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TEACHER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The relationship between EFL teachers' perception of task-based language teaching and their dominant teaching style

Seyed Hesamuddin Aliasin[1]*, Zahra Saeedi[1] and Aiyoub Jodairi Pineh[1]

*Corresponding author: Seyed Hesamuddin Aliasin, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Zanjan, IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)
E-mail: hesamaliasin@znu.ac.ir

Abstract: This study was an attempt to explore the possible relationship between EFL teachers' perception (understanding and view) of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and their dominant teaching style. In addition, the study investigated whether EFL teachers' perception of TBLT can predict their dominant teaching style. As for the participants, 180 Iranian EFL teachers took part in this study. The participants, both male and female, were selected using convenience sampling. For data collection, two adapted survey instruments were utilized: Questionnaire for Teacher Perception of TBLT and Teaching Styles Inventory. The results revealed a statistically positive correlation between the participants' perception (both understanding and view) of TBLT and dominant teaching style. Also, the results of regression analyses indicated that the participants' perception (both understanding and view) of TBLT was a predictor of the dominant teaching style.

Subjects: Educational Research; Education Studies; Teachers & Teacher Education; Theory of Education; Teaching & Learning; Continuing Professional Development

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Seyed Hesamuddin Aliasin is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics in TESL at the University of Zanjan, Iran. He supervises theses, presents his research findings at conferences and publishes articles. The present paper is a part of a wider study conducted under his supervision as an MA thesis in applied linguistics in TESL. His main research interests include applied linguistics as well as issues in SLA, etc.

Zahra Saeedi has an MA in TESL/TEFL. Her main research interests include applied linguistics as well as issues in SLA and language teaching methodology.

Aiyoub Jodairi Pineh is an assistant professor of applied linguistics in TESL at the University of Zanjan, Iran. He obtained his PhD in applied linguistics from the University of Adelaide, Australia. He supervises theses, attends conferences and publishes articles. His main research interests include systemic functional linguistics (SFL), genre-based approach to language pedagogy, L2 writing skill, etc.

Seyed Hesamuddin Aliasin

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The L2 teacher's being theory-oriented and theory-aware is an important issue in L2 teaching pedagogy. On the other hand, the teacher's attitudes toward an approach derived from a theory constitute another factor that can motivate him/her to apply it in his/her L2 classroom. Given this, this study has sought to join these two aspects in the construct of teacher perception. Furthermore, TBLT is said to be demanding on the L2 teacher. Unless the teacher is adequately aware of the theories behind TBLT and feels committed to these theories, he/she may feel incapable of or reluctant to implement it in the L2 classroom environment. Therefore, this study was an attempt to explore the extent to which teacher perception of TBLT and dominant teaching style can be correlated. The results of the study might be revealing to L2 teachers and practitioners regarding the role of theory awareness and theory commitment in an effective but demanding ESL/EFL context such as TBLT.

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1. Introduction

A review of the history of English language teaching/learning indicates paradigm shifts in theoretical orientations due to dissatisfaction over deployed methods and procedures; thus, there has been an attempt to find better ways of language teaching and learning (Sanchez, 2004). Among other things, TBLT, which evolved within the communicative language teaching approach, is regarded as a new trend in language teaching and learning (Littlewood, 2004; Nonun, 2004). According to Ellis (2012), "TBLT is an approach that emphasizes holistic learning, it is learner-driven and it entails communication-based instruction. It contrasts with traditional approaches (such as present-practice-production-PPP), which are based on discrete learning, are teacher-centered and emphasize form and accuracy" (pp. 197–198). This approach also provides English language teachers with an educational framework to change their role to facilitators (Willis, 1996).

TBLT is based on the premise that "language learning will result from creating the right kinds of interactional processes in the classroom, and the best way to create these is to use specially designed instructional tasks" (Richards, 2006, p. 30). However, as Jeon and Hahn (2006) claim, "a task in itself does not necessarily guarantee its successful implementation unless the teacher, the facilitator and controller of task performance, understands how the tasks actually work in the classroom" (p. 129). The teacher himself/herself can play a pivotal role in promoting the use of tasks in the language classroom (Shehadeh & Coombe, 2012). Thus, as reiterated by Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, and Thwaite (2001), "any innovation in classroom practice from the adoption of a new technique or textbook to the implementation of a new curriculum has to be accommodated within the teacher's own framework of teaching principles" (p. 472).

