

# SOSHUM

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### Alamat Redaksi:



Redaksi **SOSHUM** Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora, Politeknik Negeri Bali  
Bukit Jimbaran, P.O.Box 1064 Tuban Badung - BALI

Phone: +62-361-701981, Fax: +62-361-701128 E-mail: [jurnal\\_soshum@pnb.ac.id](mailto:jurnal_soshum@pnb.ac.id)

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## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) AT POLITEKNIK NEGERI BALI (PNB): A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' IMPLICIT KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH

I Made Rai Jaya Widanta

Mechanical Engineering Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali  
Kampus Bukit Jimbaran, Bali. Telp. +62 361 7019 ext. 17

Luh Nyoman Chandra Handayani

Accounting Department, Politeknik Negeri Bali  
Kampus Bukit Jimbaran, Bali. Telp. +62 361 7019 ext. 17

**ABSTRACT.** This article offers a briefly-identified appropriate English teaching method to respond our needs in improving student's English mastery. A number of methods had been implemented in the teaching of English in Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB) for the last two decades, each of which certainly contributed to some advantage. All methods, such as grammar-translation method, total physical response method, audio-visual method, based on the writer's brief experience, task-based language teaching (TBLT) considered to be the most efficient and effective one, which fits the communicative language teaching (CLT) method and enables the students to improve their implicit knowledge of English. However, implementing the model requires a little bit struggling endeavor for teachers or designing the teaching materials to meet the model. The teaching materials should be designed in such a way so that the spirit of the teaching method can be met and the model can be implemented appropriately. By doing so, the teaching and learning will be fun, restful, and easy to conduct.

**KEYWORDS:** Teaching of English, task, task-based language teaching, implicit knowledge.

### BACKGROUND

There have been a lot of arguments from theorists or research on language pedagogy contrasting a number of teaching methods, approaches, techniques to achieve students' fluency and accuracy. Those ideas are raised pursuant basically to which method applied. The new, although not to be the newest, method on English teaching which is still widely used in this era is the communicative language teaching (CLT) (Oktarini, 1:10-11). This method formulizes a concept to be utilized to the teaching of English in order to achieve students' English competence, i.e. *fluency* before *accuracy* (Richard & Rod, 2001). Whatever the method is, the teaching of English shall aimed at how to make the learners feel free to explore and able to extend their ideas without having psychological burden.

The teaching of English at Politeknik Negeri Bali has been carried out with some teaching methods all of which are basically intended to improve students' English speaking capability. Not only the approach introduced initially, but also other various methods either learned through formal ways or obtained through the daily instructional activities. There seems to be a difficulty to uniform teaching method among lectures since the presence of their different goals of instruction. Moreover, the presence of the new rule passed by the institution

that students have to be competent at English which is measured by Test of English as a Foreign Language (ITP TOEFL) and is shown by mark of 400 at minimum prior to their graduation is very much demanding. This grade is considered to have been hard to pass. Every effort has been tried to perform English lectures for the sake of two objectives, students' competence at English based on curriculum, students' competence at English measured by ITP TOEFL.

There shall be a method in which both targets can be obtained mutually. The method is hopefully able to cover the intentions without leaving one of them behind. It is, however, actually hard to gain a perfect result at once since those targets lined by the institution are, although not extremely distinctive but slightly, different one another. The former is focused on students' achievement measured by regular test based on curriculum but the later is based on TOEFL. The former is focused on student's communicative skill as the final the main goal, the later is focused on written linguistic competence like grammar, reading and listening. Some efforts have been tried by the lecturers personally or in group to seek for an appropriate way by which the target can be accommodated, but it seems that it still requires much struggle.

This article is in purpose to provide an alternative English teaching method for lecturers at Politeknik Negeri Bali regarding the dilemma faced in recent years seeing from the above learning goals. The effective way suggested to respond to this lecturers' burden is the so-called "task-based language teaching" (TBLT), a method implemented in such a way that ends in student language competence (in this case grammar) through activity of communication. Students will be provided a learning situation in which they learn English implicitly. Students' implicit knowledge of English is the final target providing them opportunity to learn grammar explicitly to avoid their being nervous, stressed, and demanded in the learning process.

## DISCUSSION

### Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

A task is intended to result in a language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world (Ellis, 2003:16). Task is also both a means of clinically eliciting samples of learner language for purposes of research (Corder, 1981) and a device for organizing the content and methodology of language teaching (Prabhu, 1987). However, Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2000b) in Ellis (2000) pointed out that task is viewed differently depending on whether the perspective is that of the research or pedagogy.



Researcher may view a task in term of a set of variables impact of performance and language acquisition whereas teachers see it as a unit of work in an overall scheme of work. Furthermore, they clarified that this work plan typically involves: (1) some input (i.e) information that learners are required to process and use; and (2) some instructions relating to what outcome the learners are supposed to achieved According to Lantolf and Apple, (1994); Lantolf, (2000a) a task is work plans that re enacted in accordance with the personal disposition and goals of individual learners in particular setting, making it difficult to predict the nature of the activity that arises out of a task.

