

International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies

ISSN: 2308-5460



Task-Based Language Teaching in Iran: A Study of EFL Teachers' Perspectives

[PP: 14-21]

Dr. Fatemeh Mahdavi

Department of English, Faculty of Language and Literature,
Yazd University, Yazd, Iran

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in Iranian context. The data for the study were collected through questionnaires from a total of 160 teachers at 20 different language institutes in Iran. The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings of the study showed that the majority of Iranian EFL teachers have a clear understanding about TBLT concepts. However, there exist some negative views about implementing TBLT with regard to its classroom practice. Based on the findings, some pedagogical suggestions have been offered which can help teachers and teacher-trainers to design and implement TBLT more effectively in Iranian context.

Keywords: *Task-Based Language Teaching, Teachers' Perspectives, Task Implementation*

ARTICLE INFO	The paper received on	Reviewed on	Accepted after revisions on
	28/05/2017	12/07/2017	17/12/2017

Suggested citation:

Mahdavi, F. (2017). Task-Based Language Teaching in Iran: A Study of EFL Teachers' Perspectives. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 5(4). 14-21.

1. Introduction

English is taught in a diverse range of contexts in Iran. Generally, in Iran, there are three sectors of schooling, with English taught across all: secondary schools and high schools (government-run) and language institutes (private-control, operated by independent bodies). Many of the language institutes use English course book series such as New Interchange, and Top Notch, which include task-based activities. Tasks hold a central place in current language acquisition research and also in language pedagogy, too (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2000, 2001, 2003; Mitchel & Myles, 2004; Housen & Vedder, 2009; Lee, 2000; Nunan, 2005; Robinson, 2005; Skehan, 1998a, 1998b, 2003; Skehan & Foster, 2001). The last two decades have seen a growing body of research investigating various aspects of task-based language teaching (for a review see Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 2003; Rahimpour, 1997, 2007; Robinson, 1995, 2001b, 2003, 2005, 2007; Willis, 1996). However, despite its pedagogical benefits, teachers' perceptions of task and task features and their reactions to the implementation of task-based language teaching have not yet been sufficiently researched in Iranian EFL context. The present study is an attempt to explore Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes towards task-based teaching based on investigating their understandings of basic

concepts of task-based language teaching, their attitudes towards implementation of TBLT, and reasons they choose or avoid TBLT in classroom.

The overall goal of the present research was to explore barriers to successful implementation according to teachers and to facilitate the clear expression of teachers' opinions. The discussion of the results allows to go beyond a superficial view of what is happening, attempting to isolate the key factors pertaining to the successful implementation of the syllabus. The findings in this study and the subsequent conclusions have implications for English teachers who are attempting to implement a task-based program.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Task-Based Language Teaching

In a broad sense, task-based syllabus is an *analytic* syllabus. Nunan (1988, p. 28) describes an analytic syllabus as one where learners are presented with chunks of language which may include structures of varying degrees of difficulty. The starting point for syllabus design is not the grammatical system of the language, but the communicative purposes for which the language is used.

Perhaps the most defining feature of analytic syllabuses, as opposed to *synthetic* syllabuses, is that the target language is presented in 'whole chunks at a time, in

molar rather than molecular units, without linguistic interference or control' (Crookes & Gass 1993, p. 11). The rationale behind presenting whole chunks of language in this fashion is succinctly defined by Crookes and Gass (1993) in their statement of the principles upon which the analytic syllabus is based:

'(a) the learners' presumed ability to perceive regularities in the input and induce rules and/or (b) the continued availability to learners of innate knowledge of linguistic universals and the ways language can vary, knowledge which can be reactivated by exposure to natural samples of L2' (Crookes & Gass, 1993, p. 11).

Based on these assumptions, learners who are taught using a task-based syllabus are presented with 'whole chunks' of language.

2.2. Task and Task Outcomes

A number of definitions have been proposed for *task*. The fundamental element of the task in task-based instruction is that it is meaning focused. Nunan (1989) believes that the task is a piece of meaning focused work involving learners in comprehending, producing and/or interacting in the target language, and [...] tasks are analyzed or categorized according to their goals, input data, activities, settings and roles (Nunan, 1989, p. 11).

