

Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Task-Based Language Pedagogy

Omid Tabatabaei^{1,*}; Atefeh Hadi²

¹Department of English, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

²Department of English, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

*Corresponding author.
Email: tabatabaeiomid@yahoo.com

Received 7 November 2011; accepted 24 November 2011

Abstract

Recently task-based language teaching (TBLT) evolving from communicative language instruction has drawn the attention of many researchers towards itself. To date, there have been few systematic studies on teachers' perceptions in this field. This study has intended to explore teachers' perceptions of task-based language pedagogy and the tasks used in the foreign language classrooms of Iran. It also seeks to investigate Iranian EFL teachers' views on implementing TBLT and the reasons which make them choose or avoid implementing TBLT. A sample of 51 EFL teachers participated in this study. A questionnaire was used to examine the perceptions of the Iranian EFL teachers towards TBLT and the data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of the study showed that most participants understand TBLT concepts and principles very well and there are just a few negative views on the application of this approach in English classrooms of Iran. This implies that EFL teachers can be hopeful to successfully apply TBLT in their classes. Ultimately, it is believed that the results of such research will encourage EFL teachers to have more positive attitudes towards TBLT.

Key words: Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT); EFL contexts; Teachers' perceptions

Omid Tabatabaei; Atefeh Hadi (2011). Iranian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Task-Based Language Pedagogy. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 1(2), 1-9. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/j.hess.1927024020110102.1558>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.hess.1927024020110102.1558>

1. BACKGROUND

The need for task-based courses arose from the failure of previous approaches to language teaching. The traditional approaches which had a linguistic/structural syllabus focused on the what of teaching and learning and did not take the learners' needs into account (Ellis, 2003). In reaction to the inadequacy of the traditional methods, CLT came into being. CLT is based on theories of communicative competence (Hymes 1971 and Widdowson 1978, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2003) and functional grammar (Halliday, 1985). This came to be known as the notional/functional approach. The notional/functional syllabus takes the learners' needs into consideration (Li, 1998) while the structural syllabus does not. This very serious criticism against the structural syllabuses paved the way for the emergence of TBLT. As Ellis (2003) writes 'proposals for task-based syllabuses, then, arose out of the recognition that it was not possible to specify what a learner would learn in linguistic terms' (p.208). Bygate (1999) illustrates how one can use tasks systematically as a context to develop learners' knowledge about language, their ability to use language, and the teachers' ability to teach it. He suggests that tasks are needed to improve learners' fluency, accuracy, and complexity in communication. Nunan (1991) also observes that TBLT has added to the repertoire of the second and foreign language teacher in the eighties both theoretically and empirically by influencing syllabus design, materials development, and language teaching methodology.

Although there is no single definition of task, most studies agree that the main feature is expressing meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Long & Robinson 1998; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007). Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001) provide a pedagogical description of task: "an activity, susceptible to brief or extended pedagogic intervention, which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (p.11). Nunan (2004) describes a task

as “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.” (p.10).

2. RESEARCH ON TBLT IN EFL CONTEXTS

Much of the research on TBLT has been in an ESL context, but it has received an increase in interest from EFL countries in recent years, particularly after attempts to implement communicative language teaching (CLT) have been met with resistance and varying degrees of success (Li, 1998; Bax, 2003; Ellis, 1996; Littlewood, 2007). Nevertheless, implementation of TBLT in EFL contexts has not been without its difficulties.

In countries where teacher-fronted classes are the norm, both students and teachers may need some time to adjust to the interactive approach of TBLT, as found in McDonough and Chaikitmongkol's (2007) study of a task-based EFL course in Thailand. The teachers in their study were not confident in their ability to implement the course and expressed concerns about having to deal with unanticipated situations and questions, something which is more common in student-centered lessons. The students reported more grammar instruction and target language forms were needed in their task-based course. They also wanted more teacher support and guidance.

