

Effectiveness of TBLT in Indonesian EFL Classroom

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Abstract– The research was in purpose to design a module for Indonesian language learning for Darmasiswa students – foreigners who learn Indonesian language and culture in Indonesia on behalf of Indonesian government scholarship. The module was designed for them to learn grammar materials which had been found demanding and confusing. In order for them to learn faster and partially from the regular in-class lesson, they required an exclusive grammar lesson apart from class hours. There are ten units of grammar modules whose materials were stemmed from text books level A1 they use in daily class lesson. Prior to their use in learning center (LC) room where students could learn grammar individually, the learning materials were piloted, validated by expert judges, and revised in accordance with inputs of revision they gained. Ninety Darmasiswa students from five campuses including Udayana University, Bali Sate Polytechnic, Teacher Training Institute of Saraswati Tabanan, Indonesia Art Institute of Denpasar, and Saraswati University were involved as research participants. The participant were given four sessions of Indonesian language grammar lesson using the designed module. There were four modules used to support the lessons. At the end of lesson, they were given a test to evaluate whether or not the lessons were successfully learned. Result of test indicated that module was effective for basic level of student (A1 level). Some revision should be given to make it appropriate for higher level students.

Keywords: *Effectiveness of module, autonomous learning, Indonesian language, learning center*

I. INTRODUCTION

In spite of its implementation for decades in EFL and ESL context, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach has still been receiving contradictive judgment

whether (or not) it succeeds to improve learners' English competence. Some theorists believe that TBLT results in a great success in English learning. It is believed to be able to help learners achieve language skill of listening, reading, writing, and speaking [1], [2]. and communicative competence through the real practice in target language with different contexts apart from mastering grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, or listening [3]. This approach is also chosen to be the means of learning by which learners are able to enhance their use of language by the use of authentic materials and the means of authentic learning [4].

Some theorists also support the existence of TBLT by comparing and finding the setbacks of other approaches, such as Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) and Test-Teach-Test (TTT). PPP and TTT, for instance, were found indissicive to promote learners' achievement [5], [6], [7]. They were found ineffective to improve students' goal (particularly communicative competence and was able to enhance a successful for second language acquisition and class-based research. The strong points TBLT gives include: (a) it is very supportive to the target of communicative language teaching (CLT) principles; (b) it could respond what PPP and TTT approach could not fulfill; (c) it was able to change learners' mind set that target language (TL) is a tool to communicate rather than an object of learning; (d) it introduces meaning rather than form and does not dominate students with presentation and practice (like in PPP). However, Willis [8] points out that in order for the students to get a success in their learning, they have to know or be given inputs about linguistic knowledge, such as how to open and close conversation, how to interrupt and challenge or other knowledge.

Samuda & Bygate's [9], Mackey's [10], [11] Takimoto's [12] investigation was also consistent with the above perspectives by sumrizing that TBLT can provide

learners with natural English leaning, provide input and real output; students' communicative competence was helped by the use of input-based task, it can provide students with meaningful language use and can be adapted with situation and condition. Apart from view points, TBLT approach was also researched by [13], [14], [15], and [16] to see how effective it was. Seyyadi and Ismail

[13] found out that TBLT was very effective for students and learning activities are successfully integrated and involved in a meaningful and a goal-oriented activity. It was proven to be able to solve problems, finish projects, and reach a decision. Moreover, it was suggested that, in order for it to be more effective, other supporting items should be prepared, such as the analytic syllabus which focuses on students ability to do the task which is nearly the target language without any explicitly-undertaken grammar lesson [14]. Form-focused instruction can be carried out in class through focus on meaning and grammar construction approach in a learning situation students are not aware of [16]. The research advised that TBLT syllabus designed should be in line with criteria where the learning has to meet cognitive domain, involve students, and be able to meet students needs [5] apart from being able to make students notice syntactical, phonological and lexical aspects [15].

The supporting sound from [17] clarify that TBLT was able to increase Chiang Mai University's students independence. There is some concern about the teacher about the lack of grammar, and there is students' recognition that the course was relevant to their real-world academic needs. Lastly, Ellis [18] indicates some advantages of TBLT, such as it offers natural learning, emphasizes meaning over form, it affords learners a rich input of target language, it is motivating, it is compatible with learner-centered concept, and it promotes communication fluency. Widanta [19] adds that TBLT was successfully implemented in Indonesian EFL in Balis State Polytechnic. In its implementation, four stages of Leading in, Enriching, Activating, and Naturalizing (LEAN) could help effectively expose students to learning English communicatively.

