SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE AND GLOBAL STUDIES

Managing Curriculum Change in Saudi Higher Education: A Case Study of Arabic

Female Teachers Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching

by

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) training needs of female Arabic teachers within the Saudi Arabian higher educational context. The central focus is on teacher cognition in relation to TBLT implementation and professional development, with the premise that appropriate professional development facilitates successful TBLT implementation. This study demonstrates originality and contributes to the literature on TBLT implementation, the theory of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) and the Saudi higher educational context.

Dissatisfaction with students' poor proficiency levels in Modern Standard Arabic, as evidenced in Saudi national examinations, has led to a call for a shift away from transmission-oriented language teaching to TBLT, which emphasises the use of language in communicative tasks. Although TBLT is a promising approach, its integration in practice is not straightforward because of the complex interplay between teachers' cognition, practice and contextual factors. While teacher professional development plays significant role in educational reform, it has received little attention and the support needed to facilitate TBLT implementation remains under investigation. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap.

The study involved a qualitative case study and multiple methods, including observations, semi-structured interviews and open-ended statements adapted from the CBAM. The data was generated from a purposive sample of six female Arabic teachers implementing TBLT in a Saudi university.

The findings indicated that teachers had a limited understating of TBLT due to insufficient exposure to this approach. The integration of TBLT was influenced by different factors relating to teachers' informational, personal, management and contextual concerns. Teachers' preference for future TBLT training was characterised as a constructivist-based approach, which was seen as opposite to the traditional approach which forms the basis of

current training. Future research in TBLT professional development is needed as a

consequence to investigate the impact of teacher identity and motivation.

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List of Abbreviations

CBAM   Concern Based Adoption Model

KAU   King Abdul-Aziz University

KSA   Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

MSA   Modern Standard Arabic

SoC   Stage of Concern

TBLT   Task-Based Language Teaching

TSLT   Task-Supported Language Teaching

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the task-based language teaching (TBLT) training needs of Arabic in-service teachers in the Saudi higher educational context. The principal focus is on teacher cognition in relation to TBLT innovation and professional development. This study demonstrates originality and contributes to the research literature in the field of TBLT by identifying the kind of support needed in order to assess Arabic teachers in developing strategies for managing TBLT implementation in the Saudi context. In addition, the proposed data-driven model for TBLT teacher training discussed in Chapter 9 contributes to both the theory and practice of TBLT training in the Saudi context, and while this topic requires further research, the study may have implications for TBLT teacher training in other similar contexts. This chapter begins by introducing the rationale of the study; it then provides background information and a statement of the research problem, and it introduces the study context. The chapter then sets out the research aims and questions followed by a summary of the research methodology which involved mainly qualitative methods. The significance of the study is then outlined and the chapter concludes by outlining how this thesis is structured to answer the research questions.

The initial impetus for this thesis originated from my interest in language learning and teaching and my professional experience as an Arabic language instructor at King Abdul Aziz University (KAU), where this study was undertaken. My learning experience in Saudi Arabia was similar to that of the teachers in this study, as the focus of the teachers was mainly on transmitting the knowledge with little (if any) participation from students.

During my professional life to date, I have had two main experiences which stand out. The first one began when I was appointed to work at KAU immediately after I graduated, and

I remembered how anxious I was when I first met my students without sufficient preparation. I struggled until I developed my teaching skills based on my experience. In 2011, I had an opportunity to study English language and a Master's degree in the UK. My learning experience in the UK was different to my previous experience in Saudi Arabia, as I was interested in the activities and in how students engaged in the classroom. When I started my MA, majoring in Applied Linguistics, I had opportunities to learn about theories of language learning and teaching based on a communicative approach, which I had not studied in other stages of my life. This provided me with the basic knowledge to recognise another approach to language teaching. In my MA dissertation, I investigated how Saudi teachers perceive their experiences learning English in the UK through TBLT. The findings showed that students had generally positive perspectives and they found learning through TBLT to be motivating.

The second phase in my professional development started when I completed my MA and I returned to Saudi Arabia at a time when reform to the education system was introduced under the name of *Tatweer*, which means development and targeted change in the curriculum, the learning environment and teacher preparation. Throughout these two varied experiences, I always believed that professional development is valued in the Saudi context but I had never engaged in research underpinning it. Therefore, my interest in TBLT as an approach to communicative language learning shifted slightly during my PhD as I decided to focus on teachers, who are considered to a large extent to be agents in successfully implementing this approach. My varied experiences along with my interests provided a grounding from which I was able to develop ideas about how teachers in Saudi Arabia perceived the era of change in education, what opportunities for professional development were provided to them and how sufficiently they were prepared to manage the change. These initial ideas paved the way to establish the current study.

1.2 Background and statement of the research problem

Since this study focuses on the implementation of TBLT in Arabic classrooms, it is useful to provide some brief background information about the nature of Arabic as this will provide the basis for a better consideration of the research problem.

Arabic is divided into three varieties: Classical Arabic (CA), Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Colloquial (CO). CA refers to the language of the Muslims' Holy Book (the *Qur'an*) and classical Arabic literature books. MSA is used in formal contexts, including academic institutions, religious ceremonies and media settings (Albiribi, 2018; Ryding, 2005). MSA is considered a sophisticated language among native Arabic speakers because inaccuracies in the application of grammatical rules can easily lead the reader to misinterpret a word or phrase (Palmer, 2007). The last variety is CO; it refers to the language used for everyday communication in informal settings and it varies significantly between speakers as each regional dialect of spoken Arabic represents a unique culture and people (Mejdell, 2018).

Like many Arab countries, Saudi Arabia gives the teaching and learning of the Arabic language significant attention throughout all levels of education. This is evident in comparing the amount of class time devoted to Arabic instruction compared with other subjects (Alghamdi & Li, 2012). Despite the attention given to Arabic instruction, a significant number of studies have shown that students' performance in Arabic is often not satisfactory (Alnassar, 2012; Taha, 2018). Al Majed (1996), for example, conducted a study in Saudi Arabia and found that 90% of Saudi students made errors in MSA grammar rules. In addition, based on the Saudi national examination, a study conducted by Alhawamdeh and Hussein (2016) reported low achievement of undergraduate female Saudi students at the University of Najran in Saudi Arabia.

Researchers have suggested several factors that have contributed to Arab students'

poor outcomes in MSA. Among the reasons identified are the difficulty of the structure of MSA, diglossia (the use of CO and MSA), the low quality of MSA grammar textbooks and incorrect language use in the media (Hasabalnabi, 2012). However, the traditional deductive teaching method was identified as the main cause of students' underachievement in understanding and applying MSA (Alghamdi & Li, 2012; Al-Rajhi, 2006). Thus, calling for a shift towards a communicative approach as a way which might contribute to effective MSA teaching and learning is evident in a range of supporting studies in over the last decade (Alnassar, 2012; England, 2006). While the Saudi education system has not experienced integration of TBLT at a national level, the government sought, through the recent national curriculum reform, to support learner centred approaches such as TBLT which poses challenges for teachers who implement it (Al-Ghamdi & Tight, 2013). Alnassar and Dow (2013) argue that to manage educational reform in Saudi Arabia, university teachers need to be aware of course objectives and use small group teaching methods to promote more student-centred approaches in order to enhance students' outcomes and provide the new generation with skills required to better participate in Saudi economic development. At the University of King Abdul-Aziz, one of the main aims, as stated in the new Arabic curriculum, is to facilitate the effective use of MSA for communicative purposes. Without appropriate guides for adopting TBLT, teachers were encouraged to integrate TBLT into MSA teaching. However, the investigation of Arabic teachers' cognition with regards to TBLT remains underresearched.

1.3 Context of the study

As this study was conducted at King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia, it is important to provide a brief history of the development of education system in Saudi Arabia.

In the past, education in Saudi Arabia was delivered in what was called *kuttab*, located usually in mosques (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). This form of education placed a

heavy emphasis on Qur'anic and Islamic studies. In 1925, a milestone in Saudi education took place with the establishment of the first formal educational administration, established by King Abdul Aziz and named the Directorate of Education (Alamri, 2011). The first public schools emerged in 1930, and at that time the Saudi education system was strongly influenced by the education systems in Egypt and Syria, countries which had provided assistance with curriculum development and teaching methodology. In 1953, the Directorate was replaced by the Ministry of Education, whose principal role was to oversee the education of male students at all school levels. According to Rugh (2002), the first public university was established in Riyadh in 1957 to meet the demand for skilled and educated workers. They were needed to develop the country after it experienced rapid industrial growth as a result of petroleum exports. Since Saudi society is influenced by Islam, students are segregated by gender. Until 1964 education was only available to male students; however, that year the government established the Ministry of Girls' Education and a number of female schools were created under its supervision (Hamdan, 2005). Although enrolment in academic institutions was not compulsory at that time, there was a significant increase in the number of students of both genders across the country.

The general education system in Saudi Arabia consists of three main compulsory stages: primary education takes place between the ages of six and twelve and this is followed by the intermediate and secondary stages, both of which last for three years. Higher education institutions offer study from the age of nineteen. This continues for four years in arts and humanities and five years in science, engineering and pharmacy. Universities across the Kingdom differ in the programmes and systems they follow; however, they all grant bachelor's and master's degrees and doctorates in certain fields. The education system in Saudi Arabia is administered by four agencies or government departments. The Ministry of Education oversees the compulsory three stages of education for boys. The General

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Presidency for Girls' Education carries out the same role for girls. The Ministry of Higher Education oversees post-secondary levels and the General Organisation for Technical Education and Vocational Training manages technical courses (AlYami, 2014).

Higher education (HE) in Saudi Arabia enjoys quite a recent history. The University of King Saud was the first university in KSA which was established in 1957 in Riyadh, the capital of KSA. Twenty years later, six other public universities were established (Alamri, 2011). In response to a steadily growing population, the number of universities rose to 24 public and 9 private universities by 2013 (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013).

According to Elyas and Picard (2013), education in Saudi Arabia is characterised by a focus on the teaching of Islam, a centralised system, state funding and a general policy of gender segregation (more details about the context in which the study was conducted is provided in Chapter 2). Since the study focuses on TBLT as innovation, the next section briefly introduces this approach.

1.4 Task-based language teaching

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been the subject of research and empirical studies within the field of language learning and teaching over the last three decades (Brandl, 2017). It has attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners since that time (Carless, 2015; Ellis, 2018; Skehan, 1998; Van den Branden, 2006). In addition, the TBLT approach has influenced curriculum design, materials development and global educational policy (East, 2017). It is considered that TBLT developed out of communicative language teaching (CLT) and became popular in Asia in the late 1990s (Butler, 2017). With globalisation, many developing countries became concerned about their citizens' lack of communication and critical thinking skills. The significance of TBLT lies in its underling theories of language learning with the promise that meaningful communication can provide the new generation with skills needed in the global economy (Li & Edwards, 2017). The significance of TBLT

was not only based on theoretical promise but also evident in empirical studies (Van den Branden, 2006). TBLT is considered 'current orthodoxy' in English language teaching (Littlewood, 2007) and it is growing in importance within literature in SLA and teacher cognition and development.

However, the implementation of TBLT is not straightforward. It has been argued, in the literature on language teaching, that teachers' practices in the classroom are influenced by prior learning experiences, beliefs about language learning and teaching, professional training and development, teaching experiences and notions of the value of language learning and teaching, which are shaped by their sociocultural context (East, 2012). Given this significant role of the teacher, there has been a call in recent years for more research into what teachers do in the classroom when they are expected to implement curriculum reform, and what the rationale for their actions is (Brandl, 2017; Carless, 2012). This entails the need to understand Saudi teachers' perceptions, knowledge and beliefs, and investigate the potential challenges within a contextual framework as it might provide insight into the kind of support needed and how best to provide it for successful TBLT implementation.

Since there are other aspects related to TBLT, it is important to clarify what this thesis is *not* concerned with. This study does not aim to be an evaluative study which mainly focuses on the relationship between knowledge and practice or the extent to which TBLT is implemented successfully. Nor it is a critique of the traditional transmission of knowledge approach. The concern here is on teacher knowledge, challenges and beliefs about TBLT in order to develop meaningful training.

1.5 Research aims and questions

The aim of this study is to explore the TBLT training needs of Arabic in-service teachers in the Saudi higher educational context. Through this study I gained insight into teachers' cognition and aimed to increase my understanding of how sustainable support could be

provided within the Saudi context to ensure the support provided matches teachers' needs. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To explore female Arabic teachers' understanding of TBLT.

2. To explore the struggles which affect the implementation of TBLT in Arabic classrooms through the lens of Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM).

3. To identify teachers' preferences for future TBLT training.

The research questions that have guided the investigation consist of one main overarching question, and four related sub-questions.

What are the professional development needs of Arabic teachers when implementing TBLT?

RQ1) What are teachers' understandings of 'task' in TBLT?

RQ2) What are teachers' concerns regarding TBLT implementation?

RQ3) How do Arabic teachers prefer to be trained in the use of TBLT?

The research questions examined here were informed by the literature and they addressed key themes highlighted in TBLT research literature as areas which need further investigation because they play a principal role in success or failure of any education reform. They include teachers' understanding of TBLT, struggles with TBLT implementation and the professional development needed to facilitate TBLT implementation. The second research question was also informed by the theoretical perspectives of CBAM.

1.6 Original contribution to knowledge

This research demonstrates originality and contributes to the literature in the following ways:

1.6.1 Knowledge contribution

The study is significant because it fills a gap in the literature on TBLT. While several studies have focused on the effectiveness of TBLT on language acquisition, there has been less research on how TBLT is implemented in practice (Brandl, 2017; Carless, 2015; East, 2017).

Much of the research into TBLT implementation with an emphasis on teachers' cognition has tended to analyse in isolated manner teachers' conceptual understanding of TBLT and identified struggles affecting TBLT implementation (e.g., Hu, 2013; Liu & Xing, 2015; Zhang, 2015), while interrelated factors of teacher education, cognition and context has received little attention (East, 2012; Wyatt & Borg; 2011). Teachers' professional needs and support remain under investigation although recent studies in TBLT have argued that an appropriate level of teacher training and support is essential for successful TBLT implementation, and they call for further investigation in this area (Butler, 2017; Carless, 2012; East; 2015). This study contributes to the literature by filling a knowledge gap in this area.

Furthermore, this study responds to the need to explore TBLT implementation with modern languages other than English (East, 2012; Erlam, 2016). Brandl (2017) emphasises the need to explore teachers' views and struggles when implementing TBLT for languages with complex structures. This study fills this gap in the literature by providing an empirical study on the implementation of the TBLT approach to teaching MSA as a first language to native Arabic speakers and investigates teachers' views and challenges towards TBLT implementation in a context where diglossia is an important consideration. The study also develops data-driven context-based TBLT training framework, explained in more detail in Chapter 9, capable of opening up new pathways for future research studies in the field.

1.6.2 Contextual contribution

Most of what it is known about TBLT implementation with the focus on teacher cognition and professional development is a result of studies conducted in Asia including Hong Kong (Carless, 2007, 2009, 2015); China (Chen & Wright, 2017; Hu, 2013; Liu & Xioing, 2015; Zhang, 2015; Zheng & Borg, 2014); and Vietnam (Viet, 2014; Viet, Canb & Barnard, 2015). A few studies have been conducted in the UK (Andon and Eckerth, 2009); in New Zealand

(East, 2012; Erlam, 2016); in Belgium (Van den Branden, 2006). According to Borg (2009) and Butler (2017), there remain many contexts where language teacher professional development and cognition needs to be further investigated. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study conducted in Saudi Arabia addressing this research area.

1.6.3 Theoretical contribution

While a number of studies in TBLT have investigated challenges encountered by teachers in TBLT implementation, they have been undertheorised (e.g., Carless, 2009; Le, 2014; Xiongyong & Moses, 2011). This study is unique in that it applies the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) as a conceptual framework which will be explained in detail in section 2.10.1, but briefly it is used to describe, explain, predict or measure the process of change experienced by teachers or others involved in the implementation of change (Hall & Hord, 1987; Hall, 2013). CBAM consists of three diagnostic dimensions for conceptualising and measuring the change, including a Stage of Concerns (SoC); a Level of Use (LoU) and Innovation Configuration (IC) (Hall, 2013). According to Hall (2013) change is carried out by teachers, and therefore identifying their concerns about an innovation can facilitate its implementation. In this study, the use of SoC was beneficial as it helped to identify teachers' concerns during the implementation of TBLT and this can provide insights into designing professorial development which can better support teachers' needs to manage the change within the Saudi context. The dimension of SoC has previously been drawn upon to investigate teachers' concerns. However, it has not previously been applied to address teachers' concerns on the integration of TBLT, thereby demonstrating that this research study is a contribution to the theory in the field. In addition, analysing teachers' concerns through the lens of SoC theory contributes to the empirical studies in the field of TBLT which have tended to be undertheorised.

Another theoretical contribution is the context in which the theory was applied. According to Gundy and Berger (2016), much of the research using the CBAM, particularly the SoC dimension, was conducted in Canada and Australia. However, only three studies have been found to apply the CBAM model in Saudi Arabia (Alsarrani, 2010; Kamal, 2013) where this study was conducted. Those studies were quantitative in nature and used questionnaires to investigate teachers' concerns about the integration of technology. This study is different as it used the model qualitatively to explore teachers' concerns with regard to the integration of TBLT. While this model assigned three tools to investigate SoC, including a questionnaire, interviews and open-ended statements, this study utilised classroom observations followed by interviews coupled with open-ended statements to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Several scholars in teacher cognition and TBLT implementation recommend the use of classroom observation coupled with self-reporting tools such as questionnaires and interviews because self-reporting instruments cannot provide direct evidence of what teachers do in actual classrooms but rather provide information on what teachers *say* they do (Borg, 2009; East, 2012).

1.7 Overview of research methodology

This study is a qualitative case study of six Arabic teachers implementing TBLT over a six-month period in their own foundation classrooms at King Abdul Aziz University. A key feature of case studies is to explore in more detail the phenomenon being studied in a particular context; as such it is aligned to the constructivist framework underpinning this study. For this research, a case study permitted an in-depth understanding of TBLT and professional development from Arabic teachers' perspectives as well as the interplay of sociocultural factors affecting teacher cognition and practice. The sample was purposely selected and data collection methods used for the study comprised classroom observation, semi-structured interviews and open-ended statements adapted from the CBAM. Three face-

to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted and the initial interviews, which took place at the beginning of data generation, aimed to collect background information about teachers, TBLT implementation and each teacher's professional development. The interviews took a place in teachers' offices at the university, with each interview lasting forty minutes to one hour. Two post-observation interviews were carried out at the end of each observed lesson focused on lessons that had been observed and provided teachers with opportunities to articulate the core beliefs behind their practice. Classroom observations, for which I acted as non-participant observer, were conducted for two Arabic lessons for each teacher with each observation lasting between forty-five minutes and one hour. The main rationale behind classroom observation was to provide evidence of how the teachers carried out the innovation in their own classrooms. The lessons chosen for observation and the schedule of interviews were planned according to the convenience of the participating teachers. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated by the researcher. Data were systematically and manually analysed and thematic analysis, in which data were coded and then categorised into themes, was adopted. More detail and justification relating to the methodology are provided in Chapter 4.

1.8 Definitions of key terms

This section provides operational explanations of key terms used in this study. More detailed definitions are presented in Chapter 2 and 3.

1. **Innovation** is defined as a 'managed process of development whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential adopters' (Markee,1997, p. 46). In this study, it represents task-based language teaching (TBLT).

2. **Task-based language teaching (TBLT)** is an approach to teaching which seeks to facilitate language learning by engaging learners to interact in authentic language use (Ellis, 2017).

3. **Cognition** is 'concerned with understanding what teaches think, know and believe. Its primary concern, therefore, lies with unobservable dimension of teaching-teachers' mental lives' (Borg, 2009, p.163).

4. **Implementation** involves putting the change into actual use within the classroom. (Fullan, 2007).

5. **Concerns-based adoption model (CBAM)** is a widely applied theory in the implementation of educational change and is concerned with measuring, describing and explaining the process of change experienced by teachers who involve in the process of implementing change

6. Understanding is defined as the ability to articulate the principles of TBLT in a way that indicates knowledge of TBLT theory and an awareness of the classroom implication of its principles (Carless, 2015).

7. **Task-supported language teaching (TSLT)** is the weaker version of TBLT which uses tasks as a tool to practise a predetermined linguistic feature in a synthetic syllabus (Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

1.9 An overview of the thesis

This chapter has briefly outlined the rationale, set out the aims, objectives, research problem and identified the research questions for the study. It has introduced the context of the study and area of TBLT implementation with a focus on teacher cognition and professional training and the gap in knowledge was clarified. This chapter has also explored the significance of the study and the methodology undertaken for data generation. The chapter concluded by defining the key terms. The reminder of the thesis is organised into a further eight chapters.

Chapter 2 provides an outline of the research problem by exploring the teaching of Arabic in the Saudi educational context. It also identifies a number of characteristics of educational reform in Saudi Arabia and reviews the relevant literature on management of change and outlines the theoretical framework that will be drawn upon to interpret the empirical findings of the study. Chapter 3 presents the gap in the literature which addressed in the current study. It begins by introducing the development of TBLT and the theories underpinning this approach. The chapter also reviews empirical studies on TBLT implementation from teachers' perspectives. Chapter 4 justifies and explains the theoretical assumptions underpinning the research and methodology used to answer the research questions and places the thesis predominantly within qualitative case study design. It also provides an explanation and justification for sampling, and the qualitative and analytic approach which allows systematic analysis of the data as well as interpretation through the lens of the theoretical framework. Considerations of ethical issues, which is essential to any research study, is also discussed. Chapter 5 is the first of three chapters to present the findings of the study. The main themes which have been identified from the analysis are discussed in more detail. The chapter explores teachers' understanding of TBLT. Chapter 6 explores the main concerns affecting the use of TBLT in the Arabic classroom. Chapter 7 addresses teachers' experience and future vision for professional development. Chapter 8 addresses more directly the research questions and presents discussion of the empirical findings from the current study, relating them to the wider literature in TBLT and teacher professional development. The study concludes by outlining the contribution of the research to knowledge and by suggesting areas for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature review: Contextual Background

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an introduction and background to the study and set out the research questions it aimed to answer. This chapter outlines the research problem which this study is intended to address. As this study focuses on the implementation of TBLT in Arabic classrooms, the chapter begins by providing some background information on the nature of Arabic and demonstrates the main reasons behind Arab students' weaknesses in Modern Standard Arabic as this can pave the way for clearer consideration of the research problem. The chapter then discusses the most relevant aspects of Saudi learning culture and provides critical analysis to Saudi higher education with specific reference to Arabic teacher preparation. Such saliant features presented include reasons why Saudi teachers might struggle with TBLT implementation which provides the rationale for investigating TBLT and professional development from teachers' perspectives. The chapter goes on to introduce innovation in education followed by explaining the theoretical framework which provides a useful lens to enable a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The chapter concludes by summarising the main points raised in the chapter.

2.2 The nature of Arabic

Arabic is a global language, which has spread not just across the Arabian Peninsula, but all over the world. It is the largest branch of the Semitic language family and it consists of 28 letters written from right to left. Arabic is divided into three varieties: Classical Arabic (CA), Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Colloquial (CO).

CA refers to the language of the Muslim Holy Book (the Qur'an), Hadith and classical Arabic poems. It is the variety whose vocabulary and sophisticated forms are held in highest esteem among Arab speakers (Mejdell, 2017; Palmer, 2007). MSA is a variety which is less complicated in its grammatical structure in contrast with CA. MSA is considered a

sophisticated language among native Arabic speakers because proficiency in this variety requires theoretical and practical knowledge of numerous complex grammar rules (Albirini, 2017). Linguistically, each corpus is labelled morphologically and syntactically, thus determining its function in the text. Inconsistencies and inaccuracies can easily lead the reader to misinterpret a word or phrase.

Both CA and MSA are known to native speakers of Arabic as *alfusha* which means 'the language of the eloquent' (Bassiouney, 2009, p. 12). However, it should be noted that MSA is commonly referred to by native Arabic speakers as 'Arabic' (Bassiouney, 2009) and therefore, 'MSA' and 'Arabic' are used interchangeably throughout the thesis. There are four key characteristics that define MSA

1- It is usually acquired in school as it is the formal language used in the education system as well as in 22 Arab countries as established by the respective governments (Albirini, 2011; Plamber, 2007);

2- It has close religious, cultural and historical affiliations, being used for prayer recitation by Muslims, irrespective of daily colloquialisms (Ryding, 2005; Wahba, 2006);

3- It is more or less homogeneous across countries where Arabic is spoken, apart from slight discrepancies in choice of words and phonology influenced by local dialects used in a particular region in the Middle East (Albirini, 2018; Younes, 2006); and

4- It is used in formal contexts, including academic institutions, religious ceremonies and media settings (Bassiouney, 2018; Plamer, 2007; Ryding, 2005).

The last variety is CO, which refers to the varieties learned natively at home and used for everyday communication in informal settings (Albirini, 2018; Taha- Thomure, 2008). It varies significantly between speakers as each regional dialect of spoken Arabic represents a unique culture and people, therefore one variety might be unintelligible to another (Ryding,

2005; Plamer, 2007). Spoken varieties of Arabic are referred to by Arabs as *ala'amia* and CO differs from MSA and CA in its lexical, grammatical and phonological features despite deriving from them. It lacks official recognition in any country where Arabic is spoken and it remains unwritten (Wahba, 2006).

Ferguson (1959) is a widely quoted scholar who describes the link between MSA and CO as *diglossia*, a notion that sheds light not only on the relative status of these two Arabic varieties, but also on their distribution in a range of social settings and the practical and social roles they fulfil in countries where it is spoken. In an Arabic sociolinguistic context, for instance, Ferguson's model presents two major forms of Arabic, namely, High (H) which represents MSA and is characterised by formality and usage in written discourse and formal circumstances, and Low (L) which represents CO and is primarily used in oral speech and everyday interaction. There are syntactical, lexical and phonological differences between the two forms and they are used for different functions (Ferguson, 1959).

However, Ferguson's definition has been criticised because it assumes that the use of Arabic is rigid and stable while native Arabic speakers in reality switch between these two varieties constantly (Albirini, 2011; Mejdell, 2018). In response to this criticism, two main approaches emerged to describe the intermediate levels between MSA and CO. The first approach attempts to identify separate varieties at intermediate levels (usually as examples of the mixing of the two Arabic forms (e.g. Blanc, 1960; Ryding, 2005). The other approach proposes Arabic as more continuum levels in varying degrees which exist between two extremes, namely, MSA and CO (e.g. Badawi, 1973). Five levels of the type of Arabic used by Egyptian media were proposed by Badawi (1973). The first level is Inherited Classical Arabic, which is linked to the Qur'an (i.e. CA), typically used in texts and spoken mostly by scholars of religion. The second level is Contemporary Classical, which represents a less complex CA form. The third level is Colloquial of the Intellectuals, which is used for oral

speech and is shaped by Standard Arabic, being adapted accordingly to achieve verbal articulation of contemporary culture. The fourth level is Colloquial of the Basically Educated Speakers, which is spoken in informal, daily settings by individuals with a basic education. The fifth level is the Colloquial of the Illiterates, which refers to the exclusive use of Local Arabic, so it is not influenced by Standard Arabic. According to Badawi (1973) these levels are not rigid and can be used interchangeably in the same setting but the ability to shift between the different levels with confidence requires a good grasp of Standard Arabic. However, criticism has been directed at Badawi's five levels due to being based on oral speech used in Egyptian media, implying that the levels are not suitable for explaining Arabic in other Arabic-speaking countries. Diglossic Arabic has raised challenges for both learning and teaching Arabic. The next section describes how Arabic students encounter difficulties in learning MSA.

2.3 Students weakness in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

It should be acknowledged that every community shows a certain different degree of consideration to teach and learn its own language because it is a matter of identity. In addition, language is a simple way to transmit civilisation, culture and knowledge from one generation to another (Alnassar, 2012). Educational institutions in the Arab world teach MSA throughout all levels of education, with an emphasis on the role of MSA as key to an Arabic literary heritage and culture (Alhawamdeh and Hussein, 2016). This is because Arabic has a unique status which cannot be shared with any other language and the significance of Arabic language comes from different perspectives. For many Muslims, learning Arabic is considered a religious duty because it is the language of their Holy Book, which Muslims consider to be the speech of God (Allah) therefore it is highly respected across the Muslim worlds (Albirini, 2011; Husein, 2017). It is essential that this be recited with accurate case endings otherwise the meanings may be misunderstood. This is considered to be difficult

with such a highly inflectional language as MSA. Arabic is one of the oldest languages, dating back more than two thousand years and still in use as old Arabic heritage and literature can still be read by Arabs all over the world (Bassiouney, 2009). Even today, MSA is still widely used by scholars, writers and students as an official language in the media, politics and for religious ceremonies. Furthermore, MSA is considered as one of the most important factors in terms of Arab unity (Al-Rajhi, 2006). It is the language used for communication purposes between Arab countries when local dialects are not fully understood.

Like many Arab countries, Saudi Arabia gives MSA teaching and learning significant attention throughout all levels of education. This can be clearly seen by the allocation of the highest proportion of time to teaching Arabic when compared to other subjects (Alghamdi & Li, 2012). Around thirty percent of weekly hours in elementary school are dedicated to Arabic. In intermediate education, the proportion is twenty-two percent and at secondary school around thirty-five percent. Arabic continues to be taught at university level and students in different departments need to pass at two different levels. In addition, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has set general aims for the education system:

1- To help Arabic students to understand their Holy book, the Qur'an and Islamic heritage;

2- To increase linguistic abilities in MSA and enable them to produce accurate language structures in both reading and writing without having vowel points based on grammatical, morphological and dictation rules;

3- To provide students with the skills needed for appropriate expression of their thoughts, feelings and needs using MSA; and

4- To enable students to understand properly what they read or listen to (Cited in Alwasel, 2017).

Despite the attention given to Arabic teaching in all levels of public education, a significant number of empirical studies have shown that the above-mentioned outcome has not been achieved as student linguistic performance in MSA is often not satisfactory (Alnassar; 2012; Al- Qudah; 2002; Hasab-Alnabi, 2012; Taha, 2018). Students across Arab countries have shown different aspects of weakness in Arabic. One of the major aspects of this low level of performance among students is their lack of ability to apply a theoretical knowledge of grammar that controls the meaning of every word and sentence (Alnassar, 2012). This type of weakness affects reading and writing since the way of pronouncing Arabic texts involves the pronunciation of the vowel signs. In addition, students have difficulty in comprehending the meaning conveyed by the text.

An example of early evidence of students' weaknesses in Saudi Arabia was conducted by Al Majed (1996) to identify and analyse the frequency and types of linguistic errors made by Arabic third year high school students in Saudi Arabia. The findings showed that ninety per cent of Saudi students made errors with MSA grammar in different aspects. The study identified a long list of grammatical mistakes that students committed. That list covered the overwhelming majority of concepts that are taught to students in Saudi schools. The problem is not limited to Saudi Arabia; it is common to encounter poor performance in MSA among Arab students throughout the Arab world at all educational levels (Alnassar, 2012; Gebril & Taha-Thomure, 2014; Ryding, 2005). For instance, with an aim to measure ability of grade four primary school students to read in their language, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRRLS) test was conducted in 2011 in 45 different educational systems including five Arab countries (Morocco, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman) to examine student's literacy achievement. Different countries and students were examined in their own languages. The findings showed that the overall score of the five Arab countries ranged between 34 and 45 which is considered to be below the international scale

average of 500 (cited in Taha, 2018). The weakness in Arabic was also reported in a study conducted by Alhawamdeh and Hussein (2016) in a Saudi university and revealed that female student achievement was generally low in Arabic grammar and rhetoric. Furthermore, Taha-Thomure (2008) and Alnassar (2012) illustrated that the students' weaknesses in Arabic across the Middle East does not need evidence therefore conferences held in many Arab countries call for addressing this issue. For instance, the conference sponsored by the University of Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud in Riyadh (1995), "The Phenomenon of Weakness of the Arabic Language Performance and Usage at the University Level", emphasized the fact that the low level of students in Arabic language has been increasingly an issue which needs urgent consideration. The other conference which was sponsored by the Ministry of Education in 2000 named "Teaching the Arabic Language at the Elementary Level: Reality and Hopes" emphasized communication language teaching with an aim to bring this issue to the attention of teachers and educational-policy makers.

In view of Arab students' low achievement, a number of studies have been conducted to shed light on the reasons behind such poor outcomes in MSA among Arab students. Researchers have suggested a number of factors that contribute to this issue. Among the reasons identified are the difficulty of the structure of MSA (Alhawamdeh & Hussein, 2016), diglossia (CO and MSA) (Alwasel, 2016; Mejdell, 2018), the low quality of MSA grammar textbooks (Hasabalnabi, 2012), incorrect language use in the media (Alnassar, 2012; Ryding, 2005), and the proficiency level of Arabic teachers (Taha, 2018; Alghamdi & Li, 2012). Overall, Arabic teachers and the quality of teacher preparation were repeatedly raised as the one reason (if not main) for student underachievement in terms of understanding and applying MSA.

2.4 Arabic curriculum

The curriculum is a central and essential feature of the education system. Richards (2015)

noted that generally an education system exposes learners to a curriculum which enables them to acquire knowledge and develop skills. Arabic language skills in the Middle East are taught through textbooks designed by the ministries of education (Almoaiqel, 2014). Gebril and Taha-Thomure (2014) argued that in many Arabic schools the textbooks lack many main characteristics of the curriculum including standards for teaching, teaching techniques and assessment tools. The absence of these has resulted in the adoption of a teacher-centred classroom which emphasises testing knowledge memorisation rather than actual achievement and growth. Another important deficiency in the Arabic language curriculum is the lack of exposure to authentic Arabic language. This leads to a focus on practicing linguistic items which is useless to the use of language in daily life (Almoaiqel, 2014).

The Arabic curriculum has witnessed many reforms in Saudi Arabia and the first phase was categorised as a subcategory approach in which the focus was exclusively on linguistic knowledge and neglected the skills needed to use the language (Al Ghamdi, 2015). The Arabic syllabus was divided into reading, literature, expression, syntax, dictation and handwriting. One disadvantage of this approach is that it did not take into account the unity of Arabic, resulting in Arabic being learnt in an artificial way (Alghamdi & Li, 2012). Many studies have considered the ineffectiveness of this approach and suggested that this was the major factor behind students' weaknesses (e.g. Alhwamdeh & Hussein, 2016; Alnassar, 2012; Al-Qudah, 2002; Gebril, Taha-Thomure, 2014). As a result, a call for adopting an alternative approach to designing the Arabic curriculum was required.

In 2002, the second phase of designing the curriculum was established and an integrated approach was adopted with the assumption that all Arabic branches complement each other and therefore MSA should be taught as a unit. Grammatical rules can be acquired if the language is taught in natural settings. This approach concentrates on outcomes, as well as on training students to acquire the skills needed for their daily lives (Al Ghamdi, 2015).

However, continuous low proficiency levels among Saudi students coupled with the impact of globalisation which has created demands for development in communication and critical thinking skills have led to a call for the necessity of school curriculum reforms at the national level. The reform advocates principles associated to TBLT, such as focusing on centeredness, communication and fostering autonomy. Alghamdi (2013) argues that with knowledge transmission and the lack of critical thinking skills, the Saudi education system has encountered challenges in managing the proposed change. The new shift of the Arabic school curriculum following the border policy of educational reform aims to adopt a learner-centred approach for MSA teaching, where learners are engaged in communicative activities to practice the use of language (Alsaiarri, 2015). Advocating such principles has resulted in revising the Arabic curriculum at the King Abdul-Aziz University and introducing learner-centred approaches as a small-scale innovation. One of the main aims as proposed in the new Arabic curriculum is to focus on the skills and enhance learners' comprehensible abilities to use MSA for communication purpose. Although the implementation of TBLT is still not mandatory at KAU, teachers are involved in in-service training and are encouraged to practise a learner-centred approach which included some principles of TBLT. However, for the change to be successfully implemented, teachers' voices need to be taken into account, not forgetting there is a gap in the literature which this study aims to address.

2.5 Context of the study: Saudi Arabia

In order to ensure a full understanding of the themes of this study, the following sub sections provide a general overview of the Saudi education system with a particular emphasis on Arabic teacher preparation within this system.

2.5.1 Arabic teacher preparation

Arabic teacher pre/in service preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia have experienced different developments. This section provides historical analysis of Arabic preparation programs in order to shed light on their nature and limitations.

The early phase of teacher preparation was between 1902 and 1924. Arabic learning during that time took a place in a *Kuttab* which was either in or near mosques. Girls and boys learned together if they were aged under 6 years, but older children were taught in separate locations. The *Kuttab* functioned like a school where children were taught how to read and recite the *Quran* and other religious texts (Rugh, 2002). In the ninth century, private schools were established in Jeddah, Mecca and Medina that offered a wider range of Arabic subjects. Arabic was declared the official language and students joined the circle *(halaqa)* of grammarians to learn grammar which was considered the main component for accurate readings of the *Quran*. The assessment procedure focused on the student's capacity to read, write and recite the *Quran*. The learning of Arabic evolved to other systematic institutions named *madrasa* which also functioned like schools with fixed programmes in different subjects (Versteegh, 2006). The teaching in this phase generally was not sophisticated due to the shortage of experienced teachers.

The second phase started in 1926 when the first systematic organisation of teaching in KSA was established, namely the Saudi Academic Institute. Several subsequent shifts and reforms have occurred. In 1976, teacher training colleges were established in different regions of the KSA with the aim of preparing teachers to teach different subjects including Arabic, English, science, social studies and mathematics in elementary schools (Al Ghamdi, 2015). According to Al-Suhaibani (1998) teachers were required to attend three and a half years of study, and half a year of teaching practice in elementary schools, and those who successfully completed the programme were directly employed as a teacher in a primary

school. This half year of practical training represented the base of pre-service preparation for Arabic teachers in the KSA. In 1960, different institutions were established to prepare teachers to teach in intermediate schools which follows primary education in KSA. Teachers who were teaching at primary school were also required to attend night colleges to upgrade their level of education.

The third phase was when the establishment of colleges and universities became essential with the expansion of secondary school graduates. According to Alghamdi (2013) the preparation of Arabic teachers in KSA is undertaken in three types of college including middle colleges of teacher preparation, education colleges and Arabic language and literature departments in the faculties of Art in the universities. The first two pathways aim to deepen students' understanding of linguistic knowledge and provide them with the skills and knowledge required for teaching. While graduates from teacher training colleges are qualified as teachers for elementary schools, those who completed successfully their course from the colleges of education are employed as teachers at the intermediate or secondary level. On the other hand, the main aim of Arabic language and literature in Art faculties is to provide broad theoretical knowledge and qualify specialised Arabic teachers with expanded knowledge about language, literature and linguistics (Al Suhaibani, 1992; Alghamdi, 2015). This is also in line with Taha (2018) who reviewed a number of the websites of Arab Universities to examine Arabic teacher's preparation programmes and found that most of those programmes tended to allocate most of their credits to content knowledge leaving Arabic teachers with a gap in their pedagogical knowledge. According to Graves (2009) effective teachers' preparation programs emphasise the balance between content and pedagogy. What follows is a critical analysis of education in Saudi Arabia.

2.5.2 Critical analysis of higher education in Saudi Arabia

According to Elyas and Picard (2013), education in KSA has four main characteristics - a focus on the teaching of Islam, a centralised system by the Ministry of Higher Education, state funding and gender segregation. However, such characteristics and other aspects in the Saudi education system have been criticised (e.g. Alamri, 2011; Al Eisa & Smith, 2013; Elias & Picard, 2013).

The Saudi education system has been criticised for its pedagogical approach which emphasises teacher-centred methods (Alamri, 2011; Alkhazim, 2003). This strategy contributes to student passivity as it heavily emphasises dependence on teachers as the only source of information. According to Ruph (2002), this kind of approach tends not to enhance the creative and critical thinking skills required for global economic development. Furthermore, the Saudi curriculum has also been criticised for its quantity and quality as it is argued that focusing on a limited supply of text books of poor quality will not prepare Saudi youth to meet the demands of the international labour market (Alnassar & Dow, 2013). Another challenge is that university programmes have not placed enough emphasis on motivation as a factor for success (Al-Ghamdi & Tight, 2013). Alamri (2011) and Alyami (2014) suggest integrating technology in higher education programmes in order to motivate Saudi students, as increased motivation can contribute to higher academic achievement. It is further argued that teachers lack pedagogical knowledge and information communication technology (ICT) skills and focus only on assessment through examination, meaning it will be difficult to provide learners with sufficient opportunities to practise creativity and problem-solving skills. Daradari and Murphy (2013) argued that the use of traditional assessments which are linked to behaviourist theories are still dominant in the Saudi context which has resulted in students focusing on marks rather than education outcomes. Alnassar and Dow (2013) argue that small group teaching methods, listening to what students say, and

encouraging asking questions are all appropriate and are still in demand for Saudi new generation.

These challenges illustrate the fact that there is increasing pressure on the Saudi educational system to produce skilled graduates to meet the demands of the global economy. It is noteworthy that by 2009 with the desire to ensure an internationally competitive workforce, education received substantial support from the Saudi government. According to Alnahdi (2014), in the recent three years the largest proportion of the Saudi budget was allocated to education. In order to raise the level of higher education, an ambitious programme called *'Tatweer'* (which means 'development') was established by the Ministry of Education from 2007 to 2013 with the aim of reforming the education system and improving the quality of educational outcomes in general education (Elyas & Picard, 2011). The first phase of the project, called the 'New School Model', placed an emphasis on enhancing the capacity of schools to manage potential change through creating smart classes and learning resource centres and by integrating technology (Alyami, 2014). The purpose of the second phase was to improve Saudi student performance by reforming the curriculum; repetitive lessons were deleted and the curriculum was decentralised. In the third phase, teachers and students were targeted to enhance the proficiency level of the Saudi education system. Several steps have been taken to build up pedagogical skills among teachers. In addition, to increase national standards and teacher proficiency in delivering information, pre-service and in-service teachers are provided with a National Standard Assessment to examine their theoretical knowledge and practical skills (Daradari& Cardew, 2013). The results of this test are taken into consideration when assessing new applicants and awarding promotion to teacher's in-service. Student knowledge and skills are also examined through a special test called 'Qiyas' in order to evaluate the proficiency of their teachers and institutions and provide solutions for further development (Alnahdi, 2014).

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The Ministry of Higher Education has also set up strategies for educational development. One ambitious project, the 'King Abdullah Scholarship Program', was initiated in 2005 to give Saudi youth opportunities to study in the best universities around the world at either the undergraduate or postgraduate level. The objective is to increase their ability to compete in the global labour market (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). To ensure a high quality of education, students take university entrance exams which evaluate their academic achievement. In terms of preparing post-secondary institutions for development, a National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) is used to assess Higher Education Institutions and their programmes (Darandari & Cardew, 2013). The aims behind such intervention are to evaluate the quality of university staff which will have an impact on students' outcome and to support educational institutions in meeting the level of world-class universities in order to ensure Saudi students are provided with learning opportunities that will enable them to compete internationally.

With the lack of empirical evidence examining the impact of such strategies, a number of scholars in the Middle East including KSA have argued that the quality of teacher and teacher education needs further consideration to facilitate successful implementation of educational reforms. For instance, Taha (2018) argued that Arabic language teachers across Arab countries lack pedagogical knowledge, child development, educational technology, teaching methodology, and classroom management. This was reflected in students' results on international standardized literacy tests which was discussed earlier. Faour (2012) in his work entitled "Arab Education Report Card" illustrated that teachers in the Middle East lack knowledge and skills required for functioning within a changing world (cited in Taha, 2018). Similarly, Al Rajhi (2006) and Alnassar (2012) among others argued that despite the efforts that have been made in many Arab educational reforms, there is a general view shared by many experts who conducted empirical studies to evaluate Arabic teachers' preparation

programmes that the contemporary standard of these programmes is underdeveloped due to the absence of scientific pedagogy in teacher preparation programmes. In the Saudi context, as demonstrated by the narrative of Saudi teachers in higher education, Alnassar and Dow (2013) and Elyas and Picard (2013) argued that without appropriate support which takes into account Saudi teachers' local needs, educational reform will likely to fail.

2.6 Innovation and change

The purpose of this section is to develop a working definition of change management and associated terms as used in this study. The terms 'innovation' and 'change' are defined differently in the literature. While some scholars refer to 'innovation' and 'change' as synonymous (e.g. Fullan, 2007: Markee, 2013), others differentiate between these two terms (White, 1993). According to White (1993), *innovation* is a deliberate and conscious effort that results in improvement and change, in contrast, *change* is a natural and unconscious process that does not necessarily involve newness. This suggests that for White (1993) intention and novelty are crucial distinguishing features of innovation as opposed to change, which can be unplanned. For Rogers (2003) the innovation can be an idea, practice or object perceived of as new by individuals who implement the innovation. In this regard, the perception of individuals is a critical factor to define the novelty.

In this thesis, however, the terms 'innovation' and 'change' are seen as synonymous and will be used interchangeably for several reasons. Following the view of Markee (2013), it is not easy to draw a line between deliberate and natural influences. This may be because deciding whether the process of implementing a new approach is innovation or change is personal and influenced by the education and experience of the teacher. For the purpose of this thesis, I adopt Markee's (1997, p. 46) definition of innovation as a 'managed process of development whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential

adopters'. The rationale behind using this definition is because it involves key factors of change which this study focuses on including the process of the management of change, new teaching materials, new classroom methodologies and new values or perceptions.

According to Fullan (2007) there are three process stages of innovation implementation named 'adoption', 'implementation' and 'institutionalisation'.

Adoption refers to the decision to embark on innovation and of developing commitment towards the process. This phase consists of all activities that appear before change is effected in the classroom. Implementation involves putting the change into actual use within the classroom. Institutionalisation is the phase when innovation and change stop being regarded as something new and become part of the usual way of doing things (Fullan, 2007).

Fullan (2007) placed an emphasis on the interconnectivity of these different phases in the change process by arguing that change process is not linear but one in which various factors from different stages interact to enhance change. The focus of this study is on Fullan's middle phase, referred to as "implementation". As Fullan (2007) emphasised that for each stage, there are certain factors which affect managing the change, the next section outlines the main factors which could have an impact of success or failure of any educational innovation which existed in managing educational innovation literature. The principal purpose of this review is to identify the variables which might occur in the Saudi context and impact on the process of TBLT implementation which is the main concern of the second research question.

2.7 Characteristics of innovation

Successful implementation is not only dependent on organisational structures but also on how people perceive the innovation (Markee, 2013; Rogers, 2003). According to Soller (2009) there are six key variables which affect the implementation of educational innovation

including compatibility, complexity, explicitness, flexibility, originality and visibility. Stoller (2009) argued that when these characteristics are present, the innovation is likely to be successfully implemented but if the innovation falls within this zone, it is more likely that the innovation will be adopted. These terms were identified as follows:

1. Compatibility is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being compatible with the current practice, existing values, and beliefs of the adopter.

2. Complexity refers to the level of perceived difficulty in comprehending and using an innovation.

3. Explicitness refers to how the adopter is clear about the meaning of innovation and what it involves.

4. Flexibility refers to the extent to which the innovation can be altered as this can minimise the risk taking.

5. Originality refers to the innovation not being novel for the adopter.

6. Visibility refers to the extent to which it is easier to see the positive results of an innovation.

These factors are related to the current study as it also addresses the innovation from the perspectives of teachers who implement an innovation in an educational context. However, more detailed explanations about factors particularly affecting TBLT implementation in language classrooms are presented in section 3.7.2. The next section outlines three different approaches to manage educational change.

2.8 Strategies for managing the change

This section aims to discuss some of the main approaches to educational change. These approaches are crucial because theories of curriculum change have strong foundations in these approaches. One such approach is the 'empirical-rational' (Marsh, 2009). This is based on the assumption that people are rational and like to do things that they are interested in. If

they understand the process of change and what it takes to be involved in the creation of new things and how change will benefit them, they will accept and support it. The empirical-rational approach allows policy makers or administrators to determine change and teachers to be told about change and ways they can implement it (Kennedy, 1987).

A second approach is the 'normative' or re-educative approach. This approach focuses on individuals who are recipients of change and differs markedly from the rational-empirical approach outlined above. According to Marsh (2009), the normative approach is based on the assumption that people are social beings rather than rational and act according to the values and attitudes which they grow up with in their society or culture. Change can take place when individuals are re-educated and redefine existing values to develop a commitment to the new one.

Implementation of this strategy, however, focuses on a collaborative problem-solving approach among those individuals affected by the change (Kennedy, 1987). Individual reflection on different practices and beliefs is useful and dialogue-individual reflection is encouraged.

A third and final concept is the 'power-coercive' approach. Marsh (2009) advised that this approach focuses on using power to force individuals to adopt change and it supports the utilisation of punishment and reward to facilitate change. In order to get specific rewards, teachers are required to implement curriculum change. The teachers are expected to comply with both identified and proposed changes. This approach can, however, be problematic because the implementation of change may not be informed by the usefulness of that change, but simply by the potential rewards following the implementation of change (Marsh, 2009). The implication for curriculum change is that teachers may simply implement it because of promised rewards, not because of its usefulness to learners.

2.9 Models of change

There are several models for managing curriculum changes which are closely linked to the approaches to change discussed above.

