

A Portrait of Task-Based Language Teaching in English Speaking Classroom in Junior High School

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Abstract

While much has been investigated about task-based language teaching (TBLT), research examining the application of task-based language teaching for junior high school students is still limited. This study analyzes how the implementation of task-based language teaching in learning English Speaking in a junior high school in West Java. This is a qualitative research with a case study design and involves an English teacher who has several years of experience in teaching English Speaking on a task-based. In data collection, the observation is made to obtain data, then analyze it with inductive data. The findings show that there are incompatibility between lesson plans, task-based language teaching theory and practices carried out by teachers in the classroom. In addition, the teacher was too focused on giving tasks that the implementation of teaching was poor. However, the teacher could apply it properly if the teacher understood and learned more about task-based language teaching. By discovering information about how to apply task-based language teaching, and not focusing too much on tasks, teachers could apply task-based English learning according to the established theory. Moreover, to obtain information about TBLT, it is necessary for teachers to attend seminars or trainings about TBLT that understand how the concept and application of TBLT are properly carried out.

Keywords: *task-based language teaching, speaking*

INTRODUCTION

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been applied in the world of education as an alternative to solving problems in learning through activities. According to Ruso (2007), one of the important things of TBLT is how to increase motivation, relieve pressure and trigger student involvement in learning languages, especially English. On the other hand, TBLT makes teachers as educators are required to design a lesson plan by creating study groups in the English class that are tailored to the needs of students (Hashemi, Azizinezhad, & Darvishi, 2012). Moreover, the design of TBLT that is designed by teachers could measure the teacher's own focus in assessing each student's ability objectively (Carless, 2007). Thus, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has to be well understood by educators so that task-based learning could be achieved properly.

However, Task-Based Language Teaching has several obstacles that occur to learners and sometimes to teachers. First, the way students learn is contrary to TBLT that low language skills become a challenge for TBLT (Bao & Du, 2015). Second, the lack of the right material has reduced the motivation of teachers to implement TBLT because it is needed them to invest more time in developing and preparing their own assignments (Li, 1998). Third, the use of tasks in the classroom is quite difficult and rarely meets the needs of students due to the lack of teacher experience (Calvert & Sheen, 2014). The other challenge is the problem of students who are embarrassed or do not like to practice language as one of the processes in TBLT, but the teacher still has to convince students until the method gives maximum results (Safitri, Rafli, & Dewanti, 2020). Thus, the challenges in TBLT stem from students' habits that conflict with TBLT and teachers' lack of experience in dealing with various teaching methods. In addition, expert suggests that the success of

the TBLT method depends on the contribution of students, tasks, and the teaching context for both teachers and students (Morphy, 2003).

There are several previous studies that serve as a reference in this study. In 2002, Carles (2002) and Rasulova (2022) analyzed the implementation of TBLT for young learners in teaching English. In addition, Tilfarlioglu & Basaran (2007), Masuram & Sripada (2020), Masuram & Sripada (2020), Hashemi, azizinezhad, & Darvishi (2012), Qing & Tian (2010), investigated the effectiveness of TBLT in English Classroom to various materials; those are reading, writing, speaking in different research year. In 1996, Willis (1996) investigated a flexible framework for task-based learning, challenge and change in language teaching. Then, Revesz (2014), investigated task-based teaching generating demands and cognitive processes in 2014. Lastly, Sarani & Sahebi (2012) researched the impact that occurred after taking the TBLT approach on English vocabulary in the ESP course in 2012. Therefore, these several previous studies could be used as references in this study.

From the previous studies above, most research is on the implementation, impact and effectiveness of the use of TBLT in English classes. However, more specific research on teachers' understanding of TBLT needs to be further researched. In addition, studies that discuss the implementation of TBLT in Junior High School are still few studied. Therefore, this study is aimed at investigating how TBLT is implemented by an English teacher in English classroom.

METHODS

The research design is a qualitative study in form case study design. Case study design was used by researchers to observe a phenomenon in English Speaking Class (YIN, 2018). Therefore, this research was to investigate how the implementation of TBLT in the English Speaking classroom. In addition, this study included a case study because it only focused on a real case; the implementation of TBLT to be observed and investigated. In this study, an observation was conducted as an instrument to collect data from an EFL teacher who applied the TBLT approach. Specifically, the English Teacher who taught English Speaking in a Junior High School in West Java. This teacher had been teaching English in a junior high school for several years using the TBLT approach such as in English Speaking classroom.

