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EFL Teachers' Understanding and Implementation of TBLT in Listening Instruction: A Discrepancy Model-Based Needs Analysis

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Abstract. Although Task-Based Language Teaching has received increasing policy-level attention, its integration into English as a Foreign Language listening instruction remains limited and inconsistently applied. This qualitative study investigates how Chinese university-level English as a Foreign Language teachers conceptualise and implement Task-Based Language Teaching in listening classrooms. Drawing on McKillip's (1987) discrepancy model, it identifies gaps between pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices using data from focus group interviews, lesson plans, and classroom observation forms. Thematic analysis via NVivo reveals that while teachers express general support for Task-Based Language Teaching, their understanding of core concepts—such as task authenticity, the three-phase structure, and communicative purpose—is fragmented. Classroom practices often involve task-like activities lacking key features such as information gaps, real-time interaction, or student autonomy. Discrepancies stem from entrenched teaching habits, time constraints, limited access to authentic listening materials, and insufficient professional development. Teachers voiced a strong need for structured support, including model tasks, task design templates, and tiered resource libraries. This study underscores the systemic nature of the cognition–practice gap and calls for context-

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sensitive training and institutional alignment to support meaningful Task-Based Language Teaching implementation in listening instruction.

Keywords: cognition–practice gap; discrepancy model; listening instruction; needs analysis; task-based language teaching

1. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education at the undergraduate level continues to face substantial challenges in developing students' listening proficiency—a skill central to communicative competence and overall language acquisition. However, listening instruction remains underemphasised in most curricula, typically relying on traditional, form-focused methods that inadequately prepare learners for real-world communication (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021; Rost, 2024).

In response to these challenges, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a widely accepted instructional approach, shifting focus from passive input reception to active engagement in meaningful, goal-oriented tasks that mirror real-life communication (Ellis, 2018; Jung, 2025). TBLT is now embedded in many national language policies (East, 2019; Newton & Bui, 2018). In China, the Ministry of Education's 2015 Guidelines for College English Teaching explicitly mandate its adoption in university English programmes (MOE, 2015). TBLT is particularly pertinent in EFL settings, where exposure to English is limited beyond the classroom (Nguyen & Jaspaert, 2021).

In such contexts, it provides structured opportunities for authentic and contextualised language use—especially in listening instruction, where it is considered both viable and pedagogically sound (Sahrawi, 2017). Unlike traditional methods emphasising grammatical precision and controlled input, TBLT frames real-world tasks as the central organising principle and primary vehicle for language acquisition (Bygate et al., 2012; Van den Branden, 2016).

Despite its theoretical strengths, the successful implementation of TBLT hinges largely on teachers—specifically, their understanding of core principles, pedagogical beliefs, and classroom practices (Borg, 2015; Burns et al., 2015). Extensive research underscores that teacher cognition—encompassing teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and mental models—strongly influences instructional behaviour (Borg, 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). In the context of pedagogical innovation, the cognition–practice relationship becomes increasingly complex as teachers navigate new paradigms within institutional, curricular, and sociocultural constraints (East, 2017, 2021; Van den Branden, 2016).

Despite its popularity at the policy level in English education, implementing TBLT presents numerous challenges for teachers across diverse educational contexts. Studies from countries such as China, Indonesia, Korea, and Vietnam have highlighted common obstacles, including limited training, lack of task exemplars, and misalignment between tasks and assessment systems (Zhao et al., 2024).

These shared difficulties often exacerbate the gap between what teachers believe and what they actually do in the classroom.

Prior research has identified clear discrepancies between teachers' theoretical understanding of TBLT and their classroom practices (Carless et al., 2012; East, 2019; Zheng & Borg, 2014). These gaps are often attributed to inadequate professional development, vague curricular directives, and broader systemic constraints (Zhao et al., 2024). The disconnect is particularly pronounced in listening instruction, where task-based pedagogy—despite policy-level endorsement in Chinese universities—remains largely absent from classroom routines that still emphasise form-focused comprehension drills (Sun, 2022). Although research on TBLT implementation has expanded, studies examining listening instruction from the teacher's perspective are still limited (Jones, 2020b; Nguyen et al., 2024). Even fewer studies adopt structured analytical frameworks to classify cognition–practice gaps systematically.

To address this limitation, the study introduces a clear methodological innovation by applying McKillip's (1987) discrepancy model, originally developed for needs analysis, to the context of TBLT in listening instruction. This structured framework provides a novel lens to examine the often-overlooked gap between teacher cognition and pedagogical practice. Specifically, it investigates how university-level EFL teachers conceptualise and implement TBLT in listening classes, focusing on goal definition, instructional practices, and perceived barriers. By systematically identifying discrepancies between theory and implementation, the study lays the groundwork for targeted professional development and adds insight into the relatively neglected connection between teacher cognition, listening pedagogy, and needs analysis in TBLT.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT is a learner-centred approach that emphasises meaningful task completion over formal accuracy. Tasks are designed to mirror real-world communicative activities and serve as the principal units of curriculum design (Ellis, 2018; Long, 2014). Theoretical foundations of TBLT suggest that language acquisition is best facilitated through authentic interaction and communicative problem solving rather than isolated grammar instruction (Ellis, 2021; Nunan, 2004). Task design criteria often include real-life relevance, meaning focus, and goal orientation. Willis (2021) stresses communicative purpose and authenticity, while Skehan (2003) highlights the need to balance fluency, accuracy, and complexity.

However, the actual implementation of TBLT remains problematic in many EFL contexts. Despite the policy-level endorsement, classroom enactments often reflect a weak version of TBLT—characterised by teacher-centredness and controlled language use (Butler, 2011; González-Lloret, 2022). Cultural expectations, examination-driven education systems, and large class sizes exacerbate the gap between TBLT theory and practice, revealing a systemic need for teacher support and context-sensitive task design (Lai, 2015; Lu et al., 2025).

2.2 TBLT in Listening Instruction

Although TBLT has been extensively applied in speaking and writing instruction, its use in listening remains limited and insufficiently theorised. Listening presents particular challenges for task design, including input authenticity, cognitive load, and process visibility (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021). Graham and Santos (2015) advocate integrating metacognitive strategy training within listening tasks, while Ellis (2021) distinguishes between open and closed tasks to guide design suitability. However, most teachers rely on top-down strategies and assume bottom-up skills are naturally acquired (Jones, 2020a). Additional barriers include the selection of authentic yet comprehensible materials (Mudinillah et al., 2024), anxiety-inducing listening tasks (Zhang & Wu, 2024), and insufficient attention to process-based instruction (Field, 2010; Xu et al., 2021). Although TBLT offers a means to reframe listening as an active, strategic skill, its classroom realisation remains partial and inconsistent (Bozorgian & Shamsi, 2025; Siegel, 2014).

2.3 Teachers' Understanding and Implementation of TBLT

Teachers' cognition — including their beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge — plays a decisive role in shaping instructional behaviour (Borg, 2015). In the context of innovations like TBLT, the gap between theory and practice is often driven by cognitive dissonance or institutional friction (East, 2017; Van den Branden, 2016). Research shows that while many teachers endorse TBLT in principle, their implementation remains procedural or superficial (Liu et al., 2021). Factors such as limited professional development, curricular rigidity, and assessment pressures constrain their practice (Butler, 2011; Hasnain & Halder, 2023). Despite increasing interest in teacher cognition, few studies (Hung, 2012; Sahrawi, 2017) offer in-depth, skill-specific insights into how teachers reconcile their understanding of TBLT with the practical demands of listening instruction. This gap restricts the development of tailored professional support mechanisms and data-informed teacher training programmes.