Along the same lines, Van den Branden (2009) emphasizes the association between teachers' perceptions and their actions in the classroom and claims that "what language teachers do in the classroom is inspired by what they know, believe, and think" (p. 403). Accordingly, it seems that when language teachers have no perception of task-based instruction, no real change will happen in an EFL setting. Thus, EFL teachers should stay abreast of changes in pedagogical philosophy and go beyond teacher-centered traditional methods in EFL contexts in which learners rarely have the opportunity to get exposed to English outside the class (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). In order to shed more light on this issue, specifically in the context of EFL teaching in Iran, this study has sought to explore any possible association between EFL teachers' perception of TBLT and what really goes on in EFL classes.

2. Literature review

2.1. Task-based language teaching

Some scholars have highlighted the role of TBLT in involving students in the English language classroom environment (Ellis, 2009; Nunan, 2005; Prabhu, 1987; Willis, 1996). According to Ellis (2009), TBLT approach can be thought to contribute to effective L2 teaching/learning in several ways. This approach provides an appropriate opportunity for natural learning inside the classroom. It both emphasizes attending to the meaning and makes provision for learning form. It also provides learners with the rich input needed for the target language learning and helps them to develop their intrinsic motivation in the classroom. Although TBLT is mostly based on a learner-oriented philosophy, it paves the way for teachers' input and direction. Moreover, it helps learners to develop communicative fluency without sacrificing accuracy (see Ellis, 2009).

There are a variety of definitions offered for the term *task* in the literature, ranging from rather general to quite specific (Willis, 2005). Long (1985), a pioneer in using the term, equates task with what people usually do in real life. For him, the task comprises pieces of work such as painting

a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes that are done as a daily routine (as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 2). Nunan (2004) makes a distinction between *real-world* or *target* tasks which involve the use of language in the world outside the classroom and *pedagogical* tasks which are meant to be used in the classroom. Pedagogically speaking, Nunan describes task as:

> a piece of classroom work that involve learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of complete-ness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end. (p.4)

In defining a task, some researchers have focused on various aspects of task such as meaning, purpose, outcome, task completion. For Willis (1996), tasks refer to activities whereby learners are expected to use the target language for a communicative purpose to achieve the desired out-comes. Shehadeh (2005) conceptualizes task as "an activity that has a non-linguistic purpose or goal with a clear outcome and that uses any or all of the four language skills in its accomplishment by conveying meaning in a way that reflects real-world language use" (pp. 18–19). Similarly, Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2011) use the term *task* to refer to an activity where the target language is employed for a specific communicative purpose.

Nunan's (2004) definition, however, seems to be more comprehensive and compatible with the orientation of the present research context. Nunan emphasizes the significance of grammatical knowledge as a departure point to convey different communicative meanings. In other words, Nunan views meaning and form in a highly interrelated framework for the development of the linguistic skills whether productive or receptive.

2.2. Teaching style
There are various descriptions of teaching style in the literature. Teaching style is described by Conti (1989) as the qualities that teachers exhibit in the classroom and that apply to diverse contexts. Dupin-Bryant (2004) describes learner-centered teaching style as "a style of instruction that is responsive, collaborative, problem-centered, democratic in which both students and the instructor decide how, what, and when learning occurs" (p. 42). On the other hand, teacher-centered teaching style, as defined by Dupin-Bryant (2004), is the one which is "formal, controlled, and autocratic in which the instructor directs how, what, and when students learn" (p. 42). Grasha (1996) views teaching style as a pattern of needs, beliefs, and behaviors that teachers display in their classrooms. He also asserts that teaching style is a multidimensional construct that affects the way in which teachers present instructional materials, communicate with learners, manage classroom activities, supervise coursework, socialize learners to the field, and mentor learners.