Kennedy (2013) considers top-down and bottom-up theories of curriculum change. These theories are partially distinguishable on the basis of the concept of coercion. In particular, top-down theories are characterised by higher levels of coercion than bottom-up theories. Fullan (2007) argues that neither top-down nor bottom-up strategies for educational reform work and proposes a combination of both strategies. Even so, it is vital to get an overview of each of these strategies and then conceptualise the benefits of mixing the two.

The top-down or 'mechanistic' change strategy of educational reform and curriculum change is discussed by Markee (2013) who noted that this strategy involves an introduction of curriculum change by a central body. Such change comes from national or central government who pass on the roles and regulations of implementing the change and those who are in the lower levels such as the ministry, schools and teachers, implement the policy made above their level and prepare policy to the next level. In the top-down approach, teachers simply receive different ideas on curriculum change, after which they are expected to implement them. Under this strategy, policies, legislation and performance standards can be used to implement curriculum change.

The top-down strategy of curriculum change has a number of benefits. These benefits include a strong foundation of extensive and thorough research, relatively easy dissemination of information, large sample use and provision of teachers with proper materials (Neary, 2002). This strategy of curriculum change however is limited due to factors like imposition of change which may make teachers uncommitted because of the large-scale nature of the innovation. When teachers' beliefs are not taken into consideration, they will

not feel ownership of the innovation. This results in either resistance to change or a mismatch between the planned change and what occurs in practice (Kennedy, 2013).

The bottom-up strategy is characterised by micro-level initiatives and curriculum change starts as the initiative of only a few people who want to change their own activities which they contribute to the curriculum (Markee, 2013). The small actions that are started by individuals affect specific modules or courses and eventually lead to wider curriculum change. Since the bottom-up approach initially involves only a few people, it is characterised by minimal involvement from the different agencies that deal with curriculum policies or legislation (Barth, 2014).

The bottom-up strategy has a number of advantages as it is less restricted and this means that individuals with high motivation have the ability to lead positive change (Barth, 2014). Neary (2002) noted that the bottom-up strategy is beneficial to local settings because involved stakeholders solve particular problems that are local and small-scale in nature. Teachers are also more involved in the curriculum change process because they act as both producers and consumers of change (Neary, 2002). This can point towards an intrinsic motivation which is often associated with better outcomes (Kennedy, 2013). Since the teachers initiate ideas and select the materials to use, they are more likely to implement curriculum change. The flexibility that characterises the bottom-up strategy also presents opportunities for changing plans. Finally, the bottom-up strategy is usually less expensive than a top-down strategy (Kennedy, 2013).

Despite the usefulness of the bottom-up approach and the advantages associated with it, the strategy is limited in a number of ways. The strategy can easily become unprofessional, it may not be easy to coordinate or be based on adequate research. Teachers may think they have the expertise to implement change but this may not be the case, learners will be affected negatively and the results may not be quantified easily (Neary, 2002). The

discussion above indicates that both the top-down and the bottom-up strategy can be beneficial, but they are also limited. Clearly, neither strategy is perfect. This explains why Fullan (1994) noted that neither of the strategies will work effectively on its own. The perspective shared by Fullan (1994) is reiterated by other scholars. For instance, Kubanyiova (2012) noted that neither of these strategies is effective in isolation. Rather, Kennedy (2013) suggested the ecological model which coordinates top-down and bottom up strategies for educational reform in order to build on them and minimise their disadvantages.

On the basis of the limitations associated with top-down and bottom-up strategies, Fullan (1994) also proposed a combined adoption of these strategies. Such a combination should be characterised by the alignment of problems with solutions (Fullan, 1994). Furthermore, the effectiveness of combined strategies can be facilitated further through providing adequate resources and the involvement of different programme specialists (Fullan, 2007). The perspectives shared by Fullan (2007) are similar to those espousing the integrated theory.

Goodson (2001) discussed the integrated theory of educational change using a socio-historical approach and proposed an integrated theory of educational change based on previous change models. The proposed integrated approach of change incorporates three main elements and includes internal processes which were dominant in the 1960s and the 1970s. It excludes externally mandated change which was dominant in the 1980s and 1990s, and personal purposes and missions (Goodson, 2001). In this case, internal processes refer to teacher-initiated educational change while externally mandated change involves teacher responses to changes initiated by external agencies (Goodson, 2001). It was also suggested that by integrating the three areas, teachers can balance the internal, external, and personal segments and that doing so would provide curriculum change. Clearly, the theory of educational change from Goodson (2001) is similar to that proposed by Fullan (1994)

because both perspectives support the combination of different theories and segments. The theories of Goodson (2001) and Fullan (1994) present a significant challenge according to some scholars.

One main challenge associated with the theories of change conceptualised by Goodson (2001) and Fullan (1994) is a struggle with integration. For example, with specific reference to the integrated theory of educational change by Goodson (2001), Bender (2007) noted that despite the proposed integration, there may still be considerable internal resistance to a change that is mandated by external bodies. This indicates that although the integrated theory supports the attainment of a balance between the internal, external and personal segments, a clear definition of this balance and its achievement may remain difficult. Similarly, Fullan (1994) does not fully discuss 'how' the top-down and bottom-up strategies should be combined. Despite the challenges associated with the integrated theory of educational change by Goodson (2001) and the theory by Fullan (1994), both are still useful. The theory by Goodson (1994) is a crucial reference point for the definition of internal, external and personal segments of change in relation to the curriculum. Each of these segments is crucial in the development and implementation of curriculum change (Bender, 2007). At a personal level, individual perceptions influence change (Bender, 2007). At the internal level, teachers have the ability to initiate and promote change, while at external levels teachers can implement change initiated by other relevant agencies (Bender, 2007).

Based on the existence of various curriculum change theories, it is clear that there is no single theory that can be used to manage curriculum change that is devoid of limitations. Kubanyiova (2016) observed that curriculum change is multidimensional in nature and that change can be approached from varied points of view which are captured by different theories. This might pose a challenge for curriculum specialists who do not know which theory would work best. On this basis, Goodson (2005) suggests developing studies of the

complexity of curriculum action. Such research would serve to support theorisation at the micro-level. This shows that curriculum change theories are still useful, regardless of the challenges they are associated with and their shortcomings.

According to Clement (2014), there is a need for more research into the specific impacts of theories of educational reform. More specifically, teachers and other stakeholders perceive curriculum change and other forms of change as temporary and as a result respond to reform by ignoring it (Clement, 2014). In this case, curriculum reform is perceived as irrelevant, particularly to the teaching and learning processes. Nevertheless, such reactions are dependent on the theory of change that is adopted.

Fullan (1994) and Goodson (2001) argue that there is a need to combine the concepts that fall under different theories of curriculum change in order to maximise positive outcomes. Moving forward then, there is need for more theories of curriculum change. This is acknowledged by Kubanyiova (2012) who stated that theoretical foundations and good practice for multiple forms of curricula are needed. This statement identifies a gap in the management of curricular theory which this study addressed. In this study the combination of theories captures the point where change should begin and the way it should be approached. Without this combination there will be a risk of not lending the findings to theoretical explanation. In addition, it facilitates developing a model for TBLT relevant to teachers' cognition and sociocultural context. This offered steps that can be taken to ensure curriculum change is successful.

To sum up, this review presents several theories with regard to managing curriculum change. They include the top-down and bottom-up, ecological models. These theories are undoubtedly useful for the management of curriculum change, but there is still room for the formulation of more theories and the improvement of those in existence.

2.10 Theoretical Framework for Research

This study aims to explore the support needed by Arabic teachers to facilitate TBLT

implementation. Since the use of dominant theory was not sufficient to understand the

complexity of phenomena under investigation, I draw upon a model of management of

change in combination with two adult learning theories. This section provides an explanation

of theoretical frameworks underpinning this study.

2.10.1. Concerns-Based Adoption Model

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) is a conceptual framework that describes,

explains, predicts or measures the process of change experienced by teachers or others

involved in the implementation of change (Hall & Hord, 1987). According to Anderson

(1997), the CBAM model is "the most robust and empirically grounded theoretical model for

the implementation of educational innovations" (p. 331).

The model was originally developed by a group of teachers at the University of Texas

Research and Development Centre for Teacher Education in the early 1970s in response to

the innovation focus approach to educational change with an aim to investigate what happens

when individuals are asked to change their practice or adopt an innovation (Hall, 2013).

CBAM is built upon the following assumptions about classroom change:

- Change is a process, not an event. This means that change cannot occur straightaway
  when teachers are given an innovation to implement, it requires time to gradually
  occur.

- Change is carried out by individuals therefore attention must be given to the role and
  the perception of individuals who implement the change.

- Change is a highly personal experience. This means that each individual behaves
  differently because they have different experiences and different values therefore

paying attention to each individual and providing appropriate support can facilitate the change.

- Change involves developmental growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes as individuals have greater experience with the innovation.

CBAM consists of three diagnostic dimensions for conceptualising and measuring the change including a Stage of Concerns (SoC) which describes the feelings and motivations of teachers who implement change of curriculum or instructional practice; a Level of Use (LoU) which concerns general patterns of teacher behaviour in the classroom, and Innovation Configuration (IC) which describes the variation in implementing the change by different teachers (Hall, 2013). Graphic overview of CBAM is provided in Figure 2.1.
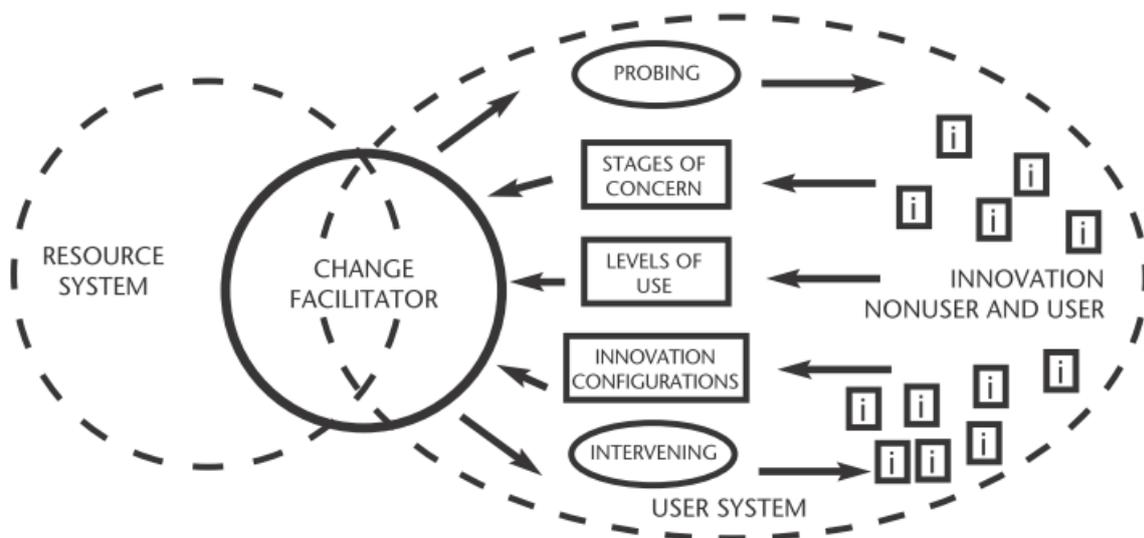
Figure 2.1 *The Concerns-Based Adoption Model from Hall (2014)*

While these dimensions can be utilised individually or as a combination, the focus on this study was on applying the core dimension which is SoC. This dimension was used because this study focused on teachers' feelings during the implementation of TBLT which is the main function of SoC. According to Hall (2013) SoC can be used to collect data that will help

determine what types of support teachers need and to predict what modifications to make to sustain implementation of change. Since the study is focusing on SoC, more explanation about this dimension will be provided below.

As mentioned earlier, SoC is a framework which describes feelings a teacher might have about a change at different points of its implementation. According to Anderson (1997), there are seven Stages of Concerns and they are referred to as "stages" because they represent possible developmental progression of teachers' concerns. The stages are identified and defined in Table 2.1.

It is assumed that when change is first introduced, teachers are more likely to have personal concerns (stages 1 to 3) and then develop to task concerns (stage 3). As the teacher acquires more skills in using the change, they move to consequence, collaboration and refocusing (stages 4 to 6).

Table 2.1 *Stages of concerns adapted from Hord & Hall (2014)*

	Stage of Concerns	Definition
Impact	6 Refocusing	A concern on evaluating and possibly making modifications to the innovation
	5Collaboration	Concern about cooperating and coordinating with others in the school
Task	4 Consequence	The individual's concerns centre upon the impact on students
	3 Management	The individual focuses on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources
	2 Personal	The individual is concerned about his or her ability to use the innovation and the personal costs of getting involved
Self	1Informational	The individual has little knowledge about or interest in the learning more about innovation
	0 Awareness	The individual indicates little concern about or involvement with the innovation

One strength of CBAM is that it provides a framework complemented by methodology for measuring the change process of each of the three diagnostic dimensions. According to Hall (2013) there are three instruments which can be used to determine individual SoC during the

implementation of innovation. The first commonly used tool is a Stage of Concerns Questionnaire (SoCQ) which includes 35 items and which requires between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. According to Anderson (1997) the first advantage of utilising this questionnaire is that it can enhance the validity and reliability of the study because the questionnaire was evaluated through a number of empirical studies in different contexts. The second strength is to provide quantitative completeness data as it shows the most intense level of each stage of concern. In addition, the questionnaire can be used several times to measure the change and in this case, a computer profile can be developed for each individual to facilitate comparing and constructing.

The second instrument which can be used to assess individual concerns is face to face interviews (Hall & Hord, 2014). This tool can enable the researcher to collect deep information about teachers' concerns in informal relaxed environments (Hord, et.al, 2006).

The last instrument developed to measure the SoC dimension is open ended statement of concerns which are considered to be more formal than interviews and more appropriate to groups of individuals. This tool involves asking teachers to write a description of their concerns as an answer to the following open question: "When you think about ………….., what are your concerns?" (Hall, 2014).

Over the last four decades the SoC dimension has been examined in relation to a wide range of innovations in different nations and cultures. Hall (2014), after reviewing a number of studies in the last decade, concluded that most of the studies which applied CBAM theory, particularly SoC constructs, were quantitative in nature and were conducted mostly in the USA, Australia and Canada. In addition, as can be seen in Table 2.2, the type of innovation that has had the most empirical studies of SoC has been in relation to the implementation of various technologies in education. The overall finding was that early implementers of innovation had mainly self and task concerns (Hall, 2014). Since the integration of

technology was mainly dominant in those studies, it appears that it is beyond the scope of this project, which mainly focuses on TBLT, to review those studies. The focus on TBLT implementation in the Saudi context was as a response to a call by Hall (2014) for conducting more empirical qualitative studies that explore various innovations in different cultures. The current study contributed to the theory as it is first applied to the field of TBLT and utilised classroom observations which was not provided as a tool in the SoC model (more details and justifications are provided in Chapter 4).

Table 2.2 *List of studies used SoC*

Year	Author	Type of Publication	Context	Innovation	Methodology
2000	Alshammari	PhD thesis	Kuwait	Information technology curriculum	quantitative
2001	Newhouse	Article	USA	Computers in the classrooms	quantitative
2010	AL-Sarrani	PhD thesis	Saudi Arabia	Blended learning	quantitative
2010	Donovan& Green	Article	USA	One to one lap top initiatives	quantitative
2011	Hwu	PhD thesis	USA	Online learning	Mix methods
2013	Kamal	PhD thesis	Saudi Arabia	Online teaching	quantitative
2015	Sultana	Article	Pakistan	Information technology based in teacher education	quantitative
2018	Yan &Deng	Article	China	Inclusive education	quantitative

2.10.2. Language-Teacher-Cognition Model

The study of language-teacher cognition grew from the mid-1990s, and it is now well established in the field of applied linguistics and the main areas covered have been teacher's cognition about reading, writing and teaching grammar. However, the term *cognition* is defined by Borg (2003) as

'unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think'

(Borg, 2003, p.81). According to Borg, a teacher's prior learning experiences establish beliefs about how language should be learnt and taught and these beliefs might continue to be influential factors throughout their professional lives. Lortie (1975) introduced the term *Apprenticeship of Observation* to refer to the impact of schooling years on teachers' pedagogical beliefs (cited in Borg, 2009). Teacher cognition and practice might also be influenced by their professional development and their experience in practice. Socio-cultural factors such as classroom, school system and examinations can also play also significant roles in shaping teacher practice as it could prevent the teacher adopting a practice which reflects their actual beliefs. Because the relationship between teacher cognition and practice is complex (as shown in Figure 2.2), this model was used as a lens to understand the core beliefs behind teachers' practice.
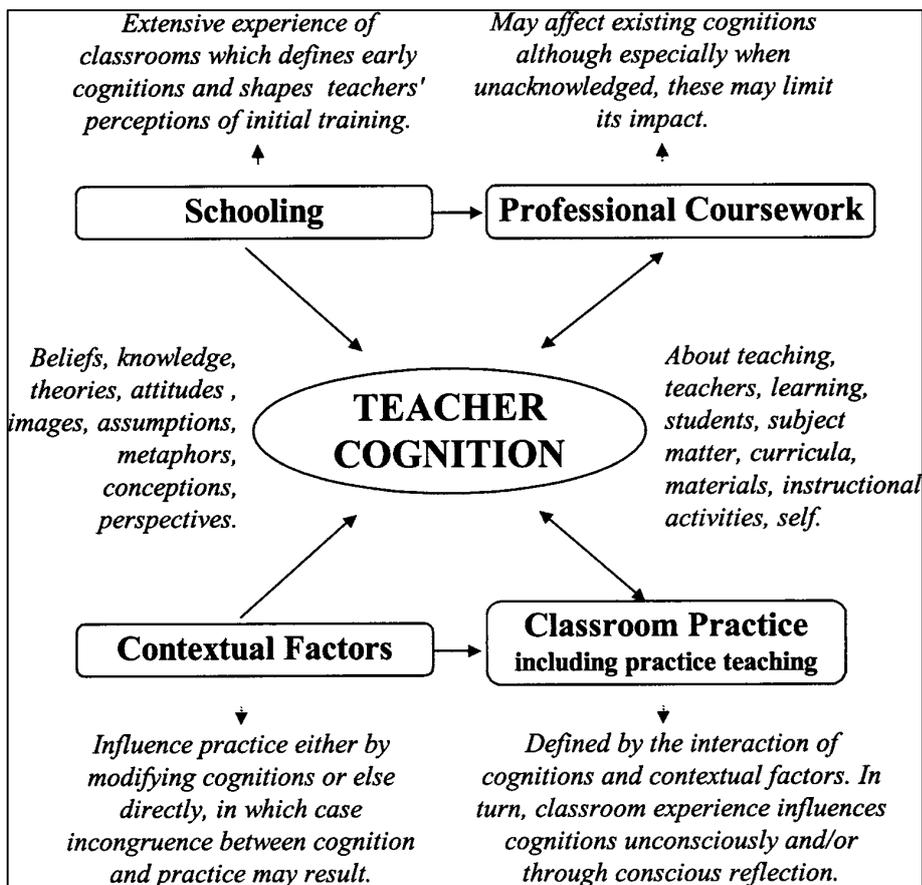
Figure 2.2 *Teacher cognition model from Borg (2003)*

2.10.3. The sociocultural approach

This theory is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978) and one of the principal assumptions of this theory is that human learning occurs with two mediating tools which are language and culture. Vygotsky (1978) argued that language can function as mediator tool for learning - when individuals interact in a meaningful context and through scaffolding, they can build on their knowledge. Since learning can take place in context, the culture of this context is considered to be another tool for learning as it forms how learning can take place. Therefore, culture could be facilitator or inhibitor facto for learning.

Socio-cultural theory was used as a lens to understand how Arabic teachers learnt to teach. Johnson (2013) argued that sociocultural theory is not widely used in teacher education while it can be promising framework in developing understanding about teachers' cognition development. In the field of TBLT, studies involving teachers' cognition are scarce. Those few given citations have tended not to discuss the empirical findings through the lens of theoretical frameworks, thereby demonstrating that there is no related literature applied CBAM, language teacher cognition or sociocultural theories for similar purposes. This study, therefore, contributes to the field of TBLT by utilising the three theories described above to better ground the findings and advance research in the field.

2.11 Summary

This chapter has so far presented the research problems addressed in this thesis. After providing brief background information about Arabic language, the chapter moved into the Saudi educational context with special reference to Arabic language learning and teaching. In summary, it can be observed that significant attention has been given to educational reform in Saudi Arabia. However, teacher preparation programmes have been identified as an issue which requires further consideration to bridge the gap in educational reform management.

This study focused on teachers' professional development and designed a context-based model which can appropriately support teachers to facilitate management of change. The chapter has also presented different themes about the management of change and sheds light on influential factors which can affect the implementation of educational innovation. The chapter concluded with an explanation of theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. The use of multiple theory is seen as essential to understanding how teacher learning can take place which in turn can facilitate the adoption of change. The next chapter will further review relevant literature on TBLT implementation

Chapter 3. Literature review: Task-based language teaching

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research literature relevant to the scope of the present study and it aims at identifying the gap in the literature. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on TBLT in theories. It begins by offering an overview of TBLT development and establishes a working definition for the current study. The chapter moves on to outline common frameworks of TBLT and review theories underpinning TBLT approach. This is followed by presenting the criticisms of this approach.

The second part of this chapter describes and discusses empirical studies of TBLT in three main areas which this study is focusing on including teachers' understandings of TBLT, challenges affecting the implementation of TBLT, and teacher professional development. The empirical studies were selected for the insights which they can bring to TBLT implementation in a Saudi context. The principal purpose of this review is to identify the gap in existing literature which this study aims to address. The chapter concludes by summarising the main points.

3.2 Pathway to the development of Task-based Language Teaching

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) up to the late 1960s, the product view of language, or what is referred to in the literature as the synthetic approach or traditional approach, emphasised the mastery of grammar as the basis of language proficiency. The language was broken into discrete items and presented to students through direct instruction; the production of accurate language and pronunciation was emphasised because it was assumed that if students made errors, these would become a permanent part of their speech. The traditional approaches were based on the belief that language consists of a set of rules, and learners will be able to combine them and build complex knowledge via oral drilling and controlled practice .Language teaching programmes following synthetic syllabi emphasised

grammar translation, audiolingual methods and the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model; here, new language structure is presented to learners, who will then practise the new structures in controlled contexts through drills or language-focused exercises before the production of the target structure in different contexts (Richards, 2015).

Synthetic approaches have been criticised, partly because such approaches failed to help learners use language for communicative purposes (Lightbown, 2000). In addition, it is assumed that what is taught will be learnt; this direct relationship is criticised by second language research, which demonstrates that learning language is not linear and what is acquired at one time does not necessarily lead to complete knowledge (Skehan, 1998). At the same time the centrality of controlling errors by encouraging memorisation and the repetition of linguistic items and their effectiveness were questioned by language teachers.

In the 1970s, under the influence of the theories of communicative competence, synthetic direct or traditional approaches which focused on the accuracy of language were replaced by process indirect approaches which gave priority to the use of language for the purpose of real communication in real situations, as an alternative to explicit explanation of linguistic items (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based language teaching are two versions of analytic approaches to language instruction (Baygate, 2016; Ellis, 2003; Richards, 2005). CLT in practice emerged in two versions, 'weak' and 'strong', and while both emphasise interaction and the use of language, they differ in an important way. According to Nunan (2004) Ellis (2018) the weak version is based on the assumption that language can be learnt through communication, while attention should continue to be paid to explicit grammar explanation and a teacher-centred approach. This approach is referred to by Long (1991, 2015) as 'focus on forms' (FonFS); it is considered to be a teacher-centred synthetic approach because it also involves explaining grammatical items before practicing them. According to East (2012) the weak version of CLT drew on the

traditional PPP model as a method for language teaching. In contrast to weak CLT, the strong version represented a significant shift from traditional approaches as it emphasised communication for language acquisition and neglected the role of grammar (Butler, 2017). However, the strong version of CLT was criticised for its focus on fluency rather than accuracy and the weak form of CLT was criticised for the propriety given to accuracy which resulted in boring lessons (East, 2017). In addition, Richards and Rodgers (2014) point out that CLT was greatly influenced by assumptions and was not grounded in theories of second language acquisition.

In response to these criticisms, TBLT emerged in the 1980s, arising from the Bangalore Project conducted in India by Prabhu in 1987 when he designed communicative tasks to examine 390 primary and secondary school students and found that students developed grammatical competence through engaging in communicative tasks (Ellis, 2012) TBLT is defined as an approach to teaching which seeks to facilitate language learning by engaging learners to interact in authentic language use (Ellis, 2017).

While TBLT is seen by many scholars as a logical development of strong CLT (e.g. Brandl, 2017; Ellis, 2017; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 2003), others such as Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2006) considered it a post-methods pedagogy which is not developed form of any particular method. Whether it is a branch of CLT or not, it has been attracting the attention of researchers and practitioners in the field of language learning and teaching since the 1980s (Carless, 2015; East, 2017; Ellis, 2003, 2017; Littlewood, 2007; Skehan, 2003; Van den Branden, 2006;). In addition, the TBLT approach has influenced curriculum design and materials development, language teachers and teacher educators (East, 2017). Indeed, in the context of globalisation, policy makers in various nations have introduced TBLT as a promising pedagogy to prepare their graduates with essential skills to be productive in their economy (Li & Edwards, 2017). TBLT has influenced educational reforms in many

countries, and Saudi Arabia is no exception to this trend. Alnassar and Dow (2013), after conducting interviews with higher educational teachers in Saudi Arabia and carrying out curriculum analysis, argued that using small-group teaching methods to promote more student-centred approaches and enable students to ask questions and solve problems is essential in the current reform. This global interest has enabled Littlewood (2007) to describe it as 'new orthodoxy'. The origins of TBLT has a strong basis in second-language acquisition theories which have been supported empirically by a number of studies in different contexts; this can help to explain its current significance and status. Before investigating the theoretical rationale behind this approach, it is essential to define the core concept of the approach, namely the 'task'.

3.3 Definition of the concept of task in theory

The central component of TBLT is the term 'task'; this has been defined in different ways in the literature and these have been reviewed in various works (Hung, 2014; Nunan, 2004; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Van den Branden, 2006). The differences among the proposed definitions give rise to different interpretations of its scope and function and how the term 'task' is used. For instance, some scholars such as Breen (1989) defined the term task broadly in a non-pedagogical sense as a synonym for a daily routine activity which can be done with or without using language, such as making a reservation, asking about directions or even painting. These broad perspectives have not suggested the essential elements for producing a task, so they cannot serve the purpose of this current study. Others have considered the term 'task' from a more pedagogical perspective as a classroom activity which has the purpose of facilitating language leaning. Different descriptions of the key principles of a task have been proposed (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Skehan; 1996). Although there is no overarching definition of what is meant by a task, they are similar in that they emphasise the notion of 'task' as a basic unit for language teaching. In addition, they give

priority to using the language for communication purposes, in which the focus is drawn to meaning rather than grammatical forms to achieve a clear objective. However, in response to criticism raised by Widdowson (2003) who argues that there is no clear line to distinguish 'task' from 'exercise', Ellis (2003) has provided a set of criteria defining what constitutes a 'task'; those criteria are also acknowledged and elaborated in Ellis and Shintani (2014, p. 135).

1- The primary focus should be on 'meaning' (i.e. learners should be mainly concerned with encoding and decoding messages, not with focusing on linguistic form).

2- There should be some kind of 'gap' (i.e. a need to convey information, to express an opinion or to infer meaning).

3- Learners should largely rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity. That is, learners are not 'taught' the language they will need to perform the task, although they may be able to 'borrow' from the input the task provides to help them perform it.

4- There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language (i.e. the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right). Thus, when performing a task, learners are not primarily concerned with using language correctly but rather with achieving the goal stipulated by the task.

These criteria show that in the task, the learner should focus on pragmatic and semantic meaning. The learner is responsible for conveying meaning and creating their own messages, while in an 'exercise' the learner is not required to produce a message but rather to substitute items in model sentences. In a task, there is a gap of information as every student has a missing part; students will need to communicate to fill this gap. In contrast, in an exercise, there is no gap as students can have the same information. Another difference is that in a task, learners will need to use their resources; they might be provided with vocabulary which can

help them but they will not be informed about how to formulate their messages. On the other hand, in an exercise, students do not need to use their own linguistic resources because they will be provided with model sentences. Finally, in a task the goal is to achieve a communicative outcome, not to practise the language, while in an exercise there is no outcome other than the correct use of language.

Since understanding innovation is a critical factor in successful TBLT implementation, the first aim of this study was to examine how Arabic teachers understand TBLT; the clear set criterial proposed by Ellis (2003, 2018) seems best suited to the purpose of the study. The reason why I subscribe to this definition is because it involves the relevant common features of a pedagogical task identified in the literature (East, 2012; Andon & Eckerth, 2009). In addition, qualitative studies examining teachers' understanding of TBLT are limited and three existing studies conducted by Calvert and Sheen (2015), East (2012) and Erlam (2016) were based on Ellis' (2003) criteria. Furthermore, these criteria provide a basis to distinguish a 'task' from a 'language exercise', which other scholars such as Skehan (1998) fail to address (Ellis, 2013). The next section provides the theoretical background underpinning TBLT.

3.4 A framework for TBLT

Although there is agreement in the literature that TBLT in practice involve a pre-task, task after task, input, output and focus on form, there is less clarity in the selection of tasks and the sequence of tasks (Andon & Eckerth, 2009). A task can be selected based on learners' needs or second language theories (Nunan, 2004). According to Long (2016), tasks can be selected based on a needs analysis which aims to identify students' pedagogical needs. Although this can provide the potential for language learners' development, it is less likely to occur in Asia, where classes typically involve mixed-ability students (Adams & Newton, 2009). The second approach is to select a task-based on second language acquisition theories.

For instance, Ellis (2017) argues that a closed task which requires an outcome is better that an open task which requires comprehension. The research also shows that an interactive task which requires learners to justify an outcome promotes accuracy and complexity (Ellis, 2012). However, East (2012) argues that teachers can select tasks based on their beliefs, understandings, teaching context or students' needs.

The procedures by which a task is implemented and the purpose of each stage are varied in the literature as there are different approaches to TBLT. According to Ellis (2017), there are different versions of TBLT and therefore it is impossible to have a uniform way to implement TBLT. Ellis (2018) and Carless (2007, 2009) emphasises that there is no proof of a single successful version of TBLT; teachers should use their experience to create a version which best fits their preference, style and the culture of the context where TBLT is being implemented. However, four approaches which are widely known in the literature are reviewed in this section: Willis (1996); Long (1991, 2015); Skehan (1998, 2003); and Ellis (2003, 2018). Table 3.1 below summarises the differences between these approaches with regard to key characteristics.

Table 3.1 *Differences in four versions of TBLT adapted from Ellis and Shintani (2014)*

Characteristic	Willis (1996)	Long (1991, 2014)	Skehan (1998, 2011	Ellis (2003, 2014)
Natural language use	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Type of task	Real-world production tasks	Real-world production tasks	Pedagogic tasks	Both real-world production tasks and pedagogic tasks
Linguistic focus	Primarily unfocused tasks	Both unfocused and focused tasks	Only unfocused tasks	Both unfocused and focused tasks
Focus on form	In pre-task and post-task phases but not in the main task	In the main task phase	Mainly in the pre-task phase	In all phases of the lesson
Learner centeredness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not necessarily
Rejection of traditional approach	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Task cycles	Pre-task, task, language focus	Pre-task, task, post-task	Pre-task, task, post-task	Pre-task, task, post-task

As can be seen in Table 3.1 the procedure for teaching language through TBLT can be varied based on the main features of each approach. However, there are differences in rationales. These approaches involve consideration of three common phases: the pre-task, during-task and post-task phases, all of which feature the task as a basic unit. They also all emphasise the natural use of language, and they see the language as a tool rather than as an object for learning. This suggests that the primary focus is on meaning rather than language. Although all versions agree that TBLT provide opportunities to focus on form, they differ in the stage in which focus on language can occur.

It has been suggested that learners should not engage in tasks without having some kind of preparation (Nunan, 2004). This means that in the pre-task phase, the teacher will need to build background knowledge prior to task performance for successful TBLT implementation. Such activities can include brainstorming, introducing the topic or even

presenting a model which can guide learners in their main task (Skehan, 2003). Through the process of presenting a model, students may take a passive role where they simply watch, listen or take notes, or they might have an active role where they are given the opportunity to ask questions or provide comments. Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggested highlighting useful vocabulary or phrases which might be needed in the task phase. This can be done by asking learners to work in groups to define target words or look at their meaning in a dictionary. Skehan (1998) raised the significance of specifying a time to prepare or think about how to perform a task, as this can enhance learner motivation. While all agree on the need to provide learners with background knowledge and vocabulary which prepare students for the task, there are differences in focusing on form in the pre-task phase. Focus on form is defined as pedagogical strategies for attracting attention to form while learners focused on meaning as they perform the task (Ellis, 2018). For Skehan and Willis, focus on form can exist in the pre-task phase but for Long, the focus should only be on meaning in this stage. Ellis is more flexible as he argued focus on form can exist at any stage.

In the second phase, or 'task phase', students will typically be divided into small groups to perform a task. It can also be a whole-class activity depending on the type of activity and the aims and level of learners (Ellis, 2009). In this stage, the focus will be on meaning, as learners will be given the opportunity to discuss and negotiate meaning with whatever language form they use. The teacher typically plays a limited role as an observer or counsellor to encourage more communication in the target language. According to Ellis (2006), setting a time limit or asking students to perform a task in their own time is a choice for the teacher at this stage. Willis (1996) argues that timing is essential in this stage because time limits can challenge and motivate learners to complete the task; this can also help them to develop their fluency in the target language. After completing their task, students are asked to prepare before reporting on their task performance in groups in front of the class, either

orally or in writing, after they view the work of others. Teachers play a crucial role in this phase as language supporters by encouraging learners to provide feedback and help each other to correct linguistic errors. According to Nunan (2004) a task in TBLT can be a real-world task which mirrors what students can find in real life (e.g. ordering in a restaurant). It can also be pedagogic; it does not reflect real life but it still generates the natural use of language. In view of different TBLT versions, Willis and Long emphasise the use of real-world tasks, while Ellis and Skehan accept pedagogical tasks. Another distinction related to the task used in the class is whether or not it should be designed to focus on specific predetermined linguistic features. An unfocused task has been designed not to focus on predetermined linguistic feature but to provide learners with opportunities for using the language; on the other hand, a focused task has been designed to create a context in which a particular predetermined linguistic feature is more likely to occur (Ellis, 2017). For Willis and Skehan, tasks should be unfocused, while for Ellis and Long both focused and unfocused tasks play a role in language learning. According to Ellis and Shintani (2014), a focused task requires the implementation of the weak version of TBLT, named task-supported language teaching (TSLT), which uses tasks as a tool to practise the language in a synthetic syllabus; an unfocused task is more likely to occur with the strong version of task-based language teaching (TBLT), which sees the task as a central component for syllabus design.

The post-task phase, or what Willis (1996) called the 'language focus cycle', consists of analysis and practice. The main purpose here is to get learners to think about a particular feature of the language which has occurred in a text that students have read or heard. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) the role of the teacher in the post-task stage is to help learners recognise the linguistic forms used, which will enable them to use them in real-life situations. This does not mean providing grammar lessons in a deductive, traditional way but rather drawing their attention to focus on form indirectly through the process of engaging

in communicative tasks. This can be done by conducting linguistic activities or what can be called 'consciousness raising activities' which help learners to practise their acquired knowledge (Willis & Willis, 2007). Such activities can include listening to particular forms, matching forms with meaning or completing sentences. Although these three common phases seem to provide a structural TBLT lesson, creativity and variety can appear in the procedure for selecting principles for each phase. This has led to the creation of strong and weak versions of TBLT (Skehan, 1996).

In brief, this section has reviewed approaches for tasks selection and framework for TBLT within which the practice of Arabic teachers can be investigated in this study. While this study did not aim to evaluate teacher practice, the investigation of selection and sequence of task were presented in section 5.3.3 because they provide an indication of teachers' understandings and beliefs about TBLT, which is the main focus of the first research question. The next section discusses briefly the main second language acquisition theories underpinning TBLT.

3.5 Theoretical rationale for TBLT

The use of tasks in language learning has attracted attention in the last two decades due to its strong grounding in both second language acquisition theories and empirical research. TBLT has been seen from different theoretical perspectives including psycholinguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural approaches. More details are provided below.

3.5.1 The psycholinguistic approach

Early second language acquisition theories were psychological in nature and drew on research from cognitive and social psychology. From psycholinguistic approaches, tasks are seen through the lens of input, interaction, output and noticing theories. Early psycholinguistic research by Krashen (1982, 1985) argues that students will acquire languages when they understand the messages – or input – in the target language. In his

influential Input Hypothesis on language acquisition, Krashen (1982) advocated that in order to allow learners to understand and continue to progress with their language development, comprehensible input should be provided, and this should be one step beyond their present level of acquired competence, represented as $i + 1$. For Krashen, learners draw upon two isolated systems when developing language competence, labelled 'learning' and 'acquisition'. Learning is a conscious process of knowledge about language which often develops through learning explicit language structures. A subconscious process is initiated when the learner receives comprehensible input after natural communication. Although both systems have a role to play in language acquisition, Krashen emphasised more the acquisition system in promoting the development of language learning.

According to Krashen's theory, input at the appropriate level will promote language acquisition as long as the individual's affective filter (emotional variables) remain low. This means that when the learner is relaxed and motivated, comprehensible input will facilitate language acquisition, but the higher the filter, the more likely that input will be 'blocked' from becoming intake. In other words, if the affective filter is up, it impedes language development. Similar to many other theories of its time, Krashen's work (1985) focused on the development of the interlanguage system in the final stages of the process, thus neglecting the initial stages of perception and comprehension. Although questions remain as to how much input may be considered sufficient and how it can be sufficiency measured, it can be affirmed that Krashen's theory has paved the way for a vast amount of further research.

Given the role of the Input Hypothesis in language acquisition, Long (1985, 2015) argued that comprehensible input alone is not enough to promote language acquisition and in 'Interaction Hypothesis' he argued that proficiency development is enhanced as a result of interaction in the target language. According to Long (2015) negotiation of meaning is an essential element when communication breakdowns take place and learners seek to overcome

this issue as it helps to ensure that the input received was comprehensible for second language learners. In a later version, Long argues that meaning negotiation can help to draw the learner's attention to target language forms. This hypothesis was criticised by Ellis (2003), who argues that if we assume there is a relationship between interaction focusing on meaning and language attainment, it is still not clear to what extent interaction can contribute to language acquisition or in what way. It is difficult even to measure that contribution for the reason that there is no single agreement of a definition for the concept of acquisition. In addition, factors such as personality, individual differences and culture can have an impact on negotiation.

Schmidt (1990) has developed a theory based on what was initially proposed by Long about noticing. In contrast with Krashen (1982), who emphasised unconscious acquisition, Schmidt (1990) in his Noticing Hypothesis argues that acquisition is not an unconscious process and that a lack of conscious attention will result in a lack of acquisition. This suggests that conscious awareness (noticing) of linguistic forms is an essential element for acquisition as it provides language learners with opportunities to convert input into intake. In addition, Schmidt (1990) suggests that noticing linguistic form can help students to identify the gap between their production and the actual target language, and that this facilitates intake.

Although early research focused on the role of input and interaction in language acquisition, Swain (2000) noticed that students who were exposed to comprehensible input did not develop their skills in the same way as native speakers. She found that a possible reason was because students were not given opportunities for comprehensible output. Based on these findings, she advocates the Output Hypothesis, which is closely related to the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1999) in emphasising the role of awareness in language learning. However, while Schmidt (1990) emphasises the role of meaningful input, Swain's

Output Hypothesis (2000) focuses on the role of comprehensible output as another component for language acquisition. Swain defines three functions of output: consciousness-raising, hypothesis testing, and a metalinguistic function and fluency. the first function, consciousness-raising, or what she also refers to as a noticing function, occurs when learners try to produce the language and they encounter gaps between what they want to say and what they are able to say, and so they notice what they do not know or only partially know in the target language. The second function is hypothesis testing via repetition, clarification requests, confirmation checks or paraphrasing. In doing so, learners receive feedback from others, which can help them to reprocess their grammatical knowledge. In addition, in some cases, when they reflect on their use of language in order to better comprehend the output, they may incidentally understand new linguistic forms. This process of output modification is essential for language development. For Swain, the third function of output is metalinguistic, whereby learners reflect on the language they have learned; their output enables them to control and internalise their new linguistic knowledge. The last function for producing language is to create what was dubbed 'automaticity'. The term refers to the frequent use of patterns which lead to fluency in the target language.

The psycholinguistic theories, however, fail to answer the question how language development occurs, which paves the way for the emergence of sociocultural theories.

3.5.2 The sociocultural approach

This theory was developed based on the work of Vygotsky (1978) with the aim of providing an insight into second language acquisition with regard to how human language develops. One of the principal claims of this theory is that language learning takes place best in social contexts through interaction with others. A second aspect of sociocultural theory is the idea that language development is limited to what are called 'zones of proximal development' (ZPD). A zone refers to particular skills in which the learner can perform at their actual level

but through involvement in communication tasks with support from an expert. Vygotsky (1978) argued that collaboration between learners themselves, with teacher support, can provide learners with the scaffolding to achieve a potential level of understanding of new knowledge or perform a new skill. This 'scaffolding' can be defined as a dialogic process in which second language learners help each other to perform new functions (Ellis, 2003). This indicates that learnt skills in communication tasks can be seen as a basis to perform new skills in another context without any assistance. In this regard, language is viewed not only as a means for social communication but also as a meditator which helps to activate cognitive processes and thus facilitate language acquisition (Lantolf, 2000). It is not surprising that the use of a sociocultural approach underlines the work on task-based teaching and learning of different scholars like Long (1989), who consider tasks as a way of manipulating how students process language.

Socio-cultural theory has provided a new perspective on tasks. It focuses on the process of accomplishing the task, not on the task itself. In addition, it identifies the roles of teacher and learner and the environment in which interactions take place, as being essential factors affecting the acquisition of language. Ellis (2003) also added that sociocultural theory does not provide a clear answer on exactly how learners acquire new skills or knowledge through collaborative activities.

3.5.3 The cognitive approach

Cognitive theory is another type of psycholinguistic approach but it focuses on the mental processes involved in language acquisition. Skehan (2000) argued that second language acquisition can be seen as a dual-mode system which involves competence in both lexis and grammatical rules. This means that learners need to focus on developing linguistic knowledge while communicating in the target language. Psycholinguistic theory assumes that language learners store information as rules. In order to progress from an exemplar-based to a rule-

based system, students should be provided with opportunities to notice linguistic forms in the target language by engaging them in communicative tasks. By doing this both exemplar-based and rule-based systems will be activated and this can contribute to second language development. A task is, therefore, an endeavour that directs students to involve themselves with a particular kind of data processing. It is assumed that the task properties area is a key determinant of the type of language one uses, and mental processing is considered to be a significant element in language development (Skehan, 1998).

To sum up, this section has reviewed the theoretical development underpinnings of TBLT. These theories are valuable in describing the conditions for successful language development and predicting success or failure based on these conditions. They provide basis for TBLT implementation in order to facilitate language acquisition. For instance, psycholinguistic hypotheses inform research on TBLT with regard to the types of tasks and the types of interaction which are more likely to promote negotiation of meaning and language acquisition. Sociocultural hypotheses inform TBLT about ways learners can construct knowledge, and cognitive hypotheses inform TBLT how fluency, accuracy and complexity be manipulated by planning time or the choice of particular type of task.

Although TBLT has received support from second language acquisition theories and empirical studies, it has also been subjected to considerable criticisms which will be discussed in the next section.

3.6 General criticisms of TBLT

TBLT has aimed to address some limitations of teacher-centred approaches and of CLT, but it has not been without its critics. Most of the limitations suggested are based on misconceptions of TBLT and have been addressed by Ellis (2013); Ellis and Shintani (2014) and Long (2016). One key criticism caused by misconception of TBLT is that it lacks sufficient focus on form and aims to develop communicative fluency, not linguistic accuracy

(Sheen, 1994; Swan, 2005; Widdowson, 2003). The assumption seems to be that if the purpose is to develop learners' ability to communicate, the focus on grammar is ignored. In response to this criticism, Ellis (2009) and Long (2016) argue that it is true that unfocused tasks in TBLT are not designed to practice grammatical features but this does not mean grammar is not taught. For Long (2016) attention to grammar can occur during or after tasks through feedback, and for Ellis (2009) focusing on grammar can be in all TBLT phases; acquiring linguistic forms does not rely only on incidental learning, but rather learners can acquire particular intended grammatical rules through corrective feedback, designing focused tasks or via explicit explanation of grammar in the post-task phase. In addition, both Ellis (2004) and Long (2016) argue that empirical studies (e.g. Bygate, Skehan & Swain; Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Swain & Lapkin, 1995) have shown that communication in tasks not only draws learners' attention to grammar but also facilitates language acquisition.

Another criticisim raised by Widdowson (2003) is that the criteria which define the feature of tasks are loosly formulated and do not distinguish tasks from language excerices. Ellis (2018) argues that ill-defined critiria of task can be related to TBLT in Skehan's (1998) approach because he does not clearly specify a focus on pragmatic or semantic meaning. In addition, the second criteria he emhasises is the goal of the task but she does not mention which type of goal. All these criticisms, according to Ellis (2013), do not apply to Ellis' approach which includes four clear criteria presented earlier.

Furthermore, Swan (2005) claims that TBLT is often characterised as not suitable for low-level language learners and it focuses on oral production and ignores the significance of input in new language learning. In response to this, Ellis (2017) argues that although most approaches to TBLT assume production, this is not essential for Ellis, as was presented in Table 3.1. Ellis (2009) argues that for beginner-level learners an input task can be used to enhance all language skills. He further explains that the input task can provide learners with

opportunities to learn the second language in a similar way to how they learned their first language, and this can minimise the anxiety which can exist by asking low-level students to speak from a very early stage.

TBLT is also criticised for lacking both theoretical and empirical support and it is still unclear to many teachers whether or not TBLT is superior to other types of traditional approaches to language acquisition (Sheen, 2003; Swan, 2005). In response to this claim, Ellis (2013) and Long (2016) argue that TBLT is based on second language acquisition theories such as input, interaction and output; they show that the effectiveness of TBLT is proven in a number of empirical studies which show that TBLT is more effective than traditional teaching approaches for teaching children and adults, and its effectiveness is evident in the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary. The final criticism is that the role of the teacher in TBLT is downgraded as teachers are seen as facilitators rather than the main source of knowledge (Swan, 2005). Long (2016) argues that the opposite is truer as the role of the teacher in TBLT is more demanding, and it needs skilful and knowledgeable teachers who are able to deal with unexpected issues in the classrooms. Those criticisms are not real issues according to Ellis (2009) and Long (2016) because they emerge as a result of misconceptions related to TBLT.

However, a number of real issues identified have not been addressed, and they need further investigation. These include appropriate in-service teacher education for TBLT (Brandl, 2017; Carless, 2012; East, 2017; Long, 2016); challenges affecting TBLT implementation (Brandl, 2017; Carless, 2012); and teachers' understandings of TBLT (East, 2017; Erlam, 2016; Zheng & Borg, 2014). Those issued are the main concerns in the current study.

3.7 The implementation of TBLT in practice

TBLT has been researched from different perspectives and purposes. However, recent

empirical studies in TBLT fall roughly into two types: studies on the effectiveness of TBLT and studies on TBLT implementation. The first type has examined designing tasks and the relationship between characteristics of tasks and second language acquisition. Such studies are laboratory-like in nature and tend to be quantitative. This approach has primarily been informed by second language acquisition theories and contributes to the literature in designing curricula, tasks and planning lessons

The second type has focused on TBLT implementation and is concerned with teacher cognition and identifying factors that can facilitate TBLT implementation in particular contexts. Such studies, in contrast to the first type, are often non-experimental, classroom-based case studies and informed by sociocultural theories and contribute to the management of educational reform.

While there are many studies of TBLT within the first type, TBLT implementation has received little attention (Brandl, 2017; Carless, 2012; East, 2017). The focus of this study falls within the latter type. What follows will, therefore, review empirical studies in this domain. It should be noted that this study reviews TBLT implementation in Asian countries where TBLT is used as an approach to foreign language instruction for several reasons. First, many research papers on TBLT have been conducted in Asia while other areas in the region have been limited (Butler, 2017). In fact, the researcher has yet to find a study conducted in the Middle East including Saudi Arabia. Secondly, it might be argued that this study concerns teaching Arabic for native speakers while most studies reviewed were based on teaching English as a foreign language. The answer is that TBLT is an approach and it needs to be examined with different languages and different contexts (Butler, 2017; East, 2012). Furthermore, Shehadeh (2012) defined foreign language learning as a language which is taught in school for the purpose of communication with others or reading from printed materials. Modern Standard Arabic has similar characteristics; therefore, some scholars argue

that MSA can be considered to be a foreign language for native Arabic speakers. For instance, Plamber (2007) illustrated that MSA is not taught until elementary school and it is therefore approached much like a foreign language. In addition, Gebril and Taha-Thomure (2014) illustrated that the diglossic situation in Arabic makes it extremely difficult to describe Arabs as the native speaker because MSA is a variety which is only taught in schools and rarely used in everyday communication except for formal contexts. This provides another justification for reviewing studies conducted in foreign language contexts. Lastly, as mentioned in chapter 2, education in Arab and Islamic contexts is influenced by learning in *Kuttab*, and the East Asian context is influenced by Confucian heritage culture. In both the Kuttab and Confucian cultures, emphasis is given to root learning, teacher centred, knowledge transmission and examinations (e.g., Alnassar, 2012; Carless ,2003, 2015; Zhang, 2015). This similarity makes it possible to discuss the findings in view of these studies. Therefore, the following three sections inevitably depend on the studies from Asian countries where research has been conducted.