2.4 Needs Analysis and the Discrepancy Model

Needs analysis plays a central role in language curriculum development by identifying gaps between learners' current competencies and instructional goals (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Long, 2005). Applied to teacher development, it is equally valuable for aligning pedagogical understanding with classroom practices. Although this study adopts McKillip's (1987) discrepancy model to identify instructional gaps, it is not the only framework relevant to needs analysis in language education. Traditional models—such as Munby's (1981) target situation analysis and Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework—have been widely applied in ESP course design, primarily emphasising learner needs by identifying the language skills required in specific professional or academic contexts.

In contrast, research on teacher cognition and pedagogical innovation often draws upon Borg's (2003) framework, which examines how teachers' beliefs and experiences shape their instructional practices. However, this model does not provide a structured method for identifying discrepancies between intended goals and actual teaching practices.

McKillip's model provides a systematic approach to needs analysis by comparing ideal instructional conditions with actual classroom practices. It includes three key stages: goal definition, performance measurement, and discrepancy identification. The model distinguishes among expressed, perceived, and actual needs, offering a comprehensive perspective on instructional gaps (Brown, 2016). Although commonly used in general education needs assessments, it remains underused in language teaching research—especially in studies of teacher cognition and TBLT implementation. Applying this model to listening instruction offers a structured lens for identifying pedagogical tensions and designing targeted interventions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

1. What are EFL teachers' conceptualisations of TBLT and its application to listening instruction?
2. What are the actual classroom practices of EFL teachers when implementing TBLT for listening instruction?
3. What discrepancies exist between EFL teachers' conceptual understanding and their actual practices when implementing TBLT in listening instruction?
4. What pedagogical and professional development needs emerge from the identified discrepancies?

3.2 Research Design

This study is part of a doctoral dissertation that aimed to design a blended TBLT module to enhance EFL undergraduates' listening skills and self-regulated learning. The research adopts the ADDIE framework—Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation—for systematic module development. This paper focuses specifically on the analysis phase. This qualitative study employed McKillip's (1987) model to examine the gaps between teachers' conceptual understanding and classroom implementation of TBLT in listening instruction. The model's three components — goal definition, performance measurement, and discrepancy identification — informed both the construction of research instruments and the analytical approach.

Data were collected from three sources: focus group discussions (see Appendix 1), lesson plans, and classroom observation (see Appendix 2). The focus group sessions explored teachers' conceptualisations of TBLT and their perceived implementation challenges. Lesson plans were analysed for indicators of task authenticity, logical sequencing, and learner engagement. Classroom observations drew on peer evaluation forms from the university's official teaching assessment system, each reflecting a full 90-minute session. These forms offered insights into real-time instructional practices, including student interaction, task execution, and teacher facilitation.

3.3 Participants and Context

The study was conducted at a public, application-oriented university in a less-developed suburban area of southwest China. Institutions in such regions often face systemic barriers to supporting Teacher Professional Development, including geographic isolation, limited access to quality training, and insufficient institutional support. These contextual constraints have been identified as key obstacles to teachers' engagement with contemporary pedagogical innovations such as TBLT (Yi et al., 2023). This site was selected for its representativeness of under-resourced institutional settings and because administrative approval ensured access to authentic classrooms under ethically appropriate conditions. Eight female EFL teachers were recruited through purposive sampling (Tongco, 2007).

All participants had at least three years of teaching experience and were responsible for undergraduate college English instruction. Their teaching experience ranged from three to 22 years, with an average of approximately 11 years. Participants were estimated to be between their late 20s and early 50s in age. All held at least a bachelor's degree, and most had completed a master's in applied linguistics, TESOL, or a related field. Their exposure to TBLT varied, including formal academic training, in-service workshops, and self-directed learning. Table 1 summarises the participants' backgrounds.

Table 1: Detailed Information of Teacher Participants

Participant ID	Academic qualification	Designation	Teaching experience	Current course taught	Major
A1	Master's degree	Lecture	12 years	College English; English Teaching Methodology	Subject Teaching (English)
A2	Master's degree	Assistant Lecturer	4 years	College English	English and American Literature
A3	Bachelor's degree	Associate Professor	21 years	College English; Comprehensive English	English (Teacher Training Focus)
A4	Master's degree	Associate Professor	22 years	College English; English Chinese Translation Practice	Translation
A5	Master's degree	Assistant Lecturer	5 years	College English; Theory and Practice of English	Translation

Participant ID	Academic qualification	Designation	Teaching experience	Current course taught	Major
				Chinese Translation	
A6	Master's degree	Assistant Lecturer	3 years	College English; Comprehensive Business English	Applied Linguistic
A7	Master's degree	Assistant Lecturer	5 years	College English; English Teaching Methodology; Academic Writing	TESOL
A8	Master's degree	Lecturer	17 years	College English; Advanced English; Introduction to Linguistics	Applied Linguistic

3.4 Research Instruments

The primary instrument was a focus group discussion guide developed in alignment with McKillip's (1987) model. Its development was also informed by prior studies examining teachers' perceptions and challenges related to TBLT, including Jeon and Hahn (2006) and Liu, Mishan, and Chambers (2021). The guide included 20 open-ended questions across six thematic categories: background, understanding of TBLT, conceptualisations (goal definition), current practices (performance measurement), perceived challenges (discrepancy identification), and reflections. Particular emphasis was placed on eliciting cognitive–practical contrasts, ensuring that participants articulated both their instructional ideals and real-world constraints. Focus group sessions lasted two hours and 23 minutes.

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase model. NVivo software facilitated code management and ensured analytic consistency. Thematic matrices were developed to align emerging themes with research questions and McKillip's framework. Triangulation across data sources (focus groups, lesson plans, observations) was used to validate and refine thematic interpretations.

3.6 Trustworthiness and Credibility

Several strategies were employed to ensure methodological rigour and trustworthiness, aligned with qualitative research standards (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1988). First, the focus group guide underwent expert validation by a panel of three TESL specialists—a full professor, an associate professor, and a doctoral-level instructor—to ensure theoretical alignment and content relevance. Second, member checking was conducted to validate transcription accuracy and thematic interpretations. Participants reviewed initial

findings and were invited to confirm or clarify the researchers' interpretations, strengthening the study's credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1988). Third, methodological triangulation was applied through the integration of focus group data, lesson plans, and classroom observations. These sources provided insights into teacher beliefs, instructional planning, and observable classroom practice, enabling cross-validation of emerging themes and enhancing confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017).

Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's Kappa coefficient, and researcher triangulation was achieved by involving three independent analysts in the coding process. An audit trail was maintained to document all coding and analytic decisions, promoting dependability and transparency (Lincoln & Guba, 1988). A thick description of participant backgrounds and contextual details was used to support the transferability of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

4. Findings

4.1 Teachers' Understanding of Tasks and TBLT in Listening Instruction

To provide a structured overview, Table 2 presents the main themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the data.