Apart from good comment, TBLT also received some critics as it was considered failed to fulfill learners' needs. Seedhouse (1999) found that it cannot avoid students using the most minimal language in order to complete the task. Students often lower their language ability in order to complete the task and often use non standard language (like pidgin) as they are judged to complete the task not complete the task by using proper language. Consequently, they will lose focus on the language they have to learn and concentrate to convey the meaning to complete the task. It was underlined why TBLT failed: (1) it constrains turn-taking; (2) it leads to minimalization or minimal volume of language because learners focus more on the task completion; (3) it spawn too many clarification request, comprehension checks, confirmation checks and self repetition which are unproven and unprovable in SLA [20]. TBLT was also refused to be implemented in English learning in South Korea as it is in contrast with Korean local culture which adopts Confucian

culture which doctrines students to always rely on the teacher [21]. This belief leads in a difficulty for teachers to get students participate in class activity.

Korean learners tend to be more tentative to speak aloud and fear to make mistakes and tend to want others to consider their culture [22]. Jeon and Hahn [23] conclude why teachers avoid TBLT in Korean classroom: (1) they have very little knowledge of task-based instruction, teacher possess limited target language proficiency, and they have difficulty in assessing learners's task-based performance. Korean students also tend to use their mother tongue (MT) to complete their task [24].

Chinese students also have similar belief. Hu [25] believes that on the basis of Confucian ideology, TBLT which triggers the application of CLT failed to be used in China due to different learning culture. The use of MT when completing task also leads Chinese learners' difficulty to improve their English language competence. Hong Kong elementary school students also did not cope with this approach as: (1) students use mother tongue when doing tasks; (2) many tasks result in non linguistic activity, such as drawing things which goes beyond the real target [24].

The two debatable stands seems to be potential to be responded. Some scholars believe that TBLT is very effective to implement in any English language teaching. On the other hand, some theorists argue the success seeing from some aspect of learners and school where learners study. Those aspect include culture, curriculum, ideology of school and country and others. This study will replicate effectiveness of TBLT to be implemented in Indonesian EFL classroom. There are two questions answered in this study: (1) How effective was TBLT being compared to its former implementation?; (2) what aspect in the teaching step was found triggering to learners' comprehension on the lesson?

II. METHOD

This is a qualitative and quantitative study on TBLT. Effectiveness of TBLT in Indonesian EFL class was analyzed with mixed method of quantitative and qualitative method, while the second question of aspects learners found effective to improve their comprehension on the topic was analyzed with qualitative method. There were sixty students from two classes administered as research participant. They were semester four students majoring in Tourism who are having one session of English a week. The classes consist of forty female and twenty male students. The participants were chosen to be the study participants as they are having English session in this semester, the classes are easily accessed by researcher and they are considered to have the same English ability based on their English teacher perception showed by their daily test result and the teachers' daily observation. In the implementation, the first class was given English learning which used TBLT and task-based English learning module, and the second group was taught with the conventional method and English materials. Both

groups were given 15-meeting English lesson. The learning was undertaken by the research team. One was assigned to teach and the other were assigned to observe and take note on the activities during they learn in class.

Prior to the learning, both groups of participant were given pretest using the test developed in prior. The test

was used as pretest and posttest instrument for both groups. The tests was in form of role play card which direct participants to perform dialog. Topic of the test were taken from materials the module introduced. Participants dialogs were scored using scoring rubric which scores five aspects, including fluency, pronunciation, comprehension, grammar, and complexity. Upon the test, they were also interviewed to know their perception about the learning procedure, whether or not TBLT could motivate them in learning and which learning stage was much helpful for their understanding on the topic.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Effectiveness of TBLT

Based on the assessment rubric developed by the research formerly which is used to measure learners' achievement (i.e. fluency and accuracy), TBLT was found effective partially. It was effective only for one aspect the assessment tools assesses and not for the other aspect.

The result of analysis showed that total students' scores of post-test and pre-test are different. There was an increase in score from pre-test to post-test (from 664 to 875). The increase was approximately 31.7%. Scores of

each aspect measured in pre-test are as follows: fluency (130), pronunciation (130), comprehension (137), grammar (124), and complexity (143). Of the scores obtained, research participants' skill in accuracy

(particularly in complexity) was the highest (143). Their second and third highest skills were in comprehension and fluency / pronunciation respectively (137 and 130). And their least skill was in grammar (124). This achievement indicated that 'fluency' aspects of language were aspects which are not extremely different in level of difficulty one another but 'accuracy' was not. Aspects of 'grammar' and 'complexity' (under the 'accuracy') were extremely different one another. Students' complexity skill was the highest of all but their grammar skill was the lowest. This situation draws that students were trying to make complex sentences, by constructing bi clauses sentences, using noun phrases (NP), compound nouns and so forth without paying attention to whether they are grammatically correct or not. This indicated that learning should also emphasize on how to produce correct form or language apart from

producing complex sentences structures and using the forms in communication activity.