3.7.1 Teacher understanding of TBLT

Change is a complex process and one part of that complexity is the role of the teachers' understandings and beliefs in the field of applied linguistic and language teaching. Research has shown that teacher cognition is related in complex ways to students' learning and to teachers' professional development (Carless, 2012). Over the last three decades, research into language teacher cognition has also emphasised the role of teachers' understandings and beliefs regarding language teaching (Borg, 2003, East, 2012). Now it is widely accepted that teachers bring their own understanding and beliefs about effective pedagogy with them into their practice. The literature on curriculum innovation and implementation suggests that one of the causes of failure in implementing educational innovation is a lack of understanding (Kennedy, 2013; Markee, 2013). On the other hand, the literature in TBLT argues that if

teachers are to implement TBLT successfully, understanding the principles and practice of TBLT are essential (East, 2014; Brandl; 2017). Therefore, the teacher's voice and participation in the processes related to educational reform have increasingly been recognised in the research literature (East, 2012; Van den Branden, 2006; Zheng & Borg, 2014).

Teacher cognition of TBLT has been studied from two perspectives. The first line of inquiry explores teachers' general attitudes, perceptions and understanding towards TBLT in isolated manner. Most of these studies collected teachers' beliefs and understanding through self-reported instruments such as questionnaires, interviews or both to understand teachers' cognition in isolation. The second line of research, by contrast, focused on the relationship between teachers' cognition and practice, and generated in-depth data by utilising classroom observation in combination with other instruments. The data generated in such studies often (although not always) showed discrepancies between what teachers believe and their behaviours. This section will review the first type and section 3.7.2.1 will review the second type, as they have all focused on examining teachers' cognition, which is also of concern in the current study.

An early study was conducted by Jeon and Hahn (2006) in Korean to explore Korean middle and high schools EFL teachers' perceptions, understanding and beliefs of TBLT. The study aimed to examine the understanding of the main principles of TBLT including task goals, focus on meaning, task outcome, learners' use of language, student-centeredness and the three-stage sequence. The data for this study was collected through questionnaires from a total of 228 teachers. The overall findings show that the teachers have a high level of understanding about TBLT concepts.

Drawing upon a survey of Jeon and Hahn (2006), Xiongyong and Samuel (2011) conducted a study in China to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions towards TBLT and testing EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT. Participants included 132 secondary school

EFL teachers, and the findings indicated that up to 81.9 per cent of EFL teachers hold

positive attitudes toward TBLT due to a higher level of understanding of TBLT concepts.

Similar findings were also reported in Hao (2017) in Vietnam which used Jeon and

Hahn's (2006) questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of TBLT. The survey was

administered online and 55 teachers responded. Based on quantitative data, findings indicated

teachers had a high level of understanding about the core principles of TBLT.

However, mixed results were achieved in a study conducted in Hong Kong by Hui

(2004) who indicated that teachers showed a high level of understanding of TBLT when they

were examined by questionnaire and non-developed understanding when they had to answer

open-ended questions in interviews. Hui concluded by suggesting that teachers in Hong Kong

do not show a clear understanding of TBLT principles and practice.

Another study aimed to understand the beliefs of secondary school Chinese teachers

on TBLT approaches in classrooms and to assess their understanding of TBLT and the extent

to which the TBLT included in the curriculum is implemented in classrooms conducted by

Zheng and Borg (2014). When semi-structured interviews were conducted in three parts –

pre-lesson, observation in-class, and post-lesson interviews, the findings were similar to Hui

(2004) as it revealed that the teachers' understanding of the TBLT curriculum was narrow as

they see TBLT as a type of communicative activity.

Overall, research into teachers' cognitions using Jeon and Hahn's (2006)

questionnaire demonstrated that most of the participants showed a developed understanding

of TBLT with general positive attitudes towards TBLT implementation. However, those

studies indicated that teachers responded to questions asking about the use of TBLT

negatively, suggesting the complexity of the relationship between cognition and practice. The

findings show a methodological issue which needs to be addressed in teacher cognition

research. It seems that examining the understanding of teachers in isolation of their

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behaviours generated limited knowledge about teachers' management to change because cognition change does not imply behavioural change. For this reason, Borg (2009) suggested utilising classroom observation with self-reporting techniques which might result in more productive research and push the field of teacher cognition forwards. I argue that by examining teachers' cognition in isolated face value, we are more likely to miss teachers' core beliefs which can provide critical insights into understanding the complexity of teacher cognition. This study, therefore, is among the few studies in the field which consider this gap by utilising self-reporting instruments with classroom observations followed by interviews to probe beneath what is said and what is done in the class in order to understand the whole picture. Having reviewed the case studies examining teachers' understandings above, the variables affecting the implementation of TBLT will be discussed in the following section.

3.7.2 Challenges for implementation of TBLT

In spite of the potential effectiveness of TBLT in language acquisition and the many educational reforms which support TBLT implementation in several Asian countries, studies that investigated TBLT in practice revealed that there is a gap between TBLT in theory and practice (Van den Branden, 2006). It is argued that when a new innovation is implemented in one part of the world, it may create some problems and challenges if they were applied in other locations (Butler, 2017; East, 2017).

In the literature, Markee (2013) argued that often SLA theories are ineffective in promoting changes in practice because they do not address the concerns of teachers in real classrooms. In language teaching research, Brandl (2017) emphasised addressing issues raised by teachers to help teachers in developing strategies for managing the proposed change.

A number of studies have addressed the many challenges of implementing TBLT in Asia, and a few studies have also examined non-Asian contexts. Those challenges were

reviewed by a number of scholars who showed different perspectives in categorising these challenges. For example, Adams and Newton (2009) grouped challenges into three main factors including institutional factors, teachers' factors, students' factors. For Lai (2015), challenges to the implementation of TBLT can be divided into four types including learner related challenges, teacher related challenges, institution and classroom related challenges, and sociocultural challenges. Categorising the challenges was also varied across individual studies. This section analyses the major factors which are widely mentioned in the previous studies and shown to be influencing factors for managing the change. Since the scholars in the field of change management such as Kennedy (2013) and Markee (2013) emphasise the significance of both micro or institutional culture and macro or social culture in accepting and successfully implementing the innovation, I reviewed studies from a variety of contextual backgrounds across various educational levels. By discussing the empirical findings related to TBLT implementation, I seek to indicate the characteristics of institutional and social cultures which can facilitate the implementation of TBLT. It should be noted that factors related to students are not considered because it is beyond the scope of this study. The factors examined are practicality, teacher understanding of innovation, professional teacher training, teachers and cultural appropriateness. Although the challenges are divided into sub-sections for clarity, it should be acknowledged that in many cases these factors interact or overlap. For example, teacher understandings and beliefs are likely to be affected by professional teacher training.

3.7.2.1 Teacher cognition

In recent years, there has been a growing need to understand the manner in which educators' experience and awareness has an impact on how they teach their students. Various researchers rely on the premise that it is truly impossible to comprehend teachers and the teaching practice in general without having an innate understanding about the knowledge, thoughts, beliefs and

concerns that inform the ability and the techniques a teacher uses with his/her students (East, 2017). These innate and unseen thought processes are what are referred to as teacher cognition. According to Borg (2003) teacher cognition refers to unobservable cognitive facets of thinking. These cognitive functions refer to what the teachers know, believe and think as they offer education and instruction to students. These cognitions often refer to the belief that teachers actively make decisions on the manner in which to teach their students by drawing on an array of complex and personalized thoughts and notions (Borg, 2003). Understanding the concept of teacher cognition has several underlying assumptions, which often come out as guiding tools in this field of research. These assumptions include, but are not limited to, teachers having cognition about concepts and things in and outside the learning environment. Secondly, these cognitions develop over time. Thirdly, cognitions affect teacher learning and interactions. Lastly, they have an effect on classroom practice (Borg, 2009).

A number of empirical studies have shown the impact of teacher cognition on the failure of TBLT implementation. For instance, a study conducted by Liu and Xiong (2016) investigated the attitudes of college English Foreign Language teachers towards TBLT. The authors investigated using the actual task-based learning and teaching, and the factors that pose as challenges during the implementation of TBLT in the institutions of higher learning in China. In the study, the researchers make use of a questionnaire survey that has 26 responses and the results are derived from quantitative and qualitative data discussions. According to the findings of the survey, the teachers experience constraints from diverse aspects like large classes and teaching material among others. Another concerning finding is that some of the teachers who are positive about TBLT lack or have a low understanding of the practices and principles of task-based learning and teaching. The results address the issues existing in the in-service and pre-service of Chinese English Foreign Language teachers.

Another study in China conducted by Zhang (2015) investigated how three Chinese

primary teachers implemented TBLT in their English classrooms. The research instruments included document analysis, classroom observations and interviews. The findings indicated that teachers had misconceptions of TBLT suggesting that teachers need to be trained to improve their understanding of TBLT and, in turn, facilitate its implementation. The study also found that teachers perceive TBLT to be incompatible because it tends to foster noise which clashed with current practice.

Carless (2009) reported similar findings in Hong Kong. The main aim of the research was to understand a better approach for teaching whether task-based language teaching (TBLT) or Presentation-Practice-Production (P-P-P) for teaching secondary school students in Hong Kong. Twelve teachers from ten different schools and ten teacher educators were chosen for the research. The findings showed that P-P-P was preferable to TBLT. The findings also revealed that teachers' understandings of TBLT was at a superficial level. Most of the teachers preferred P-P-P because according to them it is easy to understand.

However, in non-Asian countries different findings were achieved. Andon and Eckerth (2009) conducted a study aimed at exploring the extent to which TBLT in theories are applied in teachers' practice. Four L2 teachers with pedagogical practices and adequate TBLT knowledge were chosen for three semi-structured interviews, and two classroom observations. Teachers were found to use an eclectic approach and were not influenced by the lack of knowledge about TBLT but rather their behaviours were influenced by their students' needs.

3.7.2.2 Compatibility

Stoller (2009) indicated that innovation which is sufficiently compatible with current practice is more likely to be adopted. However, a number of studies have shown that the integration of TBLT in Asian classrooms is impractical.

An empirical study was conducted by Hu (2013) which aimed to understand what the teachers felt about the use of TBLT in the classrooms. Thirty teachers from six schools in Beijing were interviewed. Eleven teachers teaching in primary schools and 19 teachers teaching in high or middle school were chosen. All of them had qualifications of a Master's degree in English education from an English speaking country and their experience ranged from 4 months to 36 years. The data was collected in the form of classroom observations and later they were asked to give their responses in semi-structured interviews. Findings showed that teachers tended to adopt a weak version of TBLT because of large class sizes and the time needed to design TBLT lessons.

Another study in China by Chen and Wrights (2017) aimed to understand the belief and knowledge about TBLT of three secondary school teachers and explore factors that challenge the teachers' knowledge, belief and implementation of TBLT curriculum. Semi-structured interviews and observational data from classrooms helped explore the task-based teaching methods practiced by teachers in the classroom. It was found that the understanding and implementation of TBLT by the teachers was limited to communicative activities and oral tasks in pairs/groups. Teachers were found to focus strongly on cultivating grammar in their lessons as a part of the ELF structure. The key challenges to implementation of TBLT by Chinese teachers in secondary schools are large class sizes, examination systems and time pressure, which restrict teachers from widening their beliefs, knowledge and practices about TBLT.

Another study that showed the impracticality of TBLT in Hong Kong was conducted by Carless (2002). The aim of the research was to identify how TBLT can be implemented by considering themes like noise/indiscipline, the use of the mother tongue, the extent of pupil involvement, etc. This qualitative case study observed teachers when they implemented task-based innovation in the primary schools. The study was carried out over a period of one year

and there was a total of 51 lessons that could be evaluated for the study. The findings
revealed that as most of the schools in Hong Kong are expected to be quiet and disciplined,
there were some issues while maintaining the discipline in class as they are learning a new
thing. Another issue reported that students are more prone to use their mother tongue. Thus,
they were constantly changing their language of communication to their mother tongue rather
than using English. These issues influenced the way TBLT was implemented.

Similar challenges which lead to adopting a weak version of TBLT were also reported
from non-Asian contexts. For example, Van den Branden (2006) investigated how French
teachers implemented TBLT. The findings revealed that teachers frequently adapted TBLT to
the weak version to avoid logistical challenges, deal with time pressures and reduce the noise
which appears as a result of communication among students.

3. 7. 2. 3 Socio cultural factors

The third type of constraint identified in the previous studies includes the structural and
organisational hindrances involved with socio-cultural challenges. Change takes place in
particular contexts and therefore any attempt to implement innovation will more likely be
influenced by local situations and cultural factors (Kennedy, 2013).

As a part of the new English curriculum, teachers had to consider taking a task-based
approach towards teaching secondary school students and help these students gain better
competence in the language through task-based activities and discussions. Zheng and Borg
(2014) aimed to understand the beliefs of secondary school Chinese teachers on TBLT
approaches in classrooms and assess the extent to which the TBLT included in the curriculum
is implemented in classrooms and explore factors that affect TLT implementation. Narrative
accounts are constructed for every teacher through the use of observational data from two
semi-structured interviews and two lessons. Each account illustrates how the teachers
implement the curriculum and it also looks into the contextual and cognitive factors that play

a role in shaping their decisions with particular reference to the usage of tasks. One integral finding is that task-based learning and teaching are narrowly defined, and it is highly associated with activities of communication especially in oral work that involves groups and pairs, large class sizes, low proficiency, time pressure and examination systems. These were the factors that greatly influence TBLT implementation in classrooms.

In Vietnam, Viet, Canh and Barnard (2015) reported the results of two case studies conducted in three Vietnamese high schools to investigate the relationship between TBLT in theory and practice. Eleven teachers aged between 28 and 36 from two high schools in Vietnam were involved. Data collection methods comprised two classroom observations followed by stimulated recall and analysis of the planning of two lessons. The findings showed that teachers tended to adopt weak TBLT and most of the class time was devoted to language transmission. The study concluded by suggesting that the clashes between cultural norms and TBLT principles have contributed to difficulties in the implementation of TBLT.

Reviewing the aforementioned studies, it seems that such investigations are largely fragmented because they have focused on isolated constructs such as challenges, attitudes and beliefs but teaching as interrelated factors remain under investigation. Another issue is the absence of relevance of the research findings to conceptual frameworks. In order to address the gap in these studies, I argue that consideration of factors such as teacher understanding, challenges, professional development, future training preferences and contextual factors are necessary in order to design appropriate framework for TBLT training. In addition, I argue that with the absence of relating outcomes to theories, there is a danger of generating lists of challenges which can be difficult to categorise. In short, integrating theories from different disciplines such as this study, which integrates data from management of change and adult learning, could be an essential step in advancing the field.

3.7.3 Teacher Professional Development

The implementation of innovation is a very complex process which is influenced by diverse factors as discussed in the previous section. Given that teachers are the key element in the implementation process, the quality of professional development is crucial if the innovation is to be well implemented (Li & Edwards, 2017; Morrison, 1998). In managing innovation in language teaching literature, Carless (2004, 2012) and Van den Branden (2006) argue that without sufficient training and support, even teachers initially enthusiastic about a reform may become frustrated when implementing TBLT. In addition, the centrality of teacher competence to student achievement has been highlighted repeatedly in the literature (Ritchards, 2015; Taha, 2018). The competence of teachers is also inflected, to a large extent, by professional development although it is not the only source for teacher development (Borg, 2018). This section does not aim to present evidence of impact related to specific forms of teacher education, but to provide an overview of approaches for teacher learning and forms of teacher professional development. This is relevant to the current study which investigated teachers' learning experiences and their future preferences of in-service professional development.

There are two terms within the scope of teacher education that are often identified, *training* and *development*. According to Richards (2015) training refers to short training programmes designed to provide teachers with knowledge and skills needed for teaching. Development refers to "general growth not focused on a specific job. It serves a longer-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers" (Burns & Richards, 2009, p.2). However, these terms have been used interchangeably after reconsideration of the process of teacher learning which is viewed as constructing knowledge by socialising and practice. Therefore, in this thesis these two terms are used interchangeably.

3.7.3.1 How teachers learn

A number of approaches have been identified in the field of teacher learning to conceptualise how teachers learn to teach and although such approaches sometimes overlap and may be understood differently by different theoretical frameworks, they can lead to different approaches to teacher education. In order to understand the impact that teacher education can have in the process of promoting innovation, it is first important to analyze recent approaches in teacher education that have shaped teacher practices:

1.   *Traditional and scientific paradigms of teacher professional development*

In this paradigm learning is seen as a process involving the acquisition of knowledge from others. It is assumed that knowledge is provided to teachers as a discrete entity that can be mastered one at a time and it is expected that it will guide teachers' practice. The theory underpinning this approach is behaviourist (Johnson, 2013). In practice, the activities used for teacher learning are largely dominated and characterised by a top-down approach.

2.   *Teacher learning as a cognitive process*

This approach emphasised the impact of teacher cognition (knowledge, beliefs, feelings and attitudes) in learning (Borg, 2009). It emphasizes that teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on different interrelated factors (East, 2012). Teachers within this approach are encouraged to have active roles by exploring what factors influence their practice.

3.   *Constructivism*

Constructivist professional development adopts a bottom-up approach. From a constructivist perspective, knowledge is not acquired in a linear fashion from an external entity. On the contrary, cognitive development is complex, but teachers can construct the knowledge when they are given opportunities to interact and negotiate with new information (Aljohani, 2017). The educational philosophy underpinning this approach is largely drawn from sociocultural

theory (Johnson, 2013).

This has led to an emphasis on teachers' individual and personal contributions to learning because teacher inquiry and reflection are seen as key professional learning processes (Rout & Behera, 2014). The following sections outline the most frequent models of professional development.

3.7.3.2 Methods of professional development

1. Pre-service teacher education

This normally takes place in higher education institutions. It is considered an effective means for providing teachers with new knowledge which prepares them for professional life (Burns & Richards, 2009). Initial teacher education varies around the world in the content provided to learners, the time allocated to study and availability of practical experiences. In the literature, there is ongoing debate about the types of knowledge in initial preparation programmes. According to Johnson (2009) in language teacher preparation, two types of knowledge are emphasised including content knowledge (what teachers need to know about subject) and pedagogy which concerns how language teachers should teach. Such programmes are generally delivered by traditional approaches in which teachers have passive roles. Although it provides teachers with knowledge and skills, it is considered to be insufficient for enhancing teaching skills (Borg, 2006).

2. Mentoring

The practice whereby teachers who are new in the service and have no experience are supported and assisted by practitioners with greater experience and knowledge is known as mentoring (Malderez, 2009). This practice involves lesson observation and pre- or post-lesson discussion and can be beneficial to both teachers and mentors.

According to Richards and Farrell (2005) the success of mentoring depends on a number of factors, chief among them being that both mentors and mentees are willing, open

and ready for mentoring. Another key factor is for the parties involved to trust each other and have a good rapport.

A number of vital requirements for effective mentoring have been distinguished by Fischler and Zachary (2009). First of all, there must be reciprocity in the roles and responsibilities assumed by mentors and mentees to ensure that they are all aware of what the objective of mentoring is. Secondly, the whole process of mentoring should be geared towards the achievement of learning; in the absence of this outcome, mentoring can yield little or no benefits. Thirdly, although the development of the mentor-mentee relationship is continuous all through the process, failure to maintain this relationship cancels out the effectiveness of mentoring. Fourthly, the success of mentoring is dependent on mentors and mentees collaborating with each other, which in turn is partly based on the existence of a partnership and favourable relationship; collaboration involves all parties contributing their knowledge and experience to achieve the goal of mentoring and therefore collaboration is critical to a successful result. Last but not least, the success of mentoring also hinges on effective and methodical development of the knowledge, skills and expertise of the mentees in keeping with the established aims until a level is reached where it is considered that the mentors have completely fulfilled the responsibility of imparting their knowledge and experience. Besides these key requirements, successful mentoring also depends on both mentors and mentees being fully motivated and focused on the teaching perceptions and knowledge of the mentees (Malderez, 2009; Shukri, 2014).

3. Collaborative teaching

The assumption behind this model is that the development of new knowledge depends significantly on the social facet of learning, whilst focusing to a far lesser extent on leadership communities.

According to Johnson (2009), teacher learning and professional development is believed to benefit especially from learning communities whereby teachers collaborate with one another of their own volition to exchange and share knowledge and skills. This approach differs from single-session workshops and short-term training in that it promotes continuous learning.

However, under certain circumstances, the approach of a learning community might be detrimental to teachers' learning. For instance, when management is involved, the approach might become too formal, preventing teachers from initiating open collaboration and discussion of the difficulties they face (Freeman, 2009, 2013). The situation in which the majority of participants of a learning community are newly qualified teachers is also challenging because teachers might not obtain enough support. Last but not least, a heavy workload can pose barriers to learning communities as well.

4. Action Research

The professional development variant known as action research is designed to help with teaching planning, delivery, observation, analysis and reflection to enable teachers to consolidate their teaching practice (Burns, 2009). The high efficiency attributed to action research stems from the fact that it empowers teachers to undertake critical examination and modify not only their own practice, but also how students learn and even the entire curriculum.

The main strength of action research is that it supports the development of professional learning communities that facilitate collaboration between teachers and reflection on one another's practice. Promotion of teachers' ability for critical thinking, self-management of professional development and acquisition of the latest knowledge related to subject and teaching methods is also a strength of action research, as is the fact that it

stimulates automatic reflection and solving of common teaching problems, which benefits student-focused teaching (Thomas & Farrell, 2015).

However, according to Calvert and Sheen (2015) action research can have a negative impact on continuous professional development if teachers lack the training to implement this approach effectively. Another factor that could interfere with action research is teachers' motivation and individual or collective willingness to participate, which are important for the success of this approach (Borg, 2017).

5. Reflection

Teachers as well as students can benefit in their development from reflection prior to, during and following an instruction session (Borg, 2018; Sibahi, 2016). The technique of reflection involves critical and objective thinking about previous experiences and about the knowledge and skills derived from those experiences in order to guide present actions and frame future development so as to aid not only the teachers themselves, but also their students. In this context, critical thinking entails analysis and justification of past experiences, not just description of those experiences. However, to apply this technique successfully, correctly identify weak and strong points, and formulate effective strategies of problem-solving and prioritisation of strengths, teachers require assistance (Bailey, 2009; Burton, 2009).

Reflection is advantageous both for institutional and individual development. It demonstrates cost-efficiency in the long term because, once they have been initially trained, teachers can engage in reflection on their own until it becomes a habit, thus avoiding disruptions to teaching practice.

Given the professional development models above, the designing of TBLT professional development in this study is not incidental but was based on the characteristics of the context in which this training will be implemented. Although teacher professional development plays a significant role in management of innovation, it has received little

attention in the implementation of TBLT (Van den Branden, 2016). Few studies conducted showed the positive impact of reflective models on teacher cognition development. For instance, East (2014) conducted a study in New Zealand to look into secondary level initial teacher education programmes where TBLT is a particular focus. The study explores the impact of reflective learning models on teachers' developing of understanding of TBLT and investigates the suitability of this model for secondary schools' teachers in New Zealand. Teachers were given assignments about TBLT in theory and practice and they were asked to reflect on their reading for a year with regards to their developing experiences. The findings showed that teachers were positive about TBLT. Other findings revealed that critical reflection promoted cognition development which can facilitate successful utilisation. The study concluded by emphasising teacher professional development in meditating innovation.

Wyatt and Borg (2011) conducted a study in the Middle East to explore how three teachers of English on an in-service programme developed their practical knowledge, specifically with regard to the design and integration of TBLT in the classroom. Using qualitative data, the teachers' use of TBLT was examined over three years and comparative analysis was conducted. The research instrument included interviews and five classroom observations followed by interviews. A total of seven interviews were conducted with each teacher over a period of two years. The study provided evidence that teacher professional development can impact the development of teacher cognition. The study listed a number of criteria for successful training programmes including giving teachers opportunities to practice in real classrooms, engage teachers for reflection, supporting mentoring and teacher classroom practice are not formally assessed.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has presented the gap in the literature addressed in the current study which identifies the support needed for TBLT training. After providing an overview about TBLT in

terms of relevant theories, the chapter moved into TBLT in practice. Teachers'

understandings of and challenges surrounding the implementation of TBLT were discussed.

However, it was argued that this area is undertheorised. The chapter mentioned teacher

professional development and it was argued that this area is under research. The next chapter

discusses the study's philosophical and methodological assumptions.

Chapter 4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous literature review sheds light on the central role of the teacher's cognition and education in the implementation of TBLT. This chapter describes and justifies the methodology used to answer the research questions posed in section 4.2. Lincoln, Lyham and Guba (2018) argue that qualitative researchers are guided by a set of principles which include beliefs about ontology ("What is the nature of reality?"); epistemology ("What is the relationship between the researcher and what that being researched?"); methodology ("How do we know the world?'); and axiology ("What is the role of values?"). These beliefs have been termed as a paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or 'worldview/ interpretive framework' (Creswell, 2014) and I use the term paradigm throughout the study.

This chapter first restates the research questions in Section 4.2 and then overviews the philosophical constructs that are discussed in the literature, including positivism, constructivism and pragmatism and critical theory in Section 4.3. The intent of Section 4.4 is to make explicit the worldview underlying this research and acknowledge how its related philosophical assumptions have shaped the design of the current study. The following three sections (section 4.5 to 4.7) intend to justify theoretical perspectives that ground the study within the qualitative approach, case study methodology and multiple qualitative instruments. Considerations related to research procedures is presented in Section 4.8 and data analysis in Section 4.9. The chapter concludes with a summary after discussing the quality criteria of qualitative research and ethical considerations.

4.2 Research questions

The research questions that have informed this investigation comprise an overarching one, and three sub-questions.

What are the professional development needs of Arabic teachers when implementing TBLT?

RQ1) What are teachers' understandings of 'task' in TBLT?

RQ2) What are teachers' concerns regarding TBLT implementation?

RQ3) How do Arabic teachers prefer to be trained in the use of TBLT?

4.3 Research paradigms

The term 'paradigms' is defined as 'basic sets of beliefs that guide action' (Lincoln et al., 2018, p. 97). Although there is ongoing debate about the paradigms which embody a specific understanding of how we know what we know, there are four that are widely discussed in the literature and are reviewed in this section, namely positivism, constructivism, pragmatism and critical theory (Bryman, 2016; Crotty, 1998; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln et al., 2018).

4.3.1 Positivism

Creswell (2014) proposes different terms that can be used to refer to this paradigm; these include positivism/post-positivism, scientific methods, and doing science research. Positivism works within a relativist ontology as it supports the idea that there is only one fixed and agreed reality, so any research undertaken must strive to find a singular universal truth (Crotty, 1998). Positivism is based on a deterministic philosophy which suggests that cause influences outcome; therefore, the researcher should seek to find the linkage between them (Creswell, 2014). Post-positivism developed from positivism, and although it is similar to positivism in its realistic ontology, it differs in that post-positivism presents probability as nature's lack of absolutes. In other words, there is one reality, but the researcher cannot fully understand the relationship between cause and effect because some variables are hidden (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This paradigm is objective in its epistemology. It is mainly associated with quantitative research studies because it is based on the assumption that

realities can be measured quantitatively, and it involves testing of both the hypotheses and research questions by the use scientific methods such as questionnaires, experiments and observation to verify or contradict theories (Creswell, 2014). Since knowledge is developed independently of the researcher's effect, its validity and reliability should be verified (Crotty, 1998).

4.3.2 Constructivism

Constructivism, or interpretivism, is similar to positivism in its realistic ontology, but it contrasts with positivism as it negates the existence of a universal truth or reality. Instead, it advocates that multiple realities exist, and that knowledge is constructed through live experiences and the interaction of individuals with other members in their society (Lincoln et al., 2018). Constructivism adopts a subjective epistemology as it values the interaction between researcher and subjects to create findings. According to Creswell and Poll (2018), inquiry is shaped by life experiences, beliefs, knowledge and assumptions, and these will come out in the data generated by researcher and by participants. To create the knowledge, the researcher relies heavily on naturalistic methods (e.g. interviews, observation and text analysis), which value adequate dialogue between researcher and participants to co-construct meaningful realities. Similarly, Crotty, (1998) argues that the constructivist paradigm supports the establishment of meanings, and central to this paradigm is support for the process of interaction and the context in which interaction takes place. Creswell (2014) also illustrates that unlike positivism, which is associated with quantitative research, constructivism is often associated with qualitative research. Since knowledge is negotiated and co-constructed, it cannot be judged in term of validity and reliability because what is not accepted for one individual could be true for another. Therefore, the criteria of goodness relies on trustworthiness (Lincoln et al., 2018).

4.3.3 Pragmatism

Reality, in pragmatism, is what is useful and practical. It assumes that researchers should not restricted to one system but rather, reality is known through different approaches and methods; these are utilised to answer research questions and solve research problems (Creswell, 2014). This means that it is a mixture of subjectivity and objectivity in its epistemological beliefs and focuses on the sequence of inquiry and outcome of research. Values in this paradigm are discussed, and what is accepted as truth depends on what works at the time of the study (Bryman, 2016). Pragmatists agree that research can occur in different contexts, and in practice this paradigm is associated with a mixed-methods approach because it allows the researcher to use different approaches and multiple methods for data collection and analysis.

4.3.4 Critical theory

This paradigm is based on the assumption that human reality is based on a struggle for power. The ontological position of the critical paradigm is historical realism, which means that both privilege and oppression can be based on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values (Lincoln et al., 2018). Critical epistemology is subjective and knowledge is both socially constructed and influenced by power relations within society. The researcher believes that oppression can be changed or removed by empowerment (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Critical research should fully acknowledge the context and promote dialogical relations between the researchers and subjects. Additionally, research must create assumptions of power and support change or reform (Crotty,1998). These values are emphasised, and they differ in various communities. The researcher seeks data which should be helpful in promoting social justice and equal rights. When research creates action or the capacity for change, it is considered to be valid (Bryman, 2016).

This section has overviewed interpretive frameworks (positivism, constructivism, pragmatism and critical theory) and their associated philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology). Table 4.1 represents a summary of the links between them.

The next section will justify the choice of the interpretivist framework in the current study.

Table 4.1 *Interpretive frameworks and associated philosophical believes adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018) and Lincoln et al. (2018)*

Interpretive frameworks	Ontology ("What is the nature of reality?")	Epistemology ("How is reality known?")	Methodology ("How do we know the world?")	Axiology ("What is the role of value?")	Quality criteria ("How does the researcher judge the quality of research?")
Positivism	Single reality	Through statistics	Quantitative approach and methods (surveys, experiments)	Objectivist	Validity, reliability and generalisability
Constructivism	Multiple realities	Through interaction between researcher and participants	Qualitative approach and methods (interviews, observation, analyse text)	Subjectivist	Trustworthines
Pragmatism	Reality is what works	Through various research tools	Both quantitative and qualitative	Mixed: subjectivist and objectivist	Validity, reliability, generalisability and trustworthiness
Critical theory	Historical realism	Through the study of social structure, freedom and power	Qualitative approach and methods	Transactional subjectivist	Ability to impact action for more fair society

4.4 Constructivist theories underpinning this study

The aim of this study is to explore the TBLT training needs of Arabic in service teachers to design a context-based teacher training programme which could facilitate TBLT

implementation. In order to do that, it was essential to understand teachers' experiences with TBLT implementation and their preparation through professional development. This included examining teachers' understanding of TBLT, their struggles with its implementation, their previous experiences and their future preferences for professional development, which could best support the process of managing the change. In order to approach the inquiry, knowledge was constructed from both my own experiences, assumptions and beliefs, in addition to my interaction with the participating teachers. Both my relativist ontology (multiple realities) and my subjectivist epistemology (to co-create understanding between me and my participants) inform the way I seek knowledge through a qualitative case study utilising interviews, observation and open-ended statements adapted from CBAM. The philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology and methodology) underpinning my research suggested that the constructivist paradigm is the most appropriate paradigm to guide the study to achieve its aims.

Inquiry in this study was focused on understanding teachers' experiences with TBLT implementation at King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia. Teachers had multiple meanings of reality and to understand the complex views of teachers, the researcher needed to look for paradigm which allows to capture views. The nature of constructivist paradigm which supports the existence of multiple world meanings makes it more appropriate as an underlying epistemology in this thesis. In particular, the complex experiences and realities of teacher cognition within the Saudi higher educational context are best reflected by utilising the constructivist paradigm (Lincoln et al, 2018). The next section intends to justify the qualitative research design in the current study.

4.5 Rationale for qualitative inquiry

A research strategy can be defined as 'A general orientation to the conduct of social research' (Bryman, 2016, p. 32). According to Creswell (2014) research in the field of applied

linguistics and education can be quantitative, qualitative or a combination of both. The extent

to which these designs are distinct or overlapping has been much discussed (Bryman, 2016;

Creswell, 2014; Dörnyei & Griffee; 2010). However, an overview of the distinction between

theses designs is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 *A summary of difference between research approaches*

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mix methods
Close ended questions	Open -ended questions	Both close and open -ended questions
Descriptive	Experimental	Both descriptive and experimental
Performance, attitude and observational data	Interviews, observation, document and audio-visual data	Multiple forms of data drawing on all possibilities
Statistical analysis (Numbers)	Text and image analysis (Words)	Statistical and text analysis
Statistical interpretation	Themes, patterns interpretation	Across data bases interpretation
Theory testing	Theory emergent	Both theory testing and emergent
Artificial sitting	Natural sitting	Both artificial and natural sittings

Given the possibility of utilitising quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods design, a

qualitative approach was selected to underpin this particular project. Denzin and Lincoln

proposed working definition to qualitative inquiry as follows:

> 'Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them'. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 3)

Considering the characteristics of qualitative research in this definition, it seemed that a

qualitative approach is preferable in my research, which has much in common with these

characteristics. To clarify, my research explores teachers' experiences of TBLT

implementation within King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia. Multiple methods including observation, interviews and open-ended statements, were used to understand deeply the meaning that Arabic teachers hold about the phenomenon under investigation in its socio-cultural context.

Another rationale for utilising qualitative inquiry is when a research problem is under investigation, or when the existing theories do not adequately capture the complexity of the issue under investigation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). As highlighted in Chapter 3, the implementation of TBLT in both Arabic classrooms and Saudi context is an area which has a clear gap in the literature, and the researcher has yet to find a study focusing on Arabic teachers' cognition with regard to TBLT. The flexible nature of qualitative data can allow the researcher to establish a deep understanding by talking to participants in their context and to identify the emergence of unpredictable or less clearly defined variables during the process of data collection (Yin, 2016). Utilising a qualitative approach for data generation is required; in addition, given the complex nature of managing change, qualitative inquiry with an exploratory stance may serve me better to address the research problem. Furthermore, the constructivist framework underpinning this study places it within the qualitative approach where the meaning is negotiated between researcher and participant. According to Bryman (2016) and Maxwell (2016) the research design often referred to within constructivism is qualitative inquiry. In addition, it is difficult to measure the phenomenon under investigation through quantitative research, and in fact, looking at the literature on teacher cognition, there is little empirical experimental research within this area (Borg, 2009).

4.6 Case study design

After situating this study within qualitative inquiry, it is significant to decide which is the most appropriate design among five research designs: narrative inquiry, case study, ethnography, action research, and grounded theory. A summary of the differences among

these designs is presented is in Table 4.3. Creswell and Poth (2018) argue that identifying a

particular design can help the researcher to organise ideas, present the study as more

sophisticated and facilitate proper assess. Having identified the features of each design, I

have determined that case study is the best way to address my research problem. According

to Simons (2009), case study has different meanings to different scholars in different fields.

There is often confusion between case study and ethnography. Duff (2014) argues that case

study focuses on the attributes of individuals and aims to develop a detailed understanding of

a case. Ethnography, on the other hand, aims to understand how culture affects behaviour. In

seeking to identify what case study is, Stake (2013) stated that case study research is not a

methodology but rather an object to be studied. Nevertheless, other scholars approach the

definition of a case study as methodology or strategy of enquiry (e.g. Merriam & Tisdell,

2015; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2012). However, Creswell and Poth (2018) argue that the term

'case' can refer to both methodology or object of interest in its own. For this study, it is

viewed as a type of strategy within qualitative research.

Simons (2009) proposes a definition of case study which seems useful as he

emphasises some characteristics aligned with this approach, including multiple perspectives,

in-depth understanding, and research in real contexts via the use of different methods:

> … an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and
> uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real
> life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led.
> The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a
> thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform
> policy development, professional practice and civil or community action (Simons,
> 2009, p. 11).

Table 4.3 *Contrasting of qualitative designs adapted from Creswell and Poll (2018)*

Principles	Narrative research	Phenomen-Ology	Grounded theory	Ethnography	Case study
Research focus	Exploring the lives of individuals	Understanding the essence of experiences	Developing a theory grounded in data from the field	Describing a cultural sharing group	Developing in-depth description
Unit of analysis	Studying one or more individuals	Studying several individuals who have shared the experience	Studying a process, action or interaction involving many individuals	Studying a group that shares the same culture	Studying events, programmes, activities or individuals
Type of research question best suited for approach	Needing to tell stories for individuals	Needing to describe the essence of a lived phenomenon	Grounded theory in a view of participants	Describing and interpreting the shared patterns of culture of group	Proving an in-depth understanding of case or cases
Form of data collection	Interviews and documents	Interviews, documents, observations and art	Interviews with 20 to 60 individuals	Observations and interviews	Using multiple sources such as interviews, observations, documents and artefacts
Strategies of data analysis	Restoring stories and developing themes often using chronology	Analysing data for significant statements, meanings units, textual and structural description	Analysing data through open coding, axial, coding and selective coding	Analysing data through description of culture sharing group and themes about group	Analysing data through description of case and themes of case

Primary in designing a case study is to decide whether to focus on one case or on multiple cases. Yin (2014) identifies four types of case study design:

1. Single case design: this is based on a particular case and single unit of analysis (e.g. person, social small group)

2. Embedded single case design: this focuses on a particular case as a unit of analysis.

3. Multiple case design: multiple cases with a single unit of analysis

4. The embedded multiple case design: this entails multiple cases that have sub- unit analysis

Both single and multiple cases have advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of the multiple-case approach is that it offers the chance to study to make comparisons between cases, and replication facilitates generalisation (Bryman, 2016; Duff, 2014). However, it requires careful selection and justification for cases to be investigated (Creswell & Poll, 2018). In addition, Carless (2014) points out that multiple case studies are time consuming, difficult to conduct and produce a massive amount of documentation.

On the other hand, a single case study is advantageous because it is less complicated and the researcher can spend more time investigating a particular case and uncover its complexity, while the wholeness can provide a general picture (Starman, 2013). However, it is criticised for potential bias and generalisability. In this study, several strategies were adopted to counter these issues in section 4.10

4.6.1 Defining the case

The case for this study was a group of six Arabic teachers teaching foundation-year courses at King Abdul Aziz University (see the teachers' profiles in section 5.2. Single case and single unit of analysis through themes were chosen to paint a complete picture of how Arabic teachers perceive TBLT implementation and what their needs are in terms of future Continuous professional development.

The use of single case study research is justified mainly on the basis of its advantages. According to Creswell (2014) a key feature of case study is to explore in more detail the phenomenon being studied as it is existing in its real context. For this study, the rationale for choosing a single case was that it allowed me to elaborate on the complexities of the case and

allows the reader to understand the completeness of an Arabic teacher's mental life (knowledge, concerns, beliefs and perspectives), as well as the interplay sociocultural factors affecting teacher cognition. In addition, the case study approach has been increasingly used in applied linguistics to investigate teachers' mental lives and teachers' professional development, the area in which this study is situated (Duff, 2014). Indeed, there are many recently published studies on the management of TBLT implementation and teacher professional development in TBLT that have utilised a case study methodology (e.g. East, 2012; Hoa, 2017; Veit, Canh & Barnard; 2015; Zheng & Borg, 2014).

The focus on single case was also practical as collecting the data from the institution that I worked in facilitated access and reduced the time that might be needed to secure permission from different institutions. In addition, it was also interesting to observe more than one teacher in the same institution as it allowed the teachers perspectives to be analysed in greater depth than would have been the case if a larger number of cases had been included. An important step in research is to find suitable participants or institutions, gain access to these, and establish relationships with participants so they can provide the required data. According to Duff (2014), a common weakness in case study research is the provision of insufficient information about the case, data collection and data analysis. Simons (2009) and Yin (2014) note that to improve the quality of case studies, researchers need to develop protocols in which adequate descriptions of the case, and methods for collecting and analysing data, are provided (see case study protocol adapted from Yin (2012) in Appendix G).

The following section outlines the sampling criteria and selection methods of participants.

4.6.2 Sample

Like any qualitative research, case study involves the selection of data samples. Creswell and Poll (2018) identify three main principles to consider here, including whom to select, sampling strategy and sample size. According to Maxwell (2013), research questions should provide an indication of a particular group or setting which needs to be sampled. In this study, the research questions were directed to Arabic teachers, suggesting the unit which needs to be focused on. The sample, therefore, consists of six female Saudi teachers of Arabic who were teaching Arabic on a foundation-year programme at KAU in Saudi Arabia. The size is justifiable based on the work of Dörnyei (2007) who states that in qualitative research a sample size of between six and ten is satisfactory. The sample strategy selected for this study was purposeful sampling which allowed me to select teachers who had relevant knowledge and who could present their experiences in sufficient depth so the reader can understand the issues reflected (Braun & Clark, 2013). This strategy is considered to be aligned with the philosophical framework underpinning the research, with a focus on deep understanding rather than on generalisation. Bryman (2016) argues that the principal goal in qualitative research is not to generalise results but rather to obtain insights into particular educational or social phenomenon in a specific context. It is also common in language teaching research because it offers convenience and accessibility.

The criteria chosen for inclusion of participants was that teachers had at least five years' experience of teaching MSA, a minimum of a bachelor's degree, some interest in the application of TBLT in their classes and a willingness to take part in the study. Selection did not aim to ensure representative (Braun & Clarke, 2013) but rather to inform the issues raised by research questions. All participants were female because no access was allowed to male teachers or students for religious and cultural reasons in Saudi Arabia. There was variation in

the length of experiences and age. A summary of the six teachers is presented in Table 4.4, and more details are provided in section 5.2.

In order to recruit a sample, I sent an email inviting teachers to participate in my research on a voluntary basis, and providing them with sufficient information about the study. I received responses from seven teachers who agreed to take a part. However, before the data collection one participant withdrew due to examinations in her PhD programme.

Table 4.4 *Profiles of participant teachers*

Teacher	Gender	Age	Highest Qualification	Years of experience teaching Arabic	Exposure to TBLT
Hind	Female	45	MA	11	None
Sara	Female	36	MA	9	Yes (one week)
Mona	Female	35	MA	13	None
Reem	Female	43	PhD	12	None
Sameerah	Female	40	PhD	15	None
Nadiah	Female	36	MA	10	None

4.7 Data collection methods

As discussed in section 4.4, the current research adopted qualitative case study as an appropriate approach. Qualitative research is based on the collection of data from various observation, interviews, documents and audio-visual materials (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since this study was based on constructivism, which considers meaning to be multiple, methods were selected which would encompass different perspectives among participating teachers. A combination of methods was used, including classroom observations, interviews and open-ended statements. The rationale behind using multiple instruments was triangulation (Bryman, 2016). Yin (2014) emphasises the use of multiple methods in case study as it allows the researcher to address the issues that are investigated more broadly and reduces the risk of bias raised by depending on a single method to draw conclusions. It was also important to gain a tacit understanding of participants' perspectives which they were reluctant to state direct in interviews (Maxwell, 2013). In general, I aimed to gain a greater

understanding rather than confirmation, as the aim was to provide different perspectives which could help to increase understanding of the complexity of the phenomena studied. The timeline for data collection methods for both preliminary and main study data is shown in Table 4.5 and the three methods selected in this study are described below.

Table 4.5 *Timeline of different data collection methods and points*

Data collection method	Type of data collected	Date
1- Initial interviews	Preliminary data	August–September 2015
2- Classroom observation (CLOT scheme)	Preliminary data	August–September 2015
3- Post-observation interviews 1 & 2)	Preliminary data	August–September 2015
4- Initial interview	Main study data	June–July 2016
5- Classroom observation 1	Main study data	July–August 2016
6- Post observation interview 1	Main study data	July-August 2016
6- Open ended statement	Main study data	August 2016
7- Classroom observation 2	Main study data	August–September 2016
8- Post observation interview 2	Main study data	September-October 2016

4.7.1 Interviews

4.7.1.1 Rationale for interviews

According to Binkmann and Kvale (2015), a great deal of qualitative data comes from interviewing people. Indeed, Yin (2014) argues that interviews are one of most widely employed and effective methods in case study research. An interview is described as a professional conversation between the interviewer and participants, aimed at getting participants to talk about their perspectives and experiences (Creswell, 2014). Interviews are often divided into three types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

This study employed face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, which were conducted at prior classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study because of their flexibility, which allowed me to elaborate with additional exploratory questions (Maxwell,

2013). It is argued that one advantage of semi-structured interviews is their focus on reflecting individual experiences and perspectives (Bryman, 2016), which aligns with the epistemology of the current study as outlined in section 4.4. Another reason for using this method is its effectiveness in exploring teacher cognition. Borg (2009) argues that teacher cognition cannot be inferred from observation; therefore, semi-structured interviews is widely used in research dealing with language teacher perspectives, beliefs and knowledge (e.g. East; 2012; van de Branden, 2006). In this study, semi-structured interviews provided opportunities for teachers' voices about TBLT to be heard.

During interviews, I followed strategies posed by Binkmann & Kvale (2015), which included criteria for quality interviews such as trying to be a good listener; this was helpful as it gave my participants the opportunity to raise new and unexpected factors (e.g. their beliefs related to Islamic factors and Saudi culture, and the impact of these on how teachers prefer to learn). The questions were also designed following Maxwell (2013) as open-ended questions aimed to ensure that I covered what I wanted to investigate, followed by follow-ups question which repeated what the interviewee said with requiring more elaboration (e.g. 'You said…" or "Can you explain more?") This was followed by further probing questions aimed to build knowledge from the answer obtained from follow-up questions. Braun and Clarke (2013) argue that probing questions are used to generate more rich data. In addition to elaboration, I found the strategy helpful in minimising possibilities of bias due to asking leading questions.

4.7.1.2 Interview protocol

In this study three interviews were conducted with participants (see Table 4.5 for the interview schedule). Informed by case study protocol (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2014), I prepared a guide with some questions which needed to be covered during initial interviews. All interviews followed the same protocol to enable the collection of relevant data which addressed the research questions (Bryman, 2016). In addition, focusing on particular areas as

a guide can reduce the need to conduct further interviews to gain necessary data (Simons, 2009).

The initial interview protocol was informed by the research questions and by theoretical frameworks (Borg, 2006; Hall and Hord; 1987). The broader areas covered were as follows:

1. Teachers' understanding of TBLT (knowledge about TBLT theories and principles, perspectives about TBLT, beliefs behind teachers' behaviour)

2. Challenges inhibiting TBLT implementation

3. Teachers' professional development (experience as learner, pre- and in-service training, context, teaching knowledge, teaching experience, activities, Arabic teaching (see appendix H for the interview protocol)

Two post-observation interviews were carried out at the end of each observed lesson. The main purpose of the follow-up interviews was to provide teachers with opportunities to comment on key issues that I had identified and to discuss factors behind their practice, thereby enabling access to teacher cognition (Wyatt & Borg, 2011). In addition, the interviews that followed the first observation session allowed triangulation between what teachers reported about themselves and what was observed in actual classroom. Those interviews took place either in classes or in teachers' offices based on what was more convenient for teachers. The second post-observation interview aimed to achieve greater insight into teachers' underlining beliefs behind their practice in class; these interviews covered the main issues emerging from initial analysis which needed further in-depth clarification and justification (See Appendix I for post observation interview questions).

4.7.2 Classroom observation

4.7.2.1 Rationale for observation

Observation is a highly significant method for active qualitative enquiry research (Creswell, 2014). Classroom observation is defined by Bryman (2016) as a method for systematically observing individual behaviours at a research site. The aim of conducting classroom observation in this study was to observe the practice of TBLT implementation, which I was focusing on, and to question teachers about it to gain a full understanding of the complex setting (Yin, 2014). Observation was valuable as it enabled me to record information as it existed and notice any unusual or contradictory aspects (Creswell, 2014). Observation was utilised in this study because it is considered to be one of the most widely used strategies in studies of language teacher cognition, as the relationship between beliefs and practice is evident via classroom observation (Borg, 2009). In addition, observation was also aligned with the case study approach chosen for this inquiry as it added a new dimension for understanding the context and phenomena under investigation (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2014). Observational data was acquired in two classes for each teacher, with each observation lasting between and forty-five minutes and an hour. Multiple observations within the case study aimed to enhance the credibility (Maxwell, 2013). The decision about which lesson to be observed was based on teacher choice, as I had to arrange observation sessions according to their schedules and preferences. The schedule for classroom observation is shown in Table 4.5 above.

