

Challenges and Trials: Implementing Localized TBLT for Novice L2 Learners Throughout Three Semesters

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the constraints on implementing task-based language teaching (TBLT) and strategies that make TBLT feasible with novice second language (L2) learners in college. When the researcher (a bilingual teacher) struggled to implement tasks into traditional English courses with almost 210 novice undergraduates throughout three separate semesters, a number of constraints were identified for the task syllabus, and TBLT was modified and adapted to a localized college-level context. The study was conducted over three 16-week-semester, and its process was recorded in field notes. The findings demonstrated that there were four major constraints on implementing TBLT: 1) irrelevant topics in the coursebooks, 2) novice learners' writing dependence and limited use of the second language, 3) excessive use of the first language, and 4) an irrelevant examination system. As four strategies to adapt TBLT in a local college context, the following were practiced and suggested: 1) a needs analysis is necessary, 2) instead of task-supported language teaching, a new hybrid form of TBLT and presentation-practice-production might work, 3) teaching English in English is necessary but specifying strategies for selective use of first language (L1) is needed, and 4) relevant tests are necessary. It is hoped that these findings will enrich the actual process from adoption to adaptation of localized TBLT for novice L2 learners in Korean colleges.

Key words: implementing TBLT, localized tasks, needs analysis, novice L2 learners, PPP, longitudinal study

1. INTRODUCTION

Task-based language teaching (TBLT), which falls under the umbrella of communicative language teaching (CLT), has provided a pervasive foundation for teaching and learning

second language (L2) from theoretical, research-based, and educational perspectives for over 30 years. TBLT has been promoted as a very powerful language pedagogy for L2 development and language teaching syllabus design. However, theoretically, the definitions of TBLT tasks, strong versus weak versions of TBLT, and task-based versus task-supported language teaching were blurred, so TBLT was interpreted and applied differently in various educational contexts by diverse teachers (Long, 2016). Moreover, pedagogically, the traditional synthetic syllabus following the presentation-practice-production (PPP) procedure has been still dominant in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) settings. Some scholars (e.g., Bruton, 2002a, 2002b; Swan, 2005) strongly criticized the real effectiveness of TBLT in language learning in terms of incidental learning (or on-line learning, to employ his term), noticing hypothesis and teachability hypothesis. Other scholars (Butler, 2011; Cao, 2018; Carless, 2007, 2009; Chen & Wright, 2017; Klapper, 2003; Ko, 2008; Park, 2016; Shin & Kim, 2012) argued that implementation and contextualization of TBLT are challenging in ESL/EFL settings owing to the many conceptual, institutional, and classroom-level constraints. In addition, there is no single agreed-upon task syllabus in L2 classrooms (I will use the term L2 to refer to any non-native language). Carless (2009) highlighted the dilemmas associated with TBLT and PPP. Many teachers think students find tasks more motivating, but they are uncertain about learning outcomes. On the other hand, they think that teaching grammar is important but potentially boring for students. Most teachers' safe syllabus choice has been a mainly synthetic syllabus with some tasks because they are concerned about students' inability to communicate in English, less experience as a teacher in designing tasks, a lack of teaching materials, and classroom management problems, while the PPP is seen as less challenging and familiar to both teachers and students. Therefore, the rationale for TBLT is well known and acknowledged, yet its actual practice has been adopted, adapted, distorted, and sometimes, rejected. In particular, it is even hard to find TBLT for novice L2 learners, and thus PPP is regarded as a typical method for them (Bruton, 2002b).

To fill the gap between theoretical and pedagogical TBLT in class, the present study aims to explore TBLT for novice L2 learners in Korean college context with the following rationales: 1) Implementing localized TBLT is necessary to explore through classroom-based longitudinal studies to find how teachers implement tasks, what kinds of constraints they confront at the institutional and curricular levels, and what strategies they use to deal with actual difficulties in implementing tasks in a real classroom setting over a long period of time. Although there are a small number of notable longitudinal studies (Carless, 2004; Kim, Jung, & Tracy-Ventura, 2017; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007) exploring TBLT for six to twelve months, more number of longitudinal studies is needed to explore different localized contexts; 2) as Kim (2018) mentions that "a bottom-up approach to implementing tasks initiated by individual teachers would be a stepping stone to future

development of TBLT in Korea” (p. 882), a teacher’s actual trials to deal with difficulties in implementing localized TBLT should be explored. Many studies (e.g., Carless, 2004, 2007; Chen & Wright, 2017; Ko, 2008; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Park, 2016; Shin & Kim, 2012) mainly examined teachers’ and/or students’ perceptions or beliefs toward TBLT with a qualitative data including questionnaire, interview, and class observation. However, what teachers and students think might be different with what they actually do in class. A syllabus is not created in a day or one type of response, yet it is developed from struggling to deal with problems teachers face in class, applying a new approach, or combining existing methods to a new approach while observing students’ performance, response, and/or motivation in relation to educational practices. Therefore, a teacher’s actual adaptation process of TBLT is needed to investigate its real implementation in a localized (Korean college-level) classroom setting in a curricular level (not a single lesson level); and 3) developing TBLT for novice L2 learners is scarce, yet it is also needed to expand task-based instruction to diverse levels of students. Therefore, the present study aims to examine actual constraints and strategies to deal with each constraint when adapting TBLT for novice L2 learners during the actual process of implementing TBLT through three semesters of adoption, modification, and adaptation of localized tasks in Korean college context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Concepts of Tasks and TBLT

Tasks and TBLT are regarded differently by different people. Some educators regard traditional, linguistically focused exercises and activities in commercial coursebooks as tasks, while others regard communicative activity whose purpose is to practice specific linguistic items (e.g., role play of asking for a favor at work or guided and prompted interaction to practice past tense) as tasks. Neither have been strictly considered tasks in strong version of TBLT. The first example is an exercise, not a task, while the second task is an example of a weak version of a task. In terms of a strong version of a task, it is also regarded as an exercise and activity. In the weak version of TBLT, “tasks are a vital part of language instruction, but they are embedded in a more complex pedagogic context. They are necessary but may be preceded by focused instruction, and after use, may be followed by focused instruction which is contingent on task performance” (Skehan, 2009, p. 84). In other words, the weak version of TBLT is seen as task-supported language teaching (Ellis, 2003) similar to general CLT and/or traditional PPP.

However, in the strong version of tasks and TBLT, a task must meet the following four

criteria (Skehan, 1998a, p. 268):

1. Meaning is primary;
2. There is a goal that must be worked toward;
3. The activity is outcome-evaluated;
4. There is a real-world relationship.

