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Implementation of Focus on Form in a Task-Based Language Teaching Context in the United Arab Emirates EFL Middle School Setting

Shamsa Aziz Yousuf Al Magharabi

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جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
United Arab Emirates University

United Arab Emirates University

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

IMPLEMENTATION OF FOCUS ON FORM IN A TASK-BASED
LANGUAGE TEACHING CONTEXT IN THE UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES EFL MIDDLE SCHOOL SETTING

Shamsa Aziz Yousuf Al Magharabi

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Docto. ᵒᶠ Philosophy

Under the Supervision of Professor Ali Shehadeh

June 2019

Declaration of Original Work

I, Shamsa Aziz Yousuf Al Magharabi, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this dissertation entitled *"Implementation of Focus on Form in a Task-based Language Teaching Context in the United Arab Emirates EFL Middle School Setting"*, hereby, solemnly declare that this dissertation is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Professor Ali Shehadeh, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my dissertation have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this dissertation.

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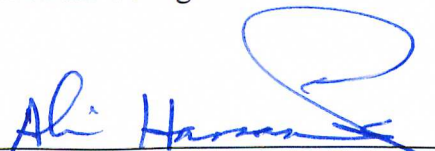   Signature _____   Date _2 July 2019_

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Abstract

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been researched from various perspectives for more than two decades. While research into the theoretical background of the framework and the design and implementation of tasks is growing worldwide, there is little experimental research in the Gulf area and, in particular, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This study investigates the implementation of TBLT in an intermediate English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms context in the UAE, focusing specifically on how teachers focus on form (FonF) in their teaching practice. The study explores the differences between four teachers when they introduced meaning-oriented tasks based on the textbook and two learning outcomes (LOs) proposed by the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). The study also investigates teachers' views and perceptions towards the TBLT framework, FonF, and the prescribed textbook. It also examines the views of students towards their classroom teachers' implementation of FonF and the challenges and constraints facing the implementation of TBLT and FonF in the UAE. Adopting a mixed-methods experimental study approach, the data set included a total of one unit taught by four teachers on the same theme, with individual lesson plans and teaching materials. Data were collected from classroom observations, field notes, documentation of students' work, as well as interviews with teachers and surveys for both teachers and students. Results show that teachers differed in their teaching practice along four dimensions: (a) the successful fulfillment of the LOs; (b) the type of FonF employed; (c) strategies used in FonF; and (d) the possibility of implementing TBLT successfully in their teaching. All teachers and students agreed that form was important for language learning and mastering. Further, teachers agreed on the efficiency of TBLT as a teaching and learning approach, but time-consuming. Additionally, teachers found the textbook a useful resource but not useful enough when they have to prepare extra materials to fulfill the LOs required by ADEK. Students also found the textbook a great resource for learning form and believed that it offered sufficient explanation for the targeted structures. Further, challenges and limitations that face implementing TBLT in the UAE are: (a) lack of motivation (b) the gap between students' current level of proficiency and the required level; (c) class size; (d) sticking with the learning outcomes; (e) time; and (f) the effect of L1. Findings imply that the most important

factors that contribute to enhancing language learning are not the task or the pedagogic framework of the textbook per se, but rather the teachers' successful understanding of the framework and their reactions to students' needs in the classroom. It is expected that findings of the study will influence the instructional practices of teachers so as to better teach language form in their classrooms and help students achieve grammatical competence, which is an essential part of language proficiency. It may also help curriculum developers and material designers to amend the existing textbooks to best fit students' needs. Additionally, this study creates more research opportunities in the context of intermediate EFL school classrooms in the UAE. It is hoped the study will emphasize the benefits of implementing TBLT in UAE educational settings in terms of quantity (or amount) and quality (or depth) of learning.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

تطبيق نموذج التركيز على الجوانب اللغوية أثناء تدريس اللغة الانجليزية في إطار تعلم اللغة المبني على المهام والأنشطة (TBLT) لطلاب المرحلة المتوسطة في دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة

الملخص

تم البحث في نموذج التعلم والتدريس المبني على المهام والأنشطة الصفية من عدة جوانب لأكثر من عقدين من الزمن. وعلى الرغم من وجود الكثير من البحوث والدراسات المتعلقة بالجانب النظري للنموذج وكيفية تصميم الأنشطة الصفية وتطبيقها ضمن هذا النموذج على الصعيد العالمي، إلا انه يوجد القليل من البحوث التجريبية في منطقة الخليج عموماً ودولة الامارات تحديداً. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف طريقة تطبيق التعلم المبني على المهام والأنشطة في عملية تدريس طلاب الصف السابع في دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة وذلك بالتركيز بشكل خاص على الجوانب اللغوية التي تشمل: القواعد والمفردات والتهجئة الإملائية والدقة اللفظية أثناء تدريس اللغة الانجليزية. كما ستتطرق هذه الدراسة لاستكشاف الفروقات بين أساليب التدريس لـ أربعة معلمين قاموا بالمشاركة في الدراسة أثناء تقديمهم لأنشطة تهدف أساساً إلى التواصل البنّاء بدلاً من القواعد والدقة اللغوية عن طريق الكتاب المدرسي المقرر من مجلس ابوظبي للتعليم (دائرة التعليم والمعرفة حاليا) والذي يعتبر مدعم بالنموذج من عدة جوانب بالإضافة الى تطبيقهم لمخرجين تعلّم من الجهة نفسها. تهدف الدراسة أيضاً لقياس وجهات نظر المعلمين وردود أفعالهم حيال الكتاب المقرر للغة الانجليزية ونحو تطبيق التركيز على الجانب اللغوي للغة من خلال نموذج الـ TBLT. كما تهدف الدراسة أيضاً لقياس تصورات الطلاب ووجهات نظرهم تجاه تركيز معلميهم على الجانب اللغوي للغة ضمن النموذج ورأيهم في لكتاب لمدرسي المقرر. إضافة الى ذلك تهدف الدارسة إلى استكشاف التحديات والصعوبات الناجمة عن تطبيق النموذج مع التركيز على الجانب اللغوي للغة. تم تطبيق المدخل التجريبي المتعدد الطرق في هذه الدراسة استناداً على درس واحد فقط تم تدريسه من قبل أربعة مدرسين بخطط تدريسية مختلفة ووسائل تعليمية متنوعة. وتم جمع البيانات من الملاحظات الصفية والميدانية، وأعمال الطلاب، ومقابلات المعلمين، والاستبانات لكلٍ من المعلمين والطلاب. هذا وكشفت نتائج البحث أن المعلمون المشاركون في الدراسة يختلفون عند تطبيقهم مخرجات التعلم من خلال أربعة محاور: ١. القدرة على تطبيق مخرجات التعلم بنجاح، ٢. نوع الآلية التي تم فيها التركيز على الجوانب اللغوية للغة،

٣. الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في التركيز على الجوانب اللغوية للغة، ٤. وأخيرا امكانية تطبيق نموذج الـ (TBLT) بنجاح. بالإضافة إلى ذلك يقدّر المعلمون و الطلاب قيمة التركيز على الجانب اللغوي للغة ومدى فعالية نموذج التعلم المبني على النشاط في تطوير مهارات تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. هذا ويوافق المعلمون على أنه بالرغم من فعالية نموذج الـ TBLT في التعلم والتدريس الا انه يحتاج الى متسع من الوقت لتطبيقه. وفيما يتعلق بـ وجهات نظر المعلمين تجاه المقرر المدرسي يرى المعلمون انه مرجع جيد الى حدٍ ما ولكنه غير كاف عندما يتعلق الأمر بتطبيق مخرجات التعلم حيث يستدعي ذلك إعداد أوراق عمل إضافية للطلاب. وفيما يتعلق بتوجهات الطلاب تجاه الكتاب المقرر، يرى الطلاب انه مرجع ممتاز للتعلم ويوفر شرح واضح وأنشطة كافية للقواعد اللغوية المستهدفة. وبناءً على المقابلات التي تم اجراؤها مع المعلمين، تم التعرف على التحديات التي تواجه تطبيق النموذج في دولة الامارات كالتالي: قلة التحفيز، والفجوة بين المستوى الفعلي والمستوى المطلوب للطلاب، وعدم انتشار ثقافة القراءة بين الطلاب، وزيادة عدد الطلاب في الفصول، وقلة الأفكار العملية في تصميم الكتب المدرسية، والالتزام بمخرجات التعلم، وعامل الوقت، وأخيرا تأثير اللغة العربية. تشير هذه النتائج الى ان العنصر المهم في تعلم اللغة ليس النشاط الصفي أو النموذج التعليمي المبني عليه الكتاب فحسب، بل فهم المعلمين الناجح للنموذج التعليمي وردود أفعالهم تجاه احتياجات الطلاب في البيئة الصفية. ومن المتوقع أن تؤثر هذه الدراسة على الممارسات التعليمية للمعلمين بشكلٍ يسهم في تطوير طريقة تدريس الجانب اللغوي للغة ومساعدة الطلاب على الوصول للكفاءة اللغوية التي تعتبر جزءاً مهماً لإجادة اللغة الانجليزية. كما قد تساعد الدراسة أيضاً مطوري المناهج ومعدي المواد التعليمية على تعديل الكتب المدرسية الحالية بما يتوافق مع احتياجات الطلاب. بالإضافة الى ذلك قد تتيح هذه الدراسة المزيد من الفرص البحثية لـ صفوف الحلقة الثانية للغة الانجليزية في دولة الامارات وستحاول أيضاً التعرف على الفرص والقيود التي قد تنجم من تطبيق نموذج التعلم المبني على النشاط في البيئة التعليمية الاماراتية. ومن المأمول أيضاً ان الدراسة ستكشف فوائد تطبيق نموذج الـ (TBLT) لمستخدمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الامارات من حيث كلاً من الكمية والجودة في التعلم .

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: تعلم اللغة المبني على النشاط، التركيز على الجانب اللغوي للغة، اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية، دائرة التعليم والمعرفة، الامارات العربية المتحدة، المدارس المتوسطة، البحث الصفي.

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Special thanks go to my parents, brothers, sisters, and husband who helped me along the way. I am sure they suspected it was endless.

Dedication

To my beloved parents, husband, and family.

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List of Abbreviations

ADEC	Abu Dhabi Education Council
ADEK	Department of Education and Knowledge
AfL	Assessment for Learning
AS-unit	Analysis of Speech Unit
CEPA	Common Educational Proficiency Assessment
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
COLT	Communication Orientation of Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FFE	Focus on Form Episode
FFI	Form Focused Instruction
FL	Foreign Language
FonF	Focus on Form
GJT	Grammaticality Judgment Test
HCT	Higher Colleges of Technology
IST	Integrated Strand Task
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LCI	Learner-Centered Instruction
LO	Learning Outcome
MO	Modified Output
MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-Native Speaker

NSM	New School Model
PET	Preliminary English Test
PPP	Presentation-Practice-Production
RQ	Research Question
SAMR	Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SCT	Sentences Combining Test
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TBL	Task-Based Learning
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TL	Target Language
V.	Versus
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview of the Study

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) and Focus on Form (FonF) in the language learning field have received considerable attention in recent years. According to Ellis (2008, p. 900), "researchers are torn between the desire to test theoretical claims about second language (L2) acquisition, which requires the investigation of precise and discrete instructional options, and the desire to ensure that form-focused instruction is ecologically valid, which leads to combining options into treatments that are pedagogically defensible." TBLT is basically an educational framework and a teaching methodology in which classroom tasks constitute the main construct of instruction. "Classroom tasks are viewed as the devices that provide learners with the data they need for learning" (Ellis, 2000, p. 193). TBLT is based on ideas derived from the philosophy of education, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, and empirical findings on effective instructional techniques (Van den Branden, Bygate, & Norris, 2009). It successfully implements the principles of collaborative pair and group work in the L2 classroom. Additionally, it focuses on the formal properties of the L2 in a communicatively or meaning-oriented context. Moreover, TBLT successfully implements the principles of learner-centered instruction and learner autonomy in the L2 classroom. In addition to that, it has brought researchers and teachers closer together more than ever before. Further, TBLT successfully incorporates aspects from the more traditional methods of L2 teaching such as focus on linguistic form, and from more recent methods such as focus on communication (Shehadeh, 2005).

From another perspective, TBLT is among those methods that are effectively used in a FonF approach. FonF is defined by Long (1991) as an approach which

"overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (pp. 45-46). It occurs as a result of an occasional shift (a switch) of attention to linguistic code features, by the teacher or the student, triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production (Long, 2015). Meaning negotiation draws learners' attention to the forms indirectly through communication (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Ellis, 2018; Pica, 1994). Studies of meaning negotiation emphasize the effect of FonF on the development of interlanguage system from effectively communicative to target-like ability (Doughty, 1991; Pica, 1994). Pica (1994) states that meaning negotiation is as important as comprehension in SLA in which, according to Long (1980) and Krashen (1985), it helps learners unconsciously comprehend L2 meanings which in turn leads to a focus on, and eventually acquisition of, L2 forms. Repetition, segmentation, and rewarding of the message during negotiation are all opportunities for learners to process the message and access its meaning. Additionally, immersion and naturalistic acquisition studies found meaning-focused classrooms produce learners with limited linguistic features that do not ultimately develop to native-like levels (Harley, 1992; Harley & Swain, 1984; Vignola & Wesche, 1991). Reviewing past literature, research shows that FonF speeds up natural acquisition processes. Ellis (1994) argues that learning L2 through experiencing its use is insufficient; a focus on its linguistic forms is needed. Studies also indicate that FonF contributes highly to enhancing students' performance by developing their abilities to use the target language (TL) effectively (Abdulmanafi, 2012; Chan, 2012; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Li, 2010; Moore, 2012; Park, 2010; Skehan & Foster, 1997).

While international research has emphasized FonF in a TBLT context, and is increasing, there is little experimental research regarding TBLT in the Gulf area, particularly in the UAE. No study with FonF as a major variable within TBLT approach has been conducted in the UAE. Further, most experimental research that considers TBLT even as a minor variable in the region comes from Saudi Arabia. Hence, there is a real need to conduct research on TBLT and FonF in the UAE. TBLT is still in its initial stages in the Gulf region, including the UAE, as evidenced by the scarcity of studies conducted in this context.

1.1 Context and Statement of Research Problem

In the governmental schools of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), English in cycle 2 (where this study was conducted) is taught as a foreign language with the aim of enhancing communication and producing learners competent in English and prepared for the workplace and life experiences. Therefore, the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) (previously known as Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC)) has been working hard to develop education to the highest academic standards internationally by preparing curriculums that meet the needs of UAE's learners taught by experienced educators with high academic qualifications. The researcher found that the current textbook in ADEK schools is based on one of the most highly recommended educational frameworks in the field of language education, task-based language teaching. The TBLT educational and learning approach puts the learner at the center of the learning process and views interaction as the main construct of the learning process. Hence, teaching is mainly organized around the language learning tasks that focus mainly on meaning, have an outcome, and are authentic in

use and based on real-life language situations (Shehadeh, 2018). Ellis (2003) points out that tasks provide a context for language learners which activates their acquisition processes and fosters processes of negotiation, modification, paraphrasing, and experimentation. Many language teachers around the world are moving towards TBLT based on the strong belief that "TBL facilitates SLA and makes L2 learning and teaching more principled and more effective" (Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010, p. 1). Unlike other teaching approaches that 'produce' learners who speak either artificially (grammatically but with limited fluency), or fluently but with low accuracy, TBLT 'produces' learners who are fluent, accurate and competent communicators (Shehadeh, 2005). Accordingly, TBLT enables learners to attain an advanced level of proficiency in the target language because it looks at language as a meaning system rather than a wording system governed by grammatical rules. Unlike grammar-based (structural) approaches, learners in a TBLT approach compete for both meaning and structure in order to develop a language which enables them to communicate effectively.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study investigates how TBLT is implemented in intermediate English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms in the UAE, focusing specifically on the way teachers focus on form in their teaching practice. It also aims to identify the differences in the enactment of TBLT of four teachers when they introduced meaning-oriented tasks based on the textbook and the set of the learning outcomes proposed by ADEK and the potential gaps between theory and practice. It examines the role of the learning outcomes in implementing TBLT successfully and helping learners focus on different

aspects of language where they encounter problems (i.e., FonF). The study also targets exploring teachers' perceptions of and views towards TBLT approach, the implementation of FonF within the TBLT framework, and the textbook. It also highlights students' views towards their teachers' implementation of FonF within a TBLT context and their perceptions towards the textbook. Finally, the study considers the challenges of implementing TBLT and FonF in the UAE public educational settings based on teachers' views.

Based on the purpose of the study and the literature reviewed, this research project is set to address the following issues: (a) identifying the differences, if any, between teachers' implementation of FonF in a TBLT context; (b) exploring teachers' perceptions of and views towards FonF, TBLT, and the textbook; (c) investigating students' perceptions towards their classroom teachers' implementation of FonF and the textbook; and (d) signaling the challenges of implementing TBLT in the UAE middle school educational setting.

1.3 Significance of the Study

In this study, I investigated the differences between four EFL teachers teaching grade seven female students in three public schools in Al Ain city, UAE. The differences were considered based on the instructional practices of teachers with respect to two learning outcomes assigned by ADEK in the curriculum, as well as teachers' implementation of the textbook. One of the learning outcomes is related to the extent to which teachers implement TBLT in their classes generally and the other to FonF in particular. I also explored the views of EFL teachers towards TBLT, FonF, error correction, and the textbook. Further, I investigated the views of students

participating in the study towards their classroom teachers' implementation of FonF and the textbook. Finally, I tried to address the challenges of implementing TBLT and FonF in UAE public educational settings.

Although there is much research on how TBLT works in laboratories and controlled settings focusing on how people acquire a second language worldwide, there is little empirical research on tasks as the basic unit of instruction in intact classrooms in regions such as the Gulf area, in particular, the UAE. Studies in different parts of the world have already explored ways of implementing and using tasks in intact classrooms, but there are no studies in the UAE context, or indeed in the whole Gulf area, that have investigated how teachers differ in their implementation of TBLT and FonF. Further, numerous studies on the international level (Carless, 2003, 2004; Zhang, 2007) and on regional level, UAE in particular (Jasim, 2011) suggest that many teachers find the concept of TBLT difficult to grasp. From personal observations and discussions with teachers, researchers and language professionals, it is evident that most teachers in the UAE context follow either traditional ways of teaching such as grammar translation, explicit teaching of rules of grammar, and other behavioristic approaches (i.e., they focus on accuracy); or go to the other extreme and focus on communication and meaning at the expense of grammar and language form (i.e., they focus on fluency). Even those who pursue the communicative methods without ignoring grammar do not have sufficient empirical knowledge about TBLT application and its philosophy of implementation, which usually leaves them unsatisfied with the results they get. Therefore, the need for further empirical studies of task implementation is central to the current TBLT research agenda. Accordingly, this research will try to investigate the differences of teachers' implementation of TBLT,

a framework that seeks to successfully combine aspects of the traditional methods of teaching (those that focus on language structures) and the more recent methods (those that focus on language functions).

1.4 Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation falls into seven chapters: Chapter 1, this chapter, offers a brief overview of the research. It briefly introduces TBLT and the current situation of language learning in the UAE that motivated this research. Chapter 1 also introduces the research questions (RQs) sought to be answered by this study. It also touches upon the importance of the research.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature reviewed on TBLT, including the rise of TBLT, the different definitions of the word 'task', and how TBLT was approached from various scopes and perspectives (i.e., interactional, cognitive, and sociocultural), authenticity and outcomes, as well as the linguistic and cognitive skills. The chapter offers a discussion of the early work that led to the rise of TBLT. A theoretical basis, as well as applications and research findings, are also provided in this chapter.

Chapter 3 presents how TBLT and FonF are being researched and implemented in various international settings by reviewing some of the major studies in different contexts. For each study, a summary is provided of the study's goal or focus, as well as its methodology, and main findings. Chapter 3 gives an overall summary and a critical evaluation of the reviewed studies conducted internationally and regionally. It concludes with the research questions that guide the current study.

Chapter 4 describes the development of the educational system in the UAE; the

Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), which is the educational body that supervises and offers support to public schools; the New School Model (NSM), which is the learning approach that focuses on developing better educators and learners, with a particular focus on its key features and the role of the teacher in cycle 2; the assessment framework; the textbooks with their design, content and methodology; and finally, the teachers and their methods of teaching.

Chapter 5 presents the methodology of the study. It provides a comprehensive description, explanation, and justification of the validity of the study, the participants, and the data collection tools.

Chapter 6 presents the data analysis and findings of the study. All of the collected data and findings from class observations, surveys, and interviews are analyzed quantitatively, qualitatively, or both.

Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the pedagogical implications of the study and its limitations, concluding with suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

2.1 Introduction

Over the last three decades, task has emerged as a significant tool in the development of language learning and teaching and as an element that contributes to fostering language learning and acquisition. Studies show that most students who are taught using conventional approaches such as presentation-practice-production (PPP) leave school unable to communicate effectively in the target language. This situation alerted several researchers in the SLA field to turn towards more holistic approaches that focus on meaning and provide opportunities for practicing language in use. TBLT is one such approach involving authentic use of the target language contextualized in tasks or activities where students are actively engaged in the learning process. Tasks attracted the attention of both researchers and teachers. Researchers are primarily concerned with how learners acquire the second language (L2) and the types of interaction learners participate in. They use them as a research tool to collect and analyze samples of learners' language and to enable them to draw conclusions on how languages are learned. Language teachers use tasks as a teaching tools or activities (Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010).

Over the years, the SLA field shifted from descriptive to a theory-oriented approach where researchers test hypotheses based on SLA theories. Ellis (2003) states that tasks played a major role in both descriptive and theoretical research. The goal of descriptive research was to examine how learners acquire an L2 naturalistically (i.e., without formal instruction). Because this kind of data (spontaneous speech of learners) was difficult for researchers to collect, they asked learners to perform various kinds of

tasks to collect communicative samples of language which were analyzed later to identify the use of specific linguistic features. Two kinds of data collection instruments were used: clinical and experimental elicitation techniques. The former was used to collect general samples of data, while the latter to identify the linguistic features. In order to investigate whether the data collected by such means are similar to or different from naturally occurring data, Tarone (1979, 1980, 1983) examined the variability in learner language. By adapting Labov's stylistic continuum, she argued that learners have a continuum of styles for language performance. At one end is the 'vernacular style' where learners focus on meaning and naturally occurring speech. At the other end is the 'careful style' where learners focus on form; this style can be manifested in experimentally elicited speech. Between these two ends are a number of styles that can be studied using a set of devices ranging from tasks to test-like exercises. She concluded that learners' use of language depends on the type of task they are engaged in. Previous studies (Beebe, 1980; Ellis, 1987; Tarone & Parrish, 1988) were conducted to test the variation in learners' performance of certain grammatical structures using various instruments. Such research advanced our understanding of the variables that affect task performance.

On the other hand, teachers use tasks as a teaching tool and as a way of enhancing teaching. In the past, these two groups (researchers and teachers) worked independently with little or no cooperation. However, with TBLT they attempt to use tasks as a teaching tool based on the theoretical insights of using tasks as a research tool. For instance, Shehadeh and Coombe (2010) state that tasks in L2 learning and teaching are more principled and more effective because they brought both researchers

and teachers and by implication, learning and teaching, closer to each other than ever before.

The early work that led to the rise of this educational approach will be discussed in this chapter, as well as the various definitions of the construct of task and how it was approached from different theoretical perspectives.

2.2 The Rise of Task-based Language Teaching

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has emerged in response to theoretical and practical challenges posed by other pedagogical approaches regarding learning and instruction, curriculum design, classroom language study, and assessment of language skills (Parbhu, 1987; Long, 1987; Ellis, 2003, 2008). For example, it has been proposed that tasks help to address the long debate concerning the effectiveness of direct and indirect instructional approaches in meeting learners' linguistic needs. While direct instructional approaches are used for defined and simple forms, indirect ways such as tasks are efficiently used for difficult and complex forms to be internalized and used automatically (Pica, Kang, & Sauro, 2006). Today, TBLT is promoted in many countries as a powerful language teaching methodology for both children and adults. Research that shows how and to what extent task performance can promote language learning is also "growing and diversifying," as Van den Branden, Bygate, and Norris (2009) described it. Now we have reached a stage where much is being published on what we know about how TBLT may promote learning (Bhandari, 2012; Bygate, 2015; Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Byrnes & Manchón, 2014; East, 2012; Edwards & Willis, 2005; Ellis, 2003; Ellis, 2008; Ellis, 2018; Garcia Mayo, 2007; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014; Long, 2015; Samuda & Bygate, 2008;

Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010, 2012; Skehan, 2014; Thomas & Reinders, 2010, 2015; Van den Branden, 2006; Van den Branden, Bygate, & Norris, 2009; Van den Branden, Van Gorp, & Verhelst, 2007). These volumes offer numerous examples that demonstrate how TBLT integrates its theoretical and empirical understanding from a variety of disciplines. For example, the roles of holism, learner-centeredness, and experiential learning came from educational philosophy; key insights into benefits of learner interaction, feedback, and focus on form from research; mechanisms for guiding learners cognitive processes (i.e., noticing, comparison, etc.) from cognitive psychology; and roles of the social linguistic environment in providing learning opportunities for learners to scaffold each other from socio-constructivist learning theories (Van den Branden et al., 2009). Since then, tasks have been widely used for various purposes in L2 research, learning, and teaching. For instance, SLA researchers use tasks to carry out research and investigate task-based performance, curriculum developers to develop curricula and syllabuses, teachers as activities in the classrooms, and language testers to follow up the progress students make throughout the learning process. Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001) point out that what determines the view of the task is whether it is viewed from a research or pedagogical perspective. For example, researchers view the task as a set of variables that affect language acquisition and performance, whereas teachers see it as a teaching unit in the learning environment. Ellis (2009) indicates that there are points of contact between the two views. For example, research can inform us about task variables that assist teachers in deciding what tasks to use and when. Consequently, the construct of task has been defined differently according to the context and purpose of its use. Below is a review of the main definitions offered in the literature regarding what constitutes a task.

2.3 Defining 'Task'

The term 'task' has been described and approached from different perspectives and for different purposes. Consequently, there is no consensus in SLA research and language pedagogy to what constitutes a task, which makes defining it problematic (Crookes, 1986). There is also no full agreement on the terms used to describe devices that elicit learners' language (e.g., activity, task, exercise, drill). For this reason, I will use Ellis's (2003) six criterial features to illustrate, explain, and analyze the definitions available in SLA research and pedagogic literature and to show how the definition of the task varies according to the purpose for which the task is used. Features include: the scope of the task, the perspective from which a task is viewed, the authenticity of a task, the linguistic skills required to perform a task, the psychological processes involved in task performance, and the outcome of a task.

2.3.1 Scope and Perspective

Regarding the scope of the task, Ellis (2003) identifies two ways of comparing definitions: one is related to language requirement and the other to the role tasks play in research and teaching. In respect of the former, he gave an example of a broad definition proposed by Long (1985) which includes tasks that require language use, such as making an airline reservation, and tasks that do not necessitate the use of language, such as painting a fence, in contrast with more narrow definitions that define the task as an activity that requires the use of language, such as those provided by Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985), and Nunan (1989). However, in terms of task role, Ellis refers to the learners' focus during the task, whether on meaning or form. He states that Long (1985), Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985), Nunan (1989), and Skehan

(1996a) restrict the term to activities where the meaning is primary. In comparison, Breen (1989) adopts a definition which incorporates any kind of language activity, including 'exercises'. On reflection, Ellis (2003) distinguishes between 'tasks' and 'exercises' in terms of the focus: If the focus were on meaning, then it is considered a 'task', and if it were on form, then it is an 'exercise'.

The second criterion, Ellis (2003) explains, deals with whether the task is seen from the task designer's point of view, as a workplan, or from learner's view, as a process. Most definitions offered in the literature (Richards, Platt, & Weber 1985, Prabhu, 1987; Breen, 1989; Nunan, 1989; and Ellis, 2003) adopt the task as a workplan. For instance, Breen (1989) defines the task as "a structured plan for the provision of opportunities for the refinement of knowledge and capabilities entailed in a new language and its use during communication" (quoted in Ellis, 2003, p. 4). It is clear that the task in such situations is intended to engage the learner in meaningfully focused language use.

2.3.2 Authenticity and Outcomes

Authenticity is the feature concerned with describing tasks that learners encounter in real-life situations. It may be situational authenticity or interactional authenticity. The former encompasses real-life situational tasks that learners encounter either daily (e.g., borrowing a library book, dressing a child, painting a fence) or 'survival tasks' that apply to situations where learners want to keep themselves safe (e.g., in the wilderness or an urban environment away from the comfort and familiarity of their homes). Interactional authenticity, as Skehan (1996a) describes it, includes tasks that are not clearly real-world but which manifest some sort of relationship to the

real world (e.g., spotting the differences between two pictures, telling a story based on

a series of pictures, describing a picture and someone else can draw it). The kind of

interaction or language behavior involved in such tasks corresponds to the negotiation

involved in real-world tasks. Long (1985) best depicts this feature in his definitions

when he proposes that a task is

> a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for
> some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence,
> dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making
> an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test,
> typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel
> reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street distention, and helping
> someone across a road. In other words, by "task" is meant the
> hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play,
> and in between. "Tasks" are the things people will tell you they do if
> you ask them and they are not applied linguists (quoted in Ellis,
> 2003, p. 4).

However, outcomes feature in what results from the task (e.g., a list of

differences or a story). Ellis (2003) emphasizes the importance of differentiating

between the outcome and the aim which is the pedagogic purpose of the task (i.e., to

elicit meaning-focused language, perceptual or productive skills, etc.). He also states

the possibility of achieving the outcome without the aim (e.g., students identifying the

differences between two pictures without using the language). In this case, the task

becomes of no value since the real purpose is to use the language in a way that

promotes their language learning rather than arriving at a successful outcome,

whatever it is. Most definitions in the literature consider this purpose and explain that

it can be measured from the task content. Outcomes may be judged from the task's

content. For example, a narrative task can be judged according to whether learners

successfully can tell all the events of the story based on the pictures provided.

2.3.3 Linguistic and Cognitive Skills

Another feature considered in defining a task is the linguistic skills involved in performing it. For instance, Long's (1985) definition clearly addresses the two linguistic skills, oral and written (e.g., making an airline reservation and writing a cheque). Similarly, Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001) identify the same two skills in their work. They describe the task as "an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (p. 11). Further, although the research and pedagogic literatures (Day, 1986; Crookes & Gass, 1993; Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001) assume that tasks are directed to oral skills, particularly speaking, while the other language skills (e.g., reading and writing) are involved at some stages in the task. Another aspect considered in defining a task is the cognitive processes involved while performing it. Cognitive processes may be selecting, reasoning, classifying, or sequencing information, and transforming information from one form of representation to another. For example, Nunan (1989, p. 10) views "comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language" as basic cognitive processes in his definition. However, Prabhu (1987) emphasizes the processes of thought, namely those that engage learners in reasoning, making connections between pieces of information, and evaluating information. This shows that various cognitive processes can be demanded from learners depending on the needs of the learning situation. Accordingly, the cognitive dimension is essential in designing the tasks because it determines the complexity of the task.

Further, SLA researchers define tasks in terms of their usefulness for data collection and eliciting samples of learners' language for research purposes. For instance, Bialystok (1983) states that a communication task must

> first … stimulate real communicative exchange in which one of the interlocutors was a monolingual speaker of the target language; second, the task had to provide incentive for the learner to attempt to convey difficult information; and third, it was necessary to have control over the items for which the communication strategies were to be examined (Bialystok, 1983, p. 103).

Similarly, Pica (1989) states that tasks should be developed in such a way as to "meet criteria for information control, information flow, and goals of the study" (quoted in Shehadeh, 2005, p.18). In contrast, there are some scholars who look at the term 'task' from a purely classroom interaction perspective. For example, Nunan (1989) proposes that a communication task is "a piece of classroom work which involve learners to comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (Nunan, 1989, p. 10).

As this discussion indicates, what constitutes a task varies to some extent. A definition given by Bygate, Skehan, & Swain (2001) identifies the essential commonalties in tasks, irrespective of their actual use. However, the need for a generalized definition remains valid. Hence, Shehadeh (2005) defines a classroom task based on the central attributes of a language teaching task as "an activity that has a non-linguistic purpose or goal with a clear outcome and that uses any or all of the four language skills in its accomplishment by conveying meaning in a way that reflects real-world language use" (2005, pp. 18–19). This definition suggests that in addition to the tasks being meaning-oriented, they must reflect real-life situations and involve

the activation of cognitive processes for learners via the development of one or more language skills. This is the definition that will be used in this dissertation because it is more inclusive.

2.4 Early Work on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

TBLT first appeared in 1979 when the Indian scholar N. S. Prabhu conducted his Bangalore project for secondary school classes in India. This project was the first work that proposed designing tasks for language teaching and it drew the attention of many researchers and educationalists in the field. Many attempts have been made to implement TBLT over the past three decades in the belief that language is best learnt when it is used to convey communicative messages.

Another major work that led to the rise of TBLT was Long's (1985) research. Long investigated the tendency of applied linguists to develop syllabuses in second-language programs independent of methodologies and psycholinguistic research. He considered this situation as a problem that threatened the efficiency of language learning and that an integrated psycholinguistically-based program design needed to be proposed. Long argued that this issue was not simple; while structural syllabus works for audio-lingualism, the notional-functional syllabus cannot work on the same methodology. If it did, a conflict between the two would arise and consequently result in ineffective learning. Accordingly, from 1982 to 1985, Long conducted a number of small-scale studies involving both native and non-native speaker dyads working on pedagogic tasks in order to investigate the role of task-based instruction in second-language classrooms. He also worked on designing prototype task-based teaching materials for children of limited English proficiency in Hawaii's public schools. Long

(1985) stated that not "anything like enough empirical studies have been done on (especially instructed) SLA – or in such areas as sociolinguistics and classroom processes – to support many of the implications and applications currently espoused in the literature" (p. 96).

Several attempts since the appearance of Prabhu's project, Long's studies, and the efforts made by the language institutions in the early 1980s to restructure language teaching and learning have been made to implement TBLT. However, because Prabhu's project had a major role in shaping the early rise of the TBLT field, I will describe it in detail below and give a brief description of early TBLT projects in United States government language institutions.

2.4.1 Communicational Teaching Project (CTP)

In June 1979, N.S. Prabhu, a pioneer in language teaching, designed a communicational teaching project that aimed to develop the grammatical competence of beginner learners through meaning-focused activities. The project initially proposed a number of different tasks students were asked to work on them in order to learn language. One of the main purposes of the project was to develop a methodology in a research-based environment to refine the theory of communicative competence and examine how learning takes place in a specific theoretical framework. The project proposed a number of communicative tasks. As Beretta (1989) indicates, the CTP project was set up "to explore a major current model of language learning, one that stresses unconscious processes" (p. 283). According to this view, Beretta asserts that content of language learning cannot be pre-specified by teachers because the teacher's agenda may not match the learner's unconscious process of hypothesis construction

and revision. Beretta (1990) emphasizes that the guiding principle of CTP was that form can be learnt entirely through meaningful tasks and that grammar construction is an unconscious process. Besides, the project fosters the idea that "not 'English for communication' but 'English through communication'; not 'learn English so that you will be able to do and say things later' but 'do and say things now so that as a result you will learn English" (Prabhu, 1980, p. 23).

2.4.1.1 Description of CTP

The CTP project has several names in the literature: the Bangalore Project, the Bangalore-Madras Project, the Procedural Syllabus Project, and the Communicational Teaching Project, which the project team itself used. Prabhu (1987, p. 1) describes the stimulus of his project as:

> a strongly felt pedagogic intuition … that the development of competence in a second language requires not systematization of language inputs or maximization of planned practice, but rather the creation of conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication.

