

**Students' Perceptions on Teachers' Implementation of
Task-based Learning Method at an English Language Education Department
in a Private University in Yogyakarta**

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Abstract

The aims of this research were to describe the steps of TBL method implemented by teachers as perceived by students, and to identify the students' perceptions on the effects of using TBL method in teaching learning process. The researcher chose a descriptive case study under a qualitative research in this research. This research was conducted in a private university in Yogyakarta. The participants were four that were chosen by purposive sampling. The researcher used face-to-face interview as data gathering method. The researcher analyzed it using open, analytic, axial and selective coding. The finding showed that teachers implemented several steps in conducting TBL class such as pre-task, whilst-task and post-task. The next finding revealed eight positive effects that students' perceived inside the TBL class such as increasing students' active participations; increasing students' interaction; developing students' confidence; improving students' critical thinking; enhancing students' speaking skills; creating an enjoyable environment inside the classroom; creating bond between teacher and students and improving students' vocabulary skills.

Keywords: Task-based learning method, teachers' implementation, students' perception, effects of Task-based learning method,

Introduction

In English classroom, one of the elements that need to be considered is the teaching method. According to Harmer (2011) has stated that, “a method is the practical realization of an approach” (p. 78). The researcher only focuses on a certain method called Task-based Learning method, because Task-based Learning method is one of the most current methods. This method was introduced and gets popularized by Prof. N. S. Prabhu in 1987. According to Prabhu (as cited in Ellis, 2003), Task-based Learning emphasizes on giving students task as in term of cognitive learning. He also believed that Task-based Learning method begins with pre-task, task cycle and post task.

English Language Education Department is one of the study programs in a private university in Yogyakarta. English Language Education Department (ELED) students learn different kind of methods. It is important to acquire this information because it eventually will help them differentiate the method that their teachers use inside the classroom. They will also be future teachers and they will use several methods they learnt inside ELED classroom

Task-based learning method is one of the most current methods. In English Language Education Department, many teachers use TBL method inside their English classes. Based on the researcher’s personal experience after attending one of TBL method classes in ELED, the students were excited to attend TBL method class. Therefore, the researcher finds it very ideal to seek out the students’ perception on the implementation of TBL method. Moreover, the researcher found that there has been no research in this particular field.

Literature Review

Task-based Learning Method

Ellis (2003) believed the term ‘task’ in Task-based Learning method is very important in conducting TBL method class. According to Willis (1996) “task(s) has an identifiable outcome, and a goal to be achieved that can be shared.” (p. 54). Oxford (2006) stated “In L2 teaching and learning, task is now often viewed as an outcome-oriented instructional segment or as a behavioral framework for research or classroom learning.” (p. 97). Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated "tasks provide both the input and the output processing necessary for language acquisition" (p. 228). Based on those experts, the researcher concludes that ‘task’ in TBL method focuses on giving students chance to do an activity which accomplishes a language use in real-life situation. Task is an activity that can be conducted inside and outside the classroom because it emphasizes on students’ language use in real-life activity such as practicing language in daily activity.

There are several definitions of Task-based Learning method according to several experts. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) "Task-based language teaching refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching." (p. 223). Moreover, according to Hadi (2013) “TBLT provides learners with authentic and meaning-based materials, real life communicative activities and motivating feedback.” (p. 103). In Task-based Learning method, students are given a task which they have to solve and perform (Harmer, 2001). Based on those experts, the researcher

concludes that Task-based Learning is a method that focused on students' ability of communicating, explaining, and performing the task in target language rather than focusing on the general form of the task. In TBL method, teacher and students more often use the target language in classroom activities. TBL focused on students' independencies and put the teacher as the prompter and assessor. In TBL classroom, students are expected to be able to interact with teacher or the other students using target language in direct situation.

Procedures of Task-based Learning Method

Ellis (2006) believed that there are three steps in doing TBL. There are pre-task, whilst-task, and post-task activities. Each of the steps implies different kind of activities conducted in TBL method class. **Pre-task.** Pre-task is a stage conducted before conducting main task. The purpose of pre-task according to Ellis (2006) is to "prepare students to perform the task in ways that will promote acquisition." (p. 21). Planning for the performance of the task can be a decent pre-task task. **Whilst-task.** Whilst-task stage is conducted after the pre-task stage. Whilst-task can also be named as; main-task, task cycle or during-task. The purpose of conducting whilst-task according to Ellis (2006) is divided into two, which are to select "the actual performance of the task and thus planned for by the teacher." and to "perform the task as it is being completed." (p. 26). **Post-task.** Post-task stage is conducted after doing the main task on the whilst-task step which became the last stage in conducting Task-based Learning method. Ellis (2003) stated that post-task is an activity which mainly emphasizes on the follow-up task from the task performance or whilst-task.

The Effects of Task-based Learning Method

Several researchers try to identify the effects of TBL on several schools. Those researches can be very helpful as it could be a kind of reflection that TBL has been implemented throughout times. **Increase satisfactory level.** Ruso (1999) found out that there is a great satisfaction of the Task-based Learning method used in the class. Students reported that each task used by the teacher varies from each other and very helpful for their learning process. Leaver and Willis (2004) stated that “they see the tasks as a tool that helps them carry out specific real-life activities.” (p. 77). They believed that TBL method develop students’ awareness on the incredible amount of material. **Decrease barrier between teacher and students.** Ruso (1999) also found out that the students’ opinion about the implementation is also important. Because students’ participation in class increased, they didn't feel bored inside the classroom. Oxford (2006) stated “the teacher provides indirect assistance so the learner can solve his or her own communication problem and can proceed to negotiate meaning still further.” (p. 111). She believed that teacher indirectly assist students inside the classroom. When students made mistakes, teachers offer some assistance to students but they did not directly involve in the communicative process. **Give Positive Attitude to Students.** Ruso (1999) stated that the students felt that their willingness to learn was increased. He found out that students agreed that learning English started to be enjoyable for those who are not used to enjoy English class. Additionally, Sarani and Sahebi (2012) stated that the outperformance of TBL class is proven by the fact that the class is “collaborative and interactive nature of the task-based

approach where language use and language learning take place simultaneously.” (p. 125). *Improve Vocabulary Learning*. Ruso (1999) stated that "tasks have been beneficial for vocabulary learning." (p. 10). When students gave the presentation they felt that they were improving their spoken English ability. Additionally, Leaver and Willis (2004) stated that creative task “helps to improve language proficiency.” (p. 77).

Methodology

The researcher uses qualitative research design. The researcher wants to get an in-depth finding in this research. In this research, the researcher got the data in terms of description, which helped the researcher to get flexible, subjective and emerging structure data. In qualitative research method, the research purposes are subjective, using prospection, in terms of describing (Creswell, 2012). The research design used in this research is case study. The researcher believed that case study would be suitable for this research because it defined the object of the study or the case. This research focuses on the phenomenon that happened at an English Language Education Department in a private university in Yogyakarta. The researcher conducted this study at an English Language Educational Department (ELED) of a private university in Yogyakarta. The researcher chose ELED because several teachers implement TBL method in their classrooms. In this research, the target participants were four students. The researcher decided the criteria of the participant as follows; the participant must be active students at ELED in a private university in Yogyakarta and the participant must have learnt and taught by the teachers who implemented TBL inside an ELED class. The

researcher used interview as data gathering method used in this research. Interview had been chosen by the researcher because it gives the participant chance to answer in complex and deep form (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The researcher believes that semi-structured interview gave in-depth and also ensuring answers. The structures used were mostly open-ended questions. In data collecting procedure, the researcher began with creating an interview guideline. Then, the researcher conducted the interview with participants. The researcher conducted interview one by one based on the agreement of both researcher and participants in terms of time and place, and it was on the participant willingness. Then, the researcher transcribed four audios into written text using website called 'Speechnotes' and re-checked the transcribed interviews. However, the researcher found out that three of four interviews were not answering the research question of this research. The researcher chose to re-conducted three interviews. Again, the researcher transcribed the audio interviews into written text using 'Speechnotes' and re-checked the transcribed data. After getting the written data, the researcher started to analyze the data. The researcher started the coding with labeling the main answers from each participants using open coding; categorizing the main answers into several findings using analytic coding; counting participants' answers in each findings using axial coding; putting each finding in table using selective coding.

Findings

Form the data analysis, the data showed that there were two main points gathered. Those points are the steps of task-based learning method implemented

by teachers as perceived by students and the students' perception on the effect of using task-based learning method in the teaching learning process. It has been found in this research that the main task conducted in the classes that the participants reported was performing presentation. Although doing a presentation is not the best example of TBL method's task; it has been found in this research that as perceived by students, teachers used a presentation as the main task. The researcher found out that in third year of English Language Education Department, the classes that use TBL method were more theory-based class rather than skill-based class. That was the reason why presentation was mainly the main task mentioned by participants inside the ELED classrooms.

The Steps of Task-based Learning Method Implemented by Teachers as Perceived by Students

The participants explained that the teachers, who implemented the TBL method inside the classroom, applied several steps in their teaching learning process which are pre-task, whilst-task and post-task. *Pre-task*. In the beginning of the class, the teachers divided the students into several groups. It was also found that not only the teacher divided the students into several groups, but the teachers also divided the whole material for a semester into smaller topics for each group. *Whilst-task*. After giving the pre-task, the participants explained to the researcher that the teacher continued the class with the main activity. The researcher found that the main activities conducted in the TBL method classes usually were performing presentations in front of the class. All of the participants stated that they have to present the topic given to each group on the pre-task

activities. ***Post-task.*** The researcher found that there were several additional activities after the main task was done. These tasks can be known as post-tasks activities. When the researcher asked the participants what happened after the main task was done; three of the participants stated that they conducted a question and answer session. After conducting question and answer session, the participant explained that usually they discuss the material. The other activity that teacher did inside TBL class was evaluation. One of the evaluations in TBL class can be a feedback.