The data analysis that is presented in this qualitative research is inductive analysis. It refers to the acquisition of raw data to obtain accurate data interpreted by the researcher (Thomas, 2006). According to Cresswell (2009), here are some levels of analysis in this data analysis.

1. Organize and prepare data for analysis. This step involves recording and copying the interviews, as well as organizing or selecting the data obtained.
2. Read all data. This is a step to build and reflect on the meaning of the information obtained as a whole.
3. Interpret data. This is in the form of meaning obtained from comparisons between research results and information from the literature or theory. In this case, the researcher reveals whether the results of his research confirm or refute the previous information.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part elaborates the findings and discussion regarding the topic of how TBLT is implemented by an EFL teacher.

Findings

As mentioned in the introduction, this study aimed at investigating about TBLT in English, especially the implementation by an EFL teacher in English classroom. As the findings, there are two aspects analyzed, the principles and stages of TBLT. The findings showed that not all principles and stages appeared in the implementation of TBLT in the classroom.

3.1 Principle of TBLT

The data that had been collected could be seen in the following table:

Table 3.1 The result of principles data

Principle	Detail
Scaffolding	x
Task dependency	x
Recycling	✓
Active learning	x
Integration	✓
Reproduction to creation	x
Reflection	x

Based on the finding, there were two principles of TBLT emerging in the classroom.

1. Recycling

In recycling, as the example of the activity, learners could experience how the target language items worked in closely related contexts and in completely different ones. In the teacher's teaching activities in the classroom that had been observed, the following was one of the teacher's words which included in the recycling principle.

"...coba apa kalimat-kalimatnya disana (buku), „the boys and the girls are busy cleaning up the classroom” ... kemudian „Budi is sweeping the floor”, sekali lagi „Budi is sweeping the floor” ...”

Based on the teacher's words above, the words "clean" and "sweep", were words with the same meaning. In the example that had been given by the teacher, the two words were used in two different sentences that were adapted to the context. For example, the word "cleaning" was meant cleaning in the overall context, while the word "sweeping" which was part of "cleaning", was used in the context of cleaning floors.

2. Integration

In this case, learners were able to recognize the relationship between function, form, and meaning. The following was one of the teacher's words which included in the integration principle in the teacher's teaching activities in the classroom.

"...pernyataan umumnya apa? The boys and the girls are busy cleaning up the classroom, artinya?...anak laki laki dan anak perempuan itu sedang sibuk...harus ada kata „sedang”nya karena kegiatan yang sedang berlangsung... jadi, anak laki laki dan anak perempuan itu sedang sibuk membersihkan apa?...membersihkan kelas“ ...contoh tadi „Edo (S) + is (to be) + sweeping (V-ing) + the floor (O) + now (adverbial/ keterangan)..."

Based on the teacher's words above, the teacher said that the sentence "the boys and the girls are busy cleaning up the classroom" had a function as a statement in the form of a declarative sentence. The sentence was to indicate that some people were busy cleaning the classroom. The activity was ongoing that the teacher confirmed the present continuous tense; *S + (are/am/is) + V-ing + O + Adv*, was used in the sentence. This teacher's explanation was made students recognize the function, form, and meaning of a sentence.

Based on the data above, it was found that not all principles were applied by the teacher in the learning process. These principles are scaffolding, task dependency, active learning, reproduction to creation, and reflection.

3.2 Stages of TBLT in English Teaching

The data that had been collected could be seen in the following table:

Table 3.2 The result of stages data

Stages	Detail
Pre-task 1. Introducing topics and tasks. 2. Native language exposure from native speakers. 3. The use of text materials and activities in these texts.	1. ✓ 2. x 3. ✓
Task Cycle 1. Task: Students do a task in pair or group. 2. Planning: Students write what occurred in their tasks. 3. Report: Students read or speak their report to the class.	1. x 2. ✓ 3. x
Language Focus 1. Analysis: Teachers record the important components from students' task. 2. Practice: Teachers conduct activities to improve students' self-confidence in learning language.	1. x 2. ✓

Based on the finding, there were several stages of TBLT emerging in the classroom.

