Exploring EFL Teachers' and Learners' Beliefs and Practices about Task Rehearsal

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Abstract: The goal of this study was to explore English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' and learners' beliefs and classroom practices in relation to task rehearsal as an operationalization of repeating a task, which entails learners' awareness of the repeated performance before they do a task for the first time. Five intact EFL classes with five teachers and 32 learners were recruited. The teachers asked the learners to perform a task that was included in the textbook twice with an interval of one week, while they made the learners aware of the second iteration prior to their first performance. Data were collected through observing the two sessions of each class and interviewing both the teachers and the learners immediately after the second task occasion. Results indicated that the participants (both teachers and learners) believed that task rehearsal was beneficial for facilitating task implementation and task performance. Findings also showed that task rehearsal led the participants to show changes in their classroom behaviors related to this practice from the first to the second session, which clearly reflected their beliefs. Implications of these results for L2 task implementation and teacher education are discussed.

Keywords: Learner Beliefs, Learner Practices, Task Rehearsal, Teacher Beliefs, Teacher Practices.

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Introduction

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an approach to language teaching in which tasks occupy center stage in planning and instruction (Ellis, 2003). Tasks are meaning-focused pedagogical activities that induce second language (L2) learners to depend mainly on their own cognitive and linguistic resources to fill communicative gaps and achieve communicative goals (Ellis et al., 2019). It is well established that tasks could be implemented using a variety of task implementation options. One implementation variable that has received extensive scholarly attention is repeating a task, in which learners are asked to perform a task multiple times (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). Repeating a task has been shown to facilitate L2 task performance as the initial enactment of the task provides L2 students with a preparatory opportunity for later iteration(s) of the same task (Ellis, 2005; Skehan, 2014). It has been proposed that repeating a task could be operationalized either in the form of task rehearsal, in which learners have an explicit awareness of the subsequent performance of the task before they perform it for the first time, or in the form of task repetition, where learners lack such awareness (Bui, 2014, 2019; Ellis, 2019). From a pedagogical perspective, in task rehearsal, the initial iteration functions as a pre-task option, which prepares learners for the second performance, while in task repetition, repeating a task serves as a post-task option (Ellis, 2018a). It has been suggested that this is a "potentially important distinction" (Ellis, 2019, p. 17), because although both task rehearsal and task repetition offer practice opportunities to learners, "they differ in the way that learners are oriented to the practice opportunity" (Lambert, 2023, p. 148), which might influence how they perform a task (Ellis, 2015). However, previous research has mainly viewed rehearsal and repetition synonymously.

Furthermore, in instructional settings, task rehearsal, as an operationalization of repeating a task, could be subject to L2 teachers' and learners' interpretation. That is, L2 teachers and learners may hold specific beliefs about this technique, which might influence how they approach task rehearsal in classrooms (Borg, 2015; Ellis, 2008). Therefore, it is essential to extend research knowledge about L2 teachers' and learners' beliefs about task rehearsal. Moreover, in order to explore beliefs properly, it seems necessary to probe into classroom behaviors as well, since "our goal is ultimately to better understand teachers and teaching, not only to describe in theoretical terms what teachers believe and know" (Borg, 2015, p. 321). In addition, learners "may not always report their beliefs accurately (i.e., they may instead report the beliefs that they think they should hold and that the researcher wishes to hear)" (Ellis, 2008, p. 13). Such exploration might help to improve

teacher education programs and offer L2 teachers insights into the task implementation procedure. Despite its importance, to date, few attempts have been to explore how L2 teachers and learners interpret and carry out task rehearsal in classroom contexts. In order to address this research gap, the current study explores Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' beliefs and classroom practices about task rehearsal.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundations of Repeating a Task