Qualitative observers vary in the extent to which they participate in the study depending on the objective of the study. Creswell and Poth (2018) classify the role of observers into four types: Complete participant: the researcher is fully engaged with participants and this can help to establish greater rapport with participants being observed.

1. Participant as observer: the researcher is not a passive observer as he/she might

participate in activities at site. While this role enables gaining subjective data, it could

be challenging as participating might be distracting for the researcher in recording

what has happened.

2. Non-participant or observer as participant: the researcher plays an outsider role as

    he/she only records data without involvement with participants.

3. -Complete observer: the researcher is neither seen nor noticed by participants.

Being a non-participant is recommended in language teacher cognition research; here, the

researcher typically sits at the back of the classroom and takes notes without participation

with teacher or students during the event being observed (Borg, 2006). In an attempt to

follow research in teacher cognition, my role in this study was that of a non-participant to

minimise the impact of me as a researcher on teachers' practice.

Although classroom observations are widely used in teacher cognition research, they

are often ineffective by themselves. Borg (2009) illustrates that observation on its own cannot

inform us about what teachers know, think and believe. Therefore, he recommends the use of

observation with a combination of another instrument, such as post-observation interviews.

For this study, as I outlined in the previous section, post-observation interviews were utilised

to understand thoughts underpinning teachers' practice (Borg, 2009) as well as for the

purpose of triangulation to enhance the credibility of the study (Maxwell, 2013).

4.7.2.2 Observation protocol

Since it is difficult to observe everything in a certain context, observation should be guided

by research purposes and questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yin (2014) emphasises the

design of observation protocol as a method for recording notes. In this study, how teachers

implemented TBLT in practice was recorded by adapting some categories from the

Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) (Spada & Frohlich, 1995) and

more details about how the CLOT scheme was adapted is provided in section 4.7.4. 2. CLOT

is considered to be the most well-known scheme for classroom observation within language education and it was developed with the aim of distinguishing teacher-centred classrooms from those based on a communicative approach (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). The COLT system consists of two parts. The categories and sub-categories in Part A are informed by the theories and designed to be used during classroom observations to focus on identifying activities which took place in the classroom and capture aspects which can be identified as communicative-based. Part B describes the main features of verbal interaction during the activity and it is designed to be used after observation sessions from audio/video recordings (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). The observation sheet was further cross validated by the researcher's supervisory team (See Appendix J for observation sheet).

4.7.3 Open-ended statements

As it was stated in Chapter 2, CBAM has posed three methods which could determine the concerns of those who implement the change, including questionnaires, interviews and open-ended statements (Hord et al, 2006). To determine teachers' concerns in the current study I used open-ended statements in which teachers were asked to write a complete sentence to answer the question adapted from the model, "When thinking about the implementation of task-based language teaching, what are you concerned about?". Open-ended statements are used in the current study with other instruments including interviews and classroom observations to permit triangulation and enhance the credibility of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Moreover, the use of open-ended statements is justified because according to Hall (2013), it is a reliable tool with which to assess the feelings and concerns of innovation implementers as it has been examined by several empirical studies and this provided additional value to the obtained findings. In addition, Hall (2013) pointed out that utilising open-ended statements can encourage teachers to provide additional data which they may

think was being missed or they were frightened to raise in their face-to-face interviews. However, this was not applied to the current study as after analysing the findings of the open-ended statements, it seems they were not productive as they did not generate additional themes which had not already been raised in the interviews, although they might be more appropriate to another context.

4.7.4 Pilot study

Braun and Clarke (2013) argue that good preparation, well-planned questions and establishing rapport are key component for successful qualitative research. In this study, I had the opportunity to trial data-generating methods between August and September 2015. According to Yin (2014), for case study research, preliminary trial can help in refining the data collection, content and procedures to be adopted. The pilot study was advantageous in this study as it provided me with experience in how to conduct interviews with a focus on TBLT implementation and gave me an impression of how teachers would react in the main study. In addition, it helped me to identify issues related to the research questions, instruments and analysis (Creswell, 2014). The main issues in the piloting research instruments which led to development as the study progressed are discussed below.

4.7.4.1 Research questions

The research questions in the pilot study raised issues leading me to redraft them to best fit the purpose of the study.

The first research question, for instance, explored teachers' perceptions towards TBLT implementation. The findings showed that teachers referred to a number of cognition factors including perceptions, beliefs and understanding. The question was therefore reframed to focus on understanding, which raised ongoing challenges in the literature of TBLT implementation.

The second research question addressed the challenges affecting TBLT implementation; after analysing the data, I found that the findings were under-theorised, as with previous studies in TBLT implementation. Therefore, I decided to use the Stage of Concern dimension from CBAM to better view the findings in relation to grounded framework. I had to reframe the question so that analysis would be informed by the theory utilised.

The third research question aimed to address facilitating factors in TBLT implementation. However, there were limited data as teachers tended to refer to challenges in TBLT. Therefore, I decided to change the scope and focus by addressing future suggestions for TBLT professional development, which could better inform the main research question dealing with TBLT professional development needs. A comparison of all questions from the pilot and main study sub questions is found in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 *A comparison between the pilot study and modified main study sub questions*

RQs	Pilot study	Main study
1	What are female Arabic teachers' perceptions of TBLT implementation?	What are teachers' understandings of 'task' in TBLT?
2	What are inhibiting factors affecting TBLT implementation?	What are teachers concerns regarding TBLT implementation?
3	What are facilitating factors affecting TBLT implementation?	How do Arabic teachers prefer to be trained in the use of TBLT?

4.7.4.2 The research instruments

The instruments utilised in the current study, including initial interviews and classroom observations followed by interviews, were pilot tested and a number of modifications were made to ensure quality data could be generated in the main study.

1- For initial interviews, similar to the main study, the sampling technique used for participants' selection was purposeful sampling and the interviews took place with six in-service teachers at KAU who were in similar age group and background to those of the main case study teachers. The aim was to explore teachers' knowledge and perspectives towards TBLT implementation.

Some of interviews' questions were adapted from Carless (2007) and others were designed by the researcher and validated by supervisory team. After piloting, some adjustments have been made. For example, I noticed that the wording of the following two questions was leading and amendments were required:

a. In what ways do you think TBLT is suitable in the Saudi Arabian context?

b. In what ways do you think TBLT can facilitate the acquisition of Modern Standard Arabic?

Furthermore, due to insufficient data provided by teachers about their experience with professional development, a number of additional topics needed to be included in the main study, such as how teachers learnt, what support is needed for teacher development, what kind of support is preferred, and what limitations existed in pre-/in-service professional development. In addition, more follow up and prompting questions were designed to enrich the data obtained. I also realised that I ended the interviews with a question that addressed teachers' challenges about TBLT implementation, and this could end the interview on a negative note. Therefore, I decided to add a closing question which allowed teachers to raise issues not covered which they thought were essential.

2- For classroom observations, one lesson for each teacher was observed, so in total six lessons were observed and the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) scheme was used as a framework for classroom observation (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). The main issue in piloting the CLOT scheme was that the pre-determined categories were clear-cut terms which were found to be more restricting than helpful as they generated quantitative data which only fitted their proposed sub-categories. This seemed inappropriate to the current study which had adopted a naturalistic inquiry approach to capture any unforeseen variables that may be of interest and related to this study. The second issue was related to Part B which was designed to be completed from audio/video recordings but this was not possible because

recording lessons was not culturally acceptable in Saudi Arabia. In addition, after the initial analysis of the pilot study, I found that data from part B aimed to quantify the verbal interaction between teachers and students and did not generate significant contributions to the research questions for the study. Taking these issues into consideration, the CLOT observation scheme was not considered appropriate for this study. However, a number of clear-cut categories from part A (e.g., activity type, participants organisation and content) were adapted to be open ended for the purpose of facilitating descriptions of the lessons observed which can have the potential to address Arabic teachers' approaches in the implementation of TBLT within Saudi culture.

3- For post observation interviews, a set of prepared questions was designed by the researcher to elicit teachers' perspectives about various aspects related to TBLT implementation. In addition, teachers might be asked to clarify issues that needed further investigation after the initial analysis of data. Since all teachers were Arabic native speakers teaching MSA, the post observation interviews were held in Arabic with three teachers from the same institution. Teachers' behaviours during the observed lessons were referred to so they can elaborate and justify their principles in TBLT implementation. After initial analysis, it was decided that the post-observations interviews questions were appropriate but more follow up questions were needed to generate in-depth data.

4.8. The procedures

The data collection followed a number of steps which were summarised above in Table 4.5 and described as follows

1. Data collection methods were piloted between August and September 2015.

2. Six initial interviews were conducted to collect data about each teacher's background, learning and teaching experiences, and how they perceive TBLT implementation. The interviews took a place in teachers' offices at the university, with each interview lasting

forty minutes to an hour. The timing of the interviews was at the convenience of the

participating teachers. All interviews were recorded after receiving participants'

permission, with the promise that anonymity and confidentiality would be secured at all

times. During interviews, notes were taken to capture important points which needed

further investigation (Maxwell, 2013). Voice recording helped me to re-examine

participants' responses during data analysis (Creswell, 2014). Interviews were conducted

in Arabic, the first language of the participants and then transcribed and translated into

English. To ensure credibility, two researchers who were Arabic native speakers revised

the translations.

3. Non-participant observation of one lesson to each teacher focusing on revisiting teacher

   behaviours to elicit data. The classroom observation procedure was similar across

   observed lessons. I entered the class with teachers and took a seat at the back, recording

   details in field notes. I made every effort not to participate in activities to avoid missing

   essential issues that emerged in practice. However, on two occasions I needed to be more

   flexible, as one teacher encountered technical problem with the computer and another

   teacher asked me to help her in distributing worksheets to the class. Although video

   recording can provide more enriched data as it is pointed out by Creswell, 2014, it is

   contrary to Saudi culture. Therefore, it was important to go back to my notes immediately

   after the observation to fill in missing information, add more comments, and highlight

   some important points which needed further investigation in post-observation interviews.

4. Post observation interview 1 which aimed to elicit information about key issues observed

   and identify beliefs behind their practice.

5. Open-ended statements adapted from CBAM to collect data about challenges inhibiting

   TBLT implementation. Participants were given four pages handout. The first page

   included basic information about the study and the second page included the consent form

which requested participants signature for ethical reason. The following page asked the open-ended question stated in section 4.7.3 and the remained of page was left blank so they can write a narrative description of their concerns with regard to TBLT implementation. Teachers were encouraged to write complete sentences as recommended by developers to facilitate data analysis. To ensure individuals were not identified from their handwriting, they were asked to type their response in the computer (ethical considerations are discussed further in section4.10.3).

6. Second observation which aimed to confirm or disconfirm data collected in the first observation and to elicit additional data about teachers' principles.

7. Second post observation interview seeking more clarification about the observed lesson and to elicit teachers' opinions about issued emerging from the initial analysis.

4.9 Data analysis

The previous sections explained the approach, design and methods used to generate data for this study. This section presents the way in which data were analysed in order to answer the research questions. Qualitative data analysis involves the process of systematically examining, describing, summarising, analysing and synthesising to address the research questions (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Bryman (2016) there is no particular time at which qualitative data analysis should begin. However, Maxwell (2013) and Yin (2014) suggest that the process of data analysis should begin immediately during data generation and continue until data are reported. In this study, analysis started immediately after initial data was collected.

There are many computer programs available to help with data analysis; the most widely used are NVivo, MAXQODA, ATLAS.ti and Hper RESEARCH (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Those programs have several advantages: they provide a system for the storage of data, they enable the linking of memos to particular codes and themes, and they produce

visual representations of data (Maxwell, 2013). However, the possibility of using computer-based analysis, such as an analytic tool, was rejected in the current study because it was believed that it can have the negative effect of distancing me as researcher from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018) while a 'hands-on' method would enable deeper immersion in the data. Yin (2014) argue that software cannot help in deciding how to code or how to interpret data, and without the researcher's guidance no programs can completely analyses data. In addition, Bryman (2016) suggest not using software if there is not a large amount of data because of the time required to learn how to run the software. Yin (2016) points out that using computer-assisted tools represents a challenge in case study research because this kind of research deals with different types evidence such as interviews and individual behaviours which occur within the complexity of the real world, and the computer tools cannot handle diverse evidence unless it is all converted into textual data. Taking all mentioned challenges into account, I decided to analyse the generated data manually because I felt that the final results of utilising a software program might not be worthwhile in contrast with the extensive time and effort required to utilise computer-assisted tools.

Qualitative data requires preparation in the form of transcription before analysis. In the current study, an orthographic (also called verbatim) form of transcription was employed (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Within this style, I focused on spoken words, which included information given by teachers rather than how it was said. Features such as laughter, pauses and non-verbal utterances were overlooked. After transcription, the data were translated into English (See Appendix K for a sample of an interview and Appendix L for a sample of open-ended statement transcripts). The general approach to data analysis for this study was inductive analysis, which implies that patterns, themes and categories of analysis emerge from the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative enquiry can be analysed using different methods, including

thematic analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory and narrative analysis (Bryman, 2016). In this study, thematic analysis was adopted; here, themes and patterns of meaning were identified in relation to each research question. The adoption of a thematic approach in this study is particularly useful because of its flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In the current study, three main themes which were directly related to the research questions were identified including teachers' understandings of TBLT, teachers' concerns regarding the implementation of TBLT and teachers' preferences for future TBLT training. Codes under each theme were identified either in a top-down manner in which codes were informed by knowledge of the literature or theoretical frameworks or a bottom-up manner in which codes were generated from the process of data analysis. Pre-exiting codes included teachers' understandings of TBLT, teachers' attitudes towards TBLT, TBLT in practice, management-related concerns, teacher-related concerns and knowledge related concerns. Emerging or data driven codes included context-related concerns, mix stages concerns, teacher experiences with previous professional development, perceived obstacles to attendance at in-service training courses and principles of preference for future in-service Arabic teacher's training in TBLT. Following Braun and Clarke (2013), I used a systematic approach encompassing five steps, which provided a useful guide for analysing this study. The process of analysis undertaken within this approach was as follows:

1. Reading and familiarisation

    The aim of this stage was to familiarise myself with the data and build a sense of the data as a whole (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This process involved reading critically, raising questions and recording noticing in memos, which I can refer back to. This process helped me to go beyond the surface meaning and identify analytic meaning (Maxwell, 2013).

2. Selective coding

Coding is a central process in data analysis and is defined by Braun and Clarke (2013) as 'the process of identifying aspects of data that relate to your research questions' (p. 206). It involves taking a chunk of text into categories and labelling them to facilitate comparison, which could lead to data development. In this study both predetermined and emerged codes were used.

3. Identifying patterns across data

This process involves shifting from coding to looking for patterns. It involves reviewing codes, looking for similarity across codes and developing themes which are linked to research questions (see a sample in Table 4.8). According to Creswell and Poth (2018) the terms 'theme' and 'category' are used interchangeably to refer to a 'broad unit of information that consists of several codes aggregated to form a common idea' (p. 194). This stage helped me to identify salient features which I might not have examined in sufficient detail without this process, such as the existence of Islamic values as a variable in TBLT implementation. Braun and Clarke (2016) emphasise the importance of looking for patterns in analysing qualitative data as it captures points that could be important, even though they may not exist frequently.

4. Reviewing and revising themes

This involves two steps. First, I checked whether created themes fit well with coded data. If themes were coherent and related to the research question, I moved to the second step, which involved refining themes in relation to the transcribed data.

5. Presenting data

In this stage, when a set of themes were developed, I had to think about how to interconnect them together and present them in logical way to give the reader rich details to convey the findings of the current data. This included a detailed discussion of several themes which presented multiple perspectives from the participating teachers. I used

some tables and figures as visual representations that can help the reader to make sense of the data.

This section has outlined the approach and process involved in case analysis. The next section has discussed the strategies employed to enhance the trustworthiness in this study.

Table 4.8 *Sample of codes and themes*

Extract	Code	Theme
It's also hard to divide the students into groups as they have different levels, different abilities and different personalities, and I am still not sure whether or not I am in the right place expertise to answer my questions	Competence	Teacher related concerns
The organisation of the classroom is not appropriate because it's not easy to divide students into groups … This makes the implementation of TBLT harder because the chairs are not movable	Logistics	Management concern
Students are assessed by language focus tests, and I need to be aware of preparing my students for the exam and I also have a big class size so it is not easy to implement it [	Context and management concern	Mix stages concern

4.10 Qualitative research issues

4.10.1 Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research

Although validity, reliability and generalisability are widely agreed-upon criteria for the evaluation of quantitative research, there are many perspectives among qualitative researchers regarding the importance of validation, the terms used to describe it and the strategies for its establishment (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Since the outcomes of naturalistic research will always be influenced by the beliefs and interpretations of the researcher, it is argued that qualitative studies should be accessible for evaluation (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2014).

This has resulted in a growing interest in establishing criteria and strategies to evaluate the trustworthiness of findings (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The term 'trustworthiness' was proposed by Lincoln and Goba

(1985); it comprises four criteria, each of which has an equivalent used by quantitative researchers. Those criteria are:

- credibility as a substitute to internal validity;

- transferability as substitute to external validity;

- dependability as substitute to reliability; and

- conformability as substitute to objectivity.

Further explanations underlining these concepts and strategies employed for dealing with each of these issues in the current study are discussed below.

4.10.1.1 Credibility

This term deals with how the study findings are congruent with reality (Creswell, 2014). For this study, credibility denotes the extent to which the outcomes represent a true picture of how teachers understand and perceive TBLT, and what their suggestions are for successful TBLT training to teach Modern Standard Arabic in a Saudi context. Since qualitative researchers can never capture the truth because there are multiple realities, a number of strategies could be used to increase the credibility of the research findings. For this study, several strategies suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Creswell and Poth (2018) were used to strengthen the credibility of the study findings.

Firstly, I made use of respondent validation, or what is also referred to as member checking, defined as submitting the research findings to the participants for the purpose of uncovering misinterpretations of the meaning of what participants say and do in their social world (Maxwell, 2013). For observation data, member checking was carried out during post-observations interviews as teachers' behaviours were recalled, and teachers were asked questions wherever possible to confirm and elaborate on what had been observed. For interview data, I sent the preliminary analysis to each teacher seeking their feedback of what was missing or had been misinterpreted, but they largely supported my interpretation.

Secondly, I employed triangulation, defined as involving multiple data sources, methods, investigators or theories to provide cooperating evidence (Creswell, 2014). The use of multiple methods to collect data (observation, interviews and open-ended statement) enabled me to capture a deeper insight into the phenomenon under investigation and a better assessment thereof, which in turn reduces the risk of bias caused by the use of one method (Maxwell, 2013).

Thirdly, I used peer examination, defined as seeking checks by someone who is familiar with the research field and phenomenon under investigation (Bryman, 2016). In this study, several meetings were conducted with the research supervisors, who provoked critical thinking by asking questions about data generating and interpretation. I also presented the data at two conferences, seeking feedback from experts in the field, and attended research methods workshops. This contributed to my reflection on this study.

Fourthly, in line with Creswell (2014) and Maxwell (2013), I reported negative information that contradicted the general perspective of the themes in this study. I also reported contradictions that existed within individuals themselves. This not only strengthened the credibility of the study but it also helped to minimise my personal bias.

Fifthly, spending prolonged time in the field is recognised as a strategy to maintain credibility (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Being a teacher in the same institution facilitated my access. In this study, I immersed myself with teachers and spent six months generating data; this helped me to gain a deep understanding of the issues.

4.10.1.2 Transferability

This term concerns the extent to which the findings in a study are applicable to other settings or with other populations (Braun & Clarke, 2013). For researchers undertaking case studies, however, this is not possible and nor is the aim to generalise findings to the wider population. Instead, the aim of case study work is to describe in detail single or a small number of cases

and explain any patterns that occur. (Simons, 2009). Even though generalisation was not an aim of this study, transferability is essential if the study is to contribute to the literature on the topic. I therefore used the strategy of thick description, which is commonly recommended to deepen the transferability of case study research (e.g. Simons, 2009; Merriem & Tisdell, 2016). I provided a thick description of reach context in chapter 1, sampling (4.6.2), case study individuals (5.2), data collection (4.7) data analysis (4.9) and findings in chapter 5,6 and 7, with evidence presented in the form of quotations from participants' interviews. By presenting such detailed description, it is expected that the reader can judge whether the results achieved in Saudi context can be transferable to other situation or other groups.

4.10.1.3 Dependability

One of the main requirements when evaluating the trustworthiness of any piece of research is dependability, also referred to as consistency, which is concerned with whether the findings are consistent with the raw data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this case, they suggest that the purpose for qualitative researchers is to view reliability as consistency between the collected data and what occurs in reality, rather than replicability of the results across different studies, which is the aim of quantitative studies. In this study, I used various data collection methods including observation, interviews and open-ended statements as suggested by Maxwell (2013) to strengthen reliability in addition to credibility as stated above.

4.10.1.4 Confirmability

The concept of confirmability in the qualitative approach refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry can be confirmed, modified or rejected by other researchers (Bryman, 2016). In other words, confirmability is concerned with establishing that the data and interpretations of the findings are not at a distance from the researcher and the participants under investigation. It is important to ensure that the findings are the real results of participants' experience rather than the interests of the researcher. Since qualitative studies

deal with human beings, researcher bias or subjectivity and the possible influence of the researcher on participants are two main principles that can be viewed as a threat to the confirmability of any qualitative case study (Maxwell, 2013). However, a number of strategies were used in establishing confirmability in this study which are discussed below.

In interpretative research (e.g. case studies), the researcher is considered key instrument as decisions about data collection methods, data analysis and interpretation are influenced by the researcher's assumptions, values and background. Personal involvement, or what Creswell (2014) describes as axiological assumptions, is seen as a limitation in case study research (Yin, 2014). However, Simons (2009) and Maxwell (2013) argue that as long as the researcher bias is explicitly explained, personal involvement is valued in understanding the investigated case. With this concern in mind, the first strategy used was to clarify my bias or develop what it is called critical reflection. This section intended to provide reflexively as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018) to make these assumptions explicit, explaining how they influenced my interpretations and how they were managed during the research. This is presented below under the topic of the role of the researcher.

4.10.2 Role of the researcher

An outsider would arguably be less subjective (Yin, 2012), but my role in this study was that of an insider. I am aware that I brought certain assumptions from my background which was in many ways identical to that of the teachers in the current study. I grew up and received schooling in same city (Jeddah), and I was trained as an Arabic teacher and worked at the same institution. Creswell (2014) argued that such common connections between researcher and participants can influence the researcher's interpretation. There was also a potential impact of me on my participants, or what Maxwell (2013) refers to as 'reactivity'. I acknowledge that some teachers were friends and they might have responded in a way that

they thought would please me. However, Maxwell (2013) and Yin (2016) argue that that it is not the aim of qualitative research to illuminate such influences because subjectivity is valued in qualitative research, just as objectivity is valued in quantitative studies. In relation to my study, being an insider provided me with advantages.

Firstly, in line with Simon (2009), I felt that my shared experience with the participants as a language learner provided me with an in-depth understanding in interpreting the case. Secondly, I felt that my experience as a language teacher was significant as it provided me with an opportunity to understand the context of the study, facilitated access to conduct and gain participants' trust (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, the use of cognition theory and socio-cultural theory requires establishing a deep knowledge of the culture and the context under investigation. My knowledge of the Saudi educational culture helped me to gain emic perspectives (Creswell, 2014). Indeed, seeking to see through the eyes of my participating teachers matches the constructivist paradigm which underpins this study (Bryman, 2016).

Whilst it is significant to acknowledge my assumptions, beliefs and background, it is also essential to manage the potential bias of subjectivity (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In this study, one strategy I used was to keep a diary in which I recorded my thoughts, assumptions and reflections throughout the process of data generation and analysis (Creswell, 2014). Reflection made me think critically and focus on what teachers wanted to say rather than on what I wanted. For example, a note from my diary after interviewing Reem on 11/8/2016 reads as follows:

> I noticed that she was interested to share her experiences as a language learner and teacher. She contradicted herself when she said had a positive view about TBLT and then said she had not engage recently in professional development because TBLT is not applicable and she believed grammar should be explained in detail, but the question is why? She spoke about some management challenges affecting TBLT implementation and impracticality was repeatedly mentioned. She also spoke about her suggestion for the content of curriculum, which seemed at the moment not

relevant, but it might have some interesting points when I look at them again during analysis.

The second strategy was to draw upon the CBAM model, cognition and socio-cultural theories in the interpretation of data to control the impact of my assumptions in interpretation.

Thirdly, when I wanted the participants to elaborate, I used their statements and ask them 'Why…?', 'How', or 'Could you explain more?'' This strategy helped me to avoid asking leading questions. Since some of teachers were my friends and there was an increased risk of bias, I explained to them clearly my role as a researcher and told them that their perceptions and beliefs, whether they were positive or negative, would contribute to the study.

Fourthly, although I shared experiences with teachers, it was not difficult to have distance as I had spent seven years outside the context studying for my MA and PhD in the UK. This distance enabled me to develop my Applied Linguistics knowledge and step back looking at the context with a different eye.

This section has discussed strategies used to establish trustworthiness in the current study; the next section outlines how ethical issues were considered in this case study. The Table 4.9 below summarises the methodology in the current study.

Table 4.9 *Summary of methodology*

Research questions	Methods for data collection	Themes
What are teachers' understandings of 'task' in TBLT?	1. Initial interview 2. Two Classroom observations followed by interviews	Teachers Understanding of TBLT
What are teachers concerns regarding TBLT implementation?	1. open-ended statement 2. Two Classroom observations followed by interviews	Teachers' concerns towards the implementation of TBLT
How do Arabic teachers prefer to be trained in the use of TBLT?	1. Initial interview 2. Two Classroom observations followed by interviews	Teachers future professional development needs

4.10.3 Ethical considerations

This chapter has explained the research paradigm, approach, study design, and methods used to generate and analyse data. Social studies deal with humans and their personal beliefs; therefore, ethical considerations are essential (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2012). Creswell (2014) emphasises the significance of research ethics through the different stages of the research process. Yin (2012) identifies a number of issues that should be given special care in case study including informed consent, confidentiality, privacy and protecting the participants from harm. This section discusses ethical considerations of these issues and others which were taken into consideration during the study.

4.10.3.1 Accessing the research site

Prior to beginning of the study, it was necessary to obtain permission to conduct the study (Bryman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Before collecting data in the current study, a letter was send to the director of general courses in the School of Arts and Humanities at King Abdul Aziz University with an information sheet explaining the aims of the study and requesting permission to access the site and collect data from both classroom observations and teacher interviews and Approval was obtained (see Appendix A). Then, the ethical form required by the Ethics Committee of the University of Central Lancashire was filled out and corresponding approval was also obtained (See Appendix B).

4.10.3.2 Informed consent

Informed consent entails providing participants with sufficient information about the study, their roles, and their freedom to participate or withdraw from participation (Creswell, 2014). Participants in this study were provided with an information sheet which clearly stated that this study was part of a doctoral thesis on the topic of TBLT implementation. In addition, the nature of the study, data collection methods and details of how their interview and observation data would be used were also clearly explained. Furthermore, participants were

informed about the approximate amount of time that the questionnaire and interviews might demand, based on information received from the pilot study. They were asked to read the consent form thoroughly and decide whether they were willing to participate in the study or not. They were given a week to decide whether or not they were willing take part. Contact information for the researcher and director of the study were provided so that the participants were able to ask questions about the study or request a copy of the results. To ensure informed consent was gained ahead of the interviews, participants were asked again to read the information sheet and ask the researcher any questions about their involvement or the study. All participants were aware, that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time before analysis of the data without the need to provide an explanation for their decisions. After analysis of the data, any withdrawal would not be allowed, due to difficulties in meeting the submission date. With regard to cultural limitations, the participants were notified that any audio recordings would be only used for the purposes of the research and destroyed after the study was finished. This was especially relevant in the context of female participants, as the recording of females is not in line with general norms of Saudi Arabian culture. This information was provided in written personal information (see Appendix C & D) Once they understood what was written, the agreement form was signed (see Appendix E & F).

4.10.3.3 Confidentiality and privacy

In this study, since the focus was on Arabic teachers' cognition and practice of TBLT implementation and professional development, participants were informed in the information sheet that their identity would be protected. For example, when I reported data, every effort was made to prevent anyone outside of the project from identifying individual subjects from their responses. The respondents were informed that the thesis and any publications arising

from the study would not contain their real names. Although teachers were happy to use their real names in the study, pseudonyms were used for better protection.

In order to ensure the protection of the participants, voice recordings and transcriptions of interviews were locked in a secure cabinet with only the researcher able to access them. During the study, all transcribed responses were typed electronically and saved onto a USB stick secured in a locked place in the researcher's home and on a password-protected UCLan server. Once the written thesis has been completed and the researcher has obtained the PhD degree, all audio recordings and paper data will be discarded after five years.

4.10.3.4 Harm to participants

According to Bryman (2016) harm is a serious issue in qualitative research; it can include physical harm, harm to participant development, stress and loss of self-esteem. The subjects in the current study were informed of any possible inconvenience that they may experience, such as observation of their classes and generating data from face-to-face interviews. However, I tried to keep them relaxed in a friendly environment. Since all of the interviews were conducted in the university, it was likely that they felt safer.

4.11 Summary

This chapter has outlined the approach and process the philosophical underpinning of the study which supported the decision to use qualitative case study methodology in order to address the support needed, from the perspectives of Arabic teachers, to implement TBLT in a University level. The chapter has explained and justified the qualitative enquiry, the single case study methodology and data generation methods which were selected for the study. Considerations of sampling, research participants were also detailed. The chapter has also outlined the approach and process for thematic data analysis which allowed to create codes and themes both from the data and the theoretical framework. Considerations of

trustworthiness, ethics and researcher positionality were also discussed. Overall, the

methodology and research instruments selected aimed to answer the research questions set

out in Chapter 1, according to ontology and epistemology of Constructivism framework

outlined in section 4.4. The next three chapters present he findings of the study.

Chapter 5. Findings: Teachers' Understandings of TLBT

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the current study is to explore the task-based language teaching (TBLT) training needs of Arabic in-service teachers in the Saudi higher educational context. For this objective to be fulfilled, the study aimed to:

1. examine teachers' current understanding of TBLT;

2. explore the nature of teachers' concerns that hinder the implementation of TBLT;

3. explore teachers' preferences for future TBLT training.

Having discussed the methodology of the study in Chapter 4, the empirical research findings analysed from the study are presented in the next three chapters. Each chapter presents findings related to one research question that the current study intended to examine. Chapter 5 focuses on the participating teachers' understanding of TBLT (RQ1). Chapter 6 explores teachers' concerns with regard to TBLT implementation in Arabic classrooms (RQ2). Chapter 7 investigates teachers' preferences for future TBLT training (RQ3). The research questions will be more directly analysed and discussed in Chapter 8.

This chapter addresses the findings of the first theme based on the data collected from initial interviews with the six Arabic teachers and two non-participant observations of a class-based lesson, followed by interviews held one week later. The chapter begins by providing a profile of the six teachers in section 5.2. Then, the main themes identified within teachers' understandings of TBLT are presented in 5.3, and chapter summary is provided in section 5.4.

5.2 Teacher profiles

This section introduces the profile of each participant based on the initial interviews. As previously outlined in Chapter 2 & 3, a number of factors have been shown in the research literature to shape teacher understanding and beliefs in innovation, and to shape teacher

action in practice; these factors include teachers' prior learning experience (schooling and university) and experience in learning to teach (pre-service education and in-service professional development), contextual factors, and classroom experience as a teacher (Borg, 2009; East, 2012). The profile of each teacher in the following subsections will begin with a description of the teacher's background, experience of education in schooling and in higher education, and experience in learning to teach (pre-/in-service professional development and practicum). This is followed by a comparison of teachers' profiles. The purpose of providing this introductory description is to provide a deep understanding of each teacher, which is the main purpose of the case study method (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2013). In addition, providing a detailed description of the teachers' education and teaching experience serves to contextualise the findings of the current study and to contribute to answering its research questions. In the following subsections, pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the teachers.

5.2.1 Hind

Hind was 45 and she held a bachelor's degree in Arabic and Literature and a master's degree in Modern Literary Criticism, both from King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU), Jeddah. At the time of the study, she was studying for a PhD in the same field at a public university in the central region of Saudi Arabia. Hind's career history dated back to her graduation from university and her work as an Arabic language teacher in a private high school where she taught for three years. She then decided to go to the UK with her husband, who completed his PhD there. When she came back from the UK, she worked as an administrator in the university's development centre. Her main role was to develop the centre's promotional materials. She believed that her job provided her with the opportunity to build relationships with others. A year later, she realised she enjoyed teaching more than administrative work, and she managed to find work as a lecturer in Arabic language for the foundation-year

programme; she was working there when the data were collected for this study.

Hind studied at private schools in the 1970s in the west of Saudi Arabia as her parents believed that the quality of teachers and the facilities provided for learners in private schools were superior to those in public schools. She studied English from primary school, this being another reason why her parents preferred private education, as in public schools English is taught from secondary school, starting at the age of 13. During her school study, she learned Arabic and other social subjects through drilling and memorisation. She relied on school textbooks as the only source of learning. She remembered also that she was given lots of homework, and she used to do it at home with help from her parents. On the other hand, she reflected positively on her school experience when she described her relationship with her teachers as being good because she believed that in private schools, teachers tended to be more flexible to satisfy students' parents. She also reflected on the positive impact of her school, not on her current practice but on her personality as she was given opportunities to take the role of presenter in the school, an activity that helped her to develop confidence. Although Hind described her schooling as being focused on memorisation, she remembered how she enjoyed going to school, spending time with her friends and celebrating special days like Eid.

Hind's pre-service training was the only formal education she had received before teaching because she had graduated from King Abdul-Aziz University and there was no practicum training in her course. Hind believed that her pre-service training had helped her to develop her subject knowledge in different areas in Arabic, including syntax, semantics, phonology and morphology. The way of teaching was similar to school in that a lecturing style was used, with students rarely engaging in group activities during the lessons. In her undergraduate studies, she found herself becoming more responsible, especially with coursework and assignments. She needed to do more research beyond the textbook. After she

started teaching, she received more a formal education during her MA, and she described the master's as a journey toward becoming more independent. She found that being spoon-fed knowledge was not sufficient in higher education as she had to demonstrate her critical thinking skills in her writing. She found, however, it was not easy to develop her critical thinking skills as her teachers still relied on a traditional teaching approach in which she had limited (if any) opportunity to discuss issues. One technique Hind used to develop her critical thinking skills was based on reading and having informal discussions with her teachers outside class time.

Hind engaged in more non-formal developmental training provided by the development centre in her institution in different areas. This included training in active teaching, assessment, classroom management and the integration of ICT for teaching and administrative purposes. Most of these training sessions consisted of one-day courses that provided her with general knowledge about different aspects of her work. Hind had been most influenced by her English learning experience in Manchester, UK, where task-based language teaching (TBLT) was used by her teachers in the EFL classroom. She learned English mainly through communicating, both in class and outside the class, and she realised that the most important skill in teaching is to engage her students in real communication to improve their understanding. She admitted that she was not trained to use TBLT but she believed that her teaching methods had changed to become more communicative after she observed how English is taught in the UK, where she developed her beliefs about language teaching. She also admitted that she used a variety of teaching strategies and activities in her class to engage her students, such as opinion-giving and decision-making activities. She showed her willingness to attend more in-service courses as she believed that teachers' learning should be ongoing.

5.2.2 Sara

Sara was 36 years old. After she completed high school in a public school in Jeddah, she studied Arabic and Literature in the Faculty of Education in Jeddah. She held a master's degree in Linguistics from King Abdul-Aziz University and was studying for a doctorate in Linguistics when the current study was conducted. She worked as an Arabic teacher in a private high school for five years and then moved to work as a teacher at KAU.

She described her primary school education as being dominated by teachers as she was rarely given the opportunity to discuss or share her opinions. The activities used in Arabic classrooms were either multiple choice or gap-fill, focusing on grammatical items. Assessment depended on how well the students had memorised the textbook. With regard to her perceived education in school, she described it as 'very strict', as they did not tolerate any type of communication during class time. She described her role as passive, saying that the teachers wanted the students to be silent and listen to their lectures without any interruptions or participation. Students only spoke when they were asked individual questions to check their understanding of specific issues, and this did not happen very often. Sara appeared to have had negative experiences with school learning as her fear of her teachers affected her personality and confidence negatively. She was not able to engage in any dialogue and was hesitant to engage in discussion and articulate her views in class. This issue was overcome when she started her undergraduate course and was given the opportunity to talk and express her views.

Sara's initial formal professional preparation started in her pre-service training in Gills Faculty of Education in Jeddah; here, she took a teaching methods module which helped her to develop her instructional skills, her general knowledge of leaning and teaching and her classroom management skills. Sara remembered that the content of this module was the same for all students from different schools. As a requirement to pass this compulsory module,

students had a six-month practicum in which they observed school teachers and then practised teaching in a high school three times a week in the first three months and every day in the last three months. Practice teaching took place under the supervision of both the classroom teacher in the school and her supervisor from her college. Sara evaluated her pre-service education as being beneficial for the development of teaching skills and the enhancement of her pedagogical knowledge.

Sara had also taken different training courses during her teaching experience. Some of these courses were for the purpose of personal development, such as how to build confidence, or how to be successful; others were for the purpose of professional development, such as strategies for active learning, brainstorming, the flipped classroom and TBLT. All of the training sessions that she attended in her in-service training were one-day short courses conducted in the institution; the exception was the TBLT course, which was one week in duration at the private development centre, and which cost her full fees, at considerable expense. S

5.2.3 Mona

Mona was 35 years old and had studied in public schools in Jeddah. She held a bachelor's degree in Arabic and Literature from a university in Jeddah and a master's degree in Linguistics from another public university in Riyadh. She had a year's experience as a teacher in the Arab Open University and 12 years' experience at KAU.

Mona described her learning experience at both the school and university levels as being teacher-based, where the teachers lectured and explained everything. She had grown up with the perception that it is the teacher's role to speak and explain, while students should be quiet and good listeners. From childhood, Mona had learned by observing and practising, and she seemed to value the acquisition of language in this way. She remembered that some teachers had the ability to deliver information in ways that made it easier for students because

they drew students' attention to the relationship between the meaning and the use of language. Mona's students were often confused by the complicated rules of MSA, and advised them to understand the meaning as this can help them to produce more accurate language.

The traditional approach to learning was dominant not only in Mona's schooling experience but also in her higher education. She described her classes as being mostly focused on the lecturer. She remembered that she did not engage in any informal communication with her teachers as they always put a distance between themselves and their students. In her MA, her professors always emphasised the significance of traditional Arabic books, which focused on sophisticated language, as key references for postgraduate students because of their belief in the traditional way of learning and teaching Arabic. She remembered that when she was working on her MA dissertation, she was directed to depend on traditional writers and to accept their opinions as truth; otherwise, she might have faced some problems if she had expressed opinions that were different from those articulated in traditional books and from the beliefs of her supervisor.

Mona had had no opportunity to learn through practising as a practicum had not been part of her undergraduate programme at King Abdul-Aziz University. She indicated that her full schedule affected her participation in in-service training, but she remembered she had received training in the use of the Blackboard learning management system. She also remembered that she had attended one in-service training session focusing on collaborative learning seven years earlier, and all she recalled about the course was basic knowledge about the advantages of this approach for learning. After that, she decided not to undertake any training in the implementation of learner-centred approaches as she believed that there were still contextual challenges which needed to be resolved first.

5.2.4 Reem

At the time of the study, Reem was 43 years old. She had an undergraduate degree in Arabic and Literature and a master's degree in Arabic Literature, both from King Abdul-Aziz University; she also had a PhD in Saudi Arabian Literature from King Saud University in Riyadh. She had been working as a teacher at KAU for 12 years, and at the time of the study, she was the director of the Arabic language department.

Reem had received all of her schooling in public schools through traditional teaching approaches. Teachers were responsible for explaining every aspect of the textbook, and some of them would direct students to memorise some parts from the textbook which were significant for their examinations. By doing this, teachers believed that they were helping students to achieve better results, and students felt excited as they did not need to memorise everything. Reem remembered that she lost marks in some examinations when she did not memorise exactly everything written in her textbook. Therefore, her mother used to listen to her recitation before examinations. She remembered that she had never been taught through new or interesting approaches, even in her university study.

Reem also admitted that the courses she had taken in her under- and post-graduate study had been theoretical in nature and had not placed any emphasis on the application of TBLT. She believed that in Saudi Arabia, students could play a more active role and discuss issues only at the post-graduate level because at the lower levels g passive as a learner and her in-service training influenced her way of teaching and encouraged her to use a more active TBLT approach in her foundation-year classes.

, large class sizes led to challenges for teachers in terms of classroom management.

The lack of opportunity to prepare for a teaching career was a real concern for Reem. When she first started to teach foundation-year classes immediately after graduation, she found herself less confident in her first few classes. She believed that at that time, she was

well prepared in linguistics; on the other hand, with limited teaching skills and no experience of how to control lessons, she faced challenges when she stood in front of her classes. However, Reem believed that teacher education was never finished; therefore, she decided to enhance her skills through in-service training. She remembered that she always checked the university development centre website and engaged in training sessions which she thought would help her with her profession, such as integrating technology in education, active learning, teaching Arabic for non-native speakers and the use of mind map in teaching. She could not, however, engage in TBLT training because it had only recently been offered by the university development centre, and the training was conducted in English. She was an Arabic language professional, and her English level was pre-intermediate as she had only studied English in schools. She wished she had more time to engage in training, but she found that every day she learned from her experience in the actual classroom.

5.2.5 Sameerah

Sameerah was 40 years old. She had completed her undergraduate in Arabic language and literature and master's degrees in Linguistics from King Abdul-Aziz University. Her doctorate from one of the Saudi universities in Riyadh was in Linguistics with a focus on Arabic grammar. Sameerah had been chosen from among her friends to work as an Arabic teacher after graduation due to her high performance. Being a teacher meant a lot to her because this had been her dream from an early age. Sameerah had started to teach MSA through distance learning and she thought in the near future she might engage her students in some online activities after class. She had 15 years' experience as a teacher in KSA when the data were collected.

Sameerah's early experience as an Arabic language learner dated back to her first three years in a private primary school; she remembered that teachers were kind and flexible, and they treated the pupils like their own children. When she moved to a public school, she

noticed that the teachers were stricter and they did not often communicate with students; their main concern was controlling the class and meeting the requirements of the curriculum. They also used to assign a lot of homework and assess students' spelling every week. The pressure of examination with the fear of being punished for not doing homework characterised Sameerah's negative experiences with schooling. Sameerah was similar to the other teachers in that she had received all of her schooling in traditional teaching methods, and she thought this could have been because studies that proved the efficiency of the TBLT method did not exist at that time.

Sameerah had received formal pre-service education, but she believed that her course had little impact (if any) on her pedagogical knowledge and practice. Sameerah complained about the teaching of MSA in her undergraduate courses, which focused only on traditional Arabic books and presented very complex language structures and vocabulary, and which are not used these days. Another common learning experience described by the participants both for school and higher education was the relationship between teachers and students and the authority role of teachers. Sameerah remembered that during her master's and doctoral studies, she built her linguistic knowledge but that she got into trouble when her opinion contradicted her supervisor's view. She had to accept her supervisor's view even if she disagreed with her because professors were always seen as having high status in Saudi Arabia.

Sameerah seemed to really enjoy being an Arabic teacher; she was strongly motivated to develop her proficiency in teaching as a possible way to help students learn Arabic (the language of the *Qur'an*), and she believed by doing this she could get the best reward from Allah. Therefore, in her in-service training, she attended training sessions whenever she could find available time in her busy schedule. Sameerah's in-service training consisted of a selection of courses which enhanced her skills in leadership (e.g. time management and

motivating staff) and which provided professional development in teaching (e.g. technology in education, teaching students with special needs, giving effective feedback and teaching through problem solving). Sameerah was not trained in TBLT, but she believed courses such as problem-solving included aspects of TBLT.

In addition to her in-service training, the informal communication between Sameerah and her husband, who worked as a teacher educator in Arabic, and his feedback on observed lessons, which she was practicing at home particularly in her first-year experience, had most impact in directing her away from traditional approaches of teaching (lecturing and linguistic practice) to more inductive approaches.

5.2.6 Nadiah

Nadiah was 36 years old and held a bachelor's degree in Arabic and Literature and a master's degree in Linguistics from King Abdul-Aziz University. She showed her willingness to study for a PhD abroad as she believed that she would be able to build both her theoretical and practical knowledge. Nadiah had ten years of experience as a language teacher, five years in a private high school and five at the university level. Nadiah decided to study for an MA to develop her knowledge. During that time, she was offered a job as a lecturer, and she had been working there for five years

During her schooling, a traditional teacher-centred approach was also used for the delivery of lessons. She shared her negative experience as a learner when she was one of few students who had critical thinking skills, and who liked to share their opinions and discuss what had been taught. Her teachers were always asking her to keep her questions and focus only on her textbook. Eventually, she started to be passive like the others. She remembered that her teachers expected students to prepare and read lessons in advance, and they might get angry if they noticed that students came to class unprepared. During class time, after explicit explanation of linguistic items, teachers usually gave students worksheets and they had to

answer the questions individually to ensure they understood the main points. Another issue that she experienced during school learning was a lack of teacher support for individual learners during class time. Students were expected to complete their homework at home, either on their own or with help from their families or by seeking help in the form of private lessons.

Nadiah did not see any difference between school and university learning as both were based on memorisation. She had completed assignments for her master's degree, but in general, she only expanded her linguistic knowledge. She found assessment through examinations based on linguistics and memorisation to be useless as she forgot lots of information after she passed her tests. Her experience through her study showed her that teachers want to show that they are the best and students should always rely on them and follow what they say. She was most critical about some of her professors in her master's course, who had received their higher education abroad and who tried to 'show off' with respect to their knowledge. She questioned how she could expect a change if even those who had studied in different cultures could not learn how to accept students' views that were supported by arguments, but that might be different from those of the teacher.

Because Nadia had graduated from a programme that did not require a practicum, she had been directed to attend intensive in-service training in her first three months to focus on building her skills in teaching, using mind maps and managing the classroom. She described her experience as a first step in her professional development. Nadiah found the training in communicative language teaching, the integration of technology and BLMS provided by the university development centre worthwhile because it exposed her to active learning, an approach which was different from the approach she was used to. However, Nadia complained because what she had learned in her training was totally different from real life; when she started to apply this approach, she found that in reality it was more complex. For

example, the approach does not focus on the use of language, and instruction in MSA is based on grammar.

The focus of the previous subsection was to present accounts of individual teacher profiles with the aim of reflecting on each teacher's experience as a language learner. A significant consideration in the following subsection is to bring the six profiles together and indicate similarities and differences across the participants' experiences.

5.2.7 Comparison across participants' profiles

From the initial interviews, it is clear that the six teachers all came from the same city in Saudi Arabia (Jeddah) and worked for King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU) as Arabic teachers on the foundation-year programme. All were native Arabic speakers, and their ages were between 30 and 45. They were all experienced teachers but novices in the TBLT approach. Six of them held a Master's degree, four in the field of Linguistics and two in Literature. In addition, the majority (four out of six) had either finished a PhD or were studying for one at the time of the study in KSA.

Given that each teacher had a minimum of ten years of professional experience as a teacher at the time of the current study, and that all had been out of school for a long time, it was not expected that there would be evidence of the use of TBLT in their early schooling. In their schooling, the participating teachers all showed similar learning experiences. The teachers who had attended both public and private schools had studied within a traditional teacher-centred (top-down) Saudi education system. They identified aspects of their schooling, including the memorisation of textbooks, a focus on grammatical rules and little (if any) participation in the class. The participants' undergraduate and postgraduate experiences in different universities in Saudi Arabia were a little different in that at the university level, they became more independent, they relied less on the textbook and they developed critical thinking skills. The authority of Saudi teachers reported by the participants

based on their experiences appeared either in their controlling of students' behaviour (in school) or in their directing of students to a particular view (in university); this seems to have had a strong influence on all teachers' learning experiences.

