The Perception and Practice of EFL Teachers on Task-Based Language Teaching

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions and practices of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in five selected preparatory schools in Dangila city and dangila woreda. All the 30 EFL teachers of the selected sample schools were comprehensively included in the study as a source of data. Convenient and comprehensive sampling techniques were used to select the sample schools and the participants respectively. After the data were collected through questionnaire, observation and interview, the analysis was carried out both quantitatively and qualitatively. In other words, close-ended questionnaire items were analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage and the data obtained from open-ended questionnaire items, observation and interview were analysed qualitatively using words. Following the data analysis, the findings revealed that the majority of EFL teachers seemed to have positive perception towards TBLT principles, but they practiced it to some extent regarding its principles and methodologies because of different challenges including; shortage of time to complete tasks, large class size, low language proficiency level of students, lack of authentic materials, lack of learners' interest and difficulty in assessing learners' task-based performance. Some recommendations were also forwarded based on the findings.

Keywords: TBLT, PPP, MOE, UEE

1. Introduction
1.1. Background of the Study
The primary goal of language teaching is to enable learners to use the target language effectively in communicative interaction inside and outside the classroom (Nunan, 2004; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). As a result, different methods of teaching have been implemented in order to meet learners' communicative need. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of the methods for teachingEnglish as a foreignlanguage.

An offshoot of communicativelanguage teaching is Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT). Task-based language teaching, based on communicative language teaching methodology, has evolved in response to some limitations of the traditional form-focused instruction (Ellis, 2003). Task-based language teaching is based on the beliefs that students may learn more effectively when they focus on the task, rather than on the language they are using (Willis and Willis, 2001). In task-based language teaching, the learning process is viewed as a set of communicative tasks that are directly linked to the curricular goals they serve (Brown, 2001). The new syllabus for English language teaching in Ethiopia

considers this thinking and has been designed in such a way that enables students to use English for social interaction where necessary (Surafel, 2002). For example, Tariku (2013) asserts that all the tasks of grade 11 English textbook contain the five components of tasks (goals, inputs, roles, activities and settings).

On the other hand, many problems have been observed in the implementation of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) classes in Ethiopia. For this reason, Ethiopian students have failed to express their ideas, opinions and feelings in English either in the classroom or outside the classroom (Girma, 2005; Tiglu, 2008). Similarly,Endalkachew (2006) and Hailemariam (2012) revealed that it is a common phenomenon that the level of Ethiopian students language skill in general is very low after they have learnt the language from grade one to university level. Hailom (1982), as cited in Tagesse (2008) also indicated that first year students of Addis Ababa University had serious problems in understanding and in using English language.

This is because as Shehadeh (2005) states most language students learnt through methods that emphasise mastery of grammar and do not achieve an acceptable level of competency in the target language. Therefore, as mentioned above, to solve this problem, task-based language teaching (TBLT) is evolved recently. Learners learn the target language more effectively when theyare naturally exposed to meaningful task-based activities (Ellis, 2003).

Jeon and Hahn (2006) explored EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT in Korean secondary school context. The data for their study were collected through questionnaires from a total of 228 teachers at 38 middle and high schools. The overall findings of their study revealed that despite a high level of understating of TBLT concepts, many EFL teachers retain some fear of adopting TBLT as an instructional method because of perceived disciplinary problems related to classroom practice. Tagesse (2008) also surveys the general practicability of task-based instruction inAddis Ababa University and KotebeCollege of teacher education. He asserts that there are some problems in implementing the TBLT based on its fundamental principles.

The problems in teaching and learningEnglish foreign language (TEFL), as Tiglu (2008) explained, are related to both teachers and learners. He asserted that this is becauselanguage teaching is not presented in meaningful contexts and situations. The students are not also encouraged to express their own feelings, attitudes and interests using the target language.

Therefore, TBLT is suggested as instructional method to teach the English language effectively using tasks (Ellis, 2003). Its overall goal is to enable learners to use the target language for communicative purposesin everyday life (Skehan, 1996b). This is because English teaching and learning is achieved when the learners can actually communicate in English inside and outside the classroom (Davies and Pearse, 2002; Jing, 2006). To this end, the teacher, who wants to try implementing task-based language teaching successfully, is necessarily expected to understand instructional frameworks of TBLT in relation to its plan, procedure and assessment.

With regard to the points mentioned above, this study aims to investigate how teachers perceive TBLT,how teachers practice TBLT and what challenges teachers face while implementing TBLT method on the actual EFL classes.

1.2. Statement of the Problem
As Girma (2005) and Tigilu (2008) state, many teachers complain that Ethiopian students are incapable of communicating in English in the EFL classes. This is because teachers teach learners through a more traditional form-focused type of presentation, practice, production (PPP) lessons that make learners unable to communicate effectively in English (Hedge, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Shehadeh, 2005).

Therefore, task-based language teaching (TBLT) is being used recently in EFL classes to tackle the problem stated above (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 1989; Willis & Willis 2001). It is used to develop learners' accuracy and fluency language for communicative purposes (Leaver and Kaplan, 2004). Despite its uses, TBLT has got some challenges of implementation. Because some teachers bring grammar presentation into the lesson first before students engaged on tasks (Eillis 2003; Hedge, 2000; Willis, 1998). Therefore, grammar-based instruction makes learners still unable to use the grammar rules in speech (Long and Doughty, 2009).

Teachers should have a good knowledge about TBLT principles in order to implement them appropriately in the actual EFL classes. In addition, Richards and Rodgers (2001) mentioned what teachers do in language classroom is the product of how they perceivelanguage teaching and learning. Thus, there are few practical studies about the perception of teachers on task-based language teaching. In this regard, two foreign researchers, Jeon and Hahn (2006) explored EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT in Korean secondary school context. They asserted that TBLT has not yet been well investigated regarding its classroom practice.

A local researcher, Tagesse (2008) also conducted a study on the general practicability of task based instruction in two higher institutes (College of Commerce, Addis Ababa University, and Kotebe College of Teacher Education). The result showed that there are many misconceptions and uncertainties about the implementation of the TBLT in practice. Thus, in Tagesse's study, the gap has been observed in the perception of basic principles of TBLT.

None of the studies mentioned above was planned to explore the perceptions of teachers on TBLT in preparatory school level. Therefore, this study is even different in the grade level and area from the above mentioned local and foreign research works. Consequently, the researcher is inspired to conduct this study based on the assumption that teachers' perceptions may play a crucial role in determining the implantation of TBLT method.

As Richards and Rodgers (2001) state, the teachers' perceptions have its own impact on their classroom practices. This is because, as Larsen-Freeman (2002) asserts, teachers implement their own perception of teaching to particular classroom. In line with this, there are many interrelated factors that affect the practice of TBLT method in Ethiopian context. In addition to the above research work, the researcher has observed that most students face problems in effective use of language. Many teachers, in the researcher's school, also complain that students are incapable of communicating in English in the English language classes. Learners' English language proficiency is much lower than the level required of them. As a result, learners do not have the required ability to meet the academic demands in the school. Probably, the root cause of this problem could be the teachers' perceptions. So far, it seems that the perceptions of teachers in preparatory school have not been assessed yet. Consequently, the researcher of this study aims to investigate particularly the perception and practice of EFL teachers on task-based language teaching.

Therefore, this study tried to investigate the perception and practice of teachers on TBLT on five selected government preparatory schools of Dangila Woreda and Dangila city in Amhara regional state. As a result, investigation of teachers' perceptions can help to identify the challenges that teachers face while implementing different innovations (theories, principles) in the classroom to promote EFL teachers' TBLT practice.

1.3. Research Questions
This study has attempted to answer the following research questions:
1. What are the teachers' perceptions of TBLT?
2. How do teachers practice TBLT in their EFL classes?
3. What challengesdo teachers face while implementing TBLT?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Definition of Tasks

Before dealing on TBLT, it is important to know what a task means in TBLT because, as (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 224) pointed out, "The notion of task is the central unit of planning and teaching". Therefore, different scholars have defined tasks in various ways. An initial definition of a task comes from OldNorth French Tasque which means a duty of a piece of work (Barnhart, 1988). Prabhu (1987: 2) defines task as "An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process".Similarly, Williams and Burden (1997: 168), define a task as "any activity that learners engaged into further the process of learning a language."

Nunan (2004) further extended that a task is "A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. Similarly, Silva (2005), defines a task is the core element for foreign language teaching and learning that gives meaning making and communicative process over form.