3.2.1 Pre-task

1. Introducing topics and tasks

In this case, the teacher introduced what theme would be discussed and what kind of task would be done or practiced. In the teacher's teaching activities in the classroom that had been observed, the following was one of the teacher's words which included in the introducing topics and tasks stages.

"...dalam pembelajaran yang akan kita pelajari pada materi hari ini yaitu kompetensi dasarnya kita harus mengkomunikasikan...to communicate states and events in progress, yang sedang berlangsung...misalnya „I am cooking rice in the kitchen"...maka di sini judulnya atau temanya itu „What are You Doing?“ ...buka halaman 101, chapter 8..."

Based on the teacher's words above, the teacher had introduced what material would be discussed in the lesson at that time. The sentence showed one of the stages of pre-task such as introducing topics and tasks.

2. The use of text materials and activities in these texts.

In this stage, the English sentences that were easily understood by students were used. The following was one of the teacher's words which included in this stage in the teacher's teaching activities in the classroom.

"...contoh lagi „Suci (S) + is (to be) + cooking (V-ing) + fried rice (O) + in the kitchen (adverbial/ keterangan)..."

Based on the teacher's words above, the sentence was taken from the name of the student himself in a situation that was easy for students to understand. This was one of the activities in this stage.

3.2.2 Task Cycle

- **Planning: Students write what occurred in their tasks**

In this stage, students wrote what would be asked and what the answers to the question would be. In the teacher's teaching activities in the classroom that had been observed, the following was one of the teacher's words which included in this stage.

"...that is the example for you but you must mix by yourself, kamu membuat sendiri cerita kegiatannya... misalnya kamu sedang belajar, menari, atau sedang berolahraga...jadi gini, kamu membuat sebuah peristiwa yang terjadi di rumah kamu masing-masing contohnya seperti ibu sedang apa, kamu sedang apa, ayah sedang apa..."

The meaning of the sentence above was the teacher provided direction to students to write what students should do on the given task.

3.2.3 Language Focus

• Practice: Teachers conduct activities to improve students' self-confidence in learning language

In this case, the teacher taught again how to write sentence patterns and pronounce sentences correctly. The following was the example which included in this stage in the teacher's teaching activities in the classroom.

"...jadi pola kalimat yang kalian buat itu adalah pola kalimat yang sedang berlangsung... yaitu subject + to be + V-ing + Object + adverbial (keterangan), ini sudah merupakan kalimat yang lengkap...disitu (buku) ada pengelompokan kata supaya memudahkan kamu dalam membuat kalimat... misalnya kamu melakukan sebuah kegiatan, place tempatnya dimana?...bisa dikelas, bebas. Kemudian person(s) bisa sendiri atau banyak, activity(s)..."

Based on the data was analyzed in the stages, it was found that there were stages that were not applied by the teacher during the learning process. The stages that were not implemented are: 1) Native language exposure from native speakers in the pre-task; 2) Task: Students do a task in pair or group, and Report: Students read or speak their report to the class in the task cycle; and 3) Analysis: Teachers record the important components from students' task on language focus.

Discussion

In this study, the research emphasized how to apply TBLT in English Speaking classroom at the junior high school level. In this school, there were many problems in implementing TBLT such as in the principles and stages.

4.1 Principle of TBLT

In the principles, there were only recycling and integration that appeared and in accordance with the theory of Nunan (2004). The theory stated that recycling is when students are given the opportunity to learn and know how a word has different functions according to context, while integration is when the teacher ensures students recognize the function and form as well as the meaning of a word or sentence. This is considered important to make it easier for students to make sentences that fit the context and understand what the function, form, and meaning of a sentence.

However, there were many principles missing in this implementation. These principles are scaffolding, task dependency, active learning, reproduction to creation, and reflection. In fact, according to Nunan's theory (2004), the scaffolding principle is provided to suit the learning needs of students and ensure that students understand the teaching materials provided. In addition, task dependency is purposed to students to improve their abilities gradually. Moreover, active learning is conducted to make students more communicative. Furthermore, reproduction to creation is served to increase students' creativities in writing a sentence and communicating it in daily activities. Then, reflection is conducted to provide opportunities for students to review the material that has been studied.