In this study, the term *teaching style* is based on Grasha's (1996) teaching style model that comprises five metaphoric components in which the teacher is believed to play a role as an expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator. According to Grasha (1996), teachers with expert teaching style possess knowledge and expertise needed in instructional settings. They endeavor to keep status as an expert among learners by indicating detailed knowledge and by challenging learners to enhance their proficiency. They are concerned with translating information and ensuring that learners are well prepared. Teachers with formal authority teaching style maintain status among learners due to their knowledge and role as a teacher. They are concerned with providing feedback in a positive and negative manner, establishing learning goals, expecta-tions, and rules of conduct for learners. They strive to do things in correct, acceptable, and standard ways and provide learners with the structure they need to learn. Teachers with personal model teaching style make an effort to provide personal examples to teach the material and establish a prototype to instruct learners how to think and behave. These teachers guide and direct learners by demonstrating how to do things. They also act as a role model and encourage learners

to observe and then to imitate their approach. Teachers with facilitator teaching style believe in emphasizing the personal nature of teacher–student interactions and instruct learners by asking questions, exploring options, proposing alternatives, and encouraging them to develop criteria to make informed choices. They also strive to develop in learners the capacity for independent action, initiative, and responsibility. They work with learners on projects in a consultative manner and try to provide support and encouragement for learners if needed. Finally, teachers with delegator teaching style try to develop learners' ability to function in an autonomous manner. They design opportunities for learners to work independently on projects or as part of a small group. The teacher as a resource person is available to provide assistance if requested. It is worth mentioning that Grasha (2002) views the concept of teaching style as a continuum consisting of several levels or components; he emphasizes that teachers do not fit into a fixed component but can subscribe to these components across varying degrees.

2.3. Empirical studies on task-based language teaching

Some studies have focused on L2 teachers' perception of TBLT in different L2 teaching contexts across the world. Nemati (2013) studied EFL teachers' perception of task-based approach in Indian primary and secondary school levels and found that although the participants had a low understanding of the principles of TBLT, the majority of them had positive attitudes toward this approach. They agreed that TBLT promotes academic progress, helps learners to develop intrinsic motivation, and develops effective learning environments through collaborative activities. In spite of such tendency, the minority of them showed reluctance to attend to task-based courses because of three main reasons: low proficiency in the target language, little knowledge of task-based instruction, and lack of teacher training courses on the principles of TBLT.

The findings by Tabatabaei and Hadi (2011) revealed that most Iranian EFL teachers had a firm grasp of the characteristics of the task and had positive attitudes toward implementing TBLT in the classroom. In a similar study, Rostamian (2013) reported that in spite of the fact that the majority of Iranian EFL teachers had a low level of understanding about the basic concepts of TBLT, they were more positive about the implementation of this approach in EFL classrooms. Ansari and Shahrokhi (2014) also showed that most of the EFL teachers in Iran understood the concept of TBLT; however, about half of them had a negative view about implementing TBLT in the classroom. These teachers avoided TBLT in the classroom because they believed (a) they had very little knowledge about TBLT, (b) large class size was an obstacle to practicing TBLT, and (c) learners were not used to task-based learning.

Xiongyong and Samuel (2011) found that, despite the fact that Chinese EFL teachers had a positive attitude toward TBLT based on a high level of understanding of task and TBLT concepts, they saw the large class size as the biggest barrier to task-based instruction in the context of secondary Chinese students. In another study, Hu (2013) examined the responses of Chinese teachers of English to TBLT at different school levels. The results indicated that 17% of the teachers held a negative attitude toward TBLT and were mostly preoccupied with the issues of examinations and their learners' achievement of high scores. Thirty-three percent did exactly what they were told to perform in the textbook or the teacher's manual. Fifty percent of the teachers held positive opinions about TBLT. They were interested in expanding their knowledge about TBLT.

In another case study on three English teachers in a secondary school in China, Zheng and Borg (2014) found that these teachers had a narrow understanding of what TBLT meant. Their common understanding of TBLT was limited to speaking in pairs and groups. In addition, they believed that some factors such as large classes, classroom management issues, examination system, mixed ability groups, time pressure and insufficient knowledge about TBLT hindered or at least limited the use of TBLT approach in their EFL classrooms.