The majority of the teachers (five out of six) had quite a lot in common in early learning experiences as they all had studied in the 1990s and had graduated from King Abdul-Aziz University. Their programmes were characterised by a lack of professional teacher development (pedagogy and practicum). They had received similar short in-service trainings in strategies or approaches to active learning, which shared some of the same principles as TBLT, but they had not been extensively trained or exposure directly to TBLT. They all had easy online access to books and journals but they were professionals in Arabic, and available literature in the field of TBLT written in Arabic (where it existed) was limited. Moreover, they had access to teacher development training only within their workplace. Hind was a bit different in that she had learning experience in the UK. Sara, in contrast, was the only teacher with experience of pre-service education who had pedagogical knowledge and teaching experience in high school as she graduated from a different public institution called the Faculty of Education; she was the only teacher who had been trained in TBLT for a period of one week before she started working at the university. A summary of the profiles of the six participants is provided in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 *Summary of teacher profiles.*

Name	Experience	Qualifications	TBLT training	Influences in teaching practice.
Hind	3 years as a teacher in a private high school; 1 year as an administrator at KAU; 7 years as a teacher at KAU.	BA in Arabic and Literature; MA in Modern Literary Criticism; working towards PhD.	None	Learned English; studied in 2 contexts (KSA & UK); trained in the use of ICT, active learning, class management.
Sara	3 years as a teacher in private high school; 6 years at KAU.	BA in Arabic and Literature; MA in Linguistics; working towards PhD.	Yes (one week)	Pre-service training; practicum (6 months in high school); training in TBLT, flipped classroom and brainstorming.
Mona	1 year as a teacher in the Arab Open University; 12 years as a teacher at KAU.	BA in Arabic and Literature; MA in Linguistics.	None	Training in BLMS and collaborative learning.
Reem	12 years as a teacher at KAU.	BA in Arabic and Literature; MA in Modern Arabic Literature; PhD in Saudi Arabian Literature.	None	Training in integrating technology in education, active learning, teaching Arabic for non-native speakers, and mind map in teaching.
Sameerah	15 years experience as a teacher at KAU.	BA in Arabic and Literature; MA in Linguistics; PhD in Linguistics (Arabic grammar).	None	Training in teaching students with special needs, giving effective feedback and teaching through problem solving; informal education (her husband worked as a teacher educator in Arabic).
Nadiah	5 years as a teacher in private high school; 5 years as a teacher at KAU.	BA in Arabic and Literature; MA in Linguistics.	None	Training in mind maps, managing classroom, communicative approach, integrating of technology and BLMS.

Table 5.1 shows that teachers have been exposed to similar influences; it is not, therefore, surprising to find shared knowledge and practice among them.

5.3 Main themes

The previous section provided a comparison across the six teachers' backgrounds, experience as language learners and experience in learning to teach (pre-/in-service professional development and practicum), with a particular emphasis on teacher preparation for TBLT implementation. The following subsections present the main themes identified within teachers' understanding of TBLT data, which include teachers' understanding of 'task', teachers' attitudes towards TBLT and TBLT in practice. These themes will be discussed in turn throughout the rest of the chapter.

5.3.1 Teachers' understanding of 'task'

In section 3.7.1 it was demonstrated that the implementation of TBLT is influenced by teachers' understanding of the principles and practice of the innovation (Van den Branden, 2009). According to Ellis and Shintani (2013) key issues that teachers may experience when integrating TBLT into their classrooms are firstly related to understanding the notion of task and the task-based approach to language teaching, and then implementing it in practice. It has been argued that inadequate understanding of innovation often contributes to failure in, or rejection of, the implementation of an innovation (Erlam, 2016; Fullan, 2007). On the other hand, Ellis (2009) identified a number of principles which could facilitate the implementation of TBLT; one of them is the need for teachers to understand the concept of task. Carless (2015) and East (2017) also illustrate the relationship between the successful implementation of TBLT and teachers' understanding of the basic notion of task and its place in practice. For the purpose of the study I adapted Carless' (2015) definition of understanding as the ability to articulate the principles of TBLT in a way that indicates knowledge of TBLT theory and an awareness of the classroom implication of its principles in practice. Although there is an ongoing debate about what a 'task' is, Ellis (2003, 2018) brings together several core principles which are repeatedly emphasised across different definitions in the literature and

argues that a language activity can considered to be a task when it meets the following criteria:

1. Involvement has a primary focus on meaning.

2. There should be some sort of gap.

3. There is some sort of relationship to real-world activities.

4. Students should rely on their resources.

5. The outcome of task should extend beyond the use of language.

As has been outlined in previous TBLT research focusing on teacher cognition (e.g. Carless, 2015; East, 2012), a teacher might hold an incomplete understanding of TBLT. Above I have considered the criteria by which an activity can be evaluated as a task. Taking such criteria into account in the new operational context of Saudi Arabia, a range of conceptualisations of task might arise by examining teachers' current understanding of 'task' in initial interviews. The participants were not informed about the principles before the data were collected to ensure that teachers were not adapting their behaviour in the classroom based on those principles which the researcher was focusing on. This provided an opportunity to investigate each teacher's current understanding of TBLT principles and to identify the knowledge required in their future TBLT training. This section analysis teachers' understandings of TBLT and a summary of criteria established by Ellis (2003) and the teachers who referred to each criterion is shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 *Criteria of task referred to by teachers.*

Criterion	Hind	Sara	Mona	Reem	Sameerah	Nadiah
Focus on meaning	√	√	X	X	√	√
Having information gap	X	√	X		X	X
Students rely on their resources	√	√	√	√	X	X
Relation to real-world activities	√	√	X	X	√	√
Outcome beyond the use of language	X	X	X	X	X	X

With this in mind, Hind reported her understanding of TBLT as follows:

> In simple language, TBLT is a way to involve learners to learn communicatively, or in other words, to use the language and achieve a clear aim independently. (Hind, Interview 1, 2016)

Here, Hind's extract emphasises some principles of TBLT, such as 'use of the language'. Since tasks are considered central elements in TBLT, Hind was asked to provide her own definition of the term 'task' and she described it as 'an activity which aims to engage a group of students in contexts similar to those which exist in the real life' (Hind, interview 1, 2016).

It was apparent that although Hind had experience of studying through TBLT and, to some extent, had been exposed to the nature of a task in the UK, she had received no direct training in TBLT. Her knowledge was still not developed as she did not mention the significance of non-linguistic outcomes and the reliance on students' resources. She also did not refer to the importance of having an information gap in the task.

In her interview, Sara showed a partly developed understanding of the TBLT approach by using her own words as follows:

> Interactive learning is a very effective way in learning, and individuals can acquire information within the group. Group A, for example, has some information which is not provided to group B so they should communicate to achieve the goal. (Sara, interview 1, 2016)

In the initial interview conducted for the current study, Sara emphasised different aspects of TBLT. For example, in her extract above she stressed interaction and autonomous learning as

the main features of TBLT. She also focused on the priority of having a gap, and on non-linguistic outcomes; these are two main criteria by which a language activity is judged to be a 'task'. The extract below from her Interview 1 illustrated her understanding of the term 'task' by her identification of these two elements:

> Each of them 'means student' knows her task, so that before they start anything they should know what are they working on and what they need to complete the task… The students should have tasks to follow and then a target; they should all know and agree on this from the beginning. The task should be similar with what we meet in actual every day live. (Sara, Interview 1, 2016)

It is apparent from Sara's quotes that she has outlined most of TBLT elements even though she has not used TBLT terminology.

Mona seemed to lack basic knowledge of TBLT implementation. In the following extract from a dialogue, I tried to determine Mona's existing level of knowledge:

> Researcher: What do you understand by the concept of task in TBLT?
> Mona: It consists of three stages: pre-task, the task itself and after the task, but we should focus on certain rules.
> Researcher: What do you mean by focusing on certain rules?
> Mona: I mean each time I should explain to them some linguistic items which they are likely to use
> Researcher: Anything else about task criteria?
> Mona: No, it is only interaction between students to complete a task.
> Researcher: Tell me about some aspects of TBLT.
> Mona: In TBLT there is interaction between the teacher and the students and between the students themselves while the teacher only guides them. The emphasis is on students looking for information, and the teacher can only help them in their search and guide them. This is the opposite of traditional learning where the teacher has the major role. (Mona, Interview 1, 2016)

As these statements show, Mona demonstrated no clear understanding of the term 'task' and its features. For example, she did not mention the priority of focusing on meaning; instead, her emphasis was on the explicit teaching of linguistic forms. She also did not refer to the need for a gap or non-linguistic outcomes. Her understanding of the term 'task' as students' interaction did not distinguish it from any other group work activities.

For Reem, TBLT meant 'dividing the students into groups, to work together to achieve a specific aim'. She seemed partially aware of the importance of engaging the

learner's interests through real-world tasks, and she could see the impact of TBLT on

enhancing independent learning and improving problem-solving skills as the following

extract shows:

> I know when students involve in task, they can rely more on themselves to find
> soulution to their problems.' (Reem, Interview 1, 2016)

Reem seemed unable to differentiate between 'task' and 'activity' and therefore appeared

unaware of the need for an informational gap. The following extract reflected her lack of

knowledge as she tried to explain her understanding of task by referring to grammatical

exercises. She also seemed to lack confidence and was unwilling to articulate clearly what

she understood by 'task' as the following extract indicates:

> Researcher: What is your understanding of 'task'?
> Reem: It is activity which the teacher designs to enhance language learning so
> students will need each other to complete the task.
> Researcher: Can you clarify?
> Reem: For example, when students need to discuss and decide which verb form they
> must select in a gap-fill activity. So, they communicate to decide which verb is more
> accurate
> Researcher: So, is there a difference between 'task' and 'activity'?
> Reem: No not really; they are synonymous. Activity and task are all the same. (Reem,
> Interview 1, 2016)

From Reem's extract it is clear that she lacked theoretical knowledge of TBLT as she

mentioned the focus on linguistic features rather than meaning and focused also on having a

linguistic outcome by choosing the most accurate form.

Sameerah was another example of a teacher who appeared to have a surface

knowledge of TBLT. For example, she was unsure of what exactly TBLT meant. In her view,

TBLT was:

> … an approach that focuses on an active learning and students accomplishing a
> defined task. The focus here is on the meaning, not the rules. It is a way for learning
> while you have fun. (Sameerah, Interview 1, 2016)

In her response above Sameerah identified interaction between groups of students and a focus on meaning as fundamental features of TBLT for her. In another extract from the same interview, she made a comment which seemed to equate above mentioned task criteria:

> TBLT a special learning approach, different from the traditional one; because students need to communicate for meaning first the activity should also reflect the real lives communication. (Sameerah, Interview 1, 2016)

However, Sameerah made no comments that showed awareness of the significance of learners' non-linguistic production or of the need for a gap to make the communication meaningful; these are considered two main criteria by which a language exercise may be called a 'task'.

Nadiah, on the other hand, seemed aware of the significance of focusing on meaning rather than explicitly explaining linguistic structures in TBLT. This appeared in her interpretation of TBLT as follows:

> Teachers interact with her students in one way or another, but it will not be based on giving the information. I think this is the most important point in the TBLT approach. (Nadiah, Interview 1, 2016)

However, Nadiah demonstrated little difference from the majority of the other teachers in the study as her knowledge of 'task' was also not developed. Her narrow understanding was evidenced when she was asked to define 'task', and she answered:

> A task should be motivating and reflect real life and not focus on the use of language accurately.

Although she identified the focus on meaning and reflecting real world in the task, she was unable to articulate several other key principles although she was encouraged by prompt questions in interview 1:

> Researcher: What also the term 'task' could involve?
> Nadiah: I think what I have said are the main features of a task.
> Researcher: You mean motivating and authentic and focus on meaning?
> Nadiah: Yes, true.

This section has examined teachers' current understanding of TBLT in view of Ellis's (2003) criteria as this can help to identify the gap in their knowledge which need to be taken further in in-service training. Responses from initial interviews can be classified as 'non-developed' as four out of the six teachers demonstrated a surface level of understanding of what a task might involve, and of how it is different from communicative language teaching and linguistic exercises. Hind and Sara showed a partially developed understanding although there was little evidence of their understanding in an actual classroom.

As is seen in Table 5.2 the most frequent features of 'task' mentioned by the teachers in their initial interviews concerned the focus on meaning and the connection with the real world. None of the participants, however, referred to the criterion that a task should have a non-linguistic outcome. This suggests that teachers' theoretical understandings of TBLT as conceptualised in the literature (e.g. Ellis, 2003) were limited. Section 5.3.2 focuses on how the teachers perceived the implementation of TBLT in the Arabic classroom and section 5.3.3 provides descriptions of the participating teachers' principles regarding the implementation of TBLT in their actual classroom practice.

5.3.2 Teachers' attitudes towards TBLT

Studies of factors that affect the success of implementing change indicate that teachers' attitudes to innovation are considered a critical variable (Murrar, 2013). On the other hand, it is argued that resistance to change is likely to occur if innovation is incompatible with teachers' attitudes (Stoller, 2009). This section, therefore, discusses the general attitudes of Arabic teachers towards the implementation of TBLT in the Arabic classroom, which emerged from their initial interview responses. The interviews included open-ended questions in which teachers were asked to state their attitude towards the use of the TBLT approach in Arabic classrooms.

The results indicated that four out of the six teachers had an overall positive attitude

about the implementation of TBLT. They gave several reasons why they were in favour of it,

which will be discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

In terms of attitude towards TBLT, Hind's responses revealed her generally positive

attitude to TBLT. She believed that she was implementing TBLT in her class, confirming that

the use of TBLT was more effective than the traditional approach because students were

more motivated. The extract below highlighted her positive views and her reason for being

positive:

> I like this approach and I prefer it more than the traditional one because of many reasons: the task represents a challenge for students, such a challenge motivates the student to finish a task or come out with better outcome. (Hind, Interview 1, 2016)

Sara explicitly stated that she was willing to apply TBLT successfully in her class.

Commenting on the reasons why she liked TBLT, she said:

> As university students, we want them to depend on themselves in their learning. (Sara, Interview 1, 2016)

She also raised the significance of TBLT as a factor enhancing students' internal motivation

by saying:

> Eventually 'TBLT' becomes a kind of competition where each group wants to be better than the other so they do their best to complete their task and this facilitate learning. (Sara, Interview 1, 2016)

In her initial interview, Mona claimed to be positive when she was asked directly saying:

> Honestly, the students now are separated from Modern Standard Arabic. It's more like a foreign language for them; they could understand some words but not all the words or the roles I consider the standard Arabic for today's generation as a foreign language unfortunately, and I think TBLT can provide them with opportunity to use MSA and this might enhance their level. (Mona, Interview 1, 2016)

She, however, contradicted herself in other extracts from her initial interviews when she said

that she preferred the eclectic approach because of the impracticality of TBLT in the Saudi

context. Mona's extract below illustrates this point:

> I have attended one course about TBLT and found that I can't apply the TBLT perfectly without having the appropriate environment and that made me feel depressed somehow and I prefer eclectic approach so first part is theoretical that gives

students the basics of the subject in a simple way and then use the task. (Mona, Interview 1, 2016)

As I will demonstrate in 5.3.3 Mona's classroom behaviour and post-observation interview data provided further support for my interpretation as it was evident that her lessons were mainly teacher centred, which did not reflect a generally positive orientation to TBLT.

Reem generally showed a positive attitude by saying:

It (means TBLT) is a good approach and interactive method for education, even if the numbers of student are large. I think it brings the student closer to the teacher because there is a dialogue between both parties. In this way, the teacher will be aware of the students' needs. It is also a good method for the students as they will be more independent and they will have experiences of how to deal with problems. (Reem, Interview 1, 2016)

In another extract, Reem showed her willingness to apply this approach in schools to prepare the new generation for their future as well as to manage the proposed change under the banner of Saudi Vision 2030, although her general attitude to language learning and particularly error correction discussed below do not support her attitude to TBLT:

I think it is appropriate because we are in the changing stage, and it is one of the fundamentals of change the individuals to become more dependent on themselves, and have the ability to discuss, and solve problems. This method facilitates the change process. (Reem, Interview 1, 2016)

Sameerah was also positive towards TBLT and the extract below shows why she was in favour of the approach:

It [TBLT] is a special learning approach, different from the traditional one; it motivates interaction between the students for the purpose of learning. The best thing about this method is that learning happens spontaneously, students are not forced to learn. It focuses on the student and reinforces self-independency, I am with this approach if the students are guided correctly. (Sameerah, Interview 1, 2016)

In another extract, she stated her support of TBLT:

Although there are some problems related to TBLT implementation in the Saudi context, in my view they are not big issues that could impede the application of it, especially as it has proved its efficiency in improving the students' level and motivating them. (Sameerah, Interview 1, 2016)

However, this claim was not substantiated in practice as she was mainly adapting the weak

version of TBLT. Nadiah also held a positive attitude and thought TBLT enhanced learners from different perspectives. In her own words, she stated:

> At first, it teaches them how to find information which they need and this is an important skill. Secondly, students can practice MSA, which they have little exposure to. Thirdly, they talk and then receive reactionary effect, feedback, and evaluation which lead to acquisition of this language. (Nadiah, Interview 1, 2016)

The findings based on initial interview data indicated that five out of the six teachers in the current study expressed a generally positive attitude to TBLT. Mona was the only teacher who showed her positive orientation toward TBLT although other extracts from interview and observation data contradicted her positive view. This suggested that teachers were willing to implement TBLT in their classrooms although they showed a superficial theoretical understanding of the term 'task' as shown in section 5.3.1 and in their practice which will be discussed in the next section in more detail.

5.3.3 TBLT in practice

Collecting data only from initial interviews was not an efficient way to investigate teachers' understanding of TBLT. Borg (2009) and Van den Branden (2012) suggest that teachers' understandings and beliefs are not investigated simply by self-reporting on questionnaires or in interviews about these matters; instead, it is important to include class-based knowledge. This can be viewed with reference to particular behaviour (e.g. classroom observation) followed by interviews in order to gain insights into teachers' core belief systems that underpin their behaviour and decision-making in the class within which their deep understanding is situated.

With regard to TBLT in particular, Leaver and East (2017) argue that in order to integrate TBLT successfully in a particular context, it is important to identify how the term 'task' is used in practice in that setting. Therefore, following the initial interviews, in order to examine teachers' practical knowledge, they were observed twice in their classes – the place where they could best demonstrate their understanding of the TBLT principles and sequence.

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No attempt was made to measure teachers' proficiency in using TBLT or to evaluate the extent in which TBLT in practice was aligned to TBLT principles in the literature, but rather the aim was to explore the manner in which TBLT was implemented in a live, naturally occurring classroom environment. The researcher was the only observer, and field notes were taken with specific attention to the types of activities used, assessment of learners' production, grammar teaching and feedback. The third phase of data collection involved post-observation face-to-face interviews, which were conducted immediately after the lessons observed. The main purpose of these interviews was to discuss teachers' pedagogical decisions related to TBLT principles during the class observed. This is supported by Wyatt and Borg (2011) and East (2012), who suggest that asking teachers to reflect on their behaviour in the classroom can help to explore factors that indirectly shape their attitude and understanding.

The following subsections provide descriptions of the participating teachers' principles regarding the implementation of TBLT in their actual classroom practice. They also identify the rationale underlining their principles based on post-observation interviews in which teachers were given an opportunity to reflect on their decision-making in their practice. Since these principles were common among teachers, detailed examples of some teachers adopting TBLT are presented rather than more superficial data of all the participants in connection with each principle. This approach can help to enhance our understanding of how TBLT was implemented and what the implications might be.

5.3.3.1 Introducing language focus in the pre-task phase

Observation data revealed that five out of six teachers in the current study started their lessons by providing students with a model which included the language that they were more likely to use in the task cycle. Sara presented an interesting example of Arabic teachers who shifted in their thinking from a traditional to a more learner-centred approach. She had been

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attempting to integrate TBLT in her Arabic classroom, but due to the nature of the Arabic language, she had to modify TBLT to TSLT, which she thought would be more appropriate to teaching MSA to native Arabic speakers. She described a scenario when she assigned the topic of 'writing a CV' and a focus on the use of *'kana wa Akhwatuha'* as a linguistic feature. In her words:

> I started the lesson by providing pictures of old and new house and asking my students to describe the houses and rooms. The problem was that the students used colloquial language. It is difficult in Arabic to focus only on meaning because students are more likely use the variety used for communication, not MSA. Therefore, students should be prepared to the use the target language in the pre-task phase. (Sara, post-observation interview1, 2016)

From Sara's extract, it could be said that the use of task as a vehicle to prepare students to use the target language went beyond factors such lack of understanding, as the application of the strong version of TBLT was hindered by the nature of the Arabic language.

Nadiah provided another example of teachers who tended to draw students' attention to language before asking them to carry out a task. In her class, she started with a pre-task activity in which students were provided with a listening activity talking about Muhammed and his history of careers. Nadiah then wrote some sentences on the board with the aim of providing students with the language needed in the task when they wrote a CV, and she asked students to practise them, as shown in Extract #1.

Extract	Translation
ماذا كان يعمل محمدا؟	What was Muhammed doing?
كان محمد مدرسا لمادة العلوم	Muhammed was a teacher of science
ماذا أصبح يعمل محمدا؟	What does Muhammed do?
أصبح محمد يعمل في التجارة	Muhammed is working in business
ماذا ترغبين أن تصبحي في المستقبل؟	What do you want to become in the future?
أرغب أن أكون.....	I want to be…
وأنت ماذا ترغبين أن…………؟	And you what do you want to…?

After presenting the model, as is seen, from Extract #1, the focus was on form. By writing the model on the board, Nadia likely intended to show her willingness to prepare students to remember this particular form *'kana wa Akhwatuha'* and use it in their task performance. This behaviour was later confirmed during her post-observation interview, when she was asked to reflect on her behaviour:

> Modern Standard Arabic is complex and it is very important to draw students'
> attention to language use. Otherwise, they will not be able to acquire it and fulfil the
> exam requirements. Providing students with the language before they used it is a way
> of controlling what I wanted them to learn because every lesson should cover a
> linguistic feature it is also a way to direct them to use MSA which exist in the
> recording. (Nadiah, post observation interview 2, 2016)

A different pattern of practice was observed in Reem's class as she has been shown to shift to more form-focused lessons, in which students first reviewed some language from previous lesson and chose the correct answer from multiple choice questions. This was done individually and then checked by the teacher. She then focused on language. Extract #2 provides an example of how Reem explained the target grammar explicitly suggesting a correspondence to a weak version of TBLT.

<u>Extract # 2</u>

The process of conjugating a verb in Arabic is simple:

1. identify the tense you are conjugating for;

2. determine who the subject is; and

3. add the proper suffix/prefix combination to the base verb.

The subject pronoun can be singular, dual or plural. The subject can be omitted in many cases if you are referring to a previously mentioned subject. Subjects might also be a part of the verb.

After explicit explanation of grammar, the teacher then gave students a worksheet with grammar-based exercises. They were asked to identify present-tense verbs and their subjects.

It was noticed that Reem, in the majority of her observed lessons, was devoted to what could be described as a deductive approach in which explicit explanation and focus on form was more strongly emphasised than carrying out tasks and asking students to use the language. The rationale behind this type of grammar task was explained as follows:

> … to ensure that students improve their linguistic ability so they can use the language any time. Teaching Modern Standard Arabic required focusing more on explaining grammar in more details. (Reem, Interview 2, 2016)

This approach both reflects her own beliefs about how the Arabic language is taught effectively and showed her preferred style of learning. Reem's response below further exemplifies these factors:

> I like the method that combines the traditional approach and TBLT. I have to explain and ask students to practise the role first before they use it. In the end, the students have different abilities and not all of them can learn from trial and error. For example, I don't learn from trial and error directly. I need someone to explain the role to me, then I understand and apply what I have learned. (Reem, Interview 3, 2016)

It seemed that Reem was different from Sara and Nadiah in that her lesson focused on practising language rather than the use of language; this suggests that her general teaching

orientation seemed not to be congruent with the principles of TBLT (Ellis, 2003) which were identified in section 5.3.1. Reem, however, was similar to Sara and Nadiah in that she struggled with the implementation of TBLT because of the demands and features of the Arabic language. This could suggest that the implementation of the strong version of TBLT presented a challenge in the context of the Arabic language, in which diglossia exists. The following subsection presents data to illustrate another common aspect of teaching in the task cycle.

5.3.3.2 Explicit corrective feedback in the task phase

Observation data showed that teachers tended to give students corrective feedback about the language they used whenever they noticed errors. There was evidence of corrective feedback in pre-task activities when students practised the language presented in the model and during a task when students communicated to complete their tasks. It seemed that all the teachers took every opportunity to correct linguistic errors. The example in Extract #3 shows how Mona provided explicit grammar correction in her writing lesson. In this lesson, students were asked to write about their opinions about having a part-time job while they were studying; first, they were prepared with the language structure in the pre-task phase. Mona commented on the language used by students in Extract #3.

Extract #3

Extract	Translation
أعتقد أن العمل سيؤثر على تحصيل الطالب لانه سيصبح مشغول (مشغولا) بقضاء متطلبات العمل	I think that the work will affect the student's achievement because he will become busy with the requirement of the work
أظن أن الطالبة أن كان لديها هدفا (هدف) تسعى من أجل تحقيقه فسوف تتقن العمل والدراسة معا	I think that if student had goal which she seeks to achieve, she will master the work and study together.
تقدمت لعدة وظائف وأصبح امامي خيارين (خياران)	I applied to different careers and I had two options

To examine Mona's practical knowledge in more detail, she was asked about commenting on

students' errors in the task phase in her interview after class observation 1:

> Correcting the language used by students is very important. If I didn't correct the
> mistakes, the students would think that it is correct, and they would continue and
> work with these mistakes. It isn't necessary to give the correct answer, but I should
> point out that there is a mistake in the form used. I don't agree with leaving the
> mistake until I complete the task of the students. (Mona, Interview 2, 2016)

She seemed to agree with other teachers about the significance of accuracy in MSA, but she

valued strategies that supported indirect feedback and that directed students to self-

correction, while most other teachers seemed to be quite explicit in their correction.

Hind is another teacher who emphasised accuracy in her lessons, but she seemed

uncertain about the value of error correction in the task cycle. When asked to reflect on her

behaviour after observation 1, she said:

> For the second phase, the teacher might be afraid that she can hear many mistakes. If
> she is silent in this phase, she might forget to comment on these mistakes unless if the
> teacher is good at writing notes and mistakes for each group and ensures that she
> doesn't miss anything. I cannot leave their errors without correction; otherwise, they
> cannot be accurate in MSA because they have little exposure to it out of class.
> Students use colloquial language out of class for communication. (Hind, Interview 2,
> 2016)

However, in another extract, she contradicted herself when she showed her preference for

playing a passive role and providing students with a correction-free environment:

> When the teacher uses the direct way in correcting the mistakes, some could feel
> embarrassed from their mistakes…some could be demotivated…some could revert
> because they fear to make mistakes, but when he let them be free, they could make
> mistakes or say correct staff and get creative, so it's nice when the teacher stays away
> from them in such a phase. (Hind, Interview 3, 2016)

It seems that Hind's behaviour was influenced by her approach towards how language should

be learnt. My interpretation of this is that for Hind, accuracy was significant and every

grammatical error should be corrected to facilitate accurate production. This should be done

without harming students emotionally or diminishing their motivation. The following sub-

section presented data about the task which was commonly used and how students were assessed.

5.3.3.3 Type of task and outcome assessment

It was anticipated that teachers would use different types of activities, varying in the extent to which they can be called 'tasks' as judged against Ellis' (2003) criteria. The lack of theoretical knowledge among teachers referred to in Ellis' principle 5 (2003), as illustrated in Table 5.2, was evidenced in the teachers' practice as observation data indicated that the tasks used by five out of the six teachers were mostly opinion gap tasks which had a language meaning outcome but were difficult to evaluate, or language exercises which had a linguistic outcome. For example, in her observation lessons, Nadiah provided students with written models of language using *''kana wa Akhwatuha''* followed by explicit explanation of this linguistic feature in her pre-task. She then asked students in groups to discuss the advantages and drawbacks of spending their summer holiday in Saudi Arabia. After engagement in this opinion task, students were asked individually to write a short paragraph on the advantages of spending a holiday in their country and to use *''kana wa Akhwatuha''*, the structure that had been explained to them explicitly in the pre-task phase. Teachers wrote some students' sentences on the board and corrected their grammatical mistakes. Nadia was asked to reflect on the outcome that students achieved:

> Students managed to use the structure of *'kana wa Akhwatuha'* and were then assessed based on their accuracy of the use this particular structure. This can enhance their linguistic ability and prepare them for their exams. (Nadia, Interview 3, 2016)

In this case Nadiah was closer to what Ellis (2017) refers to as a focus task in 'task supported language teaching' (TSLT) than to TBLT in that it focused on teaching the language and used the task to practise it rather than asking students to engage in the task with the use of any language. Sara also used this type of task and gave the following rationale:

> We must use this type of task. We cannot focus on communicative tasks because in our situation we use TBLT with native speakers, and they do not need to enhance

their communicative skills because they use colloquial language for communication. However, focusing on a task can help Arabic speakers to practice the language of MSA and to use it for academic, medic and formal situations. (Sara, Interview 2, 2016)

Language-based activities is another type of task that were also observed in Sameerah's class, in which students had to communicate and discuss interesting activities they participated in at the weekend. The teachers then asked students to read their worksheets and work as a group to identify the past tense and notice how it was used. They then answered individually in a gap-fill activity.

Such tasks have a common feature in that they have no meaning-based outcome. They are also arguably difficult to assess because they require the exchange of opinions and have no single correct outcome (Ellis, 2012). Teachers in the current study tended to use this type of task and assess the outcome based on accuracy rather than relating to the achievement of the communicative aim. However, Hind was different in that the tasks that she used in her lessons had an outcome other than the use of language. In her Observation 1, she asked students to discuss in groups their opinion about the workshops provided for students in the university and to agree on their preferred workshop. In this task, students had to listen to each other, to discuss the topic and to achieve a non-linguistic outcome. In her post observation interviews Hind was asked to describe the way she implemented her task and the rationale behind her behaviour:

I used to learn English in the UK by this was and I found it effective. We involved as a group, discuss something and arrive to decision. We were given an opportunity to present our work but this was not very often. (Hind, interview 2, 2016)

When I asked her whether she gave her students an opportunity to report back on what they had been discussing to the whole class, she answered:

My students are in favour when they present their task and listen to other groups' tasks but honestly, I run out of time mostly before they report on their discussions. (Hind, Interview 2, 2016)

This section has presented the main principles underpinning teachers' practice and reported the rationales behind their behaviours. Among reasons identified were their beliefs about how a language should be learnt and taught, beliefs about accuracy, and the nature of Modern Standard Arabic which is characterised by the accurate use of language and digolssia. Table 5.3 summarises the findings from classroom observations and post-observations interviews and shows the common principles of TBLT implementation and the rationales associated to them which could reflect, to some extent, teachers' core belief systems.

Table 5.3 *Summary of observation data and rationale behind practice*

Principles	Rationales
Introduction the lessons with a model which includes the target language	• To prepare students to use the target linguistic item during the task • To prepare students for exams • To control what is learnt • To deal with the diglossia of MSA
Explicit explanation of language	• To fit with teachers' style of learning • To address the complexity of MSA grammar
Immediate explicit correction of language errors	• To avoid making similar mistakes • To enhance accuracy in MSA
The use of focus task	• To enhance students' competence • To prepare students for exams • The address the nature of Arabic

5.4 Summary

This chapter has explored three themes within teachers' understandings of TBLT which address the first research question. The chapter began with an introduction in 5.1; teacher profiles were presented then in 5.2; and main themes were provided in 5.3. The chapter closed with a summary in 5.4. The findings show that the TBLT understanding of four out of the six teachers was considered to be 'not developed', as the notion of 'task' was defined in a narrow manner as a type of activity involving oral communication, especially pair and group work. Those teachers made comments that demonstrated either a complete lack of

understanding of TBLT principles or problems in mastering how to implement this new approach in their classrooms. The empirical data showed that teachers with their current knowledge were struggling to implement TBLT. They gave more emphasis to form than to meaning; for instance, they prepared students by drawing their attention to the target language during the pre-task, by giving language-based feedback during the task phase and by focusing on accuracy as an outcome after the task stage. In several cases, they used language-based activities which did not include the criteria of task. These principles diverged from the strong form of TBLT in Ellis (2003) which focuses on meaning in both the pre- and during-task stages.

On the other hand, Hind and Sara were more positive about the implementation of TBLT and they had taken some steps to integrate TBLT in their classrooms; however, they were still in the process of developing their knowledge, as there was not sufficient evidence of TBLT implementation in a way proposed in the literature. While a lack of understanding was a prohibiting factor, the diglossia of Arabic and teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching presented another challenge influencing effective TBLT implementation. Further constrains which played a crucial role in shaping the implementation of TBLT in the Arabic classroom are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6. Findings: Teachers' concerns regarding the implementation of TBLT

6.1 Introduction

As previously outlined in Chapter 1, the second aim of the current study was to explore the nature of the concerns which higher education teachers of Arabic in Saudi Arabia experience with the use of TBLT. This chapter presents the empirical findings of the second main theme and principally addresses the second research question.

The chapter begins by introducing the main theme in section 6.2, followed by a presentation of themes identified from open-ended statements in which each teacher was invited to complete a standard format developed by Hall and Hord (1987). Data were also derived from observations and post-observation interviews conducted to allow teachers to share their thoughts on what had been observed. The Concern-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) through the dimension of Stages of Concern (SoC) (Hall & Hord, 1987; Hall, 2014) was used as the theoretical lens through which to determine the types of concerns that have been shown to be factors affecting TBLT implementation in the Saudi context. The importance of the CBAM framework is based on the notion that facilitating change means understanding the existing concerns of those involved in the change process; therefore, individual concerns must be identified (Hall, 2014). Five themes related to teachers' concerns are discussed; these are knowledge-related concerns (6.2.1), time-related concerns (6.2.2), teacher-related concerns (6.2.3), context-related concerns (6.2.4) and mixed-stages concerns (6.2.5). The chapter concludes by presenting a brief summary in 6.3 prior to presenting the findings of the third theme in Chapter 7.

6.2 Teachers' concerns towards TBLT implementation

Having discussed examples of teachers' concerns about TBLT in section 3.7.2, this section aims to explore a number of issues that emerged from open-ended statements adapted from

the SoC. Two classroom observations were used, and these were followed by interviews in order to identify the SoC of Modern Standard Arabic teachers implementing TBLT at King Abdul Aziz University at the time when the data were collected. Concern is defined, according to Hall (2013) as personal feelings and thought about an issue, phenomenon as it is perceived. Based upon the theoretical framework of CBAM (Hall & Hord, 1987) and seen through the dimension of SoC (see Table 6.1), concerns about innovation progress through six developmental stages beginning with non-concerns, which are categorised as self-concerns, to management categories such as concerns about the task of adopting innovation, and ending with the refocusing stage, categorised as concerns about the impact of innovation on students' learning. Table 6.1 presents five main themes which were identified in the current study. Three of them were pre-existing, and they are shown with their related levels and categories in the SoC model, which was explained in more detail in Chapter 2. Teachers also experienced two other stages: context-related concerns and mixed-stages concerns. The five themes are discussed in the following subsections.

Table 6.1 *Teachers' Concerns about TBLT*

Categories of concerns	Stage of Concern (SoC)	Themes in the study	Type of theme
Impact concerns	6. Refocusing	None	
Impact	5. Collaboration	None	
Impact	4. Consequence	None	
Task / management concerns	3. Management	Management related concerns	Pre-existing
Personal concerns	2. Personal	Teacher related concerns	Pre-exiting
Personal	1. Informational	Knowledge related concerns	Pre-existing
Personal	0. Non-concerns	None	
		Context related concerns	Emergent
		Mixed stages	Emergent

6.2.1 Knowledge-related concerns (informational concerns)

According to Hall (2014) informational concerns reflect a lack of clarity about the proposed innovation, and individuals at this stage focus on learning more about the innovation. As summarised in Table 6.1, this theme represents Stage 2, the informational level, and is characterised as a phase of self-concern according to the SoC framework. It appears that for Arabic teachers in the current study, TBLT was an unfamiliar approach. This was evident from the findings of RQ1 as teachers showed uncertainty about what the notion of 'task' meant in view of basic principles (Ellis, 2003) and how to implement it in practice. Unsurprisingly, teachers were most anxious about their lack of pedagogical knowledge about TBLT. The confusion among teachers regarding the process of TBLT implementation with the need for more information was noticed as the theme most explicitly repeated by all teachers. The extracts below represent some examples that highlighted this issue.

Hind is an example of a teacher who identified issues she encountered when she implemented TBLT due to her lack of knowledge; she showed an interest in learning more about TBLT to deal with those issues when she said:

> I need courses that teach me how to deal with students and use good ways to motivate them; especially for careless students, using effective ways without telling them they are not being active or asking them why they aren't participating – there are some unconscious ways of turning lazy students into active participants. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016)

In her second post-observation interview, she made a claim for the TBLT informational need for herself and her colleagues, and she stressed her desire to build on her knowledge although she was trained in TBLT, saying:

> The process of applying TBLT is complex. For me, and I think for other teachers in our institution, we still have a lot of confusion about how to carry out TBLT lessons. I need all the correct principles that I can follow so that I can stand in front of my female students while fully understanding the idea. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016)

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Hind and Sara were not alone in their confusion as Mona's experience with TBLT was very

stressful due to the lack of teaching knowledge and not being trained in TBLT. She clearly

stated the area in which she thought she needed to elaborate more by saying:

> I do not need programmes in my subject area. I have a master's in my subject and if I need some subject knowledge, I know which reference I can use, so you can say I can support myself – but I need to know how to teach Arabic and how to deal with students of different levels and different backgrounds and how to appeal to them. I need to know how to adapt activities in the textbook to be more TBLT-like. I do not know how to choose activities that match students' level. Unfortunately, these areas are not given any consideration by the designers of in-service developmental programmes. (Mona, open-ended statement, 2016)

During observation 1, Mona showed no attempt to implement TBLT; rather, she controlled

the class using a traditional teaching approach and she occasionally involved students in

group work to practise language. She seemed uncertain about the effectiveness of TBLT in

enhancing students' performance. This could be associated with her lack of knowledge about

TBLT as is evident in the findings of RQ1. In her second post-observation interview, I

addressed her concerns, asking her to elaborate, and I raised several questions which

indicated her need to build her knowledge about the innovation:

> I have heard TBLT is an effective approach for language learning but I still have questions that need to be answered: how students can perform better with TBLT, in which condition, and why? I feel I need someone with expertise to answer my questions. (Mona, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

Reem complained that TBLT innovation was introduced to teachers without their

involvement, and they were asked to implement it without sufficient preparation:

> I and other teachers were introduced to TBLT at a faculty meeting. I had some trainings but I still feel I am not confident because I did not study this approach as part of our formal education, either in undergraduate or postgraduate classes. My courses focused on theoretical knowledge of Arabic and did not give attention to applied linguistics. I would like to know how I can deal with problems when I apply this approach. I am not completely familiar with everything about TBLT and I think I still needs more information to guide me with the complexity of TBLT in actual classroom.. (Reem, open-ended statement, 2016)

It seemed that for Reem, uncertainty about the TBLT approach was responsible, to some

extent, for her reluctance to implement TBLT in her teaching practice.

Sameerah was no different from the other participants who showed their concern due to a lack of input provided for teachers to implement TBLT. She identified knowledge in the field of Arabic learning and teaching, including teaching methods, as the area in which they wished to receive intensive training. She indicated a level of deficiency in her initial preparation when she argued:

> I feel that I was not well prepared to use TBLT successfully; I still need further qualifications in teaching skills and methods. I would like to know how and where I can learn more about TBLT. (Sameerah, open-ended statement, 2016)

Nadiah also raised the issue of catering for individual differences and seemed to be confused because what she found in practice was more complex than the input she received in her training. She argued, in her post-observation interview 2, that having sufficient knowledge about TBLT can increase the possibility of successful TBLT implementation, saying:

> It was easy to introduce us to TBLT innovation, and in training they told us what to do, but in a real situation the process is more complex. For example, I have been informed that every student should have a role during the task, but when I apply this approach, I have found that some students do not do anything and others are dominant. So, what can I do in this case? I am struggling and I think if I was well educated about TBLT approach, I would be more capable to sort out such issue. All these issues I am still not clear about. (Nadiah, post observation interview, 2).

The previous extracts show that teachers were most concerned about their knowledge of TBLT. Their uncertainty about the principles of TBLT and how to implement it in practice may indicate, to some extent, that teachers were more likely to show resistance to change in their practice. This was evident as the majority decided to adapt TBLT as it contradicted their core believe as it was shown in 5.3.3. Below further examples showed also how teachers either rejected or adapted TBLT for the reason of insufficient knowledge about TBLT.

Sara's following extract and observation data provided clear evidence that her lack of knowledge made her to adopt elective approaches:

> To be honest, I do not claim that I successfully implement TBLT in my classes because I do not have guidelines which inform me about what it is supposed to be done, and I am also not provided sufficiently well with strategies that help me to

recognise how to apply it. I chose from several approaches and strategies. (Sara, post-observation interview 2, 2015)

Reem also referred to the same problem but from a different perspective. For her, being less clear about how to divide students into groups represented a challenge which made her less inclined to use this approach:

> My problem is how to select the groups. I have not been told in any of the training sessions which I attended how to group students. Sometimes, the students want to work with their friends. I may give them a choice of groups, but then I notice they are from similar levels and they cannot benefit from each other. Being unaware of strategies to divide students has affected my decision-making in using TBLT and made me explicitly focus on form with whole class (Reem, post-observation interview 2).

It can be seen that all teachers showed informational concerns even Hind and Sara who showed better understanding than others suggesting that the movement to the next level of concern is not guaranteed. The implications of this will be provided in chapter 9. Other concerns identified by teachers and shown to be barriers affecting the management of change from traditional teaching approaches to TBLT are discussed in subsequent subsections. These are teacher-related, time-related and context-related concerns and mixed-stages concerns.

6.2.2 Teacher-related concerns (personal concerns)

The analysis of individual stages of concerns in the current study indicated that teachers identified some concerns related to themselves that affected their implementation of TBLT. This theme is most closely aligned to stage 2 (Personal) in the SoC framework. According to Hall and Hord (1987), individuals in this level are uncertain about the demands of the innovation, their ability to meet those demands, their role with regard to the innovation and the impact of TBLT on teachers. The concerns about the new demand of the innovation, capability to meet the demands, the new role in TBLT and the financial implications of TBLT were identified as the main categories under this theme.

The overall interpretation of data in the current study revealed that the teachers' practice and personal lives were greatly influenced by the implementation of TBLT. They

developed feelings of frustration due to a lack of ability to meet the challenges which TBLT

imposed on them. For example, Hind in her extract below felt threatened by the demand of

involving students which the change implied:

> To apply TBLT successfully, the teacher needs to motivate the students highly
> because she won't be able to supervise the whole process by herself […]. It takes a lot
> of effort for the teacher to guarantee the interaction of everyone in the group. In some
> cases, I found my students get bored and resisted taking part in classroom activities,
> and I did not know how to motivate them. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016)

Sara's practice was shaped by the requirement to implement TBLT. She referred to her mixed

feelings, saying that her initial feeling of motivation to implement the change had turn to a

feeling of anxiety and loss as she dealt with the innovation. She referred to her feelings as

follows:

> At the beginning, I was excited and I wanted my students' performance to develop
> through the implementation of TBLT, but when I became more involved in the use of
> TBLT, I started to feel frustrated by the requirements of the new innovation. To be
> honest, sometimes I feel lost. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016)

In her second post-observation interview, she stated that as the demands increased, she felt

increasingly overwhelmed and exhausted by TBLT principles and by her lack of ability to

motivate students to use the language:

> Sometimes I am concerned about whether the activity which my students are involved
> in is TBLT or not. Sometimes I don't know if I am focusing on the language used or
> not. I am used to learning and teaching with a traditional approach, and now I am
> concerned about changes in the way I am delivering information to the students. I am
> still uncertain that I am able to involve my students and engage them to use the
> language. I am not used to this process; it is too much for me. (Sara, post-observation
> interview 2, 2016)

There were limited available materials that suited the TBLT approach, and Sameerah showed

her doubts regarding her ability to integrate the new demands of innovation, especially when

designing appropriate materials which challenged students to complete the tasks:

> We have been introduced to the integration of TBLT and given the opportunity to
> select materials. From one point of view it gives teachers the freedom to choose, and
> this might enhance creativity. However, I do not know which materials are the
> appropriate for the university conceptual level. How do I know that I have chosen the
> right ones? I (Sameerah, open-ended statement, 2016)

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Teachers were not only concerned about the demands of TBLT presented above; in several extracts, the question of their ability to meet the new demands of the innovation was raised repeatedly. Hind, for example, expressed her concern about the use of TBLT by saying:

> It's also hard to divide the students into groups as they have different levels, different abilities and different personalities, and I am still not sure whether or not I am in the right place. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016).

Nadiah was not provided with any opportunity to practice TBLT in an actual classroom before implementing it, and this left her with a sense of uncertainty about her ability to observe and assess students when they were involved in a communicative task:

> The thing that I am worried about is that I am not able to monitor all the groups and evaluate all of the performances. I do not have any assistance and I do not know what to do. All I know if I was practicing this approach before implementing, such an issue might not be a factor. (Nadiah, open-ended statement, 2016).

Sameerah experienced different concerns as she had a student with special needs. In her extract below she described the difficulty she encountered when the activities in the class required movement:

> I have a student with special needs, and I always think about her when students are engaged in group work. They are required to find information from other groups, and this needs to move around in the class. I feel sorry for this student, and I am not prepared to deal with special needs learners. For me TBLT is demanding physically and emotionally. (Sameerah, open-ended statement, 2016)

The teachers' lack of ability to meet the demands of TBLT had a negative impact on different aspects of their personality, including self-confidence, self-image and motivation. This also affected the process of TBLT application. Sara clearly articulated her feelings, saying:

> I want to use TBLT but I fear that something will go wrong. I fear that I won't be able to deal with problems that arise in front of the students. When I ask students for examples to involve in an activity and I find some of them are dominant, or when I find the activity is not suitable for their levels, I start to feel nervous and this affects my confidence and in some cases I decide not to use the approach. (Sara, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

As is noted in this extract, the willingness to implement TBLT, the lack of teachers' competence and the impact of the affective filter suggest that the implementation of TBLT

was hindered by complex interrelated factors, not only by the teachers' lack of competence.

Hind was another example of a teacher who believed that when a teacher appears to be less competent, this might negatively affect their self-image and decision making in practice:

> I know that anything might go wrong in class. Students, for example, can take in negotiation more than I expect, so this can force me to go back to the traditional approach – at least I have competence with it, and if things do not work, I can use an alternative solution. (Hind, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

Another source relating to teachers' personal concerns was the financial implication of TBLT for teachers. In spite of agreement about the advantages of TBLT, data also revealed that there were contradictory views among teachers about the impact of financial issues raised by applying the innovation. Hind, for instance, said:

> It wasn't easy to find a specialised course, so I searched a lot till I found one. It was really very expensive, and I had to pay its fees in full. Moreover, the location of the course was so far from me. I think the university should be more serious in developing teachers and providing them with financial incentives. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016)

Reem raised her concerns regarding the financial support required to provide sufficient materials, and she argued the significance of supporting teachers financially, which in turn leads to more effective TBLT implementation:

> The class size is big and what really concerns me is that the materials provided are not sufficient. I sometimes pay from my own pocket to provide the entire class with the required materials, and this puts more pressure on me. (Reem, open-ended statement, 2016)

Sameerah, however, expressed a different view, as she valued the support provided for teachers in her institution to manage the transition:

> Implementing TBLT in our context is challenging. Both teachers and students are not accustomed to this approach, and preparing an effective class is demanding. The university invested in enhancing our professionalism. We, as university teachers, are lucky because we have free access to online resources and we can attend a number of professional development courses without worrying about the financial commitment. (Sameerah, open-ended statement, 2016).

The teachers in the current study were not only concerned about the financial implications of

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TBLT implementation. Nadiah, during her transition to TBLT, experienced a lot of stress which was mainly caused by her negative feelings about the impact of integrating TBLT on her social life. She described how she struggled to find time to spend with her family or to engage in her favourite hobby, saying:

> I used to spend much more time with my family chatting, laughing and talking about our problems. I also love writing in my spare time, but it has been a very long time since I wrote my last novel. (Nadiah, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

This subsection has shown that teacher resistance to change was influenced by a number of factors related to individual teachers representing Stage 3 in SoC model. While almost all teachers had personal concerns, they referred to different aspects, related in a complex way to this stage, and categorised as the demands of TBLT, lack of capabilities, the new role in TBLT and the impact of TBLT on teachers (Implications are provided in chapter 9). A summary of concerns related to personal level in CBAM is shown in Table 6.2. The next subsection shows how teachers struggled with management issues in TBLT implementation.
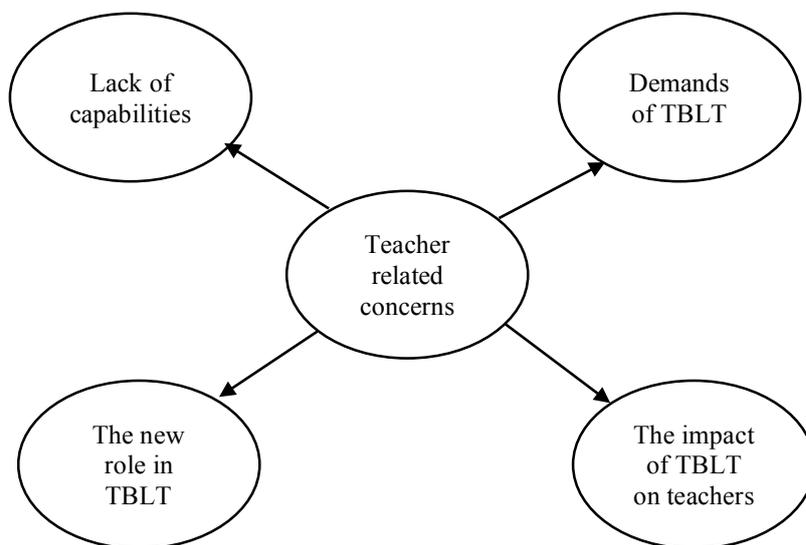
Figure 6.1 *Teachers' related concerns*

6.2.3 Management-related concerns (Management concerns)

Interpretation of the data revealed that the third most common concern that negatively affected the implementation of TBLT among Saudi teachers was related to management. Difficulties of scheduling adequate time for managing the change components in the daily schedule represents Stage 3 (management) in the SoC framework (Hall, 2014). According to Hall and Hord (1987), participants at the management level are focused on the processes and tasks required by the implementation of innovation, and on issues relating to organisation, management and scheduling of the implementation and time demands. For the teachers in the current study, management concerns were identified via several subthemes: logistics, scheduling time to manage TBLT implementation, completion of curriculum, and workload, discipline and time to cover curriculum.