In TBLT, “tasks should be the *unit* of language teaching, and everything else should be subsidiary” (Skehan, 2009, p. 84). If a weak version of a task facilitates previously introduced focused instruction, a strong version of a task is a core lesson in using language. To create a task-based syllabus, target tasks are first identified based on needs analysis and then tasks are classified into target task types. For example, in a course for college students borrowing books from the library, making a reservation to access the music practice room, and learning how to use the gym at school might be classified as school facility tasks. These pedagogical tasks are then derived from the task types and sequenced based on sequencing criteria (e.g., Ellis’s *task grading*, Skehan’s *task difficulty*, and Robinson’s *task complexity*, etc.). Through such sequenced tasks, language learning results from meaning-oriented contexts closely related to learners’ real-world communicative needs. Therefore, TBLT ranges from strong versions (task-based teaching) to weaker versions (task-supported teaching). While the former regards tasks as the central elements of syllabus design, the latter uses tasks for communicative practice with a synthetic syllabus.

2.2. The PPP Method and Related Debate

A traditional synthetic syllabus is based on the lesson structure of PPP. During the presentation, the teacher draws learners’ attention to specific forms through (mainly) deductive and (sometimes) inductive means. During the practice, the teacher helps learners work on the learned forms in controlled conditions (e.g., fill-in-the-blanks, substitution tables, and simple question-and-answer exercises, etc.). During the production, the teacher provides open practice (e.g., role play or discussion about an open-ended issue), in which learners must use the target form or function to complete the activity. Cook (2001) mentions that PPP has become the mainstream EFL teaching style owing to its merits and convenience. Advocates of PPP (e.g., Bruton, 2002a, 2002b; Swan, 2005) suggest four major advantages over TBLT (mainly, its strong version). First, PPP provides well-organized rich grammar instruction. Swan (2005) argues that TBLT, in contrast to PPP, does not provide what learners will learn but only how they will learn it. He claims that pre-teaching is a largely ancillary function in TBLT because it seems to be a primary source of task-relevant language or information, not a phase for presenting new language.

Second, when it comes to low proficient learners, PPP is more beneficial. Swan (2005) argues that “beginners urgently need a simple grammatical repertoire. Learners can hardly make the ‘occasional shift in attention to linguistic code features’ recommended by Long and Robinson (1998) if they know so little basic grammar that they cannot produce discourse to shift from” (p. 23). Third, it has merit in that the teacher’s role is clear, thus PPP allows many teachers including beginning teachers to create a syllabus easily. Finally, PPP can overcome normal time constraints in secondary and tertiary school where there are language lessons of only three to four hours per week. Swan (2005) argues if frequency of occurrence is important for noticing target forms, TBLT is not appropriate because “in the tiny corpus of a year’s task-based input, even some basic structures may not occur often, much core vocabulary is likely to be absent, and many other lexical items will appear only once or twice” (p. 393).

Despite its practical merits and popularity in classrooms, PPP has nevertheless been strongly rejected by most task-based researchers (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Long, 1991; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1998b; Willis, 1996). Long (2016) criticizes the synthetic syllabus and PPP and responds to the criticism of TBLT as follows: 1) While most commercial textbook writers assume developmental sequences are not real, one cannot teach whatever one wants through PPP if language learning is the goal; 2) besides intentional learning from PPP, incidental learning and the switch from incidental to intentional learning as facilitated by focus on form or recasts is “a key component of the psycholinguistic rationale for TBLT” (p. 15); 3) although (a strong version of) TBLT is not designed to teach particular grammatical structures and vocabulary as separate activities, grammar and vocabulary are learned “during (and if necessary after, but not before) task work” (p. 17); 4) the teacher’s role in TBLT requires greater expertise, and the teacher’s role is more important, demanding, and communicative than in PPP; and 5) students, who have limited instructional time and lack of L2 exposure outside the classroom, can learn “as much grammar and vocabulary, even at the beginners level” in an EFL setting (p. 26) if course content is relevant to their needs.

2.3. Pedagogical Constraints to Implementing TBLT

Despite the fact that TBLT is supported by mainstream instructed second language acquisition and psycholinguistic research, its actual practice in class, especially in Asian classrooms (including Korean context), has faced pedagogical constraints to implementing TBLT classified by conceptual, socio-institutional, and classroom-level constraints (Butler, 2011; Cao, 2018; Carless, 2007, 2009; Chen & Wright, 2017; Klapper, 2003; Ko, 2008; Park, 2016; Shin & Kim, 2012). First, there are two conceptual constraints of TBLT. (1) Butler (2011) claims that the literacy-focused and teacher-centered Confucian norms may

represent a constraint because little value is placed on sharing knowledge through speaking rather than reading. Ko (2008) interviewed one Korean teacher who responded that immediate adopting a learner-centered TBLT seemed a little radical for the present Korean situations because many students would expect traditional and authoritative roles for teachers in English class. (2) Another conceptual difficulty is the misconceptions about TBLT as seen above. Long and Crookes (2009) argue that many teachers misunderstand the actual concepts of TBLT and often confuse them with other types of instruction entailing a synthetic syllabus, procedure syllabus (Prabhu, 1987), or process syllabus (Breen & Candlin, 1980). Long and Crookes (2009) claim that although tasks (or activities) may be useful in language learning, if the tasks are never done outside the classroom, these *pedagogical tasks* are not *target tasks* in TBLT in the analytical sense. Kim (2018) also claims that identifying target tasks is challenging in EFL contexts “because it can be done only through speculation about possible future uses of the target languages” (p. 869). Thus, preselecting pedagogical tasks on the basis of preidentified target tasks may not reflect learners’ choices in the syllabus, thereby misleading TBLT in many classes. Carless (2009) interviewed 12 secondary school teachers and 10 teacher educators in Hong Kong to ask about their preferences between PPP and (the strong and weak versions of) TBLT. As one of the findings, the main problem of TBLT is that teachers understand it superficially but have not succeeded in understanding it deeply.

Second, there are four socio-institutional constraints of the TBLT. (1) The most significant constraint is the grammar-translation-oriented examination system (Butler, 2011; Cao, 2018). With limited class hours when English only is used and learned, many teachers and students are likely to think that TBLT may not be beneficial in the context of the pressure of the traditional grammar-focused exam (e.g., Carless, 2007, 2009; Chen & Wright, 2017). (2) There are also limited opportunities for students to use English out of the classroom communicatively (Butler, 2011). (3) Then, there is a lack of material. The use of commercial textbooks in most Asian universities does not support TBLT (Cao, 2018). Many activities in textbooks are not real tasks seeking to “achieve an interactional authenticity” (Ellis, 2003, p. 8). (4) Lastly, an institutionally supportive environment (resource, assistance, or time) is lacking for teachers to develop and carry out new teaching approaches (Adams & Newton, 2009). In terms of Shin and Kim (2012), 71 teachers working at Korean primary and secondary schools and private academy participated in a questionnaire survey about TBLT. Most of teachers acknowledged positive roles of TBLT, but it seemed to be hard to apply to real classes due to inappropriate materials for TBLT, large number of students in class, and various English proficiency levels in one classroom.

