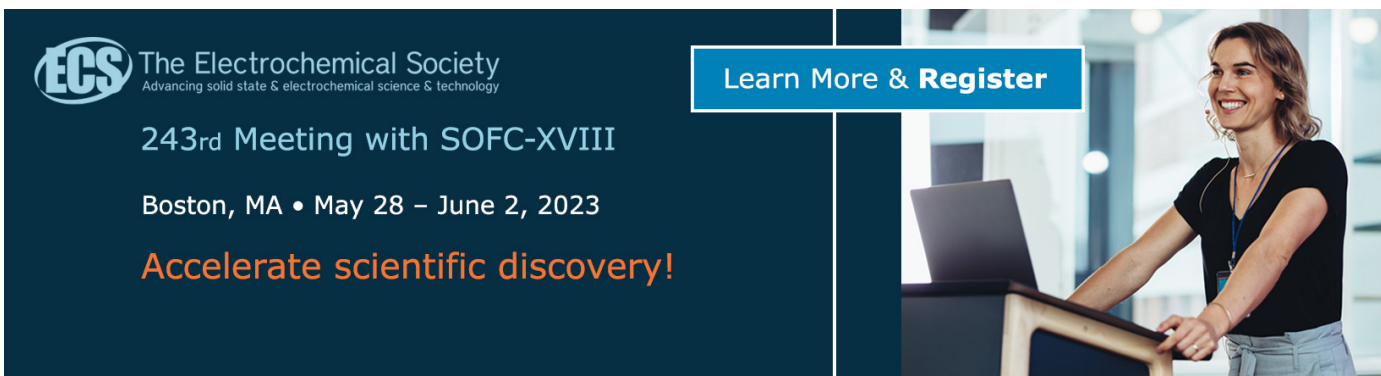**PAPER • OPEN ACCESS**

Task-based language teaching: how it is implemented effectively?

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Task-based language teaching: how it is implemented effectively?

N P Somawati[1], N W Wahyu Astuti[1], I N Kanca[1], I M R J Widanta[2], I W D Ardika[3]

[1]Tourism Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali
[2]Mechanical Engineering Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali
[3]Civil Engineering Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali

[1,2,3] Kampus Bukit Jimbaran, Kuta Selatan, Badung-80364, Bali, Indonesia
Ph. (+62361) 701981, email: psomawati@yahoo.com

Abstract. There have been a number of ideas on how task-based language teaching (TBLT) is applied in English instruction. This research attempted to investigate how the task-based language teaching (TBLT) should appropriately be implemented in vocational college. A group of twenty eight students majoring in tourism were involved as research participant. Prior to treatment, they were given pre-test (T1) to see their basic level. The test, assessment rubric, learning materials, and learning syntax were developed and validated by an expert judge prior to their use. The treatment using task-based learning materials and learning syntax stages of "leading in – enriching – activating – naturalizing" (LEAN) was undertaken for three times. The post test (T2) was then given two days upon treatment to avoid their being able to answer the test because they just still remember of the materials during the learning. The analysis result of T1 and T2 using paired sample t-test showed that there was significant difference between means of T1 (M=6.14) and T2 (M=15.46), indicated by t (27) = -54.51, p < .05. Further development is recommended to use other English for specific purposes' materials and different research participant.

1. Introduction

The essence of English learning is for students to learn how to communicate using the language. One of the approaches to reach the learning goal is to provide students with tasks to work out. Task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward, such as painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, making a hotel reservation, writing a check, finding a street destination and helping someone across a road. In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between [1].

Whatever are the terms of goal proposed to respond to why language learning is undertaken, such as competence - performance, langue - parole, pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics, or accuracy – fluency [2], [3], [4], [5], they are just the purpose of most of English language class, especially for English as second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. In the learning, students should basically be introduced with relevant context in which the form or language is used. Thus, learning should be empowered so that students are able to express what they want to express and not merely produce grammatically correct sentences [6], [7]. It will be able to trigger them to negotiate meanings, to modify, as well as to re-paraphrase something [8], apart from other salient benefit to achieve, such as students' acquisition of self-confidence, sense of initiative, encouragement, as well as

avoidance from continuous negative feeling [9]. One of the very strategic ways out is "task-based language teaching".