Table 2: Main Codes Related to Teachers' Understanding of TBLT

Theme	Category	Code	Files	References
Goal Definition	Ideal conditions for TBLT implementation	Resource and material support	1	6
		A complete and coherent three-stage structure	1	4
		Clear presentation and explanation of tasks	1	3
		Progressive task complexity and scaffolding	1	3
	Teachers' conceptual knowledge of TBLT	Confusion between tasks and exercises	8	22
		Incomplete procedural knowledge of the TBLT cycle	8	15
		Confusion about what to do in each TBLT stage	4	13
		TBLT as fundamentally student-centred	1	6
		Lack of awareness of information gap	1	4
		Awareness of teacher's changing role	1	2
	Varied Conceptualisations of "task"	Tasks as authentic real-world applications	1	19
		Tasks as output-driven	1	8

Theme	Category	Code	Files	References
		Tasks requiring meaningful and purposeful language use	1	8
		Problem solving as an embedded function of tasks	1	7
		Tasks emphasising communicative goals	1	6
		Tasks grounded in learners' prior knowledge	1	5

Although most teachers acknowledged that tasks should reflect real-life language use and serve communicative purposes, their attempts to distinguish "tasks" from "exercises" often revealed conceptual confusion. Teacher A1 described a task as *"a real-life problem students solve using English,"* while A2 emphasised that tasks involve using language *"in a specific context."* These responses indicate a general awareness of the authenticity and purpose-driven nature of tasks. However, many participants still viewed tasks as enhanced exercises rather than autonomous communicative events.

A5 stated:

> *"Exercises help with memorisation and building the language system; tasks are about ability, like solving problems or changing attitudes. But you need exercises first before completing tasks."*

This comment reflects a hierarchical misconception—that tasks are merely the final stage after form-focused drills—rather than seeing them as meaning-oriented learning units where form emerges through communicative necessity. This view contradicts TBLT's foundational principle of integrating form and meaning within purposeful interaction (Ellis, 2018, 2021). Some teachers emphasised the *"meaning orientation"* of tasks but lacked awareness of how form and meaning interplay. For example, A6 stated: *"Practice focuses on form; tasks focus on meaning."*

While partially correct, this represents an oversimplification of TBLT's "focus on form" approach, which emphasises attending to form within meaningful communication rather than before or after it. The theme of imaginative but misaligned task examples also emerged. A8 described a task where students were asked to interview historical figures, such as Li Bai or Da Vinci. While creative, the activity lacked interactional authenticity, goal orientation, and information gap, thereby failing to meet TBLT criteria for real-world applicability and communicative value (Ellis, 2021; Long, 2014).

In addition to conceptual ambiguity, teachers demonstrated a fragmented understanding of TBLT's instructional sequence. While some were aware of the pre-task or main task phase, many lacked familiarity with the full three-stage cycle (pre-task, task cycle, language focus). A2 explained:

> *"Pre-task is teaching content, the task is doing something, and language focus is maybe grammar teaching?''*

A4 admitted:

> *"I only learned today that there are three stages. I thought task-based teaching just meant assigning and completing tasks."*

These responses suggest that teachers' understanding of TBLT is often procedural but incomplete, heavily reliant on intuition rather than systematic knowledge. Their conceptual frameworks tend to overlook the structured progression and scaffolding that TBLT emphasises. Some teachers also misunderstood the purpose of language use within tasks, focusing on grammar demonstration or controlled output rather than problem solving, negotiation of meaning, or information exchange. Although several teachers aimed to increase student interest and collaboration, their understanding of tasks as authentic communicative applications was often vague or inconsistently expressed. Moreover, teachers demonstrated some awareness of the shift in their roles within TBLT, with some participants recognising their responsibilities as facilitators and supporters in the instructional process.

Overall, these findings reveal that while EFL teachers conceptually support the principles of TBLT, their understanding is fragmented, frequently shaped by prior teaching habits, lack of structured exposure to TBLT frameworks, and unclear distinctions between drills, activities, and tasks. This misalignment between theoretical understanding and operational clarity suggests the need for targeted conceptual training, scaffolded examples, and deeper exposure to the pedagogical logic of task-based instruction.

4.2 Classroom Implementation of TBLT in Listening Instruction

Table 3 offers a visual overview of the most salient themes discussed in this section.

Table 3: Main Codes Related to Teachers' Implementation of TBLT

Theme	Category	Code	Files	References
Performance Measurement	Suitability of textbooks for TBLT	Textbook content aligns with real-world scenarios	2	8
		Built-in task elements (e.g. projects, interviews) support TBLT	3	5
		Content selection based on task compatibility	1	3
		Greater suitability compared to ESP or content-specific texts	1	2
		Textbooks as a starting point with teacher supplementation	1	2

Theme	Category	Code	Files	References
	Varied Practices in TBLT implementation	Group projects become a common form	7	12
		Multimodal task output (e.g. PPTs, videos, posters)	1	7
		Scaffolding through vocabulary, structures, or prompts	4	7
		Listening-to-speak linkage	4	6
		Surface-level emulation of TBLT without conceptual understanding	6	6
		Scenario simulation becomes a common form	4	5
		Use of repetition, cloze, and transformation	2	5
		Teachers act as facilitators and supervisors in task implementation	1	4
		Clarity of task goals and instructions	1	3
		Teacher as evaluator of task output	1	2

Group discussions, lesson plan analysis and classroom observations revealed that teachers' implementation of TBLT in listening instruction was often fragmented and superficial. While many teachers incorporated elements resembling task-based learning—such as group work, project output, and scenario-based exercises — these activities frequently lacked the key features that define authentic tasks in the TBLT framework: information gap, meaning negotiation, outcome orientation, and communicative unpredictability. Listening-related tasks were commonly confined to the pre- or post-listening phases. During the actual listening stage, the dominant approach remained comprehension testing.

As A5 explained:

> *"I explain vocabulary and grammar before listening, during listening, students' complete exercises. If they get the answers right, I consider the task done."*

This pattern reflects a form-focused, accuracy-driven methodology in which listening is treated as an input verification process rather than an opportunity for task engagement or communicative problem solving. A4 described a typical translation session that followed a hierarchical progression—from vocabulary drills to sentence translation and then to passage-level output. While the sequencing may demonstrate instructional coherence, it exemplifies a form-accumulation model, not a TBLT-based design. It lacks task initiation through purposeful language use and fails to exploit listening as a catalyst for spoken or

interactive output. In terms of task output, many teachers implemented video production, group presentations, or poster-based summaries.
A5 noted:

> *"Each group created a video about a translation technique and uploaded it to Bilibili."*

These multimodal tasks were collaborative in form but limited in content variety and learner autonomy due to preset objectives. The absence of information asymmetry, interactive contingency, or audience-specific communicative purpose undermined their alignment with TBLT principles. Textbook tasks were similarly repurposed without reconfiguring them for communicative authenticity. Other observed challenges included teacher reliance on PowerPoint and lecture-style input, and inconsistent groupings that failed to optimise interactional diversity.

In terms of teacher roles, there was some evidence of facilitation during task execution; several teachers moved among groups to offer support or clarify instructions. However, the dominant orientation remained that of monitor or evaluator, rather than co-participant or scaffolder, limiting opportunities for dynamic language use. Scaffolding strategies were primarily observed in the form of vocabulary lists, structural frames, or sentence starters—often delivered before the task rather than integrated during task interactions.

