

English Students' Perceptions on the Implementation of Task- Based Language Teaching Material at Akademi Bahasa Asing Universitas Muslim Indonesia

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Title

English Students' Perceptions on the Implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching
Material at Akademi Bahasa Asing Universitas Muslim Indonesia

Author

Muhammad Yunus, S.S., M.Pd.
Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar Indonesia

Bio-Profile:

Muhammad Yunus is a lecturer at Fakultas Sastra Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) Makassar in Indonesia. His research interest is in the area of English education and language teaching methodology. He can be contacted at yunus_sastra@yahoo.com.

Abstract

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of the teaching methods organizing the sequence of tasks generating the language to be used. In TBLT, teachers' ask students to carry out series of tasks which they will require and recycle some specific items of language. This research aimed to obtain the information about English Students' Perceptions on the Implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching Material at Akademi Bahasa Asing (ABA) Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI). This research used descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The result expected is that how the students' reacted about the implementation of Task Based Language Teaching Material at Akademi Bahasa Asing Universitas Muslim Indonesia.

Keywords: *Implementation of TBLT, English Students' Perceptions, ABA-UMI⁹*

Introduction

Task-based language teaching is not new (Willis, 2005). The arrival of task-based language teaching (TBLT) started in the early 1970s in Bangalore, Southern India, Prabhu originated a long-running project which used task-based learning in a very different context (Harmer, 1991). Willis (1994) suggest three basic stages: in the pre-task stage, the teacher investigates the topic with the class and may label useful words and phrases, assisting students to catch on the task instruction, during the task cycle stage, the students perform the task in pairs or small groups while the teacher monitor from a distance, and on the post-test, the students then design how they will inform the rest of the class what they did and how it went, they then review on the task either orally or in writing.

The concept of TBLT which entered the field of second language acquisition as a model for how to create a process-oriented syllabus and design communicative tasks to promote the use of actual language by the learners. In various interpretations, it related to the classroom practice which are compatible with the philosophy of learner-centered education (Bygate et al., 2001; Ellis, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Nunan, 2005; Shehadeh, 2005). TBLT is composed of specific components such as goal, procedure, results (Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 2001), and TBLT suggests content oriented meaningful activities rather than linguistic forms (Carless, 2002; Littlewood, 1981).

The tasks intended are the sequence of activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome (Sidek, 2012; Priyana, 2001; Samuda and Bygate, 2008). The activities proposed by some authors are everything which a learner engages in order to attain an objective, which neccessitates the use of language, which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language, which the learners have to do for non-instructional purposes outside the classroom as opportunities for language learning, and which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allow teacher to control and regulate that process was regarded as a task (Long, M. and Richards, 2006; long, 1985; Crookes, 1986; Carrol, 1993; Bachman & Palmer 1996, Krahne, 1987; Breen, 1987; Prabhu, 1987; Candlin, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 2003).

For the last two years, the TBLT approach at Akademi Bahasa Asing (ABA) Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI) is one of the approaches which was maximally applied on the course of reading comprehension despite the fact that it has actually been applied also to the other ones, but it is just as likely to focus on the language form not on the language

function to be learnt. This approach is still evaluated to determine whether to provide a significant contribution to language learning, especially in the course of reading comprehension or not.

Based on the above mentioned, this study considerably needs to look at the English students' perception on the implementation of the TBLT approach to the course of reading comprehension at ABA UMI. This is important to review periodically in order to be able to know the development of teaching and learning processes based on TBLT through the students' perception by considering the aspects of strengths and weaknesses, so that we can see the strengths which should be kept and the weaknesses which should be improved.

In addition, the results of this study may be a consideration for policy makers at ABA UMI to further develop this approach by conducting training on a regular basis to the teachers to improve their professionalism in managing the classroom, so that the teacher can apply it to subjects that fit in teaching and learning process. Thus, the system of classroom learning could take place; that is, the teachers with the TBLT approach owned can create a system of meaningful learning through a variety of tasks. This is the primary consideration to conduct this study; that is, to determine the English Students' Perceptions on the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching Materials at ABA UMI.

Literature Review

Based on constructivist teaching theory and methodology of communicative language teaching, TBLT has evolved in response to some of the limitations of traditional language teaching approaches. The development of language teaching is shown by the presentation of procedures, practices, and implementation (Ellis, 2003; Long & Crookes, 1991). The task-based teaching has substantial implications for teaching through a process of development by encouraging communication and social interaction. With task-based instruction, students learn the target language more effectively because they perform these activities naturally; occurred in the eighties when language teaching developed various task approaches (Breen, 1987; Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987).