To further enhance this definition, one can draw on Breen (1989) who refers to a task as-

'a springboard for learning work. In a broad sense, it is a structured plan for the provision of opportunities for the refinement of knowledge and capabilities entailed in a new language and its use during communication' (Breen, 1989, p. 187).

A number of authors (e.g. Crawford, 1999; Skehan, 1996a; Carr, 2005, among others) suggest that another distinctive feature of tasks is that they are comparable to real life language use. Ellis (2003) discusses the link to the real world, asserting that many tasks occurring in the classroom will not be performed outside it. However, he puts emphasis on the correspondence between learners' language behavior in task performance and communicative behavior which is associated with real-world task performance. Skehan (1996b) adds two other features of a task to the above description: task completion and task outcome. According to Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2001), a task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective. Skehan (1996a) defines task as an activity

in which (1) meaning is primary; (2) there is some sort of relationship to the real world; (3) task completion has some priority; and (4) the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome. Referring to Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis, Skehan (1996a, 1998a) investigated the possibility that tasks may be chosen and implemented so that particular pedagogic outcomes are achieved. He proposed three aspects of language production, namely, fluency, accuracy, and complexity.

2.3. Task Design

Researchers have found that task inputs, conditions or outcomes can be manipulated to balance or improve language production. In order to investigate how task complexity influences the L2 learners' performance, different frameworks have been developed. For example, Robinson (2001a) proposed a Triadic Componential Framework, which distinguishes three task components: *task condition*, *task difficulty*, and *task complexity*.

Interactional factors include participation variables and participant variables. Participation variables like the number of interactants and participant variables such as familiarity and power all determine *task performance conditions*. *Task difficulty* refers to learners' factors which include affective variables like motivation, anxiety, and confidence and also ability variables like aptitude, intelligence, and working memory. Cognitive factors such as the number of elements, reasoning demand, planning time, and prior knowledge contribute to *task complexity*. Robinson (2001a, p. 29) defines *task complexity* as 'the result of attentional, memory, reasoning, and other information processing demands imposed by the structure of the task on the language learner'. *Task complexity* is helpful in designing tasks from simple to complex, in a way that they gradually approximate real world tasks. Despite its educational benefits in language learning contexts, a task in itself does not necessarily guarantee its successful implementation unless the teacher understands how tasks actually work in the classroom.

2.4. Tasks Implementation

Researchers, teachers, and syllabus designers have recognized the value of tasks. However, they have differed in the use they have made of them. According to Ellis (2003), task-supported language teaching and task-based language teaching



are the two main ways of using tasks in classroom. In both cases, tasks have been employed to make language teaching more communicative. Thus, tasks are an important feature of communicative language teaching.

TBLT is controversial for many reasons, one of which is the challenge to the nature of the fundamental teacher-student relationship. For teachers using a task-based approach, there is a necessity to relinquish control and to stand back, have faith and let learners get on with their learning. This signifies a substantial change from the role of teacher in a PPP (presentation-practice-production) approach, an approach that has been traditionally adopted by language teachers.

2.5. TBLT and Teacher Perspectives

As early as the 1970s, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach became popular among second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and second language teachers (Skehan, 2003). During the 1980s, 'task' replaced the term 'communicative activity' (Skehan, 2003) and in recent years, a number of researchers and teachers have called for a move towards task-based language instruction (e.g. Skehan, 1998 a & b; Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2003). Recent research on task-based language teaching (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Robinson, 2001a, 2005, Robinson & Gilabert, 2007; to name a few) all speak for the importance and potential of using tasks in L2 teaching, learning, and performance.

There are a few studies that focus on teachers' perception of TBLT; however, in those studies accessed, there are several commonalities. A useful starting point for investigating teacher reaction is the introduction of the Target-Oriented Curriculum in Hong Kong schools, studied by Carless (2001, 2003). While the context is significantly different from the Iranian EFL situation, there are, nonetheless, some relevant parallels in teacher opinion on TBLT. Carless (2001) refers to case studies of three teachers in Hong Kong who were attempting to implement a task-based curriculum. In contrast to Iran, task-based instruction in Hong Kong takes the form of a 'weak' approach (Skehan 1996a) with tasks being similar to the production stage of the PPP method (Carless, 2003). Tasks are therefore more structured than in the Iranian task-based teaching situation. Carless (2001) suggested that there are a number of factors that affect whether or not an innovation is implemented by teachers.