There are, in general, two major parts of task, target task and pedagogical task. A target task is a piece of work undertaken to oneself or for others, freely or for some reward, such as painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form. On the other hand, a pedagogical task is an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing and understanding language, such as drawing a map while listening to tape or listening to an instruction and performing a command (Long in Nunan, 2003), a range of work plans which have the overall purposes of facilitating language learning from simple and brief to more complex and lengthy activities (Breen in Nunan, 2003), a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in term of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed (Ellis in Nunan, 2003). So the task-based approach aims at providing opportunities for learners to experiment with and explore both spoken and written language through learning activities that are designed to engage in the authentic, practical and functional use of language for meaningful purposes.

### **Differences between a Task and an Exercise**

Skehan (1998a) distinguishes a task and an exercise as follows. A task shall has characteristics:

1. meaning is primary;
2. there is a goal which needs to be worked toward;
3. the activity is outcome-evaluated;
4. there is a real-world relationship (in Ellis:2000).

In a task, learners are primarily engaged in trying to communicate content (meaning is primary), they work towards the goal of determining whether the picture they hold is the same as or different to the picture held by their partner, the outcome is evaluated in terms of whether they are successful in this goal, and there is a relationship with the real world in the sense that the kind of discourse that arise from this task is intended to resemble that which occurs naturally (Skehan, 1998a).

Exercise as in a fill-in-blank grammar, engage learners primarily in producing correct linguistic forms, there is no obvious communicative goal to be achieved, the outcome is evaluated in terms of whether the learner's answer are grammatically correct or not, and no direct relationship between the type of language activity involved and naturally occurring discourse is intended (Skehan, 1998a). Further more, Widdowson (1998a) explains, a task and an exercise differ with regard to the kind of meaning, goal, and outcome they are directed toward. An exercise is premised on the need to develop linguistic skill as a prerequisite for the learning of communication ability, while a task is based on the assumption that linguistic ability are developed through communicative activity.

### Principles and Framework of TBLT

According to Nunan (2004:35-37), there are seven principles of TBLT as follows.

- a. *Scaffolding*; intended to lead in the learners to the topic they will learn. This activity is very essential since it functions to attract learners' schemata before being given the topic. Scaffolding should be placed in an appropriate occasion. If it is removed prematurely, the learning process will collapse. If it is maintained too long, the learners will not develop the independence required for autonomous language use.
- b. *Task Dependency*. Within a lesson, one task should grow out of, and build upon, the ones that have gone before.
- c. *Recycling*; to allow learners to encounter target language items in a range of different environment. For example, they will come to see how 'expressing likes and dislikes' and 'yes/no question with do/does' function in a range of content areas, from the world of entertainment to the world of food.
- d. *Active learning*. Learners learn best by actively using the language they are learning, through actively constructing their own knowledge rather than having it transmitted to them by the teacher.
- e. *Integration*. Learners should be taught in ways that make clear the relationships between linguistic form, communicative function and semantic meaning.
- f. *Reproduction to creation*. Learners should be encouraged to move from reproductive to creative language use.
- g. *Reflection*. Learners should be given opportunities to reflect on what they have learned and how well they are doing.



In addition, procedure, an ordered of sequence of technique describe in term of steps of work, is also an important part in the instructional process. In relation to TBLT, Willis proposed three stages, such as *Pre-task*, *the Task cycle*, and *the Language focus*.

1. In the *Pre-task* stage, the teacher explores the topic with the class and may highlight useful words and phrases, helping students understand the task instructions. The students may hear a recording of other people doing the same task.

2. In the during the task cycle stage, the students perform the task in pair or small group while the teacher monitors from a distance. The students then plan how they will tell the rest of the class what they did and how it went, and they then report on the task either orally or in writing, and/or compare notes on what has happened.

3. In the language focus stage, the students examine and discuss specific features of any listening or reading text which they have looked at for the task and/or the teacher may conduct some form of practice of specific language features which the task has provoked (Willis in IEC).

These stages will be used in designing a lesson plan.

### Implicit Learning, Knowledge, and Instruction

According to Ellis (2009) implicit learning proceeds without making demands on central attentional resources. Its generalizations arise from conspiracies of memorized utterances collaborating in productive schematic linguistic production (N. Ellis in R. Ellis, 2009:3). Learner in this case remains unaware of the learning that has taken place, although it is evident in the behavioral responses they make.

Hulstijn & Hulstijn, 1984; Seliger, 1979; Sorace, 1985 in Ellis, implicit knowledge is determined by examining the learners' use of these features in oral or written language. In addition, implicit knowledge is tacit and intuitive, procedural, available through automatic processing, an only evident in learners' verbal behavior (Ellis, 2009).

According to Housen & Pierrard, in Ellis, 2009) there are some criteria for implicit being compared to explicit instruction, as follows.

