyses were combined to evaluate the final findings. In this way, by triangulating the quantitative data with the qualitative data simultaneously, I tried to ensure that my findings were both valid and reliable.

For the quantitative portion, I converted responses from the Likert-Scale Survey and Preferred Activities Survey to numerical values (Appendix B) and interpreted them firstly using basic descriptive statistics. I calculated the mean (M), standard deviations (SD), as well as minimum and maximum values of each survey item using Microsoft Excel. Next, I ran Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests on the teacher ratings given in the Preferred Activities Survey. I calculated z values to investigate whether the ratings between TBLT and Traditional approach-oriented activities varied significantly or not. Furthermore, I calculated the corresponding p values and effect sizes of these tests to further highlight the difference between teacher ratings on TBLT versus traditional activities.

In case of qualitative data, I used both descriptive survey responses as well as interview responses to conduct my analysis. I divided data from these two sources into different documents based on the research questions pertaining to them. Small sections of data from each document was then coded and potential thematic categories identified. Next, further segments of data were pulled from the same document and coded using the initial set of categories. This often led to modification of the initial set of categories, with addition of more categories or merging of multiple categories to form a

larger category. In this way, the recursive process of data analysis continued for each document. At the end, the emerging categories were evaluated for connections between them and linked together to form larger thematic categories where appropriate. Hence, using a recursive process, data was labeled based on initial codes, and then grouped into emergent themes which became the foundation for my understanding of EFL-based EAP teachers' perspectives on TBLT. Lastly, the frequency of occurrence and range of mention by participants of each identified thematic category was manually counted and noted.

RESULTS

Results from Quantitative Analysis

Descriptive Statistics from Likert-Scale Survey

The overall results from the Likert-scale survey indicate that majority of participants agree with the TBLT principles being studied, especially those under the categories of 'Activities', 'Input', 'Learning Processes' and 'Learners'. The highest cumulative average rated by participants belonged to the categories relating to 'Activities' (MP 1 "Use of task as the unit of analysis" & MP 2 "Promote learning by doing") and 'Learners' (MP 10 "Individualize Instruction"), with mean ratings of 6.44 and 6.47 respectively. These values were fairly consistent amongst the participants as well, with a comparatively low standard deviation (SD) of 0.72 and 0.74. Similarly, MP 9 ("Promote cooperative/ collaborative learning") from the category 'Learning Processes' received a high rating of 6.18. However, the participants were not in as strong agreement for this item as there was a SD of 1.01.

In contrast, the categories 'Input' (MP 3 "Elaborate input" and MP 4 "Provide rich input") as well as 'Focus on Form' (MP 6) received moderate ratings of 5.97 and 5.54 respectively. The MPs related to 'Input', especially, showed marked variability with a SD of 1.24 and a range of 1.02, suggesting participants had lower consensus regarding these principles. The category 'Focus on Form' also generated some variability with a SD of 1.38, the highest SD amongst all the categories.

The minimum mean rating received by any of the statements was 5.34 (Statement 2, MP6, "I believe I should address my students' recurring accuracy-related errors collectively rather than addressing them individually"), whereas the highest mean

received by any of the statements was 6.61 (MP 10, Statement 1, “I believe that language learning takes place when learners actively do something with the target language”). In summary, the overall data suggests moderate to strong agreement to the MPs listed. A summary of the results is given in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Likert-Scale Responses

Category	Methodological Principles	n	M ^a	SD	Min	Max
Activities	MP1: Use task, not text, as the unit of analysis; MP2: Promote learning by doing.	41	6.44	0.72 ^b	6.18	6.61
	Statement 1: I believe that language learning takes place when learners actively do something with the target language.	41	6.61	0.54	5	7
	Statement 2: I believe that lesson plans should be developed with communicative tasks or activities as the core units.	41	6.175	0.95	3	7
	Statement 3: I believe that students should be made to carry out tasks in the classroom which resemble tasks that they are likely to do in the real world.	41	6.537	0.67	4	7
Input	MP 3: Elaborate input (do not simplify; do not rely solely on "authentic" texts); MP 4: Provide rich (not impoverished) input.	41	5.97	1.24 ^b	5.39	6.41
	Statement 1: I believe I should expose students to authentic samples of the target language.	41	6.41	0.96	2	7
	Statement 2: I believe that I need to provide rich input to my learners from an early stage.	41	5.39	1.65	2	7
	Statement 3: I believe that authentic input is effective input.	41	6.1	1.11	2	7
Learning Processes	MP6: Focus on Form	41	5.54	1.38 ^b	5.34	5.66
	Statement 1: I believe it is important to focus on grammatical errors incidentally as they occur rather than pre-selecting a set of grammar rules to teach.	41	5.61	1.34	2	7
	Statement 2: I believe I should address my students' recurring accuracy-related errors collectively rather than addressing them individually.	41	5.34	1.46	2	7
	Statement 3: I believe in explicitly teaching certain grammar structures with which my students seem to be struggling	41	5.66	1.34	2	7
Learning Processes	MP 9: Promote cooperative/collaborative learning.	41	6.18	1.01 ^b	6.02	6.41
	Statement 1: I believe that pair and group work are important for language learning.	41	6.42	0.83	4	7
	Statement 2: I believe that language is learnt in the classroom through collaboration with other learners.	41	6.02	1.07	2	7
	Statement 3: I prefer to make my students work in small groups or pairs in the classroom.	41	6.1	1.12	2	7
Learners	MP 10: Individualize instruction (psycholinguistically, and according to communicative needs).	41	6.47	0.74 ^b	6.27	6.58
	Statement 1: I believe that instruction should be customized according to learners' communicative needs.	41	6.58	0.59	5	7
	Statement 2: I believe that a language curriculum should be developed keeping the students' future needs in mind.	41	6.56	0.54	5	7
	Statement 3: I believe that before teaching a class, it is important to conduct a needs analysis in order to identify why students need/want to learn the target language.	41	6.27	1.08	2	7

^aBased on the Likert-Scale range of 1-7 (See key provided in Table 12)

^bTotal SD calculated by taking the average of the three SDs of the statements from each category.

Descriptive Statistics from Preferred Activities Survey

The ratings given by the participants on TBLT lesson outlines on Persuasive Paragraph Writing, Report Writing, and Informative Presentations were 6.54, 6.36, and 6.59 respectively. In contrast, the ratings for traditional approaches to these topics were 5.28, 5.13, and 4.24 respectively.

To add, the ratings for TBLT approaches were more consistent than the ratings for traditional approaches, with SDs resting from 0.55 to 1.1 and an average range of 3. Conversely, traditional ratings showed more variability with SDs stretching from 1.59 to 1.87. The average of the range of values for traditional approaches was 6, a high value indicating that participants were quite mixed in their ratings of traditional approaches.

The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results for Persuasive Paragraph Writing showed that on average, the teachers were more likely to use TBLT approaches (Median score = 6.5) than a traditional lesson approach (Median score = 5), with $z = -3.82$, $p < .00001$, $r = -.43$. The effect size of .43 is a medium effect according to Cohen (1988). Similarly, in case of Report Writing, teachers favored TBLT approaches (Median score = 7) over traditional approaches (Median score = 5), with $z = -2.74$, $p < .00001$, and a medium effect size of $r = -.31$. When the teachers viewed the lesson topic Informative Presentations, they judged the TBLT lesson plan as something they would be more likely to use (Median score = 5.5) than the traditional lesson plan (Median score = 4.5), with the differences being significant, $z = -4.54$, $p < .00001$, and a medium effect size of $r = -.51$.