Furthermore, he chose to discuss three factors of particular relevance to his case study of the implementation of the Target-Oriented Curriculum in Hong Kong: Teacher attitudes, teacher training and teachers' understanding of the innovation: 'If teachers are to implement an innovation successfully, it is essential that they have a thorough understanding of the principles and the practice of the proposed change' (Carless, 2001, p. 264).

In an article, Carless (2003) presented six issues of significance in how teachers implemented the Target-Oriented Curriculum. The issues included teacher beliefs, teacher understandings, the time available, the textbook and the topic, preparation and the available resources, and the language proficiency of students. According to Carless (2003), teachers had a mixed view on this issue, but his own interpretation was that students with higher ability are able to complete tasks on a wider variety of topics and also have more language at their disposal, thus reducing the time spent on task preparation, and thereby increasing time available for tasks themselves.

Similar findings to those of Carless (2001, 2003) were reported in a study conducted by Jennings and Doyle (1996) who investigated the implementation of a task-based approach in a small, private English as a Foreign Language school in Ireland. Materials were a key concern, with reference made to the desire for a textbook by the students and the difficulty in locating appropriate materials for the course. On a more positive note, higher teacher motivation was reported, as well as increased co-operation between teachers.

In her study of Queensland teachers' attitudes, conducted prior to the introduction of the syllabus, Crawford (1999, p. 360) predicted how it would be implemented suggesting that despite some shared beliefs among practitioners, variations in the way the new syllabus would be interpreted could exist due to the differences in their perceptions of the principles of TBLT framework and their different attitudes towards TBLT practice. Another prediction was related to teachers' proficiency and the effect this would have on uptake of the syllabus:

The new syllabus content will therefore provide a greater challenge to this group (lower proficiency in speaking) both in terms of their need to teach content in the target language and adapt materials to fit the curriculum rather than depend on the textbook (Crawford 1999, pp. 374-5).

Considering the fact that language learning is affected by the complex interactions of a number of variables including materials, activities, and evaluative feedback, task-based language teaching has a significant impact on these variables. It implies that task-based language teaching provides learners with natural sources of meaningful material, ideal situation for communicative activities, and supportive feedback. Jeon and Hahn (2006) studied teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching in Korean EFL situation. It was found that the teachers believed that specifically in an Asian EFL context where learners are limited in their accessibility to use language on a daily basis; it seems necessary to provide the learners with ample opportunities to be exposed to real language use in the classroom situation within the framework of task-based language teaching.

In an attempt to capture teachers' voices as they express concerns about and support for the a new task-based French syllabus introduced into Queensland schools, Sparks (2010) conducted a survey to determine which groups of teachers were using the syllabus and defined the key features of the syllabus that teachers find problematic. She found that there were barriers to the implementation of a task-based syllabus according to teachers: teachers with low proficiency experience difficulties implementing TBLT; teachers are often dissatisfied with the resources designed for the programs; TBLT as a methodology in itself is problematic to some teachers due to the change in the nature of teacher role to that of facilitator and time allocations both in the classroom and preparation time affect teacher attitude towards TBLT.

Alfonco (2016) found that TBLT was perceived as effective in promoting learning opportunities, and that the cycle of tasks was indeed successful in leading them to read the literary reading material. Bashori (2017) and East (2017) investigated task-based teaching implementation and found that both teachers and learners were likely to perceive TBLT principles more positively.

As can be seen, although there are only a few studies focusing on teachers' reactions to TBLT, similar issues are raised in each of the studies. Moreover, in the Iranian EFL context, few studies concentrated on teachers' perspectives on TBLT. Thus, the present research is an attempt to explore the way TBLT concepts

and implementation are perceived by Iranian EFL teachers.

3. Method

3.1. Research Questions

The present study investigated Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT. The study examined three related areas including teachers' understanding of TBLT concepts, teachers' views on TBLT implementation, and practical reasons teachers choose, or avoid, implementing TBLT in the classroom. Therefore, the following research questions were addressed:

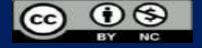
- 1: How well do Iranian EFL teachers understand TBLT concepts?
- 2: What are Iranian EFL teachers' views on TBLT implementation?
- 3: For what practical reasons do Iranian EFL teachers choose, or avoid, implementing TBLT?