Implicit Instruction	Explicit Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attracts attention to target form</li> <li>- Is delivered spontaneously (in communicative oriented activities)</li> <li>- Is unobtrusive (minimal interruption of communication of meaning)</li> <li>- Makes no use of metalanguage</li> <li>- Encourages free use of the target form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Directs attention to target form</li> <li>- Is predetermined and planned (as the main focus and goal of then teaching activity)</li> <li>- Is obtrusive (interruption of communicative language)</li> <li>- Present target forms in isolation,</li> <li>- Uses metalinguistic terminology (e.g. role of explanation)</li> <li>- Involves controlled practice of target form.</li> </ul>



### Purposes of Task in Language Pedagogy

Basically, TBLT contributes to major goals; there are “communicative effectiveness” and “second language acquisition (SLA)” (Ellis, 2000). Specifically, there is a number of TBLT purposes as identified by Willis (1996; 35-6) as follows.

1. to give learners confidence in trying out what ever language they know;
2. to give learners experience of spontaneous interaction;
3. to give learner the chance to benefit from noticing how others express similar meanings;
4. to give learners chance for negotiating turns to speak;
5. to engage learners in using language purposefully and cooperatively;
6. 6. to make learners participate in a complete interaction, not just one-off sentence;
7. to give learners chances to try out communication strategies; and
8. to develop learners’ confidence that they can achieve communicative goals.

These purposes closely relate to the two goal of TBLT proposed by Ellis. Interestingly, seven of Willis’s purposes primarily relate to communicative effectiveness and only one (number 3) relate specifically to L2 acquisition. This is also in line very much with Yule’s theory of communicative effectiveness. This reflects that TBLT is manly directed at improving learners’ ability to *use* the target language rather than at enabling them to *acquire* new linguistic skills.

### Sample Task and Lesson Plan for TBLT

Success in language instruction depends on a number of factors, one of which is the lesson plan. Like making some preparation before other things are done, preparation prior to instruction is of much importance. It scores 75% of the success of the instruction. Lesson plan or mini plan as its simpler entity can be varied. It basically contain some substances, such as *subject; materials; teaching aids; time; objective; task; procedure* and some others.

Task sample: Task 1 : A dialog and a completed form (Activity 1)

Task 2 : (Activity 2)

To	:	_____
From	:	_____
<b>WHILE YOU WERE OUT</b>		
From	:	_____
Of	:	_____
Phone	:	_____ ext _____
Message:	:	_____
	:	_____

Subject : Listening & Speaking

Materials : Telephone messages

Teaching Aids : Form of telephone messages

Time : 30 - 45

Objectives :

- \* Ss are able to make requests with direct and in direct sentences
- \* Ss are able to translate direct and indirect requests with different subject
- \* Ss are able to fill in the form while listening to message

Task:

- Practice listening to the and filling in the form like in the given task
- Practice leaving and taking their own messages like in the given task

Procedures:

*I. Pre-task*

- T reviews useful words and phrases about leaving and taking messages
- T ask Ss to identify the direct and in direct requests in the dialog
- T ask Ss to transfer or change the direct and indirect requests

*II. Task cycle*

- Ss listen to the tape and see the dialog (Activity 1)
- Ss take turns to practice the dialog while comprehending how to fill in the form (Activity 1)
- Ss do the task (Activity 2) , and T monitors Ss' performance and take note

*III. Language focus*

- T write down words and expressions used by the Ss in doing tasks 1 & 2
- which may create misunderstanding and correct them.
- T gives feedback to improve the Ss' performance, focusing on explaining more about Ss' mistakes on grammar, vocabulary, function, and pronunciation in doing the tasks.
- T invites comments from the Ss and discusses them
- If needed, T explains more about grammar, vocabulary, function, and pronunciation found as problems and report in the process of task doing.



### The use of TBLT at Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB)

Although for some ways, this method has been applied by some English lecturers in same parts of PNB, but it is not still widely and intensively used. In some departments, such as Mechanical, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineering department, this method is even rarely used. One which is considered to be the most reason why it is not used optimally is that the teaching materials. The teaching materials should be designed in such a way so that they fit the method to implement. Material should be set based on situation that students easily recognized, and by which students can perform conversations. They should, although in forms of many kinds, be designed in form of tandem which requires students to work in pair or in group. One of the usual designs is fill-in-gap task.

The lecturers of every department, even though can not redesign their existing teaching materials, should at least try to design the each-meeting- teaching task in to the TBLT design to try implementing the method. A single hard material can be designed into a simple, interesting, communicative task by reformulating it into a situation where it is going to be used. It is going to be a situational-based task.

### CONCLUSION

The use of task in the English teaching is very much assistance for both teachers and learners. It will be very easy for lecturers to engage and involve their students into a communicative language teaching. The lecturers will not find that they seem to force the students practice and perform their competence and they don't feel to be forced to do the task. In addition, the teaching and learning activities will be very interesting, fun since the students find that they perform the task based on their own interest and motivation. Moreover, by TBLT method communicative language teaching (CLT) will be optimally applied unconsciously which will certainly affect the students' implicit knowledge of English, knowledge obtained with out much awareness or intention.

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