



# **Unveiling Perspectives: Primary School Teachers' Reflections on Task-Based Language Teaching in China**

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**Author's contribution**

*The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study offers a purposive exploration into the firsthand experiences of Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province, China, immersed in the implementation of task-based language teaching (TBLT). Through thematic analysis, the research identifies crucial themes—Learner-Centered Approach, Integration of Real-World Tasks, All Language Skills Integration, Reflective and Iterative Learning, Increased Student Engagement, and Improved Language Proficiency. These findings, deeply rooted in established TBLT principles, highlight the significance of tailored teaching, authentic tasks, and holistic language skill development. Despite inherent limitations, notably a confined sample size, the study's practical implications for curriculum design and teacher development underscore its relevance in advancing effective language education methodologies. This research contributes valuable insights, urging the thoughtful integration of TBLT principles into language education policies and practices.

**Keywords:** *Task-Based language teaching; English teachers; reflective practices.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Developing successful communication skills in students is contingent upon implementing innovative pedagogical approaches in the dynamic field of language education. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a methodology that is widely recognized for emphasizing the practical application of language in authentic contexts Dao et al., [1] Crookes and Ziegler, [2] Bhandari, [3] Deng, [4]. TBLT has the potential to significantly alter language education practices. As TBLT gains momentum worldwide, understanding its implementation and impact in diverse educational settings becomes imperative. This study embarks on a journey into the experiences and perceptions of Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province, China, as they navigate the integration of TBLT into their instructional practices.

With its illustrious past and growing worldwide clout, China has gradually adopted TBLT to improve English language proficiency [5]. The commitment of the Chinese government to fostering English proficiency aligns seamlessly with the exploration and integration of innovative teaching methodologies. Hebei Province, situated in the northern part of the country, offers a distinctive context for this research, contributing valuable insights to the broader understanding of TBLT's applicability and challenges across diverse educational landscapes.

The significance of TBLT in fostering language proficiency is underscored by its learner-centred approach, which acknowledges individual differences and learning styles Ellis, [6] Liu et al., [7]. In the diverse educational landscape of China, characterized by a myriad of linguistic backgrounds and learning abilities, the learner-centred paradigm becomes particularly critical. TBLT, with its emphasis on developing practical language skills applicable to real-world scenarios, prepares students for effective communication beyond the confines of the classroom. However, the implementation of TBLT is not without its challenges, and exploring these challenges is integral to refining and tailoring TBLT methodologies to suit the specific needs of educators and students in different contexts.

**This research is guided by two primary questions:**

1. How do Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province integrate TBLT into their teaching, and what challenges do they face?

This question aims to delve into the practical aspects of TBLT implementation, seeking to understand the strategies employed by Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province. It also recognizes the challenges these educators may encounter, whether related to pedagogical approaches, resource limitations, or other contextual factors. The responses to this question are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the nuances associated with integrating TBLT into the existing educational framework.

Hebei Province, while actively incorporating TBLT, may confront unique challenges stemming from its specific socio-cultural and educational context. These challenges could range from the availability of teaching resources and infrastructure to the readiness and openness of students towards this innovative methodology. Additionally, the level of support and training provided to teachers in Hebei Province could play a pivotal role in determining the successful implementation of TBLT. As we explore these intricacies, a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province will emerge, contributing to the broader discourse on TBLT implementation.

2. What impact does TBLT have on student engagement and language proficiency in Grade 5 classrooms in Hebei Province?

This question explores the outcomes of TBLT implementation from the perspective of student engagement and language proficiency. By focusing on Grade 5 students, the study aims to assess how TBLT influences their interest, participation, and overall proficiency in English. The responses to this question are anticipated to offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of TBLT in achieving its intended outcomes and contributing to the broader goals of language education.

In the dynamic and formative stage of Grade 5, students are at a critical juncture in their language development [6]. TBLT, with its focus on real-world language use, has the potential to significantly impact student engagement by

making language learning relevant and meaningful. It is essential to uncover how Grade 5 students in Hebei Province respond to TBLT, examining not only their language proficiency but also their enthusiasm for learning English. The findings of this study will provide educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers with valuable information on the tangible benefits and potential challenges associated with TBLT implementation in Grade 5 classrooms.