A summary of the findings from the Preferred Activities Survey are given in

Table 6. Additionally, visual representations of the data in the form of 2D Dot Plots are provided in Figure 1, 2, and 3, where the *y-axis* represents the scores given by teachers on the Likert-scale of 1 to 7, and the *x-axis* represents different two teaching approaches.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics from the Preferred Activities Survey

Descriptive Statistics from the Preferred Activities Survey

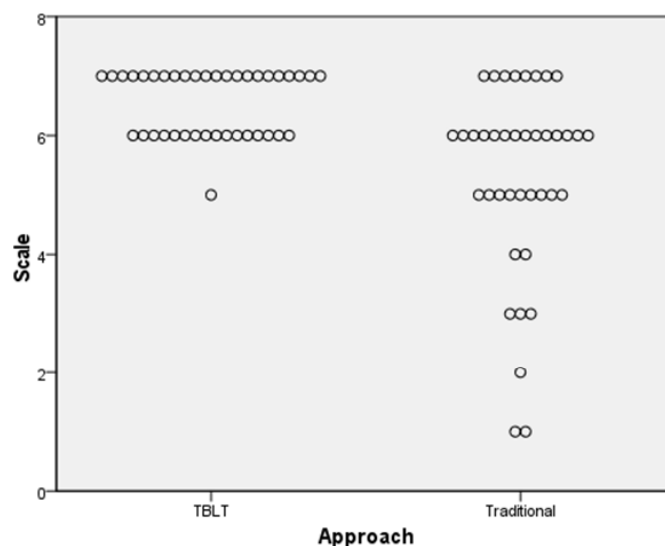
Activity Topic	Approach	n ^a	M ^b	SD	Min	Max	z(39)	p	r
Persuasive Paragraph Writing	TBLT	39	6.54	0.55	5	7	-3.82	<.001	-0.43
	Traditional	39	5.28	1.59	1	7			
Report Writing	TBLT	39	6.36	1.1	3	7	-2.74	<.001	-0.31
	Traditional	39	5.13	1.79	1	7			
Informative Presentations	TBLT	39	6.59	0.78	4	7	-4.54	<.001	-0.51
	Traditional	39	4.24	1.87	1	7			

^a 39 of the total 41 participants filled out this part of the survey

^bBased on the Likert-Scale range of 1-7 (See key provided in Table 12)

Figure 1

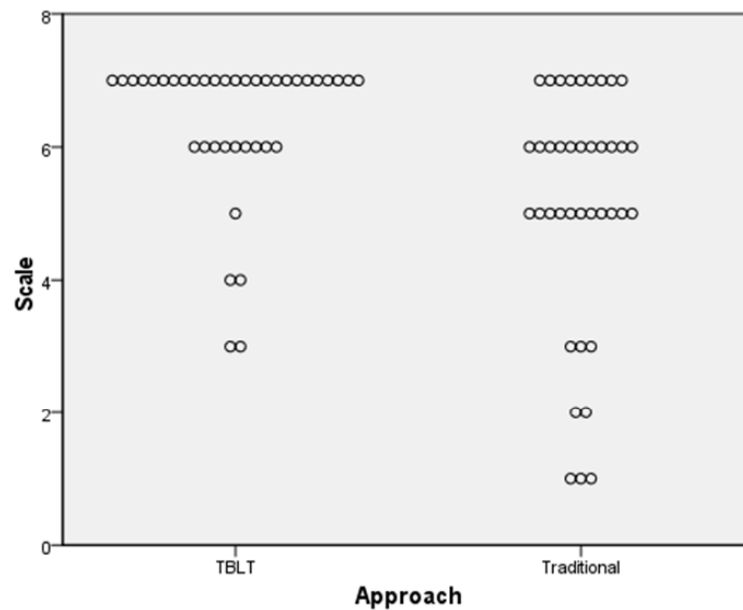
2D Dot Plots of Teacher Ratings on Persuasive Paragraph Writing Approaches



The 2D Dot Plots of teachers' ratings on Persuasive Paragraph Writing approaches (Figure 1) illustrates teachers' preference of the TBLT-oriented lesson outline for the topic Persuasive Paragraph Writing. The median rating for the TBLT approach was 7, whereas the median rating for the traditional approach was 6. Most ratings for the TBLT approach were between 6 and 7, whereas most ratings for the traditional approach were between 5 and 7. Additionally, the plot shows the extent of variability in the responses the traditional approach, whereas the responses for the TBLT outline are more consistent. The results for the topic Report Writing yielded similar results, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

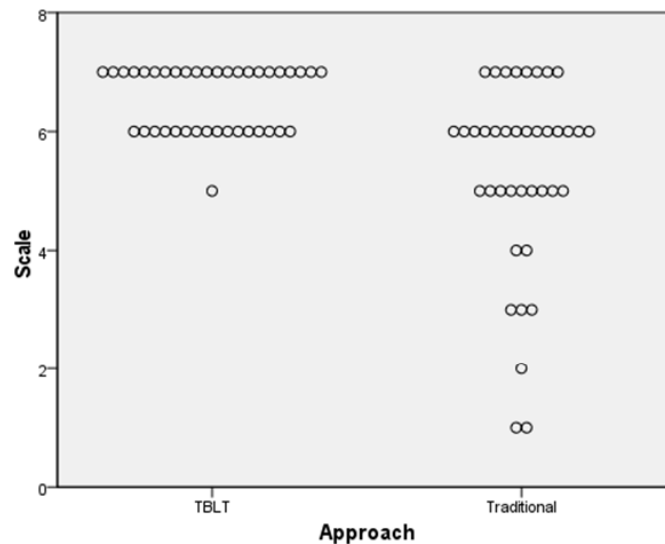
2D Dot Plots of Teacher Ratings on Report Writing Approaches



In case of 'Informative Presentation' approaches, the plots show higher ratings received by the TBLT approach again, with most values falling within the 6-7 range and the median value being at 7. On the other hand, the median value for the traditional approach was at 5, with most ratings falling between the 5 to 7 range. The amount of variability in responses for the traditional approach was higher as well and can be visibly seen in the plot.

Figure 3

2D Dot Plots of Teacher Ratings on Informative Presentation Approaches



Results from Qualitative Analysis

Thematic Coding of Preferred-Activity Survey Rationales

Participants were asked to elaborate on the rationale behind their ratings of activities listed in the Preferred-Activity Survey. These responses were then compiled and thematically categorized to give an overall view of teachers' thought processes behind their ratings. As shown in Table 8 and Table 9, the teachers had diverging reasons for their selections. Generally speaking, teacher responses for TBLT activities were more favorable than traditional approach-based activities.

In case of the TBLT-oriented activities, the most commonly given response for the teacher ratings were related to the categories 'Ensures high level of student engagement and interest' (30.77 %), and 'Has real-world relevance for students as the tasks are authentic' (23.93 %). Other beneficial themes that emerged were 'Contains element of collaboration and cooperation' (17.09 %), 'Leads to non-linguistic benefits for students' (11.97 %) and 'Rewarding for students due to non-linguistic outcome'

(11.11 %). However, not all responses for the TBLT activities were positive. A chunk of the responses (17.94 %) listed challenges related to implementing such a teaching methodology, including issues related to class size, limited class time, prep work involved, and challenges related to collaborative learning, such as unequal work distribution among the students. These results are illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7

Rationale Behind Teacher Ratings of TBLT Approach-Oriented Activities

Category	Example Quote	Frequency of Code Occurrence	Percent of Participants n(%)
High level of student engagement and interest	"I would be quite open to using this approach because the activities are fun and students would also find them relevant. Almost all students love watching movies and are familiar with Rotten Tomatoes, so they would enjoy reading the reviews and analyzing how they are written, and it would be a lot more exciting for them if their reviews are also posted. Students are more likely to learn if the activities are engaging and practical."	45	30.77%
Has real-world relevance for students as the tasks are authentic	"This is an excellent way of teaching how to write a persuasive paragraph. Often times students do not find a useful purpose of learning how to write different types of paragraphs or essays. So if the lesson is taught in this way they'll have a hands-on experience and be motivated to apply what they're learning outside the classroom."	34	23.93%
Contains element of collaboration	"There's no [sic] provision for collaboration between the students; again, students will be getting more opportunity to communicate and get input from their peers."	22	17.09%
Poses challenges related to class size, time, preparation needed, and group work	"If I have a large class I will hardly go for this approach because it will involve a lot of work load on the teacher's shoulder." "Group [sic] are most of the time guided by one of the best students and there is a possibility for other students to be silent."	21	17.94%
Leads to non-linguistic benefits for students	"Students would learn to work with large groups of people through this lesson. They can practice their leadership and negotiating skills here. They can also learn to collect data, evaluate a problem and use persuasive skills to reach a solution for the greater good."	15	11.97%
Rewarding for students due to non-linguistic outcome	"I think this would be quite an interesting way to engage them in giving a presentation because (1) they will be discussing the effective strategies of giving a good speech, and (2) uploading their presentations on their very own YouTube channel will make the content more exciting for them."	13	11.11%

In the case of traditional approach-based activities, the participants' most

common reasoning for their ratings were related to the theme 'Not engaging, interesting, or relevant to real-world needs' (33.33 %). Again, a notable portion of the responses were related to 'Less scope for collaborative learning' (13.68 %) and 'Limits creativity, critical thinking, and autonomy' (9.4 %). On the other hand, many teachers also pointed out the positive aspects of using such a methodology; 13.68 % of the responses highlighted that the traditional activities are useful for successful teaching in certain contexts, for certain type of learners, and for meeting certain goals such as those related to structure and format. Table 8 summarizes these findings.