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were Iranian EFL teachers working at language institutes where English course book series of New Interchange or Top Notch were used for different proficiency levels. From the 20 different language institutes in Iran, a total of 200 teachers participated in this study. 130 teachers were female (67.1%) and 75 teachers (32.9%) were male. The teachers ranged in age from their twenties to fifties and the majority (51.8%) of them were in their thirties and forties. Their teaching experience ranged from less than 5 years (22%), 5 to 10 years (27%), 11 to 20 years (48%), and more than 20 years (3%).

3.3. Procedure

The survey instrument devised by Jeon and Hahn (2006) was adopted to measure Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT in classroom setting (Appendix). The questionnaire included 15 Likert-type and two open-ended items. The items were divided into four sections. The first section contained demographic questions in order to gain information about the teachers' teaching level, gender, age, and teaching experience. The second section (items 1-7) dealt with the basic concept of task and principles of task-based instruction in order to review teachers' practical understandings of TBLT. The third section (items 8-15) was related to teachers' positions on classroom practice of TBLT. In the second and third section, teachers were asked to answer each question using a five-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Finally, in the fourth section, teachers were asked to rate their own reasons for choosing or avoiding the implementation of TBLT,



with reference to a total of 11 qualitative statements.

Request letters were sent to the participants via email and they were asked to cooperate by responding to the questionnaire attached to the email and return it within 2 weeks. They were provided with sufficient explanation on the pedagogical goal of the research. Instruction on how to answer the questionnaire was also provided. A total of 160 teachers (71% female, 29% male) completed the questionnaires and returned them giving a response rate of 80%.

For data analysis, the Likert-type items were given a numerical score (e.g., strongly disagree =1, disagree =2, neutral=3, agree=4, and strongly agree=5). Open-ended items were first categorized and then coded by the researcher in terms of the teachers' responding rates.

4. Results

In order to make the interpretation easier, the five-point scale responses were merged into a three-point simplified scale (strongly disagree & disagree, neutral, agree & strongly agree). Table 1 presents a percentage comparison of teacher responses to each of the seven items on the key concepts of task and TBLT.

Table 1: Teachers' Understandings of TBLT Concepts (n=160)

Questionnaire Items	Strongly disagree / Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly agree / Agree (%)
1. A task is a communicative goal directed activity.	13.7	6.3	80.0
2. A task involves a primary focus on meaning.	20.0	20.0	60.0
3. A task has a clearly defined outcome.	15.0	25.0	70.0
4. A task is any activity in which the target language is used by the learner.	18.8	18.7	62.5
5. TBLT is consistent with the principles of communicative language teaching.	18.6	15.7	65.7
6. TBLT is based on the student-centered instructional approach.	6.2	18.8	75.0
7. TBLT includes three stages: pre-task, task implementation, and post-task.	11.9	28.1	60.0

The findings in items 1 through 7 which were related to the basic concepts of task-based language teaching shows that the majority of the participants have a clear understanding of task and TBLT. In other words, most of the participating teachers had a clear idea of the task definition, task focus, and task outcome. Moreover, they were found to be familiar with the fundamental principles of TBLT.

Table 2 presents the teachers' positions toward implementing TBLT in their language classrooms.

Table 2: Teachers' Views on Implementing TBLT (n=160)

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Disagree / Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly Agree / Agree (%)
8. I have interest in implementing TBLT in the classroom.	38.1	25.0	36.9
9. TBLT provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote the target language use.	20.0	30.0	50.0
10. TBLT activates learners' needs and interests.	48.1	21.9	30.0
11. TBLT pursues the development of integrated skills in the classroom.	50.0	30.0	20.0
12. TBLT gives much psychological burden to teacher as a facilitator.	20.0	16.2	63.8
13. TBLT requires much preparation time compared to other approaches.	12.5	20.0	67.5
14. TBLT is proper for controlling classroom arrangements.	19.4	58.1	22.5
15. TBLT materials in textbooks are meaningful and purposeful based on the real-world context.	20.0	27.5	52.5