Ellis (2003) widely defines a task as a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primarily attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may dispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes. All the above definitions imply that TBLT puts tasks at the centre of the methodological focus and it views that learning process as a set of communicative tasks (Brown, 2001).

2.2. Roles of Tasks in Language Teaching

A task is the core unit of task-based language teaching (TBLT) because it provides rich opportunities for learners to engage themselves in the process of negotiation of meaning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Thus, task- based language teaching (TBLT) focuses on using tasks in EFL classes. This is because, as Dornyei (2001) explains, a task is used to motivate learners by decreasing their anxieties. Thus, a task can create motivation among the learners as they themselves actively involved in the process of task accomplishment.

Tasks are very important for the integration of the four language skills (Loumpordi, 2005). This means learners may need to speak, listen, read and write while their aim is to solve a problem, to play a role play, solve a puzzle etc. Tasks are best instruments to let the learners do so and develop all language skills simultaneously as it develops in real life. Students learn the target language more effectively when they are naturally exposed to meaningful tasks (Jeon and Hahn, 2006).

Lee (2000) also emphasized the role of tasks in TBLT that they provide opportunities for learners to involve themselves in the target language. While doing the task, students help each other, share experiences and so on. Generally, tasks enable EFL teachers to practice TBLT techniques, thereby improving learners' communication ability (shehadeh, 2005).

2.3. Characteristics of Tasks

Skehan (1998), drawing on a number of other writers, puts forward five key characteristics of a task. These are: Meaning is primary; learners are not given other people's meaning to regurgitate; there is some sort of relationship to compatible real-world activities. Ellis (2003) has also identified the critical features of a task. These features are: (1) A task is a work plan; (2) a task involves primary focus on meaning; (3) a task involves real-world processes of language use; (4) a task can involve any

of the four language skills; (5) a task engages on the process of learning, and (6) a task has a clearly defined communicative outcome.

2.4. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of the recent methods to language teaching (Ellis, 2003). Prabhu (1987) deserves credit for originating the task-based teaching and learning, based on the concept that effective learning occurs when students are fully engaged in a language task, rather learning the language. He used a task-based instruction for the first time with secondary school classes in Bangalore, India, in his Communicational Teaching Project, beginning in 1979 (Willis and Willis, 2001).

American Government Language Institution used task-based instructions for adults in the early 1980s. Other teachers and institutions throughout the world are following the task-based language teaching (Shehadeh, 2005). From the Mid-1980s onwards the term task-based was increasingly used to describe this development in language teaching methodology. Why, then are teachers making this change to TBLT? Shehadeh believed that the answer to this question is often because they realized that most language learners taught through methods that emphasize mastery of grammar do not enable learners to use the language in their daily lives.

Therefore, the task-based language teaching (TBLT), based on the view of constructivist theory of learning and communicative language teaching methodology, has evolved in response to some limitation of the traditional PPP approach, represented by the procedure of presentation, practice and production (Ellis, 2003). A traditional PPP approach fails to meet an essential requirement that language is primarily as a tool for communicating rather than studying it (Ellis, 2003; Brown, 2001). Consequently, learners cannot attain fluency. On the other hand, communicative language teaching gives great emphasis for fluency and ignores accuracy. As a result, communicative language teaching produces fluent but inaccurate learners (Brown, 1994; Heip, 2007; Hughes1983; Mekhafi and Romani, 2011).

Therefore, task-based language teaching can be seen as both a refinement of communicative language teaching as well as a response to the traditional from-focused approach (Elllis, 2003). Therefore, TBLT should incorporate both accuracy and fluency in order to make learners the native-like performances in the foreign language (Leaver and Kaplan, 2004). That is, both accuracy and fluency should be taken into almost equal consideration in TBLT. Therefore, meaning and form are interrelated each other but it does not directly teach grammar nor does it expect learners to rote-memorize grammar points. Learners learn a language through tasks by a conscious focus on meaning via interaction with an unconscious focus on structure (Skehan, 1996). In other words, students are not made aware that a specific form is being targeted; they just choose to use it so as to convey the meaning they want to. Thus, TBLT focuses on the ability to perform a task without explicit teaching of grammatical structure (Rahimpour, 2008).

2.5. Rationale for Task-Based Language Teaching

According to Prabhu (1987), a key rational for TBLT is that form is best acquired when the focus is on meaning. Ellis (2003) reveals that TBLT is a form of teaching that language primarily used as a tool for communicating rather than as a subject for study. Therefore, many scholars agree that task-based language teaching (TBLT) can promote language learning (Bygate et al, 2001; Lee, 2000; Nunan, 2005). Thus, it has the substantial implication that language learning is a process promoting communication and social interaction rather than a product acquired by practicing language items.

According to Brown (2001), the rationale behind task-based language teaching method is that the method fosters learning. He adds that task-based language teaching puts tasks at the centre of the

methodological focus and it views the learning process as a set of communicative tasks (ibid). Shehadeh (2005) adds that tasks are central components in language classes because they provide better contexts for students promoting language learning process.

Nunan (1989:10) defines communicative tasks as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language". Therefore, task-based language teaching proposes the use of task as a central component in language classroom because it provides better contexts for activating learner to promote learning (Shehadeh, 2005).

2.6. Theories of Language and Learning

A chief underlying notion here is that theories of learning are more essential than those of language (Nunan, 2004). Richards and Rodgers (2001) also add that task based language teaching is based on a theory of language learning rather than a theory of language structure. In other words, task-based language teaching (TBLT) is based on the belief the students may learn more effectively when they are focused on the task rather than on the language they are using (Willis and Willis, 2001). This means it is necessary that learners first try to communicate, and in the attempt learn language. Theories of language also play crucial role in task-based language teaching. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is also considered as an approach that consists the basic components such as theory of language, theory of learning, the role of the teacher, the role of the learner and the role of instructional materials (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, these components will be discussed under this section.

2.6.1. Theory of Language

Richards and Rodgers (2001:226-228) list four basic assumptions under theory of language in task-based language teaching as follows: (1) Language is primarily a means of making meaning; (2) multiple models of language (structural, functional and interactional) inform task-based language teaching. This means that, task-based instruction is not linked to a single model but draws on the three models of language; (3) lexical units are central in language use and language learning; (4) conversation is the central focus of language and the keystone of language acquisition.

2.6.2. Theory of Learning

Richards and Rodgers (2001: 228-229) also state the main theory of learning as follows: (1) Tasks provide both the input and output processing for language acquisition; (2) tasks motivate students to promote learning; (3) learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for particular pedagogical purposes.

Task-based approaches aim not to pre-specify order, but to best create the conditions necessary for acquisition to take place (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Task-based language teaching can therefore be seen as a means for communication (Nunan, 2004), enabling learners fulfil various functions while focusing in meaning. That is, task-based language teaching offers opportunities to use language as a communicative tool in special interaction, as well as creating the context form-focused actively after the task cycle has been completed (Hedge, 2000). Task-based languages teaching (TBLT) therefore, lies on the beliefs that language is more than a system of rules; it is a dynamic resource for the creation of meanings (Nunan, 1989).

In task-based language teaching, different types of tasks can be designed purposely to facilitate the acquisition of fluency or accuracy. However, if the tasks are more difficult and needs the higher cognitive ability of learners, it will reduce the learners' attention of focusing on form, which is thought to be necessary for accuracy. Therefore, it is possible to shift the attention of learners from accuracy to fluency, or from fluency to accuracy designing different tasks deliberately (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

2.6.3. The Role of the Teacher

Willis and Wills (1996) and Richards and Rodgers (2001) identify the role of the teacher in task-based language teaching as follows. A teacher is a practice monitor (director), assistance provider (supporter or helper), counsellor, selector, sequencer and introducer of tasks as well as facilitator of students learning process.

The other role of the teacher in TBLT is preparing learners for tasks. This means that, before learners engaged in the task process, teachers should introduce what to do and how to do about tasks (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). They added that the teachers move among the groups and monitor students' activities, teachers select and create tasks themselves, encouraging everyone's attempts at communication in the target language. The teacher act as a facilitator and it is the learner who must learn how to communicate effectively and use the language comprehensively (ibid).