Moreover, student engagement varied widely, with some learners participating enthusiastically in group activities, while others remained passive, suggesting a need for better-aligned task differentiation based on proficiency and affective factors. Taken together, these findings suggest that while many teachers were making visible efforts to incorporate TBLT elements, these were often surface-level emulations rather than full enactments of TBLT pedagogy.

Tasks tended to be teacher-constructed, output-focused, and evaluation-oriented, lacking the process interactivity and communicative authenticity that define effective TBLT practice. The observed classroom practices underscore a broader challenge: without clear conceptual understanding and adequate support, teachers may reproduce the form of task-based learning without realising its pedagogical function.

4.3 Discrepancies Between Cognition and Practice

The key discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in implementing TBLT are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Constraints Identified in the Implementation of TBLT in Listening Instruction

Theme	Category	Code	Files	References
Discrepancy Identification	Challenges in implementing TBLT in listening instruction	Insufficient professional development	1	12
		Time management difficulties	3	11
		Balancing difficulty across students with different proficiency levels	1	9
		Task clarity and operability issues	4	7
		Group management issues	1	6
		Conflict between real-life-oriented tasks and exam-format tasks	1	5
		Lack of systematic post-task assessment	3	4
		Selective use of TBLT based on topic relevance and time	1	4
		Variation in student motivation and engagement	1	4
	Difficulties in finding and developing suitable listening materials	Lack of authentic yet accessible materials	1	8
		Need for teacher-created or heavily adapted supplementary content	1	4
		Limited availability of high-quality, free, copyright-compliant audio or video	1	3

Although most teachers expressed conceptual support for the goals of TBLT, their classroom practices revealed notable inconsistencies between belief and implementation — particularly in listening instruction. These discrepancies emerged across three major domains: pedagogical understanding, classroom execution, and contextual constraints. Several teachers claimed to use TBLT in their lesson plans, yet their actual instruction was dominated by teacher-fronted, exercise-based approaches.

A6 noted:

> *"I design tasks before and after listening, but during listening, I just play the audio and ask questions."*

This suggests a disconnect between the perception of task staging and the actual integration of interactive, communicative activities in the core listening process. Similarly, A1 described using letter-writing as a post-listening task, implying an attempt to integrate skills but overlooking TBLT's emphasis on input-driven, meaning-focused task design.

Even A4, who had the most structured task logic, admitted:

> *"Each group worked on the same materials."*

This contradicts the TBLT requirement for information gaps and interactional diversity (Ellis, 2021; Long, 2014), reducing tasks to parallel outputs rather than opportunities for negotiation of meaning. Another significant discrepancy lay in teachers' overreliance on task terminology without corresponding changes in methodology.

A5 described:

> *"We told students what to do, provided the script, and they followed instructions."*

This reflects an understanding of tasks as output formats rather than communicative learning processes and highlights a lack of learner autonomy and decision-making space. While TBLT positions students as active meaning makers, most classroom practices maintain teacher-led control and a product-oriented focus. Moreover, a notable discrepancy emerged between teachers' conceptual understanding of their roles and their actual classroom practices. During interviews, several participants expressed awareness that, within the TBLT framework, the teacher's role should shift from that of a knowledge transmitter to that of a facilitator of learning or a guide in communicative interaction.

However, classroom observations revealed that this transformation had not been fully realised. In practice, most teachers continued to adopt a lecture-driven approach, and during the classes, their roles were largely limited to those of monitors or evaluators, rather than co-participants or scaffolding facilitators. This disconnects between espoused beliefs and enacted roles further underscores the systemic inconsistency between teacher cognition and classroom behaviour.

Contextual constraints further compounded the cognition–practice gap. Time limitations were a recurring theme, leading to the selective and partial use of TBLT techniques. Teachers reported that the pressure to cover textbook content and prepare students for exams left little room for exploratory or interactive tasks, resulting in the superficial implementation of tasks that prioritised form over function. There was also limited differentiation for mixed-proficiency learners, which made implementing multilevel, open-ended tasks difficult. Large class sizes contributed to ineffective group work, often resulting in poorly defined roles, uneven participation, and logistical challenges.

The lack of suitable listening materials was another major barrier. Teachers frequently cited the scarcity of authentic and accessible audio resources, the need to heavily adapt textbook content, and the difficulty of finding culturally appropriate materials that students could relate to. These material limitations restricted the use of real-world listening tasks and often forced teachers to fall back on comprehension exercises and script readings. Professional development emerged as a final, systemic gap. While teachers were familiar with the general principles of TBLT, their knowledge had often been gained through informal self-study, short-term webinars, or peer sharing on platforms like Bilibili.

As one participant explained:

> *"I've watched some videos about TBLT, but they only show short clips or abstract ideas. I've never seen a full lesson with commentary."*

This reflects a broader issue of unsystematic and insufficient training, where teachers lack not only the theoretical depth but also the practical modelling and guided reflection necessary for effective implementation. In summary, these findings highlight a multi-layered discrepancy between teachers' endorsement of TBLT and their classroom realities. While the concept of TBLT was widely accepted, teachers lacked both the pedagogical tools and institutional conditions to apply it meaningfully in listening instruction. The result was a superficial replication of task features without the underlying communicative function—what East (2017) describes as "task mimicry" rather than authentic task-based pedagogy.

4.4 Identified Pedagogical and Professional Development Needs

Mean codes for teachers' multifaceted pedagogical and professional development needs are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Main Codes for Teachers' Multifaceted Pedagogical and Professional Development Needs

Theme	Category	Code	Files	References
Discrepancy Identification	TBLT support structures and module design	Need for a complete and well-designed module	1	5
		Including pre-task, task cycle, and language focus templates	1	4
		Grouping strategy recommendations	1	3
		Multilevel authentic resource library (basic–intermediate–advanced)	1	3
		Structured task design and implementation guidance	1	2
		including model tasks and walkthrough videos	1	1

The discrepancies between teachers' conceptual understandings and their observed classroom practices revealed several pressing and multifaceted pedagogical and professional development needs. These were articulated directly by the teachers and were further supported by the analysis of lesson plans and classroom observations. A major issue expressed by participants involved the challenge of transferring the theoretical knowledge of TBLT into practice, particularly in listening instruction. Teachers supported task-based teaching but often cited the lack of formal training and practical tools for implementation, as A4 stated:

> *"I've heard about TBLT for years, but I've never received formal training on how to design a complete task—especially for listening."*

This response highlights a lack of structured, procedural knowledge about core TBLT components. The demand for more than theoretical exposure was echoed by multiple participants, who expressed the need for hands-on modelling of the full task cycle. They emphasised the importance of learning how to build information gaps, structure the three phases of task-based instruction, and

incorporate listening-specific goals and outcomes into their classroom routines. Teachers also called for a robust and context-sensitive instructional support system that could assist them in developing and executing listening-based tasks aligned with TBLT principles. A recurring theme was the urgent need for a complete and well-designed training module. Such a module, as imagined by participants, should include clear templates for pre-task, task cycle, and language focus stages and annotated model lessons and video demonstrations.
A6 emphasised the importance of this, noting:

> *"If I could see a complete example of a listening task from start to finish, with explanations, I'd feel more confident designing my own."*

This desire was often coupled with requests for access to a multilevel library of authentic listening materials, with clear differentiation by difficulty levels, from basic to advanced. Several teachers also mentioned the need for concrete recommendations on grouping strategies, peer interaction design, and techniques for maintaining authenticity while ensuring comprehensibility—particularly in large and mixed-proficiency classrooms. Misunderstandings surrounding the nature of "task" and its distinction from traditional "activities" further underscore the need for conceptual clarification within professional development programmes, as A2 remarked:

> *"I thought 'task' just meant giving students something to do—now I realise there's a structure and purpose behind it."*

This realisation signals a broader need for teacher education to address not only the procedural aspects of task design, but also the theoretical underpinnings that distinguish tasks from drills and mechanical exercises. The analysis of classroom observations confirmed that many teachers used task-like language to describe their activities, but their lessons lacked critical elements such as negotiation of meaning, student-led interaction, or the presence of an information gap. In addition, structural and institutional limitations were commonly identified as barriers to effective TBLT implementation. Teachers expressed frustration with the lack of curriculum-aligned materials and the time constraints imposed by heavy workloads.
A5 voiced this concern clearly:

> *"Even if I want to use TBLT, the textbook doesn't help, and I don't have time to design everything myself."*

This kind of feedback points to the need for broader institutional support mechanisms, including professional learning communities, collaborative task development spaces, and administrative alignment between assessment systems and communicative instructional goals. Without these supports, even well-intentioned teachers may find it difficult to apply TBLT principles consistently and meaningfully in their classrooms.

In sum, the findings reveal a clear disconnect between teachers' recognition of TBLT's value and their practical ability to implement it effectively in listening instruction. Addressing this gap requires not only conceptual and procedural training but also sustained access to structured design tools, authentic materials, and supportive institutional environments. Among the most urgent and recurrent

needs identified by participants is the call for a comprehensive, step-by-step instructional module—one that offers clear templates, annotated model tasks, walkthrough videos, a toolkit and a scaffolded resource library to guide teachers through the practical application of TBLT principles. Only through such multidimensional and context-responsive support can teachers move beyond surface-level appropriation of task-based terminology towards deep, consistent, and skill-specific instructional competence.

5. Discussions

5.1 Conceptual Understandings of TBLT: Supportive Attitudes, Fragmented Grasp

The findings indicate that while EFL teachers conceptually support TBLT, their practical understanding remains fragmented. NVivo-coded focus group data revealed recurring issues, such as confusion between "tasks" and "exercises," incomplete awareness of TBLT's three-phase structure, and inconsistent recognition of communicative task features. These themes were triangulated through lesson plans and classroom observations, where many so-called "tasks" lacked goal orientation, problem solving, or an information gap.

This disconnect reflects what Ellis (2017, 2021) and Long (2014) describe as common challenges in TBLT implementation: teachers recognise the value of tasks but struggle to apply them meaningfully. While tasks should involve purposeful communication and learner engagement, many participants described them as final output activities following grammar-focused instruction. This narrow view may stem from assessment discourses that prioritise fluency and structural complexity over accuracy and communicative authenticity. Hu et al. (2025), for example, found that human ratings in high stakes speaking tests favoured fluency and syntactic complexity, but not accuracy. Such preferences may shape teachers' perceptions of effective language use and reinforce product-oriented, monologic tasks.

Similar patterns have been observed in other contexts. Dao and Newton (2021) found that many teachers depend on intuitive understanding shaped by experience, not formal training. Likewise, "task" is often used to label any activity, regardless of its communicative value (Pohan et al., 2016). In this study, some teachers described tasks as "test practice" or "assignments," underscoring a product-focused view rather than a process-based one.

Instructional beliefs also played a role. Teachers with transmission-oriented styles tend to reduce tasks to post-exercise tools, as was evident in classrooms observed here, where tasks resembled controlled drills more than interactive problem solving (Aliasin et al., 2019). Although some teachers acknowledged TBLT's emphasis on student-centredness, they struggled to shift from direct instruction to facilitative roles.

Despite these limitations, participants expressed interest in adopting TBLT more effectively. Some studies have noted that positive attitudes often coexist with low implementation confidence because of limited training or contextual barriers

(Graciano, 2025; Mudinillah et al., 2024). Teachers in this study frequently relied on informal sources, such as online videos, for guidance, which contributes to inconsistent application. In summary, while TBLT's principles are appreciated in theory, teachers' understanding is often partial and shaped by traditional habits. Bridging this gap requires targeted training with clear examples of task design, sequencing, and meaning-form integration, especially for listening instruction, where conceptual clarity is critical.

5.2 Classroom Implementation: Task-like Activities and Structural Absences

Classroom observations, lesson plans, and focus group data suggest that while teachers incorporated TBLT-like elements—such as group work and project output—these practices often lacked core task features, including information gap, communicative purpose, and real-time interaction (Long, 2014). Listening activities were frequently reduced to comprehension checks, with limited engagement in meaning negotiation or learner-led output.

This mirrors the findings of Liu et al. (2021), who noted that Chinese EFL teachers often use TBLT terminology without a full understanding of its pedagogical implications. Similarly, Peng and Pyper (2021) found that teachers may adopt the appearance of innovation through "task-supported" activities yet retain a teacher-centred approach at the core. In this study, multimodal outputs—like posters or videos—were observed, but these tasks often lacked communicative authenticity, and student autonomy was constrained by preset formats.

Teachers mainly acted as evaluators or monitors rather than facilitators. Although some moved around during group tasks, scaffolding was typically limited to pre-task supports such as vocabulary lists. These roles suggest a persistence of transmission-style teaching, consistent with observations that dominant teaching styles often shape how TBLT is interpreted and enacted (Aliasin et al., 2019). Similarly, many teachers equate "task" with group work, neglecting the functional principles behind task-based instruction (Pohan et al., 2016).

Although some lesson plans referenced TBLT phases, actual implementation rarely followed the full cycle. This supports Peng and Pyper's (2021) argument that conceptual clarity and institutional support are key to meaningful adoption. Without these, teachers may reproduce traditional methods under the TBLT label—a form of "surface adoption" also noted by Liu et al. (2021). In sum, while teachers showed willingness to integrate TBLT, implementation was often superficial and structurally inconsistent. Strengthening teachers' conceptual foundations and modelling communicative listening tasks may bridge this gap and promote more authentic, process-oriented pedagogy.

5.3 Cognition–Practice Discrepancies: Deep-Rooted and Contextualised

The observed mismatch between what teachers claimed to believe and what they practised. While most teachers espoused TBLT in principle, their actions reflected entrenched habits, institutional constraints, and procedural confusion.

This finding also supports Argyris and Schön's (1992) concept of "theories-in-use" diverging from "espoused theories." Teachers claimed to apply TBLT but defaulted to comprehension drills, grammar explanation, and tightly controlled outputs. Some believed that group video production or scripted dialogue reading constituted genuine tasks, despite lacking essential elements like learner autonomy or interactive problem solving.

Material limitations also contributed to this gap. Teachers frequently noted the scarcity of culturally appropriate and level-adjusted listening resources. Many relied on outdated textbooks or were forced to create their tasks with limited time and support. These constraints, combined with minimal formal training, created a context in which TBLT remained an aspiration rather than a reality. Some recent reviews highlight that blended TBLT can help address time and resource constraints by allowing flexible scheduling, providing ready-to-use digital tasks, and offering technology-supported models (Gong et al., 2025; Shamshul et al., 2024). These features reduce teacher workload and support a gradual shift towards more facilitative, task-oriented roles—especially in under-supported areas like listening.

