Perceptions and Implementation of Task-based Language Teaching among Secondary School EFL Teachers in China

Cheng Xiongyong

Dept. of Foreign Languages, Xinyang Agricultural College
464000 No. 1 Nongzhuan Road, Xinyang City
Henan Province, P. R. China

Moses Samuel

Faculty of Education
University of Malaysia
50603 Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Abstract

This paper raises concerns about English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and the impact on their classroom practices to identify challenges and possibilities in TBLT implementation. From the data collected in the survey of 132 secondary school EFL teachers in China, the findings indicate that most EFL teachers hold positive attitudes toward TBLT execution due to a higher level of understanding on TBLT concepts, but that there exist constraints like the large-sized class and difficulty in evaluating students' task-based performance. As such, implications are proposed based on the findings to help teachers and teacher trainers administer TBLT more effectively in the future.

Keywords: Perception, task-based language teaching, EFL, practice

1. Introduction

This study is in the field of English language education in China's secondary schools, focusing on teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in addition to ways such perceptions impact on their teaching practices. The topic was chosen because it is related to the implementation of the new *National Standards of English Curriculum for Basic Education* (hereafter referred to as *Curriculum Standards*) (Ministry of Education of China [MOE], 2001), whose execution is in process throughout China prior to another circle of curriculum reforms. Practitioners' perceptions of TBLT tend to help reflect their teaching practices and enhance their awareness of the importance of reflections in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Understanding teachers' perceptions of TBLT seems to be the first step toward assessment and reflection on the execution of TBLT to EFL instruction (Hui, 2004).

In 2001, the MOE released the new *Curriculum Standards* in which secondary school EFL teachers were urged to implement TBLT (MOE, 2001). Two editions of the *Standards*-based textbooks for senior high school students were introduced in succession throughout China, i.e., the newly-edited *Senior English for China* in 2003 (SEFC, 2003) and *New Senior English for China* in 2007 with major changes in each of the editions (NSEFC, 2007). Nonetheless, four editions of the textbook series *Project English* for juniors during 2004-2008 came into being based on the *Curriculum Standards* with minor changes, which linked up well any edition of the senior series (Book Introduction, 2009; BRERI, 2008). The *Curriculum Standards* foregrounds the importance of EFL teachers' roles such as mediator, facilitator, partner, consultant, and reflective practitioner in view of the theoretical features of TBLT (MOE, 2001; SEFC, 2003).

2. The Problem

China's new *Curriculum Standards* contends that the teacher should no longer be authoritative but become the co-constructor of knowledge with learners through TBLT (MOE, 2001). Teachers need to care more about the teaching process rather than learning results, to help students know how to learn instead of what to learn only, and to help students establish creative learning rather than adaptive learning (MOE, 2001). The improvement of the *Curriculum Standards* seems indispensable since "the current situation of English education still does not meet needs of the economic and social development" (MOE, 2001, p. 2). As the new *Standards* puts it,

> The key point of this reform of English curriculum is to move the emphasis on grammar and vocabulary only and pragmatic skills free to the new curriculum which are designed based on students' interests, experiences and cognitive levels, promote students' authentic experience, practice, participation, collaboration and communication in the learning process, employ the **task-based** approach, develop comprehensive language skills, cultivate positive attitudes, proactive thinking and audacious practice, improve cross-culture awareness, and form independent learning competency. (p. 2)

Regretfully, TBLT has not yet been sufficiently researched or proven empirically as regards its classroom practices in foreign language learning contexts (Carless, 2004; Hui, 2004), and EFL teachers' underlying role as knowledge-giver via grammar-translation has remained unchanged (Le & He, 2007; Qiao, 2008; Wei, 2004; Zhang, 2007). This study thus attempts to fill the gap in the literature on the extent of teachers' adherence to MOE requirements in EFL instruction.