Table 1. Students' Pre-Test Total Scores

Fluency		Accuracy		Total
Fluency	Pronunciation	Comprehension	Grammar	
130	130	137	124	143
				664

The situation changed upon they were given post-test. The students were able to perform a lot better. The average increase in score the participants achieved was 32%. Their scores include 'fluency' (184), 'pronunciation' (168), 'comprehension' (196), 'grammar' (155), and 'complexity' (172). Unlike in pre-test, students' most skill was in fluency especially comprehension (196), followed by 'fluency' (184), and 'complexity' (172), and pronunciation (168). 'Grammar' was still considered to be the aspect which exposed the highest level of difficulty of all, even though it scored 155 in post-test (with an increase of 25.0% from pre-test). The table clearly showed that students fostered the highest competent in fluency better than accuracy. They were a lot better as aspect of complexity (196) and 'fluency' (184). Unlike in pre-test, their level of ability in aspect of 'complexity' was the third (172). This condition signalizes that there has been a change in the way how TBLT was implemented.

Table 2. Students' Post-Test Total Scores

Fluency		Accuracy		Total
Fluency	Pronunciation	Comprehension	Grammar	
184	168	196	155	172
				875

The change in current TBLT effect on students' achievement was also drawn by the table beneath. The change in students' achievement. It can be obviously seen that 'comprehension' is the highest skill of students with increase of 43.6%, followed by 'fluency' with increase of 41.5%. The third highest percentage increase was in aspect of 'pronunciation' with percentage of 29.2%. Aspect of 'accuracy' experienced only slight increase. Of the two aspect, 'grammar' fostered higher increase than 'complexity', i.e. 25.0% and 22.3%. This situation changed sharply.

Table 3. Students' Achievement Increase Percentage

Fluency		Accuracy		Total
Fluency	Pronunciation	Comprehension	Grammar	
41.5%	29.2%	43.6%	25.0%	22.3%
				31.7%

The evidence implied an information that TBLT was partially effective for students' skill improvement, especially that of fluency. This is considered to be a success of the learning model. However, it should be redesigned to be a more effective and comprehensible for both, improvement of students' fluency and accuracy.

This partial achievement has certainly been an

indication that TBLT focused on one side and ignored

another. The learning might put an emphasis on the way how students can improve their communication skill. The proof can be seen from the activity which contributed to students' communicative activity engagement in class room, such as lead in activity, interview and filling form, and comparison and filling in form. By doing communicative activities frequently, students get used to comprehend the way how language form is used. In addition, they could make their utterances fluent (especially in the test) as they were accustomed to the communication strategy introduced [20].

3.2 Some Tasks which Improved Students' Comprehension and Engagement

Even though the module designed in prior was implemented successfully in the former lesson and was considered successful, there were new additional task which were found prospective. The task was found more effective and was able to add more value of the module. This was found during the in class learning of students. During the TBLT implementation using the module, elaboration was made as the teacher had new thought and an improvement.

a. Lead-in Activity on Every Unit of Module

In order to make the learning successful there are a number of aspects teachers have to pay attention to, one of which is students' engagement to the lesson. Without good engagement, students mostly find it hard to follow the whole lesson and to find it comprehensible.

Lead-in activity was proven to be able to improve learners' communicative competence [26]. Lead-in activity is introduced in the beginning of each unit. It is meant to anticipate students' going beyond and bias perception as early as possible prior to its effect of learning failure. Lead-in activity is undertaken with questioning technic mostly. Question and answer is an effective activity which is meaningful to build learners' concept. Building learner concept on form or language is earlier will bring about ease for them to complete the lesson or tasks they will work out.

However, mere questioning technic is not fully effective. The technic is also found potential to trigger students' bore if it is undertaken monotonously. Lead-in activity in implementation of TBLT for teaching English to Tourism Department students with this module is conducted with two activities: (1) interview and filling form; and (2) comparison and filling in form. Interview with activity of filling in form was conducted in various sessions, one of which is on teaching topic of "Describing Weather". The first unit of the module, like other unit, is initiated with the presence of the section "Snapshot" to introduce students with the glance view about the topic. This section contains pictures types of weather in some parts of the world. The pictures are also followed by a task, an autonomous activity students have to do prior to the content learning. The task is in the form of 'matching' between the pictures and statements provided. In this case students have to look at the pictures and match with corresponding statements. As the number of statement is

bigger than the pictures, students have harder job to find some statements which can represent the same picture better than to match one picture with one statement. This activity is quite interesting as students find chance to use their visual skill. However, this activity does not support the concept of CLT as it does not expose students use their English in a verbal communication. As TBLT provides students chance to use the TL and emphasizes students' engagement in communication activity [5], this task is still considered less effective to reach the target. Thus, the task, and other section of 'snapshot' is supported with two activities as follows.

b. Interview and Filling Form

This additional activities is attached to 'matching pictures and statement' task when teaching section "snapshot". This task activity was designed upon students' failure in engaging themselves with topic, particularly forms or language being learnt. Students seemed to have difficulty to comprehend and get what point to focus in the topic. The presence of 'interview and filling form' activity seemed to be effective to enhance students' comprehension on the topic. The activity was started by giving students form of interview about their friends' hometown weather. The task contains statements students have to fill in after they asked questions to their friends.

What's the weather like in your friends' hometown?

Your friend's hometown weather _____

The hottest temperature _____

The coldest temperature _____

The coldest month _____

The hottest month _____

People favourite activity on cold days _____

People favourite activity on hot days _____

As the form consists of some different statements, students were triggered to put in their mind what questions were compatible to ask for response of each statement. In this case, they were stimulated to prepare questions before they started to ask questions. Their success in creating questions were certainly in accordance with teachers' assistance. Setting questions prior to their producing questions in verbal interaction eased them very much.

In its implementation, students were able to perform the task successfully. They could ask questions even though they still tried hard to memorize those questions. Their achievement in making and asking questions made them motivated to practice and learn more. This was the result of the condition where they felt it was not very demanding to perform dialog even though still in a basic level. There are three things the task contributes that students found it easier to comprehend the topic: (1) they were more aware of the form or language used through introducing them with natural language, real input [11] and [12]; (2) their readiness was stimulated and

formed in prior; (3) they reached their language skills [2] and communicative competence [3] as they could undergo real practice of TL; (4) they found the task meaningful better than the former task which did not involve communication [13].

c. Comparison and Filling in Form

This task was implemented in unit 3 of the module with topic of shopping. The lead-in activity in the section of "snapshot" was initiated with pictures about different shopping sites. These pictures were intended to provide students vision as a topic to discuss. The pictures are completed with some guided questions. However, students seemed lack of ideas what to discuss. It means, the snapshot was not effective to develop students' communicative competence [3]. Thus, in order to make it more meaningful for students so that students can be engaged with the topic easily, task of 'comparison and filling form' was provided. This task used questioning technic. Prior to the task implementation, students were introduced with model of dialog which contains key questions or declarative sentences, particularly how to tell and ask about prices, such as 'In my hometown, one bowl of meatball costs' 'How much is it in your hometown?'. The model was also practiced a few times before the real ask was administered. The following is the task used in this section.

Comparing Prices				
Items	U	1 st F	2 nd F	3 rd F
Fried rice	---	---	---	---
Meatball	---	---	---	---
Mineral water	---	---	---	---
House/ room rent	---	---	---	---
A cup of coffee	---	---	---	---
A litre of premium In Kioz	---	---	---	---

U = in your area
1st F = the first Friend
2nd F = the first Friend
3rd F = the first Friend

The task was found meaningful to improve their communicative skill because it could provide students with natural English and both real input and real output [11]; [12]. This is considered as the endeavor to build strong basic comprehension in their mind. Building good comprehension is similar to build a good building foundation which will determine whether or not the building will be successful. By recognizing the form, such as structure of question asking prices, the way how to answer questions,

The implementation of TBLT by using this module and inserting 'the lead-in activity' was very effective to develop students' language. The use of open

questions in the task enable students to widen their insight and knowledge about language or form. They were able to develop their ideas by being given open question like 'Why?' This fact covered the ideas that TBLT constrains turn taking in the way students undertake conversation, leads to minimization of language as learners focus on task completion [20].

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

TBLT was found to be effective for improving students' productive skill partially, especially that that of communication since the task was designed for a specific language use. It was supported with learning activities which involved "lead-in activity" which was based on question and answer technic, 'interview and filling in form', and 'comparison and filling in form' activities. Inits designing, it was focused to discuss only one single part of language form and students were focused to complete the task not to learn the language. As a task was focused to a single form, it was not very difficult to complete the task in a relatively short time. However, students could not realized what form they actually learned [20] and how the form could be further expanded to make various questions. The notion which foster that TBLT can improve students' skill of communication partially apart from their grammar and complexity mastery should be proven with further research. This research can be redesigned by involving different number or type of participants, location, learning materials, learning duration.

Recommendation to implementation of TBLT, seeing from the occurred phenomenon, is that English instructor should realize what harm TBLT contributes and try to design learning activity and materials which could also promote students' grammar learning. Grammar learning can be undertaken exclusively or in an integrated pattern that it can provide students real grammar learning.

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