The role of the teacher in TBLT is also consciousness-raising. Consciousness-raising activities can be designed and used by the teacher at the beginning or end of the task. Richards and Rogers (2001) stated that doing consciousness-raising activity does not mean that doing a grammar lesson before students take on tasks. However, it means that the teacher employs a variety of form-focusing techniques, including attention focusing pre-task activities, text exploration, guided exposure to parallel tasks etc. The teacher act as a chairperson, selecting which group's reporter will speak next as well.

2.6.4. The Role of the Learner

In task-based language teaching, the learner should be in the driving seat, not the teacher. Thus, the main roles are taken by the learners as central who accomplish the task (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In fact, though this process, the learner plays a number of specific roles, such as group participant, risk-taker, innovator, self-evaluator, writer, reporter etc (Oxford, 2006; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In other words, tasks will be done in pairs and in small groups, so learners are expected to be group participant. Moreover, learners are expected to be risk-taker, innovator (creator) of tasks. Besides, learners take the responsibility for their own learning, and evaluate their own progress and achievement.

2.6.5. The Role of Instructional Materials

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:236), "instructional materials play important roles in task-based language teaching because it is dependent on a sufficient supply of appropriate classroom tasks". The material can be both pedagogic like textbooks and other specifically developed instructional materials which used for pedagogical purposes or authentic materials (newspaper, magazines etc.) are any teaching materials which has not been specifically produced for pedagogical purposes (Skehan 1998). However, authentic tasks are more favoured as they train the learners with real world where language is used naturally and in turn; let them feel that what they are learning in the classroom is useful and applicable outside of the classroom.

2.7. Teachers' Perception and Implementation of TBLT

Teachers' perception and implementation of TBLT will be discussed in the following section.

2.7.1 Teachers' Perception of TBLT

Perception is a belief or opinion often held by many people based on how things seen. Beliefs are powerful and they can greatly influence human behaviours (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). In addition, beliefs are also considered to be a central idea in all disciplines that deal with human behaviour and learning (Bernat&Gvozdenko, 2005). That is why Fang (1996), cited in Abiy (2002) claims that research emphasize on teaching has shifted from process-product observations to a focus on teachers' thinking and beliefs. Therefore, looking at teachers' perception is very essential because teachers' perceptions play an important role in determining the implementation of teaching method.

Kagen (1992) stated that it has been found that a teacher's beliefs usually reflect the actual instruction the teacher provides to students. Similarly, Kennedy (1991), as cited in Larsen-Freeman (2002:6) stated that "Teachers interpret new content through their existing understandings, and modify and reinterpret new ideas on the basis of what they already know and believe".Richards and Rodgers (2001: 24) explained that "Teachers may for example, develop their own teaching procedures informed by a particular view of language and a particular theory of learning." This indicates that individual teachers implement their own perceptions of teaching to a particular classroom

2.7.2. Implementation (Practice) of TBLT
This is the practical stage of TBLT. So far we have seen task components and task types. Whatever care is taken in setting goals and in designing or selecting tasks, it will be fruitless unless it is properly implemented or put into practice as it is intended. Therefore, it is important here to discuss implantation principles and framework.

2.7.3. Principles for Implementation
Willis (1996), cited in Skehan (1998:126) offers five principles for the implementation of a task-based approach including; there should be exposure to worthwhile and authentic language; there should be use of langue; tasks should motivate learners to engage in language use; there should be a focus on language at some points in a task cycle and the focus on language should be more and less prominent at different times.

2.7.4. Framework for Implementation
Many Scholars (Ellis, 2003; Edwards and Wills, 2005; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Oxford, 2006) suggest that TBLT be implemented based on three main phases (cycles or stages). These are: pre-task, during or while task or task cycle and post-task/ language focus cycle.

2.7.4.1. Pre-Task Cycle
This refers to what teachers and students do before they start the accomplishment of the task. As Willis (1996) states, the pre-task aims to motivate, prepare and organize learners for the main task (task cycle). Therefore, pre-task is very essential. Edwards and Willis (2005) state the importance of the pre-task cycle. That is, it provides the necessary background knowledge and procedures; it introduces students to the new task and it familiarizes students with the topic and the task to be performed.

In the pre-task cycle, the teachers and students have their own roles. Willis (2004), Richards and Rodgers (2001), and shehadeh (2005) mentioned the specific roles of teachers and students in the pre-task phase. The role of the teacher is: introducing and defining the topic, helping students to understand the theme and objectives of the tasks, using activities to help students recall/ learn useful words and phrases, but does not pre-teach new structures, ensure students understand task instructions, and playing a recording of others doing the same or similar task. Moreover, the role of the students in the pre-task including; doing pre-task activity if there is any, reading the part of the text if the task is based on it, noting down useful words and phrases from the pre-task activities and/ or the recording, and spending a few minutes preparing for the tasks individually.

2.7.4.2. The Task Cycle
In this phase, learners do the task in Pairs or in groups and work towards the task outcome (Willis, 2004). As Edwards and Wills (2005) state, in the task cycle learners carry out a meaning focused activity. The learners give attention in fluency producing forms of the language that comes readily to them. Edwards and Willis (2005) indicate that this phase is sub-divided into three sections: task, planning and report. In the task section, learners do the task and the teacher acts as a monitor and encourages students. In the planning stage, the students are planning how to accomplish the task and report the result. On the other hand, the teacher helps the learners by acting as a language advisor. In the third sub-section, i.e. report phase, students present their report to the class and the teacher

facilitates the report as a chairperson. Edwards and Willis summarize the three stages of the task cycle as follows:

Stage of task cycle	The teacher's role	The students' roles
Task	• Acts as a monitor and encouragers students. • Moves around the groups checking task progress and helping learners.	• Do the task in pairs/ small groups.
Planning	• Ensures the purpose of report is clear. • Acts as language advisor. • Helps students rehearse oral reports or organize written ones.	• Prepare to report to the whole class what they discovered/ decided. • Draft and rehearse what then will say (orally or in writing).
Report	Acts as a chairperson, selecting who will speak next, or ensuring all students read written reports. May give brief comments/ feedback on content and form.	• Present their spoken reports to the class or exchange written reports and compare results.

As it is indicated above, in this stage learners are busy with the task. They are given the opportunities to make use of all the language they already have. The teacher also manages and encourages students to perform the task and to achieve the intended outcome of TBLT.

2.7.4.3. Language Focus Cycle / Post-Task Phase
Language focus cycle is the third phase in the task-based language teaching method. Thus, this phase brings the task process to a close. In this cycle, the teacher does some consciousness-raising activities in order to direct (grab) students' attention towards the designed language form (Willis, 1996). Thus, focusing in form at some point in TBLT course can help learners to achieve greater level of accuracy.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) sub-divided language focus stage into two parts: analysis and practice. In this sub-division, both teachers and learners have their own roles. In language analysis, the role of the teacher is: review each activity with the students, identify important words, phrases and patterns to choose on language items from the report stage. On the other hand, learners are expected to do consciousness-raising activities to identify and process specific language features from the task they accomplished or ask about other features they have noticed. In order to build the confidence of the learners, in the practice section of language focus cycle, the teacher is expected to prepare a practice activity after the analysis activities are completed. Students also expected to practice the new language item that they get from language analysis activities and write useful language items in their language notebooks.

All the three phases of the task cycle used to provide several opportunities for learners to develop the proficiency of their target language. Therefore, teachers should use pre-task, task cycle and language focus cycle in TBLT method and help learners to pass through in these stages in order to improve learners' accuracy and fluency of the target language (Ellis, 2003). Thus, in TBLT, these stages are very essential for developing learners' language proficiency.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The aim of this study was to investigate the perception and practice of EFL teachers on TBLT. Based on the objective of this study, the researcher selected and used descriptive survey design. As Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993:77) state, "Descriptive survey is suitable and useful for gathering information about the characteristics, actions or opinions of a large group of people". On the type of information seeking and data analysis, it was categorized both quantitative and qualitative research design.

In the descriptive survey design, both quantitative and qualitative data were employed. Thus, the questionnaire items were analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage. On the other hand, observation, open-end questionnaire items and semi-structured interview items were analysed and transcribed qualitatively (in words).

3.2. Participants of the study and sampling techniques

All the 30 EFL teachers of the five selected secondary and preparatory schools of Dangila woreda and city administration will be included as participants of the study. Therefore comprehensive sampling technique was employed. The researcher selected grade eleven teachers for his study because he can get the chance to observe their classroom implementation.

3.3. Data Gathering Instruments

Data were collected using questionnaire, interviews, and observations for this study.