These discrepancies reflect how teacher cognition is mediated by broader contextual, cultural, and policy environments, consistent with Kubanyiova and Feryok's (2015) socio-cognitive model of teacher development. Teachers in this study operated within exam-driven systems with high performance pressure and limited pedagogical flexibility, leading to what East (2017) refers to as surface-level adoption of innovation. These patterns are not isolated. Peng and Pyper (2021) similarly observed that EFL teachers in China and elsewhere often possess a conceptual awareness of TBLT yet struggle to translate it into classroom practice due to a lack of procedural clarity, modelling, and institutional backing. As such, the cognition–practice gap should be viewed not merely as a personal limitation but as a structurally embedded phenomenon that requires systemic intervention.

In sum, the cognition–practice gap identified in this study reflects not only conceptual misunderstandings but also deeper structural constraints. Closing this gap requires both pedagogical capacity building and institutional realignment toward communicative, learner-centred goals.

5.4 Professional Development Needs: From Awareness to Operational Competence

The findings point to a persistent gap between conceptual awareness and procedural competence, particularly in the implementation of TBLT in listening instruction. Teachers consistently expressed interest in TBLT but lacked the tools, confidence, and support to implement it meaningfully—particularly in the domain of listening instruction. As in prior research (Graham & Santos, 2015), participants in this study emphasised the need for a comprehensive, modular training programme with clear templates, annotated examples, and access to a multilevel library of authentic listening resources. They also requested practical guidance on grouping strategies, scaffolding techniques, and task design that balances communicative purpose with linguistic support.

These findings echo Iizuka's (2018) assertion that a critical yet often overlooked stage in TBLT implementation is systematic needs analysis. Without clearly identifying learners' communicative requirements, teachers are left to design tasks based on intuition, leading to misalignment with instructional goals. Participants' calls for task walkthroughs and listening-specific models illustrate this gap between theoretical understanding and design application.

Similarly, Peng and Pyper (2021) emphasise that task-based pedagogy requires more than conceptual buy-in—it demands supportive structures and peer collaboration. Beyond structural support, effective professional development should also build teachers' capacity for reflection and autonomy. As Hu and Zhang (2024) note, lasting innovation happens when teachers are seen not just as learners of methods, but as active agents who adapt and reshape them to fit their own classrooms.

Moreover, institutional constraints must be addressed to enable innovation. If teacher performance continues to be judged by textbook adherence and exam scores, educators will understandably resist the adoption of interactive, time-intensive task designs. A shift in policy and assessment alignment is essential to sustain pedagogical change. Without structural support, TBLT remains, in East's (2017) terms, a surface-level innovation.

Framed through McKillip's (1987) discrepancy model, these findings reveal systemic gaps across teacher cognition, instructional execution, and institutional ecosystems. Addressing them requires a multidimensional approach—professional development that integrates theory with modelling, materials grounded in learners' actual communicative needs, and policy frameworks that reward communicative, learner-centred practices. Among the most urgent needs expressed by participants was the call for a comprehensive, step-by-step instructional module and toolkit—featuring clear templates, annotated model tasks, and walkthrough videos—to provide practical guidance and build teacher confidence in applying TBLT principles effectively in listening instruction.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated Chinese university EFL teachers' understanding and implementation of TBLT in listening instruction through the lens of McKillip's (1987) discrepancy model. Findings revealed a consistent gap between teachers' conceptual endorsement of TBLT and their actual classroom practices. While participants generally expressed positive attitudes towards task-based approaches, their understanding of key TBLT concepts—such as task phases, communicative purpose, and information gap—is often fragmented or misconstrued. Observed classroom practices remain largely teacher-centred, form-focused, and exam-oriented, with tasks implemented in superficial or incomplete forms.

These discrepancies are shaped by multiple factors: insufficient professional training, limited access to authentic listening resources, rigid curriculum structures, and time constraints. Teachers expressed a strong desire for concrete

guidance, including structured training modules, model task demonstrations, and practical templates for designing listening tasks that align with TBLT principles.

Based on teachers expressed needs and observed challenges, several practical implications emerge. First, professional development should provide comprehensive, step-by-step training modules with clear templates, annotated examples, and demonstration videos to build procedural competence, especially tailored to listening tasks. Second, a curated, multilevel resource bank of authentic listening materials is essential to support differentiated instruction in mixed-ability classrooms. Third, in-service programmes must foster collaborative task design, peer observation, and reflective practices to promote sustainable pedagogical change.

Although the study's scope is limited by its small sample size and specific institutional context, it offers valuable insights into the persistent cognition–practice divide in TBLT implementation. Future research should explore the longitudinal impacts of targeted training and examine how changes in teacher practice influence student learning outcomes in task-based listening instruction. Addressing these challenges holistically is essential to transforming TBLT from a theoretical ideal into a practical and sustainable pedagogy in EFL listening classrooms.

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Appendix 1: Focus Group Discussion Guide (Teachers)

The purpose of this discussion is to explore university English teachers' current practices in TBLT implementation for listening.
Before we begin, I would like to remind everyone that there are no right or wrong answers in this discussion. We want to understand everyone's thoughts, so please feel free to candidly share your opinions, regardless of whether you agree or disagree with what you hear. It is crucial to hear everyone's opinions. Next, please actively participate in the discussion, aiming for only one person speaking at a time. I will play the role of a language traffic controller, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak. You may prefer that your comments are not conveyed to people outside of this group. Please treat others in the group as you would like to be treated by not telling anyone about what you hear in this discussion today.
All provided information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and used solely for research purposes. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this discussion.

I will print this form for you to fill out. This ensures that all relevant background information is collected efficiently and can be easily organised and analysed later.

Respondents' Background

Instruction: Fill in your particulars, your feedback is sincerely appreciated. Thank you in advance for your help.
Name: _____
Your highest level of education: _____
Your current professional title: _____
Years of Teaching Experience: _____
Courses Currently Teaching: _____
Key areas of expertise: _____
Here's a list of **definitions** and **features of a typical TBLT classroom** that could help you understand whether their experience is relevant to TBLT, even if you are unfamiliar with the term:

Definition of TBLT
TBLT focuses on using tasks as the primary unit of instruction: In a TBLT approach, students complete meaningful tasks that reflect real-world language use rather than traditional language exercises. These tasks are typically goal-oriented and require students to actively use the target language.
Tasks are communicative: TBLT emphasises communication as the central purpose of language learning. The tasks should simulate authentic language use, where learners focus on meaning and purpose rather than simply practicing grammatical structures.

Four components of a task
A purpose: making sure the students have a reason for undertaking the task
A context: this can be real, simulated or imaginary, and involves sociolinguistic issues such as the location, the participants and their relationship, the time, and other important factors

A process: getting the students to use learning strategies such as problem solving, reasoning, inquiring, conceptualising and communicating
A product: there will be some form of outcome, either visible (a written plan, a play, a letter, etc.) or invisible (enjoying a story, learning about another country, etc.)

Criteria for Tasks in Language Teaching Activities

Meaning is the main thing: Learners should focus on the semantic and pragmatic processing of meaning in utterances.

Presence of a "gap": There should be a need for learners to convey information, express opinions, or deduce meaning. This "gap" creates a communicative need and purpose for using the language.

Reliance on learner resources: Learners should rely on their language resources to complete the activity, rather than depending on external support or purely memorised structures.