Finally, there are two classroom-level constraints of TBLT. (1) Many teachers are inexperienced and concerned about the adoption of TBLT. Cao (2018) points out that teachers’ belief in new pedagogy is the most influential factor in educational innovation.

However, many teachers design their lesson plans with activities in a synthetic syllabus that reflect the weak version of TBLT with the PPP procedure (Viet, 2014). Long (2016) points out that teacher education for TBLT is one of crucial factors to decide whether TBLT is successfully implemented or not. (2) Students' use of their first language (L1) is excessive in class. Park (2016) claims that although the teacher asked the students to use English (L2) while engaging with their group members for group discussion, all the students spoke in Korean (L1) because his students in a military-service academy in Korea spent most of time together and had a close relationship based on using L1. Carless (2008) mentions that students' use of L1 is inevitable in Asian classrooms, and thus it may undermine the psycholinguistic rationale for TBLT.

Due to the above constrains, some scholars (Butler, 2011; Carless, 2007; Chen & Wright, 2017; Klapper, 2003) have argued that the implementation of TBLT in L2 settings is difficult without adaptation or optimization to a local context. However, because the most previous studies are based on either of review paper or qualitative analysis including questionnaire, interviews, and class observation about teachers' and students' response/perception toward TBLT, studies that present a teacher's actual adaptation process of TBLT in a classroom are very scarce. Kim (2018) claims that a bottom-up approach to implementing TBLT by teachers is necessary to make task-based syllabus feasible. For instance, Kim et al. (2017) applied task-based syllabus with 27 Korean EFL college students for one semester, and they analyzed the all participants' open-ended perception survey about TBLT and one focal participant's portfolio. Findings were that the strengths were learning new words, communication-oriented lessons, speaking practice, and high engagement in class, whereas the weaknesses were unfamiliar class format, challenging tasks, too much work in class, and low English proficiency level for doing tasks. In addition, the interesting findings were that one focal participant's motivation and perception of learning chances were low after the first task but increased and remained high throughout the semester in terms of one-semester long portfolio analysis. Despite one focal data, it shows that students' perception toward an unfamiliar instruction (i.e., TBLT) could be changeable once they actually involve to the class, which would be different with the survey data by participants who had never performed the tasks in class for a certain amount of time. Thus, McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) suggest that "considerable research is still necessary to create a robust empirical base that L2 teachers can draw on when creating, implementing, and revising task-based courses" (p. 126).

2.4. Research Questions

Motivated by previous concerns about implementing TBLT, constraints and strategies on implementing localized TBLT were examined and executed. Then, a developmental

syllabus from an early version to a recent version of the task syllabus for novice L2 learners was created based on the teacher's field notes and students' participation throughout three semesters (for over one and a half years). The following are the two research questions:

1. What were observable constraints when novice L2 learners were involved in TBLT in real classrooms?
2. What kinds of adaptations might make implementing TBLT for novice L2 learners more feasible?

3. METHODS

3.1. Participants and Instructional Context

The present study was conducted over three (two springs and one fall) separate semesters from March 2017 to June 2018. Participants in the main study were 210 undergraduates learning EFL from 11 classes with a researcher (as one bilingual teacher) at a private university in Seoul, South Korea. The participants were 123 female and 87 male students. There were 119 freshmen, 51 sophomores, 17 juniors, and 23 seniors, and the ages ranged from 18 to 27 years ($M = 19.87$). Most participants majored in music or athletics ($N = 189$), while the others majored in diverse areas ($N = 21$). The participants had learned English in instructed settings. At the time of data collection, they had been learning English in schools for at least 10 years, both in school and/or in private language institutes. They had had little opportunity to speak or write English outside the classroom.

In terms of students' speaking and writing scores on the college's English placement test, they were divided into three English proficiency levels, from novice (Level 1) to intermediate (Level 2) and advanced levels (Level 3); they could voluntarily enroll in an English class within their assigned proficiency level. All participants in the present study were in Level 1 and enrolled in a required college English course, *Basic College English I* or *Basic College English II*, which consisted of two hours per week over a 16-week semester. To determine participants' detailed proficiency levels, in the second week, they were asked to think about their favorite person or activity for a short time (2-3 minutes). Then, an oral narrative of their speech was recorded by their own smartphone in the classroom and later assessed by the researcher based on the public version of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guideline (Swender, Conrad, & Vicars, 2012). Most participants' proficiency ranged from Novice Low to Novice High, whereas a small number of participants were at the Intermediate Low and

Mid levels of the ACTFL.

The goal of the course was to help students improve their general English skills (particularly speaking and listening) by applying various educational practices. There was no shared syllabus; different instructors were supposed to create their own syllabi from EFL coursebooks that were recommended, so as not to overlap in usage between the two campuses of the university, but were not necessary to use.

The researcher, a bilingual teacher of Korean and English (native Korean) taught all 11 classes and wrote observational field notes over three semesters. She had over 10 years of teaching experience in both traditional and TBLT lessons in universities and governmental offices in Korea. Previously she had experience to design task-based instruction. Based on observation and task application in a real classroom for one and a half years (March 2017 to June 2018), she kept changing, modifying, and adjusting her syllabi of TBLT for localized tasks with novice L2 learners. During the spring (first) semester in 2017, she followed what previous courses had taught with minor modifications to some parts of the lessons. Then, during the following fall and spring (second and third) semesters, she attempted to adapt the TBLT into the existing PPP.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The present study is not a product-oriented, but a process-oriented study. Thus, while collecting data, the teacher's instruction had changed from task-supported instruction (1st semester) to task-based instruction (2nd and 3rd semesters). Previous studies (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Kim et al., 2017) indicate that students and/or teachers' reaction toward TBLT change over time. For instance, McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) reported that their Thai students learning English were initially concerned about their lack of grammar knowledge but they reported positively at the end of the course. Considering a need of time to adjust to a new TBLT approach, the present study did not use students' one-time reaction as data, but the teacher's observation- and reflection-based field notes were mainly used as the primary data (see Table 1). The field notes consisted of two elements: before-the-lesson and after-the-lesson parts. In before-the-lesson parts, general plan for the future classes was written and organized. It had 1) the major and minor themes for tasks and process of task sequences, and 2) plan for assigning homework out of the class. In after-the-lesson parts, 1) types and order of tasks conducted and any changes or new instruction trial during the class, 2) students' impromptu reaction to the tasks/class, 3) casual conversation between the teacher and students about the lesson, and 4) the teacher's reflection to tasks/class including strengths and weaknesses of the lesson were written. The field notes were written both before and after each class. The before-the-lesson parts were written at least once a week, and the after-the-lesson parts

were written immediately or within the same day when each class finished for three semesters. In addition, 1) the results of needs analysis at the second week, 2) students' written responses about previous (traditional) instruction at the second week of the course, 3) students' background information questionnaires, and 4) students' class satisfaction reports for the whole course at the end of the course were used as the other primary data.