Perceptions of the purpose of task-based learning may also differ. In a study of three EFL primary classes in Turkey, İlin, İnözü, and Yumru (2007) point out that the tasks used in the classes they observed were predominately language practice activities focusing on form rather than meaning. The teachers in their study were aware of the purpose of task-based learning, but used tasks at the end of lessons to present language items because this was expected.

Ho and Wong (as cited in Littlewood, 2007, p.246) also report that approaches such as TBLT, which originates from the West, can be incompatible with public assessment demands and conflict with educational values and traditions in non-western contexts.

Despite some problems in implementing TBLT in EFL contexts, these studies also recognize the benefits of the approach and report that teachers and students have generally responded positively. They acknowledge the importance of TBLT in developing learner autonomy and transferable skills (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007) and providing opportunities for students to practice using English (Ho & Wong, as cited in Littlewood, 2007, p.246). The use of tasks can also be adapted to review taught linguistic items (İlin, İnözü, & Yumru, 2007). The positive results from these studies look promising, but further research of TBLT in the EFL context is needed for more conclusive results.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the last few decades, communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based approaches are being used in most of the countries in order to teach second and foreign languages to learners. In foreign language learning contexts in which students have little exposure to the target language outside the classroom, TBLT can be specifically helpful. Unfortunately, task-based instruction is not widely followed as an educational approach in Iran. Given this, the educational culture of task-based learning/teaching is something completely new to the Iranian students and teachers.

On the other hand, much of the work done in the area of TBLT, has focused on the definitions of task, the role of tasks in second language acquisition (e.g. Ellis 2000; Skehan 1996), different task types (e.g. Skehan & Foster, 1997), task repetition, and task difficulty. However, there is little practical discussion of how language teachers perceive task based instruction. Whereas, language instructors' perceptions of language teaching process has a great influence on what they actually do in practice. Regarding all the above-mentioned issues, the present study seeks to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language pedagogy.

3.1 Research Questions

The present study is an attempt to investigate Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching. For this purpose the following questions were formulated to be pursued:

- 1) How well do English teachers in Iran understand TBLT principles?
- 2) What are the Iranian EFL teachers' views on the implementation of TBLT?
- 3) Why do English teachers in Iran choose to use or not use TBLT in their classes?

4. METHOD

4.1 Participants

A total of 51 male and female teachers teaching English at “Kish Language Institute” (Esfahan, Iran) participated in the survey. All of the participants had at least two or more years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. The teachers ranged in age from 20 to 32. Teachers working in “Kish Language Institute” have recently been required to apply TBLT in their English classes. There was a teaching training course through which the teachers got familiar with this new teaching procedure. Therefore, all teachers even those whose major is not English, have become familiar with the basic principles and techniques of TBLT before they start the actual practice of teaching at this institute.

4.2 Survey Instrument

A perception questionnaire was used to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT in English classrooms of Iran. This questionnaire was adapted from Jeon's (2005) used in his study on exploring Korean EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching. The questionnaire, consisted of some Likert-type items and two open-ended ones, it came in four sections. The first section contained items to collect information about the teacher's gender, age, and teaching experience. The second section asked questions to gain insights on how familiar they were with task based instruction and its principles. The third section was related to the teachers' views on classroom practice of TBLT. The questionnaire items were partly adapted and modified from Nunan's (2004) checklist for evaluating communicative tasks. In sections 3 and 4, teachers had to answer each question according to a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Finally they had to explain why they approved or disapproved of the use of TBLT with a few justifiable sentences.

4.3 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher visited language teachers of "Kish Language Institute", explained the pedagogical goal of the survey, and asked them to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed among teachers. A few of them answered the questionnaire after or between their class times, but most teachers assigned a time for returning the questionnaire, between 3 to 7 days. So the questionnaires were collected one by one during 2 months. Then the collected data was tabulated to be analyzed. Teachers' perceptions of TBLT were assessed using the answers which they provided for different parts of the questionnaires.