He explained the concept of competence and communication in the context of his project. For competence it was the automaticity in the ability to conform to grammatical norms, while for communication it was the ability to understand and convey meaning. Prabhu made it clear that competence in the project meant not the communicative competence embodied in achieving social appropriacy but instead the grammatical competence supposed to be developed through a course of meaning-focused activities. He argued that neither linguistically-organized syllabus traditionally used to systemize input nor activities assumed to maximize language practice were helpful in the development of grammatical competence. Instead, it was

found that responses to a need to convey meaning was a favorable condition for practicing and developing these 'internal self-regulating' processes. Consequently, it was decided that teaching should be concerned with creating conditions that aim to cope with and handle meaning in the classroom and imitation of linguistic behaviors of any kind, as well as 'deliberate regulation' to develop grammatical competence were excluded.

Prabhu's (1987) project was implemented in a small number of classes in primary and secondary schools in southern India, namely Bangalore and Madras. Class size in primary schools varied between 30 to 45 students and in secondary schools between 40 to 60. Students were taught by a group of 18 teachers, teacher trainers and part-time teachers, supported by the British Council in Madras and the Regional Institute of English in Bangalore. Students were taught over periods of time varying between one to three years. Notional/functional syllabuses were used in the project and content was changed occasionally based on the needs of the learning situation as Prabhu and his associates believed that a change in syllabus content was much easier to implement than in the methodology of teaching. Beretta and Davies (1985) state that Prabhu and his colleagues' belief was supported by the expectation that "linguists' generalizations about language structure are unlikely to match whatever generalizations are involved in the learner's process of grammar construction" (quoted in Prabhu, 1987, p. 144). Therefore, CTP syllabuses contained no linguistic items at all but instead tasks in the form of problem-solving activities. The main idea of the project was that form is best learnt when learners' attention is directed to meaning. In particular, as Prabhu argues, grammar-construction is an unconscious process which is best facilitated by bringing about in the learner a preoccupation with meaning,

saying or doing" (Prabhu, 1982, p. 2). As a consequence, tasks consisted of three stages: pre-task, task, and post-task or feedback. The pre-task stage introduced the task to the learner by offering relevant vocabulary to learners, for example, and was usually guided by the teacher. In the task stage the students would do the task and work towards achieving its goal. In the post-task stage, students would usually get feedback on how successfully they did the task and focus on language forms if there was a need.

Additionally, the teaching that was undertaken in this project was described by Prabhu (1987) as 'exploratory' in three ways. First, teaching was held in actual classrooms rather than in laboratories and by trial and error of a developing teaching methodology. Second, the teaching was a way to make the project's intuition clearer and articulate it more fully. Accordingly, "theory and practice helped to develop each other in the course of the five years" (Prabhu, 1987, p. 2), from 1979 to 1984. Third, the process of development was reported 'fully' and regularly to a large number of teachers and specialists in India through periodical newsletters and at annual review seminars. Teaching was reviewed, criticized, and evaluated at every stage possible. Based on the above, the project was not designed as an experiment to 'prove' a specific methodology but a classroom operation to develop a methodology and gain insights of it. Although the project was entirely based around the communicative competence theory, it follows a task-based teaching methodology in which students focus on real language and the teacher plays a leadership role. Accordingly, learning was mediated through the scaffolding model of Vygotsky where "the demand on thinking made by the activity was just above the level which learners could meet without help" (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 23-24).

2.4.1.2 Evaluation of CTP

The purpose of evaluating the CTP was to see the difference in English attainment of CTP classes, as compared with classes received normal instruction. Beretta (1989–1992) evaluated the procedural syllabus used in the project, namely investigating the extent to which teachers implemented its principles in the program. She classified their implementation into three levels. They were: *orientation* (level one: teachers who had limited knowledge about the methodology of CTP and did not know how to use it); *routine* (level two: teachers who were well-informed about the methodological implementation of the project and their use of task-based procedures was relatively stable); and *renewal* (level three: teachers who were confident enough of their mastery of the project principles and ready to modify its precepts). Beretta showed that 47% of the CTP teachers reached the routine level, and only 13% reached an expert level. Thus 40% of teachers were not well-informed about the methodology of the project and did not know how to use it. This group did not grasp the effect the project might have on teachers and learners. Nonetheless, the results of the program were considered by many evaluators as promising and successful because the idea was new and the project was the very first attempt for application.

In addition to that, from the perspective of evaluating the program generally, Breen (1987) and Candlin (1987) agreed with Prabhu that the task in the procedural syllabus is the main construct that could be mediated throughout the learning process rather than a language item on its own. However, they differed from him in two ways: (1) the role of the teacher does not totally determine how learning is sequenced and takes place, but instead it is to consult and help learners understand their own learning plan; and (2) Prabhu's procedural syllabus avoids all kinds of focus on language form,

yet students engaged in any language learning program may choose to focus explicitly on language form. Further, Long and Crookes (1992) criticized tasks proposed in the syllabuses on three grounds: (1) tasks were not based on students' needs and no analysis was actually carried out for participants to determine the needs; (2) tasks were not sequenced in the syllabuses, although Ellis (2003) believed that they were "graded": and (3) tasks made no allowance for focus on form although the current version of task-based approach allows focus on form in response to learners' needs. Similarly, Markee (1997) criticized the tasks for not being so adaptive to learners and not innovative, compared with other syllabuses such as the notional/functional and natural approaches.

Another issue was advanced by Brumfit (1984), who criticized the openness of Prabhu and how the program was imposed by the British Council in the Indian environment without taking cultural appropriacy into account. He described the project as a neo-colonial pedagogy that targeted seizing the minds of teenager participants via cultural influences injected in linguistic materials, tasks, and activities. He considered the parallel coincidence of Prabhu's use of Johnson's (1982) and Allwright's (1977) work in information-gap tasks as a proof of his pessimism. In addition, Prabhu's assumption that learning takes place "unconsciously" through the process of internalization has been challenged in SLA research. Internalization is the process by which a person moves from object/other-regulation to self-regulation and it enables learners to test out hypotheses about how the target language works (Ellis, 2008; Shehadeh, 2003). For instance, McLaughlin (1990) described the discussion of learning as "unscientific" and does not explain clearly how learning takes place (p. 620). Instead, he prefers the terms 'controlled' and 'automatic' processing. Another

fundamental concern with the project was that it received little supportive case-study evidence. What was heard about teachers' and students' voices was little, except for some transcribed materials in the appendix. This was a major shortcoming for a project that detailed all the results of a practical classroom experience.

However, in spite of these shortcomings, the project marks the first appearance of TBLT and is considered one of the pioneering works in language teaching field. Further, it is classified as the first try-out of designing language teaching through tasks.

2.4.2 American Government Language Institutions

In the early 1980s, the American government language institutions switched from teacher-centered and form-focused classroom practice to task-based instruction (TBI) in order to teach courses of foreign languages (e.g., Czech, Ukrainian, Russian, English for speakers of Russian) in a number of institutions, including the Defense Language Institute (DLI), the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Marshall Center, and other government schools. Leaver and Kaplan (2004) report that the 'task' was used as an activity in the foreign language classrooms with a measurable result in all of these programs. They were either pedagogical tasks (tasks that are not necessarily a learner's encounter in real-life situations, e.g., spotting the differences between two pictures) or authentic (tasks the student is likely to encounter in real-life situations, e.g., phoning for information, planning a holiday, answering email, or filling in application forms.

Using the Czech course at the DLI as an illustrative example, Leaver and Kaplan (2004) mention that Czech was the first Slavic language in which task-based principles were implemented in the program. It was introduced in 1991 in the DLI

institution for an intensive program lasting for 47 weeks. Two types of syllabus were used in this program: a theme-based syllabus for the first 24 weeks; and a content-based syllabus for the reminder of the period. Topics in both were selected in consultation with the students. The content-based instruction was more challenging than the theme-based. In the former, there were required subjects (e.g., grammar) and electives (e.g., physics, zoology), with all books obtained from the State Publishing House in Prague. The authors report that the program contained meaning-based, communicative, authentic tasks that reflected real-life situation interactions. Most required the integration of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and students needed to achieve an outcome by the end of the task with abundant amounts of linguistically complex materials. Further, all tasks incorporated high-order thinking skills (e.g., analyzing, synthesizing, evaluation) that help learners develop abilities they can use in the classroom and later outside the classroom. Low-order thinking activities (e.g., memorization, application, comprehension) were mostly avoided. Classes were organized into small groups where students worked together and shared their learning strategies. Finally, students were evaluated formally by the institute's testing division) or informally by speakers of Czech working in other non-teaching divisions.

The above projects helped to confirm TBLT's satisfactory results. Such early work and projects popularized the TBLT field and provided convincing evidence of efficient learning. For instance, Prabhu's project was the first work that introduced communicative tasks and got students to learn the language by working on them. This revealed impressive progress on students' learning of the target language. Further, Long's small-scale studies argued that the development of the syllabus design and the

method of instruction should go together and be psycho-linguistically based and resolved by the integration of TBLT. Moreover, he stated that the pedagogic tasks that had been used in the native and non-native dyads were solvable. In addition, the implementation of TBLT in the government language institutions in the US produced inspiring results in students' proficiency and enhanced their performance rapidly, compared with the structural approaches in use at the time. Based on such early research in the TBLT field, a number of scholars (Krashen, 1982; Swain, 1985) and also educationalists (Prabhu, 1987) concluded that classroom learning would proceed more effectively if learners were provided with meaningful tasks that elicit their use of language in the classroom.

Since the 1980s, TBLT has increasingly attracted the worldwide attention of SLA researchers, curriculum developers, educationalists, teacher trainers, language testers, and language teachers. Van den Branden (2006) describes the introduction of TBLT into the world of language education as 'a top-down' process. The concept of TBLT was conceived and developed by SLA researchers and language educators, largely in reaction to what were seen as shortcomings in teacher-centered, form-oriented second language classroom (Long & Norris, 2000). Accordingly, TBLT has been investigated from various perspectives that try to explain the efficiency of this instructional framework in promoting language learning and teaching, as will be shown below.

2.5 TBLT: Current Views and Perspectives

TBLT has been approached from different perspectives by different scholars who have tried to account for how TBLT facilitates L2 learning. In 2009, Van den Branden, Bygate, and Norris stated that:

> … there is a widespread agreement that tasks, potentially at least, offer a uniquely powerful resource both for teaching and testing of language. In particular, they provide a locus for bringing together the various dimensions of language, social context, and the mental processes of individual learners that are key to learning. There are theoretical grounds, and empirical evidence, for believing that tasks might be able to offer all the affordances needed for successful instructed language development, whoever the learners might be, and whatever the context (p. 11).

As SLA researchers have established, TBLT enables learners to attain an advanced level of proficiency in the target language because it looks at language as a meaning system rather than a wording system governed by grammatical rules. Unlike grammar-based (structural) approaches, learners in a TBLT approach compete for both meaning and structure in order to develop a language that enables them to communicate effectively. Ellis (2003) points out that tasks provide a context for language learners that activates their acquisition processes and fosters processes of negotiation, modification, paraphrasing, and experimentation. Many language teachers around the world are moving towards TBLT based on the strong belief that "TBLT facilitates SLA and makes L2 learning and teaching more successful and more effective" (Shehadeh, 2018, p. xvi). This belief is supported by theoretical and pedagogical bases and perspectives, including the interaction perspective, the cognitive perspective, and the socio-cultural perspective (Shehadeh, 2005; Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010). Following Shehadeh and Coombe (2010), these perspectives will be considered separately below by presenting the proposed perspective, its theoretical conclusions, and the ways in which tasks are seen to facilitate learning from this perspective.

2.5.1 Discourse/Interaction Perspective

One aspect in which TBLT has been proved to be efficient for language learning and teaching is the interaction perspective. This perspective is supported by theoretical and practical considerations. Below is a description of each.

2.5.1.1 Theoretical Basis

The interaction perspective is based on the interaction hypothesis attributed to Michael Long (1981, 1983, 1996) and based primarily on the work of Stephen Krashen (1981, 1985, 1994) and Evelyn Hatch (1978). The interaction hypothesis (Long, 1980, 1983, 1985) posits the importance of comprehensible input (i.e., Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis) and the modification of discourse (i.e., comprehensible output hypothesis) by negotiated interaction and modified input. These will be considered separately below.

2.5.1.1.1 Comprehensible Input and Interaction Perspective

Long's input hypothesis posits two conditions for the language input to be acquired: (1) it must be comprehended at one level above the learner's current level (i+1); and (2) the learner is emotionally receptive to the input, or, in Krashen's terminology, the affective filter must be low. This hypothesis is very restricted because it deals only with the exchanges where the less competent speaker responds to the more competent speaker and language is viewed, based on this hypothesis, as input-driven. Therefore, Long, in his interaction hypothesis, emphasized the role of comprehensible input that was central to Krashen's input hypothesis but argued that this input could be acquired during interaction that involves discourse modifications. Long's interaction hypothesis takes into consideration the interaction exchanges where the initial problem

arises in the speech of the two interlocutors. Learners modify their messages and signal their difficulties while they exchange the information and negotiate to achieve its comprehensibility. Thus, comprehensible input is held to be a necessary condition for SLA (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1983).

2.5.1.1.2 Comprehensible Output Hypothesis

As a result of studies of immersion classes in Canada, Swain (1985) argues that comprehensible input is not enough for successful SLA, but opportunities for comprehensible output are also essential. Accordingly, she proposes the comprehensible output hypothesis, which is comparable to Krashen's (1985, 1994) comprehensible input hypotheses. Swain acknowledges the role of comprehensible input in SLA but argues that the role of comprehensible output is independent in many ways and that both input and output are important for SLA. This hypothesis is based on the belief that to learn to speak we have actually to speak! She points out that understanding forms is not enough, learners need to produce them. Therefore, she suggests that learning is promoted when learners are provided with an opportunity for meaning negotiation and output modification during their conversation with their interlocutors. Based on her specific suggestions, Skehan (1985) identifies several roles of output that are relevant to language learning. They are to:

- Generate better input. Long (1985) claims that the best way to get good quality of input is using output (speaking) to receive feedback and tuning the input to the listener's current competence. According to this view, output is important to generate effective input and it is like an opportunity for meaning negotiation

that is indexed by the use of clarification requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks.

- Force syntactic processing. Swain (1985) suggests that output forces learners to move from semantic analysis of the target language to a more syntactic analysis of it which makes an effective use of input for interlanguage development.

- Test hypotheses. Swain (1985) points out that output enables learners to test out hypotheses about the target language by taking risks and looking for uncertainty in a developing grammar.

- Develop automaticity. Swain (1985) indicates that output enables learners to go beyond carefully structured utterances and achieve some level of natural speed and rhythm.

- Develop discourse skills. Skehan (1985) argues that extended speaking enables learners to develop skills, such as turn-taking skills, which ultimately qualifies them to become effective communicators.

- Develop a personal voice. Output enables learners to develop a personal manner of speaking depending on the sorts of meanings they are exposed to, and to reflect consciously on the language they are producing. In so doing, learners notice a gap between what they can say and what they want to say, which 'forces' them to stretch their current interlanguage capacity in order to fill in the gap. This represents "the internalization of new linguistic knowledge, or the consolidation of existing knowledge" (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, p. 374) as a result of active deployment of learners' cognitive processes (Izumi, 2000).

Comprehensible input is considered the driving force for interlanguage development and change, and the effect of such change leads to production or output. Both comprehensible input and modified output are believed to facilitate language acquisition. Research has shown that the interaction between a non-native speaker (NNS) and a native speaker (NS) or a NNS of a higher level creates a naturalistic language learning environment where the NNS learns, through the negotiation of meaning, input modification, or identifying their language gaps, where they face difficulties.

Pica (1992, 1994) states that opportunities for meaning negotiation assist learners in language acquisition in three ways. First, they help learners get comprehensible input, as Long and others have claimed. Pica indicates that a way in which this can take place is when the input is broken down during negotiation into smaller units that learners can easily understand during the negotiation. In this way, learners' attention is shifted to L2 forms (Schmidt, 2001). Second, Pica argues that negotiation allows learners to receive feedback on their comprehension level in the L2. Finally, Pica says negotiation allows learners to adjust, manipulate, and modify their own output and signal their difficulties while they exchange the information and negotiate to achieve its comprehensibility. Learners are 'pushed' to produce more comprehensible and target-like output as a result of the negotiation. Swain (1985, 1995) argues that such output contributes to language acquisition.

Long (1996) indicates that interaction modification includes three forms of checks, or topic-contingency devices where gaps in learners' language are identified: clarification requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks. A clarification

request is a technique learners use when they encounter an unfamiliar word and ask for clarification. Confirmation checks are used by reacting to a sentence uttered by the other speaker using L2. Comprehension checks are used to affirm that the meaning is understood. These forms of checks play an important role in managing the discourse during meaning negotiation.

The comprehensible input hypothesis has two forms: strong and weak. The strong form advocates the role of interaction in language learning, whereas the weak form views interactions as opportunities for learners to practice the language whether or not they are making productive use of it. In this regard, there is no certainty comprehensible input leads to acquisition. Ellis (2003) reports that "comprehension is not a monolithic phenomenon but highly differentiated, reflecting a continuum of understanding" (p. 81). Unlike language acquisition, comprehension has been approved to be a top-down process based on world knowledge and inferences from context. By contrast, language acquisition is a bottom-up process containing attention to the formal structures of the target language. Accordingly, comprehensible input has no direct relationship to facilitate or promote language acquisition. Gass and Varonis (1994) and Polio and Gass (1988) found that negotiation does not lead to comprehension in all cases. They state that the success of negotiation depends on the strategic abilities of the NNSs, rather than the NSs, and to what extent they are taking the leading role. Research has shown that when NSs take the role, comprehension is affected negatively. In addition, while it is simple to see that interaction may show interlocutors how to decompose utterances into smaller parts, it is less clear how it contributes to the acquisition of morphological features. To exemplify that, Ellis (2003, p.81) offers the following exchange:

NNS: I go cinema.

NS: Uh?

NNS: I go cinema yesterday.

NS: Oh, yesterday.

Here the utterance of the NNS was pushed for clarification by adding the lexical time marker of past time (yesterday) and the conversation proceeded successfully without the need for output modification, incorporating the past tense marker. So, as can be seen, not all pushed input is in fact modified. The hypothesis has also been criticized for its limitedness in scope. Ellis (2003) argues that the speech repair or the communication problem is not the only trigger for the acquisition to occur. Wells (1985) claims that interaction is very similar to the way children acquire their first language.

Despite these criticisms, the interaction hypothesis has a central place in the SLA field and has been researched thoroughly in how it supports TBLT. It contributes to the theoretical bases of TBLT and has defined criteria for analyzing the discourse involved while performing the tasks. Ellis (2003) states that

> [w]hile it may be dangerous to evaluate tasks solely in terms of the quantity of meaning negotiation they give rise to, there are solid grounds for believing that tasks that afford opportunities for this kind of discourse work will contribute to the acquisition of at least some aspects of language" (p. 83).

A lot of research has shown that tasks provide learners with conditions that stimulate negotiation of meaning, interaction, output modification, and focus on formal properties of the L2. These will be considered below.

2.5.1.2 Application and Research Findings

A number of experimental studies support the interaction hypothesis by exploring the effects of interaction on production (Gass & Varonis, 1994), on lexical acquisition (Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994), on the short-term outcomes of pushed output (Swain, 1995), and for specific interactional features such as recasts (Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998; Mackey & Philp, 1998). However, other studies have not recorded an effect for interaction on grammatical development (Loschky, 1994). In regard to the studies with results showing a promotion of language learning, research indicates that meaning negotiation facilitates the acquisition of language forms. In this respect, Mackey (1999) found that learners who engaged in negotiated interaction acquired more English question forms than those who did not. Mackey employed a pre-test/post-test design for 34 English as a second language (ESL) learners, separated into four experimental groups and one control group. They were engaged or participated in various types of interaction. Findings showed a link between the interaction and grammatical development and emphasized the importance of active participation in interaction. In respect of the effect of interaction on lexical acquisition, Ellis, Tanaka, and Yamazaki (1994) conducted two classroom studies for high-school students in Japan to investigate the effect of modified interaction on comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. They found that tasks provide learners with opportunities for meaning negotiation, modifying input, and better opportunities for vocabulary acquisition. There was also evidence that pushed output enhances language learning. Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) showed in a study conducted on two adult learners that the reformulation of utterances as a result of negotiation improved the accuracy of past

tense use. Similarly, Ellis and Takashima (1999) found that pushed output helped learners in the acquisition of past tense forms.

From another perspective, researchers conducted a number of studies that demonstrate the role of output in enhancing language acquisition. Shehadeh (2001), for instance, investigated the role of self-initiations and other-initiations in providing opportunities for modified output (MO) which Swain (1995, 1998) and Swain and Lapkin (1995) emphasized as important for language learning. Shehadeh (2001) involved 35 adult participants with eight NSs and 27 NNSs representing 13 different L1 backgrounds. He used three types of communication tasks: picture description, opinion exchange, and decision-making. The first two types were held between NS–NNS and NNS–NNS pairs, whereas the last was in NNS groups. He found that both self– and other initiations provide students with opportunities for modifying their output, with the self-initiations more prevalent and effective than the other initiations.

The central role of output is in promoting interlanguage development which leads to the third role, which is more concerned with performance and fluency. In addition, Swain (1985) mentions that learners' output is not just a sign of acquired knowledge, but also a sign of learning at work. Further, researchers demonstrate that task types provide learners with varied opportunities toward output modification in order to make it more comprehensible. For example, Iwashita (1999) found that output can be modified toward comprehensibility by one-way tasks more than by two-way tasks. Likewise, Shehadeh (1999) found that a picture description task (one-way task) provides greater opportunities toward modified output than opinion exchange (two-way task).

Based on the above reported studies, it appears the interaction involved in tasks enables learners to provide each other with modified comprehensible input, corrective feedback, and respond to each other with their own modified output. Accordingly, it may be inferred that meaning negotiation and input modification, as well as focusing on the structural aspects of the TL, are important for language learning.

2.5.2 Cognitive Perspective

The cognitive perspective constitutes another basis for TBLT. Skehan (2003) mentions three psychological areas related to the study of TBLT from this perspective: the attentional resources involved while performing the task; the influence of task conditions on performance; and the impact of different conditions under which the tasks are completed. Following is a full description of the cognitive perspective.

2.5.2.1 Theoretical Basis

The cognitive perspective draws on three aspects of learner performance. As distinguished by Skehan (1998), they are fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Fluency relates to the capacity of the learner to communicate in real time by memorizing and integrating language elements. Accuracy refers to when learners try to use an interlanguage system of a particular level to produce correct, but possibly limited, language, while complexity involves a willingness to take risks and try out new forms even though they may not be completely correct. These three aspects are important for both effective communication (fluency and accuracy) and progress and development (complexity) of the L2. Skehan argues that these three aspects of performance are influenced by engaging learners in different types of communication and production tasks. Therefore, identifying task types, variables, and dimensions is very important

for promoting L2 fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Skehan (2003) identifies two contrasting approaches with much to offer for the study of the cognitive perspective. The first is what Skehan (1998) mentions regarding the limitation of the attentional resources and how attending to one aspect of performance (accuracy, fluency or complexity) affects the other. He argues that when students speak, they can give their full attention to one of the goals of accuracy, fluency, or complexity. Skehan and Foster (1997, 2001) argue for the existence of trade-offs in performance. For instance, greater fluency might be accompanied by greater accuracy or greater complexity, but not both. In contrast, the second approach advocates two propositions: (1) learners can access multiple and non-competing attentional resources and are not limited as Skehan and Foster (2001) claim; and (2) complexity and accuracy, as Givon (1985) acknowledges, correlate since both are driven by the nature of the functional linguistic demand of the task itself. So, whereas Skehan and Foster argue for fluency being correlated with either complexity or accuracy (at best), Robinson (2001) argues that fluency contrasts with complexity and accuracy, which correlate with one another. Both cognitive approaches explore how performance can be affected by task characteristics and task conditions. The findings regarding characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The effect of task characteristics on students' performance (Skehan, 2003, pp. 5–6)

Task Characteristic	Influence on Performance and Research Basis
Structured tasks, i.e., clear timeline or macro structure	Clearly greater fluency, tendency towards greater accuracy (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster, 1997, 1999)
Familiar information	Greater fluency and greater accuracy (Foster & Skehan, 1996, Skehan & Foster, 1997)
Outcomes requiring justifications	Justifications lead to markedly greater complexity of language (Skehan & Foster, 1997)
Interactive v. monologic tasks	Interactive tasks produce markedly more accuracy and complexity, monologic tasks produce more fluency (Foster & Skehan, 1996, 1999; Skehan & Foster, 1997, 1999).

The above findings suggest that task choice can predict the language aspects to be learnt as a result of performing the task. Further, researchers explored the conditions under which tasks are performed. One line of investigation was concerned with phases which are relevant to using the tasks, i.e., what happens before, during, or after doing the task. Regarding the first, several studies examined the role of pre-task planning on performance (Crookes, 1989 and Ellis, 1987). Others investigated the effect of planning in general. For instance, Foster and Skehan (1996, 1997) conducted two studies using the same task types and variables but involving learners in different activities that go under the same task types in each study. They investigated the effect of planning in three situations (where there was no planning, planning without details or online planning, and planning with details or guided planning) on learners' performance of three different tasks (personal information exchange, narrative, and

decision-making). They measured the performance in terms of fluency, complexity, and accuracy. While accuracy was measured by dividing the number of correct clauses by the total number for each participant, fluency was measured by the total seconds of silence for each subject per five-minute task. Complexity was measured by dividing the total number of clauses by the total number of *c-units*, a text unit originally designed to measure syntactic complexity. Hunt (1966) defines it as a single, independent clause plus any subordinate clauses attached to it or embedded in it. It includes non-clausal structures with communicative value. The researchers found that different tasks affect learners' performance differently. For example, personal information exchange and decision-making tasks led to higher accuracy than narrative task, while the personal task led to lower complexity and fluency than the other two tasks.

Research has shown that fluency, accuracy, and complexity can be promoted by task-based instruction. Based on the cognitive approach framework and the previous experimental studies, Skehan (1998) proposes a model for task-based instruction consisting of the following principles:

- Selecting a range of target structures
- Choosing tasks which meet the utility criterion that is, "where the use of a particular structure would help the efficiency of the completion of the task but could be avoided through the use of alternative structures or perhaps through the use of communication strategies" (Skehan, 1998, p. 122).
- Selecting and sequencing tasks to achieve balanced goal of development.
- Maximizing the chances of focus on form through attentional manipulation

- Using cycles of accountability in which students should reflect on what they are learning in order to make further plans.

Skehan (1998) claims these principles allow learners to communicate effectively (fluency and accuracy) and enhance their L2 learning and development (complexity). He states that "these [principles] … offer some prospects for the systematic development of underlying interlanguage and effective communicative performance" (Skehan, 1998, p. 129). Ellis (2005) suggests that tasks can promote fluency, accuracy, and complexity in learners by engaging them in meaning-oriented tasks if the purpose is to promote fluency or form-oriented tasks, and, if the purpose is to promote accuracy or complexity, by choosing a range of target structures based on learners' interlanguage development. Below is a description of how task-based instruction may promote learning from the cognitive perspective.

2.5.2.2 Application and Research Findings

Researchers have explored how task-based instruction may promote fluency, accuracy, and complexity, including the effect of planning. Regarding planning effect, Foster and Skehan (1996) found that the effect of the planning condition varies depending on task type. Generally, the greater the planning for fluency and complexity, the greater the fluency and complexity achieved. Therefore, the relationship between these two constructs was described as 'monotonic.' However, in the case of accuracy, they found that guided planning before the task did not facilitate accuracy as the online planning while learners were doing the task. Consequently, they concluded that telling learners that they had time to plan for the task without guiding them in how to use the time led to greater accuracy. In contrast, higher complexity

could be achieved by guiding them in how to use the time. This shows that allowing learners to decide on how to use the time leads them to focus on language forms, while providing them with suggestions regarding language and content shifts their focus to the content, which in turn directs their attention to greater language complexity. In support of these claims, Yuan and Ellis (2003) examined the effects of two types of planning (pre-task planning and online planning) on fluency, complexity, and accuracy in oral production tasks, and they found similar results to those of Foster and Skehan. Yuan and Ellis (2003) found that pre-task planning facilitated grammatical complexity and produced fluent and more lexically varied language than online planning. However, accuracy was enhanced through online planning only and pre-planning had no influence on it. Table 2 summarizes the results of the above three mentioned studies, where (+) indicates an increase trend and (-) a decrease.

Table 2: Task type and planning results from three studies (Foster and Skehan (1996, 1997))

Task Type	Accuracy	Fluency	Complexity
Personal	+	-	-
Narrative	-	+	+
Decision-making	+	+	+
Planning			
No planning	+	-	-
Guided planning	-	+	+
Unguided planning	+	+	+
Yuan and Ellis (2003)			
Planning			
Pre-task planning	No influence	+	+
Online planning	+	-	-

Further, Loumpourdi (2005) found that task-based grammar activities promote both fluency and accuracy. Loumpourdi applied TBLT to her grammar module course with 12 intermediate-level learners studying English in a private institute in Greece. She reported that, for certain grammatical features, she could detect when the students grasped the form but failed to understand the use and meaning of the structure. Therefore, she decided to incorporate the task in her teaching of grammar following a task cycle with its three stages as proposed by Jane Willis (1996a, 1996). She used a personal experience task type and asked the students to create their own personality quiz for the purpose of learning the use and meaning of the second type of conditional.

The students were divided into two groups and, after introducing the task by brainstorming related ideas, they were asked to create the questions for the quiz using 'if' phrases, exchange the questions, and create multiple choice answers for the question they received using 'would' phrases with the teacher monitoring only. Then they were asked to choose questions for presentation, to decide on the scoring methodology, and to answer the questions and report back in pairs. Finally, the researcher detected the areas of weakness in her students, presented the conditional type as a grammatical feature, and assigned an exercise for the students to practice. From her personal observation, Loumpourdi noticed that student felt more confident when they developed their own questions and generally they were engaged with the task and clearly focused on the meaning and use of the structure.

Additionally, the influence of planning time and task type on fluency, accuracy, and complexity of learner language was investigated. For instance, Birch (2005) examined how different task characteristics affect oral task performance among Japanese false-beginners high school students studying an 'English Communication' course. He aimed to examine the extent to which developing a good command of understanding task characteristics leads to a balanced development of accuracy, fluency, and complexity. Birch used two picture-description tasks to measure the accuracy and fluency: one asked the students to describe the appearance of a person (the 'robber task'); the other asked the students to describe the locations of cities (the 'island task'). Complexity was not considered in measuring students' performance in this study because the chosen tasks were simple and highly structured. Three classes, each of 40 students, were involved in the study. After introducing the task, students were given zero, five, or 10 minutes for preparation. The amount of time was varied

to observe the effect of planning time on production. Their production on both tasks was recorded, transcribed, and read for several times with different focuses in mind. Based on factors affecting task difficulty and task characteristics (Skehan, 1998), the researcher predicted that the island task would lead to more accurate or more fluent performance as it was more structured than the robbery task (Skehan & Foster, 1997). Moreover, since the students were more familiar with describing people than describing locations, the robber task should achieve the same goals due to their greater familiarity with the task (Foster & Skehan, 1996). The finding showed that, in terms of accuracy, the planning time had no effect on the island task, and, due to the highly structured nature of the task, students' production was more accurate and grammatically correct because they were following predictable patterns and repetitive structures (e.g., --is--kilometers--of--). In contrast, although the students were more familiar with the robber task, their performance was less accurate, and they had trouble with forming questions. Further, with regard to fluency, students' performance on the robber task was more fluent (i.e., they used more complete sentences) than the other task due to the fact that this task was more familiar and less difficult to the students. Accordingly, it was concluded that task structure has a greater effect on students' performance than task familiarity and the prediction of task characteristics may help in directing students' focus to accuracy, fluency, or complexity. In support of these findings, Johnston (2005) found that planning time and the report phase not only have a positive effect on accuracy and complexity but also that they fight 'fossilization,' a process where learners experience a permanent cessation in their L2 learning despite their ability and motivation.

2.5.3 Sociocultural Perspective

The sociocultural perspective constitutes a major theoretical development in the language learning field since 1994. It offers a different way of viewing learning based on a set of metaphors establishing itself as an alternative paradigm affording accounts to explain how language is acquired and developed. Lantolf (2000) named this paradigm the *sociocultural SLA*. The sociocultural SLA is closely related to the social approaches but differs in the way it specifically promotes the role of social context and interaction in mediating language learning. Ellis (2008) points out that, despite the label 'sociocultural,' it does not aim to explain the process of acquiring the cultural values of L2 but rather how knowledge of an L2 is internalized through sociocultural experiences. It is basically a cognitive one and Lantolf (2004) called this sociocultural theory (SCT), 'a theory of mind.' Since the sociocultural perspective is the most comprehensive and current perspective on TBLT and L2 learning, I will specifically focus on it; and the following sections will be devoted to demonstrating it theoretically and illustrating case studies that exemplify how the sociocultural perspective promotes SLA.

2.5.3.1 Theoretical Basis

Sociocultural learning theory is originally based on the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky who studied learning and development to improve his own teaching. It also draws on the work of A. N. Leont've (1978) and Wertsch (1985), among others. Vygotsky (1978) posits that human development is inherently a socially situated activity. He argues that language learning and acquisition takes place in a social medium or context, not in vacuum. SCT does not distinguish between 'input'

and 'output' but rather views language acquisition as a social practice that takes place within interaction that is treated as a cognitive activity in its own right. Van Lier (2000) asserts that interaction cannot be investigated by breaking it down into its component elements (as the input-output models seek to do). Rather it is important to look at the learner's active participation in the environment and study interaction in its totality in order to show the emergence of learning. According to this perspective, the sociocultural theorists view language generally as a semiotic tool that is used to achieve social goals. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning and cognitive development. He indicates that children are born with elementary mental functions (i.e., attention, sensation, perception, memory, etc.) which, through interaction with people of higher knowledge and experience, develop into higher mental functions. Accordingly, children move from the stage of 'assisted learning' to 'independent learning.' Vygotsky explains that L2 learning, like any other form of learning, occurs inter-mentally (between the child's/learner's mind and people in interaction) as well as intra-mentally (within the child/learner), as new forms and functions appear first in production mediated by social interaction and subsequently become internalized.[1] In L2 context too, learners collaboratively construct the correct form of knowledge through interaction. Moreover, interaction enables learners to move from semantic analysis of L2 to a more syntactic analysis of it. When they do so, they notice a gap between what they can say and what they want to say or how they

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[1] Wells (1994), in her comparison of Vygotsky's and Halliday's views of language, states that both perceive language as a tool used to achieve social actions. However, Vygotsky, as a psychologist, is interested in the relationship between language and thought and accordingly looks at language as a means for mediating higher levels of thinking. In contrast, Halliday, as a linguist, is interested in how language is used as a tool for communication and how this results in language learning. Further, for Vygotsky, language is central at the word level where the child begins acknowledging its symbolic function; whereas for Halliday, language is a semiotic system consisting of grammatical, lexical, and phonological forms that encode functions involved in social behavior.

can say it. External feedback (e.g., clarification request) or internal feedback (e.g., self-noticing) are means by which a gap is brought to their attention or noticed. Swain (2000) states that noticing a gap in one's interlanguage enables learners to succeed in L2 learning because that allows the learner to stretch his/her current interlanguage capacity in order to fill this gap. In addition, focusing on the formal properties of the L2 is also necessary for successful L2 learning because it draws learner's attention to focus on the formal properties of the L2 as they attempt to produce it. Thus, SCT takes into consideration a sociocultural paradigm (external aspects) and a socio-cognitive paradigm (internal aspects). While the external contributing factors are social and cultural factors, the internal ones are cognitive factors. Woolfolk (2007) views the sociocultural perspective as an umbrella term that encompasses sociocultural and socio-cognitive perspectives. She explains that socio-constructivism views knowledge as something that can be individually constructed and socially mediated by participating in activities held with other learners; this in turn results in internalizing new strategies and knowledge. While the sociocultural perspective is the theory that emphasizes the role of interaction in development and language learning (i.e., children learn the culture of their community, ways of thinking and behaving) through these interactions, the socio-cognitivism proposes that human forms of mental activity arise in our interaction with people of our culture, as well as with the specific experiences we have with the artifacts produced by our ancestors and our contemporaries (Lantolf, 2000). Vygotsky (1978) defines artifacts as "[p]hysical and symbolic tools … created by human culture(s) over time and are made available to succeeding generations, which often modify these artifacts before passing them on to future generations" (p. 80). The symbolic tools include numbers and arithmetic systems, music, art, and, most

importantly, language. All are used to establish an indirect or *mediated* relationship between ourselves and the surrounding world.