Repeating a task refers to repeating "the same or slightly altered tasks – whether whole tasks or parts of a task" (Bygate & Samuda, 2005, p. 43). This technique functions as "a naturally occurring context for language learning" (Bygate, 2018a, p. 1). The influence of repeating a task on L2 oral performance could be explained with reference to Levelt's (1989) psycholinguistic model of speech production. According to this model, speech production includes four distinct but interconnected stages: conceptualization, in which the speaker plans the content to be communicated and prepares a pre-verbal message; formulation, during which the speaker selects appropriate lexical and grammatical items to map onto the conceptualized pre-verbal message in order to convert it to a linguistic form; articulation, in which the speaker produces the overt speech; and self-monitoring, during which the speaker monitors the speech to ensure its accuracy and appropriateness. Among these stages, conceptualization necessitates controlled processing for both L1 and L2 speakers. However, formulation and articulation have been proven to be cognitively demanding processes only for L2 speakers who have limited working memory capacity and attentional resources (Skehan, 1998). As a result, L2 speakers would be forced to divide their attention over different stages of speech production and, consequently, among form and meaning, leading to imbalanced L2 production. Repeating a task is a preparedness option that helps L2 learners to mitigate this problem. During the first task performance, L2 learners are more likely to concentrate on conceptualizing the message or familiarizing themselves with the task content. In the subsequent performance(s) of the same task, learners have sufficient attentional resources that have been freed up in the first task enactment and, therefore, can focus on the formulation and articulation of the speech. This will lead to interlanguage restructuring and improvements in task performance and L2 development (Skehan, 2014). There is abundant evidence showing the beneficial effects of repeating a task on different dimensions of L2 task performance, conceived in terms of syntactic complexity, accuracy, lexical complexity, and fluency (i.e., CALF) (see Bygate, 2018b).

In the TBLT literature, various operationalizations of repeating a task have been proposed. These operationalizations could be categorized according to the type of repeating condition (i.e., repeating the content, the procedure, the task) (Patanasorn, 2010), intervals between performances (i.e., repeating a task immediately, with intervals, multiple times across long intervals) (Bui et al., 2018), and frequency, or the number of times a task is repeated, ranging from one time (Wang, 2014) to six times (Lambert et al., 2017). More recently, Bui (2019) and Ellis (2019) suggested that repeating a task could be operationalized according to learners' awareness of the repeated performance. While rehearsal "involves explicit signalling to the learner that the previous performance may serve as preparation for the next" (i.e., the existence of learners' awareness), in repetition "students receive no briefing about future performance, thus their drawing on the prior knowledge of the same task for the following tasks becomes implicit planning" (i.e., lack of learners' awareness) (Bui, 2014, p. 65). As stated above, typically, previous studies have not made a clear distinction between task repetition and task rehearsal. This implies that task rehearsal has been oversimplified as the role of awareness in repeating a task has been neglected. It is worthwhile noting that repeating a task, as a task preparedness variable, is of pedagogical importance in instructional contexts (Ellis, 2019); however, the two different operationalizations of this practice (i.e., rehearsal and repetition) might be interpreted and practiced differently by L2 teachers and learners.

Language teachers' and learners' reactions to task rehearsal

Although the facilitative effect of repeating a task on L2 performance and production has been acknowledged in the TBLT literature, previous research has shown that L2 learners may perceive the concept of 'repetitiveness' negatively (Ellis et al., 2019) as they may associate repetitive activities with fatigue and boredom (Pawlak et al., 2020). This leads some language teachers to be unwilling to employ repeating a task, particularly in the form of repeating exactly the same task, because of its possible negative impact on learners' affective states. However, as noted earlier, various operationalizations of this practice are available in the literature. This underlines the need for exploring L2 teachers' and learners' beliefs about these different operationalizations. Beliefs have been conceptualized as "propositions individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change" (Borg, 2011, p. 370–71). Teachers, as the main agents of language education, have beliefs about the pedagogical activities they adopt in instructional settings. Examining such beliefs contributes

to reinforcing teachers' professional development (Borg, 2017). Similarly, investigating language learners' beliefs is necessary because L2 learners, irrespective of their age and learning context, hold beliefs about language learning, which can influence the process and product of their L2 development (Ellis, 2008; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2019).

