Summary of Proposed Research Program for Doctor of Philosophy

Title

Task-based language teaching in post-Soviet school classrooms: Investigation of policies, practices and teacher perceptions

Abstract

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is widely reputed as a methodology that reflects current knowledge on second language acquisition as it provides opportunities to combine meaningful communication and attention to language form. Research on the implementation of this approach in different countries and with different age groups reveals a crucial role for context in this process. The present study addresses this issue by exploring the potential use of TBLT in post-Soviet schools, an under-researched area, and yet a setting where foreign language teaching, especially English language teaching, is becoming increasingly more important due to globalisation. The study will comprise three phases, first, a comprehensive audit of the current policies and practices in post-Soviet Ukraine and Russia, second, individual and focus group interviews with teachers to investigate their perceptions about TBLT and receptivity to educational change, and third, a large scale survey of 300 teachers in both countries. The findings will have important implications for the development of foreign language teaching in post-Soviet schools. TBLT implementation in EFL contexts will be discussed and recommendations for further research and practices will be provided.

Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to investigate current policies and practices of teaching English in an under-researched area, namely post-Soviet schools, and, based on teachers' perceptions of task-based approach and receptivity to change, provide recommendations for improvement of these practices and TBLT implementation in foreign language contexts.

Research Questions

1. What are the current policies and practices of teaching English in schools in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine?
2. What are the perceptions of English language teachers in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine about task-based language teaching?
3. How receptive are English language teachers in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine to educational innovations, such as TBLT?

Background

Introduction

The development of international relations and globalisation processes has resulted in English becoming a global language. As such, competence in English has become increasingly important for personal, social and governmental reasons, which has made the teaching of it one of the major issues in education around the world. With this has come a push for improvement in the ways languages are taught. Initially in response to globalisation and as a result of the changes in our understanding about language learning, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced to meet the requirement of practical and meaningful language use in language classrooms.

However, certain concerns about this approach were raised by practitioners, particularly about the role of grammar and other aspects of language (e.g., functional requirements).

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) was developed to address these concerns and as such, has a number of advantages over its predecessor, while implementation of this approach in various contexts still presents some challenges. At the same time, there is considerable evidence for the need of practical and effective English teaching methodologies for use in a variety of situations. Despite this need, there is a lack of empirical research to inform and facilitate such change and little is known about how TBLT may benefit language teaching in a diverse range of countries. It is the concern for the implementation in school settings in Post-Soviet countries, namely Russia and Ukraine, which is the focus of the proposed research. This is because a study of TBLT in this context may help bridge the gap that exists in the literature and provide directions for future pedagogical practice.

English as a global language

Globalisation is the process of integration of or moving beyond national boundaries in terms of politics, economy, society, culture, academic work, etc. and in contemporary times has been boosted by technological development and population mobility. As a result, the need to deal with people or organisations from different language backgrounds has risen requiring certain means of mediation. For example, the use of a lingua franca has become crucial for the success of international organisations, such as the UN, as well as business and academic communities around the world (Crystal, 2003).

Today English is the main language of technology, media, business, international marketing, and advertising, and as such, has become a global language. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the number of people who considered themselves fluent in English equalled approximately 1.5 billion people, or one quarter of the world's population (Crystal, 2003). This number continues to grow as fluency in English becomes crucial for job opportunities and professional growth, participation in society at a number of levels, as well as for travel, migration and other purposes. This change has had a significant impact on teaching English as a second or foreign language around the world (Kennedy, 2010), including in post-Soviet countries.

Second/Foreign language teaching

Although the impetus has grown in recent times, teaching foreign languages, including English, as a means of intercultural communication has been a pedagogical focus for centuries. Historical accounts of language teaching show changing views on the purpose and nature of language acquisition.

Historical overview. The history of second/foreign language teaching dates back to the Middle Ages when Latin was used as a lingua franca. For centuries, attempts were made to find effective ways to teach Latin as a "language of wider communication". Greek, Hebrew, Russian and French are other examples of languages taught for this purpose in different historical periods and places. However, it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that modern languages were included in the university curriculum, and later widely adopted by public schools (Savignon, 2007, p.208).