3.3.1. Questionnaire

The researcher used both 31 close-ended and 2 open-ended questionnaire items in order to gather data from the participants of the study. In order to decrease the ambiguity of the items, both questionnaire items were adapted from a research conducted by Jeon and Hahn in 2006 based on the research questions and the purpose of this study. The main purpose of the questionnaire items in this study was to collect data on the perception and practice of teachers towards TBLT methods and it also aimed to collect data from the participants of this study in order to identify the challenges teachers face while implementing TBLT.

3.3.2. Observation

The classroom observation was conducted to check whether teachers practiced the principles of TBLT or not while the actual English lesson was going on. The researcher selected three preparatory schools (Dangila, Mengesha Jembere and Hidase) for observation since he got voluntary co-observer in each school. The focus was mainly on teachers' methodologies in conducting the different stages of implementing tasks in the lessons. In order to limit what was observed in the classroom and increase the credibility of the data, the observation checklist was adapted from Tagesse (2008).

3.3.3 Interview

Since this research is descriptive survey and the interview was carried out face to face, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview to get more reliable and in-depth information from the interviewees about the perception and practice of TBLT and the challenges that affect its implementation. The interviews were conducted with six voluntary teachers who were observed implementing TBLT method. The same types of questions were presented in the same order and manner to every interviewee.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Analysis of Teachers' Perception of TBLT
4..2. Analysis of perspective on Learner-Centeredness of TBLT

Table 1.Frequency and percentageof teachers' perception for perspective on Learner-Centeredness of TBLT

Item No.	Questionnaire Items	Respondents' Response											
		Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I perceive that learner-cantered instructional approach is one of the features of TBLT method	14	46.7	13	43.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	-	-	30	100
5	I understand that learners should interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher in TBLT method	14	46.7	13	43.3	1	3.3	-	-	2	6.7	30	100
9	I understand that TBLT gives learners a sense of freedom and responsibility to use the target language.	15	50	12	40	1	3.3	2	6.7	-	-	30	100

In the above table, under item 1, 14(46.7%) and 13(43.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they perceived that learner-centred instructional approach is one of the features of TBLT method. On the other hand, 1(3.3%) of the respondents disagreed concerning the issue, whereas, the rest 2(6.7%) of the respondents did not have decision about the issue raised under item 2.

It is also true for item 5 that 14(46.7%) and 13(43.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they understood that learners should interact primarily with each other rather than with the teacher in TBLT method. In a similar Vein, Nunan (1989) asserts that learner interact each other in the target language. Whereas, the rest 1(3.3%) was neutral and 2(6.7%) strongly agreed. Similarly, half of the respondents 15(50%) strongly agreed that they understood TBLT gives learners a

sense of freedom and responsibility to use the target language (item 9). 12(40%) agreed on the issue raised under item 9. In the same way, Van den Branden (2006) states that TBLT offers learners as a sense of freedom and responsibility which seems likely to also increase student's motivation. On the contrary, 1(3.3%) and 2(6.7%) of the respondents reported 'undecided' and 'disagreed' respectively. In other words, the sum percentage of strongly agreed and agreed in each item under table 3 is 90%. This implies that a great majority (90%) of teachers seemed to have positive perception towards TBLT with regard to the perspective on learner-centeredness of TBLT features while a small minority (10%) of them seemed to have low view of the concept. Next perspective on meaning focus of TBLT is discussed.

4.3. Analysis of Perspective on Meaning Focus of TBLT

Table. 2. Frequency and Percentageof Teachers' Perception for Perspective on MeaningFocus of TBLT

Item No.	Questionnaire Items	Respondents' Response											
		Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
4	I perceive that relating classroom language to real-world situation is the characteristic of TBLT method.	17	56.7	10	33.3	1	3.3	2	6.7	-	-	30	100
7	The four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) should be integrated in TBLT method.	20	66.7	5	16.7	2	6.7	2	6.7	1	3.3	30	100
11	I understand that the general goal of TBLT method is to enable learners to be more native-like in their performance of the target language.	14	46.7	12	40	3	10	1	3.3	-	-	30	100

As can be noticed from the above table, more than half of the respondents 17(56.7%) strongly agreed that relating classroom language to real-world situation is the characteristics of TBLT method (item 4). Similarly, 10 respondents (33.3%) reported that they agreed on the issue raised. Whereas, the rest 1(3.3%) was neutral and 2(6.7%) disagreed. More than half of the respondents 20(66.7%) and 5 (16.7%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) should be integrated in TBLT method (item 7). On the other hand, 2(6.7%) and 1(3.3%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively on the issue raised under item 7, whereas, the rest 2(6.7%) of the respondents did not have decision about the issue.

The general goal of task-based language teaching, as Skehan (1996a) states, is to enable learners to be more native-like in their performance of the target language. Accordingly, 14(46.7%) and 12(40%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they understood that the general goal of TBLT method is to enable learners to be more native-like in their performance of the target language (item 11). On the other hand, 3(10%) and 1(3.3%) of the respondents reported 'undecided' and 'disagreed' respectively. In other words, the responses to all items of table 4, on average,86.7% of the teachers responded to either strongly agree or disagree. This implies that majority (86.7%) of teachers seemed to have positive perception about the features of TBLT with regard to meaning focus based on items 4,7 and 11. Next, perspective on roles of tasks in TBLT is discussed.

4.3. Analysis of Perspective on Roles of Tasks in TBLT

Table 3.Frequency and Percentage of Teachers' Perception for Perspective on Roles of Tasks in TBLT

Item No.	Questionnaire Items	Respondents' Response											
		Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2	I understand tasks provide opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning in TBLT method.	15	50	11	36.7	1	3.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	30	100
3	I believe that teachers should use authentic materials to supplement the textbook in EFL classes	9	30	16	53.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	2	6.7	30	100
6	I understand that teachers should use tasks to teach new language items in TBLT method.	7	23.3	20	66.7	2	6.7	1	3.3	-	-	30	100
8	I believe that TBLT focuses on the accomplishment of tasks.	15	50	12	40	2	6.7	-	-	1	3.3	30	100
10	I understand that tasks in TBLT method must have outcomes.	9	30	17	56.7	2	6.7	1	3.3	1	3.3	30	100

In the above table, under item 2, half of the respondents 15(50%) strongly agreed that they understood tasks provide opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning in TBLT method. And 11(36.7%) agreed on the issue. On the other hand, 2(6.7%) and 1(3.3%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively on the issue raised under item 2, whereas, the rest 1(3.3%) of the respondents did not have decision about the issue.

Regarding the authentic materials, 9(30%) and 16(53.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they believed that teachers should use authentic materials to supplement the textbook in EFL classes (item 3). 1(3.3%) and 2(6.7%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively on the issue, whereas, the rest 2(6.7%) of the respondents did not have any

decision about the issue raised under item 3. similarly, 7(23.3%) and 20(66.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they understood that teachers should use tasks to teach new language items in TBLT method (item 6). In a similar Vein, Skehan (1996a) states that learners learn a language through tasks by a conscious focus on meaning via interaction with an unconscious focus on structure or language items. However, small minority of the respondents did not understand this notion. Consequently, 2(6.7%) and 1(3.3%) of the respondents reported 'undecided' and 'disagreed' respectively.

Regarding task accomplishment, half of the respondents 15(50%) strongly agreed that they believed that TBLT focuses on the accomplishment of tasks (item 8). 12(40%) of the respondents agreed on the issue raised under item 8. In line with this, Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that a task is the core unit of TBLT because it provides rich opportunities for learners to engage themselves in the process of negotiation of meaning. Dornyei (2001) also adds a task can create motivation among the learners as they themselves actively involved in the process of task accomplishment. Contrary to this notion, 2(6.7%) and 1(3.3%) of the respondents reported 'undecided' and 'strongly disagreed' respectively on the issue raised under item 8.

Regarding task outcomes, 9(30%) and 17(56.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they understood that tasks in TBLT method must have outcomes (item 10). 1(3.3%) and 1(3.3%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed on the issue raised under item 10. The rest 2(6.7%) of the respondents could not decide about the issue. That is to say, the responses to all items of table five, on average, 87.3% of the teachers responded to either strongly agree or agree. This implies that majority (87.3%) of teachers had positive perception about the features of TBLT with regard to roles of tasks.