Table 8

Rationale Behind Teacher Ratings of Traditional Approach-Oriented Activities

Category	Example Quote	Frequency of Code Occurrence	Percent of Participants n(%)
Not engaging, interesting, or relevant for real-world needs	"The reason behind not wanting to go for this approach is that the class would become quite boring and monotonous, even for the teacher, and the teacher would really need to put in a lot of energy into the way they teach to make the class interesting. Students already do not enjoy learning English, so if the content is not engaging then it would be a lot more difficult to teach them."	39	33.33%
Useful for certain contexts, type of learners, and objectives	"If the class size is large then this lesson plan can work well. In a large class, a teacher cannot guide everyone equally. This lesson is designed in a way where students rely less on the teacher. Also, we have a fixed number of classes where we have to complete the syllabus. In my honest opinion, I like the first lesson plan better as it engages students in a real-life activity but I am also thinking if it would be feasible to apply."	17	13.68%
Less scope for collaborative learning	"I found this approach to be less collaborative and fairly one-dimensional."	16	13.68%
Limits creativity, critical thinking, and autonomy	"...this one-way structure-based style restricts students' chances of demonstrating [sic] ingenuity or stylistic prowess." "Students are not given responsibilities. The learners have hardly any autonomy in their learning in this lesson plan."	11	9.40%
More practical and easy to implement	"This is a rather common approach to introduce students to a particular structure of writing. It helps students to easily identify the different elements that are required for the writing. Also, the whole process is very systematic and easily adaptable for different types of writing."	7	5.98%
Not effective for learning and comprehension	"This lesson involves quite an amount of lecture which may hamper the understanding."	7	5.98%

Thematic Coding of Semi-Structured Interviews

A major portion of the results from the five semi-structured online interviews highlighted teaching principles practiced by EFL teachers in their current EAP classrooms. The analysis yielded six major principles including i. Practicing collaborative learning (which included use of group/pair work; incorporating peer

feedback and peer teaching etc.); ii. Cultivating student-centered classrooms (where students play an active role in the decision-making process, enjoy high levels of autonomy, and hence relegate the teacher to a facilitator role); iii. Using interactive meaning-oriented activities in the classroom to encourage “learning by doing”; iv. Incorporating authentic materials that are relevant to students’ needs, culture, and interests; v. Focusing on individual student needs in the classroom (which involves modifying instruction or explicit grammar teaching); and lastly vi. Fostering a Community of Practice (CoP) (See Wenger, 1998) to create a safe, respectful environment for learning. Out of these six, the first two received the highest frequency of mentions in the interview data and were widely held beliefs as four out of the five participants mentioned them during the interview process. A summary of the data related to teaching principles practiced by EFL teachers in EAP classrooms is provided in Table 9.

Table 9

Teaching Principles Practiced in EFL-based EAP Classrooms

Category	Example Quote	Frequency of Code Occurrence	Range of Mentions
Collaborative learning	"So, if you just request them to work in a group, they never feel intimidated [sic]. They never feel that someone is scrutinizing [sic] them. So, they feel very happy and very comfortable in the situation and that's why I think we should create a [conductive] environment for them during [sic] group and peer work. They sometimes ask their friend, "Do you mind? Please help me" or "Help me out of the [sic] situation". So, they may learn from each other. So, we can reduce their pressure in such a way." (Participant #4)	9	Participant # 4, 10, 11, & 30
Student-centered classroom	"Especially if you spoon feed in a language class, that's never a good idea. They need to learn on their own. They need to have that autonomy. They need to learn on their own because unless that feel that [they have autonomy], they won't have that self-motivation, and I believe that self-motivation is very very important." (Participant #11)	9	Participant # 4, 10, 11, & 30
Use of authentic texts	"While choosing the reading items, we try to make sure that those reading materials are authentic and relatable to the students, so that they can actually understand it. Not only understand it and learn language, but also learn something from it." (Participant #11)	7	Participant # 4, 10, & 30
Learning by doing	"A language is something that you can only learn through practice. Just reading it or listening to it [sic] is not enough. You have to practice speaking it. You have to practice writing in that language. Only then do you learn. Especially when you get to communicate in the classroom with your teachers, when you get to practice through presentations, discussion forums, panel discussions, and interviews [sic] in in the language, it helps." (Participant #10)"	6	Participant # 3, 10, 11, & 30
Focus on individual student needs	"We have mixed ability students in our classroom. So, sometimes maybe 80% of the students are okay if you don't mention grammar structure or form, but there are 20% students who [sic] still want to know the structure and form. So, we cannot deny the requirements and needs of the rest of the students. You have to take those students into consideration [sic]." (Participant #4)	5	Participant # 4, 10, 11, & 30
Fostering Community of Practice (CoP)	"In the very first class, I always guide them—"See, you are from different departments, from different year or different semesters, but in this particular class, this will be like your family for the upcoming three months or so. And together we will learn, share, and grow." (Participant #30)	5	Participant # 4, 11, & 30

To elaborate, the teachers seemed especially enthusiastic about

implementing collaborative learning in the classroom and its benefits. Participants mentioned that collaborative work assists in lowering learner anxiety and stress as learners work together and help each other. A participant also mentioned that it leads to increased peer-to-peer interaction and participation in the classroom, and hence helps to build a community of practice(CoP). Very interestingly, although large class sizes is often seen as a hindrance to incorporating group and pair work in the classroom (Van den Branden, 2016; Zheng & Borg, 2014; Carless, 2007), one of the participants turned that idea on its head and stated that she specifically uses group and pair work due to large class sizes, as it makes providing feedback easier:

As a teacher we always love to provide feedback individually because it seems like that would be much better for “spoon feeding” [the content], so we love to do it as a teacher, as a guardian. But for a large number of students or a bunch of people, it's sometimes quite impossible to do that. That's why I go for group work as well as pair work.” (Participant #4)

Although most participants use group and pair work activities in their classrooms, they pointed out some challenges related to it too. They mentioned that strong student motivation and respectful classroom environment, which are key components to successful collaborative learning, can be challenging to maintain. Furthermore, one of the teachers mentioned that a big challenge to assigning group work is related to classroom design and infrastructure. She mentioned that although students enjoy group work, they complain about the noise made when heavy chairs and furniture have to be moved around the classroom. According to her, students often request that the furniture be kept in small circles conducive for group work instead of

being re-arranged by university staff into rows and columns after each class. However, since the classrooms are shared with other lecture-styled courses, it is not possible to preserve a classroom set-up conducive to collaborative learning.

It is also important to note that not all interview participants were unanimously in favor of collaborative learning. One participant in particular (Participant #3), strongly voiced that he does not include any collaborative components in his lessons, citing large class size and exam-driven culture and syllabus at his institute as the main reasons. The same participant also shared concerns that communicative teaching approaches such as CLT or TBLT will lead to students losing marks in assessment activities, hence lowering the end-of-term evaluation score of the teacher, in turn hurting his chances for professional advancement. Overall, this frustrating lack of teacher autonomy due to pressures from both the administration as well as learners was a major theme in this participant's responses.