As Vygotsky (1978) argues, the main source of mental/cognitive activities is the external activities that learners participate in. The cognitive processes of individuals are awakened when learners interact with each other. According to him, dialogic interaction is an important trigger for language learning. He indicates that L2 learning is promoted when learners construct knowledge collaboratively in a joint activity, not through interaction but in interaction. Learners first succeed in performing a new function with the assistance of another person and then internalize this function so that they can perform it unassisted. Thus, learning is mediated through social interaction in a process known as scaffolding (defined as the process by which one speaker (an expert or a novice) assists another speaker (a novice) to perform a skill that he/she is unable to perform independently). Learners can also reflect consciously on the language they are producing in a way that makes it more comprehensible. This is what researchers called metalinguistic talk, 'metatalk,' or 'languaging' (Swain, 2006, 2009, 2010). The SCT is an approach to learning and mental development that illustrates mainly the idea of mediating human forms of mental activity and internalization. Following is a description of these two forms.

2.5.3.1.1 Mediation and its Forms

Lantolf (2000) points out that "the central and distinguishing concept of sociocultural theory is that higher forms of mental activity are mediated" (p. 80). The higher forms of mental activity include, for example, memory, attention, and rational thinking. He suggests that mediation in language learning and acquisition involves: (1)

mediation by others through social interaction; (2) mediation by self through private speech (i.e., the learner interacting with him/herself); and (3) mediation by artifacts (for example, tasks and technology). Swain (2000) notes that learning a language involves learning how to use language to mediate language learning. This is primarily achieved by monologic or dialogic verbal interaction. Although both can mediate learning, dialogic is seen as central. Dialogic interaction enables an expert (i.e., teacher) to create a context in which novices (i.e., learners) can participate actively in learning and the role of expert is fine-tuning the support the novices are given. In particular, dialogic discourse enables the expert to identify what the novice can or cannot do without assistance. In contrast, monologic verbal interaction can take a number of forms including imitation, vicarious response (i.e., responses that a classroom learner produces to questions the teacher has addressed to another learner), and mental rehearsal. Vygotsky's notion of imitation is key to understanding internalization. Vygotsky's imitation is not the mechanical activity it assumes in behaviorist learning theories, but a creative, transformative activity in which learners come to self-regulation through imitation. Nor is this something that the learner achieves in isolation; imitation arises in and out of interaction with others.

Vygotsky (1978) explains the concept of mediation from the sociocultural perspective, arguing that, just as humans act indirectly to the physical world using tools and 'labour activity,' the same applies to our relationships with others and ourselves, we use symbolic tools, or signs to mediate and regulate such relations. In addition to that, Lantolf (2000) states that mediation must be sensitive to the learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD) in order to result in development. Again, this additional mediation may come from someone else, artifacts (computer, dictionary, etc.), or from

the self in the form of private speech. Adults, like children, employ private speech according to the principle of continuous access to the knowing strategies they have used previously. In difficult situations, adults are able to reactivate the earlier strategies as a way of achieving self-regulation. The adult learner is able to utilize private speech when he/she faces performing a new function. The main idea is that if learners can do it now with assistance, they are frequently able to do it at a later point without assistance. Lantolf (2000) puts that, according to Vygotsky, "this is because the mediation is appropriated by the individuals and this then enhances their ability to regulate their own behavior" (p. 80). According to Vygotsky, this is what development is all about, i.e., appropriating behavior in order to get control over one's mental activity.

2.5.2.1.2 Zone of Proximal Development

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a concept for understanding and assessing the performance of learners. It proposes that focusing on history of development (what learners can do without assistance) is not enough for enhancing learning; emphasizing what can be done with assistance or additional mediation is of equal, if not greater, importance because it has been found to be the main determinant of the future of development, as many experimental studies in the field have shown. The metaphor of ZPD was evoked by Vygotsky to explain the difference between an individual's actual and potential levels of development. The skills an individual has already mastered constitute his or her actual level. The skills that an individual can perform when assisted by another person constitute the potential level. Therefore, learnt skills provide a basis for the performance of new skills. In order for the

interaction to facilitate acquisition, it needs to assist the learners in constructing their ZPDs.

Lantolf (2000) indicates that some SLA researchers simulate the concept of ZPD with the well-known *i + 1* concept proposed by Krashen (Krashen, 1982, 1985). Guerra (1996) argues that Krashen's *i* is equivalent to the actual developmental level or what the child can do alone, whereas *i + 1* implies what Vygotsky had in mind by ZPD. However, Dunn and Lantolf (1998) argue that, for several reasons, this is very problematic interpretation of the ZPD and mediation. One is that while language is the focus in Krashen's input hypotheses, how individuals are involved in learning and development is the main emphasis in the ZPD concept. In other words, the input hypothesis primarily focuses on the features of language, while the ZPD is concerned with the features of learners learning the language, as well as the activities they participate in.

2.5.3.2 Application and Research Findings

In the last 15 to 20 years, there has been an increasing interest in sociocultural learning theory and its implications for research in classroom learning and teaching. It has received a range of interpretations and applications, which reflects its vitality. SCT has been implemented in a number of ways. One is TBLT and learner-centered instruction (LCI). According to this perspective, the central focus is learners using the language through tasks. Tasks are differentiated, sequenceable, problem-posing activities that involve learners' cognitive and communicative procedures. In this view, the classroom environment is learner-centered in which learners construct learning opportunities in interactions either with the teacher or among themselves. Also,

students are working in pairs and groups whereby they are willing to take risks and scaffold each other's efforts. Moreover, pair and groupwork enriches student-student interaction, collaborative learning, purposeful communication, and learner needs. Examples of such tasks are dictogloss activities or joint reconstructing sentences, information-gap activities, decision-making activities, and picture description activities. Vygotsky claims that this perspective involves real communication which entails authentic or genuine information exchange. According to this perspective, any interaction involves two dimensions; the *goal* (i.e., the overall purpose of interaction) and the *address* (i.e., who talks to whom). The teacher controls the activity but not the topic, as in small groupwork where the procedural rules are specified but the students are free to choose what to talk about. It views language learning as a holistic approach. SCT emphasizes the social and cultural nature of learning while also recognizing that language is a mental phenomenon. Ellis (2008) proposes a number of theoretical reasons why learner initiation assists acquisition. He maintains that this perspective ensures the learner's interest in the activity which helps the teacher to identify what speech sounds lie within the learner's zone of proximal development, thus providing a basis for determining the kind of scaffolding needed to assist the learner to use and subsequently internalize more complex language. In addition, learners' interpretation of and approach to a certain task determine the performance of the task because they perform it according to their socio-history and locally determined goals.

2.6 TBLT and Focus on Form (FonF)

A number of rationales and considerations have been identified for FonF or form focused instruction (FFI) (for a definition of FonF, see below). Reviewing past

literature, Doughty and Williams (1998) report that a motivation for FonF are the findings of immersion and naturalistic acquisition studies. These studies show that meaning-focused classrooms produce learners with limited linguistic features that do not ultimately develop to native-like levels (Harley, 1992; Harley & Swain, 1984; Vignola & Wesche, 1991). To overcome the limitation, studies of meaning negotiation strongly emphasize the effect of FonF on the development of interlanguage system from effectively communicative to target-like ability (Doughty, 1991; Pica, 1994). In support of this, Pica (1994) discusses the nature of input modification (meaning negotiation) during interaction based on Long's (1980) and Krashen's (1985) work. She states that meaning negotiation is as important as comprehension in SLA in which, according to their findings, it helps learners unconsciously comprehend L2 meanings which, in turn, lead to a focus on, and eventually acquisition of, L2 forms. Further, studies show that during negotiation, learners' attention can be drawn to the meaning of the message and its form. Repetition, segmentation, and rewarding of the message during negotiation are all opportunities for learners to process the message and access its meaning. Pica (1994) puts that "[N]egotiation data seem to suggest… that learners' comprehension of meaning can be the result of their access to L2 form rather than its precursor" (p. 508). This shows the crucial role of meaning negotiation in the learning context in which it indirectly draws learners' attention to the forms through communication. In support of this, studies (Ellis, Baturkmen, & Loewen, 2002; Schmidt, 1990) have shown that FonF is more effective compared to other teaching and learning instruction strategies.

There are three major approaches for teaching the target language identified by Long (1991, 1996, 2011, 2015). These include focus on forms (FonFs), focus on

meaning (FonM), and focus on form (FonF). The three approaches are inspired by various language learning theories, mainly behaviorist, mentalist, and constructivist, respectively, that have been proposed as a result of developments in the fields of psychology and linguistics. A distinguished feature between FonFs and FonF is that in the former, the language is broken down into discrete elements (e.g., words, grammar, notions, functions), which are taught item by item in a linear and additive way. Therefore, it involves a linear syllabus and instructional materials designed to present a series of linguistic items. In this type of instruction, the learners' primary focus is directed to form without excluding meaning. Further, FonFs involves teaching grammatical points and vocabulary before they are encountered in texts or tasks. In contrast, in FonF (Long, 1991; Long & Crookes, 1992) the primary focus is on meaning (i.e., on message processing) rather than on language structure. FonF is described by Ellis (2001, 2018) as the technique of attracting or in some cases directing learners' attention occasionally from meaning to a linguistic form and form-meaning connections by an interlocutor during the unit. This shift can be triggered by perceived problems with either comprehension or production, and it can be initiated by either the teacher or students. The shift is a response to what the learner has just said, just written, or just failed to decode appropriately when listening or reading.

As it can be seen from the above, FonFs and FonM present serious problems for language acquisition and language learning. Unlike these approaches, FonF has the advantages of FonM approaches but avoids their limitations and shortcomings. FonF is attributed mainly to Michael Long (1988, 1991). Long (1991) defines the notion of FonF as one which "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication"

(pp. 45-46). Additionally, Long and Robinson (1998) give a more practical definition of FonF as "often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (p. 23). With respect to TBLT in particular, Long (2015) considers FonF as a principal mechanism and defines it as follows:

> Focus on form involves reactive use of a wide variety of pedagogic procedures (PPs) to draw learners' attention to linguistic problems in context, as they arise during communication (in TBLT, typically as students work on problem-solving tasks), thereby increasing the likelihood that attention to code features will be synchronized with the learner's internal syllabus, developmental stage and processing ability. Focus on form capitalizes on a symbiotic relationship between explicit and implicit learning, instruction and knowledge (p. 27).

The above definitions show that learners' FonF is brought to their attention as necessitated by a communicative demand. Long (2015) mentions that the brief switch from meaning to form is usually, but not alwayss, triggered by a communicative problem, receptive or productive, in which it may be a missing vocabulary item, a problematic verb ending, etc. Such a brief attentional switch lasts for few seconds and occurs without any external intervention, e.g., from the teacher or the textbook. The attentional switch can be either self-initiated or initiated by others. A case of the former is when the learner faces a communicative difficulty while learning which generates a temporary new attentional focus that leads to an effortful retrieval of the missing item from long-term memory. In such case, the learner becomes aware of the form concerned but without abstract knowledge of the form-meaning association. Triggers for FonF in addition to the communicative difficulty can be the repeating of a learner's

utterance perfectly and correctly by the teacher or interlocutor. In this case the attentional switch is other-initiated.

2.6.1 Rationale, Rise, Connections with TBLT

In support of the above-mentioned claim, Long and Robinson (1998) state that the problems learners encounter which are concerned with their comprehension and production during their interactions, trigger their attention to be shifted to form. Long and Ross (1993) acknowledge that meaning negotiation that occurs during tasks increases the comprehensibility of the input and allows learners to access unknown L2 vocabulary and grammatical forms. Additionally, negotiation elicits negative feedback, including recasting of utterances, for instance, that inhibits learners from grasping the intended meaning. This allows learners to notice the difference between their current level of competence and the level of input they comprehend.

Another reason that led to the rise of FonF is the need for a pedagogical intervention in a form of communicative activities cited by Doughty (2002) in order to bring learners' attention to aspects of language that they need to notice but, for whatever reason, they do not. Besides, studies show that FonF speeds up natural acquisition processes. Ellis (1994) argues that learning L2 through experiencing its use is insufficient; a focus on its linguistic forms is needed. In light of this, Lightbown and Spada (1993) point out that students in programs that lack form-focused instruction continue to have difficulty with the basic structures of the language. They state that second language learning can be more highly promoted through form-focused instruction programs than through programs that support a focus on accuracy or fluency alone. Results from several studies show that TBLT's focus on form approach

contributes highly to enhancing students' performance by developing the students' abilities to use the TL effectively. FonF is promoted in most of the studies reviewed below through processes of recasting and negotiating of meaning (Abdulmanafi, 2012; Chan, 2012; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Moore, 2012; Park, 2010; Li, 2010).

2.6.2 Types of Focus on Form (FonF)

Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2002) indicate that FonF can be classified into planned and unplanned (incidental). They differ in the way the linguistic features are emphasized, the tasks used, and the type of attention involved. In planned FonF, learners' attention is directed to a predetermined or a preselected linguistic feature expected to cause problems to learners in a meaning-oriented activity. In comparison, in the incidental FonF, learners' attention is driven to whatever problematic forms arise during a communicative activity in which the main focus is on meaning. Therefore, in the incidental FonF, the linguistic forms are not selected in advance, instead they arise naturally in the performance of a communicative task. In addition, the planned FonF uses a 'focused task' to provide a context for its use, whereas the incidental FonF uses unfocused tasks. Further, in the planned FonF, an intensive attention to the selected linguistic features is applied (i.e., attention is directed repeatedly at the same feature over a period of time), whereas in the incidental FonF, an extensive attention to form is usually applied (i.e., it is directed at a variety of different linguistic features, mostly with no repetition). Moreover, the incidental FonF involves two types of instruction: pre-emptive and reactive. Nassaji and Fotos (2011) indicate that the former requires dedicating some time in the communicative tasks to explain language forms that are

expected to cause learning problems. The latter, reactive instruction, is about the teacher's response to student errors.

Similarly, Doughty and Williams (1998) distinguish the activities involved in FonF in terms of the extent to which FonF interrupts the flow of information, be it unobtrusive or obtrusive. The former, unobtrusive, is formed by the input flood and task-essential language, whereas the latter, obtrusive, is constituted by consciousness raising and input processing. Another aspect that these types of form differ in is the type of attention involved, reactive or proactive. Tasks that involve FonF will require the use of reactive techniques that bring out attention to form. In contrast, consciousness-raising activities are proactive because they emphasize features that learners are explicitly made aware of.

2.7 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I illustrated the rise of TBLT in the field of L2 learning and teaching, its premises, foundations and the main language teaching projects that contributed to its rise and prominence (e.g., Prabhu's project and US government language institutions). I also reviewed the various definitions of the construct of 'task', and how approaching the study of task from different theoretical perspectives contributes to understanding TBLT. The three reported perspectives in this chapter were the discourse/interaction perspective, the cognitive perspective, and the sociocultural perspective. The interaction perspective proposes that with more opportunities for negotiation, the greater the likelihood of acquisition. Namely, it suggests that acquisition is promoted by: (1) the comprehensible input resulting from segmentation and decomposition of input; (2) the feedback that learners receive; and

(3) the reformulation of learners' output. The cognitive perspective explains how TBLT enhances language learning by focusing on the three aspects of learner's performance: fluency, accuracy, and complexity. The sociocultural perspective posits that learning occurs as a result of the interaction that learners are engaged in.

In addition, I discussed TBLT and FonF from the perspective of sociocultural learning theory. TBLT is one of the methods effectively used in the FonF approach. It involves authentic use of the target language through various types of tasks that aim to promote fluency, accuracy, and complexity. It emphasizes both L2 form and meaning and involves students in situations that require them to use the language used in real-life settings. Learners within this teaching paradigm are aware of meaning and use of language features before the form is brought to their attention. SCT explains how human mental activity is mediated. Mediation develops through internalization that results from socially constructed activities, instruction, development, and assessment, and how this ultimately results in learning.

As can be seen, TBLT is now well established and many language teachers around the world are moving towards TBLT in which learners compete for both meaning and structure in order to develop their L2 to communicate effectively and successfully. There is also now a worldwide interest in implementing and understanding TBLT based on SCT in language classrooms as an alternative methodology for traditional methods of teaching. Accordingly, the following two chapters will be devoted to reviewing the applications of TBLT and FonF in international and regional (Gulf Region) contexts, respectively, in order to provide context for the current study.

Chapter 3: Applications of Task-based Language Teaching and Focus on Form

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and reviews international and regional studies that have focused primarily on the application of TBLT. The aim is to examine how FonF is considered in research conducted in this context. As illustrated above (Chapter 2, section 2.6), FonF has been one of the major distinguishing characteristics of the TBLT approach because, unlike previous approaches to L2 learning and teaching (which have typically either focused on form at the expense of content, or vice versa), it enables learners to focus on the linguistic forms and structures in a communicatively and content-oriented setting. No wonder, then, that TBLT has been widely researched in the last 10 to 15 years through the concept of FonF. This chapter will therefore be devoted to reviewing research into the construct of FonF in an intact classroom environment, either as a major or minor variable, in TBLT contexts. I will look at how TBLT and FonF together are being researched and implemented in various international and regional settings by reviewing some of the major studies in different contexts. For each study, I will summarize its goal or focus, methodology, and main findings. Then, I will make an overall summary and evaluation of the studies conducted internationally and regionally. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the research questions that will guide the current study.

3.2 Previous Studies on TBLT and FonF in International Settings

Ellis, Basturkmen, and Loewen (2001) investigated the nature of FonF in communicative ESL classrooms. Ellis et al. examined learner uptake in incidental and

transitory focus on form episodes by exploring the features of FonF that influence learner uptake, as well as the success of uptake. Two school classes in Auckland, New Zealand, each consisting of 12 students of different nationalities taught by two different teachers, were involved in the study. One class was of intermediate level and the other of pre-intermediate level. The instruction was structured in two different parts divided by a break: (1) in the first, the students were taught traditionally focusing mainly on forms; and (2) in the second, they were taught communicatively, and this was the part where the episodes of FonF were examined. The interaction between the teacher and the students and between the students themselves were recorded and transcribed. The researchers identified focus on form episodes (FFEs) and coded them from different perspectives. First, FFEs were classified based on the type as responding to language-related episodes (LREs), student-initiated LREs, or teacher-initiated LREs. Second, they were also coded based on four characteristics: (1) source (i.e., communicational or linguistic problem); (2) complexity (i.e., simple involving a single change or complex involving several changes); (4) directness (i.e., direct and resolved explicitly by prompts or indirectly requiring recast, request for clarification, repeat, and elicit solution); and (5) linguistic focus (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, spelling, discourse, and pronunciation). Another issue considered in the study was uptake (i.e., when the student notices a gap in his/her proficiency and repairs the linguistic problem or demonstrates an understanding of an item). The uptake moves were identified and coded. Different types of FFEs involved different types of uptake moves. For example, the responding FFEs involved acknowledge, repair and need for repair uptake, whereas the student– and teacher-initiated FFEs involved recognize, apply, and need for application.

Ellis et al. found that the overall amount of uptake was generally high and successful, with a total of 448 FFEs in 12 hours of communicative teaching. Further, in terms of the amount of uptake in the three types of FFEs, results showed that the uptake in reactive FFEs and in student-initiated FFEs was higher and more successful than in teacher-initiated FFEs. Further, the results showed that the amount of uptake was influenced by two factors: (1) negotiation of meaning or form; and (2) the complexity of an episode. The study also found that FonF can occur without disturbing the flow of communication in the class, and that the context of the classroom influences the amount of uptake.

Park (2010) examined the effects of pre-task instructions and planning on focus on form, lexical or grammatical language-related episodes (LREs) during task-based interaction. Six classes comprising110 Korean EFL intermediate undergraduate learners (80 women and 30 men) studying an English conversation course at a South Korean university were engaged in the study. Each class was divided into two groups and were asked to complete two oral picture narrative tasks over two weeks, the period of the study, under four conditions: specific instruction with pre-task planning; specific instruction without pre-task planning; general instruction with planning; and general instruction without planning. The general instruction involved general description of the task, whereas the specific instruction had specific description of certain things in the task (i.e., content, organization, vocabulary, or grammar). Further, the planning time was 10 minutes before the task interaction but the non-planners had no planning time before the task. Students were assigned to one of the four conditions randomly. The syntactic focus was defined by learners' talk about lexis and the morphosyntactic focus was defined by learners' discussion about syntax or morphology while they were

doing the task. The two tasks were based on six picture strips. Students were asked to work in pairs and tell the story out loud without writing as if the other students had not seen the pictures. Their interaction while performing the retelling interaction task was audio-recorded. After they finished, they were asked to complete a survey.

The researcher classified LREs based on the targeted linguistic form as either lexis or morphosyntax, following William (1999). Lexical LREs consisted of learners' talk about definition, word form, (oral) spelling, pronunciation, preposition choice, idiomatic/formulaic, or how to express meaning (i.e., 'how do you say this?'). The morphosyntactic LREs included any focus on morphology or syntax (i.e., word order, agreement, article, tense choice, or omission of verbs). Students' recorded interaction was transcribed and coded. In the analysis stage, a number of tests and measures were used to ensure the normality and homogeneity of the data. Results showed that learners focused on vocabulary regardless of the pre-task instruction types and planning availability. Learners produced the same number and kinds of LREs no matter how or if they had the chance to plan or not. Further, in terms of the main effects of instruction types, learners in both the general and specific instruction groups produced more lexical than morphosyntactic LREs. Similarly, for the main effects of planning, the planners and non-planners produced significantly more lexical than morphosyntactic LREs. Finally, with regard to the interactional effect between the pre-task instruction and planning, the results showed that, in terms of the lexical LREs, the general non-planners produced the highest lexical LREs, followed by the general planners, then the specific non-planners, and finally the specific planners. However, regarding the morphosyntactic LREs, the specific non-planners were the highest, followed by the specific planners, then the general planners, and finally, the general non-planners.

Accordingly, although learners produced more lexical LREs regardless of the instruction type and planning availability, those in the specific instruction groups produced more morphosyntactic LREs.

Li (2010) researched the effects that result from post-task transcribing activities and task practice on the oral performance of Chinese undergraduate students learning English as a foreign language. Ninety-six participants (41 females, 55 males) were divided randomly into five experimental groups and one control group (without post-task) were involved in the study for four weeks. The experimental groups were assigned four different post-task activities of two types: a narrative task, and a decision-making task. Each week they performed a task, either a narrative or decision-making, and then post-task transcribing. The post-task transcribing was performed individually or in pairs. The control group did not receive any post-task activities. Before the study, all participants underwent an English proficiency test to determine their proficiency. Students were met five times a week. While the first time in the week was devoted to the orientation of the task procedure and the basic transcribing skills, the other four occasions were devoted to the main study procedure. In order to see the long-term effect of the post-task activities and task practice on learners' performance, the researcher adopted two narrative tasks and two decision-making tasks to test the real performance, and one of each type for task training in the orientation period. In the narrative task, students were asked to retell a story after watching a *Tom and Jerry* cartoon video. A number of retelling strategies were used in terms of story comprehension, discourse organization, and selection of the language. After that, the researcher introduced a sample narrative task. Finally, the students were given two minutes to plan and then describe the story to the recorder. In contrast, in the decision-

making task, the participants were given a problem letter about a boy who was excellent at both physics and badminton. The students were given two minutes to plan for the best advice for the boy's future with their performance again being recorded. Students were asked to transcribe their own performance recordings. The different groups were given different post-task transcribing activities. After that, students were asked to revise their transcripts in two ways: (1) to correct any mistakes in the original transcripts related to spelling, lexical errors, morphological and grammatical errors, collocation problems and content misunderstandings; and (2) modifying the transcripts by adding something that should be said or replacing expressions with better opinions. Students were not allowed to use dictionaries or other references.

Student performance was measured on four dimensions: complexity, accuracy, fluency, and lexical performance. For each construct, a number of measures were used. For example, accuracy was measured by the percentage of error-free clauses and the errors per 100 words, and complexity was measured by the number of clauses per analysis of speech unit (AS-unit). In terms of accuracy, results showed that post-task transcription had a positive effect on accuracy on both task types. Further, in respect of the syntactic complexity and lexical sophistication, a limited effect of post-task transcribing was found on the narrative task. However, in the decision-making task, a supportive role of post-task transcribing activities was found for complexity. Similarly, students' performance in the decision-making task, in terms of the lexical sophistication, was higher than that for the narrative task and the control group. Further, in terms of fluency and lexical diversity, there was no significant post-task effect on students' performance of both task types. The researcher indicated that finding no effect on fluency was not surprising because fluency as a measure of

meaning processing was not a major concern in FonF research. Additionally, the trade-off between meaning (fluency) and form (accuracy and complexity) makes it reasonable that FonF activity had no effect on the meaning part of task performance. Viewed from another perspective, in regard to the effects of task practice and task type on learners' performance, the control group was engaged in a number of task practices but no significant improvement was noted in terms of the syntactic aspects of task performance. In contrast, the treatment groups that received task practice and post-task practice showed an improvement on lexical performance and lexical sophistication in which learners used a variety of different and infrequent words at both tasks. Finally, task type had an effect in this study in that the decision-making task promoted more accurate and fluent language than the narrative task. However, in terms of complexity, while participants in the decision-making task produced more clauses but shorter ones, they produced longer but simple sentences in the narrative task.

Uysal (2010) investigated the effectiveness of two types of reconstruction tasks: dictogloss and text reconstruction tasks on directing students' attention to form within a TBLT-based context[2]. Both tasks were shown by previous literature to be

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[2] Dictogloss and text reconstruction tasks are two types of reconstruction tasks. The dictogloss task requires learners to reconstruct a text after they have listened to it from the teacher (Thornbury, 1997). It is a new form of dictation developed first by Wajnryb in order to draw students' attention to form (1990). Wajnryb (1990) defines dictogloss task as "a contemporary approach to learning grammar in which language forms, structures, and patterns, are treated from the perspective of their particular contextual meaning" (p. 13). The task leads to a better understanding of how grammar works in a text-based task. It allows the students to use their productive grammar to create the text and identify what they are unable to do in language that triggers internalization process in language learning. It is differentiated from the standard dictation where the students write exactly what the teacher says. Similar to the dictogloss task, text reconstruction task aims to direct students' attention to form but they differ in the nature of the stimulus given to the students. It is audio in the dictogloss task whereby the student reconstruct the text they listened to using their notes. In contrast, it is written in nature in dictation whereby the student reconstructs the text given a coherent text containing content words with most of the grammatical features are removed (Storch, 2008).

effective in making the students focus on form while maintaining text-meaning connections. The study aimed to explore which task provides the students with more opportunities to notice the problematic aspects of their interlanguage. To do so, the researcher focused on three issues: (1) the amount of attention to form the two tasks generate based on the number of language-related episodes (LREs); (2) the type of LREs that the students focus on while performing each grammar-based episodes, meaning-based episodes, or orthographic episodes; and (3) the interactivity of both tasks based on episodes generated on both, interactive or non-interactive.

The study was conducted on Turkish EFL learners who were taught following a traditional model of teaching (i.e., PPP) with limited opportunities for output (writing or speaking) during the lessons. Consequently, the students did not have the chance to notice the areas of their weaknesses that ultimately aim to promote a development in their interlanguage. After a training that lasted for two weeks, 10 pairs of Turkish EFL learners in 12th grade were asked to complete one of the two tasks. Their performance was audio recorded and analyzed as LREs.

In a different mode of application, Abdolmanafi (2012) investigated the effects of three different types of L2 instruction (i.e., FonFs, FonM, and FonF) on the learning of English relative clauses (RCs). Relative clauses are clauses that start with relative pronouns (e.g., who, whom, that, which, whose, where) that define or identify the noun that precedes them. He also explored whether learners' metalinguistic awareness of specific L2 forms, RCs, facilitates acquisition. The researcher conducted his study at Sari Azad University in Iran on 88 Persian learners of English. Participants were divided randomly into three groups receiving different forms of instruction. An experimental design was used in this study and the researcher was the instructor for

the three groups and all sessions. The participants had three types of tests: one proficiency test a day before the pre-test, one pre-test a day before the instruction, and one post-test a day after the instruction. The proficiency test was carried out to ensure the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups. All participants were provided with presentation of the target form for four days before the pre-test. Then they were pre-tested. The pre-test involved two types of elicitation tasks of a sentences combining test (SCT) and a grammaticality judgment test (GJT) to measure the accuracy of the target form. The SCT included 20 sets of two sentences that could be combined into one sentence by using any type of RC. However, the GJT consisted of 24 sentences, of which 12 were ungrammatical; the students had to identify them to reveal what was lacking in their interlanguage. The pre-test was followed by four treatment sessions in which each group was taught following a different type of instruction, FonFs, FonM, and FonF. After that, a post-test consisting of the same tests was conducted to examine the progress the students made during the treatment sessions. Findings showed improvement in all three groups with the FonF group making the most improvement, followed by FonFs, and then the FonM for both the SCT and the GJT. Results also showed that learners' attention to detailed analysis of form structures facilitated the comprehension and production of RCs, which speaks to the importance of the type of instruction in the acquisition of the target form.

Chan (2012) examined how TBLT could be enacted in primary ESL classrooms in Hong Kong, focusing mainly on the qualitative differences that may result from novice teachers' management of the linguistic, cognitive, and interactional demands of tasks. The study examined how teachers manage the three types of task demands (linguistic, cognitive, and interactional) with reference to the way teachers

differ in the design and implementation of the tasks. Understanding the demands of the task was important for teachers in order to design tasks that suit learners' skills and needs. The three types of demands were interrelated and implicit in a way which made it difficult for teachers to address and make choices.

The researcher indicated that the demands could be adjusted by increasing or decreasing one type over another in the task. She adopted her own analytical framework on task demand to examine how these demands were managed by teachers at pre–, while–, and post-task stages and how teachers organize the tasks in the way that serves as scaffolding in the task implementation. The researcher managed the linguistic complexity by either the nature of input (i.e., the provision of visual support, context dependency, familiarity of information, frequency of occurrence, and recycling) or nature of expected outcome (i.e., medium, scope, and complexity). The cognitive complexity was managed by either establishing familiarity of topic, discourse, or by genre and type of the task. This was done by activating background knowledge, providing foregrounding, or grading the new knowledge from simple to complex, from concrete to abstract, and so on. Another way of managing the cognitive demand was by creating conditions for noticing and restructuring. Noticing was activated by the use of a set of strategies, such as guessing from context, studying the word parts, making predictions, and forming associations. Restructuring took place when learners were involved in the use of TL in different contexts. In contrast, the interactional demand was managed by either the communicative stress or task characteristics. While the former contained interactional relationship (i.e., one-way or two-way) and interactional requirement (i.e., required v. optional), the latter covered goal orientation, convergent v. divergent and outcome options (i.e., closed v. open).

Chan (2012) used a multiple-case study approach. Four teachers were involved in the study covering 20 lessons on the same topic, 'Weather.' Five lessons for each teacher were observed and videotaped. She based her data-collection framework on Skehan (1998) but with modifications and extensions from other work in the literature (Candlin, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2003). Chan collected data using three methods: (1) lesson observations of classroom teaching with the lessons being recorded; (2) semi-structured interviews with teachers; and (3) documentations (i.e., lesson plans, teaching materials, and students' work). She used four tasks throughout the study. The first task asked the students to work in pairs and write rhymes about weather change and clothes worn in each season and illustrate that by drawing pictures. The second one asked the students to work individually and make the booklet. The third one, asked the students to write a new ending for a story by suggesting ways of keeping warm. Lastly, the fourth one asked the students to write a four-line poem about their favorite poem, similar to the one in the textbook.

Data was analyzed as follows: classroom observations with field notes and classroom discourse data were video-recorded and transcribed. The interviews with teachers were held before and after the unit taught. Stimulated recall in which teachers during the interviews were asked to comment on what was happening at the time that the teaching and learning took place by looking at their lesson plans and transcriptions, and students' work. Although the textbooks used were task-based, teachers adapted some materials to suit the abilities and needs of their learners. The curriculum officially recommended the notion of TBLT and teachers were expected to design activities that led to the development of both communicative and linguistic competence.

Chan (2012) found that teachers differed in enacting TBLT in their classes along six dimensions:

- Strategic use of visual support to manage task demands

- Contextualizing input to make connections between new and old knowledge

- Simultaneous attention to task demands for progression in complexity

- Provision of scaffolding through task sequencing and adjustment of task variables

- Creating conditions for noticing form and salient features, and

- Creating conditions for restructuring to occur.

Moore (2012) investigated the incidence and effectiveness of learner-generated FonF in task-based learner-learner interaction in an EFL classroom in Japan. His three research questions were:

- To what extent do learners focus on form?

- What links are there between LREs in interaction and subsequent individual task performance? and

- To what extent, if any, contextual socio-cognitive features (i.e., intersubjectivity, pedagogic roles, and task control) of interaction influence the amount and effectiveness of FonF?

Four undergraduate, second-year students in a humanities college taking an oral presentation course with their partners were involved in the study. The total number of participants was eight (six males and two females). They were all of an intermediate proficiency level and aged 19 to 33. The class was offered once a week for 25 weeks over two semesters for 1.5 hours a week.

The researcher used small analogue tape recorders and video recorders, and transcribed interactions to collect data. Two oral presentation tasks separated by seven months were conducted. In the first, students were involved in a 10-minute biographical presentation. In the second presentation, students were involved in a 10 to 15-minute presentation on a topic of their choice that ranged from history of boxing to fast food. Data were collected for interaction, performance, and reflection from both presentations through three stages: (1) interaction data was collected from the classroom using small tape recorders; (2) each dyad practiced their oral presentation in front of one or two other dyads and the presentations were audio and video recorded; and (3) directly after recording their second presentation, learners listened to their recordings to identify errors in grammar, lexis and pronunciation.

To measure the effect of context, Moore conducted a microanalysis of one learner's interaction with partners of similar proficiency on two similar tasks, separated by seven months. Further, he highlighted the individual and dialogically negotiated features. The qualitative analysis drew on previous analysis of intersubjectivity, pedagogic roles, and task control. The intersubjectivity items included repetitions, requests, collaborative completions, phatic utterances ('um', 'ah', etc.), acknowledgment agreement, and the use of third person pronoun in the transcribed interaction. The researcher did some written self-evaluations to explore learners' experiences towards task-based interaction with their partners and peers, as well as their awareness of their own language performance.

Data were analyzed statistically by categorizing and coding the descriptive data, and qualitatively by transcribing the interaction and reflecting on the observed

data. The descriptive analysis consisted of counts of LREs in interaction, counts of LRE forms used in oral presentation tasks and whether they were target-like or non-target like, and supporting contextual data related to share of talk in interaction and the use of L1. The qualitative analyses covered the interaction data (22 transcripts in total), with mainly the emergent focus of learners classified as *procedural* (e.g., talk about how to complete the task)*, content creation* (talk about content matter that will comprise the oral presentation)*,* and *off task* (talk unrelated to the task at hand). The findings from the quantitative analysis revealed little focus on form in interaction and much variability across dyads in terms of the number and focus of the LREs they were engaged in. However, the qualitative analysis revealed that the effectiveness of FonF in improving task performance was influenced by various factors, including learners' shared background (including L1 use), individual differences in terms of engagement in LREs, learners' perceptions of each other's language proficiency, and other interpersonally negotiated features of the interaction.