A key area of concern relating to management difficulties, in the current study, was logistics. Each respondent was particularly concerned with the logistics of the delivery of the TBLT approach and their responses supported the consolidation of two issues under this single axial coding category: the organisation of the classroom and class size. Concerns were largely associated with the physical layout and organisation of the classroom, which were considered to be significant risks to the successful implementation of TBLT. This can be illustrated with the following quotation from Hind:

> The organisation of the classroom is not appropriate because it's not easy to divide students into groups … This makes the implementation of TBLT harder because the chairs are not movable. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016)

Sara was another teacher who found the organisation of the class to be a factor that impeded the implementation of TBLT, saying:

> Beside the huge number of students in the class, we have fixed chairs and rows that hinder movement; teachers won't be able to form a group in a way which makes students feel comfortable in their communication. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016).

Nadiah, on the other hand, believed that the design of class could make it difficult to design

activities which required movement, but that it should not affect the process of

communication:

> It is easier to implement TBLT in classes which have circular tables and moveable
> chairs as students can work as group more comfortably, but if this was not available, I
> do not think it would be a barrier affecting the implementation because students can
> still turn and work with their colleagues. (Nadiah, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

Mona also found it challenging to handle students' behaviour in the class when they engaged

in groups. Mona described her concerns as follows:

> Students changed their seats because they wanted to stay with their friends. They
> were distracted by social media on their phones. I did not have a means of ssessment
> and I felt depressed. (Mona, open-ended statement, 2016)

Nadiah also had a similar view; she stated:

> Managing 45 students is already quite challenging, and now, having to implement
> TBLT, it would even be more difficult since the students tend to become very loud
> and out of control when engaging in these types of activities. (Nadiah, open-ended
> statement, 2016)

Another aspect related to time is the limited amount of time available to carry out TBLT

lessons. Teachers gave examples of points of TBLT implementation as presented below.

Mona shared her personal and management concerns, stating:

> With TBLT, students participate more, and since it is focused on the topics and
> language used in everyday life in different situations, we cannot anticipate what will
> happen in the class. Teachers, therefore, must be better prepared and do more research
> into the topics they have to teach – all of this requires time and more effort. (Mona,
> post-observation interview 2, 2016)

Reem shared her concerns, saying:

> If you contrast this approach [TBLT] with the traditional PPP, I can say that TBLT
> has to go through different phases, so controlling the time is harder than using a
> traditional approach, which I can rush if I need to. (Reem, open-ended statement,
> 2016)

Like Mona and Reem, Hind raised the issue of the time required to carry out TBLT in the

following extract:

> Indeed, some activities in the class can take longer than I expect, and this frustrates
> me because the lesson can end while students are communicating. There is no time to
> evaluate students' outcomes and focus on their errors. (Hind, post-observation

interview 1, 2016)

Observation data showed that teachers spent between 7 and 10 minutes recording attendance. Although this could be a factor affecting the available time for TBLT implementation, it was not raised by any participants in their open-ended statements. In her post-observation interview 2, when asked about this, Nadiah answered:

> The reason why I spent that time taking registration is because it is the university's rule that we must take students' attendance every time because they are not allowed to pass the module if they exceed the allowed amount of time away from class. (Nadiah, post-observation interview 2, 2016).

Reem complained about the wasted time in this process and noted:

> It is very boring and less effective to spend that time every class taking attendance. I assigned one of the students as a leader to help me with that, but I also have to check it. I do not want to be unfair by not providing accurate attendance records at the end of term. (Reem, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

The pressure of time needed to complete the curriculum emerged as another time-related obstacle experienced by two teachers in seeking to apply TBLT. Mona expressed her concern about this issue as follows:

> I am always concerned about how I will manage to cover the condensed curriculum. The coursebook involves many activities and focuses mainly on grammar, and I need time to cover everything. (Mona, open-ended statement, 2016)

Sara also mentioned her concern about having to follow the curriculum designed by a group of experts in the University's Arabic language centre, saying:

> It is the teacher's responsibility to explain every aspect of the textbook, which was designed by experts in our school. If I omit something and students are asked about it in their exam, I will be in trouble. Therefore, I am most concerned about completing the textbook and following the plan. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016)

A further management concern identified by several teachers was related to workload and preparation for TBLT implementation. The teachers were concerned about managing multiple tasks together with implementing TBLT. For example, while Sameerah recognised the significance of TBLT in supporting the learning of Arabic, she found it difficult to implement as it added more work to her busy schedule. She explained her views as follows:

> I support this method, but I find it difficult to implement, I mean, I have kids and have family and other responsibilities. I need to socialise. I spend my weekend preparing, reading and trying to figure out how to manage all of these things. This has caused most of the teachers to feel stressed, nervous, and tired. (Sameerah, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

Nadiah, as a single person, did not have to take care of children as other teachers did.

However, she did experience stress after a long day of hard work. One strategy she used to

manage her stress was to go to the gym and do some exercise:

> Assessing students in TBLT is time consuming, and beside that, we need to design lessons, select appropriate activities, and do other managerial work. I come to the university early in the morning and I have to spend an extra two hours before I go back home. I feel tired, but I cannot sleep. These days I have started to go to the gym to feel relaxed and control my stress. (Nadiah, open-ended statement, 2016)

Hind is another teacher who described her initial experiences with TBLT integration as

extremely stressful. She found it exhausting to figure out how to successfully manage the

innovation with the pressures of time and workload. In her own words:

> What makes me worried is that I try to figure out how to apply this innovation while at the same time I have my own PhD assignments, I need to prepare for my exams, I have to invigilate during exams, and I might work as a supply teacher if needed. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016)

One reason that encouraged Sara to implement TBLT was her negative experience with

traditional approaches to teaching, which had impacted her confidence. However, the stress

of management made her argue:

> The integration of TBLT in our context without preparation is challenging and to enhance the possibility of its success, teachers need to be encouraged by, for example, providing them with less managerial work, and fewer hours of weekly teaching. This might encourage them to prepare more to apply TBLT. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016).

It appears that management contributed to a number of real issues which had an impact on

the integration of TBLT in the classroom. A summary of context related concerns is shown in

6.3 and theoretical implication is discussed is Chapter 9. The following section discusses

context related concerns emerging from the data that do not exist in the SoC framework.
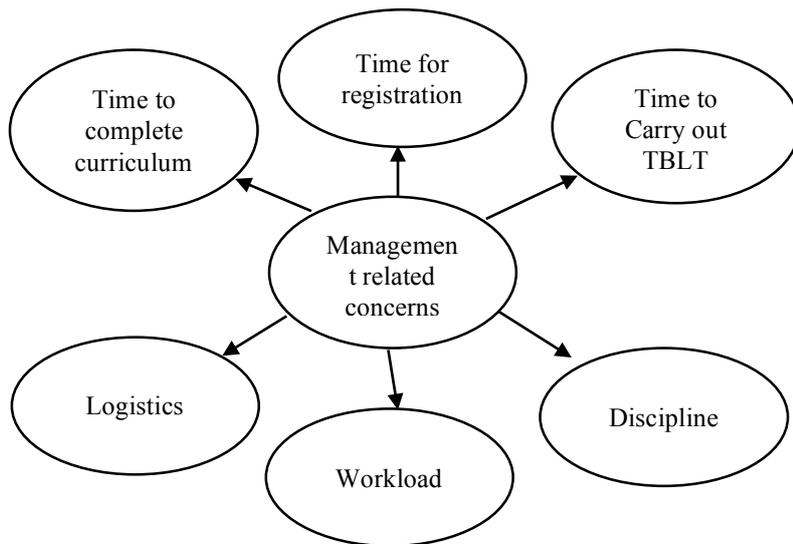
Figure 6.2 *Managment related concerns*

6.2.4 Context-related concerns

In section 3.7.2.3 it was argued that the possibility of successful implementation of innovation in the classroom is seen to be associated to a great extent to contextual factors. In other words, if the innovation is incompatible with contextual and cultural values, issues inhibiting implementation are more likely to occur as the innovation is seen as not insufficiently in line with existing factors and norms. It was also illustrated that TBLT is categorised according to Markee (2013) as being compatible with some cultures and that this made it possible to be implemented; in other cases, it was received negatively because of the cultural mismatch between the Asian context and the learner-centred approach derived from the west. This section investigates the contextual variables which had an impact on TBLT implementation in the Arabic classroom. Lack of support and cultural norms are the two main sub-themes identified here, and these will be discussed below

6.2.4.1 Lack of support

Informational, personal and management concerns have been identified as separate themes above. However, a number of key issues identified seem be related to a lack of support and a

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lack of opportunity to put into practice the skills learned. Importantly, the respondents

appeared to support the value of the TBLT approach and demonstrated an eagerness about its

adoption and application in place of traditional teaching techniques. However, this

enthusiasm was negatively affected by the lack of perceived support they received in

managing TBLT implementation. Different aspects of insufficient support were raised by the

participating teachers.

The lack of training opportunities related to TBLT provided by the university

development centre was found to be the first aspect related to lack of support in the Saudi

higher educational context. This was evident from observation data, which showed that

during the period when the data were collected, there was no available training course in

TBLT. Hind identified the shortage of TBLT training, saying:

> There were workshops [in the university development centre] with simple information
> about to improve teaching methods. It was useful somehow, but it wasn't only about
> TBLT as there were other strategies which have some of the same characteristics as
> TBLT. (Hind, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

Mona also stated:

> I am the one who is going to handle and tell them [students] what to do, and I should
> be able to manage the tasks by myself […] Unfortunately, I didn't have the chance to
> attend workshops about TBLT because I didn't find courses available in the
> university. (Mona, open-ended statement, 2016).

Nadiah was eager to learn how to implement TBLT so she attended a number of workshops.

However, as a novice to TBLT and as one who was willing to know more about TBT, the

few workshops which included some principles of TBLT did not seem to be enough. She

argued:

> TBLT has been integrated quickly, and I haven't found relevant courses available in
> the university; I attended some workshops such as mind mapping, the communicative
> approach and managing classrooms but those courses were not specialised in this
> approach to teaching and they were one to three hours in one day. (Nadiah, post-
> observation interview 2, 2016)

Sameerah shared Sara's perceptions, saying:

> I wish that I had some more workshops and more learning experiences on how to effectively adopt this approach. I don't want to waste my lectures trying to implement TBLT and sort out issues related to implementation. I don't know if practicing TBLT without attending professional courses would be fair to my students. I think to introduce TBLT, we need more training. (Sameerah, post observation interview 2, 2016)

Sara indicated clearly that she felt she had not received adequate training for TBLT implementation:

> I feel like I've thrown without sufficient help. I feel I have not been provided with adequate time and training to completely recognise everything about TBLT. (Sara, post observation interview 1, 2016)

The second aspect related to lack of support raised by the participants and shown to negatively affect the process of adoption TBLT in Saudi Arabia was the unavailability or outdated nature of relevant teaching resources and technology. It is interesting to note that under this aspect, teachers expressed concern about different issues. For example, the shortage of resources available for students as a factor that limited the implementation of TBT was raised by Hind and Sara. Hind stated:

> The students would need to look for information to complete their task, either on the internet or in books. We need more computer devices as the University provides inadequate ICT. We need computer labs which can accommodate the number of students in the class. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016)

Sara also raised similar concerns as she referred to the inadequacy of available resources and ICT in the classrooms, saying:

> With regard to the second barrier, it is the unavailability of classroom resources. I need more devices, or at least one for each group, and students should be provided with more basic references which they can refer to in any of the Arabic languages branches. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016)

Nadia was aware of the significance of the use of technology in teacher education because she had attended some courses in this field, but she referred to the lack of Arabic applications available for students to enable them to practice as she stated:

> I know the importance of using technology in education for this generation. However, to my knowledge, there is a lack of Arabic applications available for practising the language. (Nadiah, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

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The lack of resources seemed not to be a concern for Reem and Sameerah as they believed

that students were well equipped and that reference materials were available to them online.

Reem stated:

> The students have various sources of information and have the ability to use the best
> ways to access them, because they have more chances than the previous generations
> to use tools such as the internet and social media. The students can access the internet
> to get any information, because the internet is available, and they can get
> documentary films and books from it. I think there is no problem with the sources
> now. (Reem, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

Sameerah had a similar perspective; her concern was not about the availability of resources

but about the students' lack of skills in finding online available resources. She said:

> There are many tools to find information now. Students have access to the internet
> and can find any information, and there is a big collection of e-books available for the
> students – but they can't search for information. (Sameerah, open ended statement,
> 2016)

However, Mona concern was not about the availability of resources and ICT provided for

students but rather about the outdated devices she was working with. She expressed her fear

of technical breakdowns affecting her class time:

> The computers we have are old and not working well; any time you try to use one, it
> might break down, and this is an obstacle because it wastes the time allocated for
> lessons. (Mona, open-ended statement, 2016)

Nadiah expressed similar views to Mona in her concerns regarding outdated devices; she also

raised two other constraints relating to ICT: a lack of support in ICT integration and a lack of

technical support:

> The other difficulty relates to available outdated computers in laboratories. [….] I also
> face problems in managing ICT. I mean, I can use it, but if some things happen to the
> devices, I cannot sort it out and we lack a strong technical support team; they are not
> always available to assist me. I remember one time I could not log on and I contacted
> them but they asked me to leave a request, and I had to cancel that lesson. (Nadiah,
> open-ended statement, 2016)

While the lack of resources and technologies available to students were cited by some

teachers, the lack of resources available to Arabic teachers to enable them to implement

TBLT has also been shown to be a challenge for some teachers. Sameerah referred to the

issue of insufficient Arabic resources available for teachers for professional development by

saying:

> The most significant point is that the teaching staff member needs a complete picture
> and overall idea about how to apply TBLT. When she understands all the details, she
> will then be able to apply it. However, it is difficult to find Arabic references
> explaining TBLT and its implementation in detail. The teaching staff member needs
> to have books or resources that help in applying the method. (Sameerah, open ended
> statement, 2016).

Reem found the lack of resources available to assess teachers to design or adapt task-like

activities a challenge that made implementation of TBLT very difficult, and this made her to

decide to implement a teacher-centred approach:

> The textbook is not designed for TBLT, so I need either to adapt or design TBLT
> activities, in both cases with a lack of Arabic resources which can guide me. I
> preferred to stick with the language exercises many times. (Reem, post-observation
> interview 2, 2016).

Like Sameerah and Reem, Sara highlighted the problem of having reference materials in

TBLT written in Arabic:

> In fact, I haven't read much about this field. I think the Arabic books in this field are
> limited, and if they became available, they don't demonstrate in a specialised way the
> interactive TBLT method. They may talk about it in a very simple way and in a
> limited manner. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016).

Hind, however, showed a different opinion by saying:

> There are so many online resources. The internet provides so many resources for
> anyone who likes to know about others' experiences; the internet has opened the
> world for everyone. Anyone who likes to develop herself can find many resources,
> but she needs to select the sites and the articles that are based on studies. (Hind, open-
> ended statement, 2016).

It is not clear, however, whether Hind managed to find online Arabic references on TBLT or

she meant the references written in English as she studied English in the UK, and this gave

her an advantage in contrast to her colleagues in accessing many books and articles in this

field.

The third aspect under the theme of lack of support was the lack of evaluation as the teachers described the absence of mentors who could evaluate the implementation of TBLT and provide valuable feedback. Nadiah, for example, stated:

> I am trying my best to implement TBLT, but I am still concerned as there is no one who can observe my practice and guide me in the right direction. (Nadiah, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

Sara criticised the nature of the relationship between trainers and trainees which ends when the training is complete. In her open-ended statement, she emphasised the role of follow-up mentoring in teacher professional development; she said:

> To achieve potential success in anything, you need some sort of assessment. I think we need observers who attend at least some classes and evaluate the implementation of TBLT after attending training. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016).

6.2.4.2 Cultural norms

The second contextual challenge encountered by teachers attempting to use TBLT was the cultural norms related to language learning and teaching. A number of factors have been found to challenge what constitutes language learning in the Saudi context. For instance, Hind found the need to adhere to cultural norms a challenge, as Saudis value the acquisition of knowledge based on textbooks, and the teacher is seen as the only source of knowledge. She stated that a teacher needs to demonstrate her competence through grammar explanation:

> When I go to my class, I know my students are expecting me to explain every single thing in their textbook. They depend on my detailed explanation of grammatical rules. If I do not do that, they will assume either that I am not competent or that I am not doing what should be done. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016).

Interestingly, Reem's perception of transmitted knowledge seemed to be affected not only by cultural norms but also by Islamic core beliefs about honesty and fulfilment of duty. In this regard, she commented:

> I am responsible in front of my god to explain everything to my students and ensure they acquire knowledge. I won't feel good about myself if my students enter the exam without fully understanding everything in their textbook. (Reem, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

Under the influence of the traditional view of education in the Saudi context, teachers should enforce a quiet environment in their classes. This role of teacher is influenced historically by the way teachers *in Kuttab* transmitted knowledge. Mona explained:

> I divide them [students] into groups; each of them knows its tasks, so that before they start anything they should know what are they working on and what is the exact information they need to collect to avoid any confusion at the time of implementation. […] There should be rules and tasks from the very beginning, and they should also keep quiet so that they won't disturb other groups. (Mona, open-ended statement, 2016)

In another extract, she admitted:

> It is really important to manage students in the class because any failure to manage the class is seen by students as a lack of personality. This made me focus on controlled activity. (Mona, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

Nadiah struggled with her new role in the innovation saying:

> To be converted from a teacher, who runs the process of education individually, to a facilitator is not easy. I feel nervous when I see students making noise and I cannot control them. (Nadiah, open-ended statement, 2016).

Observation data showed that Reem's desire to play a dominant role in the class appeared to be one factor affecting her implementation. This was evident in the time she spent talking in contrast to her students. She also frequently used language focus practice in which students had worksheets to practice individually. She referred to similar concerns regarding her new role and stated:

> I know my students make mistakes in the language use during the task and I comment on their errors. I am not quite sure whether or not I am playing an appropriate role for TBLT. (Reem, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

Another aspect related to cultural norms involves the negative washback of examinations, as the measurement of success in learning is believed to be through exams that rely on multiple-choice linguistics-based testing. This leads teachers to use a traditional role-based approach in order to prepare their students for exams. Nadiah stated:

> The problem is the lack of compatibility between the nature of tests, which rely on measuring the understanding of rules, and TBLT, which focuses on the student's achievement of her tasks. Each side has requirements which leads to distraction of

both teacher and student. (Nadiah, open-ended statement, 2016)

For Sameerah, the shift to a more teacher-centred approach was also hindered by the pressure

to meet the requirement of linguistic-based examinations:

> I am still not convinced to use TBLT while our exam focuses on the accuracy of using
> Modern Standard Arabic. This mismatch made me think about how I am fair with my
> students. All I know is that I do not want to be unfair. (Sameerah, open-ended
> statement, 2016)

From the above extract, it seems that Sameerah raised the justice of preparing students for

exams as a cultural value which also has its roots in Islam.

Mona's beliefs about teaching seemed to be influenced by her identity as a teacher of

pure linguistics who studied under the supervision of teachers who valued traditional

grammar teaching. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that Mona, who had experienced

only a teacher-centred approach in her education, raised concerns regarding not being able to

transmit grammatical structures:

> Grammar is usually difficult for students, and I am worried about not giving them
> clear grammar explanations. I think not all students can learn through the use of
> language. (Mona, open-ended statement, 2016).

This subsection has shown that the teachers' stress was related not only to the stages

identified in SoC theory but was also related to other institutional and socio-cultural factors

which they encountered in their attempts to apply TBLT in their context. These factors, as

suggested by study data, included a lack of support and the effect of cultural norms. It

seemed that the values of Islam interacted in a complex way with the Saudi culture of

learning and this exerted an impact on teachers' professional identity. Figure 6.3 summarised

the main themes identified within sociocultural concerns.

The following section provides findings related to the second emerging theme in

relation to teachers' concerns through the lens of the SoC framework. It shows how

reluctance in implementing TBLT was a result of the interaction between two or more levels

of concern.
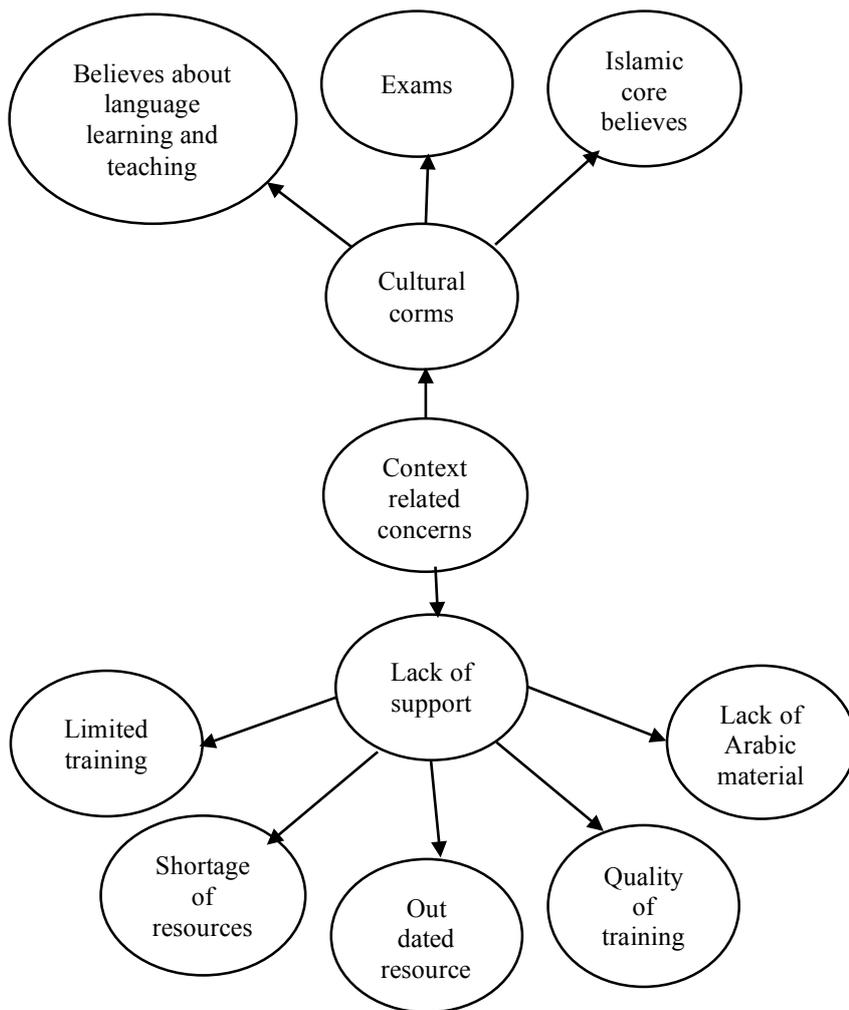
Figure 6.3 Context related concerns

6.2.5 Mixed-stages concerns

The above three sections have been identified as separate themes in relation to the SoC framework. However, an analysis of participants' responses revealed that teachers' concerns are not always as clear cut as some comments indicated, and that teachers referred to two or more stages at the same time. Examples of comments provided by teachers are presented below the assigned SoC within brackets and italicised for ease of identification.

Hind summarised her views about TBLT in her statement, which included three stages of concerns represented in the same sentence. She said:

TBLT was introduced in our context and it sounds like a good approach to prepare our students for the future, but I am not sure if I can implement it as it is intended

[personal] as I have little knowledge about it [informational] and I also have a heavy workload [management]. (Hind, open-ended statement, 2016).

Sara, who supported TBLT implemtation, exemplified both context and management concerns suggesting that these operated as a whole unit rather than as single factors when she said:

> Students are assessed by language focus tests [contextual], and I need to be aware of preparing my students for the exam I also have a big class size so it is not easy to implement it [management]. (Sara, open-ended statement, 2016).

Reem voiced her frustration when dealing with management issues and at the same time she questioned her ability and skills to deal with students in her classroom, saying:

> When I think about the effective integration of TBLT, I have to consider the limited one hour available for each lesson [management]. Added to this, I am still trying to figure out a number of issues for example my students were very talkative and they did not listen to my instruction and I did not have appropriate skills to deal with them [personal]. (Reem, open-ended statement, 2016)

Sameerah, after echoing the perceived advantages of TBLT, raised challenges related to three different stages in one sentence; these were personal, management and contextual. She said:

> Designing tasks and conducting TBLT takes a long time, and I have to cover everything in the textbook [Management], this puts more pressure on me [personal] because I am not well prepared [contextual]. (Sameerah, open ended statement, 2016)

Nadia also commented about her concerns during the implemtation of TBLT in her classroom. Her following statement can be categorised as management/personal when she stated:

> The thing that I am worried about is that I do not have assistance in the class and I am the only one who is responsible for mentoring all students [management], so how I can deal with that? [personal]. (Nadia, open-ended statement, 2016)

In another extract, she combined personal, informational and management concerns as shown in the following statement:

> I am concerned about the change of my teaching style which TBLT required of me [personal] and I look forwards to any opportunity to build on my information about how to use TBLT [informational], at the same time I always think about my overcrowded class [management]. (Nadia, open-ended statement, 2016)

The data presented above shows examples of mixed stages expressed by almost all of the teachers. Mona was the only teacher who did not provide data which could be included under this theme as each of her concerns could be identified under one particular stage presented in Table 6.1. The data related to this theme showed undeniably that the majority of statements provided by the participants above were laced with comments which can be categorised as management concerns (stage 3), suggesting that management concerns seem to play a crucial role in the process of TBLT implementation in Arabic classrooms

6.3 Summary

This chapter has identified key concerns affecting the implementation of TBLT in the Saudi context. Data were analysed based on the Stages of Concern (SoC) component of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The chapter began with introduction in 6.1 and it presented then the findings within teachers' concerns aimed to address the second research question in 6.2. It appeared during the implementation of TBLT teachers experienced various concerns that have resulted from the implementation of TBLT including concerns related to the lack of information about TBLT (6.2.1), concerns related to teachers themselves (6.2.2), several issues related to the management of the innovation (6.2.3), institutional and sociocultural factors also emerged (6.2.4) and mixed stages of concerns (6.2.5), also impacted on the implementation of TBLT. The implications of SoC theory in view of the study findings are further discussed in chapter 9.

Chapter 7. Findings: Teacher preferences for future TBLT training

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided insights into teachers' concerns about task-based language teaching implementation and revealed that a lack of support was a major contextual concern affecting the successful implementation of TBLT; this finding underlines the significance of teacher training and development. The overall findings of recent studies indicate that adequate and appropriate teacher training is key to any success in language education change (Carless, 2012; East, 2012, 2017). Responding to the recent change in Saudi education identified in section 2.5.2, Arabic teachers' professional development preferences were investigated in order to bridge the gap between the existing situation and the proposed change. This might be helpful in suggesting TBLT training frameworks that will be relevant to the requirements of the teachers in specific socio-cultural contexts similar to Saudi Arabia. This chapter presents in turn the main themes identified from analysing RQ3 data, which include teacher experiences with previous professional development, perceived obstacles to attendance at in service training courses and Principles of preference for future in-service Arabic teacher's training in TBLT. The findings under each theme will be presented below.

7.2 Teachers' experiences with previous teachers' professional developments

This theme describes teachers' perceptions concerning professional development programmes. The themes identified within this main theme provide insight into challenges opportunities experienced by Saudi teachers in their previous professional development; these are grouped into three categories: challenges in teachers' previous experiences with professional development and perceived obstacles to attendance at in service training courses how teachers learned to teach. Identifying this can provide insights into the roots of the issues that need to be addressed and the tools that could take those teachers further to better meet their needs and manage change. The following subsections present key themes identified

mainly from analysing the initial interviews, but in order to investigate this issue more deeply, I discuss further the main issues arising from classroom observations and ongoing analysis in the second post-observation interview.

7.2.1 Challenges in previous teachers' professional developments

This theme refers to issues in preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia from the Arabic teacher's point of view. These issues will be discussed in more details below

7.2.1.1 Lack of pedagogical preparation

It is clear from the findings of RQ1 that teachers lacked knowledge about TBLT, and that this affected the implementation of this approach; this is seen in the findings of RQ2. The need to focus on pedagogical knowledge in future training was not only evidenced by the findings of RQs1 and 2 but was also explicitly raised by some teachers when they discussed their experience in pre-service training. The findings provided further evidence that teachers had struggled in their implementation of TBLT as a result of gaps in the content of their initial pre-service training, which lacked training in pedagogy. The gap in this area was identified by Sameerah, who was pleased to have a good background in Arabic linguistics, but who lacked knowledge in teaching theories and teaching methods. She said:

> I have good knowledge about Arabic grammar, the debate between two Arabic grammatical schools including *Kufa* and *Basra* and the development of Arabic literature and phonology, but this knowledge is not sufficient to inform me how to implement approach such as TBLT or what I can do if the process is hindered by an issue such as individual learner differences. (Sameerah, interview 1, 2016)

In her initial teacher education at King Abdul Aziz University, Nadiah put in a lot of effort, borrowed books and asked teachers for more support to successfully pass the complexity of Arabic grammar. In her case, she stated:

> My programme was not easy. We had around seven modules each term, and every one had particular requirements such as exams, presentations and assignments. While most of the time, I studied at home independently until 1 a.m., I needed to ask teachers for support or borrow books from the library to comprehend issues that had much debate, such as clause structure and word order. (Nadiah, interview 1, 2016)

Hind, who had experience studying English in the UK, noticed how teachers used different activities and materials to motivate students:

> In my class, not all students are engaged with all activities. I feel sorry but to be honest I have never had an opportunity to learn the impact of students' psychology in learning. There was not much information about teaching skills and strategies that teachers can use to facilitate learning. (Hind, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

However, the experience of pre-service training was perceived positively by Sara, in contrast to other teachers in the current study. Sara had studied at the College of Education, and she looked at her experience from a narrower perspective as she thought that her previous pre-service education was effective in preparing her with the basic knowledge she needed as a teacher. However, she did not feel that she was fully equipped as an Arabic teacher with just one module:

> My course prepared me to be a language teacher. I remembered that we had some modules that focused on the structure and features of the Arabic language and other modules that focused on teaching methods and classroom management. I remembered that teaching methods was a compulsory subject and all students majoring in different subjects from different departments had the same textbook. Although I had some basic knowledge about teaching, classrooms management strategies and teacher roles, there was no information related particularly to teaching Arabic. (Sara, interview 1, 2016)

From Sara's extract above, it seems that she recognized the value of pre-service training in the teaching profession. The findings presented in section 5.3.3, however, reveal that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate her developed understanding of TBLT in practice.

The issue raised by teachers related to the content of professional development did not just centre on pre-service programs but was also about in-service professional training at King Abdul Aziz University. Interview data revealed that five out of the six teachers had received in-service training in their institution in active learning in the previous five years. However, when they were asked about their perceptions of the value of this training, they generally gave negative feedback, frequently describing it as 'a waste of time', 'ineffective' or 'insufficient'. Such findings indicate a general dissatisfaction with the in-service training

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development teachers had received from the University development centre. One factor

identified was related the type and content of input provided in this training.

Sameerah described the training opportunities provided by the university development

centre as being pedagogical in nature but, in her view, the input provided was not sufficient

for teachers who were not used to learning or teaching through TBLT; she said:

> Most of the time they [training sessions] were about general things like the learning
> environment or instructional strategies to motivate students, but they did not explain
> clearly the theories which support it. I mean there was no deep and enriched
> knowledge about TBLT in the literature. (Sameerah, interview 1, 2016)

In another extract, she described the aim of these courses as increasing awareness of the use

of active learning, but she commented that this form of training was insufficient for TBLT

implementation:

> I can say that the aim was raising teachers' awareness that there are other ways for
> teaching different other than what they are used to. I do not think we should be more
> optimistic and think that teachers with this knowledge will go straight away and
> implement TBLT in their classes. Imagine you want to teach me swimming and you
> keep telling me how swimming can make me fit and well. Without skills and practice,
> I would not be able to swim. (Sameerah, interview 1, 2016).

For Sameerah, without providing deep knowledge about TBLT and appropriate practice of

teaching skills, it was difficult to expect the successful integration of TBLT.

Nadiah raised a similar point and made a direct connection between the limited

availability of courses related to Arabic language teaching and, particularly, the lack of TBLT

courses and ineffective TBLT implementation by claiming:

> Although the university training centre provided a number of in-service training
> programmes, the courses allocated to language teaching were very limited. It is not
> surprising to see teachers struggling in the use of TBLT because they have not had an
> opportunity to attend TBLT courses. (Nadiah, post-observation interview, 2, 2016)

Reem was unhappy with the use of English to deliver the few training sessions which seemed

interesting and. She argued that:

> I found a few courses in the use of social media for learning in the website of the
> university development centre, but unfortunately, they were taught in English. I think
> many teachers, not only from the Arabic department, have a low level in English, so

the university should take this into account. (Mona, interview 1, 2016)

Among all the teachers, Mona was the only one who spoke about the increase of students with special needs after the inclusion policy and her needs in receiving education to meet their needs. In her extract, she complained about this, saying:

> Teachers were supposed to have a background in working with those students with special educational needs, but there was no available training which enabled teachers to provide education and support which met their needs. (Mona, post observation 2, 2016).

It was evident, based on the study findings, that teachers were largely negative about the content of pre-/in-service trainings as it gave little attention (if any) to pedagogy and applied linguistics knowledge in teaching Arabic. Other shortcomings of teachers experienced in their professional development are discussed in the next subsection.

7.2.1.2 Lack of practicum opportunities

There appeared to be a commonality among five of the six teachers in the current study that a practicum period, in which teachers can practice teaching in real classrooms, was absent in their pre-service programmes. This was identified in their responses regarding the effectiveness of pre-service programmes in providing teachers with the skills needed to implement TBLT. Five of the participants agreed that the courses they had taken in their undergraduate programmes at King Abdul-Aziz University did not offer opportunities to gain practical supervised experience of teaching in real classrooms. Nadiah criticised the pre-service training, saying:

> The programme in Arabic language and literature at our university is generally four years, and individuals leave the institution with a strong linguistic background but no experience in classrooms. (Hind, interview 1, 2016)

When she was prompted in post-observation interviews to explain her experience at the beginning of her career, Reem showed her concerns and talked about how she faced difficulties in the first year in her profession because she did not have teaching experience:

> At the beginning, I encountered some challenges because I found myself in a situation

where I had the subject knowledge but I did not know how to best deliver the knowledge to the students. So, I did not have the skills or strategies to plan or deliver language lessons. I also faced difficulty in dealing with problems that occurred in class such as different levels and personalities in the class. my first professional year was not easy as I had to spend much of my leisure time doing preparation. All of these might not be issues if we had a supervised practicum course, but in my case I had to depend on myself to develop teaching skills. (Reem, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

When Nadiah reflected on her pre-service education, she mentioned that she did not like the excessive focus on some subjects in her programme, such as Literature. She explained her view as follows:

I did not like literature. It would be better to introduce a practicum instead of teaching six levels of literature. I did not think literature required that many credits in our course plan. (Nadiah, interview 1, 2016)

Mona graduated from the same institution, and had no teaching experience before she started her career, but she had a different perspective from her colleagues. She believed that studying and practicing teaching at the same time was a challenge for students during their initial training:

Our course was demanding and I had to devote all my time to. It would be more difficult for students if there was a practicum period, which would add more time and demands. Doing a practicum and studying at the same time is difficult, and focusing on one of them might affect the outcome of the other. (Mona, interview 1, 2016)

Sara, the only teacher who graduated from a different institution, had a practicum experience in teaching Arabic to high school students for a period of six months. She found her practicum to be valuable. In contrast to what Mona said, she wished she could have more practical experience in her programme:

During the practicum, I remember that I had to plan lessons, prepare materials, manage the classroom, find resources to help me in teaching and assess students. In general, it was a rewarding experience but it would help me and maybe other teachers more if we had more time for practising in different settings and under the supervision of different experienced teachers. (Sara, interview 1, 2016)

A lack of attention to teachers' practical concerns was related not only to their pre-service preparation but also to in-service courses in the institution, in which they have easy and

funded access to trainings. While some teachers identified this as a training issue, others found it a requirement for their future development; this will be discussed in section 7.3.2. Sameerah, for instance, expressed her dissatisfaction when she talked about the nature of the in-service trainings which she engaged in, and she seemed to be more interested in how to teach in real classrooms than focusing too much on theory. She shared her experience, saying:

> I have taken a number of in-service courses here but I have never had an opportunity to design lesson or to apply a particular strategy and get some feedback. They always said this is good and this is bad, do this and do not do that and then what? I can get this information from any book it is always easy to talk but it is not always easy to do. (Sameerah, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

Mona recalled one in-service training experience in which she thought a long session of listening to a trainer was a discouraging environment for learning. She said:

> In one training session, we had to spend around three hours sitting on our chairs and listening to a trainer who provided too much information about active learning. She gave us a lot of strategies, but I have forgotten many of them. (Mona, post-observation interview 2)

It appears that the focus on only theoretical aspects was another issue raised by the participating teachers based on their pre-/in-service education. The following subsection discusses the centralisation issues in teacher education from the perspectives of Arabic teachers.

7.2.1.3 The top-down nature of training

In addition to issues raised above in both pre- and in-service professional development, different aspects of the top-down nature of training were repeatedly mentioned by teachers as a challenge encountered in their training. The delivery of training through transmission of knowledge was the first aspect of top-down training to become evident from the participants' comments as an issue in pre/in service training. For example, when asked to describe how knowledge was delivered in the previous in-service training, Sameerah answered:

The training was presented through lectures; in some training sessions, there was some kind of discussion, but it was not that much. (Sameerah, interview 1, 2016).

The teachers' negative experiences with the top-down approach was evident in Reem's extract below, in which she described the training provided in her in-service training as 'one size fits all':

The problem, in my opinion, is that teachers came from different departments and had different experiences, different needs and different different levels of knowledge, but the development trainings were not targeted at any particular group. Teachers were only required to attend courses provided by the university even though those courses were not aligned with teachers' needs. (Reem, interview 1, 2016)

In this extract, Reem highlighted the decontextualisation of the content of training provided, indicating that teacher concerns and requirements were less likely to be addressed. Sara elaborated more deeply about this issue when she reflected on one training session that she had attended as one of few compulsory trainings for all teachers; she said:

I had to attend a Blackboard management system training session in the computer lab and we were around 19 trainees. I found myself struggling to follow the structure given by the trainer because my I have only a basic knowledge of computers, while the trainer and some other trainees were specialists in computer science. This was a very unsuccessful training session for me because I felt I was lost, and I came away feeling I would need further help to effectively use this system. (Sara, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

Another piece of evidence linked to the use of the top-down approach by trainers appeared when Hind was asked about the nature of activities in her training. She answered:

It was mainly answering questions and brainstorming in groups. Most of the time the trainer used PowerPoint for explanations, and no activities were provided for the trainees. (Hind, interview 1, 2016)

Sameerah thought that being receptive rather than engaged with something to do in training was not helpful in professional development:

I have a problem with time management, and recently I decided to attend a workshop which could help me with some skills I can use. The training was more like a lecture than a workshop. The trainer spent most of the time talking. It is true that trainees were given an opportunity to discuss and share their experiences or ask questions, but I assumed that there would be something practical which could benefit me more. (Sameerah, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

These issues provided evidence that the centralisation of current pre-/in-service trainings was perceived negatively as it did not take into consideration teachers' needs, interests and various levels of proficiency.

7.2.1.4 Inexperienced and poorly prepared trainers

The shortage of teacher training programmes was found to be also related to a shortage of trainers. The most important factor, as suggested by the study data, is inexperienced and poorly prepared trainers. According to Hind:

> Most in-service trainers in the university training centre seem to be less experienced. It is not enough to have an academic specialisation; a trainer must have a depth of experience that enables her to approach different levels of professionalism. (Hind, interview 1, 2016)

Sarah also claimed:

> If we only attend theoretical courses, we will never benefit. We need experienced instructors who have already applied it [TBLT] in real classrooms. (Sara, interview 1, 2016)

To gain more insight into this point, the same teacher was asked in a post-observation interview how she knew the trainers were inexperienced. She replied:

> Most of the trainers are basically good teachers who have progressed to become teacher educators without requiring any formal preparation to train others effectively. (Sara, post-observation interview 1, 2016)

Another aspect related to trainers is their limited knowledge in the field of Arabic learning and teaching. The participants agreed that their trainers had inadequate knowledge in the implementation of TBLT. For instance, Reem explained why she thought trainers need to build their knowledge:

> Trainers are taught by traditional teaching methods because TBLT is a new innovation in Saudi Arabia, so I expect their knowledge is just basic. (Reem, interview 1, 2016)

Similarly, Nadiah argued:

> During my teaching, in all the courses I attended, I found trainers talking about the benefits of strategies, but they did not show us how to overcome problems in the classroom. (Nadiah, interview 1, 2016)

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When asked why she thought they were too theoretical, she said:

> Probably because they do not know how to deal with problems or maybe because they do not have sufficient time to practice as the course is too short. (Nadiah, interview 1, 2016).

7.2.2 Perceived obstacles to attendance at in service training courses

Having discussed the challenges experienced by teachers in their previous development, I will discuss the second theme identified within teacher experiences with previous teachers' professional developments, that of obstacles to attendance at training courses. This refers to factors that impeded the teachers from participating in more in-service training programmes provided by their institution. While teachers valued professional development, they participated in only a few training sessions with regard to their experience as a teacher. Identifying these factors can help to provide insight into more engagement in professional development which could, in turn, facilitate the process of reform. Data revealed that workload and lack of motivation were commonly cited by teachers as factors affecting teachers' decisions to participate in more professional development.

7.2.2.1 Workload

In the current study, perhaps the most widely recognised factor that prevented teachers of Arabic at King Abdul-Aziz University from attending more training courses was their teaching load. Teachers claimed that it was hard to find time to engage in more training because of their heavy teaching loads and additional administrative work. Teachers with a full weekly schedule found training sessions clashed with their class time. Nadiah in her interview referred to tension between the time needed to attend professional development and teaching responsibility called for a reduction of teachers' workloads in order to maximise the opportunity to attend more in-service training, which contributes not only to professional development but also to teachers' ability to manage the proposed change:

> Before applying this method, we should increase the chances of applying it

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successfully by eliminating such workload obstacles and allow teachers to develop their profession, but with my full-time schedule, I am busy with designing materials and assessing students to be honest I do not want to do anything more. (Nadiah, interview 1, 2016)

Sameerah was also hampered by her managerial job which left her with little time to enhance her proficiency level in TBLT integration. She stated:

It is difficult sometimes to take part in training because we don't have time. I have lots to do, with teaching and doing other managerial jobs. Some of the other teachers are also doing postgraduate study, so how can we have extra time for self-development? I know it is important, but it is difficult. (Sameerah, interview 1, 2016)

Mona's professional development was negatively influenced by her engagement in less effective responsibility, saying:

We have been given some managerial jobs which have no benefit for teacher professionalism. For example, we have to invigilate during examinations. Such jobs could be given to administrative staff in the University and teachers could be given time to develop, either by reading, publishing or attending courses. (Mona, interview 1, 2016)

7.2.2.2 Lack of motivation

A further barrier faced by teachers was lack of motivation. Despite the importance of in-service training, almost all teachers were lacking in motivation, and this was a significant factor affecting attendance at in-service training sessions. Different reasons were given for this lack of motivation; for instance, Mona's lack of motivation was due to the poor quality of training and ill-equipped trainers she had experienced. She argued:

I've had some training here [the university development centre], but I am not interested in attending any more. Why should I attend and listen to trainers who are less educated than me and who tell me a bunch of elementary things about teaching and learning? (Mona, interview 1, 2016)

In another extract she referred to the lack of facilities provided in training sessions by saying:

In some of the courses that I attended, teachers were not provided with any materials, papers or pens. In addition, teachers were left with long sessions without a break; coffee and snacks were not provided. This kind of environment is discouraging for learning. (Mona, interview 1, 2016)

Lack of motivation was also linked to difficulty in accessing training other than that provided

by the university development centre because of travel issues. This was indicated by Sara, the

only participant who had attended private courses conducted outside the university and who

viewed financial aspects as constraints, she said:

> The course location was so far from me; I think the university should be more serious
> about developing teachers and providing them with the financial means to travel – or
> at least providing high-level courses in the university for free because teacher
> development will positively affect the students' outcome. (Sara, interview 1, 2016)

Hind summarised a number of issues affecting her engagement in courses, saying:

> The reasons that prevented me from attending more courses: I haven't enough time. If
> I find a course, the course capacity is limited; on top of that, good courses are held
> outside the university centre, and transportation is not available. (Hind, interview 1,
> 2016)

For the other interviewees, lack of motivation occurred because attendance at such courses is

not compulsory or had no reward. For instance, Reem observed:

> Many courses which I attended in the university have no certificates. I feel I am not
> interested in attending any more. (Reem, Interview 1, 2016)

Mona had not attended any courses for the last five years. When asked about that, she said:

> It is not compulsory to attend these courses. I know teachers can benefit, but I do not
> have time. I know some teachers who attend regularly, and others who do not, and
> both groups are in the same position, with the same salaries and everything. (Mona
> post-observation interview 2, 2016)

The lack of reward was raised not only by Mona but also by Nadiah, who also found that

financial motivation could be considered a factor that might increase the attendance of

teachers at training sessions:

> If you want a teacher to develop, provide her with financial support or promotion. I
> think this could make a difference. (Nadiah, post-observation interview 1, 2016).

Hind believed that university professional development needs to be supported financially. In

her words, she said:

> The budget for continues professional development is not sufficient. We need to
> provide more courses, invite expert trainers in each field and motivate attendees
> financially. I think the available budget is not sufficient (Hind, post observation
> interview2, 2016)

This section presented factors which affected teachers' participation in available in-service professional development.

There are a number of reasons that prevented teachers from attending training courses, however, the most important one involved the limitation of time during term-time as they have lots of work, from materials preparation to classes and examinations. In addition to that teachers have to do some administrative work. Another reason is that training courses are not mandatory,

7.2.3 Learning to teach

With regard to challenges raised by teachers about their previous professional development, they also referred to positive experiences in which they learned how to teach. Most of the teachers mentioned that they had received support from cooperating with others. Cooperative leaning is a common form of teacher development (Johnston, 2009). In the current study, Sara, described how formal dialogues with her teacher educator and the experienced teachers during her practicum provided her with a continual learning process:

> After each class in my practicum, I used to sit with my teacher educator and the classroom teacher and they both raised points that they picked from their checklist in their observation and discussed them with me. For example, I did not realise that I asked many questions and did not give students time to answer them until my teacher educator discussed this with me. This helped me to improve, but what was most interesting was that when I went back home, I said that if I did that, it might be better, or if I said that, it might be more helpful for my students. With communication, there was always space to develop by sharing ideas and discussing issues that limit the possibilities for effective teaching. (Sara, interview 1, 2016)

Mona was not provided with formal opportunities to receive feedback about her teaching. She benefitted, however, from her informal communication with her husband, who was a teacher educator. In her extract, she referred to this by saying:

> At home, I used to practice teaching in front of my husband. He gave me some feedback about my use of body language and eye contact. Every time I went to class, I remembered his comments and tried to apply them. (Mona, interview 1, 2016)

Hind's view of cooperative leaning seemed to be influenced by the values of Islam, which encourage cooperation. In her extract, she explicitly mentions these values and describes how she personally benefitted from engaging with other colleagues in a Whatsapp group:

> I like working with others, sharing and cooperation. Actually, Islam wishes that Muslims should cooperate with one another in accomplishing good tasks. I have been interested in communicating with other teachers through Whatsapp. I found it a positive environment for learning as many times we discuss some grammatical issues and this allows me to update my knowledge. (Hind, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

In this extract, the dialogical nature of communication with teachers allowed Hind to negotiate and achieve meaningful understanding.

Cooperation was not only an effective way to improve teaching skills in the current study; Reem found it a way to develop collegiality with her fellow teachers. As she explained:

> With the pressure of my workload, I needed to socialise with my colleagues. At break time we talk, share our everyday stories and have fun. I leave them with a big smile and a nice mood to meet my students in the next class. (Reem, interview 1, 2016)

However, this sense of community and the culture which supports collaboration did not exist among the participating teachers in activities such as peer observation. While peer observation was effective for language development in theory, it was not perceived positively by some teachers, notably Sameerah and Mona. Sameerah's views about peer observation, for instance, seemed to be influenced both by her experiences as an apprentice teacher and by Saudi teaching culture, and she made this explicit in her interview. She summed up her view by saying:

> I think observations can be one way to learn, but unfortunately, many teachers reject such methods. Learning by observation is not accepted, because the teacher thinks that the observer will explore her defects. I mean, if the teacher attends her colleague's class, she will pick up on the defects. Unfortunately, this culture is not accepted in our society. I have not had any experience of peer observation. (Sameerah, interview 1, 2016)

In this extract it can be seen that Sameerah perceived peer observation negatively as she saw it as a type of critical evaluation, which conflicted with Saudi educational culture. The interaction between her experience, in which no peer observation was conducted in the university classroom, and the norm stem from the culture of Saudi higher education, which shaped the way in which she learned to teach.