Lin and Wu (2012) investigated 136 English teachers' perception of TBLT in Taiwanese high schools. The findings indicated that most of the teachers possessed some basic but limited

knowledge about the key concepts of task and TBLT. However, they held a positive attitude toward the implementation of TBLT in their classroom. In addition, the results revealed that there were several main factors hindering the implementation of TBLT in the Taiwanese setting. They included the inflexible syllabus, limited teaching hours, large class size, examination-oriented education system based on grammar-focused examination system, and classroom management. In a similar study on 228 EFL teachers in the context of a Korean secondary school, Jeon and Hahn (2006) found that although most participants held a higher level of understanding about task and task-based instruction, they had a negative view of implementing this approach in the classroom.

2.4. Empirical studies on teaching style

Faruji (2012) investigated the dominant teaching style in private language institutes in Iran. Her findings demonstrated that the most dominant teaching style was formal authority style used mostly by male, younger, and less experienced teachers. In a similar study conducted on 103 EFL teachers in Iran, Kazemi and Soleimani (2013) concluded that EFL teachers are more willing to adopt formal authority style (a teacher-centered style). In another study conducted by Dupin-Brynt (2004), the results showed that the participants exhibited both learner-centered and teacher-centered styles. Yet, they had a strong inclination toward a teacher-centered style in distance education.

The findings of Nonkukhetkhong, Baldauf, and Moni (2006) indicated that EFL teachers in the context of Thai secondary schools were attempting to apply a learner-centered approach. In another study conducted with 22 male and female education instructors at Midwestern University, Ahmed (2013) found that the participants exhibited both learner-centered and teacher-centered styles. Yet, there was a strong inclination toward a learner-centered style among the participants. Furthermore, various studies have demonstrated a relationship between teaching style and other independent variables. Variables such as personality type (Akbari, Mirhassani, & Bahri, 2005; Cooper, 2001; Larenas, Moran, & Rivera, 2011), self-efficacy (Heidari, Nourmohammadi, & Nowrouzi, 2012), the use of textbook and teacher ideology (Zahorik, 1991), classroom management beliefs (Mohammad Hoseini, Kazemi, Azizinia, Mansouryan, & Mohammadhosseini, 2014), teacher characteristics including gender, teacher education and certification, class management skills, and job satisfaction (Opdenakke & Damme, 2006), and cognitive styles (Evans, Harkins, & Young, 2008) have all been associated with teaching style.

In another study, Baleghizadeh and Shakouri (2014) examined the predicting power of teaching experience and gender in identifying ESP instructors' teaching styles in Iran. They found that years of teaching experience and gender were not statistically significant predictors of teaching styles. This finding is in line with Behnam and Bayazidi's (2013) findings which showed that personality type of Iranian EFL teachers did not predict teaching style. In another study conducted with 157 teachers (75 males and 82 females) in the context of Chinese senior high schools, Zhang (2007) found that teachers' personality traits significantly contributed to their teaching styles.

3. Research questions

Inspired by the above-mentioned research findings which dealt with teaching style as one of their main variables, the researchers came to realize that little studies have been conducted on the possible links between teacher perception of TBLT approach and teaching style in an Iranian EFL context. Thus, in order to fill part of this gap and help contribute to the enrichment of the related literature, the present study explored the relationship between teaching style and TBLT in a more focused manner, concentrating on Grasha's (1996) metaphoric model of teaching style. To this end, the researchers formulated the following research questions:

(1) Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT and their dominant teaching style?

(2) Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' view of TBLT and their dominant teaching style?

(3) Does Iranian EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT predict their dominant teaching style?

(4) Does Iranian EFL teachers' view of TBLT predict their dominant teaching style?

4. Methods

4.1. Participants
The participants of this study consisted of EFL teachers who were teaching English across different levels at junior/senior high schools, English language institutes, and universities in Zanjan, Iran. One hundred and eighty EFL teachers (56 males and 124 females) took part in the study. Their age ranged from 20 to over 50 years old, and their teaching experience as EFL teachers ranged from less than five to more than 20 years.