In the TBLT literature, exploring language teachers' and learners' beliefs and practices about tasks and task implementation is closely related to Breen's (1989) distinction between 'task-as-workplan' and 'task-as-process'. While the former concerns the plans of the task designers, the latter refers to how teachers and learners actually implement and perform the task. According to Breen, during the actual task implementation and performance (i.e., task-as-process), "teacher and learners redraw the plan in terms of their own 'frames' and their own knowledge and experience of past workplans" (p. 188). In other words, teachers and learners are likely to reinterpret and reshape tasks or task implementation variables in classroom settings, which may not fully correspond to the intentions of materials developers. As a result, exploring how language teachers and learners perceive tasks and task implementation is in need of investigation. A review of the TBLT research literature shows that a number of studies have explored language teachers' and learners' perceptions of tasks (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Lin & Wu, 2012; Tajeddin & Mansouri, 2024) and different task implementation variables, such as pre-task planning (Nitta & Nakatsuhara, 2014; Ortega, 2005), planning time conditions (Lin, 2013), different lengths of pre-task planning time (Abdi Tabari, 2023), and repeating a task. For example, Kim (2013) examined Korean EFL students' and their teachers' perceptions of task repetition and procedural repetition. She asked the learners to complete a task perception questionnaire and conducted an interview with the teacher after the tasks were repeated three times. The researcher reported that the learners found both procedural repetition and task repetition useful tools for developing their performance; however, those who repeated exactly the same task were not interested in the topic of the task and tended to lose interest as a result of doing the same activity several times. Also, the teacher, acknowledging the beneficial effects of repeating a task, believed that the lack of new content between the performances can be detrimental to young learners' interest in doing the task. Ahmadian et al. (2017) explored Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of task repetition. Using semi-structured interviews with eight teachers and 22 learners, the authors found that the teachers perceived task repetition as an important technique for improving learners' oral proficiency and, at the same time, a practice that may make learners feel exhausted. Learners, on the other hand, were reported to find task repetition facilitative for their accuracy and fluency, indicating that the teachers' and

learners' perceptions did not fully correspond. In another study, Kim et al. (2022) investigated the influence of task repetition together with indirect synchronous written corrective feedback during collaborative writing on the performance and perception of learners of Korean grammar. The researchers found that the participants believed that task repetition helped them to overcome the difficulty of the task and to feel more confidence and satisfaction during their repeated performance.

It is worth noting that Bui and Yu (2021) suggested that in studies on repeating a task where there is no clear indication of whether the participants are made aware of subsequent performance(s), if "the task is repeated for more than 3 times [or] the repetitions take place within the same day (usually immediate) with some hints" (p. 131), the study could be considered to have the experimental condition in the form of task rehearsal. On this basis, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, the only study that has explored L2 learners' perceptions of repeating a task under conditions that could be considered as task rehearsal (i.e., repeating a task six times) is Hanzawa and Suzuki's (2023) study. The research has focused on learners' enjoyment, concentration, and the number of repeated performances construed as optimal to probe into ESL learners' perceptions. The researchers reported that the practice was not necessarily perceived negatively by the majority of participants; instead, they considered it to be an effective method for enhancing their speaking skills.

Overall, the studies reviewed above have investigated either language teachers' or language learners' perceptions of repeating a task, and very little research has been carried out to explore how this pedagogical technique is perceived by both teachers and learners in a single study. Moreover, to date, no research has investigated EFL teachers' and learners' mental processes and classroom practices in relation to task rehearsal, which seems to be a lesser-known operationalization of repeating a task. This investigation is important because "their perspectives can be considered in teaching and research contexts" (Kim, 2013, p. 7) and in teacher training courses. To address these issues, the present study attempts to answer the following two research questions:

1. What are the Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' beliefs about task rehearsal?

2. What do classroom observations reveal about the teachers' task implementation and the learners' task performance on the two occasions of the task?

Methods

Design

The study utilized a qualitative approach. Given that we intended to explore the participants' beliefs and practices, this design choice was essential, since a qualitative approach enables researchers to "establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants" (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 17). To do so, both interview and observational data were collected from the teachers and learners through audio recordings and field notes, respectively.