TABLE 1
Data for Constructing and Implementing Localized TBLT

Data	Sources	Person(s) to Write	When to Write	Contents
Primary Source	Field Notes	Researcher (Teacher)	Always	1) Themes for task sequence
				2) Plan for homework
				3) Tasks/new trials for instruction
				4) Students' reaction to tasks/class
				5) Casual conversation between the teacher and students
				6) Teacher's reflection to tasks/class
	Needs Analysis	Students	2nd week	Needs for the class
	Written Response	Students	2nd week	Reflection to the previous (traditional) instruction
	Background Questionnaire	Students	2nd week	Students' English background and basic personal information
	Class Satisfaction Reports	Students	Last week	Satisfaction for the class and teacher evaluation
Secondary Source	Face-to-face Meeting, Email, and Previous Syllabi	Bilingual Instructors	Before the whole lessons	Class syllabi, lesson organization, textbook, and instructors' opinion to class

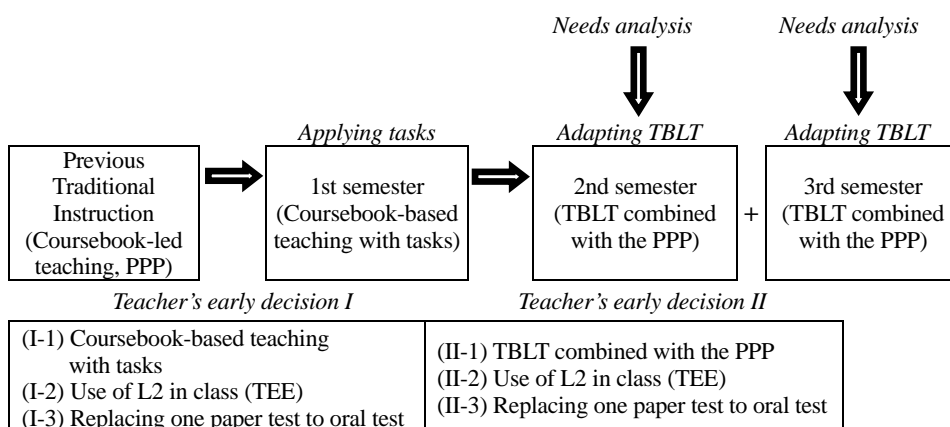
As the other primary data, in the needs analysis, the following were asked: students' previous English courses, strengths and weaknesses of previous courses, style/type of lessons they wished to have, their recent interesting topics, their favorite interaction style in English class, and any wish of the teacher and other students. In the background questionnaire, all students' personal information, including their name, academic year, birthday, major, gender, nationality, and English background were asked. At the end of questionnaire, students were asked to write about themselves, including things to do on their free time and their own strengths and weaknesses in personality in a single written paragraph in English. The needs analysis was conducted and had to be answered in L1 because detailed information was needed despite their lack of L2 proficiency, whereas the student background information questionnaire and self-introducing written paragraph were

answered in L2 because the teacher needed to know students' general English proficiency.

As the secondary data, one-to-one conference with two bilingual (native Korean and Korean American) instructors, additional questions and responses through email with them, and their previous syllabi were used for gathering the information for the previous courses.

Therefore, the above data were used as sources for making a decision to modify and adapt localized TBLT in specific class context where the teacher worked for. Since the present study's research questions were to explore observable constraints and adaption strategies to implement TBLT, besides the above data, changing class policy and tasks themselves reacting to the primary and second data were parts of data as well. Thus, the whole data for the present study were not product-oriented, but process-oriented ones. Figure 1 presents the whole process of the courses during three semesters.

FIGURE 1
Whole Process During Three Semesters



Based on previous traditional instruction, the teacher decided three issues (*teacher's early decision I*). The first early decision was made in terms of the secondary sources including face-to-face meeting and email interaction with other bilingual instructors who taught the same course before and their pre-existing syllabi. During the first semester, coursebook-based teaching was the basis for courses, while several tasks were applied in the lessons. Before starting the second semester, the teacher made another early decision (*teacher's early decision II*) that TBLT would be the basis for courses and that PPP would be combined for a limited period based on previous observations and reflection. The second early decision was made based on the primary source including the field notes, written response, and class satisfaction reports for the first semester. Since the learning process and students' responses toward tasks in the classroom were not fixed, once some constraints

were found in class, several educational practices were applied in class, and the process was also written in the notes.

After finishing all three semesters, when analyzing the data, all the above data and new lesson trials based on students and teacher' reflection about new tasks/class were scrutinized for two research questions. Then, I found four themes to make localized TBLT difficult in a Korean college class with novice L2 learners. With the four themes, different strategies to adapt TBLT were later examined. The previous two types of classes including traditional coursebook-led teaching with PPP (done by other bilingual instructors) and coursebook-based teaching with tasks (done by the researcher, for the 1st semester) before moving to TBLT (for 2nd and 3rd semesters) present in the following sections.

3.3. Previous Traditional Instruction: Coursebook-Led Teaching with PPP

Table 2 presents an example lesson covering one unit in the coursebook and lasting two hours, which was acquired from the secondary data.

TABLE 2
One (Two-Hour) Example Lesson Following the PPP

Materials	Skills/Focus	What to do	Language	Content
p. 22	Reading	Read a short conversation with pictures and find the information	Adjective / verb <i>be</i>	Favorite actors/sport teams
p. 29	Listening	Listen and complete the chart	Adjective / verb <i>be</i>	People four people know
p. 30	Speaking	Talk about your favorite celebrity or sports star in a small group	Adjective / verb <i>be</i>	Your favorite person
PPT	Grammar Vocabulary	Learn new language items	Expression for person description	Your favorite person
p. 25 PPT	Speaking	Think of one person and ask yes/no questions to guess the person	Asking questions	Your favorite person
Homework	Writing	Write about your favorite person	Expression for person description	Your favorite person

Note. p. indicates page number in the coursebook; PPT = Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation slides; Homework was sometimes assigned and was supposed to do out of class.

In both English courses, EFL coursebooks, for instance, the *Touchstone* series (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2014) or *Top Notch* series (Saslow & Ascher, 2015), were used, although there was some variation in addition to these books in selecting textbooks depending on different instructors. The coursebooks generally consisted of a set of the student's book, workbook, and class audio CD. *Touchstone* had 12 units, while *Top Notch*

had 10 units following communicative functions and targeting linguistic structures. Most courses were coursebook-led teaching (McGrath, 2016), following the PPP sequence (Ur, 1996).