Finally, Braaksma, Rijlaarsdam, Guchte, and Bimmel (2015) did a study on the effects of recasts and prompts on learning two different grammatical structures in a TBLT-based context. Sixty-four 14-year-old 9th grade students of a low-to-intermediate level who were learning German as a foreign language were randomly assigned to three groups taught by three different teachers: an experimental group receiving recast (n=20), an experimental group receiving prompts (n=21), and a control group following the form-focused regular curriculum (n=23). Two new German grammar structures that differ in difficulty and relatedness to the L1 (Dutch language) were targeted in the study: dative case after a preposition of place and comparatives. The researchers examined four main issues: the positive effect of recasts

and prompts on the accuracy of new grammar structures, the effective type of corrective feedback, type of the structure and the effectiveness of the corrective feedback technique, and whether there was a negative effect of students' focus on accuracy or their oral fluency. To observe the effect of corrective feedback on facilitating learning, the researchers chose structures unfamiliar to the students. They also chose one complex structure, the dative case after a preposition of place, and another simple, comparatives, to examine the interaction of prompts and recasts with a complex and a simple structure that also differ in their relatedness to L1. The prompt was given by the teacher in two ways: (1) provision of metalinguistic feedback on the student's false utterance; and (2) elicitation of the correct answer. The recast was given by the teacher by reformulating the student's false utterance without the error.

Two tasks, each focusing on a particular grammatical structure, were considered for the treatment groups, and each lasted three weeks. In task one, the students worked in pairs to design a room of their dreams following the TBLT framework (per–, main–, and post-task phases). While in the pre-task the students were introduced to the vocabulary they would need in the task. In the task phase they were asked to describe the room and draw it on paper. In the post-task, they were asked to present their description. Task two required the students to compare two products and, as with task one, following TBLT framework, students first chose the vocabulary, did the comparison, and presented it orally. During the pre– and main-task phases, teachers provided the students with one or two feedback moments per lesson. Students' presentation on both tasks were evaluated by using a scale ranging from 1 to 10 (low to high).

Three tests were carried out throughout the study, a pre-test, an immediate post-test, and a delayed post-test. All included written and oral accuracy, as well as oral fluency. The immediate and delayed post-tests examined the effect of the two variables, the target structure and feedback type. During the examining period, the experimental groups worked for one hour a week on the treatment tasks and in the remaining time they either read a book or practiced listening skills but without any grammar instruction or feedback. In contrast, the control group worked for one hour in their textbook doing written exercises on the two target structures and in the other hour they did reading and listening activities. All were observed. The observations revealed that no difference in treatment except with regard to the feedback type. Additionally, the means of the number of feedback moments per student revealed that students received more feedback on the dative form than on the comparative form because they had more errors there.

After performing statistical comparisons of both written and oral post-tests, the researchers found that recast and prompts were effective, compared to the control group, and with the students who received prompts outperforming those of recast treatment. These findings confirmed earlier research on the effects of recasts compared to prompts on the type and relatedness of the structure. For written accuracy, recasts had a larger effect for comparatives than dative, compared to prompts. However, for oral fluency, recasts were more effective for the dative task than for the comparative. The investigators concluded that prompts can work effectively for both complex and simple structures. Further, the more the structure related to L1, the easier the students noticed the recasts in which they could easily compare the target-like structure with

their false utterance and thereby promote acquisition. Finally, the attention to accuracy came at the expense of fluency in complex structures.

3.3 Previous Studies on TBLT and FonF in the Gulf Region

Sheehan (2005) used concordance analysis tasks within a TBLT framework to replace teacher's explanations of problematic language related to learners' questions about meaning, collocation, appropriacy or structural patterns of certain language forms (e.g., pay v. cost, the meaning of 'just,' meaning of 'due to') with a learner-teacher investigation of concordance samples of real language. The aim was to see to what extent samples of real language could answer both the teacher's and learners' questions. The methodology used was 'a discovery-type process' and the students were intermediate-level students studying business at the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) in the UAE. The researcher used the Collins Cobuild Concordance Sampler (COBUILD, 2000), a computer-based corpus, as a source for his data. This corpus provided banks of stored language where learners searched and discovered the regularities in the language they were studying. When this corpus was organized into a systematic format, it provided concordance lines that formed the source of material for the task-based framework where learners explored and induced meanings.

Sheehan used J. Willis's (1996) task-based learning (TBL) framework for structuring, planning the research, and reporting the findings. Accordingly, students performed a variety of communicative tasks to transfer from one stage to another in the framework. The TBL framework consists of three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and the report cycle. In the first stage, learners were exposed to a number of collocations, words, and phrases that occurred in the concordances which they wanted to explore.

First, the teacher discussed the specific language problem with the students. Then, he showed them a sample concordance for that word or phrase, either by listening to a recording of peers (usually more advanced learners) discussing the same concordance or asking the students questions to grasp their attention to certain aspects of the precise meaning or form of a linguistic item. In the task cycle phase, the researcher asked the students to work in groups. He gave them different samples of concordance lines to work out and required them to compare their findings after they have finished (on the first occasion the sample was the same for all groups). He exchanged the group members to allow building a bigger picture of the sample in each group. Learners in their new groups prepared a report on what they found out about the word and presented the report to the class. In the last stage, based on the presentations, the students asked questions if they noticed any differences between what was presented and their findings. Finally, all of the groups reached a consensus and wrote a summary report of the discovery procedure for future students to use. The teacher also evaluated selected language items to focus on, based on his observation during the reporting stage.

The teacher and the students worked collaboratively using a Collins Cobuild Concordance Sampler. Sheehan argued that the rationale behind his methodology of the participants co-investigating with him was to avoid the fleeting impression of the ready-made answers. Another reason was engaging the students actively in the process of research to increase their focus and attention, as he noticed, as well as providing them with a rich language learning experience. Sheehan explored terms such as due to, pay v. cost, do v. make, etc. Later, some phrasal verbs such as look for, look after, and look were also investigated. The researcher explored collocations such as hush-

hush, both as a noun and adjective, and lastly he sought to find the difference between written and spoken language. However, the main focus was directed to the 'due + preposition' form.

The researcher found that the term 'due to' occurred in 25 of 40 instances and it could be used to label either cause (e.g., due to the effect of global warming) or time (e.g., he had been due to fly). Besides, the researcher noticed that 'due' may be separated from the preposition 'to'. Accordingly, he and his students searched and listed limited phrases that can be internalized between 'due' and 'to' (e.g., 'in the main,' 'up to the point,' etc.). Sheehan also suggested that some phrases should be classified as fixed expressions (e.g., 'to give him his due'). Results also showed that 'due at' referred to place or time. However, 'due for' must be followed by a noun or noun phrase. The researcher extended students' focus from meaning to form. For instance, they found that 'due to' occurred with active verbs 10 out of 26 times and with passive verbs six times.

The same applied to the other words and phrases explored. Students had the opportunity to look at concordances for various words, verbs, and phrases, which enabled them to identify the regularities of the searched items as a result of exploring samples of real language through a series of communicative tasks within a task-based research process. The TBL framework provided learners with both structure and principles for doing the tasks. The participants' primary focus through the task fulfillment stages was discovery and meaning negotiation. In general, Sheehan was satisfied with what his participants were able to do, a few preferred the teacher to simply answer the questions for them. He realized that the better ways participants

developed noticing, questioning, and rationalizing language features, the better the exploration of concordances they undertook. In addition, the Cobuild corpus offered 40 free occurrences of the searched item in a British written corpus, 40 in the British spoken corpus, and another 40 in the American written corpus, bringing the total of displayed occurrences to 120 lines. This allowed the students to explore some differences between written and spoken language and it provided them with sufficient authentic data for their explorations.

Amin (2009) investigated the effect of TBLT on enhancing student proficiency and oral performance in English language, compared to traditional methods of teaching. Namely, he targeted exploring the effect of TBLT on students' fluency, accuracy, and their attitudes. He also wanted to identify teachers' and students' behaviors and strategies in the classroom where TBLT was being implemented, as very little was known about this aspect. First, Amin distributed 300 feedback surveys to three groups of respondents (students, subject teachers, and English teachers) at Umm Al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia. The survey included five essay questions intended to seek information about students' perception of their English proficiency in general, their perception of their English in their specific fields of study, what motivated them to learn English, reasons for their proficiency weaknesses, and finally their opinions about ways of improving weaknesses. The researcher chose to conduct the survey in Arabic to ensure students' understanding of the given questions, to make the students at ease while responding, and to help them to express their ideas freely. Of the total 300 surveys, 24 were not analyzed due to missing answers to some or all questions.

The researcher found that both students and teachers classified their the students' command of English proficiency as weak (71% of the students evaluated themselves as weak, 18% as very weak, only 7% as good, and 2% as very good). In contrast, in regard to the students' subject-specific proficiency, 36% identified themselves as weak or very weak and 61% as good or very good. However, most teachers of both English and subjects evaluated the students as weak in the subject-specific proficiency of students. Results also indicated that students were motivated to learn English (71% were very motivated and 20% were motivated). In regard to reasons for their weaknesses, most students (62%) said they lacked the communication skills to enable them to communicate in and outside the classroom. Only a few mentioned that such weakness could be traced back to a lack of teacher qualification, lack of motivation (1%), materials not being relevant to their specialization fields (7%), and a shortage of English courses (4%). However, the teachers claimed that the students' weaknesses resulted from lack of motivation (43%), a late start of learning English (36%), and the lack of English use, especially outside the classroom (27%). Ways of improvement were suggested by the students and their teachers such as greater use of English, better provision of English courses, and starting English learning at an early age.

After the feedback survey showed the students' dissatisfaction with the grammar courses being run at the University of Umm Al-Qura, Amin involved 283 lower-intermediate second-year male science students studying English for science as a compulsory course at the university in his study. Students were divided into eight groups: four classes (145 students) taught following TBLT instruction over three months and four (138 students) taught following grammar-based instruction over the

same period. The teaching was done by the researcher for all the participating groups. Both groups were following exactly the same program and curriculum, but differed only in the way each was taught. One class from each group was chosen for observation. Observations and fieldnotes for both the control and the experimental groups kept a record of the content being taught as well as students' gradual progress throughout the period. The course textbook, *Learn English for Science*, was used for both the control and experimental groups. The control group was taught traditionally with a series of exercises that emphasize mainly the reading skill, while the experimental group followed Jane Willis's (1996) TBL framework in three main stages (pre-task, task cycle, and post-task cycle) that promote fluency (as an overall focus) and accuracy (in the planning and report stages). Students in the control group were given the textbook, but those in the experimental group were not, instead they were given copies of the units on the day of the lesson. In the pre-task stage, students were asked about what they knew already about the topic. While they were answering, the teacher listed the main vocabulary. Then, in the task-cycle stage, students were asked to sit in groups of six students, read the topic, and discuss its vocabulary. Finally, in the language focus stage, they were asked to write a summary/report about the topic, exchange reports, and answer four questions concerning the vocabulary and grammar of the topic.

The two groups were pre-tested and post-tested using the preliminary English test (PET), an intermediate-level examination that assesses students' proficiency level using various measurements for fluency, accuracy, and complexity. The PET may be carried out by displaying a picture for the students and asking them to describe it. For instance, to evaluate fluency, the number of words per minute, as well as the number

of pauses for one to two seconds by each student, are analyzed and calculated. The number of verbs and multi-verbs were used to examine accuracy and the number of clauses, independent or subordinate clauses were used to assess complexity. The test allowed the students to speak for three minutes but only one minute was analyzed due to the large number of samples. Furthermore, since the study was conducted on a formal course, the students undertook an official written final examination that comprises 60% of their final grade. It focused mainly on students' grammatical knowledge and was divided into three parts: reading comprehension, writing, and grammar. Papers were marked by the researcher and checked twice for reliability. Results of the PET, together with the final exam, were used to compare the two groups. After the final examination, students were engaged in an evaluation survey to determine their attitudes towards the course.

To evaluate the differences between the control and the experimental groups, Amin analyzed the four measures used in the study: the final examination scores, oral pre-test scores, recorded classroom observations, and the evaluation survey. With the final examination, the researcher found that there was a significant difference in students' scores between the traditionally-taught control groups and the TBLT-taught experimental groups. Results showed that 40% of the students in the control group obtained results between A and B, compared to 55% of the students in the experimental group. In addition, 27% of the control group students were awarded D, compared to only 15% of the TBLT students of the same grade. Results of the oral pre– and post-tests indicated that both groups enhanced their proficiency; however, the TBLT students achieved higher scores on the basis of the assigned measures (i.e., word count, unrepeated word count, pause count, t-unit count, verb count, multi-word/verb count).

Further, the recorded classroom observations were analyzed from three perspectives: the use of class time according to the COLT (communication orientation of language teaching) scheme, teacher behavior, and students' behavior. While the latter two were analyzed using focused description analysis of their behaviors, the former gave a detailed picture of what was going on in the class and indicated how much time was given to each part of the lesson. Analysis of the COLT scheme revealed that the grammar-based class was full of activities directed by the teacher and the teaching content was determined by either the teacher or the textbook. In the TBLT class, more than half of the time was devoted to students working in groups doing much of the work, as well as having control over the content taught to them.

Jasim (2011) investigated the attitudes of EFL instructors towards the potential of TBLT in their language classes. Specifically, the study aimed to investigate the understanding of instructors of the basic principles and aspects of tasks and TBLT. It also targeted highlighting the obstacles, concerns, and opinions of instructors in regard to choosing or avoiding the implementation of TBLT, as well as discovering the extent to which TBLT could be successfully implemented in the UAE context. This study took place in a government vocational school in the UAE. Twelve teachers were involved in the study: seven were Arabs, three Indians, and two English. Jasim first used consciousness-raising presentations to increase the participants' awareness of TBLT features. He conducted two one-hour presentations with the participants to help them better understand TBLT. In the first presentation, he explained the theoretical background of TBLT and how it differed from the traditional ways of teaching which focus on grammar and accuracy. In the second presentation, he provided the participating teachers with guidance on developing and using TBLT materials and

explaining how the TBLT principles came into play through teaching these materials by demonstrating a sample TBLT lesson. Group discussion followed both presentations. Most of the discussion centered around concepts such as the link between TBLT and communicative language teaching (CLT), task v. exercise, and task cycle. The teachers were also interested in the practical aspects of the teaching method and how this educational framework differed from traditional methods. After the second presentation, teachers were asked to complete a survey. The survey was given to them to investigate three matters: their attitudes towards the potential of TBLT in their classes; their understanding of TBLT; and whether or not they thought that they would be able to implement it in their classes. The survey consisted of statements about the benefits and challenges of TBLT for both language teachers and language students. The statements of benefits and challenges were based on Carless's (2009) research with EFL instructors who applied TBLT in their classes and reported on their experiences. Further, the survey included three types of questions: demographic, scaled, and open-ended.

Two teachers from the 12 participants were selected to implement TBLT in their classes. Accordingly, the researcher designed two lessons for the purpose of practical implementation of TBLT. Each teacher was observed once using an observation log that contained a checklist covering the three stages in the TBLT lesson. The two teachers were also interviewed and audio-recorded. The aim was to identify the benefits and challenges that teachers face when implementing TBLT in their classes.

The results showed a variety of attitudes towards the potential of TBLT especially on the part of the participating teachers. It revealed that the attitudes of the surveyed participants towards TBLT were negative for four reasons not directly related to the potential of TBLT to promote language learning. These included: lack of familiarity with TBLT as a framework of teaching; unfamiliarity with task design; negative perceptions by supervisors; and students' preference for explicit grammar teaching. In contrast, the results showed that instructors who implemented the framework had positive attitudes towards the potential of TBLT, as they observed their students participating more in the class and used the target language more due to the purposes of the tasks. Further, such experience promoted the importance of employing communicative tasks in classroom instruction. Teachers stated that their experience with TBLT was more interesting than their usual form-focused work and that they found it rewarding as it gave them opportunity to get hands-on practice with TBLT that efficiently engaged the students in the learning process. They also indicated that TBLT instruction required less teaching as the student worked on the given tasks for most of the class time.

In regard to TBLT in technology-mediated context, Balanyk (2013) investigated the effect of using iPads to increase the motivation and engagement of false beginner level students with the lowest common educational proficiency assessment (CEPA) English scores in the foundation English language program at three settings in the UAE: Zayed University; Higher Colleges of Technology; and United Arab Emirates University. For the purpose of the study, instructors in the three institutions were encouraged to use iPad-based activities and the task-based learning

framework in designing the activity, with the iPad being used in every phase and stage of the lesson.

Three classes of beginner female students, each containing 20 participants, were involved in the study. The verb 'be' was the targeted structure and the students were required to use it in providing personal details in the present tense with first, second, and third persons, as well as forming questions using the same structure and tense. Previous lessons had focused on the same linguistic point but without using the iPad. The lesson was applied based on Jane Willis's (1996) framework that consists of three stages (pre-task, the task, and post-task cycles). In the pre-task phase, the students were introduced to the task by presenting them with a fictional interview with David Beckham, a famous British football player. The interview was recorded using the SoundNote app. Then the teacher provided them with an example of a report about David Beckham that was prepared using a keynote presentation and based totally on the information given in the interview. After that, the teacher showed the students a fill-in-gap activity where they used Pages software to form the questions that would be used during the task. In the final section of the pre-task phase, the teacher asked the student to choose a celebrity and search for its personal details using the Wikipedia application on their iPads.

After searching, in the task phase, the students completed the task by working in pairs and interviewing each other, with one playing the role of the interviewer and the other the famous person who answered the questions based on the information researched in the pre-task phase. Using the same applications, the interview was recorded, transcribed, and a report based on that was prepared. The students showed

their keynote presentation directly from the iPad to their classmates who were encouraged to listen actively and take notes while their colleagues were presenting. During the presentations, the instructor used the Socrative application to make a quiz 'on the fly' containing one piece of information from each presentation in order to check students' understanding and to motivate them to be active listeners.

Between the quiz and the next class, the instructor analyzed students' language, both the written (in the keynote presentation) and spoken (in the recorded interviews) to identify the most frequent language problems the students faced in their use of the target language. Then the teacher played some extracts of the recordings to allow the students to analyze their classmates' errors. The analysis was followed by a controlled practice in the subject-verb agreement with the verb *be* and personal pronouns in first, second, and third persons. Students were also engaged in a drill exercise in the prosodic features (i.e., tone, pitch, intonation, stress, and rhythm) of the questions and answers.

The lesson was analyzed using the substitution, augmentation, modification, and redefinition (SAMR) framework proposed by Puentendura (2008) and in which these four elements are considered the levels of technology used in education. Results showed that the iPad had successfully fulfilled the four levels of the SAMR framework. The framework examined mainly the wise use of technology in education to the extent that it led to promoting learning. It was also found that a strength of the iPad was its ability to work at every level in the SAMR framework. In the final analysis, all three teachers reported that the application of TBLT using the iPad helped the students to be highly involved throughout the entire lesson, motivated them to complete the task and the activities, and to produce language which was, as Willis

(1996a) describes it, "as best as they [could] achieve at the moment, given the linguistic resources and time available" (quoted in Balanyk, 2013, p.10).

Similar to Amin's study, Al-Muhaimeed (2013) investigated the effect of TBLT instruction on promoting the reading comprehension skill as contrasted with the traditional teaching method that depends mainly, among other things, on drill practices. Al-Muhaimeed explored the insights and the issues that accompanied the application of each method. This study took place at an intermediate level school in Buraydah, Saudi Arabia. Two schools were involved in this study consisting of 122 male third grade students, divided equally into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. While the former was taught in accordance with J. Willis's (1996) TBL framework, the latter was taught following the traditional way of teaching. Two teachers were involved in the study, the researcher who taught the experimental group and another teacher from the school who taught the control group. The researcher used a quasi-experimental method design that engaged the students in a pre-test to assess their level in English language reading comprehension at the beginning of the study and five post-test sets, each consisted of one standardized (traditional) test and one researcher prepared test, with both intended to measure the same materials. Within a timeframe of 10 weeks, students sat for a post-test set every two weeks. There was also a series of classroom observations with a researcher log and classroom visits to collect qualitative data.

The results of the pre- and post-tests were analyzed using a two-factor spilt-plot design, and the class observations were analyzed by categorizing, describing, and synthesizing the collected data. Results showed that the TBLT method significantly

enhanced reading comprehension, compared with the traditional method of teaching. This finding was supported by statistical reports of the standardized tests and the researcher-prepared tests that showed the existence of a significant difference in the average scores of the two groups, with the experimental group scoring higher. The scores of both groups in the pre-test were equal, which allowed room for seeing the effect of the implemented instruction. Further, the detailed description reports of the classroom observations as well as the observed data collected by the research log tool used for the experimental group only showed that students developed a positive attitude towards learning with a TBLT approach. For example, the findings revealed that TBLT provided students with a better context for language learning, and that its practices were more compatible with an effective language pedagogy, compared to traditional methods of teaching. As the researcher states, the main contribution of this study was to participate in the development line of English language learning, including the transition from classical and traditional approaches to more recent and communicative language-teaching approaches such as TBLT. In addition, these findings touch upon issues relating to the adequacy, advantages, and disadvantages of TBLT application for intermediate-level students. It was concluded that well-informed TBLT practices would help teachers to develop professionally and students to be more fluent and accurate in the language they were learning.

Hasan (2014) stated that the speaking skill is disregarded in English language teaching and learning programs, as well as in the assessment and evaluation techniques in Saudi public schools. Based on his visits and observations to some schools, he noticed that teachers stressed reading and writing at the expense of speaking and listening, with no assessment part for these skills in the exams. As he outlines, the

reasons for this attitude include: (1) teacher factors (i.e., the lack of aptitude among the teachers, unfamiliarity with these kinds of tests, and the difficulty in testing such areas of learning); and (2) student factors (i.e., low self-confidence, lack of oral practice, lack of ideas, shyness, etc.). As a result, students suffer from the inability to express themselves orally. To resolve this, he decided to use a TBLT framework that emphasizes primarily communication and oral skills, and examine its impact on promoting the oral performance of secondary school students in Abha City, Saudi Arabia. Oral performance was defined by the researcher as "the ability to provide information and give explanations orally to the topics and subjects studied in the secondary school English textbook with acceptable degree of fluency and accuracy" (Hasan, 2014, p. 254). The primary aim of the study was to help both teachers and students practice the speaking skill in their language learning programs, to convince them of the importance of this skill in learning, and practice the skill in a manner remote from traditional ways of teaching that use artificial language of no value for learners. Two intact classes participated in this study totaling 44 students divided into an experimental group (23 students) and a control group (21 students). The classes were selected randomly from second year secondary students. The research was limited to two units from an English for Saudi Arabia textbook series that comprises a teacher's guidebook and a student activity book. While the control group was taught following the teacher's guide, the experimental group was taught using TBLT. After teaching the assigned content, both groups sat for a post-test. This was an oral performance test divided into two parts: a one-way monologue test and a two-way dialogue test. Both were accompanied by an assessment rubric developed by the researcher to observe the effect of TBLT techniques in teaching the assigned part for

testing. Based on the rubrics set by the researcher, each participant was assessed, and a score assigned for each based on oral performance.

The mean scores of the students in the experimental group were much higher than those in the control group. Results also showed that, in the experimental group, a statistically significant difference between the students' mean scores in the one-way monologue test and their scores in the two-way monologue test, with the one-way test results more favorable than the two-way results. Such noticeable improvement in oral performance supports the effectiveness of a TBLT framework emphasizing speaking skill in EFL teaching. A contribution of Hasan's study is that it encourages us to have more focus on the communicative aspects (such as fluency) and oral skills of language learning, rather than focusing on grammar and accuracy alone. In addition, in observing both groups, the researcher noticed throughout teaching that TBLT, in contrasted with the traditional method of teaching, helped students to develop the desired attitudes towards the learning situations and that the roles and practices of students and teachers conformed with the principles of the constructivist learning theory.

Finally, Al-Khasawneh (2014) investigated the suitability of Saudi teaching context to TBLT as a teaching methodology for English language learning. She also examined the effect of TBLT on increasing the amount of effective use of the target language outside the classroom, its effect on increasing students' motivation to learn English, and the extent to which the textbook needed to be modified to comply with the TBLT approach. Al-Khasawneh carried out her study at a private school called Al-Rowad School in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She mentioned two factors that specifically

facilitated the application of TBLT framework at this school. These included the special interest of the school administration in English language and its positive attitude towards teachers of English, as well as a classroom size of 25 students, which was reasonable for a TBLT environment.

Al-Khasawneh compared students' outcomes in two EFL grade 7 classes: one taught traditionally, and the other with the use of TBLT. The students participating in this study totaled 39 (16 in the TBLT section and 23 students in the traditional approach section). Students in both sections were tested with a unified written task-based exam with a set of tasks (i.e., ordering, fill in gaps, sorting, etc.) to be performed individually. The exam consisted of four main questions in reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and conversation. The results showed that the average mark of the TBLT section was higher than that of the traditional approach class 71% for the TBLT and 66% for the traditional approach; however, the difference between the two was not statistically significant. The researcher explained this in two ways: (1) the unfamiliarity of the students with a new teaching methodology; and (2) the lack of a guarantee that the students would be able to succeed in performing similar tasks in the exam regardless of the amount of practice they did on the tasks (the issue of generalization).

In respect of the suitability of this teaching environment to TBLT, Al-Khasawneh found several social and school-related factors that supported the implementation of TBLT in her teaching context. Concerning the social factors, Al-Khasawneh mentions that the negative attitude towards English language is gradually changing in Saudi Arabia. The 'anti-English' claim that Saudi Arabia is not an English-

speaking society has little influence now. She supported her claims with examples, but it is beyond the limits of this study to mention these here (see Al-Khasawneh, chap. 3). Additionally, she notes school-related factors, including assessment system, time pressure, and class size. There was no formal assessment but instead an ongoing process, one that gave the teacher the freedom to assess the students on tasks they need. Also, eight periods a week were devoted to English, which was considered enough, and the number of students in each class was close to ideal. Further, since the textbook used in this study was designed to be taught within a mix of traditional and communicative methods for learning, but not to TBLT, this required a lot of time and effort on the part of the teacher to adjust several lessons to TBLT. Finally, to ascertain the effect of TBLT on learners' motivation and the amount of English used outside the classroom, the researcher asked the students in the TBLT section to complete a survey. Results showed that students in the TBLT class were satisfied with the teacher-student relationship, did not want to go back to the traditional approaches, and they felt that the English class had become a source of fun as well as learning.

3.4 Summary

This chapter reported key international and regional studies that have taken the construct of FonF as a main focus or secondary variable of their TBLT investigations. They reported the effectiveness of FonF in a TBLT-based classroom in six different settings (Korea, China, Iran, Hong Kong, Japan, and Germany). This was approached from various lines of investigation with a focus on distinct targeted structures (e.g., lexis, RCs, morphosyntactic forms, dative forms, comparative form, complexity, accuracy, fluency, and lexical performance). Different types of tasks were used to elicit

complex and simple structures (e.g., narrative task, decision-making task). Most participants were undergraduate learners (Park, 2010; Li, 2010; Abdolmanafi, 2012; Moore, 2012) and only in two cases were they school learners at a primary (e.g. Chan, 2012) or intermediate level (Braaksma et al., 2015). Further, the quasi-experimental design with pre– and post-test, class observations, recording and transcribing interactions were the most frequently used methodologies. Learners' transcribed performance during interaction was the main source of data, where learning happens either by (1) correcting the mistakes related to spelling, lexical errors, morphological and grammatical errors, collocation problems and content misunderstandings; or (2) modifying the transcripts by adding or replacing some expressions with better ones.

As can be seen, the review shows a number of ways of how FonF within TBLT instruction enhances form acquisition and learning. It also reflects the diversity of FonF and TBLT research internationally. For instance, post-task transcribing, as a FonF activity at the post-task stage, proved to be effective in producing more accurate and complex language in task performances. Although it was operated in various conditions (i.e., pair/individual work, with/without revision), all results were encouraging, although varied in the different task types (narrative v. decision-making task) (Li (2010)). Similarly, the effect of recasts and prompts on the acquisition of dative and comparative forms was explored; the findings revealed that, while recasts had a limited effect, prompts may work effectively for both complex and simple structures. In addition, the type of instruction (i.e., general v. specific) and planning availability (i.e., with planning v. without planning) provided for learners at the pre-task stage proved to have no effect on lexis and morphosyntactic forms acquisition. Instead, learners produced more lexical LREs than the morphosyntactic LREs,

regardless of the instruction type and planning availability (Park, 2010). Moreover, it has been found that the ways in which teachers differ in how they manage the cognitive, interactional, and linguistic complexity of the task help to create conditions for noticing form and salient features (Chan, 2012). Finally, the studies that contrasted the effectiveness of various types of instruction (FonFs, FonM, and FonF) on the acquisition of a specific grammatical structure showed that FonF was the most effective.

Further, in regard to the studies that investigated the application of TBLT in the Gulf area, they generally explored how TBLT enhances learners' proficiency, oral performance, reading comprehension, higher-level language learning skills, and motivation, as well as teachers' and students' attitudes towards TBLT practices and instruction. Participant levels in the reported studies ranged from beginners to low-intermediate and intermediate. In addition, although the research method of each study depended chiefly on the study purpose , the quasi-experimental design with pre– and post-test, class observations, and surveys were the most frequently-used methodologies.

This review of studies reveals how TBLT may be implemented in real-language classrooms and suggests the means for obtaining better application opportunities. The studies also indicate that research and implementation of TBLT in EFL settings is both on the rise and interestingly diverse. The above-mentioned studies used the task:

- As a vehicle to elicit teacher and student attitudes towards the potential of TBLT (Jasim, 2011)

- As an instructional tool to promote reading comprehension (Al-Muhaimeed, 2013)

- As an instructional tool to promote speaking skill (Hasan, 2014), and

- As a research instrument (Alkhasawnh, 2014).

Additionally, all the studies that compared TBLT with the traditional instruction of teaching (Al-Muhaimeed, 2013; Alkhasawnh, 2014; Hasan, 2014) addressed the need for a communicative and learner-centered approach sucha s TBLT. Their results reached a common consensus that tasks within a TBLT framework were more motivating, more engaging, and more learner-centered than traditional linguistic exercises. In addition, in respect of research methodologies, there was a range of quantitative research methods employed in the reported studies, including surveys; analysis of oral production, and the use of statistical means to present data, for instance, Al-Muhaimeed's (2013) use of the two-factor split plot analysis to analyze students' scores in traditional and TBLT-based tests. Qualitative approaches, such as classroom observations, interviews with teachers, and analysis of artifacts (i.e., lesson plans, teaching materials, students' assignments, etc.), were also used but not as frequently as the quantitative approaches. One study (Al-Muhaimeed, 2013) used a mixed-method design to collect data.

3.5 Overall Summary and Conclusion

Based on this review, we may conclude that FonF has been emphasized strongly in TBLT in international studies. However, among those studies conducted in the Gulf region, as noted in this review, out of a total of seven, only three have focused on form as a minor focus (Alkhasawneh, 2014; Sheehan, 2005; Balanyk, 2013) and none has focused on form as a major variable. In the three considered to have a focus

on, this came as a part of task performance and framework and was not given full attention, instead it was one of the measures considered in the investigation of another main research issue. For example, in Alkhasawneh (2014) the focus on form was related to one construct considered in the writing task-based test which comprised three other constructs: reading comprehension, vocabulary, and conversation. Moreover, in Sheehan (2005) and Balanyk (2013) the focus on form came as just one of the stages that students needed to cover in tasks.

Although this review has advanced our knowledge about TBLT in general and its implementation internationally, and in the Gulf region in particular, TBLT is still in its infancy in the Gulf region. This is especially so in the UAE educational context, as evidenced by the scarcity of studies conducted in this context. The reported studies demonstrate practically the factors that affect the introduction and implementation of TBLT in the Gulf, for example, how TBLT transfers the learning environment from teacher-centered to learner-centered and engages the learner actively in the learning process (Sheehan, 2005; Amin, 2009). Further, Amin (2009) demonstrates how TBLT enhances oral performance and students' proficiency. Another example, Al-Muhaimeed (2013), showed the role of TBLT in promoting the reading comprehension skill. In addition, Hasan (2014) provides additional support and confirmation of the importance of oral skills in language learning. It should be noted that most of the studies in the region came from Saudi Arabia, which is an additional reason for more research on TBLT and FonF in the UAE educational context. Moreover, none of the reviewed studies has explored how the TBLT framework to L2 learning and teaching enables learners to focus on the linguistic forms and structures (i.e., FonF) in a communicatively-and content-oriented educational setting. Indeed, much more work

is still needed in order to address the continued influence of the traditional methods of teaching that have failed to produce learners able to use the target language effectively outside the classroom. Thus far, TBLT research in the UAE has received very little attention. In order to fill in this important gap in research, this study aims to investigate how FonF is implemented successfully in an Emirati TBLT-based context and what challenges and constraints face its implementation in this specific educational setting.

3.6 Research Questions (RQs)

Based on the purpose of the study and the literature reviewed above, the following four research questions were formulated for this investigation:

1) Are there any differences between teachers' implementation of FonF in a TBLT EFL middle-school context in the UAE?
2) What are the teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards FonF, TBLT, and the prescribed textbook?
3) What are the students' perceptions of and views towards their classroom teachers' implementation of FonF?
4) What are the challenges and constraints facing the implementation of TBLT and FonF in the EFL middle-school educational setting in the UAE?

Chapter 4: Background and Context of the Study

4.1 Introduction

Education has always been a high national priority in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Executive Council identified education as a key factor in transforming the UAE from an 'oil based' to 'knowledge based' economy. The late His Highness (H.H.) Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founder of the UAE, emphasized the importance of education in his famous statement that "the greatest use that can be made of wealth is to invest it in creating generations of educated and trained people" and "the real asset of any advanced nation is its people, especially the educated ones, and the prosperity and success of the people are measured by the standard of their education." Hence, education has received considerable attention from the Government of UAE.

In this chapter, I will describe the development of the educational system in the UAE; the education body that supervises and offers support to public schools, which is the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), previously known as the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC); the learning approach that focuses on developing better educators and learners (the Abu Dhabi School Model) with a particular focus on its key features and the role of the teacher in cycle 2; the textbooks, their design, content and methodology; the assessment framework; and finally, the teachers and their method of teaching. The main goal of this chapter is to provide a context for my targeted sample in this study, which is ADEK, cycle 2, grade 7, female, public school students.

4.2 Development of Education System in the UAE

The educational system in the UAE has developed greatly since the discovery of oil. The first school was built in Sharjah in 1953 by the British colonial government that ruled the country at this time (Starr, 2010). After that, a number of schools were built with funding from other countries, including Qatar, Bahrain, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. These countries were responsible for providing the schools with staff and curricula. After federation in 1971, the UAE took control of the establishment and development of schools, implementing an educational system that consisted of four stages: kindergarten (4-5 years), primary (6-11 years), intermediate (12-14 years), and secondary (15-17 years) (Godwin, 2006). For the purpose of nationalizing the curriculum, the UAE government established a Ministry of Education and Youth (MOE). Although the MOE was the central educational authority, the curriculum and the textbooks of the secondary schools were still borrowed from the neighboring countries (Ridge & Farah, 2009). In 1979, the National Curriculum Project was launched by the MOE in order to create an Emirati curriculum, which came into full use in 1985. Since that time, the UAE has continuously been developing and reforming the curricula to high educational standards.

Language education in UAE has undergone significant change since the introduction of the New School Model (NSM) in ADEK, the education regulatory body that supervises, monitors, and offers support to public schools. The NSM is an enhanced learning approach which is learner-centered and focused on developing better educators and learners. To have a clear understanding of ADEK and NSM, a separate description of each will be provided in the following sections.