Clearly defined outcome: In addition to using language, the task should have a tangible outcome. Language is a means to an end (achieving the task's goal), not the end itself.

Key Features of a Typical TBLT Classroom

Real-world relevance: The tasks assigned in a TBLT classroom mirror real-life activities. Examples might include giving a presentation, writing an email, solving a problem, or participating in a group discussion. The focus is on functional language use, similar to what students might need outside the classroom.
Student-centred learning: The students are often given autonomy over how they approach tasks, including the strategies they use to complete them. Teachers act more as facilitators or guides rather than directly controlling the learning process.
Focus on meaning before form: In TBLT, the primary goal is for students to complete a task effectively, emphasising communication and meaning. The teacher may focus on correcting language form (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) only after the task has been completed, usually in a reflection or feedback session.
Pre-task, task circle, and language focus phases:
Pre-task: In this phase, the teacher introduces the topic and task, possibly reviewing or presenting useful language.
Task Circle: Students complete the task using the target language to accomplish the goal.
Language Focus: The teacher and students review the language used during the task, focusing on areas that could be improved, and students may reflect on the effectiveness of their communication.
Collaborative learning: Tasks often require students to work in pairs or groups to solve problems or achieve specific goals. This collaboration promotes authentic communication and interaction, helping students to negotiate meaning and use the language in a social context.

Task performance as assessment: Instead of traditional testing, TBLT assessments focus on how well students perform during the task. This could include evaluating their ability to use the language to communicate effectively and solve problems, rather than simply measuring grammatical accuracy.
Task sequencing: In a TBLT classroom, tasks are often organised from simpler to more complex. As students progress, the tasks may require them to use increasingly sophisticated language or involve more challenging problem solving.
Relevant Experience Related to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT):
_____
_____
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I would like to base some of the following questions on understanding your experiences and perspectives regarding TBLT, particularly in its application and the challenges you might have faced. Through these questions, I aim to identify your needs and insights in this area. If you feel confident answering, please proceed directly. However, if you're uncertain or need guidance, you may refer to the prompts provided below each question to help shape your responses.

Defining Goals

1. Could everyone please share your understanding of what constitutes a "task" in the context of language teaching?

a. A task often involves students using the target language in a specific context to achieve a clear outcome.
b. You might view a task as requiring a distinct goal and result, as opposed to merely practising language structures.
c. You might think that a task is simply any classroom activity, even if it's focused purely on grammar exercises without a communicative goal.
d. Tasks may involve solving real-world problems rather than simply answering preset exercises.
e. You may assume that a task only refers to simple exercises like multiple-choice questions or fill-in-the-blank activities, rather than more complex communicative tasks.
f. Tasks are usually designed to simulate real-life communication scenarios.

2. Could everyone share your understanding of TBLT?

a. TBLT might focus more on students learning language through meaningful tasks rather than repetitive drills.

b. TBLT classrooms might be more student-centred, with teachers acting as facilitators rather than primary instructors.

c. You might believe that TBLT is just a method for practicing grammar and vocabulary separately, without integrating real communication.

d. You may think that TBLT only involves adding occasional tasks into traditional lessons rather than fully embedding tasks as the central component of language learning.

e. You might think that TBLT is about giving students tasks without considering the structured phases (pre-task, task cycle, and post-task) that guide the learning process.

f. TBLT can sometimes be seen as mostly focusing on speaking tasks

- Follow up: How do you think TBLT differs from traditional language teaching methods?

3. Do you think a task is any activity in which the target language is used by the learner? Why or why not?

4. What do you see as the differences between tasks and exercises? How does this distinction affect your teaching practices?

5. What are your views on the ideal implementation of TBLT?

a. An ideal implementation might involve a well-structured teaching process with distinct phases such as pre-task activities (e.g., introducing the topic), task (e.g., completing the main communicative task), and post-task reflection (e.g., feedback and error correction).

b. Ideally, TBLT should be flexible, allowing teachers to adjust tasks on the spot depending on students' reactions and needs during the lesson.

c. Ideally, tasks should be sequenced progressively, starting from simpler activities and moving toward more complex tasks as students build their confidence and competence.

d. A well-implemented TBLT approach might also include frequent formative assessments, allowing teachers to provide targeted feedback and adjust tasks to meet students' evolving needs.

e. The availability of a well-structured resource bank with authentic materials (e.g., videos, recordings, articles) tailored to different listening levels might be considered an essential component for effective TBLT implementation.

Are there any other views or perspectives not mentioned here that you would like to share?

6. In an ideal scenario, what teaching goals would you hope to achieve through TBLT?

a. You might hope to enhance students' fluency through TBLT while maintaining a certain level of accuracy.

b. The implementation of TBLT might aim to prepare students to apply language in real-life situations, better equipping them to face real-world challenges.

c. TBLT might encourage peer learning through collaborative tasks, enhancing communication and teamwork abilities.

d. A goal could be to see students actively engaging in the learning process, demonstrating increased motivation and confidence as they complete tasks that are relevant to their interests and needs.

e. An ideal goal could be to foster students' ability to enhance their problem-solving skills through task-based activities.

f. Are there other teaching objectives not listed here?

7. What do you believe are the key goals of incorporating TBLT in teaching listening skills?

a. A key goal might be to improve students' ability to understand and respond to authentic spoken language in real-world contexts, such as conversations, announcements, or instructions.

b. You might aim to develop students' listening strategies, such as predicting, inferring, and identifying key information from different types of listening inputs.

c. A goal could be to enhance students' ability to listen for specific details as well as general meaning, helping them become more flexible listeners.

d. You may focus on building students' confidence in understanding different accents and natural speech patterns, which are often present in real-life communication.

e. You might aim to encourage active listening, where students engage in tasks that require them to listen attentively, process the information, and respond appropriately.

f. A goal could be to integrate listening with other language skills (like speaking and reading), helping students apply what they hear in productive communication tasks.

Are there other goals not listed here?

- Follow up: How do you think TBLT should connect listening tasks with real-world or authentic situations?

Measuring Performance

8. Have you used TBLT in your classroom? If so, how did you implement it?
a. You might have designed tasks that require students to practice language skills in simulated real-life situations.
b. Task implementation could involve students working in groups to complete complex language tasks, such as projects or case studies.
c. You might assess students based on their performance during tasks, focusing on their language use and problem-solving abilities.

d. Implementing TBLT might include using various resources, like videos, audio recordings, and online materials, to support task completion.
e. You might reflect on and adjust your teaching methods based on your observations of student performance during tasks.

9. Can each of you briefly share how you currently incorporate TBLT principles in your teaching of listening skills?
Nunan (2004) outlines seven pedagogical principles of TBLT, which are designed to guide the effective implementation of task-based approaches in language learning. Here's a summary of each principle:
a. Scaffolding: Learners are provided with support and guidance as they progress in their learning. This support is gradually removed as learners become more proficient and can perform tasks independently. Scaffolding involves providing models, examples, and guidance that help learners complete tasks successfully.
b. Task Dependency: Tasks are sequenced so that one task builds upon the knowledge and skills developed in previous tasks. This sequential structure ensures that learning is cumulative, and each task adds a layer of complexity, reinforcing what has been learned previously.
c. Recycling: Key language structures and vocabulary are revisited throughout the course to reinforce learning and deepen understanding. Recycling content helps learners consolidate their knowledge and become more confident in using the language in various contexts.
d. Active Learning: Learners are encouraged to take an active role in their learning process. Instead of passively receiving information, students engage in hands-on activities, problem solving, and meaningful communication, fostering a deeper connection with the language.
e. Integration: Language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are integrated rather than taught in isolation. Tasks require learners to use a combination of skills to achieve the objectives, reflecting how language is used in real-life situations.
f. Reproduction to Creation: Learners move from reproducing language forms and patterns to creating original language. Initially, they might mimic and practice known language, but as they gain confidence, they begin to experiment and produce new language in creative ways.
g. Reflection: Learners are encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences, assess what they have learned, identifying areas for improvement, and think critically about the strategies they use. Reflection helps learners become more aware of their progress and how to enhance their language learning.