Participants and the Learning Context

The present study was conducted in a private language center in Iran. The language center offered general English courses to EFL learners through English language teaching (ELT) textbooks that have been published by international publications. Such ELT materials typically contain pedagogical activities that qualify as communicative tasks, based on Ellis and Shintani's (2013) criteria for task definition. The tasks have been incorporated into these textbooks, which have a structural syllabus, to provide learners with communicative practice opportunities. This approach to using tasks for language instruction is called task-supported language teaching (TSLT) (Ellis, 2018b). Two series of internationally distributed ELT textbooks were taught in the language center: (1) the *American English File* series (Latham-Koenig & Oxenden, 2013), which has six volumes; and (2) the *Touchstone* series (McCarthy et al., 2014), with four volumes. In each of the courses, every semester was comprised of six weeks, during which there were three sessions lasting 1.5 hours each week. In response to Samuda and Bygate's (2008) call for more task-based studies in ecological settings and Ellis's (2012) call for more classroom research (i.e., research that takes place inside classrooms), this study used the classroom as the site for data collection. Five intact classes of EFL learners from the language center were recruited conveniently because the teachers and the learners in these classes expressed their interest in participating in this study. The total number of learners in the classes was 32, who had already been homogenized in terms of their language proficiency level by experts in the language center. According to the rating of the center, which was based on the benchmark of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the learners were at the B1 level. They ranged in age from 18 to 26 years old and in length of EFL learning from 2 to 5 years. In all the classes, the *American English File 2* book, which contains communicative tasks, was taught. The teachers, aged between 30 and 42 years old, held MA degrees in TEFL, had

completed the pre-defined training course offered by the language center, and had from 8 to 11 years of teaching experience. The participants for this study, therefore, were 5 experienced EFL teachers (3 females and 2 males) and 32 students (12 males and 20 females). They participated in this study on a volunteer basis. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were assured by calling the teachers T1 to T5 and the learners S1 to S32.

Task

The task used in this study was one of the communicative tasks incorporated in the textbook. It was a dialogic decision-making task that appeared after a grammar lesson on the uses of the infinitive. It provided the learners with opportunities to practice and produce the grammar structure that had already been taught. Given the type of the task, the learners were expected to perform it in pairs. The task, which was titled '*HOW TO…*', required each interlocutor to read a short article that contained five tips, and then both of them were supposed to determine the most important tip.

Procedure

At the beginning of the project (Week 1), the researchers proceeded to contact the teachers to explain the procedures and objectives of the study. After obtaining the teachers' agreement to collaborate and participate, the researchers were granted permission to attend the classes to explain the aim of the research project to the students and invite the volunteers to take part in this research. All the students in the five classes agreed to participate. The teachers informed us that they intended to implement the '*HOW TO…*' task in their classes during the subsequent week; therefore, the first researcher requested that they implement the task twice with an interval of one week. The teachers were also asked to inform the students about the second performance of the task prior to their first task enactment. During Week 2, the first researcher attended all the classes to observe the teachers' task implementation and the learners' task performance procedures, particularly to make sure that the learners were informed of the subsequent task performance. During the observations, the researcher documented the details of the participants' classroom behaviors related to the task inductively through writing field notes. In line with the instructions, all the teachers told the learners that they were supposed to perform the same task again in one week. After that, the teachers asked the learners to perform the task in pairs. In Week 3, the same researcher attended the five classes to observe and document how the task was implemented and performed (10 observations, overall). In order to minimize the effects of the observer's presence in the

classrooms on the participants' actions, during the observations, the researcher adopted the role of a non-participant observer (Borg, 2015). Immediately after the second task occasion, all the participants, including the teachers and the students were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. Each interview session lasted 10 to 12 minutes. Based on the purpose of the study and a careful review of the relevant literature, the interview questions were developed. The questions for both teachers and learners focused on their beliefs about repeating a task with/without an awareness of the repeated performance before the first task enactment, the advantages and disadvantages of this practice, and the dimensions of performance (i.e., complexity, accuracy, lexis, and fluency) that the participants believed were positively or negatively affected as a result of repeating the task with awareness. To ensure the content validity, the interview questions were examined and approved by three experts holding a PhD in Applied Linguistics. The interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, i.e. Farsi, and were recorded in audio format with their consent.