4.3 Department of Education and Knowledge

The Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), previously known as Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC), is the educational authority in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, which includes Al Ain City and the Western Region. It was established in September, 2005, by His Highness (H.H.) Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE President. Three years after its establishment, ADEK took over the role from the MOE when it became the supervising body of the Abu Dhabi educational zones. The educational zones in Abu Dhabi include the Abu Dhabi Educational Zone (ADEZ), Al Ain Educational Zone (AAEZ), and the Western Region Educational Zone (WEZ). ADEK and the educational zones work together, with the former responsible for planning and decisions and the latter responsible for implementation and action. ADEK covers three educational sectors: the public, private, and higher education sectors. The core learning years in the public and the private schools range from grade 1 to 12 and are divided into three cycles: cycle 1 (grades 1-5), cycle 2 (grades 6-9), and cycle 3 (grades 10-12). The higher education institutions are established in coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) and with approval from the Executive Council. They are classified as federal, public non-federal, and private institutions. The MOE and MOHE were merged in February, 2016.

ADEK's vision and mission put education and the learners first. Its vision states in the English cycle 2 teachers' guidebook that UAE education is "recognized as a world-class education system that supports all learners in teaching their full potential to compete in the global market" (ADEK 2015a, p. 3). ADEK's mission is

"to produce world-class learners who embody a strong sense of culture and heritage and are prepared to meet global challenges" (ADEK 2015a, p. 3). ADEK has a set of values that are considered the driving force behind the ongoing performance improvements. These values include teamwork, integrity, transparency, respect, accountability, and compassion.

ADEK has three main goals:

- Develop education and educational institutions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
- Implement innovative educational policies, plans, and programs that aim to improve education
- Support educational institutions and staff (ADEK, 2013).

In 2009, ADEK developed a strategic plan that is based on extensive research and aims to address challenges facing the P-12 grades. The key challenges that are addressed include ensuring students are performing at or above grade level, and ensuring P-12 graduates are adequately prepared for higher education and future careers. On research conducted before establishing the strategic plan, ADEK noted that 95 per cent of students graduating from public schools needed two years of remedial courses in order to be prepared for further education, especially in information technology (IT) and English language skills (ADEK, 2009a; ADEK, 2009b). In addition, Gaad, Arif, and Scott (2006) highlight a misalignment in the Emirati education system. They mention that teachers do not consider the context, the quality of delivery, and the national goals in their teaching. The strategic plan seeks to develop the skills required for higher education and future careers (ADEK, 2010). It

emphasizes the quality of education to meet international standards while preserving national identity and culture. In order to facilitate the strategic plan, ADEK initiated the 'Public-Private Partnerships,' a group of partners responsible for mentoring teachers in the public schools. Considering quality of teaching as important as quality of education, teacher training was made a top priority for ADEK. Teachers are provided with resources and continuous professional development sessions and training that enhance their capabilities. The country has invested AED 200 million to train 10,000 teachers in the latest techniques in teaching and pedagogy (Al Ateeqi, 2009). Further, in 2018, the UAE Cabinet allocated 59 per cent of the national budget over the next three years for investment in education and space research.

ADEK puts the student first and works for a modern, innovative, and world-class educational system. It now offers a number of applications to enhance parental involvement in student education. These include: eSIS, iClass, and iADEK. Each application is designed to serve a specific purpose. For instance, while the eSIS enables parents to access information, including records of academic progress, the iADEK allows them to check school locations, receive news updates and contact ADEK with enquiries. The iClass is a set of digital eLearning tools to support the Abu Dhabi School Model's student-centered approach to teaching. ADEK is also responsible for developing curriculum and educational policies, overseeing educational reform, and providing licensing and accreditation to private schools.

4.3.1 New School Model

The education system currently used in all public schools is the New School Model (NSM). The model introduces a new curriculum and new teaching methods that

aim to enhance student performance by developing the student as a communicator, thinker, and problem solver. The NSM was launched in September 2010 and has been implemented sequentially in phases, starting with KG-G3 in 2010–2011, and subsequently moving up to the following grades. It was extended to grade 4 in 2011 and grade 5 in 2012. It was first implemented in cycle 2 in September 2013 with grade 6. A year later, in September 2014, it was applied to grade 7, followed by grade 8 in September 2015, grade 9 in September 2016, grade 10 in September 2017, and grade 11 in September 2018.

The aim of the NSM approach is to develop student learning experiences and raise the learning outcomes to the internationally competitive level needed to achieve the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030. The student is actively involved in the learning process and put at the center of the learning environment, supported by school, family, and the community. Developing students' learning experiences involves improving literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills, while protecting the national and cultural identity of the students (ADEK, 2015a). Unlike the old model that emphasized rote learning and where the book was the main source of learning, the NSM focuses on the learner. It is based on a student-centered learning approach and organized around a set of learning standards and student learning outcomes. It also provides students with technology-rich learning environments with various types of activities and which cater for individual learning styles and needs (ADEK, 2013a).

4.3.2 Assessment System

In regard to assessment, ADEK uses an assessment system that does not merely inform about student learning progress based on the educational outcomes, but also provides feedback about how ADEK as a whole educational authority (including schools, teachers, students, curriculum, policy, etc.) continually advances. This system is referred to as the Assessment for Learning (AfL) system. Its nature and function incorporate all the information from an individual student's mastering of a single learning outcome through the performance of the overall in the entire Emirate. It aims to inform three main aspects in the development: (1) impacts of students' development; (2) whether support is provided to students as needed or not; and (3) efficiency of educational methods. The AfL includes school-based assessment and standardized assessment, which comprises both national and international assessment. While the former is conducted by the teacher's observation, and feedback on whether the students master the learning outcomes or not, the latter is administered at a national or international level. National assessment measures student achievement within Abu Dhabi annually. International assessments are developed by international agencies and research institutions. Further, school-based assessment aims to identify gaps and modify the instruction methods used (ADEK, 2013).

AfL is described as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (Teacher guidebook, p. 19). It has 10 principles identified by ADEK, which state that AfL:

- Is a basic professional skill

- Is based on classroom practice

- Helps in developing commitment to learning

- Is part of effective planning

- Identifies gaps in student learning

- Focuses on how students learn

- Has an emotional effect

- Has a motivational impact

- Enhances self-assessment

- Recognizes all achievements.

In addition, AfL involves 'effective feedback' from the teachers to students on their development. Effective feedback enables students to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and make, in cooperation with teachers, further plans for improvement. The Teacher Guide, provided by ADEK to teachers, says effective feedback should focus on the assessment criteria of the tasks, provides meaningful information to students regarding what they have understood, what needs to be improved, and how to achieve this. It avoids comparing students' progress with others, but reinforces the students' strengths.

Students within AfL are provided with regular opportunities for reflection on their learning in relation to the learning outcomes. Their self– and peer-evaluation is also essential for their development.

4.4 English Language Teaching in ADEK

According to ADEK, teaching is determined mainly by the learning outcomes

students are expected to display at the end of each semester. For this reason, ADEK provides the teachers with a teacher guidebook that includes the standards, learning outcomes, and skills students should gain in the areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. ADEK is committed to developing the students' English language skills to meet the needs of the Abu Dhabi 2030 Vision and prepare the students for the workplace and life experiences that require English. To achieve this goal, ADEK has launched a number of initiatives while maintaining a focus on Emirati culture and heritage. An example of such initiatives is the English curriculum in cycle 2.

The English curriculum in cycle 2 builds on what the students have already learnt in cycle 1 and extends it further to:

- Develop English language and literacy skills
- Communicate effectively
- Compose and respond to various types of texts in English
- Express ideas and feelings in English
- Develop the skills of collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking.

At the same time, the English curriculum has a clear connection with the Emirati culture and heritage (ADEK, 2015b).

4.4.1 Textbooks

ADEK uses the Reading Time scheme for cycle 1 English curriculum. For cycles 2 and 3, it uses Macmillan Topics books. The Macmillan Topics present authentic topics in a fun magazine format to encourage students to read. There are three books for each grade, one for each semester. Each book focuses on a specific theme where all activities and tasks and reading articles are centered around that

theme. There are various activities and tasks that help students improve specifically in reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. It provides a variety of text types, styles, and format. There is a revision section that consolidates what students have already learnt and an electronic teachers' notes manual,to be used as a source to help teachers while using the textbook. Because grade 7 is the focus of the present study, the section below will provide a detailed description of the textbook.

The grade 7 English language teaching textbook was published in 2014. As mentioned, there are three thematic textbooks for grade 7, one for each term: 'Healthy Lifestyles' for Term 1, 'Looking Back' for Term 2, and 'Shops and Souks' for Term 3 (See Appendix A for the unit used in this study). Each textbook consists of 11 units that are uniform in format. Each unit in the textbook starts with an article that is followed by tasks and activities to practice reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and writing. Moreover, the textbook provides the students in advance with the grammar they need for the writing task that follows. Accordingly, the grammar task is not based on the language problems students have or what they need to have more practice on. In addition, students are asked in the writing task to do some internet research as a strategy to connect them with their real lives. The internet search involves more than one language skill, writing and reading and it engages interests as the students choose a topic they like and wish to know or tell more about (known as a learner-generated task). Students in such situations have a chance to pre-plan the task, which allows for more complex language production.

4.4.2 Teachers

To successfully implement ADEK's vision of providing the students with a

world-class education, teachers perform a critical role as thoughtful, skilled and caring professionals. The role of teachers in cycle 2 of NSM is slightly different from that in cycle 1 whereby one teacher teaches English, mathematics and science to one class of students. In contrast, students in cycle 2 are taught each subject by a different specialist teacher (ADEK, 2015a). ADEK employs licensed teachers with a bachelor or master's degree. These teachers come from various nations, including the USA, UK, Australia, Sudan, and Morocco. A supervisor for the English teachers in each school is assigned to ensure development and use of best practice when teaching English in ADEK schools.

Teachers in cycle 2 at ADEK are provided with a teacher guidebook that outlines the key features of the NSM. The guidebooks in cycle 2 comprise two Chapters: Chapter 1 for English medium subjects; and Chapter 2 for English teachers. The former demonstrates the nature of the NSM, how it meets the need of learners, the learning outcomes, and an overview of expectations for planning, teaching, and assessment in cycle 2. The latter is for English pedagogy. It illustrates the pedagogical approaches in cycle 2, English language development, trimester themes, text types, genres, core theme vocabulary, templates for the trimester plan, teaching and learning map, and the lesson plan.

4.4.3 Teaching Approach

A student-centered approach is the suggested teaching methodology in the NSM. This may be performed through four techniques: gradual release, inquiry-based learning, knowing our learners, and eLearning. *Gradual release* involves taking the students step-by-step to develop their skills as independent learners while the teacher

works as a facilitator. Moving the students from dependence to independence involves changing the nature of teacher's support through four basic stages:

- Model: show students what endpoint of their learning looks like
- Share: co-construct learning the goal with students
- Guide: support students to develop the necessary components of their learning
- Facilitate: set up opportunities for students to apply their learning in meaningful way.

The *inquiry-based learning* is a process based on rich questions that the students ask and constitute the way in which their learning develops. *Knowing our learners* involves applying the differentiation technique based on the information and evidence gathered from the students' AfL. Finally, *eLearning* incorporates the use of technology in order to enhance learning and support it to ensure interactive and collaborative teaching pedagogies.

Based on the learning beliefs, teachers in ADEK are expected to adhere to the proposed teaching approach within NSM, which is task-based. To paraphrase, this includes the belief that learning should be connected to a student's life, identity, heritage, and culture, a connection that may be made through the learning outcomes, a scope or unit of work, teaching and learning experiences, and the projects students are asked to submit at the end of the trimester. Another belief is that learning should be student-centered, purposeful, and arise through meaningful interaction between the students and their teacher, linked in with the class environment and resources. Another is that students learn in a variety of ways and at different paces, and what they learn should be informed by assessment rather than driven by it (ADEK, 2015a).

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to examine teachers' implementation of FonF and TBLT and to identify the potential gaps between theory and practice. The study sought to investigate the differences between four English language teachers teaching grade seven female students in Al Ain City cycle 2 public schools. It examined how teachers implement the coursebook for grade 7 students with a particular emphasis on the way they structure FonF to their students, based on the learning outcomes assigned by ADEK. Second, the study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions and views towards FonF, TBLT, and the textbook. Third, the study looked at students' perceptions of and views towards their teachers' implementation of FonF and the textbook. Finally, the study tried to explore the challenges and constraints in implementing TBLT and FonF in the UAE intermediate school educational setting.

In this chapter, I will describe the methodology used in this study, the participants involved in the study namely, the data collection tools that were piloted, and details of the data collection tools employed, including classroom observation and field notes, surveys, and interviews. In order to obtain a profound perspective on the subject, this study was mainly based on classroom observations, field notes, documentations of student work, as well as interviews with teachers and surveys for both teachers and students. The data set included a total of a unit taught by four English language teachers on the topic, 'How do you shop? Where do you shop?', with individual lesson plans and teaching materials (See Appendix A for the unit under investigation). Since learning outcomes are the driving force in ADEK schools and

there is no specific curriculum order that teachers are required to follow, the researcher chose two learner outcomes from the list proposed by ADEK for trimester 3 to ensure that all participating teachers were teaching the same concepts. (For a complete description of the educational context and the coursebook used by ADEK teachers in grade seven, see Chapter 4). The two learning outcomes were chosen from among four areas of English-language skills: speaking and listening, reading, writing, and language. Such skills were developed in the context of a focus question related to the theme 'Shops and Souks,' which was 'Why do we shop? How is shopping different now compared to the past? What is the role of shopping in our lives? How were souks established in Abu Dhabi?'

Four English-language teachers from three schools were involved in this study. They were asked to teach the first unit in the textbook 'How do you shop? Where do you shop?' using the two specified learning outcomes. There was no intervention from the researcher of any kind in regard to the way the teachers structured the lesson to the students. After the observation, the teachers were surveyed for their perceptions and views towards implementing FonF in their teaching practice. The survey took the form of semi-structured interviews in two parts: a written part consisting of a set of predetermined questions; and a face-to-face interview part to follow up on their responses to the set of questions.

5.2 Piloting the Data Collection Tools

To ensure the validity, the data collection tools were piloted with one English language teacher and 23 grade 7 students covering one unit from the topics of the textbook. Construct and content validity were checked by people specialized in the

field and the supervisor. The aim was to avoid any ambiguity and ensure respondents' understanding in the required way. Wallace (1998) emphasizes the importance of piloting the survey specifically, regardless of sample number. However, in all cases the piloted sample should be proportional to the number of the distributed surveys. After the piloting, some statements in the student survey were explained and modified, as well as several major changes in the observation log.

5.3 Participants

This study took place in Al Ain City, the second largest city in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE. The study was conducted in the second week of the third trimester. Three schools within the ADEK NSM system were involved in the study (a full explanation of the ADEK education setting is provided in Chapter 4). These were AlFoaa School, Atikah Bint Abdul Mutalib School, and Makka School. Four English-language teachers were involved in the study, two from Atikah Bint Abdul Mutalib School, one from AlFoaa School, and one from Makka School. Two participating teachers were native English-language speakers (NSs) and two were non-native speakers (NNSs). All four were female and experienced, with at least 13 years of employment teaching English. Table 3 summarizes the demographic information about the participating teachers.

Table 3: Background information about participating teachers

Teacher Characteristics	Teacher1	Teacher2	Teacher3	Teacher4
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female
Nationality	Canadian	South African	Emirati	Emirati
English Proficiency	Native	Native	Non-native	Non-native
Academic Qualifications	Master	Bachelor	Graduate Diploma	Bachelor
Total Years Of Teaching English	13	19	14	15
Years Of Teaching English In UAE	8	3	14	15
Number Of Students In Class	29	23	24	24
School Name	AlFoaa School	Makka School	Atikah Bint Abdul Mutalib School	

One hundred (100) students ranged in age between 12 and 13 years were involved in this study from four English-language classes in the three schools (29 from AlFoaa School, 23 from Makka School, and 48 from Atikah Bint Abdul Mutalib School: 24 in one class and 24 in the other). All were given informed consents forms prior to their participating in the study (See Appendix D). Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Students got them signed, indicating they have read, understood, and agreed to participate in this research. One had to be returned to the researcher and the other to be kept in their files. All four teachers taught the same lesson with the same learning outcomes. They were observed, surveyed, and interviewed. Further, statements in the student survey were translated into Arabic language to ensure the students' understanding of the required information.

5.4 Data Collection Tools

A mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology was used in the study to achieve a triangulation and to gain an in-depth appreciation of how FonF within TBLT instruction may be applied and lead to better form acquisition. Triangulation is defined as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 141). Data obtained from the tools used in the study were intended to answer the first and main research question: Are there any differences between teachers' implementation of focus on form (FonF) in a task-based language teaching (TBLT) EFL middle-school context in the UAE?

The quantitative data were collected through closed-ended questions in the student survey, while the qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations and field notes, individual interviews with teachers and their surveys. Following is a detailed description of the research tools used in the study.

5.4.1 Observations and Field Notes

First, prior to the distribution of surveys, the researcher observed the four English-language teachers and saw how they implemented the current *Topics Coursebook* in their classes. I looked at their performance from two perspectives:

- Evaluating teachers' performance with respect to the learning outcomes that focus specifically on TBLT implementation and language and form (describing).

- Making in-between comparison with respect to other teachers' performance (comparing).

The proposed learning outcomes included (1) edit grammar, spelling, and

punctuation (LO1); and (2) retrieve, interpret, and reflect on information and ideas in a written or visual critical response text (LO2). These two learning outcomes are related to the four language learning skills: speaking-and-listening (speaking and listening skills are treated as a single skill in the coursebook under study), reading, writing, and grammar. However, I emphasized the learning outcomes related to TBLT and language use and FonF. One unit from the 'Shops and Souks' theme, which was assigned for trimester 3, was used for the purpose of looking at teachers' implementation of the coursebook. The content of the unit is based on the 'Shops and Souks' theme and starts with nine reading extracts supported by related pictures about ways to shopping, key words, and a glossary. The reading is followed by exercises to practice reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and writing (See Appendix A). Before collecting the data, I reviewed the coursebook and found that it is task-supported, goal-oriented, focused on communication and meaning, and has situational language and situational grammar. I specifically selected unit 1, 'How do you shop? Where do you shop?' because it utilizes several major principles of TBLT, including relevance to students' social culture and background, an abundance of pair and group activities, and a primary focus on communication and meaning. All such features are believed to make the students more involved, participating, and active.

Further, a series of classroom observation sessions were conducted with each participating teacher to identify the ways they differed in delivering the unit to students. For instance, four sessions (or periods) were conducted with Teacher 1, three sessions with Teacher 2, and two sessions with Teacher 3 and Teacher 4. An observation log was developed that was a checklist of the two proposed learning outcomes in the areas of reading, writing, and grammar (See Table 4). The table

comprises a description of the ways teachers could fulfill the learning outcomes, with

assessment criteria (Yes/No/Somewhat), and notes of a detailed description of their

performances, examples of student interaction, handouts, and samples of student work

(all attached as appendices).

Table 4: Observation log

Learning Outcome 1	Assessment Criteria (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Teacher 1	Notes	Teacher 2	Notes	Teacher 3	Notes	Teacher 4	Notes
Edit grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Model proofreading techniques (i.e., read aloud for understanding)								
	Provide support tools for editing purposes (i.e., *Read & Write Tutor,* reference books)								
	Model the use of using editing symbols (i.e., proof reading marks)								
	Provide opportunities for students to practice editing around grammar and vocabulary they have learnt during the trimester.								
Learning Outcome 2	**Assessment Criteria (Yes/No/Somewhat)**	**Teacher 1**	**Notes**	**Teacher 2**	**Notes**	**Teacher 3**	**Notes**	**Teacher 4**	**Notes**
Retrieve, interpret, and reflect on information and ideas in a written or visual critical response text.	Use a gradual release approach to share and discuss written and visual texts (i.e., shared reading, guided reading and independent reading).								
	Model how to skim and scan information text using headings, pictures, and bold printed words to find key ideas.								
	Use shared reading with text type scaffolding to guide students in justifying their ideas and opinions by using information from texts.								
	Ask inquiry questions such as: <u>Retrieving information:</u> "which section of the book would you find information on where to locate something?" <u>interpreting information:</u> "If you just saw the picture without the text, what would you think?" <u>Reflecting on information:</u> "Does this text remind you of something you have read before?"								
	Organize activities to develop interpreting skills (i.e., use a written text to create a visual representation of the main ideas)								
	Organize activities to develop reflection skills (i.e., create an advertisement or debate that expresses student opinions about an information text)								

5.4.2 Surveys

Second, after the observations, two surveys were used in this research, one for the students (See Appendix B) and another for the teachers (See Appendix C). The student surveys consisted of 10 Likert-scale questions. The response to each statement had five options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. To test the extent of agreement or disagreement of respondents with the items, each response was given a value from 1 to 5, respectively, for the ease of calculating the descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The teacher survey consisted of two sections: the first section included background information questions about the respondent teachers; the second contained 15 questions with five-item Likert scales designed to elicit their level of agreement with statements based on a set of principles in different aspects of FonF and TBLT. As with the students' survey, to test the extent of agreement or disagreement of respondents with the statement, each response was given a value from 1 to 5, respectively, again for the ease of calculating the descriptive statistics. The surveys were distributed to teachers and students respectively after the unit was completed and observed by the researcher. A brief description of how the surveys were carried out is provided below.

5.4.2.1 Students' Survey

A student survey was distributed to 100 students from the four English language classes in the three schools (29 from AlFoaa School, 23 from Makka School, and 48 from Atikah Bint Abdul Mutalib School: 24 in one class and 24 in the other). Students completed the survey after finishing the unit. The survey aimed to explore students' perceptions of and attitudes towards their teachers' implementation of FonF, their views towards the coursebook, and their attitudes towards FonF and error

correction. Below are the statements that were given to students (for a complete illustration of the survey, see Appendix B).

1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.

2. My teacher focuses on form just right.
3. My teacher over focuses on form.
4. My teacher under focuses (ignores) form.
5. My teacher usually corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.
6. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.
7. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure.
8. I feel frustrated when all my errors are corrected.
9. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.
10. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.

5.4.2.2 Teachers' Survey

The teacher survey (See Appendix C) was given to the four participating teachers after they have completed the unit in order to investigate their attitudes and perceptions towards FonF and how they believed it may impact the:

- Students' ability

- Teachers' views on FonF implementation within a TBLT context

- Teachers' understanding of FonF and errors correction

- Students' perception of form from teachers' perspective

- Whether the students' Arabic language (their L1) causes difficulty in form acquisition due to the structural differences between Arabic and English (their L2).

I used surveys in my research because they produce large quantities of data that can be easily administered and analyzed, while at the same time meet the goals of the study. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) indicate that closed-ended questions facilitate statistical calculation and data analysis by providing response frequencies. Further, the Likert scale questions are effective for exploratory studies. Brown (2001) suggests "Likert-scale questions are effective for gathering respondents' views, opinions, and attitudes about various language-related issues" (p. 41). At the end of the survey, an invitation for teacher interviews was offered.

Both the teacher and student surveys aimed to identify the perceptions of and attitudes of teachers and students towards FonF from a number of perspectives. They were intended to generate valuable data about the participating teachers' understanding of FonF and its implementation within a TBLT context. Similarly, the student surveys were expected to provide data about their views of teachers' application of FonF from their perspectives and their attitudes towards the textbook. Both surveys were included to provide data that assisted in answering my second and third research questions:

- What are the teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards Focus on Form (FonF), Task-based language teaching (TBLT), and the prescribed textbook?

- What are the students' views and perceptions of towards their classroom teachers' implementation of Focus on Form (FonF)?

5.4.3 Teachers' Interviews

Finally, interviews (See Appendix E) were conducted with the four teachers involved in the study. The interviews, consisting of 11 questions, were audio-recorded. A semi-structured interview type was used with the teachers after the unit was taught. The interview had several pre-set questions; some were consistent with those covered

by the survey. The interviews were used to explore teachers' perceptions towards TBLT, the textbook, and FonF. They were also used to find out the challenges and limitations in implementing TBLT in the UAE school educational setting. The interviews were intended to supplement and verify the participating teachers' responses in the survey. They also sorted out ambiguities in questions and helped in attaining deeper insights into issues relating to the implementation of TBLT in the UAE context (perceptions, attitudes, challenges, constraints, and possibilities). The open-ended questions in the interview provided rich data that could not easily obtained from the closed-ended questions in the survey and which was not anticipated. As Wallace (1998, P. 135) states: "Open questions are good for exploratory research where you have difficulty in anticipating the range of responses. They are also more likely to yield more unexpected (and therefore, perhaps, more interesting) data." Bell (2005) too states that "the interview can yield rich material and can often put flesh on the bones of survey responses" (p. 157). Further, clarifications can also be elicited from the interviews. Interview data addressed the fourth research question: What are the challenges and constraints that face implementing Task-based language teaching (TBLT) and Focus on Form (FonF) in the UAE EFL middle school educational setting? Data collected from these interviews were useful too for addressing the second research question: What are teachers' perceptions of and views towards TBLT, the textbook, and FonF?

Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the study. The data were collected from classroom observations, field notes, surveys, and interviews that were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The participants were divided into four groups. The first group comprised Teacher 1 (NS1) and 29 grade 7 students from AlFoaa School; the second group comprised Teacher 2 (NS2) and 23 grade 7 students from Makka School; the third group comprised Teacher 3 (NNS1) and 24 grade 7 students from Atikah Bint Abdul Mutalib School; and the fourth group comprised Teacher 4 (NNS2) and 24 grade 7 students also from Atikah Bint Abdul Mutalib School. Findings in this chapter will be presented in two sections. The first section contains the qualitative data collected from classroom observations and teacher interviews, supported by findings from their surveys. These data were analyzed descriptively. The second section covers the quantitative data collected from the surveys distributed to the 100 students. These data were analyzed quantitatively and by looking into patterns that identify student perceptions and views towards the textbook and their classroom teachers' implementation of FonF. Following is a detailed description of each.

6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

As mentioned, this section presents the data collected from classroom observations, documentations of student work, and teacher interviews supported by findings from their surveys. Data are presented descriptively. Below is a description of findings obtained from the classroom observations and the interviews conducted with the four teachers involved in the study.

6.2.1 Classroom Observations and Field Notes

The purpose of classroom observations was to identify the differences between the four participating teachers' in terms of their teaching practices based on their application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), FonF, and the fulfillment of the two learning outcomes assigned by the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). Teachers were assessed based on their application of the textbook and the fulfillment of two learning outcomes (LOs) proposed by ADEK and the potential gaps between theory and practice. It also sought to examine the role of such learning outcomes in implementing TBLT successfully and helping learners focus on different aspects of language with which they have problems (i.e., FonF). The observations were undertaken by the researcher for all four groups involved in the study. Data were organized based on the two LOs that assess the performance of the participating teachers based in turn on a set of assessment criteria. The first LO (i.e., LO1) is 'Edit grammar, spelling, and punctuation.' This outcome consists of four assessment criteria that assess teachers' application of FonF. The second LO (LO2), 'Retrieve, interpret, and reflect on information and ideas in a written text', consists of six assessment criteria that assess teachers' implementation of TBLT.

Data collected from classroom observations addressed the first and main research question: Are there any differences between teachers' implementation of focus on form (FonF) in a task-based language teaching (TBLT) EFL middle-school context in the UAE? Below is an illustration of the data obtained based on the two learning outcomes.

6.2.1.1 Learning Outcome 1: Edit grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Teachers fulfillment of the first learning outcome was assessed based on four assessment criteria (See Table 5). These include whether teachers:

- Model proofreading techniques (i.e., read aloud for understanding)

- Provide support tools for editing purposes (i.e., Read & Write Tutor, reference books)

- Model the use of using editing symbols (i.e., proof reading marks)

- Provide opportunities for students to practice editing around grammar and vocabulary.

As Table 5 shows, in the case of NS1, she was able to apply FonF communicatively without the use of the assigned textbook. A dictation was given to students as a starter activity that lasted 5-8 minutes. Its content introduced the theme 'Shopping and Souks' to students and what they would study in that session. After the students finished the dictation activity, NS1 wrote the dictation text on the board and asked the students to check their work. She also helped students apply strategies and rules to spell familiar and unfamiliar words. Further, NS1 asked the students to rewrite the incorrected forms with a contrasted color in their notebooks (the third criterion). She used voice intonation sometimes to help students know the appropriate punctuation. Incorrect forms of pronunciation in their interactions throughout the session were noted and corrected especially when the mistake hindered getting the message across. Sometimes this was accomplished by asking the students questions about the correct use of punctuation, grammatical features, and the use of capital letters appropriately (i.e., at the start of a sentence or with proper nouns). In regard to the fourth criterion, 'Provide opportunities for students to practice editing around grammar

and vocabulary they have learnt during the trimester', NS1, after the self-correction was done, asked questions such as 'What do we call this type of verb?' and 'How did you know that the sentence should end with a question mark?' In addition, punctuation was corrected by asking the students questions such as:

Example 1:

- NS1: why do we have to put a capital letter here?
- S: because it's at the beginning of the sentence.

Example 2:

- NS1: what sort of punctuation that goes at the end of the sentence?
- S: question mark.
- NS1: How did you know?
- S: because of wh-word.

Pronunciation of students was also corrected through the various activities in the lesson. For instance:

- S: Bazr
- NS1: Bazaar
- S: Bazaar

In contrast, although NS2 was able to fulfill the LO1 successfully in her teaching with the use of the textbook, she was not able to apply FonF in the required way. Instead, she was focusing on accuracy. NS2 wrote two sentences that were related to the theme 'Shopping and Souks' on the board with spelling, punctuation, and grammatical problems and then asked the students to identify the problems and solve. Problems were missing punctuation, capitalization, spelling problems, etc. So, the students' attention to the formal aspect of language in that case did not occur as a result

of a switch or occasional shift triggered by the teacher or other students. Instead, the NS2 targeted the form by writing the two sentences on the board intentionally and the attention to form did not happen in a task where the overriding focus was meaning. She asked the students to identify the problems with questions such as:

> NS2: what is wrong with the sentence?
> S: the letter 'a' instead of 'e' in the word 'many'.

In addition, students in NS2's class were asked to complete the writing section in the book as homework. Students were instructed to list the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of shopping using their own ideas. After they had completed the activity, students were asked to swap their books with their friends and mark each other's writing. Students were also given a worksheet, 'editing and revising' (See Appendix J), and asked to work individually on them, identify problems, and write the sentences correctly on the lines provided.

Comparatively, NNS1 was able to fulfill the LO1 with the use of the textbook but was not able to apply FonF communicatively. Instead she was over-focusing on form (focus on accuracy). Again, this inference was demonstrated by a number of practices noted in her term of instruction. For instance, she asked the students to complete the writing section in the book that required the students to list the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of shopping using their own ideas. Then they swap their books with their friends and marked each other's writing. However, the teacher undertook no checking of the editing of students' work for each other. Moreover, the students were given a worksheet on 'comparative adjectives' and asked to work on them individually (See Appendix M). Both activities were language focused and drill exercises.

Finally, NNS2 was able to fulfill the LO1 with the use of the textbook but again failed to apply FonF in the required way. Instead she was under-focusing on form (focus on fluency). Similar to NNS1, she asked the students to complete the first question in writing section in the textbook about the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of shopping. After that, the students were asked to swap their books with their friends and mark each other's writing. However, like NNS1, no checking by the teacher of the editing of students' work was undertaken.

Table 5: The application of learning outcome 1 with its assessment criteria

Assessment Criteria	NS 1	NS 2	NNS 1	NNS 2
LO1: Edit grammar, spelling, and punctuation.				
1. Model proofreading techniques (i.e., read aloud for understanding)	Good	Acceptable	Nothing	Nothing
2. Provide support tools for editing purposes (i.e., Read & Write Tutor, reference books)	Good	Good	Nothing	Nothing
3. Model the use of using editing symbols (i.e., proof reading marks)	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
4. Provide opportunities for students to practice editing around grammar and vocabulary they have learnt during the trimester.	Good	Good	Good	Good

6.2.1.2 Learning Outcome 2: Retrieve, interpret, and reflect on information and ideas in a written text

Regarding the second learning outcome, 'Retrieve, interpret, and reflect on information and ideas in a written text', the four teachers varied in the strategies and practices they followed to fulfill this outcome (See Table 6). All were able to fulfill this learning outcome but not all of them were able to implement the TBLT framework successfully.

Table 6: The application of learning outcome 2 with its assessment criteria

Assessment Criteria	NS 1	NS 2	NNS 1	NNS 2
LO2: Retrieve, interpret, and reflect on information and ideas in a written text.				
5. Use a gradual release approach to share and discuss written and visual texts (i.e., shared reading, guided reading and independent reading).	Good	Good	Good	Good
6. Model how to skim and scan information from text using headings, pictures, and bold printed words to find key ideas.	Good	Good	Good	Good
7. Use shared reading with text type scaffolding to guide students in justifying their ideas and opinions by using information from texts.	Good	Good	Good	Nothing
8. Ask inquiry questions such as: <u>Retrieving information:</u> "which section of the book would you find information on, where to locate something?" <u>interpreting information:</u> "If you just saw the picture without the text, what would you think?" <u>Reflecting on information:</u> "Does this text remind you of something you have read before?"	Good	Nothing	Nothing	Good
9. Organize activities to develop interpreting skills (i.e., use a written text to create a visual representation of the main ideas)	Good	Good	Good	Acceptable
10. Organize activities to develop reflection skills (i.e., create an advertisement or debate that expresses student opinion about an information text)	Good	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing

NS1 was able to implement the principles of TBLT approach successfully in her teaching without the use of the textbook. She divided the students into groups and each group looked through and shared magazines they had brought to class (criterion 5). Each group was asked to find a specific advertisement for the target audience (criterion 6). NS1 asked each group to discuss the role of shopping in their lives and the places where they go and shop with their families.

In contrast, NS2, NNS1, and NNS2 uses the textbook in the implementation of the TBLT framework. However, while NS2 was able to apply the framework through all of its stages (pre-task, task, and post-task) successfully, NNS1 and NNS2 enacted the TBLT framework but both missed the post-task phase. NS1 and the two NNSs asked the students: 'Where do you shop?' and 'How do you shop?' For both questions, the students brainstormed and discussed ideas in groups. Oral feedback in class was provided. However, NNS1used the Arabic language in explaining and negotiating with students. Further, students in NNS2's class were able to look at the pictures in the reading passages of their textbooks to answer the questions. NS2 showed the students a PowerPoint presentation illustrating different places where people shop and related this information to their answers. In contrast, NNS1 asked the students to share and discuss in groups the different shops and what they could buy from each. NNS2 distributed different pictures of different shops. Each group had one based on the information in the reading passages to describe.

On criterion 7: 'Use shared reading with text type scaffolding to guide students in justifying their ideas and opinions by using information from texts', NNS2 did not follow this criterion at all. However, NS2 and NNS1 implemented it to a good extent. Both NS2 and NNS1 asked the students to refer to pages 2 and 3 of the textbook to skim and scan more information. The teacher related the text to a class discussion. Students worked in groups to answer the comprehension questions in their textbooks related to the reading while the teacher was walking around to facilitate the activity.

On criterion 8: 'Ask inquiry questions', differences were noticed between the four teachers. NS1 and the NNS2 employed it to a good extent. However, NS2 and NNS1did not implement it at all. NS1 asked the students these questions:

- Have any of you thought about what makes you want to buy a certain product over other similar products? (Reflecting)?

- Was acquiring household necessities easier in the past or shopping easier now?

- Are people happier that they have everting they need at their fingertips, or were people happier when life was simpler? Explain (Reflecting).