To sum up, the responses to all items of tables 3, 4 and 5 (items 1-11), on average, 88% of teachers responded to either strongly agree or agree. This implies that majority (88%) of teachers seemed to have positive perception with regard to the key features, theories and principles of TBLT stated.

In addition the first open-ended item which elicits teachers' general view of TBLT method showed similar results to close-ended question which deals about teachers' perception of TBLT. All of the teachers' responses focused on features of TBLT. Consequently, respondents (R15, R16, R18, R19, R20, R21, R28, R29 and R30) expressed their views that TBLT is a method of teaching English using tasks. In line with this, as per the literature, Brown (2001) states that TBLT puts tasks at the centre of methodological focus and it views the learning process as a set of communicative task. Respondent (R3) expressed his view that TBLT used for learners to use English in realistic situation (as they are in real life). Respondents (R2, R7, R8, R10, R12 and R22) expressed their views that TBLT is used to promote learners' communicative ability. In line with this, Jeon and Hahn (2006) state that TBLT is focused on meaning, which means language learning is a developmental process promoting communication and social interaction. Respondents (R4, R5, R6, R11, R13, R14, R17, R23, R24, R26 and R27) expressed their views that TBLT is used to improve learners' integrated language skills. In light of this, Skehan (1996a) states that the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) should be integrated in TBLT method. This means that what has been learnt and practiced through one skill is reinforced and developed through other skills. Respondents (R9 and R25) expressed their views that students are highly responsible for their own learning in TBLT. In line with this Van den Branden (2006) states that TBLT offers learners as a sense of freedom and responsibility to increase their motivation and promote their own learning through student-centred approach.

As stated above, the responses of teachers for their general view of TBLT (for the first open-ended item) focus on features of TBLT. Therefore, the majority of the respondents of close-ended and open-ended questionnaire items that deal about teachers' perception of TBLT generally seemed to have positive perception about the features, theories and principles of TBLT. Therefore, the result implies that it is possible to assume that teachers can put TBLT principles into their entire EFL classes in

Ethiopian preparatory context. So far, we discussed teachers' perception towards task-based language teaching. The next discussion focuses on teachers' practice of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

4.4. Analysis of Teachers' Practice of TBLT

4.4.1. Analysis of Perspective on Roles of Tasks in TBLT

Table. 4. Frequency and percentage of Teachers' Practice for Perspective on Roles of Tasks in TBLT.

Item No.	Questionnaire Items	Respondents' Response											
		Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
4	I use authentic materials like newspaper and magazines in EFL classes.	1	3.3	1	3.3	5	16.7	11	36.7	12	40	30	100
9	I have designed additional TBLT related tasks to supplement the textbook I am using	-	-	-	-	5	16.7	7	23.3	18	60	30	100

As can be seen from table 6, the result on item 4 depicts that a total of 6.6% teachers with 3.3% (always) and 3.3% (often) reported that they use authentic materials. In line with this, Mishan (2005) states that authentic materials like newspaper and magazines help learners bridge the gaps between the classrooms and outside world, which learnersare required to rehearse real-world activities in the classroom. Contrary to this fact, 5(16.7%), 11(36.7%) and 12(40%) of the respondents used authentic materials in EFL classes 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never' respectively. This indicates that a total of 76.7% of teachers did not use authentic materials in EFL classes (item 4). Similarly, the result for item number 9, which states "designing of additional TBLT-related tasks", show that among the respondents, 5(16.7%) sometimes, 7(23.3%)rarely and 18(60%) neverdesigned additional TBLT-related tasks to supplement the textbook they are using. In other words, the responses to both items of table 6, on average, 80% of the teachers responded to either 'rarely' or 'never'. This implies that majority (80%) of teachers have not used authentic materials and designed supplementary tasks. Likewise, the findings of the classroom observation also confirmed that teachers have not used authentic materials like newspaper and magazines. On the other hand, all of the six teachers were observed introducing different tasks from student's textbook in the pre-task phase, such as opinion exchange tasks, reasoning tasks, comparing and contrasting tasks and ordering and sorting tasks. However, teachers did not apply these tasks in the task cycle and post-task phase. Therefore, from the results of the questionnaire, observation and interview, it can be deduced that teachers have used tasks to some extentin EFL classes.

4.4.2. Analysis of Perspective on Roles of the Teacher in TBLT

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of teachers' Practice for Perspective on Roles of the Teacher in TBLT

Item No.	Questionnaire Items	Respondents' Response											
		Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I introduce and define the topic of the task.	13	43.3	6	20	8	26.7	3	10	-	-	30	100
5	I play a facilitator role in EFL classes	1	3.3	4	13.3	17	56.7	8	26.7	-	-	30	100
7	I act as a language advisor when students are planning tasks to report.	-	-	3	10	17	56.7	10	33.3	-	-	30	100
8	I act as a chairperson to select students who will report next.	2	6.7	4	13.3	15	50	7	23.3	2	6.7	30	100

As per the literature, the role of the teacher in TBLT is that a teacher is a practice monitor (director), assistance provider (supporter or helper), counsellor, selector, sequencer, and introducer of tasks as well as facilitator of students learning process (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In line with this, as indicated in table 7 item 1, 13(43.3%) and 6(20%) of the teachers responded that they introduce and define the topic of the task 'always' and 'often'; whereas, 8(26.7%) and 3(10%) of the teachers answered 'sometimes' and 'rarely' respectively. This indicates that a total of 90% teachers introduced and defined the topic of the task. Likewise, the findings of the classroom observation also confirmed that teachers introduced and explained the topic of the task.

Regarding the role the teacher plays a facilitator of students' learning process (item 5), 1(3.3%) and 4(13.3%) reported that they did it 'always' and 'often'; whereas, 17(56.7%) and 8(26.7%) of the teachers answered 'sometimes' and 'rarely' respectively. For item 7, that is, a teacher act as language advisor when students are planning tasks to report, 3(10%) and 17(56.7%) of teachers did so 'often' and 'sometimes'; whereas, 10(33.3%) did it rarely respectively. Likewise, when teachers were asked to know how far they act as a chairperson to select students who will report next (item 8), only 2(6.7%) and 4(13.3%) of the respondents replied that they have employed it 'always' and 'often'; whereas, the majority 15(50%) and 7(23.3%) of the respondents replied that they have employed it 'sometimes' and 'rarely' respectively. Even 2(6.7%) of them said they never employ it after all. The results obtained (from items 5, 7 and 8), therefore, imply that more than half of EFL teachers have played their roles in some extent as facilitator, language adviser and chairperson in EFL classes. Similarly, the findings of classroom observation and interview results confirmed that teachers have played their roles in some extent due to different challenges. Next perspective on learner-centeredness of TBLT is discussed.

4.4..3. Analysis of Perspective on Learner-Centeredness of TBLT

Table6. Frequency and Percentage of Teachers' Practice for perspective on Leaner-Centeredness of TBLT

Item No.	Questionnaire Items	Respondents' Response											
		Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2	I use learner-centred instruction in TBLT method.	1	3.3	6	20	17	56.7	6	20	-	-	30	100
3	I encourage and involve students to find the contextual meaning of the new language items.	-	-	1	3.3	2	6.7	24	80	3	10	30	100
6	I help or encourage learners to present oral or written reports after completing tasks..	-	-	1	3.3	18	60	9	30	2	6.7	30	100
10	I assess students' progress on the basis of their day to day performance	-	-	1	3.3	8	26.7	20	66.7	1	3.3	30	100

Regarding learner-centred instruction in TBLT, only a small portion of teachers 1(3.3%) and 6(20%) indicated that they used it 'always' and 'often' respectively (item 2). Connection with this, learner-centred instruction is used to help students practice more, bearing responsibility for their own learning, assists the learners in developing independence, assess their own progress, develop confidence etc. for meaningful interaction (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). On the contrary, the remaining 6(20%) of teachers replied that they employed such instruction rarely while the majority 17(56.7%) said sometimes. The results, therefore, indicate that, even though a small portion of respondents revealed that they did not use learner-centred instruction in TBLT, more than half of the respondents sometimes use learner-centred instruction in TBLT.