Initially, second/foreign language teaching in the classroom was based on Grammar translation, an approach previously used for teaching Latin. It required learners to learn grammar rules and translate written texts according to these rules, aiming at intellectual development rather than communication. Later, other approaches were developed reflecting the thinking on language acquisition and purposes of language teaching at the time. One of them is known as audio-lingual approach rooted in behaviourist and structuralist ideas – its aim was to develop habits of correct language use with the help of drilling, reflecting the belief that language is a set of structures,

sounds and words (Richards & Rogers, 1995). This approach required teachers to follow the PPP sequence: present, practice, produce (Gower & Walters, 1983). This model was appealing to teachers as provided them with the opportunity to be in control of the language classroom and made learning process quite predictable (Ellis, 2003). However, the model had obvious drawbacks. Presentation of linguistic structures before language production resulted in learners focusing on form rather than meaning, which had a negative impact on practical use of language (Willis & Willis, 2007). Furthermore, the actual language production, which had to follow language practice, was often omitted (Johnson, 1996).

Communicative language teaching. As understanding about language learning progressed, by the 1970s learners' need to develop communicative competence for effective use was recognised. This motivated researchers and educators to question traditional methods and move towards an approach known as Communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT aimed to develop learners' ability to use language meaningfully and appropriately in a range of situations. Tied to this was the notion of 'relevance' and the aim of providing practice for real-life situations (Allwright, 1995), including social interaction. It was also a methodology that gave careful consideration to what learners brought into the classroom (Savignon, 1987Breen).

Despite its merits, over the years CLT has been the target of criticism. Specifically, it was claimed that the radical shift from the focus on form to the focus on meaning led to the development of fluency at the expense of accuracy (Richards, 2006). In addition, an absence of universal standards and a universally accepted definition of language proficiency were obstacles for the adequate assessment of learners in CLT classrooms (Brandle, 2008). Finally, though CLT was tailored to meet the need for meaningful language use, it was found difficult to implement in diverse contexts, particularly where traditional teaching approaches were strongly entrenched (McKay, 2002). In response to these claims, new methodologies, such as task-based language teaching (TBLT), content-based instruction, problem-based learning and others, were developed. Internationally TBLT is recognised as theoretically robust (emerging as it does from SLA research); appears to offer greater utility for meeting functional needs, whilst at the same time servicing the need to address both meaning and form focused instruction; and is potentially adaptable to context. As it is the focus of the current proposal, it is described in detail below.

Task-based language teaching

Over the last few decades there has been a long-standing and ever increasing interest in TBLT with SLA researchers such as Long (1985), Prabhu (1987), Breen and Candlin (1980) among the first to address and support TBLT in their work. TBLT uses task as the main unit of the syllabus, and in turn this is developed using a Needs Analysis of the learners (Long, 2005; Skehan, 1996; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; etc). Task is used as the main tool to elicit learners' language and the primary focus on meaning (Widdowson, 1998), to determine communicative goals and outcomes (Ellis, 2000), to ensure authenticity (Nunan, 2004) and language use (Willis, 1996). TBLT is learner- rather than teacher-centred (Van den Branden, 2006), with students acting as language users rather than language learners (Long, 1985; Nunan, 2004), etc.

TBLT has a number of advantages over CLT. Firstly, it is informed by contemporary research about the process of second language acquisition (Skehan, 1996; Ellis, 2003; Brandle, 2008). Secondly, task-based approach has a capacity to combine focus on meaning (central to CLT) with requisite need to also focus on form. As a result, TBLT can enable language teachers to effectively develop not only fluency and complexity, but also accuracy, through the use of communicative tasks (Ellis, 2000). Furthermore, teachers can choose from a broad variety of tasks, and refer to the task-based syllabus for a wider picture of the learning process (Long & Crookes, 1992; Nunan, 2004).