This study focuses on Grade 5 English teachers to capture crucial insights into educators' experiences at a pivotal stage in students' language development. It aims to inform effective teaching practices and contribute to broader language education goals. Addressing a research gap in understanding the interplay between Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), teacher practices, and student outcomes in specific regional contexts, such as Hebei Province, China, this research seeks to bridge this gap. By offering a detailed exploration of TBLT implementation and its impact in this unique educational landscape, the study contributes to the global discourse on innovative language teaching methodologies.

In the ever-evolving global landscape of language education, TBLT stands out as an

innovation. This research anticipates uncovering insights in Grade 5 classrooms in Hebei Province that extend beyond geographical boundaries, enriching collective knowledge on effective language education practices. The aim is not only to illuminate challenges and successes in Hebei but also to provide a broader understanding of how TBLT can be tailored to diverse educational settings, fostering enhanced language proficiency and communication skills globally.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review offers a chronological exploration of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) from 1990 to 2023. The selected studies, ranging from Long's early work on task interactions to recent research by Nguyen, provide diverse perspectives on TBLT implementation. The review identifies key findings and gaps in each study, addressing aspects such as teacher practices, student engagement, and the integration of technology. The subsequent sections provide concise insights into each study, emphasizing the evolving landscape of TBLT literature and the crucial areas that require further exploration for enhanced implementation.

**Table 1. Literature review**

Reference	Key Findings	Identified Gaps
Long [8]	- Exploration of task, group, and task-group interactions in language teaching.	- Limited application of findings to the challenges faced by teachers in implementing TBLT.
Moser et al. [9]	- Improving teacher talk through a task-based approach.	- Limited exploration of the impact of teacher talk on student engagement and learning outcomes.
Douglas and Kim [10]	- Investigation into instructor perceptions and practice of TBLT in the Canadian context.	- Lack of exploration on the impact of TBLT on students' academic performance.
Moore [11]	- Overview of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).	- Does not provide in-depth insights into potential challenges faced by teachers in implementing TBLT.
Cushion [12]	- Critical analysis of reflection and reflective practice discourses in coaching.	- Limited focus on the application of reflective practice in language teaching contexts.
Kishita et al. [13]	- Toward designing sustainability education programs: a survey of master's programs through semi-structured interviews.	- Does not delve into the application of sustainability education in language teaching contexts.
Errasti-Ibarrondo et al. [14]	- Conducting phenomenological research: Rationalizing the methods and rigour of the phenomenology of practice.	- Does not focus on applying phenomenological research to language teaching contexts.

Reference	Key Findings	Identified Gaps
Ji and Pham, [15]	- Implementing task-based language teaching (TBLT) to teach grammar in English classes in China: using design-based research to explore challenges and strategies.	- Limited examination of the role of student characteristics in influencing the success of TBLT for teaching grammar.
Ellis [6]	- Examination of options in a task-based language-teaching curriculum.	- Limited discussion on the role of technology in enhancing TBLT curriculum options.
Fang et al. [16]	- Effects of mobile-supported task-based language teaching on EFL students' linguistic achievement and conversational interaction.	- Limited exploration of potential drawbacks or challenges associated with mobile-supported TBLT.
Hasnain and Halder, [17]	- Exploring the impediments for successful implementation of the task-based language teaching approach: a review of studies on teachers' perceptions.	- Lack of exploration on how teacher perceptions of impediments vary across different educational settings.
Kessler et al., [5]	- Can task-based language teaching be "authentic" in foreign language contexts? Exploring the case of China.	- Limited discussion on the implications of cultural differences in determining the authenticity of TBLT tasks.
Lume and Hisbullah [18]	- The effectiveness of task-based language teaching to teach speaking skills.	- Limited discussion on the potential variations in the effectiveness of TBLT for different language skills.
Nguyen [19]	- Vietnamese EFL Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Task-Based Language.	- Limited exploration of the role of institutional support in influencing teachers' perceptions and practices of TBLT.