In response to item 8 through 15, it was revealed that, unlike a clear understanding of TBLT concepts and principles, the majority of the participants responded negatively when questioned about implementing TBLT in the classroom. This indicates that teachers' conceptual understandings of TBLT do not necessarily lead to the actual use of task in the classroom. Only 36.9% of the teachers were interested in using TBLT and only half of teachers (50%) believed in the relaxed atmosphere TBLT creates for learning. A considerably high percentage of the teachers (70%) expressed negative or neutral views on the role of TBLT in activating learners' needs and interests. In addition, a very low number of teachers (20%) agreed on the potentials of TBLT for developing integrated skills in actual classroom situation. A rather high majority of teachers (63.8%) believed that TBLT gives much psychological burden to teacher as a facilitator. 67.5% of the teachers argued that TBLT needs much preparation time compared to other methods, a point which may explain the low degree of willingness of the teachers for implementing TBLT. The majority of the teachers (87.5%) did not agree on the way TBLT may have a positive effect on controlling classroom arrangements, an issue, which in turn, may lead to resistance on the part of teachers for implementing TBLT principles. Furthermore, not all participating teachers believed in the meaningful and purposeful nature of TBLT materials. Only 52.5% of the teachers agreed that TBLT materials were based on the real-world language use.

In response to whether or not teachers implement TBLT in the classroom, while 120 teachers (75%) among a total of 160 respondents answered they were currently using task-based methods or techniques in their classrooms, 40 teachers (25%) responded negatively. Table 3 presents the aspects of teachers' responses to the open-ended question asking them to

identify some reasons why they decide to use TBLT techniques in classroom practice.

Table 3: Reasons Teachers Use TBLT in the Classroom (n=160)

Statements	Percent
TBLT is appropriate for small group work.	88.13
TBLT improves learners' interaction skills.	73.75
TBLT encourages learners' intrinsic motivation.	68.75
TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.	43.75
TBLT promotes learners' academic progress	29.38
Others	10.0

As shown in Table 3, teachers like to use TBLT for its group work basis and interactional and motivational traits

Table 4 presents teachers' responses to the open-ended question that asked them to pick out their own reasons for avoiding the implementation of TBLT techniques in their classrooms.

Table 4: Reasons Teachers Avoid TBLT Activities in the Classroom (n=160)

Statements	Percent
I have very little knowledge of task-based instruction.	64.4
I have limited target language proficiency.	58.13
I have difficulty in assessing learner's task-based performance.	88.75
Learners are not used to task-based learning.	65.63
Materials in textbooks are not proper for using TBLT.	35.63
Large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods.	45.63
Others	23.13

Data analysis showed that lack of knowledge of task-based instruction, among other reasons, was the main reason the participating teachers were reluctant to implement TBLT.

5. Discussion

Concerning the first research question, the results of data analysis for items 1 through 7 showed that teachers had a relatively clear understanding of the features of task, thus approving of the pedagogical benefits of task in foreign language learning classrooms. This could result from the fact that the current Iranian national curriculum for English has been characterized by a definite shift toward the application of task-based learning and activity-oriented language use aimed at improving learners' communicative competence.

Regarding the second research question, the results of data analysis for items 8 through 15 revealed that despite the comparatively clear understanding of TBLT concepts, many teachers actually hesitated to adopt TBLT as an instructional method in classroom practice. This may result from the fact that most Iranian EFL teachers still use the traditional lecture-oriented methods, which they are

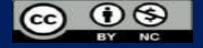
accustomed to, and more than that, they have the psychological pressure of facing some new disciplinary problems in using TBLT.

The findings of data analysis for the two open-ended items are related to the third research question. They indicated that teachers may have different reasons for choosing or avoiding the implementation of TBLT. While some teachers decided to use task-based methods as a basis for group work, or because of its motivational potential, others had fears of being confronted with problems on account of a lack of knowledge and/or confidence. Yet many problems that teachers face in implementing TBLT can be successfully reduced when teachers make an effort to understand its pedagogical benefits and increase positive attitudes toward TBLT as an instructional method.