Further Results

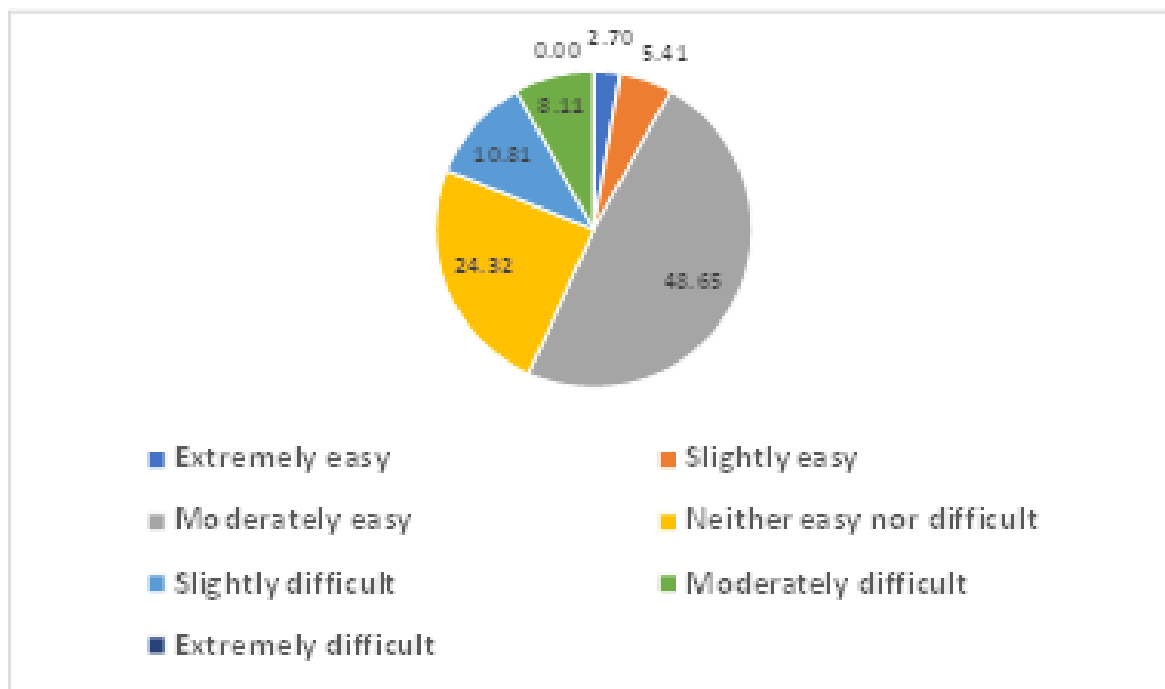
Perceptions About Online Teaching

The data for this study was collected in the first half of the year 2021, when most educational institutions worldwide had already transitioned to an online teaching format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time of survey data collection, the participants of this study had either completed or were about to complete teaching an entire semester (Fall 2020) online. About 73% of the participants stated that they were employing a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous activities for online teaching, around 16% were exclusively hosting synchronous classes, and a little over 5% were hosting exclusively asynchronous classes.

As Figure 4 shows, 73% of the participants found the transition to the online format 'moderately easy' or 'neither easy nor difficult'. Around 11% found the transition extremely easy, whereas around 8% found it moderately difficult. Overall, the data suggests that a majority of the teachers were able to shift from face-to-face to online instruction quite smoothly.

Figure 4

Perceived Level of Difficulty During Transition to Online Format



Furthermore, thematic analysis of qualitative data from the interview and the background survey revealed divided perceptions about online teaching amongst the research participants. On the one hand, many cited drawbacks of online teaching such as the awkwardness and ineffectiveness of communicating through a screen, lowered interaction in the classroom, difficulties related to assigning group and pair work, logistical challenges related to background noise and unstable internet connection etc.

On the other hand, advantages of online teaching, such as the ability to use online learning tools with confidence and flexibility, increased opportunities to use authentic materials for lessons, and the ability to focus on individual student needs were notably mentioned: "It has changed my teaching outlook remarkably. I am more technology oriented now and use online materials more often than ever. I can see a spike in percentage of authentic materials used [sic]." (Participant #13; Questionnaire Response); "It has allowed me more freedom to try to use different methods and materials to teach my students. It has also enabled me to understand their problems more specifically and offer tailor-made solutions" (Participant #26; Questionnaire Response).

Additionally, multiple participants shared their hope that online teaching will remain a part of the mode of teaching at their respective institutes even in the future as it allows increased flexibility, contact hours, and access to authentic materials for both the teachers and the students. They also shared that COVID19 has made them more open to changing their teaching methods as they already had to learn to adapt a new mode of teaching. So, they are feeling more confident and flexible about experimenting with their teaching approaches: "It is important to have an open mind about embracing new ideas and methodologies. For example, after the pandemic, it would be wise and beneficial to welcome Blended Learning in our teaching methodology" (Participant # 10, Questionnaire Response).

Although many teachers complained about lowered interaction in an online format, a few mentioned that there is more equal interaction in the classroom due to the multi-modal nature of online teaching; even shy or introverted students can participate

in class discussions through the chat option. One of the teachers mentioned that to tackle passivity and inattention of the students in the online classroom where the students have the option to turn off their video cameras, she introduced regular peer teaching in the classroom to keep the students engaged and active². According to her, such student-led *tasks* has helped her overcome the feeling that she is a “radio jockey” rather than a teacher in a virtual classroom:

“In my previous semester, I innovated a completely new approach or a new way, a new technique for conducting my class or [implementing] the assessment system... I just requested them to conduct their own classes... when you are lecturing or you are conducting classes[online] you don't know whether your students are listening to you or not. So, I sometimes felt like I'm a radio jockey. I'm navigating the class, but I don't know whether my students are with me or not...so I started implementing peer teaching[sic]...in a new normal situation, a new approach, actually...and it is so wonderful[sic]. I am learning so many things from them [my students] this semester” (Participant # 4, Interview Response).

Willingness to Adopt New Method

The survey included a couple of questions intended to gauge teachers' perceptions about implementing a new language methodology. When asked the extent to which the teachers believe that it is possible for them to adopt a new language teaching methodology (based on available time, resources, and the amount of influence they enjoy in their respective institutions), the mean rating was 4.22 out of a 7-point scale. Similarly, when the teachers were asked the extent of their willingness to adopt a new language teaching methodology, the mean rating given by the teachers was 3.38.

These findings are compiled in Table 10.

Table 10

Perceptions on Implementing a New Language Teaching Methodology

Variable	n ^a	M	SD	Min	Max
Perceived belief about extent to which it is possible to adopt a new language teaching methodology	37	4.22 ^b	1	2	7
Willingness to implement a new language teaching methodology	37	3.38 ^b	0	2	4

^a Only 37 of the total 41 participants filled out this section.

^b Based on the Likert-Scale range of 1-7 (See Key provided in Table 12)

When asked to elaborate on their selection, teacher responses centered around four major themes: 1. Rigid institutional structures limiting teacher autonomy; 2. Crammed and fixed syllabuses that require uniform implementation across multiple course sections by multiple teachers; 3. Shortage of time due to high workload; 4. Factors related to learners such as class size, student level, acceptance to new methodology etc. Lack of autonomy, especially, was a common theme in numerous teacher responses:

"The syllabus that we follow is quite rigid and the preference at the institution where I work is that all teachers should follow more or less the same techniques of teaching. We have fixed lesson plans for each class and we are discouraged to deviate from them. Thus, it would be quite difficult to propose a new method of language teaching and have it approved" (Participant # 32, Survey Response).

Despite the comparatively low scores given by teachers regarding their

willingness and ability to implement a new teaching methodology, the picture is not completely bleak. One teacher shared their dissatisfaction with the existing teaching approaches being implemented:

"Not all students' experience is rewarding, not everyone's needs are met. With the current methodology, the gap between the students is closed but in a negative way; the more proficient student is compelled to dumb-down their skills for the benefit of their peers, but very few poor performers can rise up to the level of their more expert counterparts" (Participant # 26, Survey Response).

Another teacher highlighted the evolving nature of both languages as well as language teaching:

"I am open to new techniques of teaching or to come up with innovative ways of teaching. Language evolves with time, and the way students learn also changes with time, so there is no reason why we should also stick to particular techniques of teaching year after year" (Participant # 32, Survey Response).

These responses seem to highlight a latent wish harbored by the teachers to experiment with novel teaching approaches.

DISCUSSION

With this study I explored the extent to which EAP teachers from an EFL context hold beliefs that align with core TBLT principles, as well as their levels of receptiveness to using *tasks* in the classroom. Furthermore, EFL teachers' transition to an online format during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as their willingness to adopt a new teaching approach, was investigated in this study. This second area within this paper was not planned, but came about out of the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and surfaced as a necessary research area given the time and context of the world health crisis.

Previous studies on teacher perception have shown that one challenge of TBLT implementation is EFL teachers' underlying beliefs, which often interfere with TBLT implementation and give rise to a weak version of TBLT (e.g., Carless, 2007; Hu, 2013; Chen & Wright, 2016). Zheng and Borg's (2014) analysis revealed that the extent of implementation of TBLT in an EFL classroom varied based on teachers' underlying beliefs about it. Hence, potential for successful TBLT implementation in different contexts can be effectively investigated by evaluating the teachers' underlying beliefs in advance, and this is what my study set out to do in the context of tertiary-level EAP classes in an EFL country.

To further summarize, I conducted this research because scarce research exists that looks directly at TBLT implementation in EAP contexts (Douglas & Kim, 2014), despite the fact that TBLT is known to be well-suited for EFL-based EAP students, as it allows them opportunities to practice target tasks authentically in the classroom (Light & Ranta, 2016). Existing research on TBLT implementation in EFL-

based EAP courses (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Thi, Jaspaert, & Van den Branden, 2018) has shown that TBLT is successful in meeting EAP learners' real-world academic needs. Although Douglas and Kim (2014) looked at EAP teacher perspectives on using *tasks* in the Canadian context, there are no studies that specifically looked at EAP teachers' views on using *tasks* in an EFL context. Also, there is no research on TBLT implementation coming out of the context of Bangladesh. This is a research gap that I tried to fill through my study. In addition, the findings from this study are time relevant as they feature insights on teacher beliefs and expectations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent transition to online teaching.