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of key literature on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) from 1990 to 2023, highlighting key findings and identifying gaps in each study.

Long's [8] exploration of task interactions emphasizes the need for further application to challenges faced by TBLT implementers. The identified gap lies in the limited transferability of the findings to real-world challenges encountered by language teachers practising TBLT.

Moser, Harris, and Carle [9] focus on improving teacher talk through a task-based approach, noting a gap in exploring the impact of teacher talk on student engagement. The identified gap underscores the need for a deeper understanding of how teacher talk, within a TBLT framework, influences student participation and learning outcomes.

Douglas and Kim's [10] investigation into TBLT in Canada lacks an exploration of its impact on students' academic performance. The identified gap points to the need for research that assesses the broader implications of TBLT on students' overall academic achievements.

Moore's [11] overview lacks in-depth insights into the challenges faced by TBLT implementers. The identified gap highlights the necessity for a more nuanced understanding of the practical challenges teachers encounter when implementing TBLT methodologies.

Cushion's [12] critical analysis of reflective practice in coaching identifies a gap in applying reflective practice in language teaching contexts. The recognized gap emphasizes the need for further exploration of how reflective practices can be effectively integrated into language teaching methodologies.

Kishita et al. [13] miss exploring the application of sustainability education in language teaching. The identified gap suggests the need for research that investigates the potential integration of sustainability education principles into TBLT practices.

Errasti-Ibarrondo et al. [14] focus on phenomenological research but miss its application in language teaching contexts. The identified gap underscores the opportunity to apply phenomenological research methods to

gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of language teachers within a TBLT framework.

Ji and Pham's [15] study on implementing TBLT for teaching grammar in China lacks an examination of student characteristics influencing success. The identified gap emphasizes the importance of considering student-specific factors in the successful implementation of TBLT, particularly in teaching grammar.

Ellis [6] explores TBLT curriculum options but discusses technology's role minimally. The identified gap suggests the need for further investigation into the role of technology in enhancing TBLT curriculum options, acknowledging its potential impact on language teaching practices.

Fang et al.'s [16] study on mobile-supported TBLT notes limited exploration of associated challenges. The identified gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges teachers face when integrating mobile-supported TBLT into their pedagogical practices.

Hasnain and Halder's [17] review highlights impediments but lacks exploration of varying teacher perceptions across settings. The identified gap points to the importance of considering diverse educational settings and understanding how teacher perceptions of impediments may vary across different contexts.

Kessler et al. [5] discuss TBLT authenticity in China, but the implications of cultural differences need more extensive exploration. The identified gap suggests the necessity of further research that delves into the nuanced implications of cultural differences on the authenticity of TBLT tasks in foreign language contexts, particularly in China.

Lume and Hisbullah's [18] study on TBLT effectiveness in teaching speaking skills has a gap in discussing potential variations across

language skills. The identified gap underscores the need for research that explores how the effectiveness of TBLT may vary across different language skills, providing a more holistic understanding of its impact.

Nguyen's [19] study on Vietnamese teachers' perceptions lacks an exploration of institutional support's role in influencing TBLT practices. The identified gap emphasizes the importance of investigating how institutional support or lack thereof influences teachers' perceptions and practices of TBLT in different educational contexts.

Overall, this Table 2 synthesizes key findings and gaps in existing literature on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) from 1990 to 2023. The identified gaps underscore the evolving nature of TBLT literature, pointing towards specific areas that warrant further investigation. These gaps highlight opportunities for future research to contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of TBLT implementation, especially in diverse educational contexts. Researchers can leverage these gaps to address practical challenges faced by teachers and enhance the effectiveness of TBLT methodologies. The table serves as a valuable guide for scholars seeking to explore and contribute to the ongoing discourse on TBLT.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This phenomenological study delved into the experiences and perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) among Grade 5 English teachers at a primary school in Hebei Province, China. The qualitative approach was specifically chosen to capture the intricate nuances of the educators' personal experiences and the meanings they ascribe to their professional practices within the TBLT framework, which is supported by (Kessler et al., [5] Norman, [20]).