4.2. Instruments

4.2.1. Jeon and Hahn's (2006) questionnaire for teacher perception of TBLT
To obtain the data required, the researchers used an adapted version of a questionnaire used by Xiongyong and Samuel (2011). Originally, the questionnaire had been developed by Jeon and Hahn (2006) to elicit EFL teachers' perception of TBLT in the Korean educational setting. In the introductory part, the questionnaire seeks demographic information about the respondents' degree, gender, age, and years of teaching experience, respectively. Based on this scale, perception is conceived as a construct consisting of two major components: (1) the teacher's understanding of TBLT approach which focuses on exploring the extent to which the teacher is aware of theories behind TBLT and its basic concepts and conceptual framework, and (2) the teacher's view of implementing TBLT in the classroom setting, which is meant to elicit his/her personal feelings, attitudes and evaluative assessments of employing TBLT approach in an EFL context. Thus, the first section of the scale (items 1–7) is meant to explore teachers' understanding of the concept of task and principles of TBLT. The second section (items 8–15) focuses on teachers' view of the implementation of TBLT. The respondents are expected to answer each Likert-type item using a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*.

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument, the researchers resorted to expertise judgment. The purpose was to estimate the rate of agreement (inter-rater reliability) between the expert judges who were four academic members of the English Department at the University of Zanjan, Iran. The average inter-rater reliability turned out to be .67, which indicated a moderately acceptable agreement rate between the four expert judges concerning the extent to which the questionnaire items were capable of gauging the participants' perception of TBLT. Also, the internal consistency of the instrument was measured by the researchers via the Cronbach alpha index which was calculated at 0.79, indicating a moderately acceptable internal reliability for the instrument.

4.2.2. Grasha's (1996) teaching styles inventory
To collect the data pertinent to styles in teaching, the researchers used the Teaching Styles Inventory developed by Grasha (1996). This 40-item questionnaire is composed of five sub-sections. Each sub-section includes eight items related to one of the metaphoric components of teaching style, i.e., the teacher as: expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator. In fact, the inventory is a 7-point scale, but for feasibility reasons, the researchers employed a 5-point scale. It is worth noticing that a considerable number of researchers have employed it as a measure of teaching style (Faruji, 2012; Heidari et al., 2012; Kassaian & Ayatollahi, 2010; Kazemi & Soleimani, 2013; Razak, Ahmad, & Shah, 2007). For this study, the reliability of this questionnaire was measured through the Cronbach Alpha which was calculated at 0.85.

4.3. Procedures
As the researchers had to visit a large number of guidance schools, high schools, English language institutes, universities in Zanjan, Iran, they selected these places based on distance and proximity

and the number of EFL teachers available. Therefore, the participants both male and female were selected through convenience sampling method. They received the study instruments by email or in person and through the paper–pencil format. The respondents had at least one week's time to answer the questionnaires. It is worth noticing that the researchers were reachable to the respondents via the cell phone contact for any queries.

Regarding the data collection history and rate of return for the questionnaires, it is important to note that the questionnaires were distributed in September 2015. After 3 months, 180 filled questionnaires were returned. Out of 30 questionnaires distributed via the email, 12 were returned, indicating a 40% rate of return, and out of 263 questionnaires distributed directly to the respondents, 168 were returned (63.87%).

5. Results

5.1. Investigating the first research question

The first research question was meant to explore the possible relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT (as one component of their perception of TBLT) and their teaching style. Pearson correlation results revealed a significantly positive relationship (see Table 1).

The results revealed a significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT and all the components of the teaching style [formal authority (r = .186, p < .05), expert (r = .148, p < .05), personal model (r = .170, p < .05), facilitator (r = .271, p < .05), and delegator (r = .155, p < .05)]. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on Stevens' (2009) ratings, the r-value results indicated that formal authority, expert, personal model, and delegator had low correlations with the EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT, whereas facilitator was found to be moderately correlated with the participants' understanding of TBLT.

As shown in the table, 3% (R^2 = .034) of the shared variance goes to the relationship between understanding TBLT and formal authority; the shared variances for understanding TBLT and the other components of teaching style are as follows: expert (2%; R^2 = .021); personal model (2%; R^2 = .028); facilitator (7%; R^2 = .073); and delegator (2%; R^2 = .024). Despite statistically significant relationships between the variables, the practical significance rates are rather low due to small amounts of shared variances.