At the same time, TBLT challenges traditional classroom routines. It requires teachers to change their roles from an instructor to a facilitator of learning (Samuda & Bygate, 2008) and improvise in a less predictable learning environment (Ellis, 2000). Hence, they need to achieve a higher level of language proficiency themselves and prepare additional resources to suit needs of individual learners, which is often perceived as burdensome to the teachers' workload (Zhang, 2007; Brandle, 2008). With the focus on practical and meaningful use of language, the learning process can become not only engaging, but also noisier (Carless, 2004). Therefore, it is no surprise that studies in TBLT implementation report that teachers experience a number of difficulties with its implementation, exacerbated by large class sizes, difficulties with discipline, and the use of mother tongue by the learners (Carless, 2002; Hui, 2004; Kollmann, 2005; Jeon & Hahn, 2006).

TBLT and context. As indicated, TBLT considers classroom learners' experience and links learning to the real-life situations (Nunan, 2004). Hence, task features need to vary depending on the users and contexts (Butler, 2011). Van Den Branden (2006) points out that, though tasks are supposed to be designed based on language learning needs, much of the TBLT research has been based on studies undertaken in tightly controlled settings. He questions whether this methodology would work as well in "real classroom contexts" and whether it would "inspire" or "frighten" teachers. Similarly, Batstone (2012) claims that TBLT research should more carefully take into account classroom context.

Studies undertaken in various classroom contexts have shown that these concerns are reasonable and real contexts of language teaching should be approached with due attention to their influence on teaching and learning process. For example, Stelma (2010) warns that one of the difficulties in taking communicative approaches into foreign teaching settings arises because communication may be very different (Stelma, 2010). Similarly, Allwright (1996) warns about the difference between second and foreign language learning settings and the impact that this may have on pedagogy.

TBLT research and the EFL context. Originally developed within the ESL context, TBLT has been taken to non-English-speaking countries. It has been introduced at local and national levels, with post-implementation research being carried out. Such studies have been undertaken in Hong Kong (Hui, 2004; Carless, 2007), Vietnam (Barnard & Nguyen, 2010), China (Cheng & Samuel, 2011), East Asia (Littlewood, 2007), and more recently, spread further to such countries as Japan (Sasayama & Izumi, 2012; Horiba & Fukaya, 2012), Turkey (Genc, 2012), France (McAllister, Narcy-Combes & Starkey-Perret, 2012), Spain (Malicka & Levkina, 2012), and Venezuela (Chacón, 2012).

While the overall trend of TBLT use in these contexts has been successful (Adams & Newton, 2009), a number of constraints have been identified. These may have resulted from a prevalence of traditional views on language teaching (McKay, 2002; Park, 2012). Specifically in some settings, a conflict between the methodology requirements and the local culture was observed, for example, an inconsistency between the Western ideas that underpin communicative teaching instruction and the dominance of Confucian norms in Asian countries (Carless, 2007). Therefore, it has been argued that communicative competence needs to be achieved in the ways that are appropriate to a specific cultural and social context (Breen, 1985; Holliday, 2009; Butler, 2011). In the proposed study, the implication of a post-Soviet cultural and social context for this pedagogy will be explored.

As a participant of the new methodology implementation in language teaching classes in Indonesian university, Coleman made the following conclusion: "...students were not prepared to behave any differently from the way they had always done in English lessons", and it was "... practically impossible for them [students and teachers] to adopt new roles" (Coleman, 1996, p. 80). In the overview of the recently published book *Task-Based Language Teaching in Foreign Language Contexts*, Careless commented that the question was not only to what extent should TBLT be "adapted to suit the EFL settings", but also whether educational traditions might need to

change to achieve effective learning (Carless, 2012, p. 347). While some scholars suggest combining imported methodology with that used locally (Littlewood, 2011), the question is whether TBLT is flexible enough to become context-appropriate and retain its core features when adopted to meet the local needs and values. In the proposed research, this question is being applied to a post-Soviet context.