4.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis process consisted of two phases:

1) The Likert-type items of the questionnaires, which were constructed to check teachers' awareness of TBLT principles and their views on TBLT implementation, were given a numerical score (e.g., *strongly disagree* =1, *disagree* =2, *neutral*=3, *agree*=4, and *strongly agree*=5).

2) In the open-ended items, the participants were asked to choose their own reasons for being in favor of or against implementing TBLT. So, the selected items were given the numerical score of "1" and the unselected ones were given "0".

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 11.0 for Windows was used to analyze the data. Measures of frequency (descriptive statistics) were used. In other words, a percentage analysis of teachers' responses to each of the questionnaire items was done in order to indicate how well they understand each of the concepts of TBLT, what kind of views they hold when it comes to the TBLT implementation in foreign language classrooms, and for what main reasons teachers choose or avoid implementing TBLT.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Addressing the First Research Question

Part two of the questionnaire contained seven items dealing with this question:

How well do English teachers in Iran understand TBLT principles?

Table 1 indicates the result of the teachers' responses to this section.

Table 1
The Results of the Teachers' Responses to Section Two (total 51)

Question	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	22	24	5	0	0
2	6	30	10	5	0
3	9	23	8	11	0
4	14	24	8	5	0
5	12	34	5	0	0
6	11	26	8	6	0
7	15	22	10	4	0

SA= strongly agree; A= agree; U=neutral;
D= disagree; SD= strongly disagree

As it can be seen in Table 1, the majority of the teachers generally agreed with the items, and there was no strong disagreement for any items in any of the sections. For item one "a task is communicative goal directed", for example, while there was no disagreement at all, 43.1% of the respondents strongly agreed with the idea, 47.1% agreed, and only 9.8% were neutral. Regarding item two "a task involves a primary focus on meaning", 11.8% strongly agreed, 58.8% agreed, 19.6% were neutral, and only 9.8% disagreed, but there was no strong disagreement. The statistics for item three "a task has a clearly defined outcome", includes 17.6% strong agreement, 45.1% agreement, 15.7% neutral, and 21.8% disagreement. Considering item four "a task is any activity in which target language is used by the learner", 27.4% of the teachers strongly agreed, 47.1% agreed, 15.7% were neutral, and only 9.8% disagreed. For item five "TBLT is consistent with the principles of communicative language teaching", 23.5% showed strong agreement, 66.7% showed agreement, and only 9.8% were neutral, but there was no disagreement. Studying item six "TBLT is based on the student-centered instructional approach" revealed that 21.6% strongly agreed, 50.9% agreed, 15.7% were neutral, and 7.8% disagreed. Finally, the responses for the last item in this section "TBLT includes three stages: pre-task, task implementation, and post task" comprised 29.5% strong agreement, 43.1% agreement, 19.6% neutral, and 7.8% disagreement.

5.2 Addressing the Second Research Question

Section three of the questionnaire consisted of eight items which corresponded to this question:

What are the Iranian EFL teachers' views on the implementation of TBLT?

Table 2 reveals the results of the teachers' responses to the items of this section.

Table 2
The Results of the Teachers' Responses to Section Three (total 51)

Question	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	12	30	5	4	0
2	14	25	7	5	0
3	14	25	7	5	0
4	12	26	7	6	0
5	10	20	16	5	0
6	7	23	12	9	0
7	6	20	20	5	0
8	27	22	1	1	0