5.2. Investigating the second research question

In the second research question, the researchers sought to explore any possible relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' view of TBLT (the other component of their perception of TBLT) and the five components of teaching style. Pearson correlation results revealed a significantly positive relationship (see Table 2).

As shown in the table, the results revealed varying degrees of significant relationships between Iranian EFL teachers' view of TBLT and all the five teaching style components [formal authority (r = .319, p < .05), expert (r = .248, p < .05), personal model (r = .263, p < .05), facilitator (r = .259, p < .05), and delegator (r = .227, p < .05)]. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Consequently, the overall null hypothesis for the main reserach question was rejected. Based on Steven's (2009) ratings, these results indicated that each component of teaching style was found to be moderately correlated with the participants' view of TBLT.

Despite these significant relationships, the shared variances between the participants' view of TBLT and the five components of teaching style are rather low (formal authority: 10%, R^2 = .101; expert: 7%, R^2 = .061; personal model: 7%, R^2 = .069; facilitator: 7%, R^2 = .067; and delegator: 5%, R^2 = .051). A point worth mentioning is that the amounts of shared variance for the view component of perception and the five components of teaching style are all considerably larger than those of the understanding component of perception, signifying that the view component

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Table 1. Regression results for teachers' understanding of TBLT and dominant teaching style

Dependent variable	Predictor variable	Model Summary			ANOVA					
		R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.	
Expert	Understanding of TBLT	.148	.022	.016	3.995	.047	.148	1.999	.047	
Formal authority	Understanding of TBLT	.186	.035	.029	6.375	.012	.186	2.525	.012	
Personal model	Understanding of TBLT	.170	.029	.024	5.134	.022	.170	2.305	.022	
Facilitator	Understanding of TBLT	.271	.073	.068	14.100	.001	.271	3.755	.001	
Delegator	Understanding of TBLT	.155	.024	.019	4.392	.038	.155	2.096	.038	

N =180; p < .05. (Table 4 continued).

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Table 2. Regression results for teachers' view of TBLT and dominant teaching style

Dependent variable	Predictor variable	Model summary			ANOVA			Beta	t	Sig.
		R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	Sig.				
Expert	View of TBLT	.248	.062	.056	11.675	.001		.248	3.417	.001
Formal authority	view of TBLT	.319	.102	.097	20.200	.001		.319	4.494	.001
Personal model	view of TBLT	.263	.069	.064	13.204	.001		.263	3.634	.001
Facilitator	view of TBLT	.259	.067	.062	12.800	.001		.259	3.578	.001
Delegator	view of TBLT	.227	.052	.046	9.667	.002		.227	3.109	.002

$N = 180$; $p < .05$.

enjoys higher correlations with teaching style components than the understanding component of perception.

5.3. Investigating the third research question

The third question of the study was posed in order to investigate the predictive power of teachers' understanding of TBLT on each of the teaching style components. To answer this question, simple regression analyses were conducted. It should be noted that assumptions including linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity of residuals were checked before running the regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 1.

As shown in the table, the R square values demonstrated that the *understanding* component of TBLT perception predicted 2.2%, 3.5%, 2.9%, 7.3%, and 2.4% of the variance in expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator teaching style components, respectively. The p-value in ANOVA revealed that the predictor variable significantly ($p < .05$) predicts all the teaching style components. Moreover, the Beta values in the table indicated that teachers' understanding of TBLT contributes as much as 14.8%, 18.6%, 17%, 27.1%, and 15.5% to the prediction of expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator teaching style components, respectively. It was also found that the regression pertinent to teachers' understanding of TBLT for all teaching style components was statistically significant ($p < .05$). In order to save space, the five tables of simple linear regression analyses pertinent to each teaching style component are combined in one table.

5.4. Investigating the fourth research question

Finally, the fourth question of the study was intended to probe the predictive power of teachers' view of TBLT on each of the teaching style components. To answer this question, simple regression analyses were conducted. It should be noted that assumptions including linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity of residuals were checked before running the regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 2.