Though the need for empirical study of context has been established, most TBLT - EFL research is still focused on linguistic and pedagogical aspects. This includes studies on task complexity (e.g., Sasayama & Izumi, 2012), strategic planning and accuracy (Genc, 2012), task instructions (Horiba & Fukaya, 2012), task structure (Hobbs, 2012), corrective feedback (Iwashita & Li, 2012), and focus on form (Moore, 2012). The few studies that have included some consideration of context have only done so after the implementation and usually simply by considering separate contextual factors (e.g., as teachers', or learners' perceptions, or cultural issues). One example is a study by McAllister, Narcy-Combes and Starkey-Perret (2012) who investigated teachers' perceptions of TBLT in a French university after two years of implementation. They found, by way of semi-structured interviews, that the majority of teachers were adapting to the changes in their role according to the requirements of the new methodology, realising and accepting the importance of such change. However, they also found that some teachers struggled with the additional workload. Another study by Rashtchi and Keyvanfar studied the applicability of TBLT in Iran after implementation. Students and teachers completed a questionnaire and the findings indicated that both groups suggested a need for a focus on grammar combined with the use of tasks (Rashtchi & Keyvanfar, 2012). However, the structured questionnaires used in this study did not allow in-depth analysis of the situation which may have revealed some of the contextual factors that informed the teachers' and learners' perceptions.

Empirical research is crucial for development of language teaching. It is expected that the "selection of methods and materials appropriate to both the goals and context of teaching begins with an analysis of learning in a given educational setting" (Savignon, 2007, p.209). However, to date there does not seem to be research undertaken in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Hence, a thorough preliminary study of the EFL context is needed to provide ways for successful implementation of this new methodology (i.e., TBLT) in this new context (Coleman,1996; Shamim, 1996).

Therefore, the goals of the present study is to elicit from various sources the needs that exist in the post-Soviet context and also to explore teachers' perspectives about TBLT methodology, and how well they believe it can meet these needs. Such a study is also expected to provide deeper understanding of those contextual factors relevant to post-Soviet society. This will be done through document analysis, surveying teachers, lesson observation, and in-depth interviews based on the open-ended questions about video evidence of TBLT in use.

TBLT research in school context. The age of learners is an important contextual factor in language teaching and an important variable in SLA (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Oliver, 1995, 1998, 2009; Mackey, Oliver & Philp, 2006; Philp, Oliver & Mackey, 2008). Language teaching contexts vary from school classrooms with young children to classes with adult learners. Unfortunately, though the number of empirical studies in TBLT is increasing, school settings remain underrepresented (Carless, 2007; Mackey, Oliver & Philp, 2006). Among the few studies that examined task-based learning in school EFL classrooms are those undertaken by Carless – in primary (Carless, 2003) and secondary (Carless, 2007) schools. These studies revealed teachers' concerns about the use of TBLT in Hong Kong schools, but they also provided practical advice as to the ways to deal with these difficulties. Therefore, a closer look at what happens in schools may provide school teachers, and specifically those in post-Soviet classrooms, with useful information regarding difficulties they might encounter when implementing TBLT in their classes and ways to effectively deal with such issues.

Post-Soviet school context

The focus of this study, that is a post-Soviet rather than Eastern-European context, is intentional as these regions have a different scope, with the latter being much more complex and diverse (Mitter, 1992). Total separation from the rest of the world and criticism of the ideas developed outside the Iron Curtin had a great impact on schooling as well as other aspects of social life in the countries of the Soviet Union. Further, Russia and Ukraine are the largest countries in Europe, with Russia becoming the largest country in the world, once independence was gained after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Under the influence of globalisation there is an increasing interest in learning English in the region.

Post-Soviet countries share a significant common heritage based on the Communist practices of the regime that lasted for over 70 years. This heritage includes social, economic, political, educational policies and practices based on the ideology of the Communist party. Educational reform that followed independence aimed to remove this ideology from all aspects of schooling and determine ways for further development, which drew on two main sources, namely pre-Soviet practices and Western educational experience (Mitter, 1992; Eklof, 2004). In addition, the Russian language has been gradually replaced by English as target foreign language because of its role as the international lingua franca (Ustinova, 2005).

Specifically the Ukrainian authorities support developing English language competence for the majority of the population, and see it as being crucial for the "integration of the country into the world community and the international economy" aiming at "protecting and developing an independent Ukraine" (Tarnopolsky, 1996, p. 616). However, though "teachers in the Ukraine have already made a very serious attempt … to integrate communication and attention to form, … both the public and FL teaching professionals are well aware that only a minority of students from state-owned educational institutions benefit in a practical way from the compulsory EFL courses" (Tarnopolsky, 1996, p.618). Even so the understanding of the importance of learning English in the country is growing. Recently, a new *State Standard of Primary Education* 2011 has established English as a compulsory subject in all Ukrainian schools starting from year 1.