SA= strongly agree; A= agree; U=neutral;
D= disagree; SD= strongly disagree

By studying Table 2, one can find out that there was no strong disagreement with any item and for other items the following results can be found. For item one "I am interested in implementing TBLT in the classroom" 23.6% strongly agreed, 58.8% agreed, 9.8% were neutral, and 7.8% disagreed. Item two "TBLT provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote the target language use" captured 27.5% strong agreement, 49% agreement, 13.7% neutral responses, and 9.8% disagreement. Considering item three "TBLT activates learners' needs and interests", there were 27.5% strong agreement, 47% agreement, 13.7% neutral, and 9.8% disagreement. For item four "TBLT pursues the development of integrated skills in the classroom" 23.6% strongly agreed, 50.9% agreed, 13.7% were neutral, and 11.8% disagreed. Referring to item five "TBLT gives much psychological burden to teacher as a facilitator", 19.6% showed strong agreement, 39.2% showed agreement, 31.4% were neutral, and 9.8% showed disagreement. Regarding item six "TBLT requires much preparation time compared to other approaches", there were 13.7% strong agreement, 45.1% agreement, 23.6% neutrality, and 17.6% disagreement. For item seven "TBLT is proper for controlling classroom arrangements", 11.8% of the responses were strongly agreed, 39.2% agreed, 39.2% neutral, and 9.8% disagreed. And finally, for item eight "TBLT materials should be meaningful and purposeful based on the real-world context", 52.9% of the respondents strongly agreed, 43.1% agreed, 2% were neutral, and 2% disagreed.

5.3 Addressing the Third Research Question

This part is related to the third research question that states:

Why do English teachers in Iran choose to use or not use TBLT in their classes?

Section four of the questionnaire contained one yes/no question which was related to this research question. If the respondents answered 'Yes', they had to tick any or all of the five reasons that followed, but if they answered 'No', they had six reasons to choose from. Table 3 shows the

number of reasons the teachers and the students presented for using TBLT.

Table 3
The Number of Reasons Presented by the Teachers for Implementing TBLT

Reason No.	Teachers
1	16
2	39
3	30
4	40
5	17

According to Table 3, reason one "TBLT promotes learners' academic progress" attracted 31.4% of the teachers' vote, reason two "TBLT improves learners' interaction skills" 76.5%, reason three "TBLT encourages learners' intrinsic motivation" 58.8%, reason four "TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment" 78.4%, and finally, reason five "TBLT is appropriate for small group work" attracted 33.3%. The number of reasons for those who chose 'No' option is presented in Table 4.

Table 4
The Number of Reasons Presented by the Teachers for Not Implementing TBLT

Reason No.	Teachers
1	13
2	6
3	9
4	13
5	13
6	13

It can be seen in Table 4 that 25.5% of the teachers chose the first reason "not being used to task-based instruction", 11.8% chose reason two "materials in the textbooks are not proper for using TBLT", 17.7% chose reason three "large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods", 25.5% chose reason four which deals with "difficulty in assessing learners' task-based performance", 25.5% chose reason five that is "teachers' limited target language proficiency", and 25.5% selected reason six which refers to "teachers' little knowledge of task-based instruction".

6. DISCUSSION

According to the first research question, the analysis of items 1 to 7 manifested the fact that teachers had a firm grasp of the linguistic characteristics of task which approves the teaching advantages of task in learning a second language. These findings are not surprising and are in tune with the previous findings that have shown that teachers convey a considerable amount of practical understanding about the key concepts of TBLT (Jeon, 2005; Zare, 2007). According to Jeon (2005), This could

be the result of the shift that the Asian EFL context has made toward the use of a task-based and activity-oriented type of learning a language to improve the learners' communicative skills. This finding also supports the findings of the study conducted by Zare (2007), who examined the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners and teachers towards TBLT after they were exposed to and applied TBLT, respectively. The results showed that the Iranian EFL learners and teachers had a positive attitude towards TBLT.