Students' Perceptions on the Effect of Using Task-based Learning Method in the Teaching Learning Process

The participants concluded that there were eight effects that appeared after the teacher conducted TBL class. ***Increase students' active participation.*** Two of four participants stated that TBL class stimulated students to be active in learning inside the classroom. The other participant stated that TBL class made the students be more active and creative inside the classroom. Students perceived that after attending TBL class, they became active inside the classroom; they often asked and answered questions and discussed the material inside the classroom.

Increase students' interaction. The students felt that they had better understanding because their friends presented the topic to them, so they were not afraid to ask to their own friends. Students can also ask to each other outside the classroom about the topic or the material; they can ask the topic after the class if they were still confused about it. The teamwork and togetherness inside groups were definitely increased inside TBL method classroom. ***Develop students'***

confidence. It was found that students who had lack of confidence developed their confidence inside TBL class. The main task in TBL was a presentation; in order to perform a presentation students had to be confident to talk in front of their teacher and classmates. Students were more confident to exchange suggestion in the discussion session. **Improve students' critical thinking.** Students were also required to think together as a group that improved their critical thinking. Focusing on the main task helped students developed their critical thinking. In each meeting the students had to discuss a new topic which was explained by the presenting group.

Enhance students' speaking skills. One of the participants stated that she told the researcher that she used to bring note or book when performing a presentation in front of the class but after she attended TBL class she can talk much smoother. The effect of using TBL method inside the classroom can also be seen on students' enhancement on their speaking skills. Students were also required to talk and discuss the topic within group members that improved their speaking skills. **Create an enjoyable environment inside the classroom.** The students perceived that TBL class create an enjoyable environment inside the classroom. They felt the class was relaxing; they were happy to follow the class. Students also felt comfortable inside the class because the activities were not incriminating such as giving feedback to other groups. **Create bond between teacher and students.** Students felt that the teacher became the monitor and the instructor inside the class that proven by student-centered teaching learning process. The teacher also became a supervisor inside the TBL class; it created a

better communication between teacher and students. *Improve students' vocabulary skills.* The other improvement that students' felt after attending TBL class was improvement on vocabulary skills. It was found that the teacher always give new material that never had been discussed by students. Thus, students learned new material which most probably contained of fair few new vocabularies for them to remember.

Conclusion

It was discovered that the Task-based Learning method teachers implemented several steps in conducting TBL class. The first step was called pre-task, the next step was whilst-task and the last step was post-task. It has been found in this research that the main task conducted in TBL classes was performing presentation. Doing a presentation might not be the best capture of TBL method's task; but the researcher found out that in the third year of ELED, the classes were more theory-based class rather than skill-based class. In theory-based classes, most activities aimed at understanding linguistic and pedagogical concepts. Thus, participant may recall only their current experience (i.e. in theory-based class) instead of talking about varied tasks aiming at enhancing their language proficiency which they took on the first and second year. Therefore, the finding in this research proved that presentation was used as the main task in TBL method class in ELED in a private university in Yogyakarta.

The second purpose was the students' perceptions on the effects of using TBL class in teaching learning process. The researcher discovered eight effects that students' perceived inside the TBL class. It was found that TBL class

increased students' active participations, increased students' interaction inside and outside the classroom, TBL class improved students' critical thinking, and TBL class also enhanced students' speaking skills. It was also found that TBL class created an enjoyable environment inside the classroom, TBL class created bond between teacher and students, and lastly, TBL class also improved students' vocabulary skills.

Suggestion

As the result of the students' perception on Task-based Learning method found, here are several suggestions provided to several parties. ***For students.*** It is important for ELED students to pay attention on the effectiveness of a learning method such as Task-based Learning method. It has been found in this research that the implementation of TBL method in ELED class resulted in positive effects. Therefore, ELED students may consider using TBL method in the future when they become teacher. ***For teachers.*** As it has been found in this research, TBL method produces positive effects on students' perceptions. Thus, teacher may consider using TBL method inside their classroom. It was also found in this research that the steps of conducting TBL method inside the classroom. Thus, teacher may consider applying the steps in their TBL classes. ***For other researchers.*** For other future researchers, this research may provide detail information on students' perceptions on the effects of TBL method inside the classroom. Furthermore, the other researchers can expand the research into a wider data to get wider findings.

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