3. Significance

On account of dissatisfaction with conventional instructional methods, the introduction of TBLT seems to bring innovative insights into EFL education since teachers experiment with the methodologies of TBLT and abandon ineffective approaches (Hui, 2004). Swan (1985, cited in Hui, 2004, p. 9) delineates an accurate scenario among secondary school students in China:

> At higher levels, students may perform badly at classroom comprehension tasks (failing to make sense of texts that are well within their grasp) simply because of lack of interest; or because they have been trained to read classroom texts in such a different way from real life texts that they are unable to regard them as pieces of communication. Here the problem is caused by poor methodology, and the solution involves changing what happens in the classroom, not what happens in students. (p.9)

This kind of learning is explicitly ineffective and needs to give sufficient attention to the teaching methodology. Accordingly, this study is expected to explore EFL teachers' perceptions and TBLT implementation as well as potential challenges to be happening in their classroom practices.

4. Questions

The paper is aimed at investigating China's secondary school EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT and how the perceptions impact on their instruction. Two questions to be addressed via this study are proposed as follows:

1. What are secondary school EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT?
2. What are the reasons for teachers' choosing or avoiding TBLT implementation?

5. Literature Review

A survey of foreign language literature has provided varied definitions for the term "task" on its underlying assumptions, involving the scope and perspectives. The following descriptions on task are illustrated by linguists conducting task research.

* Breen (1989) conceptualizes task as "any structural language learning endeavor which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for these who undertake the task" (p. 67).
* Skehan (1996a) views tasks "as activities which have meaning as their primary focus", whose success "is evaluated in terms of achievement of an outcome", resulting in the fact that "tasks generally bear some resemblance to real-life language use" (p. 20).
* Willis (1996) argues that tasks are "always activities where the target language is used by the learners for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome" (p. 24).
* Bygate et al (2001) also assert that "a task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective, and which is chosen so that it is most likely to provide information for learners which will help them evaluate their own learning" (p. 11).
* Candlin (2001) perceives that "tasks themselves are conceived as being potentially of differential levels of demand on learners, in terms of cognitive load, language difficulty, and conceptual content, and can require variable completion times and be undertaken in a variety of contexts and conditions" (p. 235).
* Ellis (2003a) claims that a "task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of content (rather than language)" (p. 64).

Consequently, tasks focus on both meaning and form and encourage students to view EFL learning as a purposive experience (Bygate et al., 2001; Skehan, 1996a; Willis, 1996). Effective tasks serve to motivate learners since learning ELF is imaginative, challenging, interesting, and enjoyable (Hui, 2004), who are provided with ample opportunities to apply various techniques in EFL for communication (Willis, 1996). Tasks need to be adjustable with much flexibility to adapt to learners' language proficiency, and authentic tasks can be used to achieve learning goals facilitating EFL instruction (Breen, 1989; Skehan, 1996a). It is up to teachers to determine to what extent they adopt TBLT relying on their professional decisions (Hui, 2004).

Some classifications of tasks are general, and others are specific, which can change with the insights of different linguists and researchers. Pica et al. (1993), for instance, classify tasks as per interaction sorts in the product like (a) jigsaw, (b) information-gap, (c) problem-solving, (d) decision-making, and (e) opinion exchange. Willis (1996) later proposes six types of task as per knowledge hierarchies as (a) listing, (b) ordering and sorting, (c) comparing, (d) problem solving, (e) sharing personal experience, and (f) creative. Practically, it is valuable for teachers to familiarize themselves with devices to differentiate tasks as "the different components of a syllabus can be fulfilled as to be made up of different types of tasks" (Hui, 2004, p. 23).

TBLT has been utilized not only because it has well-grounded assumptions, principles, and theories of second language acquisition, but due to the sound rationale behind its implementation (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). The application of TBLT is really a consequence of a better sense of the nature and procedures of EFL learning and also owing to the insufficiency of other approaches, for example, presentation-practice-product (PPP) (Hui, 2004). The result of employing a PPP model is that learners are still unable to apply the structure accurately though grammatical rules have been accounted for with care (Ritchie, 2003). Apparently, there exists a gap between students' mastering a rule and executing it in communication, and it is doubtful whether the grammar-based PPP model is effective to language acquisition (Ritchie, 2003).

TBLT indicates that language learning is a dynamic procedure facilitating communication and social interaction rather than a product acquired by practicing language items, and that students learn the target language more effectively when they are naturally exposed to meaningful tasks (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). Such a view of language learning caused the development of various task-based approaches in the 1980's (e.g., Breen, 1987; Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987), and during the 1990's, developed into a detailed practical framework for communicative classrooms where students performed tasks through cycles of pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task feedback (Skehan, 1996b). In particular, TBLT has been re-examined in recent years from distinct perspectives involving oral performance, writing performance, and performance assessment (Ellis, 2003b).