Task-based language teachinng (TBLT) has be given a contradictive judgement, whether (or not) it is really effective to promote students' communicative competence. [10] Studied effectiveness of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and communicative language teaching (CLT) for Jaspanese students of English in Japan. It was found that both approaches were not compatible with the English classes udertaken in Japan as those classes focused on students' mastery of grammar. They were targeted to be able to produce grammatically correct sentences. The study sucessfully found that the most compatible approach to the classes is conventional form-focused approach, such as grammar translation method (GTM), prasentation practice production (PPP), and test teach test (TTT). This research was in line with that carried out by [11], [12], [13] stating that TBLT was found indecissive for Japanese students. In addition, TBLT was criticized by scholars of second language acquisition research in Japan for its nonsupportive goal-related function. Their findings obviously summing up that: (1) TBLT was not appropriately implemented in English class in context of English as foreign language (EFL) as students do not have urgent needs of using English; (2) TBLT did not meet the students' learning style and hope; (3) TBLT decreased Japanese students motivation whose focusing was preparation for English test; (4) TBLT was in line with Confuciuos culture heritage believing that lectures or teachers always have authority more than students do; (5) TBLT has learning model focusing on grammar; (6) TBLT violates grammar-based syllabus principle of learning; and (7) using TBLT could result in fossilization of language than language acquisition [12], [14], [13], [15], [10].

On the other hand, PPP was found to be uneffective to improve students' communicative competence and TBLT was a very sucessful for second language acquisition and class-based research [16], [17], [18] . TBLT has been proven to have some betterment: (1) the approach is very supportive to CLT; (2) the approach was the reaction of failure of PPP and TTT approach; (3) TBLT considers target language as a tool to communicate rather than an object of learning; (4) TBLT does not dominate students with presentation and pratice where students are fed with grammar lesson better than meaning like PPP approach

Other study investigating that TBLT was very effective was done by [22], [19], [20], [21]. [22] Stated that "task" is an holistic activity enambling students to use language to reach a non lingusitic goal. It was further more clearized that such learning prioritize a context where task becomes a learning center which provides activities to use English language for students in class, guides teachers to design curriculum and syllabus specifically and determine assesment model for students. The investigateion summed up that TBLT promotes some benefits: (1) it provides students naturally occuring English; (2) it is an alternative to the problem students faced in Japan; (3) it can provide input and promote real output; (4) the use of input-based task helps students improve their communicative competence; (5) it can provide students with meaningful language use; and (6) it can be adapted with situation and condition [19], [21], [22].

Other investigation result supporting the existance of TBLT in English language learning was that carried out by [23], [24], [25], [26]. [23] Stated that TBLT was very effective as students and learning activities are integrated in a meaningful and a goal-oriented activity so that it can solve problems, finish projects, and reach a decision. To make it more effective, TBLT should be supported with analytic syllabus focusing on students ability to do the task which is nearly the target language without any grammar lesson explicitly with procedural syllabus [24]. Procedural syllabus emphasizes that forms or grammar can be learnt in class through focus on meaning and grammar construction approach in a learning situation students are not aware of [26]. The research suggested that TBLT syllabus should support a critaria where the learning has to meet cognitive domain, involve students, and be able to meet students needs [27] apart from being able to make students notice sintactical, phonological and lexical aspects [25].

The contradictive view on TBLT implementation drawn above may be caused by difference in the use of research data, population, goal of learning and some other aspects. TBLT which prioritizes students communicative competence more than the other competence, for instance grammar mastery, may be inconsistent with the class whose students's goal is to improve grammar competence. Or the class which intention is to teach students EFL using grammar-based syllabus may be best

taught with PPP, TTT, or GTM may not be compatible with TBLT. The pendulum swing-like opinion should be put in an action of investigaion to see whether it really works appropriately or not. This research was attempted to investigate whether (or not) TBLT is appropriately applicable for vocational collage students and how it should be implemented.

2. Methodology

The experimental research was a research and development using a design proposed by [28] . The research was done in a group of students majoring in tourism, Bali State Polytechnic. This is a state vocational college whose English learning focuses on practice rather than learning language theory. A group of students (28 people) majoring in tourism was involved as reserach participants. The participants were involved in a number of activities during the research, such as being subject whose activity was observed during their English learning, obtaining students' basic English competence through first test (T1), implementation the developed task-based English learning model, as well as obtaining students' English competence upon the model implementation through last test (T2).