In the nineties, the language teaching developed into a detailed practical framework for the communicative classroom. Through the focus of language, learners perform activities based on a series of tasks starting from the pre-task preparation, task performance, up to the post-task feedback (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996). Although the use of tasks in language teaching is common, there are some significant challenges behind the design of syllabi and

authentic materials based on the tasks. The challenge according to Ellis (2003) lies in the different perspectives including verbal, writing, and assessment ability. In response to these challenges, many second language acquisition (SLA) researchers today distract their attention from the tasks of conceptualization to the tasks of implementation based on observations of TBLT methodology's practical usefulness in the classroom practice.

In order to formulate useful tasks for communicative classes, it is first necessary to provide a precise definition of 'task' related to its properties and parts. In various discussions and interpretations related to the definition of tasks, Nunan (1989) suggests that the tasks can be conceptualized in relation to the specific objectives of the task purpose, input data, which became the starting point of the tasks, and related procedures the students did in completion of the task. Willis (1996) provides a definition of a task as an activity in which the target language is used for communicative purposes in order to achieve an outcome. Skehan (1998) suggests the main properties of the task in four criteria: there are goals to be worked on; activity is evaluated; meaning is the main matter; and there is a connection with the real world. Candlin and Murphy (1987) assert that these tasks can be done effectively by systematic components including objectives, inputs, settings, activities, roles, and feedback. In short, the goal refers to a general purpose for that task, and input represents the verbal and non-verbal material in which the participants work for the tasks. The setting refers to the environment in which the task was done, and activities involve cases where participants will work on those tasks in a given setting. The role of the teacher and students are intimately associated with the successful execution of those tasks, and feedback regarding the task's evaluation. Framework of tasks components provide researchers of SLA in a task-based syllabus design and development of authentic material a starting point for designing task-based activities.

Methodology

In an effort to investigate the English students' perceptions on TBLT reading materials, this research investigates about the English students' perceptions on the Implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching reading material. Based on the aspect mentioned above, the proposed research questions is how well are the English students' perceptions on the implementation of TBLT reading materials at ABA-UMI?

In this research, the instrument used consisted of the questions designed to find out English students' perceptions on the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching reading material at ABA-UMI. Those questions were formulated in a simple questionnaire

which consists of three parts of the questions based on the response percentage of respondents. The first part of the question (question 1) contains the aspects of the sorts of tools available used to obtain information about teaching material, coursebook, teaching aids, workbook, classroom atmosphere, and lecturer's method in teaching. The second part (number 2) is related to the students which were interested to attend the lecture using TBLT coursebook in the future. The third part of the section (number 3) is associated with the coursebook and workbook the students have used. The questions are partially adapted and modified from Long's (2015) checklist to evaluate the English students' perceptions on the implementation of TBLT reading materials.

The populations in this research were the first and the second year of English students of the English Department at ABA-UMI which consisted of seven classes, A-G. The first comprised four classes of 105 students, and the second had three classes of 245 students. Therefore, the total number of the populations were 245 students. Then, the sampels randomly taken were 5 students from each of the classes A-G. Thus the total number of the sampels were 35 students.

Data collection in this research, the questionnaires were distributed to the sampels of 35 students in the classes in January 2016. Before the students filled out the questionnaires, the researcher first explained the purpose of the research and asked them to answer the questionnaires. Within one hour, the questionnaires had been completed by all the students to provide answers to each according to what they have experienced and were known about the implementation of TBLT reading materials in the classroom.

The data obtained were analysed by the simple percentage of students' responses. The students' responses intended in this research were as follows: (a) a positive response; that is, students' statement in the category of fun, new, and interested in the components of learning activities, and (b) a negative response; that is, students' statement in a category of not fun, not new, and not interested in the components of the learning activities.

Results and Discussion

Results

Table 1 presents the English students' perceptions on the implementation of TBLT reading materials. To facilitate the assessment, the simple percentage of English student perception was used.