Despite its educational benefits in the language learning context, a task unnecessarily guarantees its successful implementation unless the teacher as facilitator of task performance understands how tasks actually work in the language classroom (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). It likewise suggests that TBLT as an instructional approach is more than giving tasks to learners and evaluating their performance. The teacher, who attempts to succeed in conducting TBLT, is requested to have adequate knowledge on the instructional framework related to its plan, process, and assessment (Hui, 2004). This literature review is perceived to shed light on the rationale for the establishment of the research questions to be answered through this study.

6. Data Collection

6.1 Instrument

To obtain data to address the predetermined questions, a survey was adapted from Jeon and Hahn's *Teacher Questionnaire* (2006) testing EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT in terms of the sense of task and TBLT concepts, views on TBLT implementation, and reasons for teachers' choosing or avoiding TBLT (see Appendix). The adapted questionnaire contains four items as summarized in Table 1. Given potential linguistic biases from EFL, a Chinese version questionnaire subject to a panel of experts in the Chinese language was employed in the study.

Insert table 1 about here

6.2 Subjects

The target population of the study composed of all China's secondary school EFL teachers to which the researcher prefers to generalize is rarely achievable, so this study was conducted in Henan located in eastern central China for the accessible population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007). Justification for choosing participants was that they were from schools with different backgrounds, which could generate rich data on teachers' perceptions and TBLT implementation in various settings. A total of 132 teachers from 132 high schools in Henan fulfilled the survey, consisting of 91 senior high school teachers (68.9%) and 41 junior ones (31.1%). The majority of the participants (n = 98) had five or more years' experience of teaching EFL. Totally, 91 teachers were female (68.9%) and 41 teachers (31.1%) were male. The teachers ranged in age from their 20's to 50's, of whom 43.9% (n = 58) were in their 30's and 50's. The number of years they had taught EFL varied, ranging from less than 5 years (n = 34, 25.8%), 5 to 9 years (n = 35, 26.5%), 10 to 20 years (n = 46, 34.8%), and more than 20 years (n = 17, 12.9%).

7. Data Analysis

As per Creswell's (2005) rough estimate of a survey sample size, questionnaire sheets were mailed to 350 teachers who were randomly chosen from 350 secondary schools in Henan. A vital difficulty with the survey is that a smaller percentage of pre-sampled participants tend to answer questionnaires (Liao, 2004). Out of the 350 distributed questionnaire copies, a total of 132 effective copies (37.7%) were returned, but "power is not an issue" since the sample size is large with 100 or more subjects (Stevens, 1996, p. 6, cited in Pallant, 2007, p. 205). Once the answered sheets came back to the researcher, they were assigned ID numbers in order that any problem related to the database might be checked against the original (Liao, 2004). All the survey data were coded and categorized into a computerized database. The data analysis process encompassed the Likert-type scale and open-ended item analysis. The 5-point Likert-type scale ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* in the case of teachers' understandings of task and TBLT and views on TBLT implementation. The open-ended items, designed to identify why teachers chose or avoided TBLT, were categorized and coded according to the teachers' responding rates. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 for Windows was used to analyze the collected data.

8. Findings

The findings of the study were reported in order of the two questions on the basis of the survey data.

8.1 Findings for RQ1: What Are Secondary School EFL Teachers' Perceptions of TBLT?

8.1.1 Teachers had a higher level of understanding task and TBLT

Table 2 shows the frequencies of the subjects scaling the seven statements as regards the basic concepts of task and TBLT, means (*M*), and standard deviations (*SD*). As shown in the table, most of the participants have a higher level of understanding task and TBLT since each of the means exceeds the average score (= 3.00).

Inert Table 2 about here

In response to items 1 through 4, asking for the concepts of task, most of the respondents understood that task has a communicative purpose (n = 110), a primary focus on meaning (n = 116), and a clearly defined outcome (n = 83). However, 48.5% of the participants viewed task as an activity where the target language is used by learners (n = 64). In response to items 5 to 7, the results concerning the relevance between TBLT and communicative instruction, the instructional philosophy, and TBLT stages, reveal that most of the teachers (n = 78, 115, 121) perceived the relation between TBLT and communicative language instruction, held a firm belief in learner-centeredness, and recognized the three phases of task, i.e., pre-task, during-task, and post-task.