Data Analysis

The data from both sources (i.e., observations and interviews) were analyzed using thematic analysis (TA), which is defined as "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79), and includes six phases. As for the interviews, in the first phase of analysis, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and then translated into English by a research assistant. After that, the researchers read the transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the data set. During the second phase, initial codes were generated to organize the data into meaningful sections. In the third phase, the codes extracted in the previous phase were merged into potential themes. In the fourth phase, the initial themes were reviewed by checking them in relation to the generated codes and the whole data set to determine if the themes properly addressed significant points in the transcripts. In the fifth phase, the final themes were defined precisely and named appropriately. In the sixth phase, the final report of the TA analysis of the interview data was produced. Regarding the observational data, we analyzed the field notes inductively and arranged the participants' actions on both occasions of the task. To ensure the trustworthiness, the translations were checked by the first researcher, and a professional research assistant was asked to do TA again for the purpose of the credibility of the analysis. The Cohen's Kappa was calculated and reached .94, which showed a high inter-coder agreement.

Results

In the following section, the beliefs and practices of the participant teachers and learners are presented, respectively.

Task Rehearsal Beliefs

Data analysis showed that three themes emerged from the interview data, namely, (1) the influences of task rehearsal on different dimensions of performance (i.e., CALF), (2) the effects of task rehearsal on learners' affective states (i.e., motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety), and (3) the function of the first task performance in task rehearsal.

Influences of Task Rehearsal on Different Dimensions of Performance

Although the participants' responses indicated that they had not already been familiar with repeating a task in general and with task rehearsal in particular, they valued this pedagogical technique and expressed a sense of satisfaction with this new experience. Overall, both the teachers and the learners held that repeating the task with awareness of the second iteration (i.e., task rehearsal) was an effective tool for improving the performance of the task in terms of CALF. For example, T2 noted that *"awareness of the second time encourages learners to engage in self-study between the two performances, which leads to the production of more advanced grammatical structures and vocabulary items"*. Likewise, T5 stated that

> *Repeating a task with awareness is a good method of implementing the tasks that are available in the textbook because it seems to help learners think about the errors they make in their first performance in order to do the task without those errors in the second time.*

In addition, almost all the teachers (4 out of 5) emphasized the effects of learners' awareness on their fluency in the second performance. For example, T3 pointed out that "*my students were significantly more fluent the second time I asked them to do the task; I think they might have practiced the task during the week*".

Similarly, the learners were of the opinion that repeating the task while they were aware of the second performance helped them to show a better performance in terms of CALF during the second occasion. For instance, S21 said, *"Because I knew that I was expected to do the task again, I thought about my first performance during the week and tried to find better ways of doing it using more difficult grammar and more difficult words"*. Among the learner participants, 29 out of 32 mentioned that they were able to perform the task more accurately as a result of their awareness, which led them to reflect on the errors

they made in their first performance and to try to avoid the errors in the repeated performance. They made such comments as *"I felt I had fewer errors"* (S12), *"I corrected the errors I made last week"* (S6), and *"I studied the grammar that I needed to do the task without my previous errors"* (S9). As to fluency, 23 out of 32 learners believed that they were more fluent in their second performance because they practiced the task during the one-week interval. For example, S25 commented that *"I believe I had fewer pauses the second time I did the task, because I did the task several times during the week to have a quicker performance the second time"*. S16 noted that *"in the first week, I did not do the task as quick [sic.] as I expected, so I did it with one of my classmates during the week, because I knew that I had another chance"*.

As mentioned above, these comments made by the teachers and the learners clearly indicate that they believed in the facilitative role of task rehearsal in helping learners develop the CALF of their performance during the second occasion.

Effects of Task Rehearsal on Learners' Affective States

The second theme of this study was the teachers' and the learners' beliefs about the role of repeating the task with awareness of the repeated performance in learners' affective states, including their motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Both the participant teachers and learners acknowledged that task rehearsal positively influenced learners' affective dimensions. All the teachers believed that repeating a task with awareness of the repeated performance increased learners' motivation and self-confidence and decreased their anxiety. For example, T1 said that *"if learners are made aware of the upcoming performance, they may do the task with less anxiety on both occasions because they already know that they are expected to do an activity repeatedly"*. In a similar vein, T4 noted that

> *I prefer to inform the learners about the second performance of the task. I think they probably do the task more confidently and more eagerly the second time because they have the awareness of a new opportunity to show more advanced performance, particularly when the task is expected to be performed in the classroom.*

Likewise, virtually all the participant learners (30 out of 32) believed that task rehearsal had benefits for their motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. For example, S20 stated that *"awareness of the second time made me confident that I had another opportunity to try my chance and to correct my errors, so I did the task without stress and I was eager to do it the second time"*. The learners made such comments as *"being aware of my second chance*

before the first time made me sure that I can do it better the next time" (S22), *"I think knowledge of the second performance before the first time helped me to do the task with less stress the second time"* (S11), and *"because I knew that there would be another performance, I was motivated to see how I improved from the first time"* (S8).