As is evident from the table, the R square values indicated that the view component of TBLT perception could predict 6.2%, 10.2%, 6.9%, 6.7%, and 5.2% of the variance in expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator teaching style components, respectively. The p-value in ANOVA revealed that the individual regression model for all the teaching style components is statistically significant ($p < .05$). Moreover, the Beta values in the table indicated that teachers' view of TBLT contributes as much as 22.8%, 31.9%, 26.3%, 25.9%, and 22.7% to the prediction of expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator, and delegator teaching style components, respectively. It was also found that the regression pertinent to teachers' view of TBLT for all teaching style components was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

6. Discussion

The first research question was meant to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT and their dominant teaching style. The results obtained revealed that Iranian EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT is statistically associated with all the components of teaching style. The second research question addressed the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' view of TBLT and their dominant teaching style. Based on the findings, Iranian EFL teachers' view of TBLT is statistically related to all components of teaching styles. These findings are parallel with previous studies that found a significant relationship between personality type (Akbari et al., 2005; Cooper, 2001; Larenas et al., 2011), self-efficacy as a key personality factor (Heidari et al., 2012), classroom management beliefs (Mohhammad Hoseini et al., 2014), teacher characteristics (Opdenakke & Damme, 2006), cognitive styles (Evans et al., 2008), the use of textbook and teacher ideology (Zahorik, 1991) and teaching style.

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The third research question was formulated to explore the predictive power of teachers' understanding of TBLT on each of the teaching style components. The results revealed that EFL teachers' understanding of TBLT makes a statistically significant contribution to the prediction of all components of teaching style. Finally, the fourth research question dealt with the predictive power of EFL teachers' view of TBLT on each of the teaching style components. Based on the findings, EFL teachers' view of TBLT statistically contributes to the prediction of all the components of teaching style. These findings are in line with previous research findings concerning the predictive power of teachers' personality traits for teaching style (Zhang, 2007). However, these findings are in contrast with those of previous studies which found that other variables including the years of teaching experience and gender (Baleghizadeh & Shakouri, 2014), and personality type (Behnam & Bayazidi, 2013) were not statistically significant predictors of each of the teaching style components.

This discrepancy may be due to the fact that perception of TBLT (as one main variable in this study) is logically more vigorously related to the teaching style construct as compared to those variables dealt with in the studies mentioned. Moreover, the authors of this article have to admit that the predictive power of perception of TBLT was not remarkably high, as reported in the results section above.

Even so, two points are worth mentioning with respect to the findings of this study. First, the previous study findings reported here are only partially related to the context of the present study. They dealt with only one of the variables of this study (teaching style but not teacher perception) in relation to some other different variables. In this regard, this study can be said to be closer to the exploratory end of the exploratory-confirmatory design continuum than its confirmatory end (see Perry, 2011). As such, elaborate comparison and contrast across those findings and the findings of this study did not seem completely feasible.

The second point worth mentioning is that concerning the *understanding* component of teacher perception, the highest correlation was found between this component and the *facilitator* teaching style component, whereas regarding the *view* component of teacher perception the highest correlation existed between teacher view and *formal authority* component of teaching style. This may indicate that although teachers are aware of the theories behind the method or approach to which they seem to subscribe, in practice they fail to adhere to those theories as they tend to mostly subscribe to their own personal feelings, preferences, attitudes, modes, etc. Hence, we still face the ever-present gap between theory and practice.

7. Conclusion

The findings of the present study may throw some light on the current situation in an EFL educational setting regarding the topic under study. Language educators, planners, policy-makers and practitioners are expected to focus on the theory-awareness of L2 teachers. They should also be cognizant of how much this awareness of theories among the teachers has practical reflections in their teaching style orientation. A more tangible implication is that for teacher educators and curriculum developers to be successful in bridging the gap between theory and practice, they are recommended to attend cogently to teachers' views and beliefs about teaching methods, materials, learners and even about themselves. Such beliefs in humanistic views of language teaching/learning are of paramount importance (see Williams & Burden, 1997). Thus, attempts should be made to build a convincing harmony and correspondence between adopted theories/approaches/methods and teacher beliefs. This entails that ample studies across the globe be devoted to exploring factors and reasons why L2 teachers tend to deviate from theories or approaches to which they are expected to subscribe in a specific language teaching/learning program.