Concerning the second research question, which investigated teachers' views on TBLT implementation, the analysis of items 8 through 15 indicated that the Iranian EFL teachers actually had positive views on implementing TBLT as an instructional method in classroom practice. They seemed to be flexible and dynamic in the language teaching environment. These results contradict with the findings of the previous studies that have shown, despite the comparatively higher-level understanding of TBLT concepts, many teachers actually hesitated to adopt TBLT as an instructional method in classroom practice (Jeon, 2005). Jeon argues that teachers' conceptual understandings of TBLT do not necessarily lead to the actual use of task in the classroom. According to him, this may result from the fact that most Korean EFL teachers still use the traditional lecture-oriented methods, which they are accustomed to, and more than that, they have the psychological pressure of facing some new disciplinary problems in using TBLT. In relation to task participants' roles and classroom arrangements, it might be true that Korean EFL teachers have become accustomed to working in teacher-centered classrooms, thus adopting a one-way instruction method rather than two-way interaction. However, a teacher has to be pliable in controlling a language learning environment because naturally, language learning necessitates the active participation of learners in language use activities.

The findings of this study related to the second research question are consistent with the findings of Zare's (2007) study, in which it is argued that Iranian EFL teachers participated in the study welcomed the new experience. Zare asserts that the educational environment to which people are accustomed can have some effects on their attitudes towards methods of language teaching and these attitudes can sometimes prevent or delay the acceptance of new methods of language teaching. On the other hand, he argues that these attitudes are not innate and can be changed through exposure to a new method of teaching.

In response to the third research question in which the practical reasons for which teachers and learners choose or avoid implementing TBLT, the answers to the two open-ended items were analyzed. The findings revealed that teachers may have different reasons for choosing or avoiding the implementation of TBLT.

Most of the teachers were in favor of task-based

methods firstly because of its collaborative and interactional nature and then its motivational potential. These findings are in accordance with the findings of other researchers such as Jeon (2005). According to him, Korean EFL teachers appreciate the fact that TBLT increases learners' motivation and small-group interaction.

The majority of teachers who were against task-based implementation, had fears of being confronted with problems due to a lack of knowledge of TBLT, limited target language proficiency, and not being accustomed to TBLT. There are still many problems that teachers come across when using TBLT which they can lessen by trying to understand its' advantages and to fashion a positive view toward it as an instructional method. Firstly, it's necessary for teachers to learn the weaknesses and strengths of a task-based methodology, and to understand its basic principles other than its diversity of techniques.

These findings are in line with those of Zare (2007), who proposed that teachers can be hopeful to successfully apply TBLT in their classes. This can be true not only at the level of private institutes, but also at the level of public schools. In other words, one can hope to institutionalize the culture of TBLT in public schools as well, though in this process the teacher may initially face some cultural and managerial problems. Moreover, it is clear that such a change can take place only gradually.

Although teachers are reluctant to use the TBLT due to the difficulty in evaluating learner's task-based performance, performance evaluation must be given notice. In terms of group evaluation, giving the same score to every member may be a downside of trying to have a reasonable evaluation, especially in high achieving learner groups. As a result, to intensify the participation and quality of involvement in task-based group work, the teacher must consider both inter-group and intra-group evaluations. Contrary to the inter-group assessment which uses the groups' products as part of the course evaluation which results in giving equal grades to all members, the intra-group assessment deals with individual evaluation.

Concerning task-based materials, few teachers indicated that the materials in the textbooks were the reason they didn't use task-based techniques in their classrooms. This somehow shows that the present EFL textbooks available in Iran, many of which follow the principles of the communicative theory of language learning, correctly reflect the task-based syllabus which mainly concerns communicative skills and social interaction. In addition, it shows that at times it's necessary for teachers to redesign textbook materials to make them suitable for interaction and collaborative learning.

Regarding big classes which are mostly problematic to control in task-based group work, the teacher must consider each groups formation and presentation. Besides the fact that big classes are time consuming to prepare, task-based techniques can be similarly used in both small

and big classes.

7. CONCLUSION

In Iranian EFL context, because learners don't have direct contact with native speakers of English, the teachers have emphasized a more active group learning classroom contrary to the traditional passive lecture for the learners to become more acquainted with the target language in use. As a result, teachers are keener on using TBLT, primarily because they believe task-based learning, benefits learners' communication skills and interaction.