Teachers were asked to know how frequently they encourage and involve students to find the contextual meaning of the new language items (item 3). Though only a small portion of teachers 1(3.3%) and 2(6.7%) replied that they did it 'often' and 'sometimes' respectively, 24(80%) of them practiced it rarely. Yet, 3(10%) explained that they never did it after all. This implies that the majority of teachers seemed to practice language items (rules of grammar) to learners in isolation. In other words, the sum percentage of rarely and never (90%) is greater than the sum percentage of often and sometimes (10%). From this, one can infer that a great majority (90%) of teachers rarely and never encourage and involve learners to find the contextual meaning of the new language items.Furthermore, classroom observation and interview results confirmed that teachers did not encourage and involve learners to find the contextual meaning of the new language items. As a result, students could not be encouraged to write and speak using the structure of the language in communicative way. Literature suggests that students do not memorize language items (rules of grammar) in isolation; rather, the task should be used to provide the main context learners' language use similar to the way language is used outside the classroom (Ellis, 2003).

Willis (1996) suggests that the teacher asks students to present oral or written report how they did the task in TBLT and on what they decided or discovered. Accordingly, 1(3.3%) and 18(60%) of teachers

replied often and sometimes respectively that they have helped or encouraged learners to present oral or written reports after completing tasks (item 6). Whereas, 9(30% and 2(6.7%) of teachers replied rarely and never respectively on the issue raised udder item 6.

Teachers were asked to know how frequently they assessed students' progress on the bases of their day to day performance (item 10).Though only a small number of teachers 1(3.3%) and 8(26.7%) replied that they did it 'often' and sometimes' respectively. per the literature, Long and Norris (2001) state that TBLT assessment focuses on the performance of tasks whether the performance on the task is successful or not and does not pay attention to specific units of the language. Contrary this fact, 20(66.7%) and 1(3.3%) of teachers said that they employed such assessment rarely and never respectively. This shows that the sum percentage of rarely and never (70%) is greaterthan the sum percentage of often and sometimes (30%). From this, one can deduce that a majority (70%) of teachers rarely and never assess students' progress on the basis of their day to day performance. Moreover, interview results confirmed that teachers did not assess students' progress on the basis of learners' day to day performance because of different challenges such as shortage of class time, large class size,lack of students' interest, low language proficiency level of students and influence of national exam.

As can be seen from table 6,7 and 8 (items 1-10), the discussion concerning classroom practice therefore indicates that majority of teachers practiced TBLT to some extent regarding its principles and methodologies. Likewise, the results of classroom observation confirmed that although teachers implemented TBLT to some extent, they tended to focus on linguistic features due to shortage of time and other constraints. For this reason, it is important to see the results of the constraints that affect the implementation of TBLT.
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4.4.4. Analysis of challenges that Affect the Implementation of TBLT

Table 7. Factors that Affect Implementation of TBLT

Item No.	Questionnaire Items	Respondents' Response									
		To great extent		To some extent		To less extent		Not at all		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Lack of learners' interest in engaging and participating in tasks.	20	66.7	4	33.3	3	10	3	10	30	100
2	Shortage of time to complete tasks	24	80	3	10	2	6.7	1	3.3	30	100
3	Large class size	24	80	6	20	-	-	-	-	30	100
4	Lack of teachers' interest to use TBLT method.	2	6.7	13	43.3	12	40	3	10	30	100
5	Difficulty in assessing learners' task-based performance	8	26.7	19	63.3	3	10	-	-	30	100
6	Structure based instruction	16	53.3	11	36.7	2	6.7	1	3.3	30	100
7	Low language proficiency level of students.	24	80	4	13.3	2	6.7	-	-	30	100
8	Teacher-led instruction	10	33.3	17	56.7	3	10	-	-	30	100
9	Lack of authentic materials	23	76.7	4	13.3	3	10	-	-	30	100
10	Grammar-based assessment system	20	66.7	7	23.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	30	100

As can be seen from table 9, the most serious problems that affect the implementation of TBLT to great extent, according to 24 (80%) of the respondents are, shortage of time to complete tasks, large class size and low language proficiency level of students. Another serious factors that affect the implementation of TBLT based on teachers' responses are, 23(76.7%) of teachers identified that they had no access to authentic materials like newspaper and magazines, 20(66.7%) of teachers identified that grammar-based assessment system and lack of learners' interest in engaging and participating in tasks and 16(53.3%) of teachers indicated that structure-based instruction.Two other challenges found to affect the implementation of TBLT to some extent, 19(63.3%) of teachers identified that difficulty in assessing learners' task-based performance and 17(56.7%) of teachers indicated that teacher-led instruction.

From the results above, one can infer that teachers have faced many challenges while implementing TBLT. The observation result and the responses from the interview also showed similar results. As per the literature, Leaver and Kaplan (2004) state that different factors hinder the effective implementation of TBLT, such as shortage of time, large class size, lack of students' interest, assessment system and the like.

Therefore, teachers were asked to suggest ideas, under the second open-ended questionnaire item, to implement TBLT effectively. Consequently, their responses to "what, do you think, should be done for the successful implementation of TBLT?" are related to the factors mentioned above. Respondents (R20, R23, R28 and R30) expressed their suggestion that teachers should get in-service training about TBLT. Respondents (R1, R7, R17 and R24) suggested that students should be well aware of TBLT method to increase their motivation and interest about TBLT method. Respondents (R5, R6, R8, R25 and R27) replied to suggest that the number of students in the class should be minimized. Respondents (R11, R15 and R18) expressed their suggestion that teachers should use their maximum effort in order to implement TBLT successfully. Respondents (R3 and R21) expressed their suggestion that teachers should design additional tasks to supplement the textbook. Respondents (R9, R16 and R22 suggested that teachers should use authentic materials in English lesson to implement TBLT effectively. Moreover, respondent (R2) explained that teachers use learner-centred instruction properly in order to implement TBLT successfully. Furthermore, respondents (R12, R13, R19, R26 and R29) put their suggestion that learners should be given adequate time to perform tasks. Last but not least, respondents (R4, R10 and R14) explained that teachers should assess learners' progress using performance assessment based on speaking, reading, listening and writing skills in the process of learning rather than giving too much emphasis on grammar-oriented exams at the end of the semesters (i.e., Summative assessment).

4.5. Analysis and Discussion of Classroom Observation

The classroom observation used to get firsthand information and check whether teachers practice the principles of TBLT or not while the actual English lesson was going on. Accordingly, observations of six sections of grade 11(D, F, I, J, L and O) were conducted prior to the distribution of the questionnaire. Thus, six volunteer teachers were observed four times each (all together twenty-four times) by the researcher and co-observers using a checklist (see Appendix B). The researcher and co-observers discussed after every observation on what was observed in the classroom. Based on their agreements, the data obtained through observation were discussed as follows.

In all observed sections, there were sixty students arranged into ten groups based on one to five arrangements for discussion and all teachers introduced tasks to learners.

Teacher A began the lesson in this way "ok students open your textbook on page 172"discourse markers". The teacher introduced the topic that discourse markers are words and expressions which show the relationship between different parts of a discourse or text in order to present logical arrangement of ideas. During the task cycle, the teacher also explained that discourse markers can

have various functions, such as adding information (furthermore, moreover, also, in addition, etc.), contrasting (however, although, etc.), sequencing information in a list (firstly, second, next, last, etc.). The teacher explained the types and functions of discourse markers by giving different examples like this, she is clever; moreover, she is beautiful (adding information). He is sick. However, he comes to school (contrasting ideas). First I will finish my work, next I go to the party (sequencing). The teacher order students that in such away list other discourse markers and construct eight sentences in group. During the task cycle, the teacher did not move among the groups for monitoring, rather he tried to keep the discipline of the classroom. The teacher said that we did not have enough time, so who can read the sentence that you construct. One student from one group read that, Abebe studied day and night; consequently, he pass the exam. The teacher said very well and gave correction like this, Abebe studied day and night; consequently, he passed the exam. Immediately, he said the time is up and he ordered them to rehearse such a way at home.

Teacher B started introducing cause and effect by definition. He said open your textbook on page 273. 'Cause' means the person or thing that makes something happens while 'effect' means a result that happens in spite of its cause. Let us see by examples. Haile got a medal because he had done so well. Cause (he had done so well) and effect (he got a medal). The teacher did not monitor the class. He explained cause and effect relationship by giving different examples. He also ordered learners to complete sentences with suitable cause or effect (result) expressions or verb. The teacher immediately announced that the time isup; therefore, you have to do at home. The learners did not get enough time for reflection.