8.1.2 Teachers held positive attitudes toward TBLT implementation

Table 3 presents the aspects of teachers' positions toward implementing TBLT since each of the mean values exceeds the average score (= 3.00). In response to item 8, like a higher level of teachers' understanding TBLT, 81.9% of the respondents (n = 108) had positive attitudes toward TBLT implementation. This implies that EFL teachers' conceptual understanding of TBLT might bring about the actual adoption of tasks. Items 9 to 11 attempted to explore teachers' perceptions in TBLT as a teaching approach. Most of the teachers (n = 96, 94, 97) claimed that TBLT provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote the target language use (72.7%) and activates learners' needs and interests (71.2%), making positive responses regarding the fact that TBLT pursues the development of integrated skills (73.5%).

This indicates that the correct execution of TBLT seems to comply with the acquisition of knowledge as regards the four language skills on the basis of social interaction. Items 12 and 13 investigated the teacher's role as facilitator and preparation time in conducting TBLT. While most of the teachers (*n* = 90, 68.2%) asserted that they would spend more preparation time compared with other approaches, less than half of them (*n* = 50, 37.9%) insisted that TBLT gives teachers much psychological burden as facilitators. The results for item 14 suggest that over half of the participants (*n* = 86, 65.2%) viewed TBLT as proper for controlling classroom arrangements. Respecting item 15, the vast majority of the respondents (*n* = 106, 80.3%) argued that TBLT materials should be meaningful and purposeful based on real-world situations.

Insert table 3 about here

8.2 Findings for RQ2: What Are the Reasons for EFL Teachers' Choosing or Avoiding TBLT Implementation?

8.2.1 Teachers preferred to use TBLT for its motivational features

In response to whether or not to implement TBLT, 103 teachers (83%) among a total of 124 EFL participating teachers (8 missing values excluded) contended that they were currently applying TBLT in the language classroom, but 21 teachers (17%) responded negatively. Table 4 displays the reasons they chose to adopt TBLT. The results reveal that the three main reasons that teachers preferred TBLT are associated with encouraging students' intrinsic motivation (81.6%), enhancing students' interactive strategies (75.7%), and generating a collaborative learning environment (73.8%). By contrast, the smaller percentages argued that TBLT promotes students' academic progress (63.1%) and adapts to small group work (68.9%). The "others" category (4.9%) involves the diversity of promotion of students' learning interest and initiatives.

Insert table 4 about here

8.2.2 The biggest reason teachers avoided TBLT existed in the large class size

Table 5 presents the participants' responses to the open-ended question requesting them to pick out reasons to avoid implementing TBLT. The data findings show that the large class size, as a barrier to the execution of TBLT (85.7%), was the major reason for the EFL teachers to be reluctant to conduct TBLT. Their lack of self-confidence to evaluate students' task-based performance (61.9%) was the second main reason, followed by materials in textbooks not properly designed (42.9%) and self-perceived lack of knowledge on task-based instruction (42.9%). The issues regarding the students not accustomed to task-based learning (38.1%) and the teachers' self-perceived inability to use the target language (14.3%) were less frequent reasons provided. Other responses (4.8%) concerned the misconception of TBLT.

Insert table 5 about here

9. Discussion

9.1 Discussion of the Findings for RQ1: What Are Secondary School EFL Teachers' Perceptions of TBLT?

The data analysis of items 1 to 7 indicates that the teacher participants had a comparatively clear concept of the linguistic characteristics of task and approved of the students benefiting from task-based EFL learning. It is believed that the teachers apprehended a considerable amount of practical conception on the key features of TBLT. This could originate from the fact that the *Curriculum Standards* claims that the teacher should be the co-constructor of learners' knowledge through a definite shift toward task-based learning and activity-oriented language application for the facilitation of learners' communicative competence (MOE, 2001).