Major findings from my study, integrating both quantitative as well as qualitative analysis, are outlined below.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked in this paper was, "How aligned are EFL-based EAP teachers' underlying teaching principles with core TBLT principles?" The data suggests that EFL-based EAP teachers' underlying beliefs about language learning and teaching conform to core TBLT principles from a moderate to high degree. Out of the seven MPs under consideration in this study, the teachers seemed to strongly agree with the following four:

- i. MP1: Use task, not text, as the unit of analysis
- ii. MP 2: Promote learning by doing
- iii. MP 9: Promote cooperative/collaborative learning
- iv. MP 10: Individualize instruction

These four MPs consistently featured as important teaching principles in the responses from the Likert-Scale Survey, the Preferred Activities Survey, as well as the Interviews. Additionally, MP 3 and 4, which focus on providing authentic and rich input to learners, received a moderate level of consensus from the teachers. In contrast, MP6 (“Focus on Form”) was the least agreed upon principle from the ones under investigation.

Although MP 9 (“Promote collaborative/cooperative learning”) received consistently positive attention from participants throughout the investigation, it is not a principle without contention. I was alerted of this division in viewpoints first and foremost by the relatively high standard deviation among the ratings related to this MP in the Likert-Scale Survey. Qualitative responses from the Preferred Activities Survey, as well as the Interviews, further confirmed this divide: “We have to get them [the students] ready for the mid and the finals. So, I don’t do a lot of group work because I don’t think I’ll be able to finish it [the syllabus] within the time frame” (Participant #4, Interview Response); “Groups [sic] are most of the time guided by one of the best students and there is a possibility for other students to be silent” (Participant # 4, Survey Response). Therefore, any sweeping generalizations regarding EFL teachers’ underlying beliefs about group/pair work being positive need to be qualified accordingly. On the other side of the coin, responses from this study, as well as my own experience as an EAP instructor in an EFL context, suggests that some teachers believe that group work can be an effective classroom management strategy for large classes. Teachers prefer it as it allows opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction and teaching, as well as efficient feedback. This, in turn, lowers the instructional burden on the teacher, and additionally

makes providing feedback to students more manageable.

The other contentious TBLT principle is related to focus on form (MP 6). The Likert-Scale Survey showed a high standard deviation of ratings related to this principle as well. Furthermore, teacher responses regarding it on the survey and the interviews were often contradictory. One of the interview participants, for instance, shared how his own traditional English learning experience made him averse to explicit grammar instruction, although his stance has become more flexible since he started teaching the language:

"I would have disagreed with it [the principle about focusing on form] completely had I not been in teaching. When I came to teaching, I actually found that there are certain times, there are certain instances, and there are certain contexts in which grammar can be used or can be instructed in an explicit manner. So, if I did not come into teaching, I would have strongly disagreed with the concept, but since I have been teaching[sic], I am neutral about it. I'm not a very big fan of explicit grammar instruction even today, but I do not strongly disagree with it" (Participant # 11, Interview Response)

My own personal experience was similar to this participant's. Given my exposure to communicative language teaching methodologies such as CLT in my undergraduate program in Bangladesh, I was strongly against explicit grammar teaching until I had more exposure to SLA research. In contrast, other teachers from the same context, such as Participant # 3 in this study, favor grammar instruction to a large extent: "Obviously, we have to focus a lot on the grammar chapters. We have a good number of grammar chapters. Half of the syllabus is grammar for English" (Participant #

3, Interview Response). These responses highlight the fact that factors related to the teachers' own experience learning English, their educational background, as well as the curriculum in place in their respective institutions all play a role in shaping their views on focus on form in the classroom.

Despite the interesting contradictions present with regards to these teaching principles, the overall trend seems to be teachers being in support of them rather than against them, research that aligns with general findings in favor of TBLT from other EFL contexts (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Thi, Jaspeart, & Van den Branden, 2018). MP 9 (Promote cooperative/collaborative learning) and MP 6 (Focus on Form) received cumulative Likert-Scale Survey ratings of 6.18 and 5.54 out of 7 respectively, which indicate favorable beliefs held by teachers about these principles. Support for MP 9 (Promote cooperative/collaborative learning), in particular, is evidenced by numerous positive mentions it received in the qualitative data. To sum up, despite few inconsistencies, the participants seem to agree with the main TBLT principles under consideration from a moderate to a high degree. In fact, it is evident from the qualitative responses that most of the survey participants already employ many of the core TBLT principles in their classrooms, and this does not appear to be age-dependent (as was suggested by Zheng & Borg, 2014), as those who agreed with TBLT principles in this study ranged from 27 to 60 years of age.

Research Question 2

The second research question of interest for this study was, "How open and likely are EFL-based EAP teachers to use *tasks* in the classroom?" Based on the responses from the Preferred Activities Survey, it can be confidently said that EAP

teachers from EFL contexts are significantly more likely and open to using *tasks* in the classroom compared to traditional activities. This aligns with findings from Douglas and Kim (2014), who reported that EAP teachers from ESL-contexts such as Canada are highly receptive to using tasks in their classrooms. Teachers seemed to especially prefer *tasks* for topics related to presentations, and this echoes findings from Douglas and Kim (2014) as well. Not only did the teachers seem to prefer *tasks* over traditional approaches, there also seemed to be a stronger consensus amongst the teachers regarding willingness to using *tasks* in the classroom.

The participants shared that TBLT oriented activities will potentially generate high levels of student engagement and interest, be relevant to students' real-world needs, garner collaboration and cooperation amongst the students, and be rewarding for the students due to non-linguistic benefits and outcomes. However, teachers also cautioned that there are challenges related to implementing such an approach in EFL contexts, especially those related to (a) Large class sizes; (b) Implementing group work; and (c) Teacher preparation time. Contradictorily, other teachers shared that communicative and collaborative approaches in the classroom can help with classroom management, especially in large classes, as students can participate actively in groups. Therefore, it seems that the two major challenges cited in i and ii are not insurmountable, but rather related to lack of appropriate teacher training and exposure to communicative and collaborative classrooms. The third challenge, however, is a more difficult challenge to overcome, and requires changes at the institutional level to afford teachers sufficient time to develop and implement *tasks* in their respective classrooms.

There was both lower teacher enthusiasm and consensus regarding the traditional activities outlined in the Preferred Activities Survey. The teacher ratings indicate that they are significantly less inclined to using such activities in the classroom. Furthermore, the comparatively higher standard deviation between teacher responses with regards to traditional activities suggests lower agreement regarding use of such approaches in the classroom. Whereas some teachers thought that these activities are not engaging, interesting, conducive to collaborative learning, or relevant to students' real-world needs, other teachers shared that they would use such an approach in certain cases, for example for beginner level learners, or in order to accomplish goals related to structure and format. Still, teachers almost unanimously seemed to prefer the TBLT oriented activities, or *tasks*, over traditional activities.

Further Discussion

Impact of Virtual Classes on Teaching Approaches

According to the survey, majority of the participants viewed the transition to online classes as either relatively easy, or they were impartial about it. In case of how it impacted their teaching approaches, the findings were ambiguous and contradictory. The teachers mentioned various challenges related to online teaching, such as awkwardness of interaction through a video camera/screen, less participation and interaction in the classroom, less scope for collaborative learning, and difficulty in providing feedback to students. On the other hand, many teachers voiced a newfound sense of confidence and interest in learning about and implementing online teaching tools, as well as new teaching approaches. There is hope amongst the teachers that blended learning will become the new norm in the future. Furthermore, three

advantages of online teaching underscored by teachers seem to be conducive to TBLT core principles, including:

- i. Increased use of authentic materials in the classroom
- ii. Higher focus on individual student needs
- iii. Wider possibility to experiment with student-oriented activities in the classroom

In fact, it can be argued that despite the various challenges of online teaching, the transition has led teachers to become more flexible, confident, and open to trying new approaches in the classroom: "In response to Covid-19, my university adopted online learning, which is new for me. However, I never hesitate to try and implement a new method in the course that I am teaching" (Participant # 9, Survey Response); "It is important to have an open mind about embracing new ideas and methodologies. For example, after the pandemic, it would be wise and beneficial to welcome blended learning in our teaching methodology" (Participant # 10, Survey Response). Coupled with this openness and flexibility on part of the teachers, as well as increase in use of authentic materials, individual attention to students' needs, and student-led collaborative activities in the classroom, it can be argued that the tertiary level EAP courses in Bangladesh are readier for TBLT implementation now than they were before the pandemic.