The language situation is more complicated in Russia, previously Russian was taught as an international language in all Soviet nations. However, in modern Russia, "educational system regards foreign languages as an important component of the curriculum..." and in fact, English would appear to be "the foreign language of first choice for most parents and students…" (Ustinova, 2005, pp.244-245) In comprehensive schools, teaching English starts in year 5, while in schools that specialise in English it starts in year 1 or 2.

Given the growing importance of English for school students in Russia and Ukraine, there is a need for a closer look at the effective ways to teach it. A lack of empirical data on teaching English at school in both countries remains an obstacle to meeting this goal. Hence, the present study is expected not only to inform methodology developers on the contextual issues and possibilities of task-based approach implementation in post-Soviet region, but also to make a valuable contribution towards meeting local needs.

Summary

English has become a global language that is used for a variety of personal and professional reasons. As a consequence, there is a need to use effective language teaching approaches. Equally there is a need for practical and meaningful language use to enable the development of communicative competence. Drawbacks of CLT have given rise to task-based approaches which aim to address a learner's need to perform in real-life situations. However, the implementation of TBLT in EFL contexts reveals an inconsistency with local practices and this has caused concerns and barriers to success. Thus the role of social and cultural context is recognised and in recent times it is gaining more attention in the literature. Even so, there is still a need to explore the

implementation of TBLT in a variety of school classroom contexts. For example, no studies could be identified in post-Soviet school contexts. The present study aims to address this deficit and in doing so provide information on teacher perceptions and receptivity to adaptation of TBLT in Post-Soviet school classrooms.

Significance

The significance of the proposed study is fourfold. Firstly, although there is a growing interest in the implementation of TBLT around the world, no attempts could be identified in any country of the post-Soviet block, thus this study explores TBLT in a yet to be researched location. Secondly, while TBLT research in other countries has been carried out after implementation, the proposed research involves a unique approach, namely it is a preliminary study. Such an approach is expected to identify effective and context-sensitive ways for future implementation. Thirdly, due to the significant changes in post-Soviet social, political and economic spheres, and increasing effects of globalisation, teaching languages is becoming increasingly important for the future of the region, and the number of school students learning English is growing. This requires rigorous research of what is happening in language classrooms and what changes are needed to facilitate language acquisition, as well as the ways to effectively implement these changes. The present study is going to be one of the first to analyse the existing situation of language teaching in a number of public schools in Russia and Ukraine, elicit teachers' perspectives and provide practical recommendations for teachers, curriculum designers and policy makers. Finally, even though there is a risk of some subjectivity, the study by a researcher native to the context provides more insight into the problem and is more grounded. As Holliday puts it, "innovation can only be effectively managed by the insiders" (Holliday, 1994).

Research Method

Research Approach

A mixed-method approach will be used in the study. This approach combines the strengths of quantitative and qualitative research methods and thus promotes better understanding of the research problem by providing "a complex picture of the situation" (Creswell, 2012, p.535). According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.42), combinations of quantitative and qualitative data form a "very powerful mix" and this ensures both comprehensiveness and reliability. Stake (1995) suggests quantitative methods are used for explanation, and qualitative methods are used for exploration. The present research seeks to explain and also to explore the language teaching in post-Soviet school classrooms as it is currently practiced and how it might be improved.

Research Design

The study will be conducted in three sequential phases using the Exploratory Sequential Design in which qualitative data collection and analyses precede quantitative data collection and analyses (Creswell, 2012, p. 541). Phase One is an audit of current policies and practices, Phase Two is an interpretive study of teacher perceptions, and Phase Three applies a survey instrument and quantification techniques. The following description of the research methods presents the procedure, the research sites and participants, the data analysis techniques, and a description of how the validity of the investigation will be ensured.