Observing and reviewing current English learning condition was the initiating research activity. The participants' English learning activity using conventional English learning model was observed. Some data about current English learning condition to determine how the later task-based English learning model will be designed was obtained, such as learning paradigm, learning material, English learning approach, learning stages, learning process, and learning assessment. The observational result showed that the conventional English learning method was found less effective to support CLT to achieve students' communicative competence. Some weakneses of the conventional English learning model need to be revised and ajusted to meet TBLT model, such as teacher-centered paradigm should be shifted to student-centered paradigm, learning modul was lack of communicative competence-rising task, communicative approach using task was still very restricted, learning stages (lesson plans) was not prepared, assessement still used written middle and final test lined in the curriculum which was not supportive to students' English speaking competence.

Developing TBLT model as the second stage was done by developing task-based materials, learning stages or lesson plan, and assessment devices. Materials were designed to affix TBLT. There was one unit materials developed to support the TBLT implementation. The materials were validated by an expert judge prior to its use. Learning stages in the form of lesson plan was designed in such away in order to facilitate a learning and teaching method for every single material. Pursuant to the needs of TBLT, the learning stages was designed with four main steps abbreviated LEAN (Leading, Enriching, Activating, Naturalizing). The lesson plan is a universal plan to teach every unit of the book.

The third development was assessment devices, consisting of test and rating rubric. The test was made in the form of role play card. Each role play has different topic in accordance with topic of each unit. Role play was chosen to be a test in order to provide the learning with communication-rising activity. Rating rubric consisting of four Likert scales (1 to 4) was made in line with the learning goal, i.e. to improve students' accuracy and performance.

For the purpose of judging the three products, there were two types of instruments prepared, instrument for assessing the products and instrument for assessing the instrument. Three product-assessing-instruments were prepared to assess the learning materials, lesson plan, and assessment tools. The instruments consist of a number of statements to respond which are related to content of each product. In order to assure that the istruments were appropriate prior to their use for judgement, they were also validated by using validating instruments. The validation for the instruments and the products was involving the assisstance of an expert judge whoes expertise is in leraning model design and English learning.

Data for analysis was taken from test result. First test (T1) was given two days prior to treatment. The participants were grouped in to twenty four pairs. Each pair was given the oral role play consisting of a situation. Each person was assigned to work out the role as required by the card. The production of each participant was rated by using the scoring rubric. Finally, the students' score was listed in a table.

Treatment using the validated materials was done for three meetings. One meeting took place for 90 minutes. A lecturer who was not apart of the research team was assigned to do the instruction. Instruction using a topic "Describing a City" was undertaken based on learning stages pursuant to the lesson plan. The first meeting was strated with "leading in" activity using questioning technic. The meeting was also used to discuss pictures comparison and introduce language expressions for describing a place. This "Enriching" activity lasted with exercises. Practicing the language expression was done in "activating" activity. Students were given models of dialog and some data to practice. The last activity, "naturalization" was closing the learning on the third meeting. In this activity students were given tasks to practice the langauage in a real life situation. They were given some wider situation as basis to produce dialog.

T2 was given two days up on the treatment has lasted in order to avoid students being able to answer the test as they still remember materials during treatment. Using the same oral role play card, students were requested to peform dialog in pairs. The test result was rated using the same rubric and listed in accordance with T1 participants prior to analysis. Both test results were analyzed using paired sample t-test.

3. Result and Discussion

Result of both tests (T1 and T2) indicates that there is a significant improvement in students' competence. It can be clearly seen that students' score for each aspect was only between 1 and 2. Score 1 seems to be dominant than 2, i.e. between 77,1% and 22,8%. Their total scores also varied. Most students got total score 6 or pursued by about 53,5% students. The second most score was 7, obtained by about 25%. Score 5 even obtained by less number of student, i.e. only 17,8% of all students. The hardest score to pursue by students was 8 (by 3,5% students).

Of the five aspects tested, grammar and complexity aspects are the most difficult of all. All (100%) students only got score 1 for both aspects. Comprehension was the easiest aspect for them. They obtained both score (1 and 2) for this aspect in the same amount. Half of them (50%) obtained score 1 and half of them obtained score 2. Students' ability in pronunciation seemed to be lower than that of comprehension. Score 1 was obtained by 53,5% students and score 2 was obtained by even lower students (46,4%). Fluency is more difficult aspect than pronunciation. Most students obtained score 1 (82,1%) and only 22,8% students obtained score 2.