Willingness to Adopt a New Teaching Approach

The teachers provided low ratings on both willingness to implement a new language teaching methodology, as well as the extent to which it is possible for them to do so given institutional and practical constraints. Rigid hierarchical structures that limit

teacher autonomy was a major theme in the teacher responses. Coupled with shortage of time due to high workload, as well as crammed exam-oriented syllabuses and fixed lesson plans, teacher willingness and ability to adopt a new approach in their classrooms is quite low. However, as touched on the results section, many of the descriptive responses from teachers indicate a latent desire to move away from existing teaching approaches in the classroom and experiment with new ones. Especially, a wish for blended learning featured multiple times in the teacher responses. However, such changes can only take place if there are changes at the institutional policy levels, especially with regards to policies that afford higher levels of autonomy and support to teachers. Implementing a new teaching approach such as TBLT will require multi-level buy-in and effort.

Implications and Recommendations

The study conducted in Bangladesh, in connection with results from other studies from Thailand and Vietnam, respectively (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Thi, Jaspaert, & Van den Branden, 2018), suggests that EAP teachers from Asian EFL countries, including Bangladesh, are in agreement with TBLT principles for the most part, and harbor a preference for using *tasks*, especially if they are given the opportunity to teach in a blended format that utilizes both face-to-face and online teaching. Notably, availability of authentic materials online and ease of student-centered learning focusing on individual student needs in virtual classrooms, coupled with teachers' newfound confidence in using technological tools, make TBLT implementation in such contexts more feasible now than ever before. Therefore, a post-pandemic world might witness TBLT oriented principles being implemented in EFL classrooms to a larger extent if

blended learning becomes the norm in future.

However, any changes with regards to teaching approaches used in these EAP courses will require multi-level effort and commitment from teachers, administrators, as well as curriculum developers. To begin, administrators of departments and institutes offering EAP courses could consider including an online component that provide students with higher target language contact hours and opportunities for authentic interaction and input. Furthermore, they could decrease the frequency of standardized testing prevalent in such courses (such as quizzes and multiple mid-terms) to allow room for meaningful activities that are more relevant to students' real-world needs. This would also allow teachers the flexibility to address students' needs as they arise through the process of teaching (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007) as well. Reorganizing the curriculum keeping students' future academic needs as the organizing principle rather than discrete grammatical forms (i.e., moving away from a *synthetic* to an *analytic syllabus*) might be a starting point for implementing such changes. Another recommendation pertaining to administrators is reserving a fixed number of classrooms for EAP courses. According to research participants in this study, this will ensure preservation of classroom seating arrangements conducive to collaborative learning, and hence make initiation of collaborative work in the classroom easier.

Other than such institutional changes, the most important transformation needs to come from the teachers themselves. Firstly, teacher autonomy needs to be fostered extensively in order to empower them in their teaching context (Chen & Wright, 2016) as the study showed that lack of teacher autonomy is the biggest hurdle to trying

new approaches in the classroom. Furthermore, as many teachers seem to have limited exposure to collaborative learning and teaching, their concerns related to it can be addressed through extensive training, discussion, and exposure. Teacher forums where videos, lesson plans, or transcripts of EFL classrooms following collaborative tenets can be made available online for teachers who are interested to make their classes more collaborative in nature. These resources can also be critically analyzed and reflected upon in teacher-training sessions through *data-based teacher development* (see Borg 1988). Such interventions may help teachers find ways to implement collaborative learning more effectively and avoid common pitfalls. For example, one challenge repeatedly mentioned by teachers with regards to incorporating group work in the classroom is that advanced learners take the active role whereas as struggling learners become passive. Through discussion amongst peer-teachers, solutions such as assigning specific roles or sections of the task to each learner in a given group might come into light (Sharma, 2014).

Limitations and Future Directions

Following the research on TBLT implementation by Kim, Jung & Tracy-Ventura (2017), Thi, Jaspaert, & Vanden Branden (2018), as well as Douglas and Kim (2014), my study used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the extent to which EAP teachers from EFL contexts agree with TBLT principles, as well as the extent to which they are open and willing to using *tasks*. Furthermore, teachers' views regarding virtual classrooms in relation to their teaching approaches and their willingness to implement new approaches were explored in this study. I triangulated the data by integrating quantitative and qualitative data from two different surveys with semi-structured

interviews. Still, a few limitations remain in the design and execution of the study.

To begin, the study utilized data exclusively from teachers only. Perspectives of other important stakeholders, such as students and administrators, were not considered in order to keep the scope of this thesis at a manageable level. As lack of teacher autonomy was an important finding in this study, future research on the perspectives of department leaders and administrators on the tenets of TBLT holds key to future implementation of TBLT in such contexts. Similarly, the scope of this study did not allow triangulation of data from other sources, such as from classroom observations and textbook/material survey and analysis. Hence, future studies that expand on available data sources could shed further light on the research questions and the possibility of successful TBLT implementation in EFL-based EAP courses.

An additional limitation of the study lies in the lack of use of a second-rater in the qualitative data analysis for higher reliability. Future versions of this paper could employ a second rater to increase the reliability of the qualitative findings. To add, another shortcoming of the study which is its focus on private university teachers only. I chose to prioritize private university settings given my familiarity with such settings both as a student as well as a teacher. Since the academic environment of EAP classes in public and private settings in Bangladesh do not differ to a great extent except for class sizes (Jamil and Rahman, 2021), the findings from this research can be extended to public EAP settings as well.

Future research on how teachers' varying educational backgrounds and teaching experiences shape their views about core TBLT tenets can unearth important insights for successful implementation of it in EFL contexts. Additionally, this research is

an initial window that affords a view of the shifting pedagogic landscapes in light of the coronavirus pandemic and its aftermath. More extensive research is needed to unveil the ways online teaching has impacted teacher perspectives on language teaching approaches.

CONCLUSION

As stated by McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007, p. 123), “EFL learners in academic contexts, particularly university-level learners, have immediate academic needs, and these needs are a legitimate real-world target for task-based EFL courses.” The current study shows that EAP teachers from such contexts approve of many underlying TBLT principles and use them in their current classrooms. Furthermore, the teachers seem to prefer *tasks* over traditional activities for EAP lessons. In light of online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers’ language teaching beliefs and practices seem to have aligned further with core TBLT principles. Thus, proponents and researchers of TBLT might discover EFL-based online classrooms becoming ripe ground for evidence in favor of TBLT effectiveness.

However, it is imperative to note that teacher perspective-oriented research on TBLT, including the current one, often paints teachers as mere consumers of pedagogic knowledge rather than as *co-explorers* of it (Kumaravadivelu, 2001), and in doing so limits the very teacher autonomy proposed in their respective recommendation sections. Hence, I believe that future research on TBLT will benefit from a teacher-centered approach, where teachers’ perspectives on their specific context is studied from the ground-up, and TBLT tenets proposed or modified accordingly. Similarly, learners’ functional language needs, as well as intellectual and socio-political empowerment should be considered in the development of *tasks* as a way to ensure that students not only acquire the target language, but also knowledge on “how communicative events position students inequitably, how they respond to such events,

and what actions they can take to empower themselves” (Ellis, 2021, p. 18-19). One of the participants in the study mentioned how language keeps evolving, and so in turn classroom teaching should follow suit and keep evolving too. I would go a step further and propose that given changing contexts, environmental factors, and insights from the broader field of education and curriculum development (Ellis, 2021), underlying principles of teaching approaches such as the TBLT should keep evolving too. In the end, change is the only constant.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The more commonly used name for the Bangla language is 'Bengali', which is the anglicized exonym. Since this anglicized exonym is a remnant of colonization, I prefer to use the endonym Bangla instead.