On the contrary, NNS2 asked the students to interpret the information and think about the type of the shop and, based on the pictures, what each was expected to sell (See Appendix I).

On criterion 9: 'Organize activities to develop interpreting skills', the four teachers applied it but to different extents. NS1, NS2, and NNS1 implemented it to a good extent. However, NNS2 did not apply it at all. NS1 asked the students to work in pairs and find three advertisements targeting specific audiences and then explain how they felt when they looked at the advertisement, and explain to their partners whether they would purchase the product advertised. Further, NS2 gave the students an activity to compare any two different ways or places of shopping based on the reading text in the book. Additionally, NNS1 asked the students to listen to an audio that described different shops and what they could buy from each. Then they were given a worksheet to fill in with the information they had heard.

On criterion 10: 'Organize activities to develop reflection skills', NS1 implemented it to a good extent. However, the other three teachers did not apply it at all. NS1 asked each student to think about creating an advertisement for a new candy bar, a candy bar that is not in the market or in the shops. They were asked to think

about how advertising appeals to their senses and to eventually create their own advertisement based on a target audience. Additionally, as a homework project, students were asked to write a children's book for Abu Dhabi Reads Project. They were given two weeks to write, illustrate, and print the children's book. Finally, the students were asked to read English at home for a minimum of 20 minutes and record the number of pages they read in their notebook logs.

6.2.2 Teacher Interviews

The semi-structured interview included 11 questions (See Appendix E) targeting the four English language teachers. The interview covered three areas:

- Teacher awareness of the TBLT framework (Q1, Q2, Q3).

- Ways and approaches used to teach form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) (Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8).

- Teachers' views and perceptions towards the methodology suggested in the curriculum (Q9).

- The challenges and the constraints they encounter in implementing TBLT and FonF in their teaching context (Q10, Q11).

The findings show that the four teachers were aware of the kind of teaching methodology they followed in their classes (Q1). Further, they all confirmed that the approach they followed was ADEK's suggested approach which is 'Abilities that Constitute 21st Century Skills' (i.e., critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication). They tried to apply the assigned approach based on the needs of their students and the purpose of the lesson. In addition, the NS1 and NS2 indicated that they took a student-centered approach (i.e., gradual release approach) with their students. The four teachers confirmed they have tried TBLT in their classes by

applying the Integrated Strand Task (IST) and the Product Task (Q2). IST covers the components of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar that were designed by the teacher and considered the 'endpoint' where students use the skills they have been learning throughout the term. The Product Task refers to the end of the trimester in which teachers were expected to incorporate all the learning outcomes in the four main language areas.

Three teachers (NS2 and the two NNSs) confirmed that they were aware to a great extent that the textbook is based on TBLT. In comparison, NS1 explicitly indicated she was less aware of that (Q3). The NNSs had the same perspective that the textbook was a good resource to use but was inappropriate for low-level students. Similarly, NS2 commented that "it is a good resource to use but not enough in which the teacher has to develop extra worksheets to make sure students have good foundations especially when it comes to grammar". Likewise, NS1 commented that "it's a good resource in which it covers the four main language learning areas (reading, vocabulary, writing, and grammar) and has great theme-related passages, great images that the student can relate to and foreign images to expose them to the other countries. However, it is not a teaching tool for what's required by ADEK. The learning outcomes do not coincide with the activities provided in the textbook. The activities on themselves don't give the students an opportunity to work and think about problems. Students' assignments are usually corrected with detailed feedback, notes about ways or corrections, ways to improve their writing for example".

When the teachers were asked to describe the approach they used to teach grammar in their teaching practice, their responses were varied (Q4). For instance, NS1 indicated that "grammar is taught in context and in isolation to avoid

overwhelming the students with much information about aspects of language acquisition". The learning outcomes are the driving force in NS1's classes. She usually does research and, based on the amount of information collected, creates her own worksheets and handouts for the students complete. Once the students have acquired the targeted rule, they are asked to work in groups or pairs and interview each other using the newly acquired structure. In a like manner, for the NS2, grammar teaching practice is in context with testing prior knowledge and then building and adding to it. She clearly stated in the interview that this is done by giving the students examples from the theme, the textbook, IST, and the Product Task. She said: "I usually start with the rule so ensure that students know the foundations, then I practice the use of the targeted structure in authentic examples the students see around them". On the contrary, the NNSs said that they teach grammar in context without testing prior knowledge due to time constraints.

The two NSs value the importance of teaching form, including grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation (Q5). NS1 mentioned that: "Still I don't teach them together. I teach each in isolation because if they were taught simultaneously students are less likely to learn any. Even if I did, I'll put reading and pronunciation together, but grammar not to be combined with any language aspect". NS2 emphasizes that "for example, when I teach vocabulary, I refer to parts of speech (noun, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.). So learners can always understand the relationship between form and vocabulary. Further, pronunciation is practiced on daily basis because learners don't have that background. However, spelling is not given that much emphasis, but students are given a weekly spelling test on the core theme vocabulary coming from ADEK. Students are engaged weekly on activities where they look up

meanings, use words in sentences, and communication activities". However, the two NNSs view teaching form to be of moderate importance in their lessons, reasoning that they had other learning outcomes that they were required to cover.

In regard to the factors that make teachers focus on form in their teaching method (Q6), there were a number of differences between the four teachers. NS1 believed that 'student errors' made her focus on the formal properties of language. However, she maintained that it should not be done directly in order to avoid the student feeling intimidated. Instead, the teacher rephrased errors without the students realizing that she was correcting the error. (e.g., the student: 'on the weekend we go to Dubai'. The teacher: 'oh girls, over the weekend I too went to Dubai Mall with my friends and watched a movie.') Another factor was the gap students had between their current level of proficiency and the required level due to a lack of a reading culture among students. This factor was common with the two NSs and NNS1. Additionally, NS2 and NNS2 mentioned a new factor: the ADEK syllabus they followed allows the teacher to cover a single learning outcome three times minimally. So, teachers continually work on the LOs throughout the term.

The seventh interview question consisted of two parts: 'How, in practical terms, are you focusing on form in your teaching within the framework of the currently used syllabus?' and 'What considerations do you make when sequencing the teaching events, including focus on meaning and focus on form?' In regard to the first part, three teachers (NS1 and the two NNSs) confirmed that the ADEK syllabus was the driving force for focusing on form. However, NS2 believed that several factors comprised the driving force for focusing on form. These included: the IST; the Product Task; the use of context clues rather than going directly to dictionary; and the deconstruction of

words into prefixes, suffixes, etc. Further, regarding the second part of the question, two considerations were highlighted. The first was mentioned by NS1 and the NNSs, who indicated that the order of the LOs followed by the scope and the sequence provided by ADEK was how teachers introduced the LOs. The second was mentioned by NS2, who stated that the LOs, student understanding, their progress, and needs were what determined the sequence of teaching events.

The eighth interview question also consisted of two parts. Regarding the first part, how students' grammatical mistakes (oral or written) were corrected, the four teachers agreed that written errors were corrected in detail and the oral errors were generally disregarded, except if they hindered the flow of communication the teacher corrected by rephrasing the student's utterances. The second part of the question focused on the effect of error correction on students' language level. The teachers' responses were somewhat similar. They all agreed that correcting students' errors affect students learning positively, but with some concerns from NS1 that over-correcting student errors impedes the students' desire to participate and answer the teacher's questions.

Regarding whether the way of teaching is compatible with the methodology suggested in the curriculum documents (Q9), NS1 stated that "ADEK wants English language teachers to teach the LOs, especially the grammar LOs, within the framework of the two Projects: IST and the Product. It is too challenging unless the students are high-level learners. Teaching in the suggested way would lead to overwhelming the students with too much information to focus on. Therefore, I go for teaching the LOs in isolation". However, NS2 found it compatible because it 'forces' the teacher to work with the learner in a gradual way. Hence, in such cases, no learner is left behind

because learners are continually given opportunities to practice and master the targeted structure/form. A NNS found it somewhat compatible and good but she did not consider differentiation in student abilities.

In respect to the problems that face teachers and their students in teaching and learning form (Q10), NS1 stated that "the effect of L1 on pronunciation, conjugating verbs, and students tries to use 'Google Translate' to translate passages because it changes the whole meaning is the main problem.' However, NS2 mentioned that 'the gap between students' current level and the required level causes most of the problems". She explained that the gap mainly resulted from the students' lack of reading. Reading allows learners to observe and accumulate form where they have the opportunity to see what the sentence looks like (i.e., starts with capital letter, has to have subject-verb agreement, etc.). On the contrary, while NNS1 indicated that sticking to the learning outcomes is the main problem, NNS2 mentioned that time constraints were a challenge for teaching form.

Finally, concerning the challenges and possibilities of implementing TBLT and FonF in the UAE context (Q11), the four teachers mentioned various issues. They faced different challenges to which they provided different solutions. For example, NS1 mentioned six issues:

- Lack of motivation especially with low-level students
- Time for having all students do presentations of their work
- Gap in the students' level of proficiency
- Lack of reading culture
- Large number of students in the classes

- Lack of practical ideas in designing the textbook especially with low-level students.

The possibilities to overcome these issues were as she stated: "through more practice and repetition, class environment where everything there serves a purpose and giving students more opportunities to communicate in English". Further, NS1 offered an optional 'advanced English club' for one hour a week. Furthermore, she gives high-level class surveys and based on what the students write, she adapts and designs subsequent classes.

NS2 faced a different challenge: the gap that results from lack of a reading culture in the UAE context and the large number of students. She suggested that this might be overcome by (1) building love of reading in the classrooms (establishing reading clubs and reinforcing student by buying them books instead of chocolate); (2) confronting students with technology in the classes; and (3) creating online reading programs, as suggested by ADEK (e.g., RAZ-Kids). Further, NNS1 mentioned the lack of training as the main challenge, suggesting more professional development opportunities and guiding teachers on how to practically implement measures in classes. Finally, NNS2 indicated a lack of resources as the main challenge, which might be overcome by requiring ADEK to make the classes more prepared and compatible with what is required by the learning outcomes.

6.2.3 Teachers' Survey

The teachers' survey consisted of four dimensions, each representing one or more measured factors (items). The dimensions were:

- Teachers' perceptions of FonF importance to learners (3 items)

- Teachers' perceptions of FonF implementation within TBLT (4 items)

- Teachers' perceptions of FonF and error correction (6 items)

- Effect of Arabic language on form acquisition (1 item).

Table 7 presents the ratings of the teachers on these four dimensions, which were included in their survey.

Regarding the first dimension, 'teachers' perceptions of FonF importance to learners', the results showed a positive agreement between the four teachers. NS1 believed that studying form was 'usually' essential to mastering a foreign or second language, while the three other teachers found it 'always' essential. Further, NS1 agreed that natural exposure to foreign language was 'sometimes' enough for acquiring linguistic competence (grammar that allows a speaker to use and understand a language). The other three teachers found it 'usually' enough for acquiring linguistic competence. They all had the same perception that students 'always' find grammar 'something useless to study.' The teachers' feedback on FonF importance to learners was positive and formative even though their students find grammar of no value. The results obtained here were to a good extent matching the teachers' results in the interview (Q5).

Table 7: Teachers' perceptions towards FonF and TBLT

Measuring factors	Native English speakers		Non-native English speakers	
	Canadian NS 1	South African NS2 2	Emirati teacher 3	Emirati teacher 4
Teachers perceptions of FonF importance to learners				
1. Studying form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is essential for learners to master a foreign or a second language.	Usually	Always	Always	Always
2. Natural exposure to foreign language is enough for acquiring linguistic competence (grammar that allows a speaker to use and understand a language)	Sometimes	Usually	Usually	Usually
3. Students find grammar something useless to study. (Negative)	Always	Always	Always	Always
Teachers perceptions of FonF implementation within TBLT				
4. Studying form helps students improve their communication skills.	Usually	Always	Always	Usually
5. Using authentic texts when teaching grammar takes more time but it is more beneficial for students' learning. (Negative)	Usually	Sometimes	Always	Usually
6. Trying to connect meaning and form in context confuses students. (Negative)	Often	Often	Always	Usually
7. Teaching form in context is of no avail with students at low language level. (Negative)	Often	Always	Always	Usually
Teacher perceptions of FonF error correction practices				
8. Students should only be corrected in speaking when their errors hinder getting the message across.	Usually	Usually	Often	Often
9. Corrective feedback motivates students and satisfies their needs if it's employed appropriately.	Usually	Usually	Always	Usually
10. Immediate correction of students' oral mistakes can help prevent fossilization (stabilization) of erroneous patterns.	Often	Usually	Usually	Usually
11. Peer-correction in small groups is more preferable for students than teacher correction.	Usually	Always	Always	Sometimes
12. On correcting students' speaking errors, only explicit feedback (teacher corrects the error or gets it corrected with an indication that an error has been made) should be used. (Negative)	Usually	Sometimes	Always	Usually
13. On correcting students' speaking errors, both types of feedback (explicit and implicit) should be used.	Sometimes	Usually	Usually	Usually
Effect of Arabic language on form acquisition				
14. Arabic language causes difficulty in learning English grammar because of the structural differences between the two languages. (Negative)	Usually	Usually	Usually	Often

Also, as can be seen from Table 7, regarding the second dimension, teachers' perception of FonF implementation within TBLT, the four teachers had different perceptions from each other on each of the four items. NS1 and NNS2 found studying form 'usually' helpful for students to improve their communication skills. However, NS2 and NNS1 found it 'always' helpful. NNS1 found using authentic texts when teaching grammar 'always' takes time. This indicates that TBLT has a negative implementation side, as it is time consuming, but still more beneficial for students' learning. This finding was agreed with to some extent by NS1 and NNS2 who shared the same perception on this issue that using authentic texts when teaching grammar 'usually' takes time. However, NS2 had a lower estimation that it 'sometimes' takes more time. In regard to trying to connect meaning and form in context and whether it confuses students, NNS1 found it 'always' confusing to students. This finding was somewhat agreed on by NNS2 who shared the same perception that connecting meaning and form in context 'usually' confuses students. However, NS1 and NS2 had a lower estimation that it 'often' confuses students, indicating that it is useful for form implementation within TBLT approach. Further, NS2 and NNS1 indicated that form implementation within TBLT is 'always' of no avail to students at a low language level. However, NNS2 found it 'usually' of no avail, compared to NS1 who has a positive perception that it is 'often' of no avail for students at a low language level.

From another perspective related to teacher's perception of FonF and error correction, the results showed that, while NSs saw that students should usually be corrected in speaking when their errors hindered the message, the NNSs believed that they often should be corrected. Further, NS1, NS2, and NNS2 shared the same perceptions that corrective feedback usually motivates students and satisfies their

needs if it is employed appropriately. This finding was highly supported by NNS1who believed that it 'always' motivates students and satisfies their needs. Additionally, while the NS1 believed that immediate correction of students' oral mistakes can help prevent fossilization (stabilization) of erroneous patterns, the other three teachers found it to be 'usually' helpful. Further, NS2 and NNS1 felt that peer-correction practice in small groups is 'always' more preferable for students than teacher correction. In contrast, NS1 believed that it is 'usually' helpful and NNS2 believed that it is 'sometimes' helpful. Whether explicit feedback should be used to correct students' error was a moot issue among the four teachers. NS2 felt it should be used 'sometimes' only, whereas the other three teachers believed that it 'usually' should be used. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of the last item in this dimension (item 13). Item 13 explains that both types of feedback (explicit and implicit) should be used to correct students' errors, which is the ideal practice, but the teachers' perceptions on this varied. NS2, NNS1, and NNS2 believed that both types of feedback, explicit and implicit, should 'usually' be used.

Finally, in regard to the effect of Arabic language on form acquisition, the two NSs and NNS1 believed that the Arabic language 'usually' causes difficulty in learning English grammar because of the structural differences between the two languages. However, from the perspective of NNS2, it 'often' causes such difficulty.

6.3 Quantitative Data Analysis

6.3.1 Students Survey

The students' survey was distributed to 100 students from the four classes taught by the four English-language teachers in three schools. The survey consists of seven items distributed to four dimensions as follows:

- One item measured the 'students' perception of FonF importance'

- Two items measured the 'students' view of FonF implementation in class'

- Two items measured the 'students' perception of the textbook'

- Two items measured the 'students' techniques when talking in English.'

Cronbach's alpha reliability test was performed to measure the students' survey reliability. The results showed a reliability index of 0.764 after deleting three items which showed irrelevance to the whole measure. This index indicates that the results of students' responses were valid for the study purpose.

Table 8 presents the students' perceptions towards the importance and implementation of FonF and the textbook. The rating scale consists of five ratings that helped students decide on their perceptions on each of the seven items. All seven items were positive in direction which means the higher rating the better the perception. Counts and percentages were used to explain how the responses of the 100 students are distributed on the five ratings on each item. Descriptive statistics (minimum rating, maximum rating, mean, and standard deviation, or S.D) were employed to give a better understanding of the overall judgment of the students' perceptions on each item. The true limits of the mean of each rating were as follows:

- Seldom = 1.00 to 1.49
- Often = 1.50 to 2.49
- Sometimes = 2.50 to 3.49
- Usually = 3.50 to 4.49
- Always = 4.50 to 5.00

Table 8: Student perceptions towards the importance and implementation of FonF
and the textbook

Student perceptions of Focus-on-Form Instruction (FFI)	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D	Judgment
Student Perceptions of FonF Importance						
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.	100	2	5	4.59	.653	Always
Student Views of FonF Implementation In Class						
2. My teacher focuses on form just right.	100	3	5	4.61	.618	Always
3. My teacher corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.	100	2	5	4.67	.620	Always
Student Perceptions Of The Textbook						
4. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.	100	1	5	4.14	1.025	Usually
5. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure	100	1	5	4.22	.949	Usually
Student Techniques When Talking In English						
6. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.	100	2	5	4.34	.819	Usually
7. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.	100	1	5	4.54	.846	Always

To determine if there is consistency between the ratings of the students in the four classes, another analysis was done for each class separately on each item of the four dimensions constituting the survey. The ratings of the four classes on their perceptions towards FonF instruction are presented in Table 8. Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to measure the reliability of the students' survey; the results showed a

reliability index of 0.764. This index confirms that the results of students' responses are valid for the study purpose, as the factor analysis plot in Figure 1 indicates.
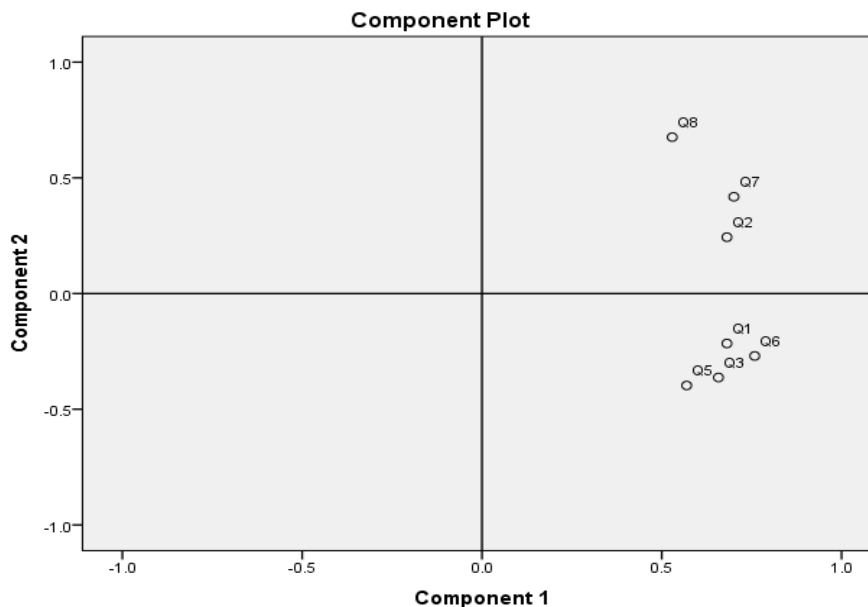
Figure 1: Factor analysis of students' perceptions

To decide if there were any significant differences between the four classes, a one-way ANOVA test was performed at significant level alpha = 0.05. Results show no significant variances (f-ratio = 0.763, sig. = 0.518) between their ratings which can be attributed to their class group as presented (Figure 2).
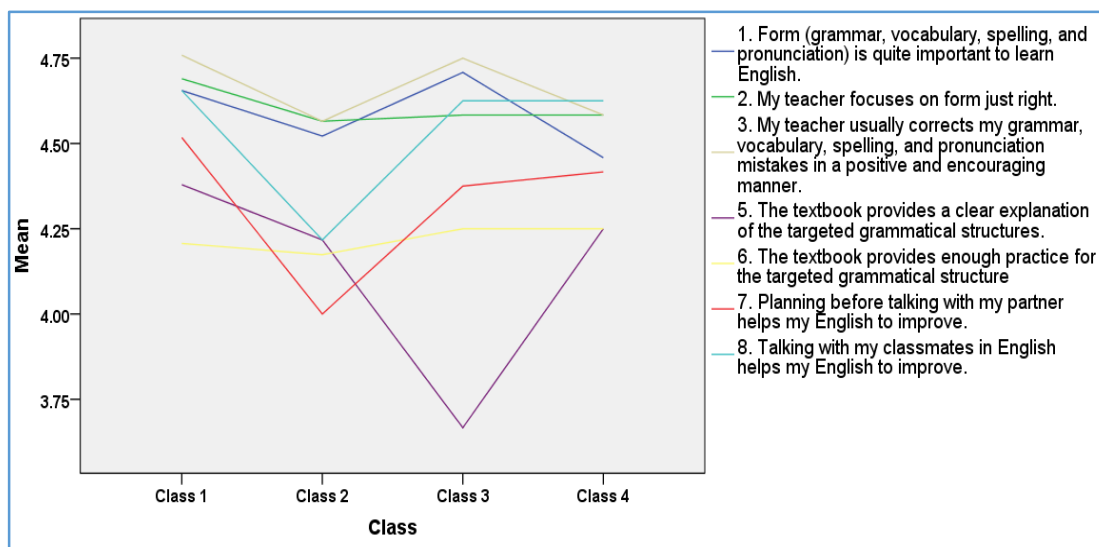
Figure 2: One-way ANOVA test of students' perceptions

The results obtained from the one-way ANOVA are shown in Table 10. Another analysis was employed to determine if the English language proficiency of teachers (native – non-native) variable could explain significant differences in student perceptions regarding FonF instruction. The test employed was the t-test set at significant level alpha = 0.05. The t-test confirmed there were no significant differences that could be attributed to the English proficiency variable (t-value = 0.098, sig. = 0.922) (Figure 3). The results related to the t-test analysis are shown in Table 11.
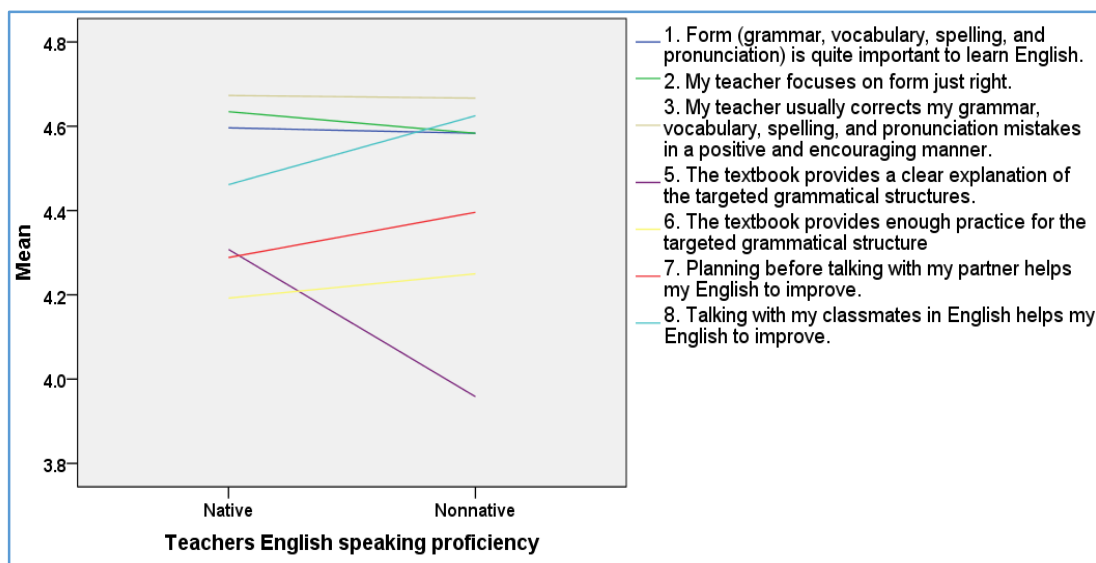
Figure 3: T-test of students' perceptions

Regarding the first dimension, students' perception of FonF importance, which consists of one item only, student ratings were positive to the perception that form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English. Their ratings were between 'often' and 'always', and the overall mean (4.59) indicates that form is 'always' important to learn English. This finding is consistent with teachers' perceptions on the first dimension that focusing on form is integral for language learning (Table 7). The ratings of the four classes on this item, shown in Table 9, were somewhat consistent, indicating they had the same perception that form is 'always' important to learn English (a mean of 4.46 for class 4 and 4.71 for class 3). Further, there were no significant variances (f-ratio = 0.763, sig. = 0.518) between their ratings which could be attributed to their class group, as presented in Table 10. This confirms that the students found form 'always' important to learn English, just as the teachers did. Testing for any significant difference between the students' perceptions on this item that could be related to the teachers' English proficiency (native – non-native) variable, the results in Table 11 show that the two groups of

students had the same perception that form is 'always' quite important to learn English. Group 1 was taught by a native English speaker (mean = 4.60) and group 2 by a non-native English speaker (mean = 4.58). The t-test confirmed that there were no significant differences that could be attributed to the English proficiency variable (t-value = 0.098, sig. = 0.922).

The second dimension investigates students' views of FonF implementation in class. This dimension consists of two items. The first item asks if the teacher focuses on form just right. Students' responses were between the ratings of 'sometimes' and 'always', favoring the 'always' rating (mean = 4.61), confirming that their English-language teachers 'always' focus on form just right (mean of 4.57 for class 2 and 4.69 for class 1), as shown in Table 8. The ratings of the four classes on this item, shown in Table 9, were consistent with each other, indicating that they shared the perception that their teachers 'always' focus on form just right.

Additionally, there were no significant variances (f-ratio = 0.225, sig. = 0.879) between their ratings which could be attributed to their class group, as presented in Table 10. This confirms that the students found teachers 'always' focus on form just right. Testing for any significant differences between the students' perceptions on this item that could be related to the teachers' English proficiency (native – non-native) variable, the results in Table 11 show that the two groups of students had the same perceptions that teachers 'always' focus on form just right. Group 1 was taught by a native English speaker (mean = 4.63) and group 2 by a non-native English speaker (mean = 4.58). The t-test confirms there were no significant differences that could be attributed to the English proficiency variable (t-value = 0.413, sig. = 0.681).

The second item in the second dimension asks if the teacher corrects students' mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner. Students' responses were between the ratings 'often' to 'always', favoring the 'always' rating (mean = 4.67), which received the highest rating among all items in the students' measures, confirming that their English-language teachers correct students' mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner (mean of 4.57 for class 3 and 4.76 for class 1), as shown in Table 8. The ratings of the four classes on this item, shown in Table 9, were consistent with each other, indicating that they shared the perception that their teachers 'always' correct students' mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.

Moreover, there were no significant variances (f-ratio = 0.699, sig. = 0.555) between their ratings that could be attributed to their class group, as presented in Table 10. This confirms that the students found their teachers were 'always' correcting students' mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner. Testing if there were any significant differences between the students' perceptions on this item that could be related to the teacher English proficiency (native – non-native) variable, the results in Table 11 show that the two groups of students had the same perception that their teachers 'always' correct students' mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner. Group 1 was taught by a native English speaker (mean = 4.67) and group 2 by a non-native English speaker (mean = 4.67). The t-test (Table 12) confirms that there were no significant differences that could be attributed to the English proficiency variable (t-value = 0.051, sig. = 0.959).

Table 9: Student ratings on teacher variable (four different classes taught by four different English-language teachers)

Teacher variable	Canadian Teacher (NS1)				South African Teacher (NS2)				Emirati Teacher (NNS1)				Emirati Teacher (NNS2)			
Class variable	Class 1 = 29 students				Class 2 = 23 students				Class 3 = 24 students				Class 4 = 24 students			
Student perceptions of Focus-on-Form Instruction (FFI)	Min	Max	Mean	S.D	Min	Max	Mean	S.D	Min	Max	Mean	S.D	Min	Max	Mean	S.D
Student perceptions of FonF importance																
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.	2	5	4.66	.670	2	5	4.52	.730	4	5	4.71	.464	3	5	4.46	.721
Student views of FonF implementation in class																
2. My teacher focuses on form just right.	3	5	4.69	.541	3	5	4.57	.662	3	5	4.58	.654	3	5	4.58	.654
3. My teacher corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.	3	5	4.76	.511	3	5	4.57	.728	2	5	4.75	.676	3	5	4.58	.584
Student perceptions of the textbook																
4. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.	2	5	4.38	1.015	2	5	4.22	.795	1	5	3.67	1.435	3	5	4.25	.532
5. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure	1	5	4.21	1.013	1	5	4.17	1.029	2	5	4.25	.989	3	5	4.25	.794
Student techniques when talking in English																
6. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.	3	5	4.52	.738	2	5	4.00	.953	3	5	4.38	.770	3	5	4.42	.776
7. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.	2	5	4.66	.721	2	5	4.22	.902	1	5	4.63	1.013	3	5	4.63	.711

Table 10: Results of one-way ANOVA test on class variable (four different classes taught by four different English language teachers)

Classes of native English-speaking teacher	Native English speakers					Non-native English speakers				
Student perceptions of Focus on Form Instruction (FFI)	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D
Student perceptions of FonF importance										
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.	52	2	5	4.60	.693	48	3	5	4.58	.613
Student views of FonF implementation in class										
2. My teacher focuses on form just right.	52	3	5	4.63	.595	48	3	5	4.58	.647
3. My teacher corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.	52	3	5	4.67	.617	48	2	5	4.67	.630
Student perceptions of the textbook										
4. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.	52	2	5	4.31	.919	48	1	5	3.96	1.110
5. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure	52	1	5	4.19	1.011	48	2	5	4.25	.887
Student techniques when talking in English										
6. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.	52	2	5	4.29	.871	48	3	5	4.40	.765
7. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.	52	2	5	4.46	.828	48	1	5	4.63	.866

Table 11: Student ratings of teacher English proficiency variable (Native – Non-Native)

Student perceptions of Focus on Form Instruction (FFI)	Variance group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig. (2-tailed)
Student perceptions of FonF importance						
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.	Between Groups	.982	3	.327	.763	.518
	Within Groups	41.208	96	.429		
	Total	42.190	99			
Student views of FonF implementation in class						
2. My teacher focuses on form just right.	Between Groups	.264	3	.088	.225	.879
	Within Groups	37.526	96	.391		
	Total	37.790	99			
3. My teacher corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.	Between Groups	.814	3	.271	.699	.555
	Within Groups	37.296	96	.388		
	Total	38.110	99			
Student perceptions of the textbook						
4. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.	Between Groups	7.466	3	2.489	2.474	.066
	Within Groups	96.574	96	1.006		
	Total	104.040	99			
5. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure	Between Groups	.097	3	.032	.035	.991
	Within Groups	89.063	96	.928		
	Total	89.160	99			
Student techniques when talking in English						
6. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.	Between Groups	3.740	3	1.247	1.909	.133
	Within Groups	62.700	96	.653		
	Total	66.440	99			
7. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.	Between Groups	3.125	3	1.042	1.477	.226
	Within Groups	67.715	96	.705		
	Total	70.840	99			

Table 11: Student ratings of teacher English proficiency variable (Native – Non-Native) (continued)

Student perceptions of Focus on Form Instruction (FFI)	Variance group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig. (2-tailed)
Student perceptions of FonF importance						
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.	Between Groups	.982	3	.327	.763	.518
	Within Groups	41.208	96	.429		
	Total	42.190	99			
Student views of FonF implementation in class						
2. My teacher focuses on form just right.	Between Groups	.264	3	.088	.225	.879
	Within Groups	37.526	96	.391		
	Total	37.790	99			
3. My teacher corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.	Between Groups	.814	3	.271	.699	.555
	Within Groups	37.296	96	.388		
	Total	38.110	99			
Student perceptions of the textbook						
4. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.	Between Groups	7.466	3	2.489	2.474	.066
	Within Groups	96.574	96	1.006		
	Total	104.040	99			
5. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure	Between Groups	.097	3	.032	.035	.991
	Within Groups	89.063	96	.928		
	Total	89.160	99			
Student techniques when talking in English						
6. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.	Between Groups	3.740	3	1.247	1.909	.133
	Within Groups	62.700	96	.653		
	Total	66.440	99			
7. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.	Between Groups	3.125	3	1.042	1.477	.226
	Within Groups	67.715	96	.705		
	Total	70.840	99			

Table 11: Student ratings of teacher English proficiency variable (Native – Non-Native) (continued)

Student perceptions of Focus on Form Instruction (FFI)	Variance group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig. (2-tailed)
Student perceptions of FonF importance						
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.	Between Groups	.982	3	.327	.763	.518
	Within Groups	41.208	96	.429		
	Total	42.190	99			
Student views of FonF implementation in class						
2. My teacher focuses on form just right.	Between Groups	.264	3	.088	.225	.879
	Within Groups	37.526	96	.391		
	Total	37.790	99			
3. My teacher corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.	Between Groups	.814	3	.271	.699	.555
	Within Groups	37.296	96	.388		
	Total	38.110	99			
Student perceptions of the textbook						
4. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.	Between Groups	7.466	3	2.489	2.474	.066
	Within Groups	96.574	96	1.006		
	Total	104.040	99			
5. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure	Between Groups	.097	3	.032	.035	.991
	Within Groups	89.063	96	.928		
	Total	89.160	99			
Student techniques when talking in English						
6. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.	Between Groups	3.740	3	1.247	1.909	.133
	Within Groups	62.700	96	.653		
	Total	66.440	99			
7. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.	Between Groups	3.125	3	1.042	1.477	.226
	Within Groups	67.715	96	.705		
	Total	70.840	99			

Table 11: Student ratings of teacher English proficiency variable (Native – Non-Native) (continued)

Student perceptions of Focus on Form Instruction (FFI)	Variance group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig. (2-tailed)
Student perceptions of FonF importance						
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.	Between Groups	.982	3	.327	.763	.518
	Within Groups	41.208	96	.429		
	Total	42.190	99			
Student views of FonF implementation in class						
2. My teacher focuses on form just right.	Between Groups	.264	3	.088	.225	.879
	Within Groups	37.526	96	.391		
	Total	37.790	99			
3. My teacher corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.	Between Groups	.814	3	.271	.699	.555
	Within Groups	37.296	96	.388		
	Total	38.110	99			
Student perceptions of the textbook						
4. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.	Between Groups	7.466	3	2.489	2.474	.066
	Within Groups	96.574	96	1.006		
	Total	104.040	99			
5. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure	Between Groups	.097	3	.032	.035	.991
	Within Groups	89.063	96	.928		
	Total	89.160	99			
Student techniques when talking in English						
6. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.	Between Groups	3.740	3	1.247	1.909	.133
	Within Groups	62.700	96	.653		
	Total	66.440	99			
7. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.	Between Groups	3.125	3	1.042	1.477	.226
	Within Groups	67.715	96	.705		
	Total	70.840	99			

Table 12: T-test results on teacher English proficiency variable (Native – Non-native)

Group Statistics	Teacher English proficiency	Descriptive statistics				t-test for Equality of Means			
		N	Mean	S.D	S.E of Mean	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference
Student perceptions of FonF importance									
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English.	Native	52	4.60	.693	.096	.098	98	.922	.013
	Nonnative	48	4.58	.613	.088				
Student views of FonF implementation in class									
2. My teacher focuses on form just right.	Native	52	4.63	.595	.083	.413	98	.681	.051
	Nonnative	48	4.58	.647	.093				
3. My teacher corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner.	Native	52	4.67	.617	.086	.051	98	.959	.006
	Nonnative	48	4.67	.630	.091				
Student perceptions of the textbook									
4. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures.	Native	52	4.31	.919	.127	1.719	98	.089	.349
	Nonnative	48	3.96	1.110	.160				
5. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure	Native	52	4.19	1.011	.140	-.302	98	.763	-.058
	Nonnative	48	4.25	.887	.128				
Student techniques when talking in English									
6. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve.	Native	52	4.29	.871	.121	-.653	98	.515	-.107
	Nonnative	48	4.40	.765	.110				
7. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve.	Native	52	4.46	.828	.115	-.965	98	.337	-.163
	Nonnative	48	4.63	.866	.125				

The third dimension examined students' perceptions of the textbook. This dimension consists of two items. The first item asked if the textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures. Students' responses in regard to that were between the ratings of 'seldom' to 'always,' favoring the 'usually' rating (mean = 4.14), which received the lowest rating among the items of student measures, confirming that the textbook 'usually' provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures, as shown in Table 8. The ratings of the four classes on this item, shown in Table 9, were consistent with each other, indicating that they shared the perception that the textbook 'usually' provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures (mean of 3.67 for class 3 and 4.38 for class 1). There were no significant variances (f-ratio = 2.474, sig. = 0.066) between their ratings that could be attributed to their class group, as presented in Table 10. This confirms that the students found the textbook 'always' provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures. Testing for any significant differences between the students' perceptions on this item that could be related to the teachers' English proficiency (native – non-native) variable, the results in Table 11 show that the two groups of students had the same perceptions that the textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures. Group 1 was taught by a native English speaker (mean = 4.31) and group 2 by a non-native English speaker (mean = 3.96). The t-test (Table 12) confirmed there were no significant differences that could be attributed to the English proficiency variable (t-value = 1.719, sig. = 0.089).