The findings of items 8 to 15 show that the teachers' attitudes toward TBLT implementation were positive on the basis of the higher-level understanding of TBLT, which, with reference to the participants' own reports, resulted in their adopting TBLT. However, attitude is related to behavior only under specified conditions, and the correlation between them is not always biunique (Mueller, 1986; Oskamp, 1991). The existence of situational constraints would cause the failure of behavior despite favorable attitude (Mueller, 1986; Oskamp, 1991). For example, the large class size was the biggest constraint in this study in process of the participants' implementing TBLT. With respect to task participants' roles and classroom arrangements, it might be true that the teachers preferred to work in the teacher-centered setting due to the large-sized class, adopting a one-way instruction method rather than two-way interaction.

This may result from the fact that most China's secondary school EFL teachers still employ grammar-translation which foregrounds students' grammar learning through translation and interpretation of rule after rule (Brown, 2001). Students learn English grammatical structures and rules which they are accustomed to, but they cannot use them in authentic contexts flexibly in a natural way (Widdowson, 1990; Ye, 2007). The consequence of this method is that students are weak in oral English after many years of learning English (Ye, 2007) in that the method puts little emphasis on communicative skills and is viewed as generating "deaf and dumb" (*Longzi*, *Yaba*) (Ng & Tang, 1997, p. 68). Students have thus been strong in grammar structures but weak at communication competence (Johnson & Morrow, 1981).

9.2 Discussion of the Findings for RQ2: What Are the Reasons for EFL Teachers' Choosing or Avoiding TBLT Implementation?

The data analysis of the two open-ended items reveals that the EFL teachers had different reasons for choosing or avoiding TBLT implementation. While some of the participating teachers decided to apply TBLT which is deemed to encourage learners' intrinsic motivation, to improve students' interactive strategies, and to create a collaborative learning environment, others feared to face problems with the large class size and a lack of self-confidence to evaluate students' task-based performance. Excluding the large-sized class, many issues that teachers confront in conducting TBLT can be reduced should they strive to recognize both the merits and demerits of TBLT as far as its underlying principles and skills are concerned.

The large-sized class was the most serious constraint in implementing TBLT in this study since the small size class might allow students enough opportunities to drill spoken skills unlike in crowded classrooms (Yang, 2006). Ng and Tang (1997) also contend that "China is not only the country with the largest population, but also has the greatest number of English learners in the world" (p. 66). China is confronted with a big problem with the shortage of EFL teachers since around two-thirds of them do not suit the current curriculum easily (Education in China, 2005). The ratio of teachers to students seems extremely high in China, which goes against the normal principles of EFL education when each class has at least 50 students (Huang & Xu, 1999; Ye, 2007). These cases seem to persist and restrain the enhancement of learners' conversational skills (Tang & Absalom, 2000, cited in Yang, 2006). As Li (2004) describes,

> It is very difficult for a teacher to give appropriate timely guidance to individuals or groups in such large classes. Sometimes, teachers have to stop whole class discussions and ask the rest of the students who still want to speak to discuss their ideas after class or write down their comments in their homework. (p. 227)

Accordingly, Shih (1999, cited in Liao, 2003) suggests the following solution to the problem of big classes:

> *How to deal with large classes:* teachers can rearrange the desks and chairs to leave room for various pair or group activities. Limit teachers talking time and let students participate in various communicative activities like information gap, role-play, and games. (p. 190)

For large classes, EFL teachers probably allow for group formation and presentation processes in which task-based techniques are employed similarly like in small classes, except that large classes may occupy more time and preparation (Jeon & Hahn, 2006).

Given the fact that difficulty in assessing learner's task-based performance was one of the main reasons teachers avoided TBLT execution, the teachers needed to consider inter-group and intra-group assessments while improving the quality of task-based collaborative work (Lourdusamy & Divaharan, 2002). As Jeon and Hahn (2006) suggest, "while the inter-group evaluation involves using the group's products as part of the course evaluation and thus giving equal grades to all members of the group, the intra-group assessment involves individual evaluation" (p. 19). As for the students not accustomed to task-based learning, one of the reasons they avoided participating in task-based activities might concern the lack of confidence in performing tasks (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). It seems necessary for the teacher to help students establish confidence urging them to learn how to handle tasks and utilize cooperative skills in task-based performance. Task participants might learn to enable themselves to overcome constraints like the fear of assessment, competition, and task difficulty if they realize that learning in tasks is one of the effective learning strategies (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). Badly-performed students in task learning likely turn more confident by participating more equally and sharing work burden (Burdett, 2003).