Finally, it should be noted that because of the fact that the participants were selected through convenience sampling, the findings of the study should be generalized with due

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reservation. Furthermore, a number of variables beyond the researchers' control might impact the results obtained. Further studies are required to shed more light on the issues in this respect.

Author details
Seyed Hesamuddin Aliasin[1]
E-mail: hesamaliasin@znu.ac.ir
Zahra Saeedi[1]
E-mail: z92saeedi@gmail.com
Aiyoub Jodairi Pineh[1]
E-mail: j.pineh@znu.ac.ir
[1] Department of English Language and Literature, University of Zanjan, P.O. Box, Zanjan 45371-38791, Iran.

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Appendix A

Teacher Perception of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) Questionnaire

Section I. Demographic Information

Degree:	□ B.A.	□ M.A.	□ Ph.D.	
Gender:	□ male	□ female		
Age:	□ 20–29	□ 30–39	□ 40–49 □ 50+	
Teaching Experience: □ <5 years		□ 5–9 years	□ 10–20 years	□ >20 years

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Section II. Teachers' Understandings of TBLT

Please answer by ticking (v) in a grid according to the scale: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), N (no idea), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree).

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. A task is 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

Please respond by ticking (v) in a grid according to the scale: SA (strongly agree), A (agree), N (no idea), D (disagree), SD (strongly disagree).

	SA	A	N	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.	□	□	□	□	□

Appendix B:

Teaching Styles Inventory

In this questionnaire, a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* is used.

□Strongly agree   □ Agree   □ No idea   □ Disagree   □ Strongly disagree

1. Facts, concepts, and principles are the most important things that students should acquire.
2. I set high standards for students in this class.
3. What I say and do models appropriate ways for students to think about issues in the content.
4. My teaching goals and methods address a variety of student learning styles.

5. Students typically work on course projects alone with little supervision from me.

6. Sharing my knowledge and expertise with students is very important to me.

7. I give students negative feedback when their performance is unsatisfactory.

8. Students are encouraged to emulate the example I provide.

9. I spend time consulting with students on how to improve their work on individual and/or group projects.

10. Activities in this class encourage students to develop their own ideas about content issues.

11. What I have to say about a topic is important for students to acquire a broader perspective on the issues in that area.

12. Students would describe my standards and expectations as somewhat strict and rigid.

13. I typically show students how and what to do in order to master course content.

14. Small group discussions are employed to help students develop their ability to think critically.

15. Students design one of the more self-directed learning experiences.

16. I want students to leave this course well prepared for further work in this area.

17. It is my responsibility to define what students must learn and how they should learn it.

18. Examples from my personal experiences are often used to illustrate points about the material.

19. I guide students' work on course projects by asking questions, exploring options, and suggesting alternative ways to do things.

20. Developing the ability of students to think and work independently is an important goal.

21. Lecturing is a significant part of how I teach each of the class sessions.

22. I provide very clear guidelines for how I want tasks completed in this course.

23. I often show students how they can use various principles and concepts.

24. Course activities encourage students to take initiative and responsibility for their learning.

25. Students take responsibility for teaching part of the class sessions.

26. My expertise is typically used to resolve disagreements about content issues.

27. This course has very specific goals and objectives that I want to accomplish.

28. Students receive frequent verbal and/or written comments on their performance.

29. I solicit student advice about how and what to teach in this course.

30. Students set their own pace for completing independent and/or group projects.

31. Students might describe me as a "storehouse of knowledge" who dispenses the fact, principles, and concepts they need.

32. My expectations for what I want students to do in this class are clearly defined in the syllabus.

33. Eventually, many students begin to think like me about course content.

34. Students can make choices among activities in order to complete course requirements.

35. My approach to teaching is similar to a manager of a workgroup who delegates tasks and responsibilities to subordinates.

36. There is more material in this course than I have time available to cover it.

37. My standards and expectations help students develop the discipline they need to learn.

38. Students might describe me as a "coach" who works closely with someone to correct problems in how they think and behave.

39. I give students a lot of personal support and encouragement to do well in this course.

40. I assume the role of a resource person who is available to students whenever they need help.

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