Issues raised by teachers regarding peer observation did not centre only on its conflict with Saudi culture, as Mona's perception seemed to be influenced by her identity as a university teacher. After graduation, Mona started her career as a teacher at the university level at the Arab open university, and later she moved to the University of King Abdul Aziz. Being a university teacher gave her power and a high position in her community; therefore, she rejected peer observation as she believed this could affect this status. She said:

> For me, I prefer to develop myself by reading or attending courses. I do not accept the idea that someone comes to my class to observe or evaluate me. I feel this is incompatible with the prestige of university teachers, who are highly qualified. (Mona, interview 1, 2016)

While peer observation was not a favourable form of learning for Sameerah and Mona, Reem sought support from another eye in her classroom. She said:

> I always think about my students. I want them to receive a high standard of education. I want someone to observe my interaction with students and give me feedback because I know that in the class I make decisions and take action, and I may not notice what could be better. When someone picks up on these things, it could help in developing the way you deliver lessons. But not everyone can help you to develop. For example, if I receive feedback from my administrator, I expect it would affect my self-confidence. With someone I have a strong relationship with, such as a colleague, I will not feel that anxious and her comments would not harm me. (Reem, post-observation interview 2, 2016)

Although the potential value of peer observation which Reem considered, such as collecting information about her teaching which she could not gather herself, it seems that the identity of the observer and the imbalance in the relationship of power and status can hinder the conditions for learning.

While peer observation is a common form of professional growth, much knowledge can be constructed in a secure environment through self-observation and reflection (Richards, 2005). Self-observation and personal critical reflection in which the teacher keeps a record of her teaching and collects information about her behaviour in order to achieve a better understanding of her behaviour and develop her professionalism are suggested in the literature as effective forms of teacher professional development (Burns & Richards, 2009; East, 2012). However, only one teacher in the current study showed an interest in self-observation. In the following extract, Sameerah described how she used this process:

> I was interested in finding out about my accuracy in using MSA, and I recorded my voice in a lecture and listened to it later. It helped me to correct my mistakes and avoid similar problems in the future. (Sameerah, interview 1, 2016)

However, when asked how often she reflected on her teaching, Sameerah answered that she had only done it twice during her 15 years of teaching. This suggests that although the teacher had experienced this method, she did not seem to believe in its impact on her professional development. In addition, she used it for purposes other than to develop teaching practice and enhance skills in TBLT implementation.

Other teachers showed explicitly their doubts regarding the effectiveness of reflection and self-mentoring as forms of professional development. Mona, for example, described her views saying:

> It's good [reflecting on her teaching], but you have to be honest with yourself, and it might not be so useful because a person needs to deal with others and hear their opinions in order to improve. (Mona, interview 1, 2016).

Reem also showed her lack of motivation to learn in this way. In her extract, she found it difficult to remember details that had occurred in her lesson and to reflect on her practice. She said:

> I do not think it has any effectiveness because I will not know my problems without warning me. I mean how I can know I did something right or wrong? How I can remember what students did and how I responded to them? I need someone to tell me

and spot my mistakes to know if I am doing it right or wrong. (Reem, interview 1, 2016)

In addition, after observation 2, Sameerah was asked to reflect on her lesson and she was asked whether or not her students met the aims of the class, and why. She answered:

I explained to them clearly and I think yes, they knew how to use the verb *to be*. (Sameerah, post observation interview 2,2016)

Responses such as this did not reflect her understanding of reflection because it is unlikely that all students achieved the aims of the lesson; there is always something that needs to be developed further.

Based on the data it is apparent that the teachers lacked awareness of the role of self-observation and reflection on their practice in the process of teacher professional development. The next section provides teachers' suggestions for future professional development which could facilitate their management of the implementation of TBLT in practice.

7.3 Principles of preference for future in-service training in TBLT

This theme addresses the participating teachers' own vision of the main future training elements which could facilitate the use of TBLT in the Saudi higher education context. In other words, the principles below provide a foundation for what future training oriented towards TBLT could look like from the perspectives of Arabic teachers.

7.3.1 Conducting training on a continuing basis

The teachers showed a generally positive attitude towards the use of TBLT in Arabic teaching, but because they were unfamiliar with its implementation, they required more urgent preparation.

Although the teachers had only been involved in limited in-service training, they highlighted the significance of professional development, particularly for university teachers who, to some extent, contributed to preparing teachers for their future careers. Lifelong

learning was seen as an essential component in teachers' professional development.

Sameerah explained explicitly the dynamic of learning and her need for ongoing training, saying:

> Once the teacher earns some certificates from training, this does not mean they have sufficient knowledge. I know learning never ends. Every day we learn something new, and every day knowledge is changing. I need to take part in more development courses in the future, and the university should update the course provided. (Sameerah, post-observation interview 1, 2016).

Sara referred more specifically to TBLT, saying that one short course was insufficient for TBLT implementation due to the complexity of this approach. She pointed out that conducting continuing training is essential to implement TBLT successfully:

> The implementation of TBLT is complex, and it is not sufficient to attend one or two courses and expect this would prepare a teacher for TBLT implementation. (Sara, interview 1, 2016)

Hind referred to the design of in-service training, which should be as a continuum of learning, starting with novice teachers and ending with those who are retired:

> I think we need coordination among in-service training to have a powerful effect on teachers' professional development. (Hind, interview 1, 2016).

Nadiah argued the significance of providing trainers with continuous support, evaluation and quality training:

> The success of training depends, to a large extent, on the trainers. If a trainer is not sufficiently prepared, professional development will have a minimal impact on how teachers teach or change. The university should employ highly qualified trainers and increase the standards by which they are evaluated. (Nadiah, interview 1, 2016)

7.3.2 Enhancing constructivist-based learning

When teachers were asked about their suggestions for future development which could facilitate their implementation of TBLT, the most common answer, which was repeatedly mentioned, was workshops. More than half of the participants appeared to value the practicality of workshops.

In the following extract Reem briefly outlined why she would be interested in interactive workshops. They are not only a means of enhancing her teaching skills but also a way of developing her passion:

> I like workshops because we work as a team and we can have open discussions in an informal environment. When you make sense of something which you think is impractical, you develop confidence and feel you can do anything in the classroom. (Reem, interview 1, 2016).

Sameerah also seemed to value workshops, but she believed they should be used in conjunction with classroom-based experience. She said:

> For me, workshops are essential to build skills. They give teachers tips which they can use, but teachers still need to go to their classes and test whether or not what they have learnt is practical.

Interacting in pairs after the observation was also beneficial for Hind, who illustrated that the only time she had worked with teacher colleagues was during her first two years at a private high school. In the following extract she recalled her experience with peer observation, which she thought was valuable for her professional development:

> Mentoring is, without a doubt, a very good approach for development. When I was working as a teacher in a private high school, teachers were required to present a model lesson once or twice a year. In this lesson, colleagues observed the lesson and gave me feedback, which I found useful. I also attended other teachers' lessons, and we shared ideas on how to best plan a particular lesson or design materials. For me, I learned by observing others more than in the training courses which I have been involved in at the university. (Hind, interview 1, 2016)

Nadiah ephasised the benefits which she could have by visiting other institutions and observing experienced practitioners who were successfully implementing TBLT; this would provide her with an opportunity to explore how it is used effectively. She said:

> It is good to send us to schools or institutions that follow the same approach successfully, even if these are abroad, so we can learn the best way to apply such an approach. If this is difficult, they can show us a video of how TBLT is practiced in a real classroom. By watching this, we can make sense of TBLT. By this I can see how they manged to solve problems. When I see others, I can determine whether I am right or not. (Nadiah, interview 1, 2016)

Sara was the only teacher who demonstrated the value of training through TBLT and showed her willingness to be engaged in such training. When asked about her perceived usefulness of TBLT training, she referred to the problem-solving activities which were applied in this training by saying:

> I had a chance to attend a workshop or a training session for five days, five hours a day. The most amazing thing about this workshop is that we learnt the fundamentals and principles of TBLT by using the same method. The instructor divided us into groups and defined the roles, tasks and target for each of us. During the course, we were leaning through TBLT; it was not like the usual courses that are based on theoretical explanation but we had problems and we interact to solve this problem. I hope I can find more of these training opportunities. (Sara, interview 1, 2016).

When she was asked to explain in more details why she thought this training was beneficial, she said:

> In that training all teachers were active and motivated because everyone had a task to do. Because I worked with groups, I had the opportunity to ask questions to gain a meaningful understanding in a stress-free environment. (Sara, interview 1, 2016)

The participants described in this section what they believed was missing in their in-service training and they would prefer in their future professional development. Features identified were related to different aspects, including the preferred form, delivery and activities which, when taken together, suggest the constructivism of teacher education

7.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined the data collected through pre- and post-observation interviews to answer the third research question. The chapter began with an introduction in 7.1 followed by a presentation of the findings under two main themes: teachers' experiences with previous professional development in section 7.2 and teachers' preferences for future TBLT training in 7.3. The findings revealed that TBLT represented a major shift for Arabic teachers because of the discrepancy between a top-down teacher-centred approach implemented in pre-/in-service professional training and teachers' preferences for bottom-up constructivist-based learning,

which seemed to be not only compatible with teachers' perspectives but also in line with

TBLT principles.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1. Introduction

The findings of the study were presented in the previous three chapters. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the key findings structured with reference to the research questions; the purpose is to addresses the needs of teachers of Arabic in the Saudi higher educational context for facilitating TBLT implementation. Each section that follows addresses one of the research questions that the study aimed to answer. Teacher understanding of TBLT is the focus of 8.2; teachers' concerns towards TBLT implementation are discussed in 8.3; and teachers' professional development preferences are considered in 8.4. The findings of the three research questions are discussed critically in relation to the literature in the area of teacher cognition and change management, with special attention to those studies investigating teacher cognition of TBLT.

8.2 RQ1: What are teachers' understandings of 'task' in TBLT?

When teachers implement any pedagogical approach, such as TBLT, their practice in the classroom seems to be influenced by their understanding of and beliefs about effective pedagogy (East, 2017). However, Borg (2009) argues that when teachers' beliefs and knowledge are acknowledged and addressed in teacher education programmes, new knowledge about innovation can be established. Therefore, gaining an insight into the understanding and beliefs of the teachers in the current study aimed to increase understanding of how teachers can be more effectively supported within the Saudi context to better implement TBLT in the future.

With regard to the new operational context of TBLT for Saudi Modern Standard Arabic teachers, which I explored in Chapter 5, it seems that although all teachers had heard about TBLT, the understanding of the majority (i.e. four of the six teachers) did not appear to be developed; that of Hind and Sara can be categorised as partially developed. My

interpretation of their understanding as being non-developed is based on the fact that the notion of 'task' was narrowly defined by those teachers as a type of activity involving oral communication or pair/group work. There was also no evidence in the teachers' responses of an awareness of the different ways that the term 'task' could be defined (e.g. Long, 2015; Skehan, 1996; Willis & Willis, 2007). Although the participating teachers were able to touch on some key principles of TBLT, there was no evidence of clear knowledge of the difference between task, communicative activity and language exercise. The criteria of having non-linguistic outcomes was not mentioned by any participants. Sara and Hind demonstrated a partially developed understanding because they referred to a number of characteristics outlined in Ellis (2003) by using their own interpretation. This suggests that the majority demonstrated minimal understanding of TBLT and failed to acknowledge TBLT as an innovation; they were, therefore, more likely to fail to manage the change despite the considerable investment of Saudi Arabia in educational reform. Carless (2015) argues that to manage the implementation of TBLT successfully, teachers should have a developed understanding of its theoretical principles and practice. Brandl (2017), Ellis (2009); and Erlam (2016) also highlight the need to recognise what a task is as main criteria for successful TBLT implementation.

To understand why Hind and Sara showed a better theoretical knowledge of TBLT in contrast to the other participating teachers and to gain insight into how they developed their knowledge, I draw upon Borg's (2003) teacher cognition theory which was discussed in chapter 2. Such knowledge could contribute to a better design for teacher professional development in the Saudi context. Fullan (2007) points out that change will always fail unless the process that engages teachers in developing their knowledge is identified. On the other hand, designing professional TBLT training without considering the insights provided by looking through the lens of theory which takes contextual factors into account may result in

designing professional development training that is less relevant and less effective in preparing Arabic teachers to implement TBLT in the Saudi context. Schooling experience, professional coursework and contextual factors interact with one another and affect teacher cognition and practice (Borg, 2003, 2009). The rationale for using theory is because it serves to deepen our understanding of the findings of the current study and can be supported by data obtained from multiple qualitative methods. The first principle in Borg's (2003) theory assumes that teacher cognition, including knowledge, understandings and beliefs, is influenced by the teacher's early experience as a learner. Teachers' experience as language learners in the current study, as was indicated in 7.2, is categorised as teacher-centred, which values memorisation, examination and dependency on a course textbook. It seems that for those teachers who experienced only a transmission orientation approach in their education (four out of six), their cognition was more influenced by this approach and they found it difficult to implement TBLT in their own practice because it is so inherently different from the way they learned as learners. However, the possible impact of 'apprenticeship of observation' – of Hind's experience of being taught through a TBLT approach when she studied English – might explain her better knowledge and adoption of TBLT in practice. This was evident as she was the only teacher who used task-like activities which included most features of a 'task'.

The second principle from Borg (2003) emphasised the significance of professional training in influencing teacher cognition. This is supported by the findings reported by Sara who had had a different learning experience from the other teachers as her initial training in the College of Education had included both content and pedagogical modules. The teaching methods course, according to Sara, provided her with basic knowledge about teaching strategies and classroom management. In addition, the training about TBLT which she had attended seemed to have had an impact on building her theoretical knowledge as shown in

5.3.1.

It is clear that most of the teachers had a non-developed understanding of TBLT, and two showed a partly developed understanding as evidenced by data in this study. The teachers who lacked knowledge had not been provided with TBLT principles through systematic professional TBLT development training as it is shown in their profiles in Section 5.2. They had also not engaged with TBLT literature due to the limited resources written in Arabic, the language of their professional discourse as it was presented in section 2.6.4. We might therefore argue that the absence of TBLT within formal language learning in Saudi institutions and the lack of TBLT in service training affect their understanding of the complexity of TBLT. With regard to different levels of teacher understanding, it could be argued that different levels of continuing professional development training in TBLT can be essential to meet teachers' needs.

The findings of the current study which were seen through the lens of Borg's (2003) teacher cognition theory confirm the few empirical studies that have been carried out in different contexts. These have shown that insufficient training influences teacher understanding of TBLT innovations and implementation of the innovation in practice. This finding is supported by Carless (2003) who investigated teachers' perspectives and practice towards TBLT and found that two teachers who were trained in TBLT showed developed understanding, while one who was not trained experienced difficulty in interpreting and implementing TBLT. The finding is also in line with East's (2012) study of New Zealand teachers, which showed that Asian teachers who were not familiar with TBLT showed a lack of understanding in contrast to teachers of European languages who had had the opportunity to attend formal training in TBLT.

Surprisingly, the findings of the current study contradicted the majority of earlier studies which addressed teachers' understanding of TBLT in different Asian contexts. These

studies include Joen and Hahn (2006) in Korea; Xiongyong and Samuel (2011) in China;; all show that teachers have developed understanding of the basic principles of task. The difference could be due to the way in which the data were collected, as those other studies were quantitative and either used or adapted Joen and Hahn's (2006) questionnaire to examine teachers' understanding of TBLT principles which provided them with multiple choice questions. This can be further supported by the findings of Hui (2004), who indicates that teachers showed a high level of understanding of TBLT when they were examined by questionnaire and a more limited understanding when they had to answer open-ended questions. Hui concludes by suggesting that teachers do not show a clear understanding of TBLT principles and practice. In addition, Zheng and Borg (2014) achieved findings similar to the current study: teachers' understanding of TBLT in secondary school in China was shown to be limited when they were challenged by pre- and post-observation interviews.

It is also possible, although this is purely interpretation, that all of these studies examined the cognition of English teachers in the context which TBLT emerged three decades ago, and teachers had the opportunity to be educated formally and informally; on the other hand, the approach is considered an innovation for the Arabic language in general and for MSA for native speakers in particular.

Attitudes towards innovation has been emphasised as a key factor in managing change (Markee, 2013; Stoller, 2009). Although the teachers in the study had a limited understanding of TBLT, they generally welcomed this approach because they found it a means of enhancing student proficiency in MSA and motivating their students as well as increasing their authenticity. Investigating teacher attitudes towards TBLT revealed mixed results. A number of studies have indicated teachers' generally positive attitude towards TBLT. For example, Carless (2003) investigated the implementation of TBLT in three primary schools in Hong Kong; the findings indicated that teachers expressed positive

attitudes towards TBLT. Similarly, Jeon (2005) in Korea and Xiongyong and Samuel (2011) in China also indicated that teachers in their context showed generally positive attitudes to the implementation of TBLT. The findings of the current study provide further support for these findings.

However, other studies have revealed that teachers hold negative attitudes with regard to TBLT implementation. For example, Hu's (2004) study found that teachers generally perceived TBLT negatively due to the impracticality of TBLT in their context. Similarly, Joen and Hahn (2006) explored EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT in a Korean secondary school via a survey; their study revealed that half of the participants showed a negative attitude towards TBLT

Most of these studies were self-reported by teachers, either by questionnaire or by interviews, and the findings were either positive or negative; it is not clear whether or not the findings reflected teachers' core beliefs, which have an impact on teacher practice. In the current study, self-reported data was used with classroom observation as recommended by Borg (2009) and East (2012) and challenging some teachers' views suggesting that positive attitudes expressed in initial interviews showed that they are willing to try out TBLT in practice. However, observation data revealed that teacher positivity was not reflected in their behaviour in the classroom as there was no evidence of the strong version of TBLT. This could suggest that what teachers reported in their initial interviews are peripheral beliefs, which Borg (2006) argues cannot contribute to a change in behaviour. This study has shown the value of not only relying on self-reporting data but rather of utilising other resources such as observation followed by interviews to explore teachers' core beliefs underpinning their behaviour. This could provide more insight into designing teacher training. Van den Branden (2006) argued that training that fails to take into account what influences teachers in practice might be less successful than other training, which considers variables affecting teacher

action.

As stated earlier, it is beyond the scope of the study to investigate the extent to which TBLT in practice is aligned or different from the theory of TBLT, or to identify the relationship between cognition and practice. Rather, it aims to bring teachers' tacit beliefs to the surface through observation and to provide teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and justify the way in which they implement TBLT in their classrooms. Observation data revealed that the teachers demonstrated a superficial understanding of TBLT in practice. A common principle identified among teachers was to begin their lessons with explicit explanation of the structure, either with or without providing models; they seemed to focus students' attention on the use of the language structure in their task performance. This behaviour was confirmed later by the teachers in their post-observation interviews; here, the teachers showed their strong inclination to focus on form, and they raised different factors from their core beliefs to justify their behaviour in practice. These factors included the belief that they were preparing students for exams; their enforcement of the use of a particular structure presented to the students; the complex nature of MSA; and their personal experience of the effectiveness of this approach in language teaching.

Another principle observed was the teachers' tendency to correct grammatical errors explicitly, although Hind tended to encourage her students to correct their own mistakes. This behaviour was confirmed by teachers and shown to be influenced by the core belief that correcting all mistakes facilitates accuracy in language production. Another belief is that students have less exposure to MSA out of class; by focusing on errors, they can know their weaknesses, which might prevent them from committing similar mistakes. In addition, the teachers believed that MSA is characterised by error-free production and if they accept mistakes, their language appears similar to colloquial usage.

The last principle was the use of consciousness-raising tasks or grammar exercises

with a lack of outcomes; where an outcome exists, it is more likely to be language based; the use of tasks focused on meaning was underutilised, even though some teachers showed an awareness of this principle in their initial interviews. The use of these types of task served to draw students' attention to specific linguistic items covered in the textbook prior to their production. The lack of reporting the outcome was due either to limited class time or to the teachers' lack of knowledge about the key principles underpinning the definition of task (i.e. the need for a non-linguistic outcome); it could also be based on their belief that by giving students more time to communicate, their language proficiency will be enhanced.

While teachers' initial interviews illustrated that they use TBLT in their classrooms, an analysis of principles from actual classroom data revealed that the teachers in the current study showed resistance to change either by rejecting it such, as in the case of Reem, or by adapting it to the week version of PPP, which is more compatible with their current beliefs and the nature of MSA. This version was identified by Ellis (2017) as task-supported language teaching (TSLT); it is significantly different from the principles of TBLT presented in Ellis (2003), the strong version. The findings showed that the way TBLT was implemented in the current study suggests that teachers not only misinterpreted TBLT in light of their limited theoretical understanding but also that their practice was influenced in a complex way by their beliefs, experience and preferred style, as well as by the nature of MSA.

The findings related to teachers' beliefs can be also understood through the lens of Borg's (2003) theory. The teachers' contextually determined core beliefs about how MSA can be taught effectively influenced their cognition and practice. It seems that the 'apprenticeship of observation', reflected in the years Saudi teachers spent in traditional knowledge transmission and language-focused classrooms, contributed to shaping the core beliefs of Arabic teachers regarding what constitutes good or bad practice in Arabic classrooms. The teachers seemed to be struggling with beliefs incompatible with TBLT

principles and this in turn, to some extent, has been shown to affect their management of change. For example, they saw language as a series of items which needed to be taught before students could use them, and this belief was reflected in their practice as they began their lessons with explicit explanation of language. Although there is evidence that teachers were engaging students actively in their classes, there is little evidence that their beliefs were changing to be more task oriented. This suggested that the learning experience formed earlier in their lives has impacted their believes and subsequent practice. This in line with Algamdi (2013) who argues that with knowledge transmission and the lack of critical thinking skills, Saudi education system has encountered challenges in managing the proposed change.

The findings seen through the lens of Borg's (2003) teacher cognition theory confirm the results of empirical studies in different contexts in Asia. For example, Carless (2007, 2009) concluded that teachers in Hong Kong adapted TBLT to the weak version because it conflicted with their beliefs about effective pedagogy which were influenced by Confucian Heritage Culture. Similar findings were also reported by Viet, Canh and Branden (2015) in Vietnam which focused on teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to TBLT in two high schools in Vietnam. The study revealed that teachers tended to adopt a weak version of TBLT as they were influenced by the belief that forms should be taught before engaging students in communicative tasks. Zheng and Borg (2014) explored the understanding of TBLT of three Chinese secondary school teachers who implemented TBLT in English classrooms; their goal was to investigate the extent in which TBLT was implemented as planned. The findings showed that the implementation of the strong version of TBLT was influenced by the teachers' lack of understanding and beliefs that language teaching should explicitly focus on explaining grammar. This belief was formed in early school learning in China. These studies, which support the findings of the current research, provide further evidence that teachers are guided by their own beliefs, which are fed by their experiences as

students in contexts where TBLT did not exist. While this study is in line with previous studies, it also contributes to the previous studies as it presents an opportunity to explore the nature of effective pedagogy from the perspective of Arabic native speakers teaching MSA, which is considered to be an under-researched area. I believe that there is a need for further research to understand how Arabic teachers understand TBLT and which beliefs and contextual factors shape their behaviour in the classroom. Such findings could inform the development of in-service training which can better support Arabic teachers in TBLT implementation.

Based on the discussion provided above, it seems that teachers' interpretation of TBLT in practice is not only based on their theoretical knowledge gained mainly from pre/in-service trainings; rather, the relationship is more complex as teachers' understandings, beliefs and action interplay and are influenced by each other. It could be argued that teacher change in practice should not concentrate on isolated constructs but rather it should investigate interrelated factors which are influenced by beliefs and practice. The next section addresses the second research question, which focused on challenges inhibiting TBLT implementation in Arabic classrooms.

8.3 RQ2: What are teachers' concerns regarding TBLT implementation?

It is argued that when a new innovation is implemented, teachers often respond by expressing their concerns about the change, and that this is likely to influence the potential to implement TBLT successfully (Van den Branden, 2016; Butler, 2017). Therefore, the purpose of the second research question was to investigate teachers' concerns when experiencing the implementation of TBLT in Arabic higher educational classrooms. Data from the six teachers were addressed within the framework of the Stages of Concern Model (SoC) developed by Hall and Hord (1987) and outlined in more detail in Chapter 2. The SoC framework was used as a tool to determine the pattern of concerns among teachers. Identifying existing concerns

can increase the opportunity for better support for TBLT implementation through resolving concerns which teachers express more often in their setting via pre-/in-service training.

Overall, based on open ended statement and classroom observation followed by interviews, the study revealed that the teachers were concerned about the innovation; the three main themes informed by the SoC theoretical framework and identified by all teachers as concerns affecting their TBLT implementation were informational, personal and management concerns. In addition, teachers' responses contributed to the emergence of two pattern of concerns: mixed stages and contextual concerns.

According to Hall (2014), when a change is introduced, individuals typically respond by expressing a need for more information. Teachers in the current study expressed a number of knowledge-related concerns aligned with Stage 1, Informational, in the SoC. It means that teachers wanted to learn more details about the innovation, in this case, TBLT. In view of the findings of RQ1, which showed that teachers had a minimal understanding of TBLT, it is not surprising to find that teachers were uncertain about the innovation. They identified in the open-ended statements and post-observation interviews a number of barriers under this theme which they thought had impacted the successful implementation of TBLT. For example, Mona was struggling with selecting activities that were appropriate for her students' level, and Nadiah raised the issue of dealing with individual learners' differences.

Teachers' limited understanding was also empirically evidenced in previous studies as constraints affecting the level of integration of TBLT in practice. Liu and Xiong (2015) conducted a study to investigate the perceived challenges raised by Chinese teachers implementing TBLT to teach English in secondary school. The findings showed that teachers had a fragmented understanding of TBLT and this made it difficult for them to avoid the use of traditional approaches. Viet, Canh and Banard (2015) conducted two case studies in Vietnam to explore teachers' beliefs and practices related to TBLT; they found that teachers'

understanding of TBLT was not developed compared to descriptions of TBLT in the literature. The findings showed that teachers were struggling to identify the difference between 'task' and 'exercise', and in practice they focused on explicit linguistic knowledge and error correction. Zhang (2015) conducted a case study in China to explore how three primary school teachers understood and implemented TBLT. The findings supported Vie, Canh and Banard (2015), as these teachers also showed a limited understanding of TBLT; this was reflected in their practice as there was no evidence of implementation of the strong version of TBLT. However, other studies conducted in non-Asian countries came to different findings. For example, Andon and Eckerth (2009) analysed the understandings of four teachers implementing TBLT in the UK with an aim to investigate the relationship between TBLT in theory and practice. The findings showed that teachers had a well-developed understanding of TBLT principles because they were well trained through the CELTA and DELTA. However, in practice they drew selectively on different approaches as they were influenced by their students' needs. Similar findings were found in Plew and Zhao (2010), who found Canadian teachers had developed knowledge about TBLT but they also adapted it in practice suggesting that although training in TBLT is shown to be significant, it is not the only factor which shapes teachers' practice.

Throughout the duration of the study, teachers were also anxious about their ability to meet the demands of TBLT and the impact of the innovation on themselves. They expressed, for instance, concerns related to their capability to engage students and to design communicative tasks at the appropriate level for their students. These issues represent Stage 2: Personal in the SoC framework. Personal concerns are related to individuals who are uncertain about innovation and their capability to meet those demands (Hall, 2014). This finding aligns with the work of Chen and Wright (2017), who conducted a case study in China designed to examine the relationship between teacher beliefs about TBLT and their

practice. The findings illustrated that teachers showed a lack of confidence and expressed doubts about their capability to design tasks, and that this affected the level of TBLT implementation. This is similar to a study by Liu and Xiong (2016), which presents the demands on teachers as one factor hindering the implantation of TBLT in China.

Teachers' concerns about their language proficiency level have repeatedly been identified in a number of studies as one factor which limits teachers' ability to use TBLT (e.g. Butler, 2017; Carless, 2009; Zhang, 2015; Zheng & Borg, 2014). This concern, however, did not appear in the findings of the current study. Mona, for example, stated explicitly that her subject knowledge did not present a challenge to her implementation of TBLT by saying:

> I do not need programmes in my subject area. I have a master's in my subject and if I need some subject knowledge, I know which reference I can use, so you can say I can support myself. (Mona, open-ended statement, 2016)

I suggest the absence of concern about the proficiency in the target language was not an issue for the teachers in this study and the reason might be because the current study relates to the implementation of TBLT to teach MSA by native Arabic teachers who were professional in Modern Standard Arabic, while in previous studies TBLT was implemented to teach English by teachers who speak English as a foreign language. Another reason might be because the teachers in the current study had a minimum of a master's degree so their linguistic ability in the use of Modern Standard Arabic did not seem to present a challenge for them. Focusing on concerns preserved by Arabic teachers fill a gap identified in the literature by Brandl (2017), who indicated that research is needed into the adaptation of TBLT for languages with morphologically complex structures and into the teachers' views, struggles, and challenges with these languages. As can be seen, common concerns found in previous studies, such as proficiency in the use of the language, did not exist in this study. On the other hand, concerns regarding the implementation of TBLT in contexts where diglossia exists did not appear in

previous studies. Therefore, like East (2012) and Brandl (2017), I argue that a focus on modern languages other than English in TBLT implementation is needed.

Teachers in this study were also concerned about issues related to scheduling, task, processes, demands on time, teacher workload and logistics (Stage 3, Management). A number of these issues were also reported as challenges encountered by teachers who attempted to integrate TBLT in their contexts. Carless (2007) showed evidence that concerns about the time needed to complete a task had an impact on the extent of TBLT implementation by teachers in Hong Kong. This constraint to TBLT noted by Carless (2007) was also noted by Le (2014) in China. Zhang (2015) also indicated that the three primary teachers' practice in China was influenced by the teachers' understanding of TBLT, student expectations, time constraints and class size. Luo and King (2015) also support the previous findings in that teachers rejected TBLT implementation because they had too little time to prepare material. Class size has also been shown to be a barrier to change (Carless, 2007; Liu & Xiong, 2015; Zhang, 2015). Based on open-ended statements, classroom observations and interviews, it was evident that class size represented a challenge for Arabic teachers in the current study, particularly with the absence of teaching assistants. However, teachers in non-Asian contexts raised similar challenge. For example, Van den Branden (2006) investigated how French teachers implemented TBLT. The findings revealed that teachers frequently adapted TBLT to the weak version to avoid logistical challenges, deal with time pressures and reduce the noise which appears as a result of communication among students. Another study by Plew and Zhao (2010) examined Canadian teachers' perceptions and understanding of TBLT and found similar findings in that teachers combined TBLT with different approaches in practice, although they showed an understanding of the basic principles of this approach. Among reasons identified that held teachers back from implementing the strong version of TBLT were student expectations, the need to avoid time pressure and the

requirement to cover the curriculum.

It appears that the reluctance to implement TBLT in the Saudi context is not limited to concerns presented in the SoC framework, as the teachers expressed concerns related to mixed stages; this will be discussed in the section dealing with implications for the theory in section 9.4.4. Another emerging theme was context-based concerns, as teachers reported a lack of institutional support and the conflict between TBLT and the Saudi education values and cultural norms as two main influential factors limiting the effective implementation of TBLT.

Since the empirical findings of the current study do not seem to lend themselves to the dominant theoretical explanation of the CBAM, I draw upon another principle from cognition theory (Borg, 2003) as a tool for analysis as the CBAM seemed to be inadequate to deal with contextual factors which emerged as a theme affecting the adoption of TBLT in the current study. According to Borg (2003), teachers' practices are shaped by contextual realities which include parents, school, social environment, curriculum, policy, standardised testing, and availability of recourses. Such factors can inhibit the adoption of particular practices. This was empirically evident in the current study and other previous research in the field. A lack of training represents a contextual challenge in the current study; this finding is in line with other studies such as Xiongynog and Samuel (2011), Luo and Xing (2015) and Zhang (2015), which repeatedly raise the impact of a lack of training in different contexts in Asia on teacher cognition and practice. In addition, even studies which report that teachers demonstrated a developed understanding of TBLT identify a lack of training as one factor that impedes the effective implementation of TBLT in practice (Andon & Eckerth, 2009; East, 2012; Plews Zhao, 2010; Van den Branden, 2006).

Incompatible values and educational beliefs relating to the focus on language teaching, the need for assessment through exams and the role of the teacher are considered

significant challenges affecting TBLT implementation in this study. These findings can also be seen through the lens of cognition theory (Borg, 2003) and they also support the previous studies conducted in different parts of Asia. For instance, Carless (2007) conducted a study in Hong Kong to investigate how teachers perceived the implementation of TBLT to teach English in secondary school. The findings showed that the centralised exam system constrained what and how teachers taught. Similar findings were also reported by Viet, Canh, Barnard (2014), who conducted a case study in Vietnam and concluded that there was a gap between teachers' practice and TBLT as proposed in the literature, and that this was partly due to sociocultural factors in Asia, which values the transmission of language instruction. Another challenge for TBLT implementation in Asia was identified by Zhang (2015) in his case study in China: he concluded that teachers perceived their work as delivering knowledge and the shift to the role of facilitator represented a challenge.

The similarity of findings related to cultural norms in this study and a number of studies conducted in different regions Asia might be viewed in relation to similarities between Confucian heritage for language education in Asia and the historical roots of the informal teaching of religious subjects in *Kuttab*, which was developed in the Arabian Peninsula as both emphasised root learning, teacher centred, knowledge transmission and examinations.

Although many issues affecting the implementation of TBLT in the current study identified above were raised in previous research, this study contributes to knowledge in the following ways:

1. The previous studies, which focused on teachers' concerns about TBLT, were undertheorised. The empirical findings of those studies do not seem to be explained through the lens of a particular framework. However, this study utilised the SoC and cognition theories as the theoretical underpinning.

2. The focus of most previous research was on investigating the perceptions, beliefs and practice of non-native speakers implementing TBLT to teach English, together with a few studies investigating teachers from other modern languages such as Dutch and French. This study adds to the literature by reporting on the use of TBLT by Arabic teachers who teach Modern Standard Arabic to native speakers.

3. Previous studies showed the impact of culture and cognition on the effective implementation of TBLT, while this study showed that the affective filter, motivation, the values of Islam, teacher identity and the nature of Modern Standard Arabic appeared as variables affecting the implementation in the Saudi context. However, the impact of these variables needs further investigation in the future.

Issues related to the implementation of TBLT have been categorised as separate themes in three stages of the SoC framework; however, an analysis of participants' responses reveals that many of the issues raised and grouped in those stages were conceptual in nature. They stemmed either from teachers' lack of understanding of TBLT or from the contradiction between TBLT and their understanding of the values of educational culture. For example, the concern about the lack of teacher competence to design communicative tasks (Stage 2 in the SoC) is seen to be linked to lack of information. Teachers' insufficient knowledge has been shown in recent literature to be an unresolved challenge hindering TBLT implementation, even though teachers have shown their willingness to apply this approach in their classrooms (Ellis and Shintani, 2013). East (2014) also states that when teachers show a willingness to implement TBLT, a lack of understanding of TBLT and how to implement it might hinder the process of change. The absence of concerns in Stages 3 to 6 of the SoC framework, which are related to the impact of innovation on students, coupled with deep concerns at the personal, information and management levels, suggests that current teacher education in Saudi Arabia has so far failed to fill the gap in teachers' pedagogical awareness to meet the

complexity of TBLT. In view of the current lack of Arabic resources, conferences and training in TBLT, it could be argued that Arabisation could provide a solution to Arabic teachers' lack of exposure to TBLT. On the other hand, conceptual issues stemming from teachers' views of effective language learning and teaching in the Saudi context suggest that teachers' core beliefs are still in favour of a traditional teaching approach. The next section discusses the findings of Research question 3 in view of previous research.

8.4 RQ3: How do Arabic teachers prefer to be trained in the use of TBLT?

Effective teacher professional development is crucial in bringing change in teachers' attitudes and practice and in students' outcomes (Erlam, 2016; Wyatt & Borg (2011). In addition, research in the field of education change has shown that professional development plays a significant role in successful implementation of innovation (Johnson, 2013; Markee, 2013). It is argued that secondary innovation, such as professional development, is an essential factor in facilitating the successful implementation of primary innovation. In TBLT in particular, a recent trend has been to shift the attention to teachers' professional development; this is an area which more empirical research is needed to push the field forwards (Lai, 2015).

In this study, I focused on 'secondary innovation' in the form of pre- and in-service professional development to facilitate the adoption of primary innovation 'TBLT'. The focus was to investigate teachers' experiences with professional development to gain insight into how teachers learnt/preferred to learn teaching skills. This could provide insight into the kind of support which teacher professional development in Saudi context should strive to bring about.

It is clear from the findings in section 7.2 of this study, which investigated previous experience with pre- and in-service training that although teachers had spent different numbers of years studying Arabic in at King Abdul Aziz University, they showed similarities in their learning experiences. Generally, teachers perceived the content of pre-service

professional development programmes negatively because the tendency of these programmes was to emphasise the provision of content-based knowledge and ignore pedagogical content knowledge. On the other hand, in-service programmes focused on general pedagogical knowledge and on raising awareness of the use of technology for administrative and teaching purposes. Sara was the only teacher who had been prepared with knowledge about teaching in her pre-service course, but even she felt it was insufficient to prepare her for complex innovations such as TBLT. This is in line with the point raised by Alghamdi and Tight (2013), who illustrated that many Saudi higher education academics were not involved in any formal pedagogical preparation before they began their teaching careers. Although there is some debate in the literature as to whether to focus on subject matter or teaching knowledge in teacher education, there is general agreement about the significance of providing teachers with both types of knowledge (Borg, 2018; Graves, 2009; Johnson, 2009). This suggests that teachers in the current study are in urgent need of ways to enhance their pedagogy to strengthen their teaching.

Although Borg (2003) and Gebhard (2009) argue for the significance of the practicum experience in developing teaching skills, negative experiences reported by the participants suggested that most of the content of the training courses seemed to be presented theoretically with no opportunity for a practicum period in which implicit knowledge could be practiced. Although Reem had had a better opportunity in her pre-service training to engage in more pedagogical modules and had benefited from her practicum, she was similar to other teachers who faced challenges in TBLT implementation because their pre- and in-service training was theory-oriented through explicit transmission of knowledge. The trainer seemed to be a knowledge transmitter, and trainees did not take an active role in their training, as two teachers reported, and they found such training to be discouraging.

The kinds of roles that teachers and trainers play in pre- and in-service training in

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Saudi higher education are influenced by the traditional view of education. According to Smith and Abouammh (2013) both schools and professional development in Saudi Arabia are influenced by the Islamic and cultural tradition of rote learning, and by a teacher-centred approach. It seems that, based on interview data, the content of previous professional development, the way in which training was delivered and the role trainees played did not satisfy the participating teachers and it had little (if any) impact in preparing teachers to manage the change. Van den Braden (2006) argues that it is not compatible with TBLT training to use a traditional approach and to assign teachers a passive role; she described it as a 'strange paradox' in which knowledge is transmitted to teachers in training and then they are asked not to use this approach. It could be argued that Saudi Arabia has not gone far enough in preparing teachers to understand what TBLT really means and how it can be integrated. This was evident as Reem was still not sure what 'task' meant, and others were concerned about different aspects related to TBLT implementation as discussed in Chapter 5.

The type of activity which most valued by teachers in this study was cooperative learning. Teachers has different experiences but they believed that collegial support received from others had had a positive impact on their professional development. Richards and Farrell (2005) and Johnston (2009) argue that cooperative learning presents a strategy in which teachers could communicate and share experiences, discuss topics, update their content knowledge and raise issues in their practice, either face to face, online or through blended learning. In this study, Sara found that formal dialogues with her teacher educator and the experienced teachers after each lesson during her practicum provided her with a continual learning process. The feedback received from her supervisor was essential to develop her teaching and management skills. Mona gained support when she informally communicated with her husband, who was an experienced educator. Hind found the dialogical nature of communication in groups through Whatsapp to be a supportive environment in which she

could negotiate, update her content knowledge and achieve meaningful understanding. Reem found a way to socialise with her colleagues and break the daily work routine. Sara had had unique professional development in which she had experienced learning through TBLT, and she valued the impact of learning through problem-solving in her TBLT training as each teacher had an active role and had to communicate with others to solve problems. This, based on her interview data, helped her to develop her theoretical understanding of TBLT and this was evident from the data examining teachers' understanding of TBLT in Chapter 5. These strategies were shown to have benefited the participating teachers in their professional growth as evidenced by the interview data. However, since the only teacher who referred to the relationship between collaborative leaning and facilitating TBLT implementation was Sara, it is not claimed that interaction in teacher education would facilitate TBLT implementation. This is beyond the scope of the study, but based on the data it could be argued that teachers managed to learn through communicating with others, it could provide the potential for TBLT integration if this approach was applied in teacher training. However, this needs further investigation in the future.

Andon and Eckerth (2009) and Van den Branden (2006) argue that teacher education in TBLT should be task based and teachers should have opportunities to engage in communicative tasks. Based on the data it appears that participants at KAU valued learning communities. In addition, cooperative learning is grounded in Islamic values in which Muslims are advised to cooperate and get advice from each other, as explicitly mentioned by Hind. To better understand why teachers develop through collegial relationships, I used sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) as a tool for analysis as it was seen useful to provide a better explanation of how participating Arabic teachers learned teaching skills, which in turn has significant implications for ongoing professional development in the Saudi context. The first assumption underpinning sociocultural theory is that individuals can construct the

knowledge by social interaction, and that language is a mediated tool which facilitates interaction (Lantolf, 2008). This theory has been supported by empirical studies in TBLT.

For example, Andon and Eckerth (2009) used classroom observation and interviews as two data collection instruments to explore the relationship between theory and practice with regard to TBLT implementation in the UK. Subsequent analysis revealed that teachers in their study showed developed understanding; one reason was because they interacted regularly in their school in communicative activities. The researchers, therefore, argued that providing teachers with opportunities to discuss issues related to TBLT implementation might filter down the ideas for them and facilitate implementation of TBLT. Similar findings are reported by Calvert and Sheen (2015), who conducted action research in China. Although teachers in the current study did not refer to the relationship between communicative activities and TBLT, their positive experience with cooperative leaning could suggest the potential for this type of activity in enhancing their level of TBLT understanding (Andon & Eckerth, 2009). With regard to teacher education, cognition is constructed and shaped by social activities in which teachers engage (Johnson, 2015).

Peer observation is another type of activity experienced by two teachers in the study, and they perceived it negatively. Peer observation is defined as a process whereby two peers mentor and benefit from each other's teaching (Richard & Farrell, 2005). It is assumed that novice teachers can develop professionally when they observe how experienced teachers teach, solve problems and manage the class. On the other hand, experienced teachers can develop an awareness of their teaching and they can benefit from strategies used by others to deal with problems occurring in the classroom. It is argued that when integrating a new programme or new approach, mentoring should be used not only with novice teachers but also with experienced teachers, who are considered to be novices with regard to the innovation (Malderez, 2009). However, data in this study suggested that teachers were not

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willing to be observed and preferred to learn through other means, like reading the literature or attending training. Sameerah, for example, perceived peer observation negatively as a type of critical evaluation which conflicted with Saudi educational culture. The interaction between her experience, in which no peer observation was conducted in the university classroom, and the norm which stems from the culture of Saudi higher education shaped her preference for a different form of professional development. Mona seemed also not in favour of peer observation as it is seen to be in conflict with her identity as a university teacher. For Mona, a university teacher has a special status, and the observation might threaten this position as it is not culturally supported. The reasons identified by both teachers can be categorised under cultural issues and can be better understood through the lens of the second principle of sociocultural theory, which assumes that cultural beliefs and attitudes impact how learning takes place. In teacher education, Johnson (2013) illustrated that cuturural values can facilitate or inhibit teachers professional development. Based on the data, it could be argued that observation is not a common form of professional development in Saudi culture, particularly at the university level, as stated by teachers. Therefore, Saudi culture in learning seemed to have an impact on teachers' beliefs regarding their unwillingness to learn through peer observation.

These findings, which are grounded in sociocultural theory, are also supported by a mixed-methods empirical study conducted by Shukri (2014) in a Saudi university to explore how teachers perceived peer observation. The data revealed that the majority of teachers realised the importance of peer observation in professional development but they perceived it as an evaluative tool and did not see it as the only means of professional development. Although Wedlle (2003) argues the value of observation in contexts of educational reform, it seems that observation conflicts with Saudi culture. Malderez (2009) shows that peer observation can have an essential function in teacher development if it is supported by a

culture that supports collaboration and inquiry. Such a culture is not generally characteristic

of the Saudi context, which emphasises isolation in learning. This could suggest that a key

issue in facilitating change in Saudi context is the need to take cultural issues into

consideration.

The role of personal learning and reflection is stressed in a number of studies in

language teacher education (e.g. Borg, 2017; Miller, 2009). A few recent empirical studies

conducted on TBLT teacher training have shown the impact of reflection on teacher

cognition development. For instance, East (2014) conducted a study regarding a secondary-

level initial teacher education programme in New Zealand to explore the impact of reflection

during one year of the programme on teacher development. Data from teachers' reflections at

the beginning and end of the programme revealed that critical reflection on TBLT

experiences was beneficial for secondary teachers in New Zealand, as it helped them to

develop their understanding of and beliefs about TBLT. It therefore facilitated the process of

TBLT implementation, as positive characteristics of TBLT were significantly more

frequently mentioned than limitations at the end of the programme. Similarly, Wyatt and

Borg (2011) conducted a qualitative case study in Oman to explore how three teachers of

English developed their practical knowledge with regard to the design and use of

communicative tasks. Data collection, including observations and interviews over a three-

year period, revealed that two of the three teachers showed growth in their theoretical

knowledge and practice. However, reflection was perceived negatively by five out of the six

teachers in this study. Based on the data it is apparent that the teachers lacked knowledge

about reflection and they seemed to be unaware of the role reflection can play in teacher

professional development. This finding is also supported by sociocultural theory. According

to Vygotsky (1978), learning takes place in a context and cognitive development can differ

between different cultures in different contexts. This suggests that while theory developed in

Western culture emphasises reflection for learning, and empirical studies have proven its effectiveness, this conflicts with Saudi culture. Sibahi (2015) conducted a qualitative study to explore how higher education teachers in Saudi Arabia perceived reflection in teaching. Interview data revealed that teachers had a limited understanding about reflection teaching. The main challenges identified by teachers were the restricted education system, a lack of awareness about the impact of reflection on professional development and a lack of training.

The findings related to teachers' preferences for future training in the current study revealed that teachers showed a willingness to be trained continuously through workshops in which they can practice what they have learned in a real classroom. This in line with Richards and Farrell (2005): in settings where innovation is integrated, workshops can be an ideal way for teachers to enhance their proficiency, develop collegiality and increase their motivation to manage change.

Features identified were related to different aspects, including the preferred form delivery and activities which, when taken together, suggest the constructivism of a teacher education approach. This finding suggested that there is a gap between what teachers are provided with and what they prefer. Constructivism is approach which allow teachers to have an active role to construct the teaching knowledge and it is argued to be essential in language teacher training (Borg, 2016) and in TBLT (Aljohani, 2017) and it could be promising approach to take Arabic teachers forwards to better implement TBLT although it needs further investigation.

8.5 Summary

This chapter has summarised the findings of the study aimed at answering the research questions in relation to previous literature. The study has drawn upon the cognition theory, SoC framework and upon sociocultural theories to conceptualise the support needed for TBLT professional development in the Saudi context. The findings suggest that while Saudi

Arabia has supported the professional development, it seemed that teachers have been provided with a traditional approach in their professional development, which has neither satisfied them nor prepared them for TBLT implementation. Since culture plays a principal role in the implementation of TBLT and in teacher professional development, change in teacher cognition is essential. Such change can be facilitated by a constructivist approach in which teachers need to be trained to analyse their teaching in relation to their context. The final chapter sets out the contributions and implications, limitations of the study and makes suggestions for further research.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis sets out the main conclusions drawn from the study. This chapter consists of four sections. The first sections summarise briefly the aims and the main findings of the current study with respect to the research questions. The second section presents some implications for improving teacher preparation to manage the Saudi educational reforms. The third section outlines the main contribution of the thesis to the field of task-based language teaching for teaching the Arabic language in the Saudi context. The final sections outline, respectively, the main limitations of the study and some suggestions for further research.

9.2 Summary of the study

9.2.1 Statement of research problem

Despite the attention given to Arabic learning in Saudi Arabia, a significant number of studies have shown that students' performance in Arabic is characterised by underachievement (Alhawamedeh and Hussein, 2016). TBLT was introduced in Saudi Arabia as a promising approach to meet the demands of the global market and stimulate long-needed change; however, and in spite of significant support for education and teacher professional development, there has been not much evidence of improvement in Saudi education after three years of implementing the proposed reforms (Elyas and Picards, 2013). One reason identified as a cause for the poor performance of Arabic students is the lack of teacher preparation (Alnassar, 2012). The quality of teachers is emphasised in the research literature, not only for its association with student achievement but also for the role played by the teacher in the process of managing change (Van den Branden, 2016). It is argued that without sufficient preparation, any proposed change will be superficial. In Saudi Arabia, Al-Ghamdi

and Tight (2013), for example, argue that the failure to manage the change is, to a large extent, due to a failure to take teachers' knowledge, needs and attitudes into account when designing professional development programmes. However, this area is being under research in TBLT and in the Saudi context although numerous recent studies have identified it as an issue which needs further investigation both in managing educational reform in general (Markee, 2013) and TBLT integration in particular (Butler; 2017; Carless, 2012; East, 2012).