² To tackle this issue related to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, many teachers in western educational settings introduced policies asking students to keep their videos on during class at all times. However, this was not a policy that teachers in Bangladesh could impose on their students. Free and unlimited internet access is not common in the country. So, the high costs that students would incur in buying large amounts of internet data for a video call for class would not have been economically feasible. Therefore, educational institutes in Bangladesh decreed that keeping the camera turned on is optional for students.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Individual Profiles of Survey Participants

Table 11

Individual Participant Profile

Participant Number	Gender	Age/years	Years of Teaching Experience	Highest Educational Degree	Currently Used Teaching Methodologies	Familiarity with TBLT	University Affiliation
1	Female	38	8	MA	CLT; CLL	Yes	University B
2	Female	38	10	MA	CLT	Yes	University B
3	Male	43	3	MA	GTM; CLT	Yes	University B
4	Female	32	4	MA	GTM;CLT	No	University A
5	Female	29	3	MA	Combination/ Customized	No	University B
6	Male	30	3	MA	ALM; CLT; CLL, TBLT, The Natural Approach	Yes	University A
7	Female	30	3	MA	CLT	No	University A
8	Female	27	2	MA	CLT; TBLT	Yes	University A
9	Male	32	3	MA	Project-based; TBLT; CLT	Yes	University A
10	Female	40	4	MA	Interactive approach	Yes	University A
11	Male	30	4	MA	Combination; CLT.	Yes	University A
12	Male	29	5	MA	Combination/ Customized	Yes	University A
13	Male	27	3	MA	GTM; CLT	Yes	University D
14	Male	35	10	MA	CLT	Yes	University A
15	Male	32	6	MA	CLT; TBLT	Yes	University A
16	Female	31	3.5	MA	ALM; TPR	Yes	University A
17	Female	39	1.5	MA	GTM; CLT	Yes	University G
18	Male	30	3	MA	GTM	Yes	University B
19	Male	45	13	MA	Combination	Yes	University A
20	Female	30	3	MA	CLT	No	University A
21	Male	34	7	MA	CLT	Yes	University D
22	Male	38	7	MA	CLT; GTM	Yes	University A
23	Female	34	10	MA	CLT; TBLT	Yes	University A
24	Female	60	20	PhD	GTM; CLT	Yes	University B
25	Female	31	3	MA	CLT	No	University A
26	Female	44	6	MA	CLT; ALM	Yes	University A
27	Female	30	5	MA	CLT	Yes	University A
28	Female	40	14	MA	CLT	Yes	University A
29	Female	31	4	MA	CLT; TPR	Yes	University E
30	Female	28	3	MA	CLT	Yes	University C
31	Female	32	11	MA	GTM; CLT	No	University B
32	Female	33	7	MA	ALM; CLT;TBLT	Yes	University A
33	Male	27	1.5	MA	GTM; CLT; TPR	Yes	University C
34	Female	33	4	MA	CLT	No	University C
35	Female	29	3	MA	CLT; ALM; TPR	Yes	University A
36	Female	29	4	MA	CLT; TBLT; GTM	Yes	University C
37	Female	31	5	MA	CLT; DM	Yes	University A
38 ^a	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
39 ^a	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
40 ^a	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
41 ^a	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

^aParticipants 38 through 41 did not complete the Background Information section of the survey

APPENDIX B

Survey Data Conversion Key

Table 12*Survey Data Conversion Key*

Descriptive Option Provided on Survey	Corresponding Numerical Value Assigned
Question 1	
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Somewhat Disagree	3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4
Somewhat Agree	5
Agree	6
Strongly Agree	7
Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	
Extremely unlikely	1
Moderately likely	2
Slightly unlikely	3
Neither likely nor unlikely	4
Slightly unlikely	5
Moderately unlikely	6
Extremely unlikely	7
Question 10	
Impossible	1
Mostly Impossible	2
Somewhat impossible	3
Neutral	4
Somewhat possible	5
Mostly possible	6
Possible	7
Question 11	
Not very open	1
Willing to think about it	2
Somewhat open	3
Very open	4

APPENDIX C

Guiding Questions for Interviews

Guiding Questions for Interviews

1. What does a typical in-person lesson look like for you? How do you begin and end the class? How do you structure the activities during the lesson?
2. What are some advantages and disadvantages of group work versus individual work during a lesson? Which one do you prefer?
3. From the following teaching principles, could you talk about a couple that stand out to you? You might agree or disagree with the principle, or simply have comments or thoughts to share about its implementation:
 - i. Instruction should be individualized as much as possible, with students' needs considered during curriculum development.*
 - ii. Cooperative learning should be promoted in the classroom through pair or group work*
 - iii. Focus on form or explicit grammar instruction is sometimes necessary*
 - iv. Language learning should be promoted by doing, i.e. students should be engaged in activities where they are using the language*
 - v. Students should be provided with authentic texts to expose them to rich input*
4. How has online teaching impacted your teaching style or philosophy? What revelations have you had as a teacher after switching to online teaching?

APPENDIX D

Copy of Survey Questionnaire

Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching in Academic English Courses

Start of Block: Consent Page

Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching in Academic English Courses
Researchers: Dr. Paula Winke; Ms. Tamoha Siddiqui Department of Linguistics and Languages, Michigan State University **Contact Information: winke@msu.edu ; siddiq88@msu.edu** **BRIEF SUMMARY AND WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO**

You are being asked to participate in a research study of EAP teachers' beliefs and preferences with regards to language teaching in an EFL context. You will be asked to:

1. Complete a survey questionnaire. It will take about 30 minutes.

2. At the end of the survey completion, you can volunteer for an online one-on-one interview with the researchers by providing your email address. This is optional. This would be an additional 30-minute Zoom interview at the time of your choosing, and you would be asked to allow it to be video-recorded.

3. As a follow-up, you will be asked if you are willing to permit the researchers to observe two full-length EAP lessons conducted by you. This is optional too. **RISKS INVOLVED** There are minimal risks to participating in this study. The most likely risks are slight fatigue or stress.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The purpose of this research study is to explore the extent to which you are receptive and prepared to implement Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in the EAP courses that you teach.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS You will not benefit financially from this study. You may also not benefit personally from being in this study. However, we hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study as it will explore different approaches to teaching Academic English in EFL contexts. Furthermore, participation in this study might contribute to your understanding of the language teaching approach called Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY Any electronic data, including signed consent forms, filled out questionnaires, video recordings of interviews, and transcriptions of interviews etc. will be kept securely in the researchers' files for the duration of up to 3 years. The data will not be used for any purposes other than this study.

YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW You have the right to say no to participate in the research. You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized.

CONTACT INFORMATION If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researchers: Dr. Paula Winke Email: winke@msu.edu Ms. Tamoha Siddiqui Email: siddiq88@msu.edu If you have

questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

End of Block: Consent Page

Start of Block: Likert-Scale Survey

Q1 Please read the following statements carefully and select the option that matches with your beliefs the most.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
I believe that language learning takes place when learners actively do something with the target language. (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe that pair and group work are important for language learning. (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe that instruction should be customized according to learners' communicative needs. (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe I should expose students to authentic samples of the target language. (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe it is important to focus on grammatical errors incidentally as they occur rather than pre-selecting a set of grammar rules to teach. (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I believe that lesson plans should be developed with communicative tasks or activities as the core units.
(6)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I believe that language is learnt in the classroom through collaboration with other learners. (7)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I believe that a language curriculum should be developed keeping the students' future needs in mind. (8)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I believe that I need to provide rich input to my learners from an early stage.
(9)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I believe I should address my students' recurring accuracy-related errors collectively rather than addressing them individually.
(10)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I believe that students should be made to carry out tasks in the classroom which resemble tasks that they are likely to do in the real world. (11)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I prefer to make my students work in small groups or pairs in the classroom. (12)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I believe that before teaching a class, it is important to conduct a needs analysis in order to identify why students need/want to learn the target language. (13)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I believe that authentic input is effective input. (14)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

I believe in explicitly teaching certain grammar structures with which my students seem to be struggling (15)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

End of Block: Likert-Scale Survey

Start of Block: Preferred Activities Survey Part I

Two different approaches to a lesson plan on the topic "Persuasive Paragraph Writing" are outlined below. Please read each outline carefully and select how open you are to using each approach if you are to teach this topic in class (assuming you have complete autonomy over the class content).

Q3 Persuasive Paragraph Writing Approach-1 1. The students are shown two authentic audience reviews from the movie review website, "Rotten Tomatoes", on a film most of the students are familiar with (e.g. "Titanic" or "The Avengers"). 2. The students are sorted into pairs and asked to discuss if they think the reviews are effective or convincing and why. Next, they analyze each review trying to find the common elements present in the reviews and the way they are organized. 3. Following this activity, each pair draws up a list of Dos and Don'ts for writing a review paragraph, which the teacher explains is a kind of persuasive writing. Through a whole class discussion, the teacher puts up the important Dos and Don'ts of persuasive paragraph writing on the board. 4. Next, remaining in pairs, the students are asked to write a review paragraph on a movie that they have all previously watched, or a review of a short animated movie (e.g. Pixar Short Films) shown during class time. 5. Feedback on content, structure, and accuracy is given by both peers and the teacher using a checklist handout, and a final revision is done. 6. The persuasive paragraphs or 'reviews' of the movies can be posted up on a hallway wall for other teachers and students to read, or even posted on Rotten Tomatoes itself.

	Extremely likely (1)	Moderately likely (2)	Slightly likely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Slightly unlikely (5)	Moderately unlikely (6)	Extremely unlikely (7)
How open are you to using such an approach for a class on this topic? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q3 Please elaborate briefly on your selection.