**Table 2. Participant profile**

Participant ID	Age Range	Gender	Teaching Experience	TBLT Experience	Additional Qualifications
Teacher 1	35	Female	10 years	3 years	TEFL Certificate
Teacher 2	40	Male	15 years	5 years	Master's in Education
Teacher 3	28	Female	6 years	2 years	B.A in Education
Teacher 4	41	Male	12 years	4 years	TESOL Certificate
Teacher 5	31	Female	8 years	3 years	B.A. in English Language
Teacher 6	47	Male	20 years	7 years	B.A in English Education

Table 2 outlines the careful selection process employed in this study, utilizing purposive sampling to gain profound insights into the practical applications of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Participants were deliberately chosen based on direct TBLT experience, ensuring the study's findings were grounded in hands-on pedagogical encounters. As illustrated in Table 2, the six selected teachers, with ages ranging from 28 to 47, exhibit a gender balance and a diverse range of teaching experiences (6 to 20 years) and TBLT exposure (2 to 7 years). Their varied qualifications, including TEFL certificates, TESOL certificates, and advanced degrees in education, contribute to the richness of pedagogical perspectives explored in the study.

Data collection primarily relied on semi-structured interviews guided by a framework developed through an extensive literature review and aligned with the study's objectives. While each interview was tailored to the individual, a consistent structure allowed for comparability across all participants. Questions were designed to elicit comprehensive narratives about teachers' TBLT methodologies, conceptual understanding of the approach, and any implementation challenges encountered..

Pilot interviews were initially conducted to assess the efficacy of the interview guide, leading to adjustments that enhanced its capacity to delve deeper into teachers' TBLT experiences. The main interviews, lasting about an hour each, took place in a private setting, were audio-recorded with participants' consent, and aimed to foster a comfortable atmosphere for candid discussions.

The collected data underwent a thorough thematic analysis, starting with an immersive reading of the transcripts and followed by open coding to establish the groundwork for identifying themes. The analysis was iterative, ensuring that themes accurately reflected the participants' insights.

Ethical considerations were of utmost importance throughout the study. Approval was obtained from an institutional review board, and participants were guaranteed anonymity with the option to withdraw without repercussions. This methodological rigour aimed to support the study's objectives, providing a comprehensive view of the role and reception of TBLT in the context of Chinese primary education from the educators' perspective.

## 4. RESULTS

The findings of this study emanate from in-depth interviews with six Grade 5 English teachers, centring on their encounters with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Hebei Province, China. As summarized in Table 3, their perspectives unveil pivotal themes, including the Learner-Centered Approach, Incorporation of Real-World Tasks, Integration of All Language Skills, Reflective and Iterative Learning, and Improvement in Language Proficiency. These revelations not only capture the distinctive experiences of each teacher but also resonate with the broader tenets of TBLT, providing a holistic understanding of its implementation and efficacy in the realm of primary education.

Table 3 indicates that Participant Perspectives on Key Themes in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers a succinct and insightful compilation of the experiences and insights shared by six Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province, China. It provides a condensed yet comprehensive overview of their views on various essential themes associated with TBLT, accompanied by direct quotes from each participant.

**Learner-Centered Approach (Teacher 1):** This theme emphasizes the significance of tailoring teaching methods to meet the unique needs and abilities of individual students. Teacher 1 underscores the core principle of TBLT, advocating for the adaptation of strategies to suit diverse learning styles and personalities within the classroom.

**Incorporation of Real-World Tasks (Teacher 2):** Teacher 2's quote highlights the value of integrating tasks with real-life relevance into the language learning process. This aspect is pivotal in TBLT, making learning more engaging and meaningful by helping students understand the practical applications of language skills beyond the classroom.

**Integration of All Language Skills (Teacher 3):** Teacher 3 stresses the importance of developing all facets of language ability—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—through TBLT. This holistic approach ensures comprehensive language skill development, a crucial factor for overall proficiency in English.