As a warm-up activity, students read a short conversation between Haley and Zach, using the pictures in the book to find information about what was on TV. Then, they listened to four sets of short conversations between two people and filled out the chart in the book about who the two people were talking about and how old the person was. Based on what they were reading or listening to, students needed to talk about their favorite celebrity or sports player with a partner. Then, the bilingual instructor taught new language items, including target grammar, the verb *be*, and adjectives and words using PPT or handouts. Lastly, a guessing game was played between two students by asking yes/no questions. If one student picked a football player who was presented in the PPT, the other needed to ask questions such as “Is he famous?” or “Is he tall?” to discover who the person was. If the guess was right, the turn changed.

After the class finished, the students needed to do writing homework about their favorite person. The lesson demonstrates a typical PPP sequence: from warm-up, presentation of linguistic items by the instructors, practice with fill-in-the-chart or yes/no questions, and production with a short written text as an assignment. In sum, all instruction during the 16-week semester had a format like the above. The instructors chose six to eight units in the coursebook and then selected a number of questions and activities in each unit of the book. Answers to the questions were addressed in the class or uploaded to the board section in the cyber education support system (YSCEC) each week.

In addition, the types of assignments included fill-in-the-blanks, writing short conversational turns, or writing single paragraphs. Spoken projects for a one-minute speech or having a short conversation or writing projects for a short paragraph about what they had learned in class were assigned one or two times. Formal assessments consisted of two paper tests with multiple-choice; fill-in-the-blanks to complete questions, conversations, or words; translation of sentences from Korean to English; sentence transformation from statements to questions; and reading comprehension questions. Two tests mainly covered grammar and vocabulary that students had learned in class. The instructional language was L1, Korean, since almost all classes for novice L2 learners (at Level 1) were taught by bilingual instructors including native Koreans and Korean Americans, and they thought students would not understand what they said in English. In terms of students’ reflection toward previous instruction was quite similar: Most of classes had focused on building up English grammar and vocabulary knowledge and they knew it might be important but quite boring to attend English classes. In terms of written responses toward the previous class, one student mentioned (in L1) that “English class used to be almost similar. If I know English grammar and vocabulary well, I could be a successful student in class.”

3.4. Previous Task-Supported Language Instruction: Coursebook-Based Teaching with Tasks

During the first semester, the researcher as the bilingual teacher decided to use the coursebook-based teaching combined with some *tasks* (in terms of a strong version of TBLT, it could be called *exercises* or *activities*) because she thought it was too radical to change preexisting syllabi into TBLT and she also needed to observe her students in class at least for one semester. However, before starting the lessons, she decided to change three policies in class for task-supported language teaching after becoming informed of previous traditional instruction (see Figure 1): 1) the use of English as an instructional language, 2) covering the coursebook while providing students with tasks, and 3) including a speaking test as the final exam. First, by using the L2, the frequency of using English was maximized in the EFL context, where using L2 in their real lives was limited to the classroom and students would have realistic reasons for using English to ask for a teacher's directions and help or when they are involved in pair-work or group-work. Only English as an instructional language was used in and out of class. All class materials, including PPT slides, handouts, and textbooks were written and delivered only in English following the teaching English in English (TEE) policy. Interaction including text messages, emails, and oral communication between the teacher and students were also delivered only in English as well. Second, the teacher used the same coursebook, but it was partially used and supplemented with various other handouts or video/audio materials. The teacher often implemented a number of tasks while trying to cover parts of the coursebooks. The instruction involved coursebook-based teaching (McGrath, 2016) combined with PPP and tasks. Lastly, by replacing one paper test with an oral test, a positive washback effect such that the form of testing helps students become involved in speaking actively in and out of class was expected since the purpose of the lessons was to improve students' speaking ability. With these three major changes in the first semester, there were tremendous difficulties and challenges to face every time in class; several new trials and an adaptation process to adjust them to novice L2 learners and the localized class context were recorded in the teacher's field notes for the next TBLT during the second and third semesters.

4. RESULTS

The two research questions of the present study were concerned with the constraints on implementing TBLT and proposals for adaptation of the TBLT for novice L2 learners. I will report each proposal for dealing with constraints in implementing the TBLT with novice L2 learners in a classroom with the following four themes (of constraints and strategies in order).

4.1. TBLT Based on Needs Analysis for Irrelevant Topics in the Coursebook

During the first semester, the courses followed coursebook-based teaching, and some tasks were implemented. The main purpose of this was because the teacher wanted to apply tasks based on existing previous courses, which allowed her to avoid changing previous instruction and materials to a greater degree and thus taking little risk. However, in terms of the field notes that show students' reaction to tasks/class, the teacher found three general problems in the first semester. First, topics in EFL coursebooks seemed to apply to real life (e.g., *All about You, In Class, Everyday Life, Favorite People, and Around Town*, etc.), but they seemed to have a distant connection with students; the authenticity of the topics was still far from students' real lives in the coursebook-based teaching. For instance, when dealing with the topic *Favorite People* in the coursebook, as practice and production phases of PPP, the coursebook suggested a pair-work conversation to talk about students' favorite people. Example 1 indicates the instructions for practice from *Touchstone: Student's book 1* (McCarthy et al., 2014, p. 23). Although there was an example sentence below the table, many students simply exchanged information such as "BTS" or "Monnet." The purpose of the pair-work was probably talking about something in English, rather than sharing authentic information about favorite people. The lack of authenticity in the topics led to a spurious purpose of communication in class.

Example 1

Write the names of your favorite celebrities below. Then talk about them with a partner. How many things can you say?

actor	<i>Andrew Garfield</i>	sports team	
singer		writer	
band		artist	

"My favorite actor is Andrew Garfield. His movies are good."

Second, a detailed guide to target structure and words tended to allow the students to rely only on existing structures when "making a phrase or sentence" (rather than talking). It allowed them to limit chance exploration and motivation when talking deeply about their favorite person. Third, several tasks created by the teacher were implemented, yet the relation between the book and tasks seemed to be less in coursebook-based teaching. For instance, after learning linguistic structure and practicing giving directions in unit 7 of *Around Town* in the coursebook, *Touchstone: Student's book 2* (McCarthy et al., 2014, pp. 56-57), the task titled "Take a walk with your friends" was introduced. One pair of students was supposed to decide which route they should use to take a walk with their friends who

had different needs. The two students in the pair needed to decide which route they should suggest to their friend who had a dog, felt extremely bored in that town, and needed to spend at least two hours walking. When they decided on the route, they needed to explain the reasons for selecting the route and the direction. In performing two-way, open-ended, and decision-making tasks, many students seemed to be unfamiliar with directions, wondered how to start their conversation, and asked a certain set of expressional template questions. The lack of linguistic support and students' low level of proficiency led to excessive L1 use for planning and reasoning with a partner. Importantly, since the task was used as a means of production in the PPP sequence, students tended to put less importance on tasks than on presented grammatical forms and expression; they tended to regard tasks as supplementary activities for practicing what they had learned in the coursebook.