The second item on the third dimension asked if the textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure. The students' responses were between the rating of 'often' and 'always,' favoring the 'always' rating (mean = 4.22), confirming that the textbook 'usually' provides enough practice for the targeted

grammatical structure (mean of 4.17 for class 2 and 4.25 for classes 3 and 4), as shown in Table 8. The ratings of the four classes on this item, shown in Table 9, were consistent with each other, indicating they shared the perception that the textbook 'usually' provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure. There were also no significant variances (f-ratio = 0.035, sig. = 0.991) between their ratings that could be attributed to their class group, as shown in Table 10. This confirms that the students found the textbook 'usually' provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure. Testing for any significant differences between the students' perceptions on this item that could be related to the teachers' English proficiency (native – non-native) variable, the results in Table 11 show that the two groups of students had the same perception that the textbook 'usually' provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure. Group 1 was taught by a native English speaker (mean = 4.19) and group 2 by a non-native English speaker (mean = 4.25). The t-test (Table 12) confirmed there were no significant differences that could be attributed to the English proficiency variable (t-value = -0.302, sig. = 0.763).

The fourth dimension attempted to understand students' techniques when talking in English. This dimension consists of two items. The first item asked if planning before talking with a student partner helps his/her English to improve. Students' responses were between the rating of 'often' and 'always,' favoring the 'usually' rating (mean = 4.34), confirming that planning before talking with a student partner 'usually' helps his/her English to improve, as shown in Table 8. The ratings of the four classes on this item, shown in Table 9, were consistent with each other, indicating they shared the perception that planning before talking with a student partner 'usually' helps his/her English to improve (mean of 4.00 for class 2 and 4.52 for class 1). There were also no significant variances (f-ratio = 1.247, sig. = 0.133)

between their ratings that could be attributed to their class group, as presented in Table 10. This confirms that the students find planning before talking with a student partner 'usually' helpful to his/her English to improve. Testing for any significant differences between the students' perceptions on this item that could be related to the teachers' English proficiency (native – non-native) variable, the results in Table 11 show that the two groups of students had the same perception that planning before talking with a student partner 'usually' helps his/her English to improve. Group 1 was taught by a native English speaker (mean = 4.29) and group 2 by a no-native English speaker (mean = 4.40). The t-test (Table 12) confirmed that there were no significant differences that could be attributed to the English proficiency variable (t-value = -0.653, sig. = 0.515).

The second item on the fourth dimension asked if talking with classmates in English helps him/her English to improve. The students' responses were between the rating of 'seldom' and 'always,' favoring the 'always' rating (mean = 4.54), confirming that talking with classmates in English 'always' helps his/her English to improve (mean of 4.22 for class 2 and 4.66 for class 1), as shown in Table 8. The ratings of the four classes on this item, shown in Table 9, were consistent with each other, indicating that they had the same perception that talking with classmates in English 'usually' helps their English to improve. There were also no significant variances (f-ratio = 1.477, sig. = 0.226) between their ratings that could be attributed to their class group, as presented in Table 10. This confirms that the students find talking with classmates in English 'always' helps their English to improve. Testing for any significant differences between the students' perceptions on this item that could be attributed to the teachers' English proficiency (native – non-native) variable, the results

in Table 11 show that the two groups of students had the same perception that talking with classmates in English helps their English to improve. This was so even though group 1, which was taught by a native English speaker, rated the perception at the upper end of the 'usually' level (mean = 4.46), while group 2, which was taught by a non-native English speaker, rated the perception at the 'always' level (mean = 4.63). The t-test (Table 12) confirmed there were no significant differences that could be attributed to the English proficiency variable (t-value = -0.965, sig. = 0.337).

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined how a task-based textbook enhances form acquisition and how the potential gaps between theory and practice might be addressed. The study also aimed to explore teachers' and students' views and perceptions towards the textbooks and the implementation of FonF within a TBLT framework. Adopting an experimental study approach, the data set included a total of one unit taught by four teachers on the same theme, with individual lesson plans and teaching materials. Data were collected from classroom observations, field notes, documentations of student work, as well as interviews with teachers and surveys of both teachers and students.

The purpose of this concluding chapter is four-fold:

- To discuss the findings of the current study in relation to the growing body of research on TBLT and FonF

- To show how teachers are diverse in the performance and implementation of TBLT and FonF

- To discuss the role of teachers' and students' views towards TBLT, FonF, and the textbook

- To discuss the meaning and interpretations of findings, as well as provide suggestions for further future research.

7.1 Introduction and Background

Four English language teachers, two native and two non-native, from three different intermediate governmental schools in Al Ain City, UAE, participated in this study. The four teachers were observed teaching the same grade (grade 7), the same unit from the coursebook, and with the same learning outcomes assigned by ADEK. The data set included one unit taught by the four teachers on the same topic but with

different lesson plans and teaching materials. All participating teachers engaged in interviews and supplementary surveys in which they shared their experiences as participants in the UAE English-language teaching community for over 10 years each. In addition, the teachers expressed their views on FonF through TBLT approach. Teachers were able to reflect on the possibilities and constraints of implementing TBLT in the UAE intermediate-school educational setting. Further, one hundred students from the same three schools participated in this study. The students were observed and surveyed too. They were able to express their views regarding FonF and their classroom teachers' implementation of TBLT and FonF in teaching practice.

7.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the current study revealed clear differences in terms of teachers' teaching practices regarding the implementation of FonF through the textbook that is TBLT supported. Teacher performance regarding TBLT application was assessed by the first learning outcome (LO1), 'retrieve, interpret, and reflect on information and ideas in a written text.' In regard to FonF, it was assessed based on the second learning outcome (LO2), 'edit grammar, spelling, and punctuation.' Teachers used different tasks and strategies to fulfill the two mentioned learning outcomes the matter that created the variety and difference in their teaching performance.

Results showed that all teachers were able to fulfill the LO1 but were not able to implement TBLT to the same extent. While the NSs were able to implement TBLT framework in their instruction successfully but NS1 did not refer to the textbook while NS2 did that with the use of the textbook. NNSs implemented the framework with reference to the textbook but without covering the final post-task stage. In regard to

LO2 and FonF implementation, all participating teachers were able to fulfill the LO2 but not all of them were able to apply FonF successfully. While NS1 was able to implement FonF in the communicative and expected way, NS2 did not. Instead, she did form-focused instruction (FFI) where the overriding focus of the tasks were for accuracy rather than meaning. Further, NNS1 was focusing on accuracy and forms at the expense of fluency, while NNS2 did the reverse, focusing on meaning only over form.

From another perspective that assesses teachers' views and perceptions towards TBLT, FonF, and the textbook (RQ2) and how they believed they affect students' learning, this study showed that all four teachers agreed that form was important for language learning and mastering and that it helped students improve their communication skills, even though the students found it 'useless to study.' Further, the findings indicate that using authentic texts when teaching grammar (through TBLT) took more time but was more beneficial for student learning. However, while native speakers often thought trying to connect meaning and form in context confused students, non-native teachers thought it always did, which explains their inability to do FonF in the appropriate way. Lastly, regarding teachers' views towards the textbook, all teachers found it a good but insufficient resource, as they had to prepare extra materials to fulfill the LOs required by ADEK.

In relations to students' views towards their classroom teachers' implementation of FonF (RQ3), this study showed that students found FonF essential and integral for their language learning, as did their teachers. From their perspective, their teachers focus on form in the right way and correct their errors in a positive and encouraging way. They also found the textbook a great resource for learning form,

including grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation and they believed that it offers enough explanation for the targeted structures.

In regard to the challenges and constraints that face implementing TBLT and FonF in the UAE EFL middle-school educational setting (RQ4), the study revealed a number of issues. These included:

- Lack of motivation

- A gap between students' current level of proficiency and the required level

- Lack of a reading culture

- Large number of students in classes

- Lack of practical ideas in the textbook, especially with low-level students

- Sticking to the learning outcomes

- Time constraints

- Effect of L1 on pronunciation and conjugating verbs.

In line with the obtained findings, teachers differed in enacting TBLT and FonF in their classrooms along four dimensions:

- The ability and extent to fulfill the two learning outcomes

- The type of FonF employed in the classroom

- The discoursal strategies used for doing FonF (i.e., editing, self and peer correction, etc.)

- The ability to implement TBLT successfully in the classroom based on the design of the lessons with or without the textbook.

These findings imply that the most important factors that contribute to enhancing language learning are not the task or the pedagogic framework the textbook is built on *per se*, but rather the teachers' successful understanding of the framework

and their reactions to student needs in the classroom environment. Below is a discussion of the findings that are related to the implementation of TBLT and FonF.

7.2.1 Findings related to TBLT Implementation

Findings of this section and the subsequent section, FonF implementation, answered the first and the main research question: "Are there any differences between teachers' implementation of focus on form (FonF) in a task-based language teaching (TBLT) EFL middle-school context in the UAE?" This RQ was answered positively and it revealed clearly the differences between the four participating teachers in terms of their fulfillment of the LOs and the application of TBLT and FonF. In regard to the implementation of TBLT approach, the four participating teachers displayed clear differences. While the NSs were able to adopt the framework successfully in their instruction using different strategies, the NNSs were not able to do so to the expected standards. Further, while NS1 was able to implement TBLT in her instruction but without any reference to the coursebook, NS2 and the two NNSs did it with the use of the coursebook. No wonder, NS1 was not aware that the textbook was TBLT-supported and she explicitly expressed that lack of awareness in the interview. She believed that the textbook was a good resource but not a teaching tool for what was required by ADEK. In comparison, NS2 and the NNSs were aware that the textbook was TBLT-supported and found it a good resource but the teacher still had to develop extra worksheets to make sure students had good foundations, especially in grammar, as they mentioned in the interview. Further, they felt that some activities in the textbook were not suitable for low-level learners. We may conclude that there was an agreement between the teachers that the textbook was a good resource but was not compatible with ADEC requirements to fulfill the assigned learning outcomes.

Additionally, although teachers were supposed to follow a teaching approach suggested by ADEK called 'Abilities that Constitute 21st Century Skills' (i.e., critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication), in fact this was not the case. Moreover, there were two long-term tasks required by ADEK to be accomplished by the end of the term that asked teachers to stick to the TBLT approach, 'the Integrated Strand Task (IST)' and 'the Product Task.' However, it was outside the scope of this study to examine the implementation of each. In fact, practically and on a daily basis, teachers followed various approaches in their teaching, as will be described below.

7.2.1.1 Native Speaker 1

NS1 was considered to have successfully adopted the TBLT approach in her teaching. This conclusion is demonstrated by a number of practices in her instruction. For instance, she encouraged the use of authentic language in her teaching by asking the students to bring magazines to introduce them to the concept of 'advertising' and 'propaganda.' She also asked the students to organize themselves into groups in which they had the chance to discuss the magazines they had, share the knowledge, scaffold each other, and work together. Students were working in groups and using language to accomplish the tasks required. Ellis (2008) asserts that pair/group work allows students to take risks and scaffold each other's effort. Moreover, pair and group-work enriches student-student interaction, collaborative learning, purposeful communication, and learner needs.

The design of a task-based lesson involves a number of stages in which the task constitutes the basic component. Several designs have been proposed for creating task-based lessons (Estaire & Zanon, 1994; Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1996a; Willis, 1996, 2012). Although all have in common the same three principal phases (pre-task, the task

cycle, and post-task or language focus phase), one of the basic frameworks for creating

an effective task-based learning lesson is that established by Jane Willis (1996) (Figure

4).
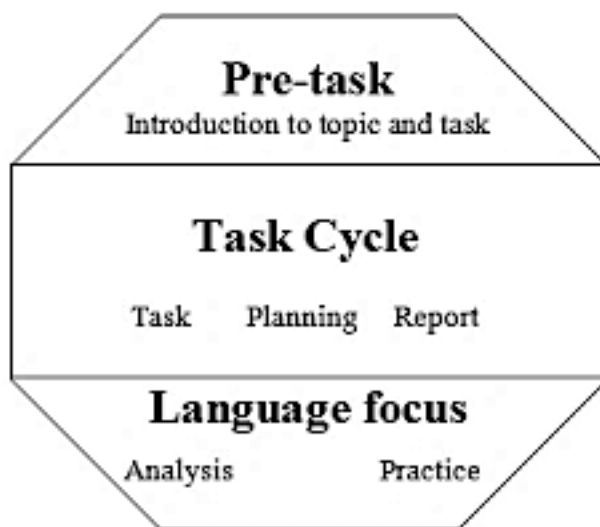
Figure 4: TBLT framework by Jane Willis (1996).

Willis's framework represents what NS1 did in her class. In the pre-task stage,

the teacher organized the students into groups and asked them to discuss the role of

shopping in their lives. They were also given handouts about the different types of

advertising in the media and examples of advertising as a way to familiarize and

prepare them for the main task, as Figure 5 illustrates.

Figure 5: Examples of propaganda in advertising

The given worksheet (See Appendix G) guided the students in justifying their ideas and opinions by using the information from the text.

In the task stage, the students worked in their groups and chose three advertisements from the magazines they brought to present in front of class. They explained how they felt when they looked at the advertisements and explained to their partners whether they would purchase the products being advertised. In addition, NS1 required the students to undertake a long-term task that develops their reflection skills. The task was asking each student to think about creating an advertisement for a new candy bar, a candy bar not at the market or in the store (See Appendix G). In this task, the students had the opportunity to select a specific advertisement that they wanted to share with their target audience. They were required to work in pairs and explain how they felt when they looked at the selected advertisement and clarify for their partners whether would they purchase the product being advertised. Accordingly, students reflect ed on the advertisements and expressed their views about buying the advertised item. Several advertisements based on a specific target audience were created.

However, it was out of the scope of this study to see the outcomes of the students in this task. Students were given a detailed instruction on how to do the task and time for planning. The purpose of both communicative tasks was fluency and linguistic development. This dual focus would not occur without a focus on form.

At the final stage, the post-task, three students from each group presented orally the three advertisements they chose. While the students were presenting, the teacher took notes of the areas where students had problems with and needed reinforcement (language focus). The students also received feedback from the teacher and were informed on how successfully they did the task.

7.2.1.2 Native Speaker 2

NS2 too was able to adopt a TBLT approach in her teaching successfully. As a pre-task activity, students were presented with a PowerPoint presentation showing the different ways people shop and the places they shop at. This presentation activity introduced students to the various means of shopping and prepared them to the most likely terms/vocabulary they would use in the main task. In the task stage, students were asked to discuss in groups the different places and ways of shopping. They were also referred to the textbook to skim read pieces about ways of shopping (i.e., shopping malls, internet shopping, door-to-door shopping, etc.) and then compare any two different ways of shopping based on the reading text in the course book.

To do the comparison, students were given a Venn diagram worksheet to list and represent the similarities and differences between the various ways they chose (See Appendix H). Finally, students exchanged the papers and had the chance to look at their colleagues' comparisons and correct the language problems if there were any.

Another post-task activity was asking the students to list the advantages and disadvantages of the different forms of shopping using their own ideas in the writing section in their course books. After that, students were asked to swap their books with their friends and mark each other's writing. Finally, students were given a worksheet 'editing and revising' and asked to work individually on them, identify the problems, and then write the sentences correctly on the lines provides (see Appendix J).

7.2.1.3 Non-native Speaker 1

NNS1 was implementing TBLT in the design of her lesson too, although the final stage, post-task, was not covered. Following Willis's (1996, 2012) framework, as a pre-task, students brainstormed on different types of shops that they already knew (shopping malls, internet shopping, door-to-door, etc.) and asked how they shop from each. As a main task, students listened to an audio from the assigned textbook that described different shops and what they could buy from each. They were given a worksheet which they filled with the information they heard (See Appendix K). The names of the various means of shops in the worksheet were translated to the students' first language (L1) to make sure that they understood the name of each shop. Students used the reading in their book to skim and scan for more information in order to complete the worksheet. After that students started a collaborative discussion about the information they gathered.

There are four criteria described by Ellis (2009b) that need be in a language-teaching activity in order for it to be counted as a task, and these include:

- A primary focus on meaning
- A gap (e.g., the learner has to do something in order to complete the task)

- Requiring learners to rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic)

- An outcome (e.g., something to show for having successfully performed the task, not just a display of language; see Ellis, 2009b, p. 223).

The activity held by NNS1 was a task because its main focus was meaning. For the students to be able to complete the worksheet, they read and skimmed from the extracts in the reading section in their textbook. They also had to rely on their own linguistic resources to do the task. Finally, there was a clear outcome: the learners' written information about what can be bought from each shop was the proof for having done the task. However, there was no post-task phase. It would be a good focus on form if the NNS1 brought the related words and phrases to learners' attention in the final stage or highlighted the areas (language forms, grammar issues, or related terms) where the students needed more reinforcement and work.

7.2.1.4 Non-native Speaker 2

NNS2 implemented TBLT in her lesson but without covering the final stage, post-task. As a pre-task, students brainstormed the ways and places of shopping by asking them to discuss them in groups. The students had a chance to look at pictures in the reading passages in the textbooks to answer the questions. In the task phase, the teacher distributed different pictures for different stores. Each group had one based on the information in the reading passages to relate and describe (the task). Based on the pictures, students interpreted the information and thought about the type of the shop and what each was expected to sell (See Appendix I).

Again, following Willis's (1996, 2012) framework, and based on Shehadeh's (2005) and Ellis's (2009) definition of the task, the above activity is a task as it

coincides with conditions required for the task mentioned above. Its central focus was on meaning. Additionally, there was a gap in which the students had to work in groups and skim the extracts in their textbook to identify the various shops and do the task. Students had to use their own linguistic resources to do the task. Finally, there was a clear outcome and a written report for the performance of the task that the students shared with their teacher and classmates. However, like NNS1, there was no post-task stage covered in her lesson.

7.2.2 Findings related to FonF Implementation

This study looked at the implementation of FonF involved and examined a number of areas related to the ability of teachers to teach the linguistic forms in a communicative and effective way. These included:

- The type of the emphasized linguistic forms (i.e., responding, student initiated, or teacher initiated)

- The source of the linguistic form (i.e., communicational or as a result of linguistic problem)

- Complexity (i.e., simple and involves a simple change or complex and involves several changes)

- Directness (i.e., direct resolved explicitly or indirect and requires recast, clarification request, repeat and elicit solution)

- The linguistic focus (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, discourse, pronunciation, and morphology).

Below is a description of the performance of each teacher.

7.2.2.1 Native Speaker 1

NS1 was able to focus on form to a good extent and in particular in a reactive way using different strategies. For example, as a warm-up, NS1 gave the students a dictation activity. This activity fulfilled the first learning outcome where the students had to do the editing of the spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The dictation describes the plan of the week, what students would study in the session, or a small introduction about the theme itself (See Appendix L for samples of the dictation accomplished by the students of the first group). As it can be seen from the examples, students got to write the correct form of the dictated passage directly below their dictation so they could compare their version of the text with the original. NS1 provided the students with opportunities to edit their work when the teacher wrote the correct form of the dictation text on the board and asked the students to check their work individually. The students counted their errors in a circle. Self-assessment enabled students to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and, in cooperation with the teacher, they made further plans for improvement (Ellis, 2008).

Further, the teacher used strategies to spell familiar and unfamiliar words, (i.e., asking the students to rewrite the incorrect forms with a contrasted color in their notebooks, using voice intonation to help students know the correct pronunciation and the appropriate punctuation, asking the students questions about the correct use of punctuation, grammatical features, and the use of capital letters at the start of a sentence or with proper nouns). NS1 employed an explicit reactive FonF strategy in the editing of the dictation task, as well as in the discussion after. For instance, she signaled the incorrect pronunciation of the word 'bazar', as illustrated below.

Example 1

> S: Bazr
>
> NS1: Bazaar
>
> S: Bazaar

In other cases, the teacher rephrases the error made without the students realizing that the teacher corrects the error, as the example below shows.

Example 2

> S: On the weekend we go to Dubai.
>
> NS1: Oh girls, over the weekend I too went to Dubai Mall with my friends and watched a movie.

Directing learners' attention occasionally from meaning to a linguistic form and form-meaning connections by an interlocutor is FonF as Long (1991) and Long and Crookes (1992) describe it. This shift was triggered by a perceived problem in the production of the student and was initiated by either the teacher or the student. Additionally, the teacher was able to identify the areas where the students had problems, based on the students' written work, with the interaction taking place in the classroom, and in the oral presentation students did in the candy bar task (discussed earlier in the section on implementation of TBLT). Learners' written work was the main source of data where learning happened by correcting mistakes related to spelling, as well as morphology and grammar. In such situations, learners test out hypotheses about how the target language works and this is where the 'internalization process' occurs as SLA researchers such as Ellis (2008) and Shehadeh (2003) state. In fact, the dictation activity generally supported the listening and writing of students' skills. Simultaneously, it created opportunities for various skills such as the correcting pronunciation and spelling of the key words in the theme assigned, editing their spelling, grammar and punctuation, and the use of their notebooks. Reviewing past

studies in the literature, it has been found that teachers utilize dictation as an evaluation method (Coşkun, Taşkaya, & Bal, 2013; Baydık, Ergül, & Bahap Kudret, 2012; Demirel & Şahinel, 2006). Dictation tasks work also on accuracy and fluency in the four language learning skills. For example, it provides the students with a chance to notice their language problems (i.e., spelling mistakes, missing articles, absence of third person 's', etc.) and enables them to notice features of pronunciation such as weak forms, linking and elision.

7.2.2.2 Native Speaker 2

In regard to the approach used for teaching grammar, NS2 mentioned in the interview that grammar teaching practice is in context with testing prior knowledge and then building on and adding to it. This is done by giving the students examples from the theme, the textbook, Integrated Strand Task (IST), and the Product Task which students work on. She stated: "Start with the rule so ensure that students know the foundations then they practice the use of the targeted structure in authentic examples they see around them". Based on the observation of her teaching practice, her performance in terms of implementing FonF was considered less compared to the first native speaker. She used a pre-emptive FonF strategy that is classified in the literature as teacher-initiated (Long, 1985). She also adopted query means to check whether the students knew a particular linguistic form, capitalization rules and punctuation marks when she wrote a couple of sentences on the board and asked the students to identify the errors, as in the two examples below.

Example 1

NS2: why do we have to put a capital letter here?
S: because it's at the beginning of the sentence.

Example 2

> NS2: what sort of punctuation that goes at the end of the sentence?
>
> S: question mark.
>
> NS2: How did you know?
>
> S: because of wh-word.

In the above examples, there was no shift to form. The main goal was to understand the function of punctuation and capitalization. These two examples are not FonF, but rather FonFs. Additionally, NS2 asked the students to complete the writing section in the book as homework. The task asked the students to complete the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of shopping using their own ideas. After that the students were asked to swap their books with their friends and mark each other's writing. Students were also given a worksheet 'editing and revising' and asked to work individually on them, identify the problems, and write the sentences correctly on the lines provided (See Appendix J for samples of student work). In this case, FonF was generated by the teacher and the students had the chance to do both self– and peer-correction. Again, this was not a FonF technique because meaning and communication were not the overriding focus. By these three activities, the teacher was able to fulfill the second learning outcome, 'editing grammar, spelling, and punctuation,' through the three activities but not focusing on form in the proper way. She was doing the editing perfectly and language focus but without focusing on form in the proper way either. What she did on the three tasks was form-focused instruction (FFI), which should not be confused with FonF. The former is an umbrella term used to refer to

> any pedagogical technique, proactive or reactive, implicit or explicit, used to draw students' attention to language form. It includes focus on form procedures, but also all the activities used for focus on forms, such as exercises written specifically to teach a grammatical structure and used proactively, i.e., at moment the teacher, not the

learner, has decided will be appropriate for learning the new item.
(Long, 1998, p. 41)

Accordingly, since in none of the mentioned examples did form arise in the meaning tasks but rather all were prepared and scheduled in advance, NS2 was not considered doing FonF in the right and appropriate way.

7.2.2.3 Non-native Speaker 1

NNS1 was over-focusing on form and accuracy and unable to fulfill the learning outcome related to editing. Students were given a worksheet, 'comparative adjectives,' and asked to work individually on it (See Appendix M). The worksheet showed examples of ways of doing comparison that were photo-supported. Then the grammatical rule was clearly described and followed with some exercises in which the students had to produce the correct comparative form and the opposites of some adjectives. A number of drill practices were followed. This is purely a language focus activity. It has a direct and an explicit attention to language forms only. It also targets a specific grammatical rule. This is FonFs instruction, as described by Long (1998). NNS1 taught the students the grammatical structure and the vocabulary before they encountered them in texts or the tasks. At the end, it is the responsibility of the student to synthesize the parts for use in communication, which is why Wilkins (1976) called this the synthetic approach to syllabus design. Long (1998) states that in FonFs approach, not only the syllabus is synthetic, but also learners have to master linguistic items one at a time to native-like levels using synthetic materials, methodology, and pedagogy. This activity/exercise can be turned to a task-based one rather than a grammar-based one if its main focus was meaning and students' attention was shifted

to linguistic forms when they experience problems as they work on the communicative task (Long, 1998).

7.2.2.4 Non-native Speaker 2

Although NNS2 was able to fulfill the second learning outcome related to editing, she was under focusing on form. NNS2 asked the students to complete the writing activity in the textbook and, after they had done that, they were asked to swap their books. However, no checking from the teacher on the editing of students work to each other was taking place. Further, no interaction between the teacher and the students, and between the students themselves, took place either. Additionally, no peer-correction strategy to check the ability of learners to provide each other with corrective feedback, recast, uptake in order to resolve the problems they encountered throughout the task was taking place. Based on that, NNS2 seemed to be in a focus on meaning approach that supports the proposal that L2 learning, like L1 learning, is not intentional but incidental (i.e., while doing something else) and implicit (i.e., without awareness) (Long, 1998). Learners are presented with comprehensible and interesting samples of L2 use that are relevant to the theme assigned but it is the learner's job to analyze the L2. Long argued for many years in a number of publications that comprehensible L2 input is necessary but not sufficient. Therefore, a pure focus on meaning is not enough for mastering the target language.

7.3 Teacher Views and Perceptions of TBLT, FonF, and the Textbook

RQ2: "What are the teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards Focus on Form (FonF), task-based language teaching (TBLT), and the prescribed textbook?" In order to answer RQ2, the four teachers were engaged in interviews and supplementary surveys in which they shared their experiences as participants in the English-language

teaching community in UAE for more than 10 years each. RQ2 was answered positively and their answers clearly stated. The teachers' survey was given to the four participating teachers after they completed the unit in order to investigate five dimensions: (1) their views and perceptions towards FonF and how they believed it could impact students' ability; (2) their views on FonF implementation within TBLT context; (3) their understanding of FonF and error correction; (4) students' perception of form from the teachers' perspective; and (5) to find whether the Arabic language (L1) causes difficulty in form acquisition due to the structural contrast with English. The survey was followed by semi-structured interviews to explore the same issues, as well as to find out the challenges and limitations in implementing TBLT in the UAE school educational setting.

Results show that all four teachers agreed that form was important for language learning and mastering, although the students found it useless to study. Ellis (1995) and Spada (1997) found empirical evidence that form focused instruction (including FonF) is essential for SLA. Doughty and Williams (1998) show in a number of empirical studies too that FonF with adults and children in a variety of classroom setting is effective. In regard to teachers' views of FonF implementation within TBLT framework, results in this study show that teachers trust that studying form helps students improve their communication skills and using authentic texts when teaching grammar takes more time but it is beneficial for students' learning. However, while native speakers often think trying to connect meaning and form in context confuses students, non-native teachers think it always does, which explains their inability to do FonF in the appropriate way.

All four teachers mentioned in the interview that they teach form in context. However, the way each taught it varied. For instance, NS2 mentioned that, "when I teach vocabulary, I refer to parts of speech (noun, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.) so learners can always understand the relationship between form and vocabulary.' Practically, and as observed by the researcher, NS2 is not following the principles of FonF. She focuses on the structural parts of language but in a different way. For instance, pronunciation is practiced on a daily basis because learners do not have that background. However, although spelling is not given much emphasis, students are given a weekly spelling test on the core theme of vocabulary prescribed by ADEK. Further, her students are engaged weekly in activities where they look up meanings, use words in sentences, and communication activities. The non-native English-speaking teachers view it as of 'moderate' importance to put emphasis on teaching form in their lessons. They justified that view by saying "there are other learning outcomes that we are required to cover." Meanwhile, three teachers (NS1 and the NNSs) assert that natural exposure to foreign language is enough for acquiring the linguistic competence.

From another perspective related to teachers' views of error correction, while native speakers believed that students usually should be corrected in speaking when their errors hinder getting the message across, the non-native teachers believed they often should be corrected, even though 'usual' and 'often' correction of errors is considered explicit negative feedback that results in a FonFs lesson, as Long (1997) calls it. In this survey the statement was specific to those situations when errors hindered the student from getting the message across, which gradually leads to FonF. In support of this, the four teachers believe that immediate correction of students' oral

mistakes helps to prevent fossilization (stabilization) of erroneous patterns. Surprisingly, three of them, but not NS2, supported explicit feedback of speaking errors regardless of the situation, a view that conflicts with a FonF approach, which does not require instant correction of errors. Also, the teachers believed that peer correction of errors is more favorable for students than teacher-student correction. Finally, all four teachers hold the view that Arabic language (L1) causes difficulty in learning English grammar because of the structural differences between the two languages. For instance, one of the main differences between Arabic and English grammar is that English has verbal sentences only, whereas Arabic has both nominal and verbal sentences and does not require a verb.

7.4 Student Views and Perceptions of Teachers' Implementation of FonF

In the current study, 100 students in grade 7 from three schools in Al Ain City answered RQ3. Students were engaged in surveys in which they reflected positively their perceptions of and views towards the importance and the implementation of TBLT and FonF. The student survey provided data about their views of teachers' application of FonF from their perspectives and their perceptions of the textbook. Specifically, the survey aimed to explore students' perceptions of and views of their teachers' implementation of FonF from their perspectives. Results showed that students found FonF important and integral for their language learning as did their teachers. They believed that teachers focus on it in the right way and correct their errors in a positive and encouraging way. They also valued the textbook for learning form, including grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation and found the explanation for the targeted structures to be clear and the proposed practice sufficient. Additionally, students indicated that planning before talking with student partner 'usually' helps

their English to improve, as well as talking with classmates in English. They also felt that talking with their classmates in English 'always' helps their English to improve.

7.5 Challenges and Possibilities of TBLT and FonF in the UAE

Implementing TBLT and FonF in the UAE has several challenges based on the interview conducted with the four participating teachers to answer the fourth and final research questions. Teachers mentioned in their interviews seven issues in regard to the application of the two pedagogical aspects. These include:

- Lack of motivation, especially with low-level students
- A gap between students' current level of proficiency and the required level
- Lack of a reading culture
- Large number of students in classes
- Lack of practical ideas in the textbook, especially with low-level students
- Sticking to the learning outcomes
- Time constraints
- Effect of L1 on pronunciation and conjugating verbs.

To overcome such problems, the suggested solutions include building a culture of love of reading in the classrooms (establishing reading clubs and encouraging students to buy books), or familarizing students with technology in the classes to use the online reading programs suggested by ADEK (i.e., RAZ-Kids). Additionally, for the purpose of encouraging reading, NS1 started a homework project in which students were asked to write a children's book for the Abu Dhabi Reads Project. They were given two weeks to write, illustrate, and print their children book (see Appendix N).

Reading allows learners to observe and accumulate form when they have the opportunity to see what the sentence looks like (i.e., starts with capital letter, has to have subject-verb agreement, etc.).

7.6 Limitations

One of the aims of this study was identifying the limitations of implementing TBLT in the UAE intermediate-school educational setting. Accordingly, this section identifies the limitations and how future research can build on the current findings to advance the knowledge in the TBLT and FonF field. The limitations of this study include two matters: (1) the issue of generalizability of the results; and (2) the selection of participants.

One of the limitations of the current study was the issue of generalizability in regard to the results. The main goal of the study was not addressing teachers' and students' beliefs towards TBLT, FonF, and the textbook among all EFL teachers in ADEK schools in the UAE. Rather, its aim was to offer a rich description of their perceptions, as well as identifying the differences between four teachers teaching within the TBLT framework and how they react to FonF, which is an integral part of the learning process. Future research can build on the current results by designing large-scale studies to examine teacher and students' perceptions across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi regarding the application of TBLT framework in UAE classrooms. In addition, different grade levels of students could be involved in any upcoming study.

The second limitation of the study was in involving participants in interviews and classrooms observations. Many teachers refuse to be involved in interviews or having their classes observed especially for research purposes. This might be because teachers in the UAE educational setting were not often asked to reflect on their views

or having their classes observed. I met 12 teachers but only four of them agreed to be part of this study. All the participating teachers had no less than 10 years of teaching experience. Research has shown that the teaching experience impacts the way teachers prepare their lessons, their reactions in various situations in the classrooms, as well as their views and practices (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Tsui, 2003). Based on that, future research might examine how factors such as teaching experience might impact teachers' performance and practices.

7.7 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sought to examine the possibility of implementing TBLT in the UAE with a particular attention to FonF which is an integral part of the TBLT framework. It identified the differences between four EFL teachers when they introduced meaning-oriented tasks based on the textbook and the set of the learning outcomes proposed by The Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) - (previously known as Abu Dhabi Education Council, ADEC) and the potential gaps between theory and practice. It also explored the views and perceptions of teachers towards TBLT and FonF application as well as their reactions towards the textbook assigned by ADEK too. The study also targeted finding students' views towards their classroom teachers' implementation of FonF and their attitudes towards the textbook. Finally, it explored the challenges of implementing TBLT and FonF in the UAE public educational settings based on teachers' views. Results show that teachers differ in the application of TBLT and FonF along four basic dimensions: (1) the successful fulfillment of the learning outcomes; (2) type of FonF employed; (3) strategies used in FonF; and (4) the possibility of implementing TBLT successfully and with or without the use of the textbook.