6. Conclusions and Implications

The main aim of the present study was to investigate Iranian EFL teachers' views and perceptions of TBLT concepts and implementation. In the Iranian EFL context, in which learners don't have much contact with native speakers of English, the focus of language teaching has been placed on changing the classroom practice from the traditional passive lecture to more active group learning so that learners can be more easily exposed to target language use. Thus, many teachers have had an increasing amount of interest in using TBLT as an instructional method, mainly because they believe task-based learning has specific benefits for increasing learners' communication skills and interaction.

The findings of the present study showed that despite a clear understanding of TBLT concepts, many Iranian EFL teachers are not completely sure of the outcomes of utilizing TBLT because of the perceived problems related to implementation. Based on the overall results, some implications for teachers and teacher trainers are suggested. Since teachers' perspectives regarding TBLT implementation have a great effect on classroom practice, it is necessary for the teachers to have a positive attitude toward this method. Moreover, teachers should first be trained how to implement TBLT techniques and tactics. Also, in teacher training courses the teachers can be provided with instructions on how to tackle challenging aspects of TBLT by employing a variety of alternative techniques for task selection, grading, adaptation, and modification.



References

- Afonso, J.C. (2016). What role do tasks play in an EFL environment? unfolding 9th grade learners' perceptions on the implementation of a cycle of tasks on the first chapter of 'Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone', MA Thesis. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.
- Bashori, M (2017). I love Indonesia: EFL learners' perceptions on web facilitated language learning. *EduLite (Journal of Education, Literature and Culture)*, 2/1, 273-302.
- Breen, M. (1989). The evaluation cycle for language learning tasks. In R. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum*, (pp. 187-206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (2001). Introduction. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks, second language learning, teaching and testing*, (pp. 1-18). Harlow: Longman.
- Carless, D. R. (2001). A case study of curriculum implementation in Hong Kong. In D. R. Hall & A. Hewings (Eds.), *Innovation in English language teaching*, (pp. 263-274). London: Routledge.
- Carless, D. R. (2003). Factors in the implementation of task-based teaching in primary schools. *System*, 31(4), 485-500.
- Carr, J. (2005). More thoughts on the usefulness of tasks in the multi-level classroom. *Babel*, 39(3), 31-36.
- Crawford, J. (1999). *Teacher response to policy and practice in the teaching of LOTE*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Griffith University, Brisbane.
- Crookes, G., & Gass, S. (1993). *Tasks in a pedagogic context: Integrating theory and practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- East, M. (2017). Task-Based Teaching and Learning: Pedagogical Implications. *Second and Foreign Language Education*, 2, 85-95.
- Ellis, R. (2000). Task-based research and language pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, 4, 193-220.
- Ellis, R. (2001). Non-reciprocal tasks, comprehension and second language acquisition. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching and testing*, (pp. 49-75). London: Longman.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Housen, A. & Vedder, I. (2009). Complexity, accuracy, and fluency in second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(4), 461-473.
- Jennings, K., & Doyle, T. (1996). Curriculum innovation, teamwork and the management of change. In D. Willis & J. Willis (Eds.), *Challenge and change in language teaching*, (pp. 169-177), Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann English Language Teaching.
- Jeon, I. & Hahn, J. (2006). Exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching: A case study of Korean secondary school classroom practice. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(1), 192-206.
- Lee, J. (2000). *Tasks and communicating in language classroom*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Long, M. H., & Crookes, G. (1992). Three approaches to task-based syllabus design. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26, 27-56.
- Mitchel, R., & Myles, F. (2004). *Second Language Learning Theories* (2nd Ed.). London: Hodder Arnold.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *Syllabus design*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 589-613.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (2005). Important tasks of English education: Asia-wide and beyond. *Asian EFL Journal* 7(3), 123-133.
- Rahimpour, M. (1997). *Task complexity, task condition, and variation in L2 oral discourse*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Queensland, Australia.
- Rahimpour, M. (2007). Task complexity and variation in L2 oral discourse. *Linguistic Working Papers*, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.
- Robinson, P. (1995). Attention, memory, and the 'noticing' hypothesis. *Language Learning*, 45, 283-331.
- Robinson, P. (2001a). Task complexity, cognitive resources and syllabus design: A triadic framework for examining task influences on SLA. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and second language instruction*, (pp. 285-316). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, P. (2001b). Task complexity, task difficulty, and task production: Exploring interaction in a componential framework. *Applied Linguistics*, 21, 27-57.
- Robinson, P. (2003). Attention and memory during SLA. In M. Doughty & M. Long (Eds.), *Handbook of Second Language*