In order to deal with these problems in class, TBLT was set as the core instruction instead of task-supported language teaching based on the teacher's field notes and students' class satisfaction reports during the following second and third semesters. Since a task-based syllabus should be designed based on a needs analysis, a needs analysis was conducted in the second week of each semester. In terms of the needs analysis, a number of major themes were selected for TBLT: 1) description of a person; 2) a trendy machine such as a smartphone, laptop computer, or iPad; 3) description of a place; 4) a daily routine; 5) instructions/process concerning a college's facilities or travel; 6) compare and contrast two topics in a different culture, Korean social issue, music/sports industry, or different job; 7) advantages and disadvantages of topics in Korean social system/schools/facilities or machines; 8) problems and possible suggestions for a college system or Korean local community; and 9) a surprising/memorable/pleasant past event. Based on the above major themes, three to four tasks for each major theme were created by the teacher. For instance, two major themes were the instructions/process concerning a college's facilities and comparing and contrasting two topics in a different culture, Korean social issues, music/sports industry, or different job. Table 3 presents examples of two major themes consisting of three tasks for each theme. Throughout the semester, the order of themes and tasks within the major themes were sequenced from simple to complex tasks in terms of topic familiarity (familiar → unfamiliar), linguistic difficulty (simple syntactic and lexical forms → complex and various linguistic forms), task type (closed tasks → open tasks), cognitive difficulty (simple → complex), and interactional difficulty (pair-work → group-work), following Skehan (1998b, 2001), Ellis (2003), and Robinson (2001, 2011).

As a result, themes and topics of each task were authentic, realistic, and closely related to the students' real lives in TBLT, and thus the students were eager to perform and accomplish the goals of the task, even though a relatively higher level of linguistic forms was required to finish the tasks. The following teacher's note was recorded right after the class on the decision-making task (Task 3, "Create a better school by adding a facility," in

Table 3):

It was surprising that no one realized the class finished today because we were busy talking and dealing with creating a better school. Some groups' ideas were so brilliant, despite their low levels of English.

TABLE 3
Tasks Within College's Facilities and Compare Two Korean Issues

Major Themes	Tasks	Topics	Task Types (Grouping)
College's Facilities	Task 1	How to exercise at school every day? How to use a 24-hour study room at the library?	Information-gap (pair-work)
	Task 2	Helping a foreign student use school's facilities	Decision-making (pair-work)
	Task 3	Make a better school by adding a facility and explain why we need and how to use them	Decision-making (group-work)
Compare Two Korean Issues	Task 1	Compare two celebrities	Information-gap (pair-work)
	Task 2	Compare a way of entering schools/courses/major/festival/job supporting systems between Yonsei and Korea Universities	Opinion-exchange (pair-work)
	Task 3	Compare two topics (for instance, Samsung smartphone vs. Apple iPhone or going to the military service before vs. after graduating from a school etc.)	Jigsaw (group-work)

Tasks in the TBLT were central to instruction and sequenced according to difficulty (from simple to complex). By performing sequenced tasks, the students became familiar with the types of tasks and the direction. The students already knew that they needed to determine some linguistic forms by asking each other questions or asking for support from the teacher. They seemed to be more active in asking questions, finding dictionaries, or helping each other.

4.2. New Hybrid Form of TBLT and PPP for Writing-Dependent and Limited Use of L2

Since the first semester, whenever the novice L2 students performed the tasks, two frequently observable scenes were as follows in terms of the field notes that show students' reaction to tasks/class, class conversation, and the teacher's reflection to class: The students kept writing sentences on paper before speaking and tended to read what they had written. They also consulted an electronic dictionary before and while performing tasks, and some students even used *Google Translator* or *Naver Papago* before talking in class.

In order to support the students' linguistic needs in class, instead of going back to PPP as

the core instruction, the teacher needed to adapt the TBLT to the localized context where most students were novice L2 learners, it seemed hard for them to form complete sentences and have the confidence to speak with others in class, and English was never used outside the class. The following two attempts were made during the semesters based on the TBLT. First, a short period of PPP (during the second and third week out of a sixteen-week semester) was inserted before the first thematic unit began in the fourth week for novice L2 students' readiness and easier access to perform the oral tasks. The difference of PPP in hybrid form of TBLT compared to traditional syllabi is that essential grammar instruction was only provided and taught for early short period of time. As explicit grammar and vocabulary instruction, a number of grammar targets entailing 1) simple/compound/complex sentences, 2) yes/no and wh-questions, 3) simple present/past/present perfect tense, 4) subject-verb agreement, and 5) capitalization and a list of daily life-related words (e.g., *go to school*, *give me a hand*, *make a decision*, or *in the morning*, etc.) were presented, practiced, and produced following the PPP instruction. Since the students' English proficiency was novice level, many students could not speak English in complete sentences and communicated with the teacher by linking a number of words (e.g., "*Sera! Me restroom go please?*" or "*I sick yesterday, so not happy,*") although their writing skills were generally higher than their speaking skills. Thus, to help them create at least some short, complete sentences that are meaningfully comprehensible to each other, four grammar targets (from (1) to (4)) were decided, while capitalization (5) addressed their writing. For instance, when the students learned three different tenses, the important rules about tense were briefly explained with examples through PPT slides and handouts (presentation phase). Then, the teacher asked several students some questions, using the present or past tense (e.g., "How much time do you use your smartphone every day?") When the students responded, they were supposed to use a complete sentence (e.g., "I use my smartphone for two hours."), not a phrase (e.g., "*Two hours.*"). After teacher-led practice with the whole class, a group of four students found five to six reasons to use three tenses in a school's English magazine titled *Yonsei Annals* and then reported their findings (practice phase). Lastly, the students needed to talk about how they passed the time on Saturday or what they did last week using five to six sentences for a short 30-second speech or written paragraph (production phase). According to the needs analysis, most students asked the teachers to learn grammar because they thought that grammar was their weakest area in English. After inserting PPP to teach survival target structure for two weeks, the teacher frequently saw or heard students using previous learned grammar as a reference when they planned or prepared for subsequent tasks. Therefore, the teacher kept in mind that the amount of direct instruction should be given at early period of time with a minimum amount in TBLT to avoid making tasks supplementary to practicing grammar, even for novice L2 learners. Secondly, the use of a dictionary was always allowed, but translators

including *Google Translator* or *Naver Papago* were not allowed in class. In this way, students could find unknown words and apply them to pre-existing syntactic structure.