10. How does your knowledge about TBLT affect your application of TBLT?

11. How do you connect the listening tasks with real-world or authentic situations in your classrooms?
a. You might use real news reports or interview recordings as listening materials.
b. You could design tasks that simulate every day or workplace scenarios, such as phone conferences or client conversations.
c. You may invite guest speakers or use real-life audio materials to increase the authenticity of tasks.

d. You could have students engage in role-plays or discussions after listening to materials to reinforce learning.
e. You might design tasks based on student's interests and career plans to make them more relevant to real life.

- Follow-up: Can you provide a specific example?

12. Are the textbooks of the "university English" curriculum at your university appropriate for TBLT?
a. The textbooks might include tasks suitable for TBLT, but you may need to supplement with additional materials.
b. You might evaluate whether the tasks in the textbooks are designed with students' language levels and needs in mind.
c. You could adjust the tasks provided in the textbooks to better align with your teaching objectives.
d. You may find the tasks in the textbooks too simple or too complex to effectively support TBLT.
e. You might combine textbook tasks with self-designed tasks to ensure students experience diverse language learning opportunities.

Are there any other thoughts not mentioned here that you would like to share?

13. Is the time allocated for each unit sufficient for you and your students to complete tasks and satisfactorily achieve the course objectives?

Identifying Inconsistencies

14. What challenges, if any, have you encountered when incorporating TBLT in your teaching of listening?
a. You might feel uncertain about whether the tasks you've created adequately meet the key components of TBLT, such as focusing on real-world communication and integrating all stages of the task cycle.
b. You might encounter students struggling with complex tasks, and requiring additional support.
c. You might encounter challenges with managing time effectively, as TBLT tasks often require more class time for preparation, task execution, and follow-up reflection than traditional approaches.
d. You might notice that it is challenging to ensure all students actively engage in the listening tasks, particularly in larger classes where some students might feel hesitant or shy about participating.
e. You might experience logistical challenges related to consistent and reliable access to technology, such as audio playback devices or online resources, when implementing TBLT for listening.
f. You might find it difficult to design tasks that cater to diverse student needs, especially in mixed-ability classrooms where some students may need more scaffolding to complete listening-based tasks.
Anything else?

- Follow-up: How do you think the class size influences the implementation of TBLT?

15. Are there any limitations or difficulties you face in finding or developing suitable materials for TBLT in listening?
a. You might find it challenging to locate authentic audio materials that support TBLT tasks.
b. Developing suitable materials for your classroom might require extra time and effort.
c. Textbook listening materials might lack the flexibility needed to fully meet TBLT requirements.
d. Existing resources might not provide enough authenticity or relevance to support effective TBLT implementation.
e. You might need to supplement textbook materials with additional resources, such as online or external materials.

16. Are there any difficulties you face in designing suitable tasks for listening?
a. You might find it challenging to design tasks that are engaging yet appropriately matched to your students' listening proficiency levels.
b. You might struggle with creating tasks that effectively simulate real-world communication scenarios while also integrating the necessary language skills.
c. You might experience difficulty balancing task complexity, ensuring that tasks are challenging enough to promote learning without overwhelming students.
d. You might feel uncertain about how to structure the pre-task, task cycle, and post-task phases to ensure that students gain the most from the listening activities.
e. You might worry that the tasks you design do not fully encourage active listening and real-time interaction, leading to passive learning experiences.
f. You might face challenges in designing tasks that require students to both comprehend and respond to what they hear, effectively integrating listening with other language skills.
g. You might find it difficult to design tasks that cater to different learning styles, especially in mixed-ability classrooms where students' listening abilities vary significantly.
h. You might feel unsure about how to assess the effectiveness of the tasks you create, especially in terms of how well they achieve communicative and listening goals.
i. You might struggle with ensuring that the tasks remain contextually relevant and meaningful, rather than becoming routine or mechanical exercises.
j. You might experience difficulties in keeping tasks flexible enough to allow for spontaneous student interaction while still maintaining the structured learning objectives of the lesson.

17. How do you stay informed about best practices and new developments in TBLT for listening?

18. Do you prefer to use TBLT in your teaching of listening? If possible, please describe your reasons for implementing task-based language teaching. If not, for what reasons do you avoid implementing TBLT?

19. Do you feel the need for a complete and well-structured module that demonstrates how to effectively use TBLT? What specific content would you expect such a module to include?
a. You might expect the module to include clear explanations and examples of each stage of the TBLT process, such as pre-task preparation, task cycle execution, and post-task reflection.
b. You might find it helpful if the module provides sample lesson plans and task templates that can be directly applied or easily adapted to different classroom settings and student levels.
c. You might value having access to a resource bank with authentic materials, such as listening texts, videos, and real-world scenarios, that can be used to create engaging tasks.
d. You might prefer that the module includes assessment guidelines and rubrics tailored to TBLT, focusing not just on language accuracy but also on communicative competence and task performance.
e. You might expect the module to cover practical strategies for integrating TBLT with existing curriculum requirements, ensuring that tasks align with course objectives and exam preparation.
f. You might look for content that addresses classroom management techniques specific to TBLT, such as how to facilitate group work, monitor task progress, and provide effective feedback.
g. You might see the need for a section in the module that offers differentiated task ideas, catering to mixed-ability classrooms and students with varying levels of proficiency.
h. You might expect the module to provide troubleshooting advice, offering solutions for common challenges like time management, resource limitations, or low student engagement.
i. You might appreciate it if the module included case studies or video demonstrations of TBLT in action, showing how different tasks are implemented in real classrooms.
j. You might find it valuable if the module offers ongoing support options, such as professional development workshops, online forums, or peer-to-peer coaching to help refine and enhance your TBLT practice.

Summary and Reflection

20.What new insights have we gained about the application of TBLT in listening teaching from today's discussion? What aspects do you think need special attention in future teaching?
If anyone has additional comments or suggestions, please feel free to share.

Appendix 2: Observation Forms

Class Observation Form

Instructor		Designation	
Observation Time		Age Group	
Class		Location	
Course Name		Course Type	□ Basic Course □ Major Foundation □ Major Course
Number of Students			

Course Content:

Teaching Evaluation:

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Details	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Teaching Attitude	Natural manner, sufficient preparation, energetic, concise and accurate language.			
2. Teaching Content	Clear goals, comprehensive and structured, connected with practical needs.			
3. Teaching Methods	Effective integration of visuals and materials, attention to learning activities and feedback.			
4. Teaching Effectiveness	Clear logic, engaged students, active classroom atmosphere, good comprehension results.			
5. Class Organisation & Student Participation	Smooth teaching flow, logical structure, strong student interest and involvement.			
Final Score:				

Comments and Suggestions: