Indonesian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Task-Based Language Teaching Approach

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ABSTRACT

Task-based language teaching is an approach applying task as a key point of pedagogical instruments. This study explores teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching in secondary school context in Indonesia. Descriptive qualitative research design is used with data collected by using questionnaires. This study used purposive sampling to choose the sample. The findings showed that most of the junior and senior high school EFL teachers appeared to embrace positive attitudes towards practicing task-based language teaching, even though their knowledge of task-based language teaching is still low. All teachers in the study said they have implemented task-based language teaching in the classroom. All of them will continue to use TBLT. The implication of the study is to inspire other researchers to investigate task-based language teaching with greater confidence. The researcher hopes that this research will motivate curriculum designers and other researchers to explore more fully the views of those who are key to successful classroom implementation.

Keywords: Indonesian EFL; secondary school; task-based language teaching; TBLT; teachers' perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Over thirty years, task-based language teaching has been a renowned approach to language teaching. It is an approach applying task as a key point of pedagogical instruments. From the point of view of TBLT, the encouragers recommend that TBLT is the clear improvement of Communication Linguistics(Wilis,1996).It is because they have connected values in teaching. All of them agree that activities in language acquisition are the most eminence for communicating in real situation. They also agree that improving language acquisition can be done by presenting meaningful tasks. In addition, they agree that the meaningful language will cover the methods of teaching and learning approach for students.

Several researchers have outlined the term of task. Breen (1987) defines task as "a rane of work plans". Long (1985) comprehends task as "a piece of work undertakenfor oneself or for others, freely or for some reward". According to Nunan (1989), task is "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending,producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather thanform". Wilis (1996) gives the meaning of a task as "a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve areal outcome". A classroom task is an exercise or activity which has a specific objective. It includes communicative language use within the process. It will go beyond the common classroom activity as a result of task which related to the additional linguistic world. Ellis (2000) states that the kind of discourse rising from task is focused to be just like the one which basically appear in the real situation.

Task-based language teaching is an advancing learning approach which improves the process of presenting the tasks for the knowledge and skill of language acquisition. The roles of the teacher in the classroom are instructors and guide. While students are receiver and main agents. Students can comprehend their communicative skill in transfering their first language to the target language. It offers an opportunity for the students to interact each others. As Lin (2009) states, TBLT stimulates students' decisive skills to use and cope with the target language in a very proficient method. In addition, students will get great chance to learn collaboratively because in order to present the task, they have to make an effort (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Students try to understand what is told by each other and deliver their idea. Due to this, it is believed that this occurance will facilitate language learning.

Long & Crookes (1992) notes language teaching in task-based point of view has arised to respond the barriers of traditional presentation, practice, and

performance approach. Rather than a product incorporated by applying language items, language acquisition focuses on improving communication and social interaction. Students can use the target language in a natural way when implementing task-based interactions (Ellis, 2003).

According to Breen (1987), language acquisition emerged in the eighties to the development of task-based approaches. It then evolved the communicative classroom into comprehensive structure in the nineties. During this era, Wilis (1996) explains that students performed task-based language focused exercises through pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task feedback cycles. Task-based approach has been reviewed over assessment, oral and written performance from various of perspectives (Ellis, 2003). TBLT was first stated by Prabhu (1987) and the ideas of task-based approach in second language learning then has been improved.

TBLT regards language as a communicative tools since it is a learner-centered approach. In line with Lin (2009), TBLT values in managing language acquisition contexts and learner-centered crassroom. He also notes the objectives of TBLT is providing chances for students to master the target language through task learning activities for both in oral and written in order to improve the studentsin using the language for specific purpose in a natural way.

Task-based language teaching has three pedagogical phase; 'pre-task' phase, 'on-task' phase, and 'post task' phase (Wilis, 1996). During 'pre-task' phase, the teacher asks the students to set up for the task they are going to do. It contains delivering the objectives of the task, introducing the concept of the task, giving clear information about the task, and stating what to be achived in the end of the task (Skehan, 1998). Some of the experts may see this phase as a guidance for the students to imitate about the task they are going to perform. Thus, the focus of the language of this phase is to emerge the taskitself through students' engagement in the 'on task' phase.

Wilis (1996) explains that the teacher gives support when students invove the task in the 'on-task' phase. The teacher makes sure whether the students are moving in a proper way. The teacher may interrupt this phase to check on how the students are working. This will empathize some groups, give ideas and thoughts for students who feel difficult and make sure that they are in the right track of task outcome. It is essential to highlight that task-based language teaching result is not similar task from all students. However, it is a variety of various proper solutions to a similar problem.

The next phase is 'post-task' phase. It is a phase which used to make sure the outcome of the task made by the students is clear related to language use that will be assessed by the teacher (Wilis, 1996). In addition, it allows the discussion in the

classroom interaction about appropriate language outcomes. Post-task phase also supplies the chance for form-focused languageobserve on options they could have had problem with within task context. In this phase, the teacher gives the correction and feedback to the students.

We should recognize that the implementation of TBLT has been evolving all over the world. Many studies from Asian countries has been discussed in response its suitability. Since 1990s, English education policies and curricula in many Asian countries have been embracing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Littlewood, 2004). Additionally, in Japan, China, Korea, Vietnam, and Malaysia, (Nunan, 2003) found the significance of task-based language teaching in their syllabi and curriculum guidelines. According to (Liu et al., 2018), the English college teachers in China who are familiar with task-based language teaching is only 28%. Due to low understanding of TBLT, the teachers feel hard in implementing TBLT in their teaching and learning process. Unsurprisingly, this is one of the main reasons that teachers choose to use TBLT. In line with this, since their knowledge in TBLT is still low, the concept of task-based language teaching begin to be discovered in public school textbooks in Taiwan and Hongkong (Nunan, 2003).

However, the study concerning task-based language teaching in Indonesia is still limited. According to Fachrurrazy (2000), the syllabus in Indonesia was not related to task-based languagae teaching. He also notes that the concept of task-based language teaching is not in line with national examination in Indonesia. Moreover, the teachers felt they did not teach the studets because the interactions in the classroom are on students' hands. Teachers stated that they can regarded something as teaching if they it is implemented traditionally. The next problem is some of the students cannot understand the language if the teachers use the target language in delivering the materials in the classroom.

A few studies has been discussed about what teachers believe and know about TBLT. Nevertheless, among these existing studies, there is a lack of study that examines teachers' perception about TBLT in secondary school context, especially in Indonesia. It is essential to investigate teachers' belief as they can present the knowledge to be practiced in theclassroom(Kumaravadivelua, 2012). In line with (Farrell, 2013), he believes that the relation between teachers' perception and their implementation insight into what they have understood and the way how they set the knowledge into classroom implementation. To fill the above gap mentioned, this study explores teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching in secondary school context in Indonesia. The research question is "What are the EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching approach?"

METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative research design to explore secondary schools teachers' perceptions ofTask-based Language Teaching in Indonesia context. This research used purposive sampling to choose the sample who are currently or once have implemented TBLT in their classrooms. The participants in the research were six EFL junior and senior high school in Pangkalpinang. Four of the participants were female and two of the participants were male. Two of participants were between 40 and 49 years old.They had English teaching experience for more than 20 years.

To collect the data, the writer useda questionnaire taken from Dörnyei (2007). The questions were yes-no questions and multiple choices. The questionnaire contained questions that asked about teachers' background information, their knowledge about TBLT, their use and implementation of TBLT. In additions, there were questions adapted from Jeon & Hahn (2006) about the reasons of why the teachers implement TBLT or not in their classroom. These questions were used to explore teacher's perceptions of TBLT.

The writer used thematic analysis by Braun & Clarke (2006) for data analysis.Thematic analysis refers to a method for "identifying, analyzing, andreporting patterns orthemes within the data set". The construction proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) used by the researcher including introduces the data, produces codes, looks for themes, analysis themes, gives explanation themes and makes report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Four of the teachers have a poor understanding of task-based language teaching. They feel it hard to implement it to the class because of the limitation of their knowledge. Not suprisingly, this is the reason why teachers choose to use TBLT. Non-native English teachers who teach speaking in ELT class sometimes do not feel confident of their strategic and socio-culturalcompetence,especially when they introduceor assess communicative activities of the students (Butler, 2011). This respond supporting Nunan (2003), he stated thatat the public school in Hong Kong and Taiwan,the standards of TBLT start to come out in textbooks.In contrast, teachers have a low level understanding of task-based language teaching.Nunan (2003) determines that it is still being a question whether the teachers can use these textbooks.

In this research, all teachers have used TBLT in their teaching and learning process. All of them will continue to use TBLT. Altough they have a poor understanding of TBLT, they still embrace positive attitudes towards practicing it. Moreover, one of themgave comment, "*TBLT let the students enjoy their learning process.*"

Table 1. Reasons for implementing TBLT

Option	Participant (n)
TBLT promotes learners' academic progress	4
TBLT improves learners' interactive skills.	3
TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.	1
Total number of participants: 6	

The results of the findings on the table above about reasons for implementing TBLT showed that four of the participants believed that TBLT promotes learners' academic progress, three of the participants assumed that TBLT improves learners' interactive skills, and a participant agreed that TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.

The main reason that teachers choose to use task-based language teaching is it improves the academic performance of students. This is obviously connected to the National Examination in Indonesia that the testare in the form of multiple choice which onlyfocused onanalyzing grammatical error. Prabhu (1987) states that in measuring students' cognitive skill, it can be used not only by multiple options, but also by something that related to social context such as formation, reasoning, and opinion gap activity that related to social context.

The second reason why teachers choose to implement task-based language teaching is TBLT improves students' interactive skills. These junior and senior high school EFL teachers identify TBLT as serving toencourage students'

communicativecapability. Collaborativelearning environment was the reason chosen by three of the teachers. It is in line with Skehan (1998) and Wilis (1996) who figure out that one of the best values in task-based language teaching is peer interaction. It commonly based on pair or group work. As a result, unsurprisingly the teachers in this research identify collaborative learning suits best with TBLT.

Table 2 Reasons for avoiding TBLT

Option	Participant (n)
Materials in textbooks are not appropriate for using TBLT.	5
Large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods.	4
Students are not used to task-based learning.	1
Total number of participants: 6	

The results of the findings on the table 2 about reasons for avoiding TBLT showed that five of the participants believed that materials in textbooks are not appropriate for using TBLT, four of the participants assumed that large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods, and a participant agreed that students are not used to task-based learning.

The two main participants' reasons for avoiding task-based language teaching are "Materials in textbooks are notsuitable for using TBLT" and "large class size is an obstacle to use task-based methods". The participants also gave two comments regarding teaching materials, due to the

reasons,"*Too many materials in a semester*" and "*Materials in textbooks are notsuitable for implementing TBLT*". In line with these comments, one of the participants in China commented "*Sometimes, materials in textbooks are notappropriate for using TBLT*" (Liu et al., 2018). In addition, task-based textbooks and materials which are ready-made and in line with TBLT are still in limited accessibility (Hobbs, 2011).As the result, the teachers regard that planning the materials for teaching and learning process by themselves is the pattern how to implement task-based language teaching.

'Large class' is the second top reason of why the participants avoid implementing TBLT. Skehan (1998) and Wilis (1996) who figure out that task-based language teaching's value is peer interaction which is related to pair or group work. However, it is a quiet challenging for the teachers in fulfilling pair or group work in their teaching and learning process, especially in large classes. It causes management problems. Hence, seeing the fact that four of six participants think that in implementing task-based language teaching large class is a barrier is not suprising anymore.

Due to teachers' lack of confidence and understanding about TBLT, Ellis (2003) argues that "where communicative opportunities outside the classroom arelimited, there is an obvious need to provide such opportunities inside the classroom; TBLT is a meansfor achieving this". In Indonesia, the students' chances to communicate with native English speaker is limited. Mishan & Timmis (2015) states that "statistically, English isspoken most commonly among non-native speakers".

According to Iwashita & Li (2012), the key poin to be success in implementing TBLT are students' cooperation and their learning motivation. This relates to the finding that one of the participants chose 'students are not used to task-based learning' as the reason for avoiding task-ased language teaching. Hadi (2012) states that students may need additional time to establish to interactive approach in task-based language teaching in teacher-centered educational environment. Passive classroom attitudes are mostly because of the educational context and Asian students basically are not passive learners (Littlewood, 2007). Adams and Newton, (2009) notes that "onceexposed to task-based teaching, Asian learners can adjust their preferences for learning". Lai (2015) in his research found that "students demonstrate acceptance of and preference for TBLT over traditional teaching method" despite bad feeling at the beginning about task-based language teaching.

Issues of Task-based Language Teaching in Indonesia

The concept of task-based language teaching depends on English mastery of the teachers as a communicative approach involving the interactions between students and teachers during teaching and

learning process. Using the target language in communicating is insistent in order to achive an effective results in implementing TBLT. In contrast, according to Marcelino (2008)and Yulia (2013), teachers' proficiency related to giving instruction do not present in a good way in Indonesia context. Additionally, the students in Indonesia cannot present good results in speaking because their oral proficiency is low (Suryanto, 2014). Yulia (2013) found that the students tend to use their mother tongue when communicating during learning process in classroom. It can be concluded that it is hard to implement communicative approach in Indonesia because they do not use English in their daily life.

In addition, Suryanto (2014) notes that Indonesian students are taught to enjoy the learning process by avoiding the conflicts of interaction among them. Related to task-based implementation, the lack of students' participation affects the classroom interaction. The students do not have any initiative to talk because they believe that the teacher who knows everything is the only one who should speak in the classroom (Marcelino, 2008). This leads the students become passive and do not have confidence to express their thought. Thus, it drives the learning process become teacher-centered learning.

Additionally, national examination in Indonesia is not in line with the idea of task-based language teaching. The questions are set in multiple choice and frequently asked about grammatical error.

National examination in Indonesia does not encourage students to have logical and innovative thinking (Sulistyo, 2009). In contrast with Prabhu (1987), he states that task-based language teaching should be related to social context that can be formed not only by multiple-choice, but also by any designed, such as formation, reasoning, and gap activity. Moreover, according to Furaidah et al. (2015), teachers only focus on pushing their students' reading skill and ignore other materials to pass the national examination. As the result, teacher-centered appeared in the learning process.

Alternative Solutions to the Issues of Task-based Language Teaching in Indonesia

In order to improve teachers' instruction, the teachers can perform Engage, Study, Activate" (ESA) teaching stages trilogy by (Harmer, 2007). First, the teacher encourage students' interest by showing pictures and asking them questions. For instance, the teachers show a picture of zoo and ask them 'Have you ever visited zoo?' or 'Did you go to zoo last holiday?'. These questions make them engaged with the materials. Second, the teachers can focus on clauses, phrases, and grammar. Last, the teachers can ask them to perform what they have learned. The task here plays the essesntial role, as Harmer (2007) notes that it is "designed to activate the students' language knowledge".

Dealing with low level of oral proficiency, Lantolf (2000) promotes that

learning process are mediated through interaction. It is believed that second language acquisition is "not an individual-based process but shared between theindividual and other persons" (Ellis, 2003). Thus, teachers can help the students in facing difficulties by using verbal interaction. They can prompt the students with phrases when the students cannot express their thought in communicating.

According to (Royani, 2013), using local culture that is really close to students' daily life (e.g. traditional food, national costume, and big day celebration) can improve their interests in engaging the 'task'.

CONCLUSION

Most of the secondary school EFL teachers surveyed in the research appeared to embrace positive attitudes towards practicing task-based language teaching, even though their knowledge of task-based language teaching is still low. All teachers in the research saidthey have implementedtask-based language teaching in the classroom. All of themwill continue to use TBLT. This research will inspire other researchers to investigate task-based language teaching with greater confidence. The researcher hopes that this research will motivate curriculum designers and other researchers to explore more fully the views ofthose who are key to successful classroom implementation.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

This research was designed, directed, and coordinated by TP, NN, and AW. TP planned, provided conceptual and investigated the participants of the research. NN and AW participated as technical guidance for all elements of the research. TP found the data and analyzed the data with NN and AW. The manuscript was written by TP and commented by NN and AW.

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