As far as task-based materials were concerned, few teachers agreed that materials in textbooks were one of the reasons they avoided TBLT. It seems that current EFL textbooks in China's high schools reflect the task-based syllabus characterized by communicative skills and social interaction (MOE, 2001). This also implies that EFL teachers should often be encouraged to innovate on individual work-oriented materials in textbooks to further comply with the rules of facilitating interactive and collaborative learning among students.

10. Conclusion

Conclusively, in China's EFL contexts where students fail to have frequent contact with native speakers of English, the emphasis of language instruction has been laid on changing classroom practices from passive grammar-translation to interactive group learning for students' being more exposed to target language utilization. For that to happen, teachers need to increase interest in the application of TBLT as an instructional approach because they have perceived task-based learning to be specifically beneficial to the facilitation of students' communicative and interactive skills.

11. Implications

The overall findings of this study reveal that most EFL teachers had positive attitudes toward TBLT execution due to a higher level of understanding of task and TBLT concepts. It was brought to light that EFL teachers possessed their own reasons for applying or avoiding TBLT implementation. As such, two implications for EFL teachers and their trainers are proposed.

First, since teachers' understanding of TBLT impacts greatly on teachers' attitudes toward its implementation, teachers should be given more opportunities to acquire the knowledge of TBLT in relation to designing, planning, executing, and evaluating. Once EFL teachers hold positive attitudes toward TBLT, they are likely to draw on task-based approaches in the language classroom as facilitators of students' tasks. It is advisable that teacher education programs, focusing on cultivation on language instruction, reinforce the identification between the strengths and weaknesses of TBLT as a teaching device ranging from general principles to specific skills.

Second, given the finding that the two biggest reasons for the participating teachers to avoid administering TBLT were connected with the large class and lack of confidence to assess students' task-based performance, it is suggested that reducing the large-sized class and reforming the assessment system be stressed on the agenda. Much attention should be paid to alternative resolutions of classroom managements such as hierarchical tasks, partner evaluation, and a wide range of task types involving two-way information gap activities and one-way activities like simple asking and answering. Likewise, traditional summative assessment is recommended to be replaced by formative assessment which highlights the diversity of forms, contents, and methods.

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Table 1: Questionnaire Sections and Scopes

Question	Main Content	Category	Focused Area
Item 1	Collecting teachers' demographic information	Closed-ended	Background
Item 2	Teachers' understandings of task and TBLT	Likert-type	Concept
Item 3	Teachers' views on implementing TBLT	Likert-type	Opinion
Item 4	Reasons for teachers' choosing or avoiding TBLT	Open-ended	Implementation

Note. Adapted from Jeon & Hahn's *Teacher Questionnaire* (2006).

Table 2: Teachers' Understandings of TBLT Concepts (n = 132)

Questionnaire Items	Frequency (%)					*M*	*SD*	Ranking
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Undecided	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree			
1. A task is a communicative goal directed.	1(0.8)	6(4.5)	15(11.4)	85(64.6)	25(18.9)	3.962	.7455	4th
2. A task involves a primary focus on meaning.	0(0)	2(1.5)	14(10.6)	92(69.7)	24(18.2)	4.046	.5908	3rd
3. A task has a clearly-defined outcome.	1(0.8)	15(11.4)	33(25)	56(42.4)	27(20.5)	3.705	.9470	5th
4. A task is any activity in which the target language is used by the learner.	3(2.3)	32(24.2)	33(25)	48(36.4)	16(12.1)	3.318	1.043	7th
5. TBLT is consistent with communicative language teaching principles.	2(1.5)	13(9.8)	39(29.5)	61(46.2)	17(12.9)	3.591	.8906	6th
6. TBLT is based on the student-centered approach.	0(0)	4(3)	13(9.8)	72(54.5)	43(32.6)	4.167	.7222	2nd
7. TBLT includes pre-task, during-task, and post-task.	0(0)	2(1.5)	9(6.8)	85(64.4)	36(27.3)	4.174	.6116	1st

Table 3: Teachers' Views on Executing TBLT (n = 132)