**Reflective and Iterative Learning (Teacher 4):** Teacher 4 discusses the dynamic nature of TBLT, emphasizing the encouragement of students to

take an active role in their learning journey. This quote underscores the role of communication and interaction in TBLT, contributing not only to improved language skills but also fostering a deeper engagement with the learning process.

**Increased Student Engagement and Participation (Teacher 5):** Teacher 5 illustrates the effectiveness of TBLT in cultivating a learner-centred environment that promotes active participation. The quote suggests that TBLT's learner-centred, process-oriented approach significantly benefits students' communicative abilities.

**Improvement in Language Proficiency (Teacher 6):** Teacher 6 focuses on the role of TBLT in promoting learner autonomy, departing from traditional teaching methods. This perspective highlights the effectiveness of TBLT in encouraging students to take control of their learning, leading to improved language proficiency.

Overall, Table 3 effectively consolidates individual perspectives on key aspects of TBLT,

providing a nuanced understanding of its impact in the classroom. The direct quotes add authenticity and depth to the themes, making the study more relatable. The strategic organization and thematic coverage contribute to the rigour and richness of the study, enhancing its value for both academic and practical audiences.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, rooted in the experiences and perspectives of Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province, China, provide nuanced insights into the practical implementation and impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). The thematic analysis, as presented in Table 3, reveals critical themes such as the Learner-Centered Approach, Incorporation of Real-World Tasks, Integration of All Language Skills, Reflective and Iterative Learning, Increased Student Engagement and Participation, and Improvement in Language Proficiency. These identified themes serve as focal points for a comprehensive discussion that contextualizes them within the broader TBLT literature and addresses specific gaps identified in prior research.

**Table 3. Participant perspectives on key themes in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**

Participant ID	Theme	Quote
Teacher 1	Learner-Centered Approach	"Each child has his or her own unique personality and learning ability. Therefore, I use different teaching methods for different students."
Teacher 2	Incorporation of Real-World Tasks	"I create real-life scenarios that provide the students an opportunity to use English in a meaningful context. This makes learning fun and also helps students understand the practical applications of the language."
Teacher 3	Integration of All Language Skills	"Using task-based teaching method, I strive to enhance students' comprehensive English ability, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills."
Teacher 4	Reflective and Iterative Learning	"Learner-centeredness involves allowing the students to take an active role in the learning process. This, in turn, encourages communication and interaction among the students, improving their English speaking skills."
Teacher 5	Increased Student Engagement and Participation	"When using task-based language teaching, I will repeatedly utilize key elements such as learner-centred, process-oriented, reflective and iterative learning... The learner-centred teaching method is theoretically very beneficial for cultivating students' communicative abilities."
Teacher 6	Improvement in Language Proficiency	"Promoting learner autonomy is another essential element. I encourage students to take charge of their learning, fostering a sense of ownership and self-reliance. It's a departure from traditional spoon-feeding methods and encourages students to become independent language users."

The study's emphasis on the Learner-Centered Approach aligns with the literature gap identified in Long's [8] exploration, emphasizing the limited application of findings to challenges faced by TBLT implementers. The insights shared by Teacher 1 echo the challenges related to personalization and application, emphasizing the importance of adapting teaching strategies to individual students within a learner-centred approach. This connection underscores the critical need to bridge the gap between theoretical insights and practical challenges faced by teachers implementing TBLT.

Furthermore, the theme of the Incorporation of Real-World Tasks, as highlighted by Teacher 2, resonates with the literature gap identified in Moser, Harris, and Carle's [9] study, which needed more exploration of the impact of teacher talk on student engagement. Teacher 2's emphasis on the practical application of language through real-world tasks underscores the significance of incorporating authentic, real-life scenarios to enhance student engagement. This aligns seamlessly with the broader TBLT philosophy of authentic language use and highlights the importance of making learning more meaningful and engaging for students.