These comments clearly show that the participants had positive perceptions about task rehearsal because this practice helped the learners to repeat the task with increased motivation and self-confidence, and decreased anxiety.

Function of the First Task Performance

The final theme that emerged from the data was the beliefs of the teachers and learners regarding the function of the first task performance for aware learners. The teachers agreed that awareness of the second performance may possibly lead learners not to take the first iteration seriously and, therefore, not to thoroughly enjoy the benefits of the preparation opportunity provided during the initial task enactment. For example, T5 stated that *"if learners know that there is a second time, they probably do not put enough effort into doing the task the first time"*. In a similar vein, T3 noted that

> *learners' knowledge of the second time before they do the task for the first time may force them to avoid using all the grammar and vocabulary they know in the first performance so that they can keep some of the language they know for the second time in order to show a different performance.*

On the other hand, almost all the learners (29 out of 32) believed that awareness of the second iteration of the task before the first performance induced them to consider the first task enactment as a phase that prepared them for the main task performance and an opportunity for familiarizing themselves with the content of the task consciously, which facilitated them in choosing more appropriate linguistic items in the repeated performance. They mentioned points such as *"awareness of the second time helped me to notice details of the task in the first time"* (S14), *"I used the first time for thinking about what to say"* (S22), and *"during the first performance, I focused more on analyzing the activity in my mind because I knew I had a second time to focus more on the grammar and vocabulary"* (S17).

These comments reveal that there was a difference of opinion between the teachers and the learners about the role of the first task performance. While the teachers were doubtful whether aware learners could fully benefit from the first iteration of the task, the learners emphasized the positive contribution of awareness to their full utilization of the advantages of the initial performance.

In sum, the participants of this study perceived task rehearsal positively by mentioning the benefits of this practice and expressed their interest in experiencing this pedagogical technique in task implementation and performance in instructional settings.

Task Rehearsal Practices

As stated earlier, the two occasions of the task in all five classes were observed by the first researcher. The teachers' and learners' actions regarding task implementation and task performance during the two sessions were analyzed inductively, and a number of categories and sub-categories were obtained, as shown in Table 1. The observational data revealed that in the first sessions, the teachers' task implementation procedure consisted of a pre-task, a task, and a post-task phase. During the pre-task phase, all the teachers reviewed with their classes the uses of the infinitive that had already been taught and was the target grammatical structure of the task. They did so by giving a short explanation to the students and asking them some concept-checking questions (CCQs). The teachers, then, paired the students up as the task was dialogic and, therefore, entailed interaction between the students. After that, the teachers informed the learners about the subsequent performance of the same task in one week and then instructed them to perform the task. The teachers asked the students information-checking questions (ICQs) to make sure that they had clearly understood the instructions. In the task phase, meanwhile the students were doing the task, all the teachers observed them closely while documenting their errors and supported them by providing the English equivalents of some Persian words and the necessary grammatical structures to facilitate task performance. Three of the teachers also corrected some of the students' errors on the spot. During the post-task phase, virtually all the teachers (4 out of 5) made attempts to correct the errors that the learners had made during the performance of the task by writing the errors on the board and either asking the students to correct them or giving the teacher corrective feedback. The observations also showed that, during the task phase, the majority of the learners (19 out of 32) encountered problems in task performance or had questions and, therefore, asked the teachers and/or their interlocutors to help them mitigate the difficulties by providing the necessary grammar and/or vocabulary.

Classroom observations showed that, in the second session, the teachers did not exactly follow the pre-task, task, and post-task procedures. That is, they implemented the task without a post-task phase. In the pre-task phase, the teachers only assigned the students to pairs. During the task phase, the teachers observed the students, and only one of them corrected the learners' errors immediately. Regarding the students' actions, only a small

number of them (7 out of 32) in the five classes asked their interlocutors to help them with some vocabulary items, and none of the learners asked the teachers for assistance in their task performance.