Language tasks can be used in communicative approach to arouse learners' motivation for learning a foreign language. These tasks don't just give variety to the language teaching methodology but also make the classroom much more fun and interesting; besides, they can produce a lively atmosphere in the classroom which gives language instruction more creativity.

Concerning the findings of this study, using flexible and interactive teaching tasks in English classes have many positive results, such as:

TBLT encourages learners' academic progress.

TBLT improves learners' interaction skills.

TBLT encourages learners' inherent motivation.

TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.

TBLT is suitable for small group work.

Like we said before, language tasks are tools of communicative approach in language teaching which can increase students' use of target language by providing collaborative as well as competitive problem solving tasks as mentioned by learners and teachers who took part in this study.

Generally, the findings of this study manifested the fact that the majority of Iranian EFL teachers highly understand TBLT concepts and have positive attitudes toward using them in the classroom. Only a small number of teachers avoid TBLT as an instructional method because of former problems they had in classroom practice but at the end it seemed teachers and learners had their own reasons to approve or disapprove of the use of TBLT.

8. IMPLICATIONS

Concerning the results of the study, some notifying suggestions are given to teachers and teacher trainers. First, because teachers' attitudes toward instructional approaches highly influence classroom practice, it is necessary for the teachers to have a positive attitude toward TBLT so that it can be successfully used. Second, because some teachers know little about applying task-based methods or techniques, they should be given the chance to educate themselves in fields relating to the planning, the putting into practice, and evaluation of TBLT. For this purpose, language teaching programs

should properly deal with the strengths and weaknesses of TBLT as an instructional method from basic principles to specific techniques. Third, when lack of confidence is one of the reasons why teachers avoid TBLT, it should be given consideration to overcome these impediments in the classroom. Teachers should also use different and creative ways of management such as leveled tasks, peer evaluation and a diversity of task types like two-way information gap activities besides the one-way activity of questions and answers.

This study has some implications not only for EFL teachers in private institutes but also for teachers at public schools. They are as follows:

- One way to move towards learner-centeredness in language teaching as such is to try new approaches to language teaching proposed by theoreticians. One such approach is task-based instruction which offers more humanistic activities in the language classroom.

- Although EFL teachers in Iran are not accustomed to a task-based approach to language teaching in the educational system, it does not mean that one should put TBLT aside and follow traditional methods of language teaching.

- As the attitudes of Iranian EFL teachers to TBLT were rather positive in this study, EFL teachers are encouraged to adopt this approach in their classrooms. In this regard, the managers of private English institutes should also do their best to promote TBLT at their institutes.

- At a broader level English teachers at schools should also take steps to use a task-based approach in their classes. Of course, this requires a change of attitude or awareness on the part of decision makers at higher levels than schools, too.

- Finally, EFL teachers should bear in mind that once they choose to teach English through a task-based syllabus, they ought to evaluate their students' performance through a task-based syllabus as well.

REFERENCES

- Bax, S. (2003). The End of CLT: a Context Approach to Language Teaching. *ELT Journal*, 57(3), 278-287.
- Bygate, M. (1999). Task as Context for the Framing, Reframing, and Unframing of Language. *System*, 27(1), 33-48.
- Bygate, M. Skehan, P. & Swain, M. (2001). Introduction. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching Pedagogic Tasks: Secondlanguage Learning, Teaching and Testing* (pp.1-20). Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Ellis, G. (1996). How Culturally Appropriate is the Communicative Approach?. *ELT Journal*, 50(3), 213-218.
- Ellis, R. (2000). Task-based research and language pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, 4(3), 193-200.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*.