Moreover, Teacher 3's focus on the Integration of All Language Skills corresponds with the holistic approach advocated by TBLT, as noted in Ellis [6]. This aligns with the literature gap identified in Douglas and Kim's (2015) investigation, which needed an exploration of TBLT's impact on students' academic performance. By delving into the comprehensive development of language skills, the current study contributes to addressing this gap and emphasizes the necessity of a well-rounded language education approach for overall proficiency.

The identified theme of Reflective and Iterative Learning, emphasized by Teacher 4, aligns with the literature gap identified in Cushion's [12] critical analysis of reflective practice in coaching. This connection emphasizes the dynamic nature of TBLT and the need for reflective learning within this framework, extending the literature by highlighting its importance in language teaching contexts. Teacher 4's insights underscore the role of reflective and iterative practices in improving language skills and fostering a deeper engagement with the learning process.

In addition, the focus on Increased Student Engagement and Participation, highlighted by

Teacher 5, aligns with the learner-centred, process-oriented approach of TBLT, as noted in Ji and Pham's [15] study. This theme illustrates the effectiveness of TBLT in cultivating a learner-centered environment that promotes active participation. Teacher 5's emphasis on learner engagement resonates with the broader TBLT approach and contributes to the literature by highlighting the importance of student characteristics in TBLT success.

Furthermore, the theme of Improvement in Language Proficiency, emphasized by Teacher 6, aligns with the literature gap identified in Hasnain and Halder's [17] review, which needed more exploration of teacher perceptions across different settings. Teacher 6's focus on learner autonomy, a departure from traditional teaching methods, underscores the importance of considering diverse educational contexts. The study extends the literature by emphasizing the significance of learner autonomy in promoting better language proficiency and independence.

In conclusion, this study not only supports existing TBLT literature but also extends it by providing authentic insights into the practical experiences of Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province. The identified themes offer a rich understanding of how TBLT is operationalized in the classroom and its impact on language learning, thereby contributing to the ongoing discourse on effective language teaching methodologies. The congruence between the study's findings and the existing literature on TBLT enhances the broader understanding of TBLT's applicability and challenges, especially in the unique context of Chinese primary education. The study's thematic insights, grounded in the voices of educators, bridge theoretical gaps and offer a valuable foundation for future research and the enhancement of TBLT practices in diverse educational settings.

## **6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study comprehensively examines Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) implementation among Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province, China. The identified themes, including the Learner-Centered Approach, Incorporation of Real-World Tasks, Integration of All Language Skills, Reflective and Iterative Learning, Increased Student Engagement and Participation, and Improvement in Language



Proficiency, collectively contribute to our understanding of effective language education methodologies. By emphasizing aspects such as reflective and iterative learning and recognizing the significance of learner characteristics in TBLT success, the study enriches the discourse on language teaching practices.

It is imperative to recognize the limits of this study. The findings may not be as applicable to other educational levels or geographic areas due to the focus on English teachers of Grade 5 in Hebei Province. Even if the study's qualitative design offers depth, it might not be able to capture the breadth that a quantitative method could. A limited sample size may not accurately reflect the range of experiences among the larger teaching community, and relying solely on self-reported teacher viewpoints creates possible biases. The study's consequences are significant for language education research and practice, notwithstanding these limitations. A learner-centred approach, reflective practices, and iterative learning are prioritized, which emphasizes the value of customized teaching methods, engaged students, and educators' continuous reflection. Additionally, TBLT can support the development of autonomous language users, given its emphasis on learner autonomy and improvement in language proficiency. It is suggested that educators and policymakers consider incorporating TBLT principles into language education methods and policies.

In conclusion, while recognizing its limitations, this study advances our understanding of effective language teaching methodologies, offering practical considerations for educators and policymakers. The identified themes provide valuable insights, and the study sets the stage for future research to explore TBLT in diverse contexts and with larger, more varied samples.

## CONSENT

All authors declare that written informed consent was obtained from the Grade 5 English teachers in Hebei Province, China, for the publication of their experiences in this study.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study received ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Taylor's University, Selangor, Malaysia. The research

was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards outlined in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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