Table 1. The Teachers' and Learners' Task Rehearsal Practices

	First session	Second session
Teachers' actions	Following the pre-task, task, and post-task procedures	Including only pre-task and task phases
	Reviewing the target grammatical structure	----------
	Pairing up	Pairing up
	Giving instructions and asking ICQs	----------
	Observing (with documenting errors)	Observing
	Supporting by providing necessary language	----------
	Giving immediate corrective feedback	Giving immediate corrective feedback
	Giving delayed corrective feedback	----------
Students' actions	Asking teachers and/or interlocutors for help	Asking interlocutors for help

To summarize, implementing and performing the task twice with learners' awareness of the repeated performance led to changes in the number and quality of both the teachers' and the learners' classroom actions. That is, some of the classroom behaviors that the participants exhibited in the first session were not shown again and some other actions were modified in the second session.

Discussion

The first research question explored Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' beliefs about task rehearsal. The results suggested that both the teachers and learners believed that task rehearsal had positive effects on different dimensions of task performance conceived in terms of CALF. That is, in their opinion, task rehearsal led to improvements in the CALF of their performance from the first to the second iteration of the task. This finding is partially consistent with the findings of Hanzawa and Suzuki's (2023) study, where the participants believed that task rehearsal was effective for developing fluency in their oral task

performance. This belief about the effects of task rehearsal has been empirically tested and confirmed in Mostafaei Alaei and Mansouri's (2024) study, where task rehearsal led to improved task performance in terms of various measures of CALF. This is also in alignment with the general view about the facilitative effects of awareness on language development (Leow, 2019). In addition to the theoretical accounts, empirical research provides evidence lending support to the benefits of awareness for L2 learning (e.g., Hama & Leow, 2010; Kachinske et al., 2015; Rosa & Leow, 2004). Our findings also revealed that the participants (both teachers and learners) found task rehearsal effective for increasing learners' motivation and self-confidence and decreasing their anxiety. This means that the participants did not perceive the repetitive practice negatively, which counters the general assumption that repeating a task inevitably results in negative influences on learners' affective states (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2020; Pawlak et al., 2020). This finding was also reported by Hanzawa and Suzuki (2023), who found that language learners did not have negative perceptions towards task rehearsal. This could be explained with reference to the fact that awareness of the second task enactment neutralized the adverse influences of repeating exactly the same task without anticipating any beneficial results (i.e., task repetition). Awareness also improved the learners' motivation and confidence in their strengths and reduced their anxiety over their weaknesses in language production possibly because they knew that the initial iteration was not their only chance and they expected another opportunity to show an improved performance. Another finding of this study was the teachers' and the learners' beliefs about the function of the initial task performance in task rehearsal, which were in sharp disagreement. On the one hand, the teachers believed that awareness may possibly deprive learners of the advantages of the first task enactment. It might be reasonable to assume that the teachers held this belief because of their insufficient familiarity with task rehearsal, which led them to have "partly intuitive and judgmental" (Nunan, 1989, p. 11) perceptions. The learners, on the other hand, perceived the first performance in task rehearsal as an opportunity that made them familiar with the task content and facilitated speech formulation in the second performance. This observation accords with the general advantages of repeating a task, which is based on the premise that during the initial performance of a task, learners allocate their attentional resources to conceptualizing the message and, therefore, more attentional resources will be available to them to focus on formulating the message in the repeated performance (Skehan, 2014). In this study, the learners presumably benefited from both the facilitative effects of repeating a task and awareness of the second performance, which induced them to expect the beneficial

outcomes of repeating the task. They, therefore, construed the first performance as "their chance to experiment with the language" that enabled them to notice the linguistic elements they "have registered […] in the input to feed into the next repetitions" (Bui & Yu, 2021, p. 126) during the second performance.