Q4 Persuasive Paragraph Writing Approach-2 1. The teacher shows a sample of a persuasive paragraph. The students are asked to underline the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence. Additionally, students circle any linking words that they can find in the paragraph. The teacher also draws the students' attention to any examples or supporting details provided by the author. 2. Next, the teacher gives the students an argumentative prompt in the form of a question and asks individual students to form an opinion about the topic and write down three reasons for their selection. 3. Based on their notes, students are asked to write a persuasive paragraph following the structure used in the sample paragraph they were shown. 4. The teacher collects the paragraphs, provides written feedback

on structure, content, and accuracy in the next class, and asks students to revise their work accordingly.

	Extremely likely (1)	Moderately likely (2)	Slightly likely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Slightly unlikely (5)	Moderately unlikely (6)	Extremely unlikely (7)
How open are you to using such an approach for a class on this topic? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4 Please elaborate briefly on your selection.

End of Block: Preferred Activities Survey Part I

Start of Block: Preferred Activities Survey Part II

Two different approaches to a lesson plan on the topic "Report Writing" are outlined below. Please read each outline carefully and select how open you are to using each approach if you are to teach this topic in class (assuming you have complete autonomy over the class content).

Q5 Report Writing Approach-1

1. The teacher writes the headings of different sections of a report on the board and explains

each section in brief. Students copy the board-work as notes. 2. The teacher shows samples of two different reports and asks students to identify which report is more effective and why. The teacher asks individual students to share their answers. 3. Next, the teacher gives students two articles to read on the same topic. Students are asked to annotate the articles and write margin notes highlighting key points. 4. Once students have finished reading, the teacher asks the students to write a brief report on the topic drawing from the articles that they have read. The rubric that will be used to evaluate their work is also shown to them. Students complete the work individually. 5. The teacher provides written feedback to the students based on the rubric and a revised draft is compiled by the students

	Extremely likely (1)	Moderately likely (2)	Slightly likely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Slightly unlikely (5)	Moderately unlikely (6)	Extremely unlikely (7)
How open are you to using such an approach for a class on this topic? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5 Please elaborate briefly on your selection.

Q6 Report Writing Approach-2 1. Students are sorted into small groups and asked to jot down a couple of issues related to their university campus that they think needs immediate attention of the authorities. 2. Through a whole class discussion and democratic process, students decide on one topic that they will work on during class. The teacher tells them that they

will be writing a report on this issue for submission to the Vice Chancellor of their university. 3. Remaining in the groups, students are asked to discuss what information should be included in the report. 4. Next, the groups are given two sample reports and asked to identify which report is more effective and why. Then, students jot down the strengths and weaknesses of each. Following this exercise, each group is asked to come up with a checklist of criteria for an effective report. A whole class discussion ensues and the items in the checklist are finalized with consensus from all the groups. 5. The next day, each group develops the first draft of their report and then receives feedback from peer groups based on the checklist developed by the class. Students revise their drafts. 6. The teacher provides written feedback to the students on final drafts. Any questions or confusing points are clarified. Relevant grammatical forms students struggled with are also addressed collectively.

	Extremely likely (1)	Moderately likely (2)	Slightly likely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Slightly unlikely (5)	Moderately unlikely (6)	Extremely unlikely (7)
How open are you to using such an approach for a class on this topic? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q6 Please elaborate briefly on your selection.

End of Block: Preferred Activities Survey Part II

Start of Block: Preferred Activities Survey Part III

Two different approaches to a lesson plan on the topic "Informative Presentations" are outlined below. Please read each outline carefully and select how open you are to using each approach if you are to teach this topic in class (assuming you have complete autonomy over the class content).

Q7 Informative Presentations Approach-1 1. Students are shown two informative speeches from TED-Talks and asked to fill out a note-sheet regarding different aspects of the speeches including content, audio-visual aids, non-verbal gestures, voice quality and rate of speech, use of humor etc. 2. In pairs or groups of three, students are asked to rate each Ted-Talk based on the criteria highlighted in the note-sheet. A whole-class discussion on elements of a good speech or presentation ensues. 3. Each pair or group is asked to come up with three specific topics that are of interest to them. Through class-voting, a topic is chosen for each pair or group. They are asked to research on the topic and prepare a presentation on the topic for next class, ensuring all members get the opportunity to speak for ample length of time. The teacher announces that their final speeches will be video-taped and published on You-Tube as informational content. The teacher also provides students with a rubric which will be used to evaluate their work. 4. Next class, the teacher gives oral feedback after each presentation using the rubric. With permission from students, the presentations are recorded using a mobile phone or other recording device and uploaded on a You-Tube Channel maintained for this course. In this way, the class develops their very own "Ted-Talks".

	Extremely likely (1)	Moderately likely (2)	Slightly likely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Slightly unlikely (5)	Moderately unlikely (6)	Extremely unlikely (7)
How open are you to using such an approach for a class on this topic? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q7 Please elaborate briefly on your selection.

Q8 Informative Presentations Approach-2 1. Using PowerPoint slides, the teacher shares the DOs and DON'Ts of giving a presentation, including aspects related to content, body language, audience engagement, appropriate audio-visuals etc. 2. The students are then asked to sit in pairs and given a short text on a topic of interest. After reading, the students are asked to prepare a brief 2-3 minute presentation on the topic, adding their own examples and ideas if needed. 3. One member from each pair is selected to present on the topic. The teacher gives feedback to each presenter using a rubric. 4. At the end of the class, each student is assigned a topic and asked to prepare a presentation on it for next class. The teacher distributes the rubric which will be used to evaluate their performance.

	Extremely likely (1)	Moderately likely (2)	Slightly likely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Slightly unlikely (5)	Moderately unlikely (6)	Extremely unlikely (7)
How open are you to using such an approach for a class on this topic? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q8 Please elaborate briefly on your selection.

End of Block: Preferred Activities Survey Part III

Start of Block: Beliefs About Language Teaching Methodology

Q9 Which language teaching methodologies or approaches (such as GTM, ALM, TPR, CLT etc.) do you use in your classroom?

Q10 Based on available time, resources, and the amount of influence you enjoy in your institution, please comment to what extent it is possible for you to implement a new language teaching methodology in the current Academic English courses that you are teaching.

	Possible (1)	Mostly possible (2)	Somewhat possible (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat impossible (5)	Mostly impossible (6)	Impossible (7)
To what extent is it possible for you to implement a new language teaching methodology in the Academic English courses you are currently teaching? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q10 Please elaborate on your selection.

Q11 Would you be open to implementing a new language teaching methodology in the current courses that you are teaching?

- ☐ Yes, very open (1)
 - ☐ Yes, somewhat open (2)
 - ☐ Willing to think about it (3)
 - ☐ No, not very open (4)
-

Q11 Please elaborate on your selection.

Q12a Are you familiar with a language teaching methodology called Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)?

- ☐ Yes, I am familiar with TBLT (1)

 - ☐ No, I am not familiar with TBLT (2)
-

Q12b If you answered yes to the previous question, then please briefly jot down any key points you recall about TBLT below.

End of Block: Beliefs About Language Teaching Methodology

Start of Block: Experience Teaching Online

Q13 In which manner are you teaching online classes?

- ☐ Synchronously (i.e. students and I meet online for a set period of time every week for lectures and class activities) (1)
- ☐ Asynchronously (i.e. weekly class activities and lectures are posted on an online platform and students complete them at their own pace) (2)
- ☐ A mixture of both (3)
- ☐ Other (4) _____
-

Q14 How easy or difficult was it for you to make the shift to online classes?

	Extremely easy (1)	Moderately easy (2)	Slightly easy (3)	Neither easy nor difficult (4)	Slightly difficult (5)	Moderately difficult (6)	Extremely difficult (7)
How easy or difficult was it for you to make the shift to online classes? (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q15 How, if in any way, has online teaching affected your teaching methodology or teaching style?

End of Block: Experience Teaching Online

Start of Block: Background Information

Q16 Your age:

Q17 Your gender:

Q18 Name of the institution where you teach Academic English courses:

Q19 For how many years have you been teaching Academic English at a university level?

End of Block: Background Information

Start of Block: Further Participation

Q20 Would you be interested in participating in a 30-minute online interview with the researchers on the same topic?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Maybe (3) _____
-

Q21 If you are holding synchronous online classes for Academic English courses in Spring 2021, would you be willing to let the researcher(s) observe two lessons conducted by you?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ I am not taking synchronous classes online in Spring semester (3)
- ☐ Maybe (4) _____
-

Q22 If you have answered 'Yes' or 'Maybe' to any of the questions above, then kindly share your name and email ID here so that the researchers may get in touch with you.

End of Block: Further Participation

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