- Acquisition, (pp. 631-678). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Robinson, P. (2005). Cognitive complexity and task sequencing. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 43(1), 1-32.
- Robinson, P. (2007). Task complexity, theory of mind, and intentional reasoning: Effects on L2 speech production, interaction, uptake and perceptions of task difficulty. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 45(3), 193-213.
- Robinson, P. & Gilabert, R. (2007). Task complexity, the cognition hypothesis and second language learning and performance. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 45(3), 161-176.
- Skehan, P. (1996 a). A framework for the implementation of task-based instruction. *Applied Linguistics*, 17(1), 38-62.
- Skehan, P. (1996b). Second language acquisition research and task-based instruction. In J. Willis & D. Willis (Eds.), *Challenges and changes in language teaching*, (pp. 78-101). Oxford: Heinmann.
- Skehan, P. (1998a). *A Cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Skehan, P. (1998b). Task-based instruction. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18, 268-86.
- Skehan, P. (2003). Task-based Instruction. *Language Teaching*, 36, 1-14.
- Skehan, P., & P. Foster, P. (1997). Task type and task processing conditions as influences on foreign language performance. *Language Teaching Research*, 1, 185-211.
- Skehan, P., & P. Foster, P. (2001). Cognition and tasks. In P. Robinson (Eds.), *Cognition and Second Language Instruction*, (pp. 183-205). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sparks, (2010). Teacher reaction to and understanding of a task-based embedded syllabus in Queensland. *FULGOR*, 4(2), 73-92.
- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madson (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition*, (pp. 235-253). Rowley, Mass.: Newberry House.
- Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Harlow: Longman.

Appendix: Teacher Questionnaire (Adopted from Jeon and Hahn, 2006, pp. 192-206).

This questionnaire is designed to examine EFL teachers' beliefs of task-based language teaching with reference to classroom practice. Please answer all of the questions as best as you can. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Section I. General and Demographic Information

Teaching level	<input type="checkbox"/> elementary school	<input type="checkbox"/> guidance school	<input type="checkbox"/> high school	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> female		
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 40-49	<input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Total number of years teaching English	<input type="checkbox"/> less than 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-20 years	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 20 years

Section II. Teachers' Understandings of Task and TBLT
For each of the following statements, please answer by putting × 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 a communicative goal directed.					
2. A task involves a primary focus on meaning.					
3. A task has a clearly defined outcome.					
4. A task is any activity in which the target language is used by the learner.					
5. TBLT is consistent with the principles of communicative language teaching					
6. TBLT is based on the student-centered instructional approach.					
7. TBLT includes three stages: pre-task, task implementation, and post-task.					

Section III. Teachers' Views on Implementing TBLT

The following statements address teachers' views on implementing TBLT in the classroom. Please answer by putting × 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 have interest in implementing TBLT in the classroom.					
9. TBLT provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote the target language use.					
10. TBLT activates learners' needs and interests.					
11. TBLT pursues the development of integrated skills in the classroom.					
12. TBLT gives much psychological burden to teacher as a facilitator.					
13. TBLT requires much preparation time compared to other approaches.					
14. TBLT is proper for controlling classroom arrangements.					
15. TBLT materials should be meaningful and purposeful based on the real-world context.					

Section IV. Reasons Teachers Choose or Avoid Implementing TBLT
Do you use TBLT in your teaching? YES? NO?

Reasons	YES?	NO?
<input type="checkbox"/> TBLT promotes learners' academic progress.		
<input type="checkbox"/> TBLT improves learners' interaction skills.		
<input type="checkbox"/> TBLT encourages learners' intrinsic motivation.		
<input type="checkbox"/> TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.		
<input type="checkbox"/> TBLT is appropriate for small group work.		
<input type="checkbox"/> If you have other reasons, please write them down.		
<i>If no, please put × any reasons that you avoid implementing TBLT.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Students are not used to task-based learning.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Materials in textbooks are not proper for using TBLT.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I have difficulty in assessing learner's task-based performance.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I have limited target language proficiency.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I have very little knowledge of task-based instruction.		
<input type="checkbox"/> If you have other reasons, please write them down.		