Table 1

No	Aspects of Assessment	Percentage (%)	
		Interest -ing	uninteresting
1	What is your opinion about		
	a. Teaching Materials	85	15
	b. Coursebook	90	10
	c. Teaching aids	90	10
	d. Workbook	84	16
	e. Classroom atmosphere	90	10
	f. Lecturer's method in teaching	86	14
	Average	87.5	12.5
2	Aspects of Assessment	Percentage (%)	
		interest ing	uninteresting
	In the future, are you interested to attend the lecture using TBLT reading coursebook	90	10
3	Aspects of Assessment	Percentage (%)	
		yes	no
		Give your comments about the coursebook and workbook you have used.	
		a. Do you agree that the coursebook and the workbook are easy to read?	85 15
		b. Do the coursebook and the workbook use the familiar English?	90 10
	c. Do you agree that the coursebook and workbook are interesting?	80	20
	Average	85	15
	Total Average	87,5	12,5

The first question for the teaching materials showed 85%, for the coursebook 90%, for the teaching aids 90 %, for the workbook 84 %, for the classroom atmosphere 90 %, and for the lecturer method in teaching 86% of respondents interesting respectively. On the second question, in the future are you interested to attend the lecture using TBLT coursebook, showed 90% of respondents interesting. The last question for item (a) 85 % of the respondents agreed that the coursebook and the workbook are easy to read, item (b) 90% agreed that the coursebook and the workbook use the familiar English, and item (c) 80% agreed that the coursebook and workbook are interesting. So, the total average of the respondents who showed fun, new, and interesting is 87.5%

Discussion

First, the question 1 for item (a), 85% of the respondents perceived positively when asked about teaching material. The respondents stated that the teaching materials contain the themes

which related to the real world life of daily activities. Thus the themes made us fun. Item (b), 90% of the respondents perceived positively when asked about the coursebook. The students asserted that the coursebook could facilitate us to improve our knowledge through simple reading text materials. Besides, the coursebook provided the visual and auditory which assist us in the learning teaching process. Item (c), 90% of the respondents noted positively when questioned about the teaching aids. The students stated that the teaching aids, such as LCD, whiteboard, boardmaker, and rods made the learning teaching process easier. Item (d), 84% of the respondents explained positively when questioned about the students' workbook. The students informed that the workbook assisted to more understanding the reading text material because in the workbook was prepared a variety of exercises which could improve the reading comprehension. Item (e), 90% of respondents affirmed that the classroom atmosphere provided a relaxed condition in learning teaching process. This is because the classrooms have the quite large spaces to arrange the chairs according to the teaching activities. Item (f), 86% of the respondents stated that the lecturer's method in teaching provided the various approaches which stimulated the students to more active interaction in the classroom. In conclusion, most of the sorts of tools available used to obtain information about teaching material, coursebook, teaching aids, workbook, classroom atmosphere, and lecturer's method in teaching made the students very enjoyable and exciting.

Second, the question 2 showed that 90% of the students were interested to attend the lecture using TBLT reading materials. They perceived that this approach was suitable for various group works, provided the variety of students' interaction in learning teaching process, encouraged the students' motivation, created a collaborative learning environment, promoted the students' academic progress, was suitable for the classroom setting, and promoted the use of the target language.

Third, the question 3 for item (a) 85% of the students agreed that the coursebook and the workbook are easy to read. The respondents explained that the coursebook and the workbook are easy to read because the reading material contents related to the real world lives. Item (b), 90% of the students noted that the coursebook and the workbook used the familiar English. The vocabulary used in the coursebook and the workbook is easily recognized because the vocabulary consists of the simple words. Besides, the sentences are simple and compounds. Item (c), 80% of the students stated that the coursebook and workbook are interesting. The coursebook and the workbook which make interesting are the impressive book's cover, the interesting themes, and the attractive illustration.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusions

In conclusion, the overall findings of this research indicated that the students had the positive perception, especially on the teaching materials, the teaching aids, the workbook, the classroom atmosphere, and the lecturer method in teaching. Besides, the students also were interested to attend the lecture using TBLT coursebook and agreed that the coursebook and the workbook are easy to read, the coursebook and the workbook use the familiar English, and the coursebook and workbook are interesting. Therefore, this approach should be maintained because the students had positive perception which make them fun and interesting in learning English.

Suggestions.

It is suggested that the policy makers at ABA UMI should develop this approach by conducting the workshop on a regular basis to the teachers to improve their professionalism in managing the classroom, so that the teachers can apply it to subjects that fit in teaching and learning process. In addition, the teaching aids and other facilities which make the teaching and learning processes conducive should be improved either in quantities or in qualities.

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