9.2.2 Reviews of aims and methodology

The current study therefore aimed to identify the training needs of Arabic teachers in higher education in light of TBLT implementation. To meet this aim, one main question and three sub questions were posed:

What are the professional development needs of Arabic teachers when implementing TBLT?

RQ1) What are teachers' understandings of 'task' in TBLT?

RQ2) What are teachers' concerns regarding TBLT implementation?

RQ3) How do Arabic teachers prefer to be trained in the use of TBLT?

In order to generate data, the study utilised a qualitative case study approach. The participants in the study were six Arabic teachers implementing TBLT at King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia. The sample was purposely selected, and instruments used to collect data included classroom observation, semi-structured interviews and open-ended statements adapted from the CBAM. An initial interview was conducted with each teacher to elicit her background information, and subsequently two lessons for each teacher were observed. Each lesson was followed by an interview with an aim to understand how each teacher's beliefs informed her practice. Data were systematically and manually analysed and thematic analysis, in which data were coded and then categorised to themes, was adopted. The

following presents the main conclusion to be drawn from this study and answers briefly the research questions.

9.2.3 Brief answers to research questions

For the first research question, teachers' current understanding of TBLT was examined in view of Ellis' (2003) criteria which included the main principles identified in the literature. Examining teachers' understanding was for the purpose of identifying the gaps in their knowledge which need to be addressed by in-service training. As shown in Section 5.3.1, responses from initial interviews can be classified as 'non-developed' as four of the six teachers demonstrated a surface level of understanding of what a task might involve, and of how tasks are different to communicative language teaching and linguistic exercises. Hind and Sara, who had experienced learning via TBLT, showed a partially developed theoretical understanding in self-reported interviews as they managed to identify most of the principles mentioned by Ellis (2003), although there was little evidence of their understanding in an actual classroom. None of the participants, however, referred to the criterion that a task should have a non-linguistic outcome, demonstrating a gap in their knowledge particularly with regard to these criteria; they needed to develop their knowledge before engaging in TBLT implementation. In practice, teachers gave more emphasis to form than to meaning; for instance, in a pre-task, students' attention was drawn, either directly or indirectly, to the use of language rather than to meaning. This suggests that TBLT was not implemented, not only because of teachers' lack of understanding but also because it represents a challenge in the context of Modern Standard Arabic.

The second question addressed the challenges inhibiting TBLT implementation in the Arabic classroom. This issue was discussed by applying the SoC dimension from the CBAM. As indicated in 6.2, teachers during the implementation of TBLT experienced various concerns that had resulted from the implementation of TBLT. Three concerns were informed

by the theoretical framework, including concerns about a lack of information about TBLT (Stage 2 in SoC), concerns related to teachers themselves (Stage 3) and a number of issues related to management of the innovation (Stage 4). Institutional and sociocultural factors and mixed-stage concerns were two themes that emerged from the data and that were shown to impact the implementation of TBLT in the Arabic classroom within the Saudi higher educational context. Islamic values, which emphasise honesty in work, coupled with teachers' lack of pedagogical knowledge and how language could be acquired through communication, created a challenge affecting TBLT implementation. The data related to this question suggested that the implementation of TBLT is complex and should not be viewed in isolation, as it involved a number of interrelated factors including teachers' knowledge, beliefs, practice, learning experiences, feelings and sociocultural factors.

The third research question was addressed through a presentation of the findings under two main themes: teachers' experiences with previous professional development (see section 7.2) and teachers' preferences for future TBLT training (7.3). With regard to issues in preparation programmes in Saudi Arabia, the findings of this question supported the findings of the first research question as they provided further evidence that teachers had struggled in their implementation of TBLT as a result of gaps in the content of their initial pre-service training and in-service programmes, which did not focus on preparing teachers with the appropriate pedagogical knowledge. The programme at the College of Education was better than the one at King Abdul Aziz University as it provided students with pedagogy and practice, although this was not sufficient from Sara's point of view. The focus on only theoretical aspects of pedagogy was another issue raised by the participating teachers based on their experience in both pre- and in-service education. The top-down nature of training was perceived negatively by teachers as they showed that such an approach cannot provide them with the skills needed to implement TBLT. On the other hand, teachers showed their

willingness to learn via workshops conducted on a continuing basis. They also valued the connection between theory and practical experience as a way to learn in their future training. The findings of this question revealed that the centralised top-down training implemented in pre- and in-service professional training seems to be neither effective nor preferred by Arabic teachers who seek to develop skills for successful TBLT integration.

9.3 Significance of the study

This research, as stated in Chapter 1, demonstrates originality and contributes to the literature. The main significance of the study is threefold. It contributes to research in the field of TBLT, to the CBAM and to the Saudi context. The study contributes to the literature in TBLT by focusing on TBLT in a language other than English and identifies teachers' struggles and the support needed to facilitate TBLT implementation. The study also develops a data-driven context-based TBLT training framework, explained in more detail in 9.4.5. The study also provides empirical research on the implementation of TBLT in a Saudi context from the perspectives of higher education teachers, which is considered as an area under investigation. With respect to the CBAM and particularly the dimensions of the SoC framework, the study contributes to the theory by its application to TBLT and to the use of classroom observation as a method to explore the Stages of Concerns. One strength of the study is that it follows Fullan (2007) and Carless (2015) by drawing on aspects of change management and aspects of language teaching and learning to facilitate successful implementation of innovation in educational research. In addition, the study is based on multiple theories, which better ground the findings. In view of the findings, I argue that as teachers' implementation is influenced by complex interrelated factors including context, beliefs, understanding, learning experiences and classroom practice, teachers' preparation should not be studied without consideration of these factors.

9.4 Implications

Based on the findings of the study which analysed Arabic teachers' needs to facilitate TBLT implementation, the following recommendations are made.

9.4.1 Teachers

As shown in Chapter 2, the Saudi educational system is seeking a shift from rote learning to the promotion of active learning. Such a reform can be successful only if teachers have the knowledge and skills to implement the innovation in practice. As can be seen in section 5.3.1. self-reported data showed that the teachers in the study had limited knowledge about TBLT and they were unable to articulate their understanding. This was also evident in section 6.2.1, as teachers' concerns were in Stages 2 and 3, which are categorised as personal concerns in the CBAM and according to the developers of the CBAM, individuals who show concerns in the first three stages require more information about innovation to facilitate the process of implementation. In addition, the data from classroom observations, presented in section 5.3.3, showed that the class was mainly teacher-centred as teachers were dominant and the type of activities provided were focused on language. Although students were engaged in communication, most of these activities were group work rather than tasks as they did not meet the criteria of TBLT in Ellis (2003), as stated in 5.3.1. With respect to different definitions of 'task' in the literature, teachers should be aware at least of the common principles identified by Ellis (2003). It is therefore suggested that teachers without formal training in TBLT will be less likely to implement the change. Although formal training might not be sufficient on its own, there is evidence in the literature to show that teachers showed better changes in their knowledge and beliefs after they were trained formally to implement TBLT (East, 2012; Van den Branden, 2006; Wyatt and Borg, 2011). Teachers should have a clear understanding of what the term 'task' means, how it is different from group activities and what the principle and theories of TBLT are. This point seemed essential as most of

participants were unable to identify the difference.

In section 6.2.2 teachers' concerns fall into Stage 2 (personal concerns) in the SoC framework as they identified the negative impacts of TBLT on themselves, such as workload, financial impacts and psychological impacts. For those who showed concerns at this level, a good strategy to reduce personal concerns is to acknowledge the benefits of TBLT. For example, they can be provided with empirical research showing how students' performance is enhanced when TBLT is implemented. It could be also beneficial to psychologically prepare teachers before they become involved in the process of TBLT implementation (Lia, 2015). During the implementation phase, teachers can be involved with others who have implemented the change so they can see how others addressed similar challenges. It is also important to provide encouragement.

In section 6.2.4, teachers referred to their beliefs about the value of being honest and about their responsibility to uncover everything for students, which stem from the core beliefs of Islam. However, with the findings evident in section 7.2.1 which showed that teachers had not been prepared with pedagogical knowledge in their pre- and in-service programmes, my interpretation is that teachers might not recognise that acquiring language can be incidental and does not happen only by discrete grammar explanation. Recommendation for this could be to enhance teachers' knowledge about theories of adult language learning and increase their knowledge about teaching methods.

9.4.2 Policy makers

The planning of reform in the Saudi context is centralised as evidenced by the interview data presented in section 7.2.1. It has been shown that top-down policy is less successful in managing change if those who are implementing the change are not involved (Markee, 2013). Policy makers, therefore, should involve teachers in designing materials and planning lessons before implementation of any reform. According to Smith and Abouammoh (2013), female

academics in higher education should be equally involved as males in planning curriculum designed to improve the quality of education. Including teachers in planning programmes will enhance ownership, which has been shown to be essential in accepting change (Lai, 2015).

As is evident in section 7.2.1, trainers are inexperienced and not sufficiently prepared to train others to work in students-centred classrooms. It is therefore recommended that the criteria for selecting trainers and ensuring their suitability be changed. Since the competence of trainers is essential in successful training, continuous training and assessment should be provided to ensure the suitability of trainers.

As seen in section 7.2.1, the content of pre-service training was mainly focused on content knowledge resulting in a gap in teacher knowledge. Policy makers should reform the content of these programmes and increase the number of credits allocated towards pedagogical modules. This can provide teachers with basic knowledge, which is essential in any professional development programme (Richards, 2015).

Section 7.2.2. shows how the teachers lacked motivation to engage in professional development programmes. Therefore, involvement in in-service programmes could be made mandatory. Teachers who participate in optional in-service training should be officially recognised by providing promotions and other financial rewards.

One significant finding that emerged from the data in 7.2.3 is that teachers benefited from informal communicative learning. Fostering informal networking inside the institution can be done by creating regular meetings in which teachers can communicate and discuss issues related to the institution and their practices in a secure environment. It could be useful to encourage academics who have travelled abroad to complete their postgraduate studies to share their knowledge and experiences with their colleagues. International collaboration between KAU and other professional institutions outside the country through online long-term partnerships, as suggested by one teacher, could help teachers to acquire knowledge and

teaching skills.

A significant finding in section 6.2.4 was that teachers were concerned about the lack of resources about TBLT in Arabic, and about the lack of conferences in Saudi Arabia. This is critical in helping teachers to integrate TBLT into their teaching. Policy makers can invest in translating literature on TBLT into Arabic or encourage teachers who specialise in translation in the university to be involved in this process. Arabic teachers should be encouraged to attend international conferences which provide live translations of presented works. This could help teachers to gain up-to-date knowledge about TBLT.

9.4.3 In-service training

As can be seen in section 7.2.3, personal learning was not perceived positively among teachers in the current study. Results of studies in teacher education have shown that including reflection in training programmes results in teachers developing more complex understanding and changing their practice (Burton, 2009). A few studies conducted in TBLT have also shown the effectiveness of reflection on the development of teacher knowledge and on changes in their beliefs (e.g. East, 2014; Van den Branden, 2006; Wyatt and Borg, 2011). In-service training should raise teachers' knowledge about the effectiveness of reflection. Activities provided in training can include sections on reflection, in which teachers could practice this strategy. Teachers could be introduced to articles on reflection and shown how reflection can be used as a model of professional development.

It was evident in section 6.2.4 that the universality development centre had not provided intensive training in TBLT. Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct training in learner-centred instruction in general, and in TBLT in particular. This training should go hand-in-hand with classroom practice, in which teachers can put what has been taught into use in an actual classroom and reflect on their experiences. The types of activities provided in in-service training should allow teachers to participate and play an active role. Such activities

can help teachers to make sense of how learning can be acquired incidentally.

9.4.4 Theoretical implications

In this study, the SoC framework from the CBAM was used as a lens to analyse teachers' concerns about TBLT at the time when the data was collected. While it was helpful in increasing our understanding about the nature of teachers' concerns, the findings had some implications which could be taken into account in theory development:

1. This model was limited in its capacity as it says nothing about sociocultural concerns which appeared in the current study as a factor affecting teachers' implementation of TBLT. In order to illuminate the data of this study, cognition theory (Borg, 2003) was combined with the SoC to better understanding teachers' concerns from a theoretical perspective. Since change always exists in a context, adding a stage addressing contextual concerns could be required.

2. The findings of the current study showed that emotions, including confidence and anxiety, presented themselves as variables affecting teachers' practice. Studying teachers' concerns from the perspective of motivational and self-efficacy theories can have the potential to address identified concerns and may advance the findings in this field.

3. The findings in the current study showed that the progression of concerns is not simple and linear: Hind and Sara, for example, showed a better understanding of TBLT than the other teachers, but they still experienced informational concern (Stage 2) in the CBAM and did not progress to consequence concerns. In addition, the concerns were not always clear-cut as teachers' responses showed the interaction of concerns from different stages of the CBAM, suggesting the complexity of managing change in practice.

4. In each stage teachers raised different aspects of concerns. I argue, therefore, that adding more layers to each stage could provide more accurate data to inform the designers of professional development.

5. Although the use of open-ended statements provided insight into teachers concerns, it might be insufficient on its own as some teachers wrote only one paragraph. The use of observations followed by interviews was valued in the current study as it provided in-depth data with regard to teachers' concerns.

9.4.5 Implications for TBLT teacher training

The study aimed to determine the foundation Arabic teachers' needs for effective TBLT implementation. This section builds on data presented in Chapter 5, 6 and 7 with the aim for drawing out some implication for teacher training in TBLT. In Figure 9.1, I attempt to design a framework for TBLT training. The suggested framework is data driven as it is based on identified needs raised by Arabic teachers in the Saudi higher educational context to integrate TBLT into teaching Arabic. Van den Branden (2006) shows how training that fails to take into account teachers' needs and drives which impact decision-making in the classroom are less likely to succeed in preparing teachers, in contrast to those which do consider the needs of those who implement the innovation.

Stage 1 in Figure 9.1 is about understanding the teachers who are targeted to be effectively trained. The information gathered about teachers in the current study was foregrounded in the literature chapters as factors affecting the management of change, either by theory or empirical studies. These included who the trainees are (5.2); what they know (5.3.1); their attitudes (5.3.2); the core beliefs behind their practice (5.3.3); their concerns (6.2); their sociocultural context (6.2.3); their experiences as learners and how they acquired their knowledge (7.2). It is not claimed that those are the only factors that should be considered about the trainees, but they represented what exists in the literature and what was examined in the current study.

Stage 2 in Figure 9.1 addresses teachers' desires and indicates what teachers prefer in their future training. This emerged mainly from self-reporting in initial interviews

supplemented by the data from two classroom observations followed by interviews in (7.3). The rationale behind this stage is that what is known through needs analysis in Stage 1 does not always reflect what teachers prefer in their teaching. For example, needs analysis revealed that teachers lacked knowledge about TBLT and one strategy suggested by the literature was the development of reflection on their teaching. However, it was evident in 7.3.3 that, regardless of the reason, teachers seemed not to value learning through class-based research.

Stage 3, designing training, is influenced by Stages 1 and 2 and has function of bridging the gap between 1, 2 and 4, which includes the objective of innovation. Stage 3 includes two elements: what to know (the content of training) and how to know (the delivery). The information regarding what to know in the current study builds based on data investigating teachers' experiences in previous training in 7.2, along with data examining teachers theoretical understanding of TBLT in 5.3.1 and teachers' concerns in 6.3. Findings revealed that teachers' exposure mainly to content knowledge in their education and their level of concern fell in the personal stage; therefore, their limited knowledge about TBLT and their concerns should be considered when designing the content of TBLT training. Based on the data in the current study, teachers need more attention to be paid to the following areas:

- Building pedagogical knowledge (knowledge about teaching methods and teaching skills, classroom management).

- Pedagogical content knowledge (knowing how to deliver MSA in a way that makes it comprehensible for Arabic-speaking students).

- Psychological knowledge (knowing how to motivate students and reduce the affective filter impact).

- Theories behind language learning and teaching.

- Definition of the term 'task', and principles of TBLT:

- o Approaches in TBLT and focus on Ellis' approach (TSLT) which could be more suitable to the nature of MSA.
- o Raising teachers' awareness of the difference between task, communicative activity and language exercise.

The second element under Stage 3 is how to know (delivery of knowledge). Needs analysis in the current study revealed that using only top-down approaches, which four of the six teachers had experienced in their pre- and in-service training, seemed to negatively affect their understanding and practice of TBLT. However, Hind and Sara had a better understanding of TBLT in contrast to the other teachers, as was found in 5.3.1. In view of Borg's (2003) theory, it could be said that there is an indication of these benefit with Sara, from learning through TBLT in her training course and through interaction with her supervisor and the classroom teacher during her practicum period. Hind seemed to have also benefited from both her experience of learning English through TBLT in the UK and her observation of how TBLT was implemented, as evident by interviews in 7.3.3. This supported the findings of teachers' preferences for their future training in 7.3.3 as they showed their willingness to play an active role via communicative learning.

In view of both needs analysis data and teachers' preferences, it seems that using the following methods could provide teachers with a supportive environment to learn about TBLT:

- informal communication within the institution;
- TBLT; and
- observing good models.

It is not claimed that this is the only model for TBLT training, but it is data driven and it needs to be evaluated in both Saudi and other contexts with regard to different modern languages, including Arabic which this study is focused on. It is hoped that this model could

have implications not only for TBLT training in the Saudi context but also for TBLT teacher training in other similar contexts.
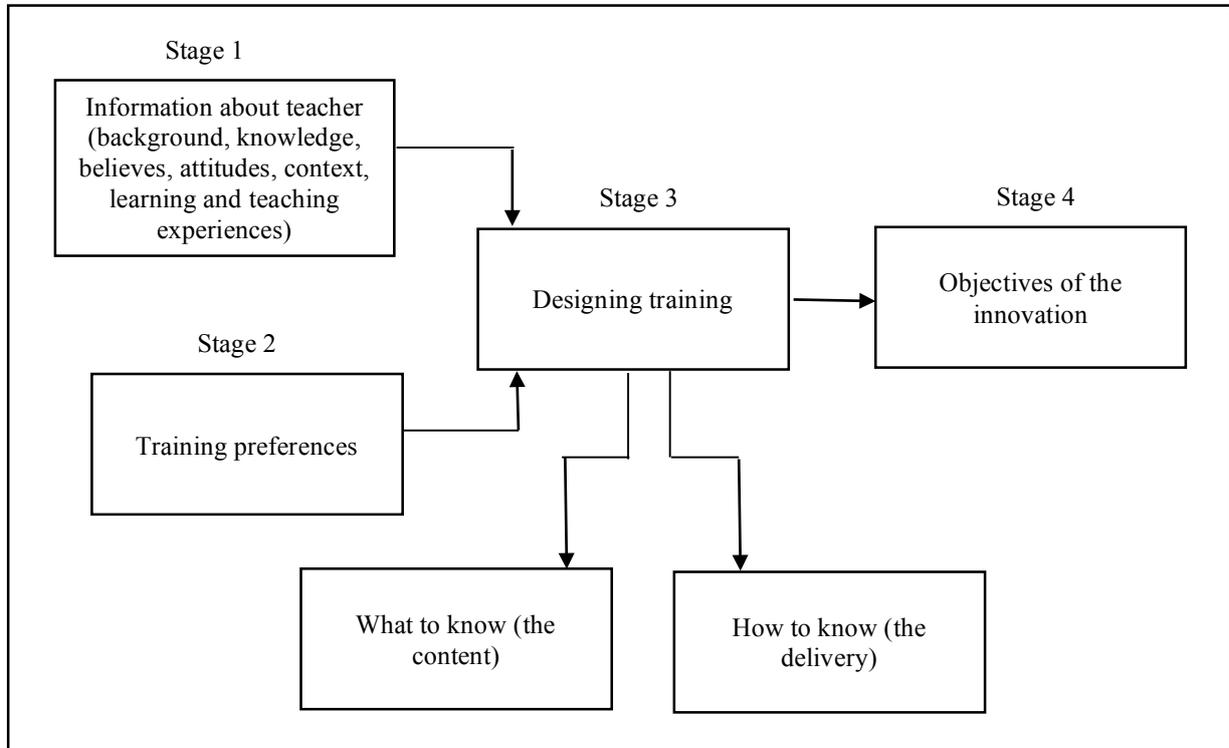
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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Stage 1                                                                      │
│  ┌──────────────────────────┐                                                  │
│  │ Information about teacher │                                                 │
│  │ (background, knowledge,  │                                                  │
│  │ believes, attitudes, context, │   Stage 3          Stage 4                  │
│  │ learning and teaching    │                                                  │
│  │ experiences)             │──────┐  ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐      │
│  └──────────────────────────┘      └─▶│              │   │ Objectives of the │ │
│                                        │ Designing    │──▶│ innovation   │      │
│   Stage 2                              │ training     │   └──────────────┘      │
│  ┌──────────────────────────┐         │              │                         │
│  │                          │     ┌──▶└──────────────┘                         │
│  │  Training preferences    │─────┘       │      │                             │
│  └──────────────────────────┘             ▼      ▼                             │
│                          ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐                   │
│                          │ What to know (the │ │ How to know (the │           │
│                          │ content)     │   │ delivery)    │                   │
│                          └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘                   │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 9.1 Framework for TBLT training

9.5 Limitations and future research

This thesis has addressed three research questions relating to the implementation and preparation for managing change within Saudi higher educational contexts. Whilst the answers to research questions have been set out throughout the study, findings were limited and have raised further possibilities for future research. Both the limitations and suggestions for future studies aligned to those defined limitations are outlined in this section:

1. The choice of methodology using a single case study was explained and justified in Chapter 4. Although it provided a deep understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, it limited the potential to generalise the findings beyond the specific teachers who were examined and analysed. Continuing research in this area in different contexts and different institutions will offer broader insights into issues related to

implementation of TBLT in Arabic classrooms.

2. With respect to the methods used in the study, including semi-structured interviews coupled with classroom observations followed by interviews, it was effective as it provided opportunities to challenge teachers' behaviours. However, with respect to the purpose of the study and the qualitative approach chosen for it, the reporting of quantitative data such as assessing the level of implementation or exploring the impact of factors such as age, teaching experience and qualification was not possible in this study. Further research can gain more insight by using a mixed-methods approach and conducting longitudinal studies to examine the change in teachers' concerns and how they progressed through the SoC framework over time.

3. Considering the complexity of TBLT implantation and its correlation with other factors such as beliefs, knowledge and context, the time available for conducting the study was limited. Future studies can take advantage of more longitudinal research designs, which will allow a deeper investigation of issues that have not been the focus of the thesis but that can enrich the data in the field. These include the impact of identity, feelings and Islamic values coupled with a lack of pedagogy in the use of TBLT as an approach to language teaching and the impact of the nature of MSA.

4. Although the use of observation added to the picture drawn in the study, it was a challenge in the Saudi context because the video recording is not allowed for both religious and cultural reasons. In addition, the involvement of males in the study was not possible for the same reason. Future research in other Middle East studies can provide other dimensions for the study if male was involved. Since only two lessons were observed for each teacher, it provided a snapshot view which might not reflect the real classroom; observing further lessons for each teacher would have provided a stronger basis for claims about these teachers' practice and decision-making.

5. Since the purpose of the study was to explore the implementation of teachers' supports needed for effective TBLT implementation, the focus was primarily on practitioners. Additional research is needed to elicit data from different sources, including teacher educators, professional development administrators and students. In addition, although observing trainings provided to teachers could provide more insight into challenges which need to be overcome, with the limited time available to conduct this study observation of both classrooms and training sessions was not possible. Future research can gain more insight by utilising some further observations of in-service training. It seems that in order to address the challenges which influence TBLT implementation, teacher education should account the complexity of interplay factors. There is clearly needs to conceptualise the kind of support which professional development in each context should strive to bring about.

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Appendix A: KAU ethical approval

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Ministry of Education

KING ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box: 80200 Jeddah: 21589

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6952000

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
جامعة الملك عبد العزيز

ص. ب ٨٠٢٠٠ جدة ٢١٥٨٩
☎ ٦٤٠٠٠٠٠
٦٩٥٢٠٠٠

Ref.:....................................

Date:....................................

Encl.:....................................

كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية

الرقـــم : ....

التاريـــخ : ....

المرفقات : ....

Permission to carry out a study

Dear Areej

Referring to the request regarding the approval of a study entailed 'Managing

Curriculum Change in Saudi Higher Educational Context' as one of the

requirements for obtaining doctorate degree from the University of Central

Lancashire, we grant you a permission to carry out your research and collect

data via classrooms observations and conducting interviews with the target

sample of teachers and students from 10/7/2016 until 10/9/2016.

Director of Faculty of Arts & Humanities
Huda Mohammad Alamoudi

Signature:

Appendix B: Uclan ethical approval

24 June 2015

Michael Thomas / Areej Bayousef
School of Language, Literature & International Studies
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Michael / Areej

Re: BAHSS Ethics Committee Application
Unique Reference Number: BAHSS 264

The BAHSS ethics committee has granted approval of your proposal application 'An **Investigation of the Perceptions of Undergraduate Saudi Teachers and Students on Using Task Based Language Teaching for Teaching Arabic**'. Approval is granted up to the end of project date* or for 5 years from the date of this letter, whichever is the longer.

It is your responsibility to ensure that

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved, by Committee
- you notify roffice@uclan.ac.uk if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to Committee
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (Existing paperwork can be used for this purposes e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use e-Ethics Closure Report Proforma).

Yours sincerely

Chair
BAHSS Ethics Committee

* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date

NB - Ethical approval is contingent on any health and safety checklists having been completed, and necessary approvals as a result of gained.

Appendix C: Participants Information Sheet (English version)

You are invited to participate in a research study, *which I am undertaking as part of my PhD thesis. The* title of the Research Project: Manging Curriculum change in Saudi Higher Educational context: A case study of Arabic Female Teachers Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching. Before you decide *whether you wish to take part*, it is significant for you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve. *Please take the time to read the following information carefully and a*sk questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to explore the task-based language teaching (TBLT) training needs of Arabic in-service teachers in the Saudi higher educational context. The principal focus is on teacher cognition in relation to TBLT innovation and professional development and to identify the potential challenges that might affect the process of implementation.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been chosen to take part in the study as you are a Saudi female teacherteaching Arabic in the preparatory year at the University of King Abdul-Aziz.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You will be given a week to decide whether you wish to take apart in this study. It is important for you to know that the tasks are adapted from your textbook, and this means that you would be taught everything as in the other classes with one exception. As a participant in this study, you would use a task-based approach when given the opportunity to interact with others in communicative tasks, which is different from the traditional teacher centered approach.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You may benefit from participating as you experience a new approach to language learning; studies have shown that this approach motivates learners and facilitates language acquisition. Your participation also may help to identifying the kind of support that might be required to facilitate the effective implementation of a task-based approach in a Saudi context. In addition, this study might help to create a local framework of the task-based approach that could highly fit and benefit Saudi educational culture.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are no possible risks if you decide to join this study.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you choose to take part in research, you will be asked to sign consent form after reading the information sheet. You will be then observed in your classroom for 8 weeks and you will be asked to participate in semi structured interviews and you will be asked to explain your experience with learning/teaching Arabic through task based approach with identifying the potential challenges affecting the implementation of task based approach. It is significant for you to know that a digital tape-recorder will be used to collect qualitative data after receiving your permission. The interview will take up an hour and data will be collected according to your preference for time, date and venue.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be transcribed, analysed and used for the completion of my PhD thesis to be submitted to the School of Language, Literature and International studies at the University of Central Lancashire in the UK. It might be part of a conference presentation or a published article in the future. If you wish to obtain a copy of the results in this research, you can contact the researcher and ask for a copy via email or post.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Data will be used for research purposes only and at every stage, your name will remain confidential. Voice recordings and written transcripts of interviews will be locked in a secure cabinet that is accessible only to the researcher. Electronic data will be saved on a USB stick, which will be secured both in a locked place in the researcher's home and on a password-protected Uclan server.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

Your participation is voluntary and you would be free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to provide a reason, but your data cannot be deleted after the results have been analyzed. If you change your mind and decide to withdraw during the study, you will be moved to another classroom and be taught according to a traditional teaching approach. This would not affect your assessment in your academic program or your attendance, as all of the foundation year classes follow the same pace in the curriculum.

What is the duration of the research?

We will meet between three to six months and the date, time and venue to be mutually convenient.

Where will the research be conducted?

We will arrange meeting either in your department at the University or in the library wherever you prefer.

Contact for further information

If you have any queries about the study, please contact me at Asmbayousef@uclan.ac.uk or 00447459844506. You can also contact the Director of Studies: Dr Michael Thomas at (Tel.: +44 1772 893148 / E-mail: MThomas4@uclan.ac.uk). I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part.

Thank you

Researcher name: Areej Salem Bayousef

School of Language, Literature and International Studies.

Central Lancashire University, UK.

Appendix D: Participants Information Sheet (Arabic version)

أنت مدعوة للمشاركة في الدراسة البحثية التي أجريها كجزء من دراستي لمرحلة الدكتوراة.. عنوان المشروع كاملاً: إدارة تغيير المناهج في سياق التعليم العالي السعودي: دراسة حالة لمدرسات اللغة العربية في تطبيق طريقة التعليم التفاعلي. قبل أن تقرر ما إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة، فمن المهم بالنسبة لك أن تفهم السبب وراء اجراء هذه الدراسة وماذا تشتمل عليه. الرجاء أخذ بعض الوقت في قراءة المعلومات التالية بتركيز وطرح الأسئلة اذا وجدت أن ما تقرأه غير واضح أو اذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على المزيد من المعلومات.

ما هو الغرض من الدراسة؟

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف احتياجات مدرسات اللغة العربية السنة التحضيرية في الجامعة حول تطبيق طريقة التعليم التفاعلي في تدريس اللغة العربية في المملكة العربية السعودية. ينصب التركيز الرئيسي على إدراك المعلمين فيما يتعلق بالابتكار والتطوير المهني وتحديد التحديات المحتملة التي قد تؤثر على عملية تطبيق طريقة التعليم التفاعلي

لماذا أنا مدعوة للمشاركة؟

أنت مدعوة للمشاركة لأنك معلمة تعلمين اللغة العربية للسنة التحضيرية في جامعة الملك عبد العزيز.

هل يجب أن أشارك؟

الأمر متروك لك ما إذا كنت ستشاركين أو لا. سيتم منحك أسبوعا لتقرري إذا كنت ترغبين في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. من المهم بالنسبة لك أن تعرفي أن الأنشطة سيتم تعديلها لتلائم كتابك المدرسي وهذا يعني أنك ستدرسين كل شيء مثل الفصول الأخرى مع استثناء واحد وهو أنك ستدرسين بطريقة التعليم التفاعلي الذي يختلف عن المنهج التقليدي الذي يركز على المعلم.

ماهي الفوائد المحتملة المترتبة على المشاركة؟

يمكنك الاستفادة من تجربتك لطريقة جديدة لتعلم اللغة وقد أثبتت الدراسات أن هذا المنهج في التدريس يحفز المتعلمين ويسهل اكتساب اللغة، كما أن مشاركتك قد تساعد في التعرف على نوعية الدعم المطلوب لتسهيل تطبيق هذه الطريقة في المملكة العربية السعودية. بالإضافة لذلك فان هذه الطريقة قد تسهل وضع إطار محلي لطريقة التعليم التفاعلي يناسب البيئة السعودية ويعود عليها بالنفع.

ماهي المخاطر المحتملة للمشاركة؟

لا يوجد أي مخاطر محتملة إذا قررت المشاركة في الدراسة.

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ما لذي سيطلب مني القيام بفعله لو قررت أن أشارك في الدراسة؟

في الفصل الدراسي لمدة ثمانية أسابيع وسيتم بعدها عمل مقابلة معك وسيطلب منك التحدث عن تجربتك مع التعلم بالطريقة التفاعلية والتحديات التي قد تؤثر على تطبيق هذه الطريقة في السعودية. من المهم أنه سيتم تسجيل المقابلة لجمع البيانات بعد موافقتك على ذلك. المقابلة ستستغرق ساعة على الاكثر وجمع البيانات سيكون وفقا للتاريخ واليوم والمكان المناسب لك.

ماذا سيحدث لنتائج الدراسة البحثية؟

سيتم وصف النتائج وتحليلها واستخدامها لاستكمال متطلبات أطروحة الدكتوراه التي ستسلم لقسم اللغات والآداب والدراسات العالمية في جامعة سنترال لانكشير في بريطانيا. قد يتم عرض النتائج في منشورات علمية في المستقبل وإذا كنت ترغبين في الحصول على نسخة من نتائج هذا البحث يمكنك مراسلة الباحثة عبر البريد الالكتروني أو البريد العادي.

كيف سيتم المحافظة على السرية؟

المعلومات سيتم استخدامها لأغراض البحث فقط وفي مل المراحل سيتم المحافظة على السرية بعدم اظهار اسم المشاركة. التسجيلات الصوتية والمعلومات الوصفية المكتوبة سيتم حفظها في خزانة آمنة بحيث يمكن للباحثة فقط الوصول اليها. البيانات الالكترونية سيتم حفظها على قرص مرن سيتم حفظه في مكان امن في منزل الباحثة وجهاز الحاسب الالي في الجامعة الذي يحتاج لكلمة مرور خاصة.

ماذا سيحدث لو اخترت عدم المشاركة أو قررت تغيير رأيي؟

مشاركتك في الدراسة تطوعية وستكون لك حرية الانسحاب من الدراسة في أي وقت بدون تقديم أسباب ولكن لا يمكن حذف معلوماتك بعد تحليل نتائج الدراسة. إذا غيرت رأيك وقررت الانسحاب من الدراسة سيتم نقلك لفصل دراسي اخر يدرس بالطريقة التقليدية وهذا لن يؤثر على تقييمك في برنامجك الأكاديمي أو نسبة حضورك لأن جميع فصول السنة التحضيرية يتبعون نفس المنهج بنفس التقسيم خلال الفصل الدراسي.

ماهي مدة البحث؟

سنلتقي ما بين ثلاثة الى ستة أشهر وسيكون التاريخ والوقت والمكان مريح لك.

أين سيتم اجراء البحث؟

سيتم ترتيب المقابلة في المكان المفضل لديك سواء أكان في قسمك ف الجامعة أو في المكتبة.

إذا أردت الحصول على المزيد من المعلومات يمكنك التواصل على:

البريد الإلكتروني: Asmbayousef@uclan.ac.uk

الجوال:0044759844506

سأكون ممتنة إذا وافقت على المشاركة في الدراسة

اسم الباحثة: أريج سالم بايوسف

القسم: اللغات والآداب والدراسات العالمية

الجامعة :سنترال لانكشير ،بريطانيا

Appendix E: Participants Consent Form (English version)

CONSENT FORM

uclan
University of Central Lancashire

Title of the Research Project: Manging Curriculum change in Saudi Higher Educational context: A case study of Arabic Female Teachers Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching
Name of the researcher: Areej Salem Bayousef
Position: PhD student at University of Central Lancashire
Mobile Number: 07459844506
E-mail: Asmbayousef@uclan.ac.uk
Director of Studies: Dr Michael Thomas (Tel.: +44 1772 893148 / E-mail: MThomas4@uclan.ac.uk).

Please read the following statements and initial the boxes to indicate your agreement to participate in this research study conducted by the above named researcher.

Please initial box

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet, dated 22/03/2015 for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. ☐

I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised) in a specialist data centre and may be used for future research. ☐

I understand that it will not be possible to withdraw my data from the study after final analysis has been undertaken. ☐

I agree to the interview being audio recorded. ☐

I agree to be under observation in the classroom during data collection time. ☐

I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications. ☐

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form (Arabic version)

uclan
University of Central Lancashire

نموذج الموافقة

عنوان المشروع كاملاً: إدارة تغيير المناهج في سياق التعليم العالي السعودي: دراسة حالة لمدرسات اللغة العربية في تطبيق طريقة التعليم التفاعلي
اسم الباحثة: أريج سالم بايوسف
المرتبة: طالبة دكتوراه في جامعة سنترال لانكشير
جوال (المملكة المتحدة): ٠٠٤٤٧٤٥٩٨٤٤٥٠٦
البريد الالكتروني: Asmbayousef@uclan.ac.uk
المشرف على الدراسة: Dr Michael Thomas
بيانات التواصل مع المشرف: (Tel.: +44 1772 893148 / E-mail: MThomas4@uclan.ac.uk)

يرجى قراءة العبارات التالية ووضع اشارة على المربعات التي تشير الى موافقتك على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية التي تجريها الباحثة الموضح اسمها أعلاه:

☐ أقر بأنني قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات المؤرخة للدراسة المذكورة أعلاه وكانت لدي الفرصة للتفكير في المشاركة في الدراسة وطرح اي اسئلة تتعلق بها.

☐ أتفهم بأن مشاركتي تطوعية ولدي الحرية للانسحاب في أي وقت بدون إعطاء أسباب

☐ أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه

☐ أوافق على أن البيانات المجمعة في هذه الدراسة قد تخزن (بدون أسماء) في مركز خاص للمعلومات وقد تستخدم في أبحاث مستقبلية

☐ أفهم أنه من المستحيل سحب بياناتي من هذه الدراسة بعد مرحلة إجراء التحليل النهائي.

☐ أوافق على التسجيل الصوتي فقط

☐ أوافق على أن أكون تحت الملاحظة في الفصل الدراسي خلال فترة جمع البيانات

☐ أوافق على الاقتباس من بياناتي بدون ذكر أسماء في النشر

التوقيع	التاريخ	اسم المشاركة

التوقيع	التاريخ	اسم الباحثة

Appendix G: Case study protocol

Overview of the case study project

The aim of this study is to explore the task-based language teaching (TBLT) training needs of Arabic in-service teachers in the Saudi higher educational context. The principal focus is on teacher cognition in relation to TBLT innovation and professional development and to identify the potential challenges that might affect the process of implementation.

Field procedures

1. Data will be generated through individual interviews with six Arabic teachers implementing TBLT at King Abdul Aziz University, classroom observations followed by interviews and open- ended statement adapted from SoC.

2. My role in this study was will be insider. My role provides me with an opportunity to understand the context of the study, facilitated access to conduct the study and gain participants' trust.

Case study questions

What are the professional development needs of Arabic teachers when implementing TBLT?

RQ1) What are teachers' understandings of 'task' in TBLT?

RQ2) What are teachers' concerns regarding TBLT implementation?

RQ3) How do Arabic teachers prefer to be trained in the use of TBLT?

A guide for the case study report

- The general approach to data analysis for this study will be inductive analysis. Thematic analysis will be adopted.

- Data will be analysed drawing upon CBAM, Sociocultural and Cognition framework.

Appendix H: Interview protocol

Introduction

- Give out the Participant Information Sheet and explain the purpose of research. Ask for consent using the consent form.

- Explain the structure of the interview.

- Explain that there are no right or wrong answers and I am interested in your experiences and your thoughts towards TBLT implementation

Warm up questions

- How long have you been teaching Arabic?

- Can you tell me a little bit about your experience as a learner?

Understanding TBLT

- What do you understand by the term 'task' in Task based language teaching (TBLT)?

- What are the main principles of TBLT?

- How TBLT can be applied in the classrooms?

- What are your views about TBLT?

Teachers Concerns

- Explain your feelings when you apply TBLT in the class room?

- In what ways do you think TBLT is suitable or not suitable in the Saudi Arabian context?

- In what ways do you think TBLT can/ can not be applied in Arabic classrooms?

- What were the main issues affected the implementation of TBLT in your class?

- What are the reasons behind those challenges?

- How did you overcome that?

- Can you tell me about anything you encountered in the TBLT that felt very new to you?

Professional development

- Can you tell me about the in-service trainings you have participated in?

- What did those training involve?

- What's your perception about those trainings

- Can you tell me about any new knowledge related to TBLT you felt you gained in the training?

- Can you explain the nature of those trainings and the type of activities you involved in

- Do you feel like there were many opportunities for you to participate in TBLT trainings?

- What did you do to support your professional development?

- What do you think you need to support you in TBLT implementation?

- How would you prefer to learn about the use of TBLT?

Closure

- Would you like to say anything else about your experiences that we haven't already covered?

Thank the interviewees for their participation

Appendix I: Post observation interview questions

1. What is your overall impression of TBLT?

2. Can you think of any difficulties when you implemented TBLT in your classroom?

3. Can you describe the impact of your context on your teaching approach?

4. How closely did you follow the textbook?

5. Does the text book lend itself well to TBLT approach?

6. How did you organise your lesson?

7. Did you consider any other way to implement TBLT in your class?

8. In what ways did you think your class was similar or different to TBLT?

9. How would you compare your experiences as a language learner with the way you delivered your lesson?

10. One aspect of your practice was to present model of the target language would you explain more?

11. What was the reason for

   - Immediate Error correcting

   - Explicit explanation of grammar

   - Engaging students in groups

   - Brainstorming

   - Using comparing task

Appendix J: Observation sheet

Date: Time: Teacher:

Lesson:

Adopted from (CLOT) scheme (Spada & Frohlich, 1995)

Items to observe	Comments
Participants organisation	
Activity types	
Content (the subject matter of the classroom)	
Teacher and student roles	
TBLT features	

Key

R: Researcher

T: Teacher

R-Could you please tell me a little bit about your background?

I am …..and I am 36 years old. I completed high school in a public school in Jeddah. I held a bachelor degree in Arabic and Literature from the Faculty of Education and a Master degree in Linguistics from King Abdul-Aziz University and now I am studying for a doctorate in Linguistics at KAU.

R: OK let's start from schooling, could you please tell me a little bit about your experience of leaning Arabic?

T: My primary school education was dominated by teachers as students were rarely given the opportunity to discuss or share their opinions. Teachers generally were very strict as they did not tolerate any type of communication during class time. The teachers wanted the students to be silent and listen to their lectures without any interruptions or participation. Students only spoke when they were asked individual questions to check their understanding of specific issues.

R: How about your experience at university level?

T: I started my initial teaching training in Gills Faculty of Education in Jeddah. My experience of the way we were taught was similar to schooling as we spent hours listening our lecturers. We had to memorise the textbook even if we did not understand the content. Exams focused generally on grammatical items.

R: How did you find this as approach for teaching?

T: I do not like this approach as I had negative experiences during learning. The fear of teachers who were very strict affected my personality and confidence negatively because I was not able to engage in any dialogue and later I was hesitant to engage in discussion to articulate my views out of class. This issue was overcome when I started my undergraduate course and was sometimes given the opportunity to talk and negotiate.

R: Do you think that your schooling experience has an impact on your teaching? If yes can you explain in what way?

T: Well yes and no. I was influenced by my schooling experience as I still provide my students with grammar based activities such as filling the gaps and no because I do some other communicative activities and gave my students an active role and make them more responsible about their learning.

R: Can you describe your initial teaching education?

T: It was 4 years and I remembered that I took a teaching methods module which helped me to develop my instructional skills, my general knowledge of linguistic and teaching skills. I remembered that the content of this module was the same for all students from different schools within the Factuality of Education College. As a requirement to pass this compulsory module, students had a six-month practicum in which they observed school teachers and then practised teaching in a high school three times a week in the first three months and every day in the last three months. Practicing how to teach was under supervision of both the classroom teacher in the school where I had teaching and my supervisor from the college. I think it was beneficial for the development of teaching skills and the enhancement.

R: Has your initial teaching program had an impact on you as a teacher? How?

T: During the practicum, I remember that I had to plan lessons, prepare materials, manage the classroom, find resources to help me in teaching and assess students. In general, it was a rewarding experience but it would help me and maybe other teachers more if we had more time for practising in different settings and under the supervision of different experienced teachers. After each class in my practicum, I used to sit with my teacher educator and the classroom teacher and they both raised points that they picked from their checklist in their observation and discussed them with me. For example, I did not realise that I asked many questions and did not give students time to answer them until my teacher educator discussed this with me. This helped me to improve, but what was most interesting was that when I went back home, I said that if I did that, it might be better, or if I said that, it might be more helpful for my students. With communication, there was always a space to develop by sharing ideas and discussing issues that limit the possibilities for effective teaching.

R: Let's talk about TBLT, what do you understand by TBLT?

T: It is Interactive approach for teaching and I think it is a very effective way in learning. It advocates that individuals can acquire information within the group. Group A, for example, has some information which is not provided to group B so they should communicate to achieve the goal.

R: What are the main principles of TBLT?

T: Each student knows her task, so that before they start anything they should know what are they working on and what they need to complete the task. The students should have tasks to follow and then a target; they should all know and agree on this from the beginning. The task should be similar with what we meet in actual every day live.

R: What are your views about TBLT?

T: Without doubt I support the implementation of TBLT. As university students, we want them to depend on themselves in their learning. Eventually 'TBLT' becomes a kind of competition where each group wants to be better than the other so they do their best to complete their task and this facilitate learning.

R: Explain your feelings when you apply TBLT in the class room?

T: At the beginning, I was excited and I wanted my students' performance to develop through the implementation of TBLT, but when I became more involved in the use of TBLT, I started to feel frustrated by the requirements of the new innovation. To be honest, sometimes I feel lost.

R: What were the main issues affected the implementation of TBLT in your class?

T: The process of applying TBLT is complex I still have a number of questions which require to be answered. I need the correct guideline that I can follow so that I can stand in front of my female students while fully understanding the idea.

R: In what ways do you think TBLT is suitable or not suitable in the Saudi Arabian context?

T: I am not sure but what I can say is that it is challenging. The class size is very big and teachers face difficulties in noticing all groups and also, we have fixed chairs and rows that hinder movement; teachers won't be able to form a group in a way which makes students feel comfortable in their communication.

R: In what ways do you think TBLT can/ can not be applied in Arabic classrooms?

T: I think Arabic teachers would be enforced to adapt TBLT because of the nature of Arabic language which requires accurate use of language. So, this what I personally found difficult to deal with.

R: Can you tell me about the in-service trainings you have participated in?

T: I attended managing Black Board system course and some other trainings about personal development such as self-confidence and some strategies for teaching such as flipped classroom and brainstorming.

R. What's your perception about those trainings?

They were beneficial to some extent but there are limited options to choose from and also, they provided only the basic ideas about teaching strategies. I mean with one session for strategy, you cannot get sufficient knowledge about how to use it.

R: How about TBLT, where did you learn about TBLT?

T: I had a chance to attend a workshop or a training session for five days, five hours a day. The most amazing thing about this workshop is that we learnt the fundamentals and principles of TBLT by using the same method. The instructor divided us into groups and defined the roles, tasks and target for each of us. During the course, we were leaning through TBLT; it was not like the usual courses that are based on theoretical explanation but we had problems and we interact to solve this problem. I hope I can find more of these training opportunities.

R: Have you read about TBLT?

T: No not really. I mean I am not sure there is a available book about TBLT in Arabic language.

R: Do you think your teaching practice is influenced by what you were taught about TBLT or what you believe is effective?

T: Will both I think I tried to put what I learnt about TBLT in practice but when I feel that it did not work, I do what I believe it could be better help my students. For example, I have

been told not to correct linguistic errors but I believe students can only learn if they notice their mistake.

R: Do you feel like there were many opportunities for you to participate in TBLT trainings?

T: Not really, I found only one course and its location was so far from me; I think the university should be more serious about developing teachers and providing them with the financial means to travel – or at least providing high-level courses in the university for free because teacher development will positively affect the students' outcome.

R: How would you prefer to learn about TBLT?

T: I think learning through problem- solving would be effective. Teachers needs to experience learning by TBLT in order to understand how it works. I personally found it very effective.

R: Would you like to say anything else about your experiences that we haven't already covered?

T: No, thanks

Ok this was really helpful, Thanks for your participation

Appendix L: Sample open ended statement

When think about the implementation of Task based language teaching, what are you concerned about?

The process of applying TBLT is complex. For me, and I think for other teachers in our institution, we still have a lot of confusion about how to carry out TBLT lessons. I need all the correct principles that I can follow so that I can stand in front of my female students while fully understanding the idea. At the beginning, I was excited and I wanted my students' performance to develop through the implementation of TBLT, but when I became more involved in the use of TBLT, I started to feel frustrated by the requirements of the new innovation. To be honest, sometimes I feel lost. Beside the huge number of students in the class, we have fixed chairs and rows that hinder movement; teachers won't be able to form a group in a way which makes students feel comfortable in their communication. It is the teacher's responsibility to explain every aspect of the textbook, which was designed by experts in our school. If I omit something and students are asked about it in their exam, I will be in trouble. Therefore, I am most concerned about completing the textbook and following the plan. The integration of TBLT in our context without preparation is challenging and to enhance the possibility of its success, teachers need to be encouraged by, for example, providing them with less managerial work, and fewer hours of weekly teaching. This might encourage them to prepare more to apply TBLT. With regard to the second barrier, it is the unavailability of classroom resources. I need more devices, or at least one for each group, and students should be provided with more basic references which they can refer to in any of the Arabic languages branches. In fact, I haven't read much about this field. I think the Arabic books in this field are limited, and if they became available, they don't demonstrate in a

specialised way the interactive TBLT method. They may talk about it in a very simple way and in a limited manner. Students are assessed by language focus tests and I need to be aware of preparing my students for the exam I also have a big class size so it is not easy to implement it.