The second research question delved into the teachers' and learners' actual classroom behaviors regarding task rehearsal. It was revealed that the teachers implemented the task following the PTP (Pre-Task, Task, and Post-Task) framework (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1996, 2009), which is the most commonly used model for task implementation in classroom contexts. During each phase of the implementation procedure, the teachers employed some pedagogical techniques to facilitate task performance. This finding suggests that the teachers were well aware of how to implement the task, which could be explained by their efficient training. It is widely accepted that teacher education plays a significant role in shaping teachers' actual classroom practices (Borg, 2015; Walsh & Mann, 2019). It was, however, found that the teachers' pedagogical practices were different in the two sessions in terms of the number and quality. With regards to the number, in the first sessions, the teachers implemented the task in three phases of pre-task, task, and post-task; however, in the second sessions, they confined the implementation procedure to a pre-task and a task phase. In addition, the teachers' task implementation in the first time included seven pedagogical techniques, but the number of techniques decreased to three in the second time. For example, in the first sessions, the teachers reviewed the previously taught grammar, which was necessary for doing the task, with the class, but they ignored such review in the second sessions. As to the quality of the pedagogical techniques, as mentioned earlier, during the task phase of the first iterations, the teachers carefully observed the learners' task performance while noting down their errors; however, in the second iteration, the observations became less restricted, and the teachers ignored note-taking. These changes in the teachers' classroom actions from the first to the second sessions could be a result of the facilitative effects of task rehearsal on improving learners' performance, which decreased the necessity for teachers' intervention in the process of task enactment during the repeated performance and the teachers' beliefs about such beneficial effects. These beliefs were adequately reflected in teachers' classroom actions because they were experienced teachers, and teaching experience has been shown to positively contribute to the congruence between teachers' beliefs and classroom actions (Basturkmen, 2012).

The findings also showed that the learners, similar to the teachers, exhibited changes in their classroom behaviors (i.e., task performance) in the second session. That is, while, during

the initial performance, the majority of the learners needed the teachers and/or their partners to help them overcome arising problems in task performance, on the second occasion, their requests for assistance decreased dramatically. This suggests that the learners became more proficient and autonomous in performing the task, both of which resulted in achieving improved performance in the second iteration of the task. There are two possible explanations for this result. First, repeating the task, irrespective of its type, facilitated the learners to develop their production in the repeated performance of the task. Such benefits have been well established both theoretically and empirically in the TBLT literature, as mentioned earlier. Second, the awareness of the repeated performance in one week induced the learners to practice the task in the interval between the two occasions, as indicated in their responses to the interview questions, which led to improvements in task performance.

Conclusion

This classroom-based study looked into the Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' beliefs and classroom practices regarding task rehearsal, which is an operationalization of repeating a task where learners are made consciously aware of the repeated performance before the first task enactment. The results suggested that the participants acknowledged the usefulness of repeating a task with awareness of future performance and were satisfied with this new experience. Also, the beneficial effects of task rehearsal were evident in both teachers' task implementation and learners' task performance.

This study provides pedagogical implications for teacher education programs and for task implementation in instructional settings. First, teacher education courses, in contexts where tasks play either a primary role (i.e., TBLT) or a supplementary role (i.e., TSLT) in language pedagogy, need to introduce the practice of repeating a task and its different operationalizations, particularly task rehearsal, to language teachers and make them aware of the advantages of this pedagogical technique so that they can implement tasks more efficiently and effectively. Second, due to the facilitative effects of task rehearsal, from EFL teachers' and learners' perspectives, language teachers, particularly in some Asia-Pacific countries where TBLT is considered a newly introduced curriculum, can use this practice to help learners develop their CALF of performance while they are in positive affective states so that they fully exploit the benefits of performing tasks for L2 development.

Finally, a number of limitations need to be considered. First, the task used in this study was a decision-making task that was repeated at a one-week interval. Considering that the task type and the length of spacing between performances may have impacts on the learners'

perceptions (Hanzawa & Suzuki, 2023), further studies can be conducted with different types of tasks (e.g., argumentative, narrative, etc.) and different time intervals between iterations. Second, the current study focused on experienced teachers and intermediate learners as participants. Given that teachers' experience and learners' individual difference factors (IDs), such as proficiency level and gender, can influence their beliefs and practices about teaching and learning, it is tenable to examine how novice teachers and learners with different IDs perceive and carry out task rehearsal.

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The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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