Procedure

Phase One. The purpose of this phase is to explore language teaching in public primary and secondary schools in Russia and Ukraine. Qualitative data will be collected by way of three methods:

1. *Document analysis* of state educational policies and guidelines including curricula regarding the teaching of foreign language, and also of relevant school policies and guidelines coming from a centralised website. Teacher-produced records and documents including 40 lesson plans obtained from primary ($n = 10$) and secondary ($n = 10$) school teachers in each of the two countries. These will also be subject to analysis of content. This will be carried out in conjunction with an examination of instructional resources including textbooks.

2. *Lesson observation* will be used to provide further information on existing practices. It is expected that eight lessons will be observed (two primary, two secondary in each of the two countries). The researcher will be a nonparticipant observer. Data will comprise field notes and drawings. Field notes will focus on teacher and student roles, learning activities, resources used, L1 and L2 use, while drawings will represent the physical setting of the classroom (location of students' desks, position of a teacher, a blackboard/whiteboard, other resources if any). Analysis of data from observing lessons will be based on the observation protocol, including coding for themes and classroom features.

3. *Semi-structured interviews* will be conducted with eight teachers (two primary, two secondary in each of the two countries) and two-three teacher educators in each country to reveal preferred teaching approaches and methods, understanding of teacher and student roles, and of prevailing difficulties. Interview data will be transcribed and discourse analysis applied. Analysis of data obtained by these methods should describe the current policies and practices of teaching English in schools in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine.

Phase Two. This phase will involve interviewing teachers, collecting data from individuals and in focus groups. Based in the integrationist tradition, interviews will be used to "generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experiences" (Silverman, 2001, p. 87) which in turn helps achieve "knowledge of the social worlds" (Miller & Glassner, 2004, p. 127). The purpose of this phase is to reveal teacher perceptions of TBLT and their receptivity towards implementing TBLT in their classrooms. First, teachers will attend a presentation on TBLT delivered by the researcher (including a video sample of TBLT in action), and then each teacher will be individually interviewed using semi-structured and open-ended questions. Questions will be written to elicit information on teachers' knowledge and understanding of the pedagogy of teaching English as a foreign language including principles and methods associated with TBLT. Other questions will be more centred on attitudes towards the implementation of alternative ESL practices including issues and levels of concern about the adoption of these. Following analysis, emergent themes will be explored further through focus group interviews. Two focus-groups (five to seven teachers in each) will be organised – one with the teachers in Ukraine, one in Russia. Data from both types of interviews will be subject to content analysis. At the completion of this phase, several heuristic frameworks will be proposed to represent the findings of this interpretive phase of the study in a form suitable for quantification in the following phase (Wilson, 2010).

Phase Three. In this phase, a survey will be constructed and administered to 300 teachers (150 randomly selected in each country), to elicit and scale teacher perceptions and receptivity to the adoption of TBLT. The items comprising the survey will be based on the frameworks developed from the previous phase. Categorical data on teacher characteristics such as gender, years of teaching and formal training will be collected. Ordinal data will be collected from rating-scale items that allowed the respondents to express their degree of agreement with statements about their knowledge of ESL and TBLT theory and practice, and about their motivation and confidence with

regard to implementing TBLT. It is anticipated data will be multi-dimensional and several scales will require construction to measure different aspects of the teachers (Bond & Fox, 2007). Data will be scaled using the Rasch model (Rasch, 1960/1980). Descriptive statistics will illustrate characteristics of the teachers and the items in the scales, correlational statistics will be estimated to examine associations between ordinal variables, and the effect of teacher categorical variables on variance in the ordinal data will be tested by analysis of variance. The results from this phase will complement and extend those from the previous phase.

Sites and participants

The study will be conducted in public primary and secondary schools in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, in Kyiv regional areas, in Moscow, the capital of Russia, and Moscow regions. Note, in Russia and Ukraine, primary school includes years one to four, secondary school includes years five to eleven, with students starting school at the age of 6-7 and graduating at the age of 16-17 years. As there is still much centralisation in educational policies in these countries, these schools will constitute a typical sample of the region. Concentration of funding, resources and professionals in the capital area is expected to provide the most progressive views. At the same time, including city, town and village schools will reduce the limitation of social and economic status of the respondents and increase the representativeness of the sample. All teachers participating in the study will be trained in foreign language teaching (holding a Bachelor or Master's degree in a relevant discipline), with ranging teaching experience. They will be randomly chosen from the city and nearby schools. Teacher educators will be university lecturers from the School of Teaching Foreign Languages.