4.3. TEE with a Selective Use of L1 for Students' Excessive Use of L1

I will present the use of L2 issues from two perspectives: teacher-student and student-student interaction. Regarding teacher-student interaction, during the first semester (particularly for the first two to three weeks of the semester), it was a chaotic situation owing to the TEE. As the teacher's early decision I (see Figure 1), the teacher decided to use only L2 in and out of the class. Many bilingual Korean instructors had used their L1 as the instructional language in an English class (for Level 1), and most native English instructors had taught in classes targeting Level 2 or Level 3. The teacher walked into the classroom on the first class day in March 2017 and spoke slowly to her students in English at first. Her reflection in the field notes on the first day was as follows:

I could see students' surprise and worry about using English right after listening to my speaking in English. I could feel a kind of mixed feeling toward their use of L2. I heard that many students whispered to each other in Korean, saying 'Wow, English! She spoke English. What can we do?' But some students seemed to be curious and excited as well.

In terms of the needs analysis, many students mentioned they were very worried about the use of L2 in class because they thought they could not follow the class or understand a very important notice including information about the midterm, final, and due dates of assignments. Some students asked the teacher to speak more slowly, and others asked her to use both L1 and L2 together in class. However, the teacher kept using L2 in and out of class. At the first time, email or text sent to the teacher was written in Korean, but once the teacher replied with an email or text in English, they also followed the out-of-classroom communication in English policy. It took almost a month to settle the policy of TEE in and out of class. However, the teacher used the L1 only for unfamiliar grammar-related words such as gerund, to-infinitive, tense, and conjunction. For instance, she said "We are going to cover how to use compound sentences, called *중문* [*jung-mun*] in Korean." For limited cases, when meaning negotiation seemed to be unnecessary, she used some Korean words in the middle of English sentences. At the end of the first semester, most of students mentioned, in anonymous class satisfaction reports, that TEE was very helpful in increasing their opportunities to speak English.

Regarding student-student interaction, however, the biggest problem the teacher faced every time in class was the excessive use of L1 between students in pair-work or group-

work in terms of the field notes. It was difficult to stop them using L1 because most of the students were majoring in music and athletics and had known each other for more than five or six years in their area even before entering college. Although they had met each other, in other cases, at first, they had no reason to speak English in an EFL situation in which everyone had the same language to use besides English. Due to the TEE policy, all students knew that they needed to speak English with the teacher; thus, when the teacher stood next to them, they used English with each other, but when the teacher moved away, they came back to Korean. Thus, how to promote students' use of English was a big challenge in the TEE and TBLT classes.

In order to deal with these problems in class, the teacher modified her TEE policy based on five policies for teacher-student and student-student interactions during the second and third semesters. First, the teacher only used L2 in and out of class except for unfamiliar grammar-related words, as she did in the first semester. Second, the teacher used both L1 and L2 in the school's cyber education support system, YSCEC. Class management or procedural information including due dates of assignments, grading criteria for group and individual presentations, or important notices relating to tests were written in Korean, while other information including what they had learned was written in English. Through the teacher's use of both languages on the board, students did not miss important notices and understood what was going on in class. Third, students' use of L1 with each other was officially allowed for a limited time for special purposes instead of restricting use of L1. During the planning stage, before the task of idea generation, which is more crucial than linguistic encoding between class members in groups, a limited time for using L1 was allowed. However, whenever students asked questions in any language (L1, L2, or code-mixing language) the teacher always responded to them in L2. In the TEE class, encouraging the use of L1 for a limited time seemed to provide students with a motivational environment to gather information eagerly, and students often shared language-related episodes about how to translate Korean phrases to English ones. It seemed like they did not feel guilty about using L1 for an assigned time, and L1 was used as a facilitator for tasks. Fourth, heterogeneous pairing and grouping occurred whenever one thematic unit was completed by the teacher. Despite the similar majors between the students, their relationships and specific majors (e.g., piano, violin, flute, physical education etc.) were not the same. When the teacher made a group, she considered group members of different genders, less close relationships, different academic years or ages, and different detailed L2 proficiency. This uncomfortableness seemed to help prevent the use of too much L1, even when the teacher was away from them during pair-work or group-work. Lastly, the post-task tended to be important for leading to students' maximum amount of L2 (not L1) while performing the tasks. After accomplishing the goal of a task with classmates, if a personalized or extended post-task was required, the use of L1 was

restricted between student-student interactions. The teacher asked them to report their decision (from decision-making tasks) or completed findings (from jigsaw tasks) by recording their voices individually and then sending the file to the chatroom shared with the teacher. Therefore, the teacher set up a chatroom called KakaoTalk chatroom with all individual students in the second week and used it to report personalized findings in pair- or group-work and submit spoken assignments until the end of the semester. The fact that the teacher would listen to their own speaking later might force students to use more L2 or find appropriate linguistic L2 forms. As an extended post-task, for instance, the group's findings from jigsaw tasks were included in part of the contents of the final oral test. This extended usage of products of the tasks in the final oral test and group/individual presentations would later lead students to eagerly perform the tasks with L2.

4.4. Importance of Relevant Tests for Irrelevant Examinations

In the previous coursebook-led instruction with PPP, the main focus of the class was linguistic forms, words, and grammar; thus, the two types of midterm and final exam were paper tests including multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, and translation from Korean to English. The instructions and examination were difficult and far from the purpose of the class, that is, to improve students' communicative and basic academic skills in English.

In order to deal with this constraint, relevant tests were needed to produce a positive washback effect to accomplish the purpose of the course since tasks were implemented from the first semester. As the teacher's early decision I, the final paper test was replaced with an oral test. This changed policy continued in the second and third semesters. As mentioned above, two oral (group and individual) presentations were also added. These oral tests and presentations tended to shape the students' active task involvement, active use of L2, less use of L1, and their attempts to produce qualified task products.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research questions of the present study were as follows: 1) "What were observable constraints when novice L2 learners were involved with TBLT in real classrooms?" and 2) "What kinds of adaptations might make implementing TBLT for novice L2 learners more feasible?" When I, as the teacher in the study, moved from synthetic syllabus following PPP (previous semester, before the experiment) to task-supported language teaching following the PPP (during the 1st semester) and, finally, to task-based language teaching combined with PPP (during the 2nd and 3rd semesters), I faced four major constraints to implementing TBLT with novice L2 learners: 1) irrelevant and real life-like topics in the

coursebooks; 2) novice students' writing-dependent and limited use of L2; 3) novice students' excessive use of L1 in class; and 4) irrelevant examination of TBLT. To deal with the constraints on implementing TBLT, four strategies were practiced in class and suggested: 1) when designing a task syllabus, a needs analysis is a necessary process, not based on coursebooks' or teachers' preassumed themes; 2) a new hybrid form of TBLT and PPP might work; 3) TEE is necessary in TBLT, yet specifying strategies for selective use of L1 is also inevitable; and 4) relevant tests (e.g., oral tests and oral presentations) are necessary for positive washback effects.