Students' achievement upon treatment seems to be extremely higher than that of T1. There were three different scores students obtained in the test, they are 2, 3, and 4. Score 2 was obtained by the least students (2,1%) of all. Score 3 was obtained by the most students, that was 84,2% students. And score 4 was obtained by 13,5%. Their total score also varied from 14 until 17. Most of students' total score was 15 (obtained by 46,4%) of all students. The second most total score was 16, obtained by 28,5% of all students. Total score of 17 was obtained by 14,2% and the lowest total score (14) was obtained only by 10,7% students.

Of the five aspects tested on T2, grammar got the highest score. About 21,4% of students got score 4 and about 78,5% of them got score 3 for grammar aspect. Complexity was also the easy aspect for the students. About 10,7% of them obtained score 4 and about 89,2% of them obtained score 3. Comprehension is the third easiest aspect students faced. There were 3,5% students obtained score 4 and 98,4% of the students got score 3. Fluency is easier aspect tested. All students obtained score 3 for fluency. And pronunciation seems to be the most difficult for them as only 89,2% of them got score 3 and about 10,7% of them got score 2.

Statistical analysis using paired sample t-test showed that there was significant difference between average score of first test (T1) (M=6.14) and last test (T2) (M=15.46), where t (27) = -54.51, p <. 05. That indicates that the task-based language teaching (TBLT) is effective to implement as it could improve students' English competence both accuracy and fluency.

It can be obviously see that the leaning model using TBLT can improve not only student communication skill but also grammar skill. It can be proven in from the result of T2 that stusdents' accuracy (grammar and complexity) improve significantly. Sudents' grammar and complexity was the lowerst of all in T1 (showed with score 1) could be risen up to be the highest and the second highest in T2 (showed with score 3 and 4). It is indicating that the notion stating that conventional learning

model particularly TTT, PPP, GTM can improve students grammar competence [12], [14], [13], [15], [10] is not proven. Their idea stating that TBLT is not supportive to students' grammar knowledge improvement was even contradictive to the fact found in this research.

TBLT implemented on the class treatment was obviuosly able to improve not only students' communicative competence but also grammar competence. This may caused by the implementation of teaching stages which integratee implicit and explicit form-instruction. Implicit form-instruction was taught through "leading", "activating", and "naturalization" activity, and explicit forminstruction was taught through "enriching" activity. Enricing provided students more to realize explicitly form of language. Clearly, intruducing students with expression, language functions, and sentence structures used in a certain topic benefited students.

Based on the test result, students were not able to improve their fluency more optimally than their accuracy. This might be resulted by the situation where the activitis involved in the learning sessions were filled with that exposing students grammar learning rather than using language in verbal practice. The situation might be caused by the exessive exposure of controlled practice that freer pracice during the lesson. However, seeing from both test scores, they tended to obtain much better scores on T2 being compared to T1 (1- 2 on T1 and 3 – 4 on T2). This case can strongly prove that TBLT can expose students with communicative goal apart from form mastery. TBLT introduced that language is the tool used to communicate ideas during working out the tasks rather than as an object to learn [27], 17], [18].

TBLT designed in this reserach could introduce the students with meaningful language learning. It can be traced from the free practice where students were assigned to work out the task by interviewing the students and filling in the form with the interviewees' responses. This activities was successfully directing their attention not to learn language but to use language in order to finish the task. Therefore, when the learning can meet students' needs, they will find it is very meaningful [19], [20], [21], [22], [27].

There were some activities by which students' fluency can be exposed such as writing "Favorite city" and finally describing favorite city on their own to their friends. These activities were able to motivate them to be more productive than other controlled practices. However, prior activities which required them to produced grammatical sentences when doing interview and writing their partners' response might make them be aware of making grammar mistakes.

4. Conclusion

Seeing from the activities, motivation, willingness, and perseperance students showed during the lesson and from T2 result they could perform, TBLT can be concluded as the model suitably implemented in vocational tourism college. It is a strategic model which guarenttee students' learning the two important aspects of language, i.e. competence and performance, langue and parole, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, or accuracy and fluency [2], [3], [4], [5]. The model was able to improve students' competence as it integrated the pillars, such as visible materials, language learning process, and learning evaluation. They were made integrative in order for it to be able to bridge between students' needs and teachers' teaching method.

However, there are a number of possibilities based on which the research can be replicated, such as varying the research participant, changing the research location, varying the learning materials. One of the most urgent endeavours is to condition the learning materials in such a way that they can expose students' learning to use the language more than their learning the forms. It is essential to try in order to further investigate whether (or not) it will be able to improve students' fluency apart from accuracy.

5. Acknowledgement

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