- London: Arnold.
- Hymes, D. H. (1971). On Communicative Competence. In Pride, J., & Holmes, J. (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1972. (Excerpt from the paper published 1971, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.)
- İlın, G., İnözü, J., & Yumru, H. (2007). Teachers' and Learners' perceptions of Tasks: Objectives and Outcomes. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*, 3(1), 60-68.
- Jeon, In-Jae. (2005). An Analysis of Task-Based Materials and Performance: Focused on Korean High School English Textbooks. *English Teaching*, 60(2), 87-109.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2003). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Li, D. (1998). "It's Always More Difficult than Your Plan and Image": Teachers' Perceived Difficulties in Introducing the Communicative Approach In South Korea. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(4), 677-703.
- Littlewood, W. (2007). Communicative and Task-Based Language Teaching in East Asian Classrooms. *Language Teaching*, 40(3), 243-249.
- Long, M. & Robinson, P. (1998). Focus on Form: Theory, Research, and Practice. In Doughty, C. & Williams, J. (Eds.), *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 15-41), Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lourdusamy, A., & Divaharan, S. (2002). An Attempt to Enhance the Quality of Cooperative Learning Through Peer Assessment. *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 3(2), 72-83.
- McDonough, K. & Chaikitmongkol, W. (2007). Teachers' and Learners' Reactions to a Task-Based EFL Course in Thailand. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(1), 107-132.
- Nunan, D. (1991). Communicative Tasks and the Language Curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(2), 279-295.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based Language Teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A Description and Analysis*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Skehan, P. (1996). A Framework for Implementation of Task-Based Instruction. *Applied Linguistics*, 17(1), 38-62.
- Skehan, P. and Foster, P. (1997). Task Type and Task Processing Conditions as Influences on Foreign Language Performance. *Language Teaching Research*, 1(3), 185-211.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Zare, G. (2007). *The Attitudes of the Iranian EFL Learners and Teachers Towards Task-based Language Teaching*. (Unpublished MA thesis). Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.

Appendix

Teacher Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to examine Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) with reference to classroom practice. I would be really grateful if you read each item carefully and provide an answer. Your answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your cooperation.

Section I. General and Demographic Information

Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> female		
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-35	<input type="checkbox"/> 35 +
Total number of years teaching English	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 10years

Section II. Teachers' Understandings of Task and TBLT

For each of the following statements, please answer by putting a \sqrt in a box, according to the following scale: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), U (undecided), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree).

Questionnaire Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. A task is communicative goal directed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. A task involves a primary focus on meaning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. A task has a clearly defined outcome.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. A task is any activity in which the target language is used by the learner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. TBLT is consistent with the principles of communicative language teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. TBLT is based on the student-centered instructional approach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. TBLT includes three stages: pre-task, task implementation, and post-task.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section III. Teachers' Views on Implementing TBLT

The following statements address teachers' views on implementing TBLT in the classroom. Please answer by putting a \sqrt in a box that matches your position most, according to the following scale: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), U (Undecided), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree).

Questionnaire Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
8. I am interested in implementing TBLT in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. TBLT provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote the target language use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. TBLT activates learners' needs and interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. TBLT pursues the development of integrated skills in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. TBLT gives much psychological burden to teacher as a facilitator.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. TBLT requires much preparation time compared to other approaches.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. TBLT is proper for controlling classroom arrangements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. TBLT materials should be meaningful and purposeful based on the real-world context.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section IV. Reasons Teachers Choose or Avoid Implementing TBLT

Do you use TBLT in your teaching? YES NO

If yes, please put a \sqrt for any reasons that make you decide to implement TBLT.

- TBLT promotes learners' academic progress.
- TBLT improves learners' interaction skills.
- TBLT encourages learners' intrinsic motivation.
- TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.
- TBLT is appropriate for small group work.

If you have other reasons, please write them down.

(_____)

If no, please put a √ any reasons that makes you avoid implementing TBLT.

- Students are not used to task-based learning.
- Materials in textbooks are not proper for using TBLT.
- Large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods.
- I have difficulty in assessing learner's task-based performance.
- I have limited target language proficiency.
- I have very little knowledge of task-based instruction.

If you have other reasons, please write them down.

(_____)