Questionnaire Items	Frequency (%)					*M*	*SD*	Ranking
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Undecided	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree			
8. I have interest in implementing TBLT.	0(0)	12(9.1)	12(9.1)	81(61.4)	27(20.5)	3.932	.8121	2nd
9. TBLT provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote the target language use.	0(0)	7(5.3)	25(18.9)	71(53.8)	25(18.9)	3.891	.7760	4th
10. TBLT activates learners' needs and interests.	1(0.8)	9(6.8)	23(17.4)	64(48.5)	30(22.7)	3.890	.8750	5th
11. TBLT pursues the development of integrated skills.	0(0)	9(6.8)	21(15.9)	69(52.3)	28(21.2)	3.913	.8167	3rd
12. TBLT gives much psychological burden to a teacher as facilitator.	3(2.3)	28(21.2)	45(34.1)	43(32.6)	7(5.3)	3.183	.9243	8th
13. TBLT requires much preparation time compared to other approaches.	1(0.8)	10(7.6)	26(19.7)	60(45.5)	30(22.7)	3.850	.9004	6th
14. TBLT is proper for controlling classroom arrangements.	4(3.0)	10(7.6)	26(19.7)	62(47.0)	24(18.2)	3.730	.9668	7th
15. TBLT materials should be meaningful and purposeful based on real-world contexts.	0(0)	5(3.8)	17(12.9)	71(53.8)	35(26.5)	4.063	.7503	1st

Table 4 : Reasons Teachers Use TBLT in the Classroom (n = 103)

Statements	Frequency	Percentage (%)
TBLT promotes learners' academic progress.	65	63.1
TBLT improves learners' interaction skills.	78	75.7
TBLT encourages learners' intrinsic motivation.	84	81.6
TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.	76	73.8
TBLT is appropriate for small group work.	71	68.9
Others	5	4.9

Table 5: Reasons Teachers Avoid TBLT in the Classroom (n = 21)

Statements	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students are not used to task-based learning.	8	38.1
Materials in textbooks are not proper for using TBLT.	9	42.9
Large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods.	18	85.7
I have difficulty assessing learner task-based performance.	13	61.9
I have limited target language proficiency.	3	14.3
I have very little knowledge of task-based instruction.	9	42.9
Others	1	4.8

Appendix

Teacher Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed for the survey of China's secondary school EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT and their classroom practices. Your responses will be used for the research only and kept confidential. No participants will be named in the study. The validity of this survey depends on the extent to which your responses are open and frank. So you are warmly required to answer honestly. Thank you for your cooperation!

Your phone number/e-mail address (if applicable) for the convenience of contact:

_____

Section I. General and Demographic Information

Teaching level	□ junior middle school □ senior middle school
Gender	□ male □ female
Age	□ 20-29 □ 30-39 □ 40-49 □ 50 +
Teaching year(s)	□ < 5 years □ 5-9 years □ 10-20 years □ > 20 years

Section II. Teachers' Understandings of Task and TBLT

For each of the following statements, please answer by ticking (v) in a grid according to the 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 an activity where learners use the target language.	□	□	□	□	□
5. TBLT agrees with communicative language teaching principles.	□	□	□	□	□
6. TBLT is based on the student-centered instructional approach.	□	□	□	□	□
7. TBLT includes pre-task, task implementation, and post-task.	□	□	□	□	□

Section III. Teachers' Views on Implementing TBLT

The following statements address teachers' views on implementing TBLT. Please respond by ticking (v) in a grid that matches your position most according to the 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 EFL use.	□	□	□	□	□
10. TBLT activates learners' needs and interests.	□	□	□	□	□
11. TBLT pursues the development of integrated skills.	□	□	□	□	□
12. TBLT gives a teacher as facilitator much psychological burden.	□	□	□	□	□
13. TBLT needs more preparation time than 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 for Teachers' Choosing or Avoiding TBLT Implementation

Do you use TBLT or not? Please respond by ticking (v) in one of the following grids.

         □ YES   □ NO

If YES, please choose reasons that you decide to implement TBLT by ticking (v) in a grid.

□ 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 choose reasons that you avoid implementing TBLT by ticking (v) in a grid.

□ 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.
(   )