4.2 Stages of TBLT in English Teaching

In the stages, not all stages were applied in the learning process. There were only a few stages which correspond to the theory stated by Willis (1996). In the pre-task, introducing topics and tasks, and the use of text material is done that students had an idea of the teaching materials to be given. In

addition, planning is aimed to make it easier for students to understand how to do the given task. Moreover, practice is carried out to familiarize students in communicating using the target language.

However, there were many stages missing in this implementation. These stages are: 1) Native language exposure from native speakers in pre-task; 2) Task and Report in task cycle; and 3) Analysis in language focus. In fact, according to Willis (1996), native language exposure from native speakers is used to familiarize students with hearing English vocabulary from native speakers. Then, task in pair or group and report of students aims to make students more confident to develop their creativity in speaking English. Then, the analysis was carried out to make it easier for the teacher to measure the English speaking ability of each student. These stages are emphasized by Willis and Willis (2007). It is also mentioned by Frost (2004), Skehan (1998), Shehadeh (2005) and Sholeh (2021) in their research.

In addition, it is contrary to the previous report. In the research conducted by Hashemi, Azizinezhad, Darvishi (2012), all TBLT principles must be applied in the teaching process. Moreover, the teacher needs to ensure that every task given is principled (Hashemi, Azizinezhad, & Darvishi, 2012). Besides, this study also had differences with the previous study which was done by Ruso (2007). The study tells that the teacher must provide 3 basic conditions for language learning such as pre-task, task cycle and language focus. All of the principles and stages were emerged in the previous studies.

This part mentioned some previous studies which focused on the implementation and the effectiveness of TBLT in teaching English. Carles (2002) analyzed how the TBLT implementation for young learners through qualitative in form of case studies. The result suggested that this study provided recommendations for teachers who carried out activities with young EFL learners in another context. In addition, Tilfarlioglu & Basaran (2007) tried to find the effectiveness of task-based technique to improve students' English reading and writing comprehension in quantitative in form of an experimental study. The results provided a theory confirmation to Task-Based Learning users that there was no significant difference between those who used TBLT or not. Moreover, Masuram and Sripada (2020) conducted the research in developing English speaking skills by using quantitative of survey design. The result revealed that TBLT could be designed and used by every teacher in the English class. On the other hand, Nita, Rozimela & Ratmanida (2020) investigated the improvement of high school students' speaking skills using Task-Based learning, it was a quantitative research which used quasi-experimental design. The results showed that there was a significant effect on students' speaking skills from Task-Based Learning. Another researcher was the study from Albino (2017) which assessed how learners improve their English fluency through task-based language teaching (TBLT). It was qualitative in form a case study. It stated that learning through TBLT in improving speaking skills was recommended to teachers in schools. Hence, this study attempted to analyze the other aspect of TBLT. It was investigating the implementation of TBLT in secondary level. For this, the results showed that there were many parts that were not carried out on the implementation of TBLT in English Speaking class at the junior high school level.

Moreover, the researchers realized that this study still had many mistake, but the researchers hoped that this study could be used as one of effective aspects needed to be considered by readers to understand how the implementation of task-based language teaching in class by teachers, especially in English Speaking classroom.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As mentioned in the previous section, this study was aimed to investigate how TBLT is applied in learning English Speaking classroom in Junior High School level. Based on the findings, it is concluded that this teacher did not understand how to implement TBLT properly. This teacher only understood TBLT in the aspect of giving tasks continuously without paying attention to the principles and stages. In the principle aspect, many did not appear, such as scaffolding, task-dependency, active learning, and reproduction to creation, and reflection. Meanwhile, in the aspect of stages, several stages such as native language exposure from native speakers, task in pair or

group, student reports, and analysis by the teacher are also not applied to the learning process in the classroom. In this case, the teacher could learn more about TBLT, especially to apply the principles and stages. Moreover, due to the limitation of this study, the further studies are expected to accomplish more comprehensive investigation in terms of using more instruments in collecting the data, and involving more subjects of the study (EFL teachers, students).

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