Findings show that, while the first native speaker (NS1) was able to fulfill the learning outcomes well and in a communicatively-based context without referring to the textbook as a main resource, the second native speaker (NS2) and the two NNSs fulfilled these two LOs with the use of the textbook. However, not all of the four teachers were able to implement TBLT and FonF regardless of the fulfillment of the LOs. For instance, NS1 was able to implement TBLT and FonF successfully in her teaching. In contrary, NS2 was able to implement TBLT successfully in her instruction but failed to FonF in the right way. Additionally, the NNSs were able to implement TBLT but not in a successful manner in which both missed the post-task stage. Both too were not able to apply FonF in the expected manner. NNS1 was considered over-focusing on form and NNS2 was under focusing on form, though both made a good use of the textbook. This leads to the conclusion that neither the framework that the textbook is built on, nor the LOs required by the supervising body for learning and teaching, is essential and leads to successful learning. Instead, what really matters is the teachers' awareness about student needs and their successful understanding of the conductive framework they are required to follow. From another perspective, such variance indicates the complexities underlying the application of TBLT, as Sui Ping and Chan (2012) mentioned in a similar case study. Such variance indicates the strength and depth of the framework.

From another perspective related to the perceptions of participants, all of them (teachers and students) believed in the importance of TBLT as a teaching and learning approach and FonF as an integral part of the language learning process. However, based on my personal interaction and interviews with in-service teachers, teachers do not understand the concepts of TBLT and FonF in the expected way. Even those who are trying to apply it in their practice do not implement it in a fully successful manner.

Although all four teachers in the study fulfilled the learning outcomes and were required to follow the same teaching approach proposed by ADEK, not all of them were able to intact TBLT and FonF successfully. More specifically, in regard to FonF implementation, based on what has been notified in the lessons observed with NS1, there was no intentional language learning and no attempts to attract learners' attention to forms explicitly. Learners were expected to acquire the correct forms in the course of the communicative task. Accordingly, the dictation task and creating an advertisement task were not explicitly designed to teach them verb tenses, punctuation, spelling, etc. They were intended to get learners to notice formal aspects of the target language in the course of doing the communicative task. The linguistic features of concern were those targeted by the main tasks assigned. Comprising, NS2 and the two NNSs were not considered following the principles of FonF in the required way. That is because FonF requires involving learners in tasks in which the overriding focus is meaning rather than isolated grammar forms or rules, as the ultimate goal of FonF is to promote functionality in language. In support to this, Skehan (2007) notes, a task-based approach has much to offer form-focused instruction in variety of ways. FonF at the post-task stage is a promising area which is worthy of future exploration. Ellis (1995) and Spada (1997) find a great empirical evidence that form focused instruction (including focus on form) is essential for SLA. Besides, Doughty and Williams (1998) show by a number of empirical studies too that focus on form with adults and children in a variety of classroom setting is effective.

I conclude this chapter and the whole thesis with three main recommendations based on the findings of this study. The first relates to teachers' education about TBLT and FonF. Teachers need to be systematically engaged in professional development programs that provide them with opportunities to learn about TBLT and FonF in order

to develop the full potential from both. Many teaching contexts still adhere to traditional, teacher-centered, and language-focused approaches. That is due to five reasons mentioned by Shehadeh (2019). These include: (1) many teachers lack the knowledge of how to utilize the principles of TBLT in their teaching practice; (2) many teachers are not aware about what exactly TBLT is, why it is more conductive to learning, and how to implement it successfully in their classes; (3) many teachers look at the task as another face of the traditional (grammar based and the drill) exercise; (4) many teachers feel more secure in the traditional approaches; and (5) many of them believe that TBLT is an alien concept that is not applicable in their teaching settings (see also Shehadeh, 2012). Eltantawi (2012) investigated university teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching in EFL undergraduate university classrooms in the UAE. He found that many teachers until recently still taught following traditional approaches. In spite of that, there are a number of successful teacher education programs that have been developed and are in place for the full potential from TBLT, e.g., in Hong Kong, Carless, 2009; in Japan, Jackson, 2012; in Venezuela, Chacón, 2012.

The second recommendation relates to encouraging more research on TBLT and FonF in EFL contexts, as compared to ESL contexts. Although Shehadeh (2012, 2018a) states that the research and implementation of TBLT in EFL settings is on the rise, until recently most TBLT research and application was in the ESL settings. For an overview and critiques, there is a number of research that has been done by Manchón (2009), Ortega, (2009a), and Shehadeh (2012) in the literature. Future research can build on the current results by designing large-scale studies that examine teachers and students' perceptions across the emirate of Abu Dhabi regarding the application of TBLT framework in UAE classrooms. In addition to that, different grade levels of students can be involved in the upcoming studies. Future research can also

examine how factors such as teaching experience might impact teachers' performance and practices.

Finally, the third recommendation relates to teachers' adaptations of TBLT. In some EFL contexts such as the UAE, there are a number of challenges that hinder the utilization of TBLT as a teaching approach. These include institutional factors, exam pressures, cultural pressures and expectations, time pressures, available materials, teacher factors, and student factors (Shehadeh, 2012). In spite of that, there are several cases that demonstrate a successful adaptation of TBLT in the EFL context. For example, the research by McDonough & Chaikitmongkol (2007, 2010) in Thailand and the extensive work in Spain by García Mayo and her Basque team (Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2009; Azkarai & García Mayo, 2015; García Mayo, 2007).

In conclusion, there is a need for: (1) more research on what actually takes place in intact classrooms in EFL settings as compared to the ESL contexts in which teachers seek to implement task-based language teaching; and (2) teacher education programs that support the proper implementation and utilization of task-based language teaching and focus on form in EFL educational settings such as the United Arab Emirates.

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Appendices

Appendix A

The Unit

How do you shop? Where do you shop?

Door-to-door
This is when people visit homes to sell things. Farmers sell their fruit and vegetables, or fishermen sell their catch.

An ice-cream truck is door-to-door selling which is popular in some places. A truck goes to where the people are (e.g. a housing area, a park, a beach) and plays loud music. Children come running to buy ice-cream!

Market/Souk
Markets (also called souks, bazaars, or fairs) were first used in ancient times. They are still found all over the world and are still the best place to get a **bargain**!

Convenience store
These are usually small and close to where people live (unlike some supermarkets or markets). They sell many everyday products (e.g. bread, rice, vegetables) so are very useful if you forget something at the supermarket!

Supermarket
Supermarkets are bigger than other stores. They are also **self-service** — shoppers choose their own **products** and carry them in a basket or **cart** to the **checkout** where they pay.

2

Specialist store

These sell just one type of product, e.g. a bakery sells bread and cakes, a **butcher's shop** sells meat. You can also find many specialist stores in shopping malls — one store will sell clothes, one will sell shoes, one will sell **jewelry**, etc.

Department store

These big stores have many different parts, or **departments**. Each department is like a specialist store. They sell everything under one roof — Harrods in London has the motto *All Things for All People, Everywhere.*
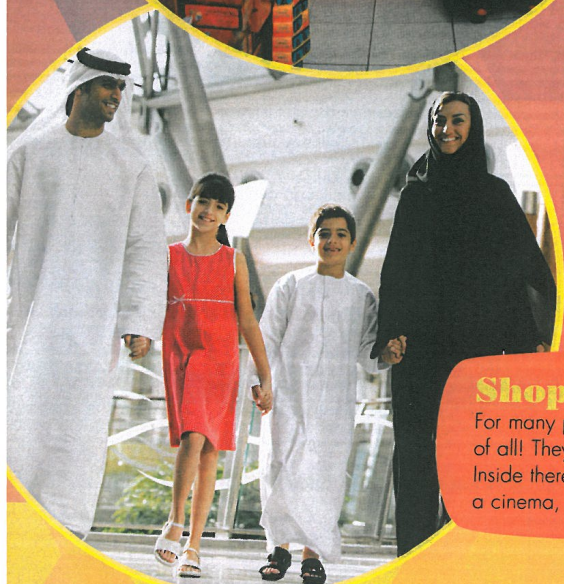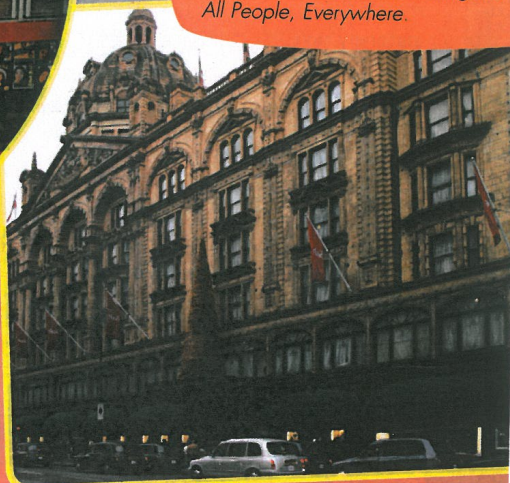
Shopping mall

For many people these are the best **shopping experience** of all! They are in huge, and often beautiful buildings. Inside there can be specialist stores, a supermarket, cafés, a cinema, banks, and many other stores.

Internet shopping

You can stay at home and shop with your computer, tablet, smartphone, or TV. The shopping then arrives at your door — a modern version of door-to-door shopping!
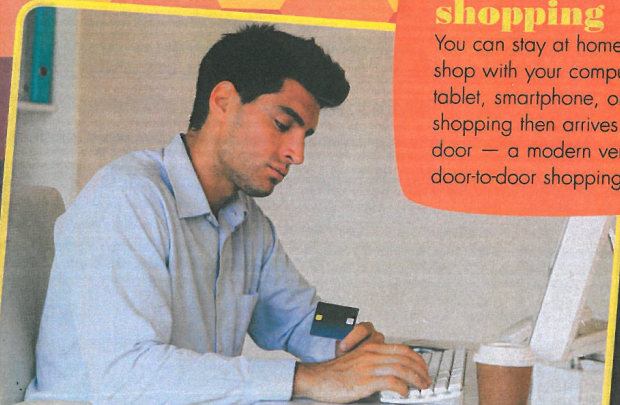
KEY WORDS

bargain	butcher's shop
self-service	jewelry
products	departments
cart	shopping experience
checkout	

GLOSSARY

catch	fish for sale
motto	short sentence that states an aim
version	type

store 🇺🇸	shop 🇬🇧		
shopping mall 🇺🇸	shopping centre 🇬🇧		
shopping cart 🇺🇸	shopping trolley 🇬🇧		

3

Vocabulary

1 Match the stores with what they sell.

baker — bread and cakes
butcher shop — meat
grocery store — fruit and vegetables
jewelry store — jewelry
stationery store — paper, pens and pencils
boutique — clothes

(handwritten notes: what does this task test? — student understanding of vocab. meaning — To see how much vocab learner learned. Former → groups; Nusra → individually; Nasira → bunched together. Something (FL1.5 AlYsi) But n words are Not broken down on regular list)

2 Complete the words across to find the word down.

	? ↓							
1	**B**	a	k	e	r			
2	**C**	a	r	t				
3	**M**	a	r	k	e	t		
4	**V**	e	g	e	t	a	b	l	e	s
5	**D**	e	p	a	r	t	m	e	n	t
6	**C**	i	n	e	m	a		
7	**I**	n	t	e	r	n	e	t

Words across:

1 He/She makes bread and cakes.
2 In the UK they call this a trolley.
3 Another name for a souk or bazaar.
4 You can buy fruit and _____ at the grocery store.
5 A section like a specialist store in a big store.
6 In the mall, you can watch a movie here.
7 You can now do your shopping on the _____.

Word down:
Bargain

Reading

(handwritten: (Nauv AlYsi))

1 Read the article on pages 2 and 3. Name one similarity between these kinds of shopping.

Example: door-to-door / internet   *you shop at home*

1 souk / shopping mall
2 door-to-door / specialist store
3 supermarket / internet

2 Name one difference between these kinds of shopping.

Example: convenience store / supermarket
   the size (supermarkets are bigger than convenience stores)

1 specialist store / supermarket

2 souk / shopping mall

3 internet / door-to-door

(handwritten: Nasira appeared / one person; grammar to be fulfilled)

4

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Grammar: *and / but*

1 Complete these sentences with *and* or *but*.

1 The mall is expensive _____ I like it.

2 I like shopping at the souk _____ I love the mall.

3 At the mall, we buy clothes _____ we go to the cinema.

4 I wanted to go shopping _____ I didn't have any money.

5 My father will take us to the mall _____ he won't go shopping with us.

2 Complete the sentences in your own words.

1 I like to go to the mall and _____

_____

2 I like to go to the mall but _____

_____

3 I use internet shopping and _____

_____

4 I use internet shopping but _____

_____

GRAMMAR

Conjunctions *and, but*

We use conjunctions like *and* and *but* to join ideas in a sentence.

- We use *and* to join two similar ideas.
  *Farmers sell their fruit **and** fishermen sell their fish.*
  *You sit in comfort **and** shop with your computer.*

- We use *but* to join two different or surprising ideas.
  *I love shopping **but** I hate the souk.*
  *Internet shopping is new **but** it is very popular already.*

Writing

✓ No Los match this section

1 Complete the table with the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of shopping. Use your own ideas. Make short notes, not sentences.

	+ advantages	**−** disadvantages
Example: convenience stores	*near home, everyday products*	*expensive*
1 souk	New line chg % price	
2 shopping mall	AC, Inedr	Cour chg a price
3 internet shopping		Expus a Tm gex

2 Write sentences about the advantages and disadvantages of the three forms of shopping. Use *and* and *but*.

Example: *Convenience stores are near to homes and they sell everyday products but they are expensive.*

1 souk: _____

_____

2 mall: _____

_____

3 internet shopping: _____

_____

5

Appendix B

Student views and Perceptions towards Focus-on-Form Instruction

استبانة قياس تصورات الطلاب نحو التركيز على الجوانب اللغوية (التي تشمل: القواعد والمفردات والتهجئة الإملائية

والدقة اللفظية) في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية

Instructions:

Please read the following statements carefully and tick the right box for each statement that best expresses the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. The response to each statement has 5 options: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. <u>If you would like to elaborate on statements, you can add your comments on the lines provided at the end of the page.</u>

تعليمات:

اقرأ العبارات الآتية بإمعان واختر الجواب الأنسب لكل عبارة موضحاً مستوى موافقتك او عدم موافقتك لها. لديك خمسة خيارات للتعبير عن مستوى رضاك عن العبارات المعطاة: موافق بشده، موافق، محايد، غير موافق، غير موافق بشدة. إذا أردت اضافة تعليق على أي من العبارات، يمكنك إدراجه في الجزء المخصص آخر الاستبانة.

Statement / Response	Strongly Agree موافق بشده 1	Agree موافق 2	Neutral محايد 3	Disagree غير موافق 4	Strongly Disagree غير موافق بشدة 5
1. Form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is quite important to learn English. ١. الجوانب اللغوية للغة التي تشمل: (القواعد والمفردات والتهجئة الإملائية والدقة اللفظية) عناصر مهمة لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.					
2. My teacher focuses on form just right. ٢. يقوم معلمي بالتركيز على الجوانب اللغوية للغة بالشكل المطلوب أثناء تدريسها.					
3. My teacher over focuses on form ٣. يقوم معلمي بالتركيز الزائد عن الحاجة على الجوانب اللغوية للغة أثناء تدريسها.					
4. My teacher under focuses (ignores); form ٤. لا يعير معلمي انتباه للجوانب اللغوية للغة أثناء تدريسها.					
5. My teacher usually corrects my grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation mistakes in a positive and encouraging manner. ٥. يقوم معلمي عادةً بتصحيح أخطائي في القواعد والمفردات والتهجئة الإملائية والدقة اللفظية.					
6. The textbook provides a clear explanation of the targeted grammatical structures. ٦. يوفر الكتاب شرح واضح للقواعد المستهدفة.					
7. The textbook provides enough practice for the targeted grammatical structure ٧. يوفر الكتاب تمارين كافية للقواعد المستهدفة.					

Statement / Response	Strongly Agree موافق بشده 1	Agree موافق 2	Neutral محايد 3	Disagree غير موافق 4	Strongly Disagree غير موافق بشدة 5
8. I feel frustrated when all my errors are corrected. ٨. اشعر بالإحباط/الانزعاج عندما يتم تصحيح جميع أخطائي					
9. Planning before talking with my partner helps my English to improve. ٩. التخطيط والتحضير للنشاط المطلوب مع زميلي قبل البدء في العمل به يساعد في تحسين لغتي الإنجليزية.					
10. Talking with my classmates in English helps my English to improve. ١٠. التحدث مع زملائي باللغة الانجليزية يساعد في تحسين لغتي.					

Additional Comments: (Please refer to the statement number before your comment)

ملاحظات إضافية: (يرجى الإشارة إلى العبارة المعنية قبل كتابة التعليق)

_____

_____

_____

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مع جزيل الشكر

Thank you for your time!

Appendix C

Teacher Survey of Focus-on-Form Instruction

Dear colleagues,

This survey is part of a research investigating how focus on form, or FonF (i.e., the technique of directing students' attention from meaning to form occasionally because of communicational problem) can be applied in a task-based language teaching (TBLT) context in United Arab Emirates Middle schools. The investigation is conducted partly through exploring teachers' perspectives on FonF application.

I appreciate your candid responses to all questions according to your beliefs and actual classroom practices. Your valuable opinions are so important as they will help teachers and researchers reconsider methods of teaching grammar that may elevate students' proficiency level in the English language.

I confirm that the data obtained from this survey will be limited to the research with respondents' names and other personal information unrevealed.

Thank you for your participations!

Part1: Demographic information

Kindly complete the following information about yourself

Name (Optional):

_____

Gender:

_____

Nationality:

_____

Highest Academic qualification:

_____

What is your first language?

_____

How long have you been teaching English?

_____

Name any training programs or workshops related to English language Teaching (ELT), in particular, focusing on grammar teaching attended and duration of each (if any):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part2: Focus-on-Form statements

Please read the following statements carefully and tick the right box for each statement that best expresses the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. If you would like to elaborate on any statement, you can add your comments on the lines provided on the additional comment section.

Statement / Response	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Neutral 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
1. Studying form (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is essential for learners to master a foreign or second language.					
2. Natural exposure to foreign language is enough for acquiring linguistic competence (grammar that allows a speaker to use and understand a language)					
3. Studying form helps students improve their communication skills.					
4. Using authentic texts when teaching grammar takes more time but it is more beneficial for students' learning.					
5. Students find grammar something useless to study.					
6. Trying to connect meaning and form in context confuses students.					
7. Teaching form in context is of no avail with students at low language level					
8. Students should only be corrected in speaking when their errors hinder getting the message across.					
9. Students feel frustrated when all their written errors are corrected.					
10. Corrective feedback can motivate students and satisfy their needs if it is employed appropriately.					
11. Immediate correction of students' oral mistakes can help prevent fossilization (stabilization) of erroneous patterns.					
12. Peer-correction in small groups is more preferable for students than teacher correction.					
13. On correcting students' speaking errors, only explicit feedback (teacher corrects the error or gets it corrected with an indication that an error has been made) should be used.					
14. On correcting students' speaking errors, both types of feedback (explicit and implicit) should be used.					
15. Students Arabic language causes difficulty in learning English grammar because of the structural differences between the two languages.					

Additional Comments: (Please refer to the statement number before your comment)

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Thank you for your time!

Appendix D

Informed Consent

Study Title: Implementation Of Focus On Form In A Task-Based Language Teaching Context In The United Arab Emirates EFL Middle School Setting

Investigator: Miss. Shamsa Almagharabi   **Telephone**: +971504997377

Email: Shamsa.aziz@uaeu.ac.ae

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Miss Shamsa Almagharabi, a doctoral student in the Department of Linguistics, College of Humanities and Social Science, United Arab Emirates University. This study is supervised by Prof. Ali Shehadeh. The study investigates the efficiency of task-based language teaching (TBLT) used in the textbook for enhancing form acquisition by applying focus on form (FonF) in the teaching practice for grade 7 students in the UAE public schools. The study will take place at three public schools in Al Ain City, UAE.

I will be looking at the differences between four teachers involved in the study when they introduced meaning-oriented tasks to their students and the role of such tasks in helping learners focus on different aspects of form including syntax (grammar), lexis (vocabulary), spelling, and pronunciation, where they have problems with. I am also interested in exploring teachers' and students' beliefs and attitudes towards the textbook and the implementation of FonF within a TBLT framework. This will take one unit from the textbook and a total time of two weeks to cover class observations, teacher interviews, and surveys for both teachers and students.

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. The informed consent forms and other identifying information will be kept separate from the data. All materials will be stored in a computer and only the researcher will have access to them. The tape recordings too, if used, will be listened to only by the researcher. Any records that would identify you as a participant in this study, such as informed consent forms, will be destroyed three years after the study has been completed. The results of this research will be used in my dissertation and possibly in subsequent journals or books.

Participating in this study is strictly voluntary. This means you don't have to be a part of the study. Your decision to participate will in no way affect your grade in any class. You will participate in the same activities, but nothing you say or do will be used as part of the data. If at any point you change your mind and no longer want to participate, you can tell your teacher. You will not be paid for participating in this study. If you have any questions or concerns about your right as a research participant, contact the Ethical Approval Committee at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) by email at research.office@uaeu.ac.ae or you can contact the researcher, Miss Shamsa Almagharabi, by telephone at 971504997377, by email shamsa.aziz@uaeu.ac.ae, or in person at UAEU, male campus, H1 building, 1010 office. No harm or risk of any kind will be experienced by participants involved in the study.

Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Please sign both, indicating you have read, understood, and agreed to participate in this research. Return one to the researcher and keep the other for your files.

Signature of Investigator _____   Date _____

I have read the information provided in this Informed Consent Form. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Your Signature _____   Date _____

موافقة على المشاركة في بحث دراسي

عنوان الدراسة: تطبيق نموذج التركيز على الجوانب اللغوية اثناء تدريس اللغة الانجليزية في إطار تعلم اللغة المبني على المهام والأنشطة (TBLT) لطلاب المرحلة المتوسطة في دولة الامارات العربية المتحدة

اسم الباحث: شمسه المغربي   **رقم الهاتف**: 971504997377+

الايميل: **shamsa.aziz@uaeu.ac.ae**

نقترح عليك المشاركة في بحث علمي تقوم به طالبة الدكتوراه شمسه المغربي في كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية بجامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة تحت إشراف البروفسور: علي شحادة. تحلل الدراسة مدى فعالية نموذج تعلم اللغة المبني على المهام (المطبق في الكتاب المدرسي المقرر) في التركيز على الجوانب اللغوية للغة أثناء تدريسها لطلاب الصف السابع في دولة الإمارات ومدى إسهام ذلك في تحسين اكتساب اللغة.

سأقوم بالتركيز على الاختلافات النوعية بين أربعة معلمين اثناء تدريسهم ومقارنة أدائهم في التركيز على الجوانب اللغوية للغة حيث يواجه الطلاب مشاكلهم اللغوية التي تشمل: القواعد والمفردات والتهجئة الإملائية والدقة اللفظية). بالإضافة إلى ذلك سأقوم بالنظر إلى اراء وتوجهات المعلمين والطلاب نحو الكتاب المدرسي وتطبيق نماذج التركيز على الجوانب اللغوية للغة وتعلم اللغة المبني على المهام والأنشطة. ستتم عملية البحث والمقارنة على درس واحد فقط من المقرر المدرسي لمدة لا تزيد عن الأسبوعين ستتم فيها تغطية المشاهدات الصفية ومقابلات المعلمين والاستبانة لكل من المعلمين والطلاب.

كل المعلومات التي سيتم توفيرها ستبقى سرية. طلبات الموافقة على المشاركة في بحث وغيرها من المعلومات التعريفية سيتم حفظه بشكل منفصل عن المعلومات المطلوبة. كل المعلومات سيتم حفظها في كمبيوتر ولن يتمكن اي شخص من الوصول إليها سوى الباحث. وكل التسجيلات الصوتية (إن وجدت) سيتم الاستماع إليها من قبل الباحث فقط. أي سجل يُعرفك كمشارك في الدراسة سيتم التخلص منه بعد ثلاث سنوات من إتمام الأطروحة. سيتم نشر نتائج هذه الدراسة في الأطروحة ومن المحتمل في المجلات اللاحقة أو الكتب.

المشاركة في هذه الدراسة اختيارية بمعنى في حال قررت التوقف عن المشاركة لن يؤثر ذلك على تقدير درجتك في المادة. ستشارك في نفس الأنشطة كبقية الطلاب ولكن لن يتم اعتبار مشاركاتك جزء من المعلومات التي ستدخل في التحليل. يمكنك اخبار معلمك في حال غيرت رأيك بالمشاركة. لن يتم تمويلك مقابل مشاركتك في الدراسة. إذا كان لديك أي أسأله أو استفسارات بخصوص حقوقك كمشارك في البحث يمكنك التواصل مع لجنة أخلاقيات بحث العلوم الانسانية بجامعة الامارات عن طريق الايميل (research.office@uaeu.ac.ae) أو يمكنك التواصل مع الباحث عن طريق المقابلة الشخصية. لا يوجد أي اذى او خطورة من أي نوع ستلحق بالمشاركين من جراء المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

تم توفير نسختين من هذه الرسالة. من فضلك وقع على كلاهما مشيراً بأنك قرأت وفهمت ووافقت على المشاركة في هذا البحث. خذ نسخه وأعط الأخرى للباحث

توقيع الباحث _____   التاريخ _____

لقد قرأت المعلومات في هذه الرسالة وأقر بالموافقة على المشاركة.

توقيع المشارك _____   التاريخ _____

Appendix E

Interview Questions (20 minutes)

Introductory statement

Thank you for being part of this research. The aim of this interview is to have insightful ideas about your beliefs of teaching form to grade seven students at your school. The information you provide will help me gather accurate information that contributes to the success of this research project. Our interview will be audio recorded and will take 20 minutes maximum. As you have been informed, participants' names and workplaces will not be revealed and all that you say will be restricted to my research.

1. Are you aware of the kind of teaching methodology you are following?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. Have you tried task-based language teaching (TBLT) in your classroom before?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Are you aware that your textbook is based on TBLT? What are your views and perceptions towards it?

4. _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

5. Describe the approach you follow to teach grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation in your teaching practice.

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

6. Do you think teaching form (including grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation) is important for language learning? Do you put emphasis on teaching form in your lesson? Why / why not?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

7. What are the factors that make you focus on form in your teaching?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

8. How, in practical terms, are you focusing on form in your teaching within the framework of the currently used syllabus? What considerations do you make when sequencing the teaching events, including focus on meaning and focus on form?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

9. How do you usually correct your students' language mistakes (oral or written)? What is the effect of error correction on students' language level?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

10. Is your way of teaching compatible with the methodology suggested in the curriculum documents? What do you think of the teaching approach to form suggested in the curriculum document?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. What are the problems facing you and your students in teaching and learning form?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Overall, what are the challenges and constraints that you encounter in your teaching form and the possibilities of implementing TBLT and focus on form in your teaching context?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!

Appendix F

Grade 7   **Propaganda**

Name: _____ Date: _____ Section**:** _____ #: ____

1. What is propaganda?

Persuading someone through the use of advertisements to buy or use their product.

Propaganda persuades someone's mind using good reasons.

2. What types of media make you want to buy something?

TV, newspapers, magazines, internet.

Types of Propaganda in the Media

1   **Must-have** *(bandwagon):* Everyone has it/one, so should you.

2   **Good feeling** *(Having fun):* If you use what they are selling, you will feel good and have fun in your life.

3   **Star appeal** *(transfer):* They use a famous person in the ad to make you think they use the product (even if they don't use it). *Sneaky.*

4   **Humour**: There is something in the advertisement that will make you laugh. So when you are in the store, you will see the product and most likely buy it.

5   **Comparison**: one company says that their product is better than another.

6   **Loaded Emotional Words**: Use words that appeal to your emotions (your feelings) sell the product. Many adjectives are used.

Appendix G

Grade 7: Lead Up to IST   Create Your Own Candy Bar!   Trimester 3

Name: _____ Date: _____ Section: _____ #: _____

Instructions: You will work in small groups, no more than four students to a group.

1. Each group will create an advertisement for a **<u>new candy bar</u>**, a candy bar that is **<u>not</u>** on the market or in the stores.

2. Your pre-IST will be on **half a page (half of A4)**. If it's any larger, I won't mark it.

3. Your advertisement must include:

    - The name of your candy bar

    - The ingredients in your candy bar

    - Your candy bar wrapper

4. Be sure to appeal to one of the six types of advertising propaganda. Who is your intended audience? Remember to appeal to their senses!

5. Work collaboratively with all the members of your group and have fun!

Appendix H

market and shopping mall

market/south

Shopping mall

- They were the first used in ancient times.
- Not often in beautiful buildings.
- the best place to bargain.
- no specialist stores

- Both are in huge.^^
- Both sell a varieties.
- Both are found all over the world.

- they were set up in these recent years.
- often in beautiful buildings.
- no room for bargaining
- They have specialist stores

Appendix I

(Google Maps, 2019)

(Khan, 2019)

Appendix J

Name: _____ Date: _____

Editing and Revising

DIRECTIONS: Read each sentence carefully, and circle all of the errors. Write the sentences correctly, on the lines below.

1. Joe and bill went shopping at cross keys Mall.

_____

2. I have to wear my coat mittens and scarf in the winter

_____

3. My best friends birthday is in november.

_____

4. my favorite cereal is cheerios

_____

5. Does you have to do your home work first

_____

6. we whent to the movies to see the Lion king.

_____

7. ryan Jessica and david are three of my best friends

_____

8. Apples are a delishous fruit to eet?

_____

9. He wus driving to the amusment park

_____

10. The bird had long tale fethers.

_____

Appendix K

How do you shop?
Where do you shop?

7SL 1.3 participate in collaborative discussion

7R2.3 retrieve, interpret and reflect on information and ideas in a written or visual critical response text.
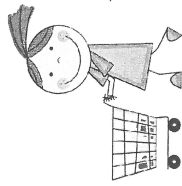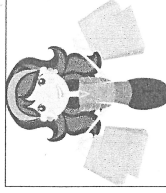
1 Door-to-Door سلع و اسلع	2 Market\Souk السوق	3 Supermarket سوبر ماركت	4 Convenience store دكان
5 Specialist store محلات خاصة	6 Department store محلات كبرى	7 Shopping mall المول	8 Internet shopping التسوق عن طريق الإنترنت

Appendix L

Example 1

12-04-2017   Dictation

⋆ (I) ~~will~~ (your) trimester 3 IST will (incloued) (dessining) an (adverstmient).

Has ~~anyere~~ ~~one~~ one ever (othout) about the (sensses) that are ↓ (win) looking at (telvesien) ove (torging) ~~and~~ magazine (at). (11x)

Our trimester 3, IST, will include designing an advertisement. Has anyone ever thought about the senses that are targeted, when looking at television or magazine ads?

13-04-2017   Dictation

What is your (favorit) television (adfersament) and why? (Whese) alot of detals to explain your answer. (3x)

What is your favourite television advertisemen and why?
Use lots of details to explain your answer

Example 2

Dictation   12-04-2017

-Our termster₃ Ist well include disinging and adversment.
                                    thought
-Has any one over that about the sences that are
targetd when looking at telang or magzine ask
                        ledain televetiony   X7

Our trimster 3, Ist, well include disinging an adversmet.
Has anyone ove thought about the sences that are
targetet, when looking at television or magzime ads?

Dictation   13/04/2017
What your faurote television adversemmt₃ and why?
lot's of deateals to explaine your answer.
                                    X3

what is your favourite television advertisemnt
and why?
use lots of adetails to explain your answer

7u3   Dictation   16/4/2017
                                    diffrent
This week we are going to look at diffent tipes advertising
                                think
Who can tell me what you thnk advertising is?
where do we see advertisement?
                                    XI

This week, we are going to look at different types advertis
who can tell me what you think advertsitiony is?
where do wesee advertisement?

Appendix M

L 2.4 use adjectives of degree

Comparative Adjectives

Student's name: _____   Level: Basic 03

SLOW   SLOWER   HEAVY   HEAVIER   DANGEROUS   MORE DANGEROUS
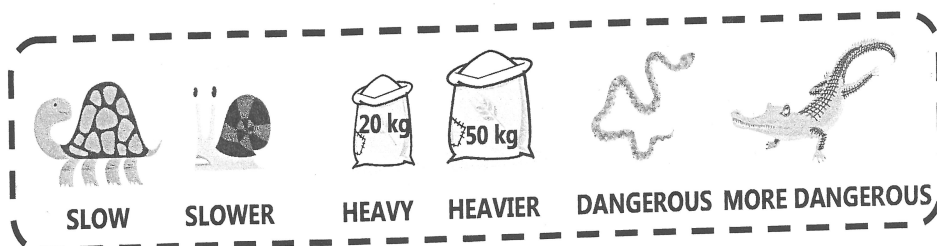
Short words (1 syllable) → - er

old → older   slow → slower
warm → warmer   tall → taller

big → bigger, hot → hotter
heavy → heavier, happy → happier

Long words (2, 3, 4 syllables) → more...

dangerous → more dangerous
expensive → more expensive
Irregular comparative forms:
good → better, far → further
bad → worse, little → less

Write the comparative form:

new _____
long _____
nice _____
big _____
good _____
fat _____
modern _____
friendly _____
famous _____

**Write the opposite.**

younger   _____
cleaner   _____
darker   _____
more boring _____
hotter   _____
happier   _____
easier   _____
smaller   _____
cheaper   _____

Write comparative sentences using the verbs in brackets

1. My house is (big) _____ than yours.
2. This flower is (beautiful) _____ than that one.
3. A holiday by the sea is (good) _____ than a holiday in the mountains.
4. The weather this summer is even (bad) _____ than last summer.
5. I think mathematics is (difficult) _____ than English.

Appendix N

Abu Dhabi Reads Homework Project
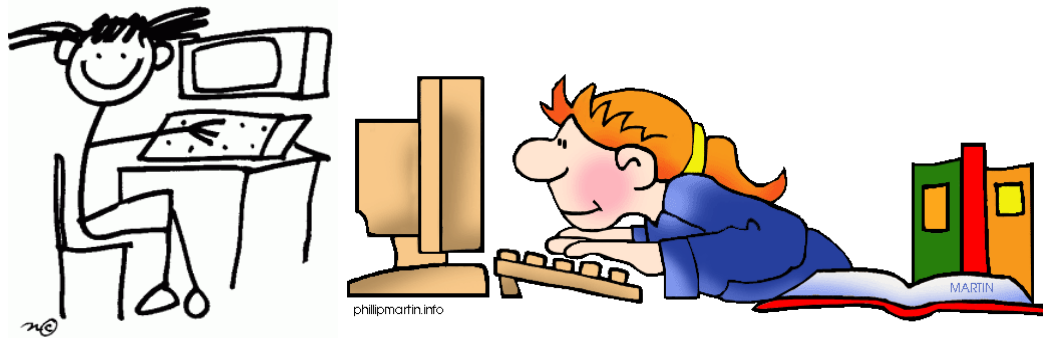
Have you ever wanted to become an author? Well, here's your chance! The Emirate of Abu Dhabi is holding a competition to see which teacher can create the best activity for his/her students. I have decided that each of you will write your own children's book. That's right, a children's book.

You will have two weeks to write, illustrate and print your children's book. I won't give you any guidelines, nor will I restrict you in any way. You can make it as many pages as you want. You can choose whatever type of children's book you would like to write, and you can decide your topic; however, your topic may not be offensive to Islam, in any way. All of you are aware of the types of material you would be allowed to write about and which topics to stay away from.

You can create your own characters and write a story book or you can create a comic book, an alphabet or even a number book. You decide! This is a homework project and you will not be given any class time to complete this activity, so use your time wisely.