Quality control mechanisms

Given the present study implements a Mixed-Method design, both qualitative and quantitative research quality control mechanisms will be used. These include ensuring validity and reliability of the quantitative phase and credibility, confirmability, dependability, transferability and trustworthiness of the qualitative phases (Golafshani, 2003). The use of multiple sources (i.e. teachers, teacher educators, state and teacher-generated documents, textbooks) will ensure construct validity of the research (Mackey and Gass, 2005). Content, substantive, structural, generalizability, external and consequential aspects of construct validity (Messick, 1995) will be considered during data collection, analysis and interpretation. Triangulation is one of the ways to enhance validity and reliability (Patton, 2002; Stiles, 1993). This study involves method and data triangulation – combining qualitative and quantitative methods, and the use of focus groups that follow teacher interviews – the latter also strengthens dependability and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). Furthermore, credibility will be ensured by the use of well-established methods, procedures and models successfully used in previous studies, familiarity with the culture of the participants, random sampling of schools and teachers, mechanisms to ensure honesty of the respondents, negative case analysis and member checks; in terms of transferability, the boundaries of the study will be clearly determined (Shenton, 2004).

Ethical Issues

All participants of the study will be adults, namely primary and secondary school teachers and teacher educators in Russia and Ukraine. School headmasters and all the participants will be provided with the Information letters in their first language and their written permission to collect necessary data will be obtained through the signing of consent forms. Participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time. After the interviews are conducted, participants will be given an opportunity to verify the data obtained and any necessary clarifications will be

made. Permission to use video material for the TBLT presentation will be officially provided by the owner of the copyright/intellectual property.

Interviews and focus groups will be conducted after the lessons to avoid disruption of the teaching process. During lesson observations the researcher will be a non-participant observer and the time of observation will be negotiated with the teacher to be the most convenient for him/her. Data collected during lesson observations will include written notes and drawings of the physical layout of the classroom and will not include any audio/video recordings. Survey questionnaires will be distributed to teachers personally or through their line managers and teachers will be able to complete them at the time convenient for them. Survey will include optimal number of items to avoid being time-consuming for the respondents.

Privacy and confidentiality will be ensured by not including any identifying information in data collection and representation, as well as by storing all data obtained from teachers in a secure location (on a hard drive with the high level security password). The researcher will collect, transcribe and code data herself or with the help of the computer software. Any information that would make it possible to identify the participants or schools will be removed and no real names will be used in data presentation.

Prior to research commencement, a low risk ethics clearance will be obtained from Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University.

Facilities and Resources

A video on TBLT will be used in Phase Two of this study, therefore computer software and a projector will be required for the presentation. In this case, school facilities will be used. A trip to the research site will require financial support (airfare) which will be within the limits of Curtin University's PhD HDR consumable allowance. A ready video resource for the presentation will be obtained from the copyright holders with their written consent to use it for the purposes of the research.

Data Storage

All hard copies and electronic data will be stored in a safe and secure place at Curtin, Faculty of Humanities, School of Education for five years. All folders and data storage devices will be clearly labelled.

Timeline

Time period	Research activity
February – June 2013	Candidacy Proposal preparation
July – September 2013	Obtaining ethics clearance with Curtin University Research instrument refining
October – November 2013	Phases 1 and 2 in Russia
December 2013 – January 2014	Phases 1 and 2 in Ukraine
February-March 2014	Analysis of phases 1 and 2 data, development of survey instrument
March-April 2014	Phase 3
May-September 2014	Analysis of phase 3 data
October – December 2014	Thesis writing: Chapter 3 (Method)
January – March 2015	Thesis writing: Chapter 4 (Results)
April – August 2015	Thesis writing: Chapters 2 & 5 (Literature Review & Discussion)
September -December 2015	Thesis writing: Chapters 1 & 5 (Introduction & Conclusion) and Abstract
January 2016	Submission of thesis for examination

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