Teacher C began the lesson like this, 'open your textbook on page 212on the topic 'comparing people and things.' The teacher explained the three kinds of comparison by giving examples. Positive degree is used to compare two equal things or people. s+v+as+adj+as+n, example, Student 'A' is as tall as Aster. Comparative degree is used to compare two people or things. Forms s+v+adj.+-er/ more+adj.+than+n. Example, Student 'B' is more beautiful than Genet. Superlative degree is used to compare three and more than three people or things. Form; s+ v+ the + adj. + -est /most + adj. + n. Example, Student 'C' is the tallest boy in this class. The teacher took much time on explaining language forms. He also ordered students to construct five similar sentences in their groups and read the sentences loudly. One short student from the infront seat read 'I am the shortest student in this class '. The teacher thanked him. From other group, one student also read. Student 'D' is the tallest boy in this class. The teacher thanked him too, but immediately the teacher said the time is up and he ordered them to do the task at home in a similar way.

Teacher D started the lesson like this, 'today we are going to learn verb patterns, v + - ing and v+ infinitive, so open your text book on page 226 and we focus on exercise 3'. He further explained the patterns by giving examples like this, some verbs such as finish, enjoy, deny, etc. are always followed by -ing. He gave examples. He enjoys playing football; I have just finished writing to my sister etc.They are also other verbs which always followed by infinitive (to + v1.). Some of these are: agree, hope, decide, arrange, refuse, etc. Examples, He refused to come early. I decided to work hard. The teacher spent too much time on explaining verb patterns. He ordered students to identify a verb + -ing in the text about the topic and a verb + infinitive in the text about Helen Keller. Immediately, the teacher announced we did not have enough time to present your discussion and he ordered them to practice at home.

Teacher E began the lesson like this, "Ok open your text book on page 261 describing cause and effect in unit 10.5. Today we are going to describepeople or things using cause and effect relationship". Cause is a source of something happen and effect is a result of a cause. She added examples like this; Money alone does not lead to development.Cause (money) and effect (development). She ordered students to identify cause and effect from the given sentence on exercise one. She did not move round in the class to monitor the task progress and to help learners when they faced difficulties, rather she

tried manage learners' discipline. Learners were not given adequate time to accomplish the task. There is no report stage in the task cycle. The teacher said time is up, and ordered them to do at home in a similar way.

Teacher F started talking about events that did not happen in the past (page 251 in unit 10.3). He continued the explanation; the lesson is about past or third conditional. It has two parts, the if-clause and the main clause. In the if-clause, we use present perfect tense (if + had + past participle) and in the main clause we use perfect conditional (would /could / might + have+ past participle). He tried to clarify using examples. If I had studied hard, I would have passed the exam. This means, I did not study hard, so I did not pass the exam. The teacher ordered learners to construct six similar sentences in groups about Ethiopia or Korea. One student raised his hand and read'South Korea would not have been developed so rapidly if it had not had a good education system'. The teacher said good and elicited other student. From other group, one student said that if we had planted more trees, drought would have disappeared in Ethiopia. The teacher thanked the student and advised them to practice at home because the time was over.

As it was discussed in the review literature, the role of teachers in pre-task cycle was introducing and familiarizing the topic to learners that help them to perform the task. Regarding this, all the sixobserved teachers introduced the topic of tasks. Edwards and Willis (2005) indicated that the main role of the teacher in the task cycle (during task cycle) is move round among the groups to monitor the task process and help students in their difficulties. Even though teachers were always expected to do this, all the six teachers were not observed to monitor the task progress and help students while performing tasks; rather they tried to control and manage students' discipline.

In the task cycle, Seedhouse (1999: 150) states, "As a rule, the teacher withdraws after allocating tasks to the learners, to allow them to manage the interaction themselves". Nunan (2004: 361) adds that "Learners learn best through active use of language; therefore, the majority of class time should be devoted to using the language." Regarding this, all the observed teachers did not create opportunities to students to use the language while discussing. Teachers took almost all the class time to describe language items. Learners also did not get a chance to report what was discussed in the task cycle.

Willis (1996) recommends that asking students to present oral or written reports or how they did the task are some of the roles of learners during task cycle. Therefore, Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that there should always be a report stage in the task cycle which helps learners to use the language fluently and accurately. Regarding this, teacher A gave the chance to only one group, teacher C gave the chance to only two groups and teacher F gave the chance to only two groups out of ten groups to reflect and report what they discussed in their groups. The rest three teachers were not observed to create conditions for learners to present oral or written reports in the task cycle.

Moreover, a few students were observed interacting in English while the majority of the students murmured in Amharic and awgni languages and others were not involved totally in group discussion. This shows that all students have not used the target language during their pair or group discussion. Unless students interact with each other using English, they cannot reach the intended level of proficiency in English.

As per the literature, Willis (1996) states that the post-task phase (language focus cycle) is used to direct students to concentrate and discuss on the form of language used in the task cycle. This is because, according to Leaver and Kaplan (2004), accuracy and fluency should be taken into almost equal consideration in TBLT to make learners the native-like performance in the foreign language. Regarding this, the post-task phase (language focus cycle) has been ignored by all the six observed teachers. Therefore, these teachers implemented only two phases, pre-task and in some extent the task cycle. They did not implement the post-task phase due to shortage of class time. For this reason,

teachers ordered learners to rehearse the post-task phase at home. Moreover, students were not given adequate time and chance to finish their tasks. Furthermore, all the teachers were observed to use only student's textbook in the classroom. They did not use authentic materials like newspaper and magazines.

It can be concluded that the observed teachers gave more emphasis to accuracy than fluency. As per the literature, equal emphasis should be given to both accuracy and fluency in TBLT in order to make learners the native-like performances in the foreign language (Skehan, 1996b; Leaver and Kaplan, 2004; Shehadeh, 2005).

4.3. Analysis and Discussion of Teachers' Interview

As mentioned in chapter three, an interview was held with six teachers who were observed while the actual English lesson was going on. Consequently, the teachers' responses to the five interview questions are presented and analysed as follows.

The first interview question was to elicit information whether teachers perceive the features of TBLT or not. Five out of the six interviewed teachers mentioned that learner-centeredness, focus on meaning, completion of tasks, skills integration, goal oriented and task outcome are some features of TBLT. However, one of them did not state the characteristics of TBLT properly. This indicates that majority of teachers have understanding about features of TBLT.

The second interview question was indicated to elicit information from interviewees about the roles they play in EFL classes. All the six teachers responded that they play roles as introducer of tasks, sequencer of tasks, selector of tasks, facilitator, language advisor, practice monitor and counsellor in EFL classes. Based on the data obtained from the interviewees, teachers know about their roles that they play in EFL classes. It indicates that the result of teachers' interview is consistent with the result of the questionnaire items. All teachers played some roles such as introducing and explaining of tasks but much more expected roles such as monitoring tasks and facilitating learners were not implemented in the observed classes because of shortage of time.

Concerning instructional materials that teachers use in EFL classes in the third interview question, all the six interviewees said that most of the time they use student textbook, and teacher's guide. Four out of the six teachers replied that they have used grammar reference books besides the above mentioned and they do not use authentic materials. The reasons why they did not use authentic materials in EFL classes were that they had no access to authentic materials and much time was needed to select and use authentic materials and they emphasised on content coverage of the voluminous textbook. One of the teachers, for example forwarded the following.

"The materials we use are that which is found around in our area. For example, textbook, grammar book and so on. If it is possible and available authentic materials are very, very important for this purpose but we cannot get them easily. Because of shortage, we cannot get authentic materials like magazines, newspaper and so on, so we cannot use these."

The responses, therefore, imply that teachers do not use authentic materials. The fourth interview questions dealt about how teachers assess learners' progress in EFL classes. All of the respondents replied that most of the time they have used grammar-oriented examinations to assess learners' progress. Their reasons for this were to prepare students for the University Entrance Exam (UEE) which focuses mainly on linguistic forms. They also reasons the problems out that it is difficult just to assess each and every individual's language skills, because of shortage of time, large class size and lack of learners' interest. However, they said that they sometimes use project work, group work, pair work, oral question and even individual work to assess learners' progress. One of the participants, for instance, commented.

"Actually, we assess our students' learning progress normally by providing project work, group work and even sometimes individual task may be reading and even by providing listening text, but the lion's share is given for mid-exam and final exam which I can say totally grammar-oriented."

Another teacher commented,
 "I assess learners' progress by giving grammar tests because university entrance exam focuses on grammar. Shortage of time, large class size and lack of learners' interest are also the other reasons. And I sometimes use oral questions to assess learners' progress."