Regarding task authenticity and its central role in language teaching, like many other teachers in one of the longitudinal studies (e.g., McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007), I was also very concerned about this, at first. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol's (2007) 12-month TBLT study in a Thai university found that many teachers and students were concerned about a perceived lack of grammar instruction, at first, but by the end of the semester, they expressed positive reactions to TBLT. During the first semester, I added three elements (task-supported language teaching, TEE, and oral tests) in the existing syllabus with less risk-taking. As other teachers did, I selected a number of units from the coursebooks, reorganized the units, selected specific parts of each unit, and created so-called "communicative activities" for each unit. This was task-supported language teaching, not genuine task-based language teaching. What I observed during the first semester was that novice students relied too much on suggested target structure and vocabulary in the weak version of TBLT, as they do with the synthetic syllabus, because they may know that the purpose of "communicative activity" at the end of the PPP procedure will help them practice and produce what they previously learned in an open-ended way. Importantly, there was much less authenticity of tasks in (coursebook-led and) coursebook-based teaching with tasks than in the task-based syllabus owing to assumed themes without a needs analysis (Long, 2016). Therefore, what I used as language teaching instruction in the first semester did not provide real authenticity in performing tasks in terms of procedure and choosing themes as task-based scholars (Kim et al., 2017; Long, 1991, 2016; Skehan, 1998a, 2009) claim. However, when I switched to TBLT during the second and third semesters, all tasks were based on a needs analysis and carefully sequenced from simple to complex tasks in order. Considering novice L2 learners, although a minimum amount of grammar and words were guided in the pretask phase for a short time (Skehan, 1998b), students needed many linguistic forms while performing the tasks. However, since the task's theme was chosen from the needs analysis, its actual connectedness with students' real lives and its centrality in lessons tended to provide different learning circumstances and students' active task involvement. Kim et al. (2017) also claim that "in localized TBLT contexts, although the task content and task outcome might not be immediately relevant to the students, designing tasks using the content that they are familiar with and

interested in seems important to increase their task motivation” (p. 654) in terms of her one-semester-long study. In an EFL context, students may not instantly use what they perform in tasks in English out of the classroom; thus, authenticity of themes and centrality of tasks are more crucial. Despite being novices, when the students performed one of tasks comparing two electronic devices such as Samsung *Galaxy* smartphone versus Apple *iPhone*, LG *Gram* laptops versus Apple *MacBook* laptops, and Microsoft *Surface* versus Apple *iPad* through a jigsaw task, many students eagerly tried to find important features of each device. They compared two subtopics in original groups and then shared their information in new groups. After the lessons, some students mentioned it was time to buy a new smartphone, showing that they were very curious about the topics and shared information about them. Therefore, the needs analysis-based task syllabus is beneficial even for novice L2 learners since university-level learners’ needs are “a legitimate real world target for task-based EFL courses” (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007, p. 123).

While a strong version of TBLT sustains the lessons, a short period of PPP (e.g., previous two weeks out of a sixteen-week semester) is also needed for novice L2 learners. Regarding the hybrid form of TBLT and PPP, two contrasting syllabi should not mix at the same time, but if PPP is briefly utilized at first and then TBLT is introduced and adapted as core instruction in chronological order of the whole courses, it may provide novice L2 learners with a basic linguistic reference and emotionally safe linguistic zone to visit and use frequently. During my TBLT courses, whenever a certain task was given in class, students immediately started looking for words and their usage using an electronic dictionary, owing to the minimal supply of grammar or vocabulary before the tasks. Some students even wrote whole sentences for what they needed to talk about before and/or while performing the tasks. Based on these observations and reflections throughout the course, five key grammar features were taught, practiced, and produced through a number of activities in class. Afterward, when students performed the tasks, I saw some students use what they had learned from time to time; the tendency of always-writing-for-tasks behavior decreased. Klapper (2003) proposes a weak version of TBLT, called a *hybrid model* in a reconfiguration of PPP. He claims, “if the task phase in TBLT is considered the equivalent of the production phase in PPP and the other two phases, presentation and practice, then follow on from it, pedagogical sequencing moves much closer to a model that accounts for what is known about the way second languages are learnt” (p. 40). However, my suggested model (a new hybrid model) is to provide explicit grammar instruction over a short period of time and then implement the (strong version of) TBLT with novice L2 learners. Each task does not need to be hybrid, but the whole course needs to be hybrid between the PPP (as an early two-week instruction) and TBLT (as a main instruction).

Students' excessive use of L1 and irrelevant examination systems have been problematic areas to implement TBLT. Butler (2011) argues that a number of unsolved but prominent issues are students' use of L1 in TBLT and implementation of TBLT in an exam culture, and Long (2016) also argues that a remaining real problem of TBLT is how to assess task-based abilities and improve in-service teacher education for TBLT. Carless (2008) claims that one significant dilemma between L1 and L2 is that "the more absorbing the task, the greater is the risk of student use of MT [mother tongue]" (p. 335). In his study, secondary school teachers in Hong Kong suggested several strategies to promote the use of L2 in task-based classrooms. One was to appoint "language monitors," who are in charge of reminding their classmates to use English. The other was to set up a reward system; that is, when students or groups used more L2, they could receive rewarding stickers or stamps. Another was to assign students grammar-related post-tasks or task repetition (Bygate, 2009). However, the participants of the present study were college students; thus, they may require more sophisticated strategies than the student reward system used in secondary schools. In teacher-student communication, teachers should provide TEE to enlarge the use of L2, whereas in student-student communication, limited time to allow them to use L1 to generate and share ideas, creating heterogeneous groups frequently, and post-tasks to report their findings or task decisions to teachers using smartphone-mediated communication in TBLT (Thomas & Reinders, 2010) tended to encourage students to use less L1. This, along with a task-relevant examination, led to successful and active TBLT involvement.

The present study has a limitation and also suggests further studies. Although students' responses and reactions to the task-based syllabus were included in the teacher's field notes, if students' actual oral performance is added as summative data, it would provide a much larger picture of the findings. With respect to further studies, first, a longitudinal study combined with students' performance is necessary. Moreover, considering the limited use of L1 prior to tasks, it may be worth exploring, in task-based research, how such strategies shape students' interactions and task outcomes. Lastly, the present study did not start from an experimental design setting to conduct an experiment and acquire the results with the purpose of experimental research. Instead, the researcher, as the bilingual teacher, struggled to implement the tasks in traditional synthetic syllabus-running courses and modified and adapted the TBLT to a localized context; that process was observed and then reflected. What I did in class was reanalyzed later, based on task-based theories and empirical studies. I hope that further studies will also show the actual modification and adaptation process of certain strategies for task syllabi in real classroom settings to enrich task-based language instruction and task-based research.

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Applicable levels: Tertiary

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