The responses imply that teachers mostly use grammar-based examination at the end of the semesters. The last interview question was dealt about the factors that can hinder the effective implementation of TBLT. All of the six teachers said that shortage of time to complete tasks, lack of learners' interest to participate in English lessons and large class size are major factors that hinder the effective implementation of TBLT. In addition, two of the interviewees said that the environment by itself and lack of resources in the school are hindrances of TBLT implementation. One of the six teachers also said that teachers' and students' perceptions can be factors which can hinder the effective implementation of TBLT because we teachers in some cases are not committed to apply TBLT since it requires (needs) more time and excessive teacher preparation. One of the respondents forwarded,

"The main problems that hinder me to apply TBLT: The first one is shortage of time to perform tasks. It is difficult for me to cover every language skills within 42- minute class time. The other one is large class size. The textbook is too bulky to cover within a given time since it has a lot of contents and tasks insideand lack of students' interest to participate in English lessons since they are exam-oriented. Related to that exam, students would like to do grammar-based activities instead of doing reading, speaking, listening and writing."

The responses; therefore, imply that there are a number of challenges that teachers face while implementing the principles of TBLT despite the fact that they are aware of the importance of task-based language teaching method and the fact that they are interested and happy with principles of TBLT.

4.6. Discussion
4.6.1. Discussion of the findings related to the first research question
The first research question was aimed to investigate teachers' perception on TBLT. The items of the questionnaire about teachers' perception of TBLT were sub-categorized into three themes: perspectives on learner-centeredness of TBLT (table 3), meaning focus of TBLT (table 4) and roles of tasks in TBLT (table 5).

In the first category of teachers' perception questionnaire (Table 3), teachers seemed to have positive perception towards learner-centeredness. For instance, 90% of teachers replied that they strongly agreed and agreed that they perceived that Lerner-centred instructional approach is one of the features of TBLT method (item 1). Similarly, the majority (86.7%) of the respondents seemed to have positive perception towards the perspectives on meaning focus of TBLT (Table 4) and 87.3% of respondents seemed to have positive perception towards perspective on roles of tasks in TBLT (Table 5). Generally, the responses of all items (1-10) of tables 3,4 and 5, on average, 88% of teachers responded to either strongly agree or agree. This implies that majority (88%) of teachers seemed to have positive perception with regard to the key features, theories and principles of TBLT stated.

Likewise, The findings of the first open-ended question and the interview were similar to the findings of the first research question.

The finding is in line with the findings of the previous studies that have indicated that teachers convey positive understanding about the key concepts of TBLT conducted by (Jeon and Hahn, 2006; Ansari and Shahrokhi, 2014). Jeon and Hahn (2006) explored EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT in Korean secondary school context and teachers held positive perception towards TBLT principles. This could be the fact that the current Korean national curriculum for English had a shift towards TBLT which aims to improve learners' communicative skills. The findings also supports the findings of the study conducted by Ansari and Shahrokhi (2014) who examined the perceptions of 40 Iranian English teachers who teach at high school and language institute. It was found that teachers had clear understanding of TBLT principles. This could be the fact that the current Iranian national curriculum for English had a definite shift towards TBLT which aims to improve students' communicative skills. This finding also supports the findings of the study in our context conducted by Tagesse (2008), who examined the practicability of task-based instruction in higher institute.

The findings of the current study also indicate that the majority of teachers perceived TBLT. This could happen due to the fact that, as Littlewood (2004) states, TBLT has been a recent expansion of communicative language teaching and has become a popular approach to language teaching globally. After the new education and training policy had introduced, the English language textbooks were prepared with TBLT principles which is an offshoot of CLT. For example, Tariku (2013) asserts that all the tasks of grade 11 English textbook contain the five components (goals, inputs, roles, activities and settings) of tasks.

4.6.2. Discussion of the Findings Related to the Second Research question

The second research question was aimed exploring how teachers practice TBLT in their EFL classes. The items of the questionnaire about teachers' practice of TBLT were sub-categorized into three themes: perspectives on roles of tasks in TBLT (Table 6), roles of the teacher in TBLT (Table 7) and learner-centeredness of TBLT (Table 8). The data obtained from the questionnaire and the interview regarding the roles of tasks (Table 6) indicates that teachers sometimes use tasks in TBLT method. The results of the observation also indicate that, even if teachers did not use authentic materials, all of the six observed teachers introduced different tasks form the textbook in the pre-task phase, such as opinion exchange tasks, reasoning tasks, comparing and contrasting tasks and ordering and sorting tasks. However, teachers were not observed using these tasks definitely in the task cycle and in the post-task phase.From the above discussion, it can be deduced that teachers use tasks in EFL classes.

Regarding the roles of teachers (Table 7), the data obtained from the questionnaire, the interview and the observation indicate that teachers introduced and explained the topics of tasks in the pre-task as expected but the roles of teachers in the task cycle and the post-task phase were not implemented as expected. Teachers, therefore,play their roles in some extent in TBLT method. Similarly, learner-centeredness (Table 8), the questionnaire, the observation and interview results show that teachers seem to apply learner-centred instruction in some extent in TBLT method.

The finding of the second research question therefore indicates that the majority of teachers practiced TBLT in some extent regarding its principles and methodologies. The findings of this result is inconsistent with the finding of the study conducted by Ansari and Shahrokhi (2014) that investigate the perception and practice of Iranian high school and language institute EFL teachers. It was found that despite teachers' clear understanding of TBLT principles, most of the teachers expressed their reluctance to adopt TBLT techniques in EFL classes. However, the finding of this result was in line with the findings of the study in our context conducted by Tagesse (2008), who examined the

practicability of task-based instruction in higher institute EFL teachers, though the basic principles of TBLT are not followed.

Teachers have attempted to apply TBLT in EFL classes but it is insufficient with regard to its basic principles and specific techniques. Consequently, it is suggested that the Ministry of Education (MOE) and other concerned bodies should give in-service training to teachers concerning about principles and techniques of TBLT, how to implement it and how to assess learners' progress.

4.6.3. Discussion of the Findings Related to the third Research Question

The third research question was aimed to identify the challenges teachers face while implementing TBLT. The findings of the questionnaire and interview data analyses show that challenges teachers face while implementing TBLT including; shortage of time to complete tasks, large class size, language proficiency level of students, lack of authentic materialsand lack of learners' interest. Among the factors, shortage of time to complete tasks, large class size and low language proficiency level of students are the most serious ones which are identified by the teachers.Tagesse (2008) studied these challenges at higher level institute and found that factors that affect task-based instruction in Ethiopian colleges were: lack of authentic materials, shortage of time to prepare lessons, students background, difficult to predict how much time learners would need with each time, difficulty to test and lack of students' interest to involve in learning process is identified to be factors that negatively influence the implementation of TBLT. Among these, students' poor background is the most serious factor which is identified by the instructors. Difficulty in assessment is also the other challenge according to Jeon and Hahn, 2006; Ansari and Shahrokhi; 2014.

EFL teachers should consider the challenges while they are implementing TBLT. For shortage of time which has often been considered to be a major challenge in completing tasks (Skehan, 1996a), teachers involve students in groups and at the same time give most of the class time for learners enables them to save class time. Moreover, teachers can use different active learning methods such as Jigsaw by providing different topics for different topics to save time. For large class size, teachers should consider group formation procedure. Finally, assessment should be matched to TBLT method. Therefore, teachers should apply performance assessment based on students' reading, listening, speaking and writing skills rather than giving grammar-based examination at the end of the semester (Summative assessment).

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

➢ The data obtained from the questionnaire and the interview regarding features of TBLT such as learner centeredness, meaning focus, and roles of tasks indicated that majority of the teachers seemed to have understanding about features of TBLT. It implies that majority of EFL teachers seemed to have positive perception towards TBLT principles.

➢ Even though majority of teachers seemed to have positive perception towards TBLT, they practiced it to some extent regarding its principles and methodologies because of different challenges.

➢ The challengesteachers face while implementing TBLT including; shortage of time to complete tasks, large class size, low language proficiency level of students, lack of authentic materials, lack of learners' interest in engaging and participating in tasks, difficulty in assessing learners' task-based performance, grammar-based assessment system, influence of the national examination, load of contents and tasks in the textbook, lack of teachers' interest to use TBLT method and teacher-led (teacher-fronted) instruction.

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