

ENHANCING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT)

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ABSTRACT

Students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms often face difficulties in developing their speaking skills due to limited vocabulary, pronunciation problems, and low self-confidence, which hinder their ability to communicate effectively. To address this issue, this study aimed to analyze the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving students' speaking skills and to explore their perceptions toward its use in the classroom. The research was conducted in a junior high school in Karawang, Indonesia, involving one English teacher and 40 eighth-grade students, with six purposively selected as interview participants. A qualitative case study design was employed, using classroom observations and semi-structured interviews as the main techniques of data collection. Thematic analysis was applied to interpret the data. The findings show that TBLT was implemented through three stages, namely pre-task, task cycle, and post-task, using recount texts as the learning material. During these stages, students actively participated in pair discussions, presented their work, and received feedback, which contributed to the improvement of their classroom engagement and confidence. Nevertheless, several challenges were identified, including vocabulary limitations, pronunciation difficulties, and variations in students' levels of confidence. Overall, students perceived TBLT positively, emphasizing that collaborative learning and meaningful tasks encouraged them to be more active in communication. This study concludes that TBLT plays a significant role in enhancing students' speaking skills and provides practical implications for EFL teachers in designing interactive and student-centered learning activities.

Keywords: speaking skill, student perception, TBLT

ABSTRAK

Siswa dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) sering mengalami kesulitan dalam mengembangkan keterampilan berbicara akibat keterbatasan kosakata, kesulitan pengucapan, dan rendahnya rasa percaya diri, sehingga menghambat kemampuan mereka untuk berkomunikasi secara efektif. Untuk menjawab masalah tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa serta mengeksplorasi persepsi mereka terhadap penerapan metode ini di kelas. Penelitian dilaksanakan di salah satu SMP di Karawang, Indonesia, dengan melibatkan satu guru Bahasa Inggris dan 40 siswa kelas VIII, serta enam siswa yang dipilih secara purposif untuk diwawancara. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi kelas dan wawancara semi-terstruktur.

Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan thematic analysis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa TBLT diimplementasikan melalui tiga tahap, yaitu pre-task, task cycle, dan post-task dengan menggunakan teks recount sebagai materi pembelajaran. Pada setiap tahap, siswa terlibat aktif dalam diskusi berpasangan, mempresentasikan hasil kerja, dan menerima umpan balik, yang berkontribusi pada peningkatan partisipasi dan rasa percaya diri mereka. Meskipun demikian, terdapat beberapa kendala seperti keterbatasan kosakata, kesulitan pengucapan, dan perbedaan tingkat kepercayaan diri antar siswa. Secara umum, siswa memberikan persepsi positif terhadap penerapan TBLT, karena pembelajaran kolaboratif dan tugas bermakna mendorong mereka untuk lebih aktif berkomunikasi. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa TBLT berperan signifikan dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa serta memberikan implikasi praktis bagi guru EFL untuk merancang pembelajaran interaktif yang berpusat pada siswa.

Kata Kunci: persepsi siswa, sekolah menengah pertama, TBLT

A. Introduction

Speaking is a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it enables students to communicate ideas effectively, interact in authentic contexts, and build confidence in language use. In Indonesia, however, speaking is often considered the most challenging skill to master because classroom practices remain dominated by teacher-centered instruction, leaving students with limited opportunities for communicative interaction. As a result, learners frequently struggle with low participation, lack of motivation, and limited confidence in speaking English.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been introduced as a promising solution to these challenges. TBLT emphasizes the use of meaningful tasks as the central unit

of instruction, encouraging learners to use language for real communication rather than merely practicing isolated forms (Nunan, 2004). Research has demonstrated that TBLT not only improves students' fluency and vocabulary but also fosters collaboration and builds learner confidence. For instance, Nugrahaeni (2022) reported that junior high school students showed significant improvement in speaking fluency and vocabulary through TBLT-based activities, while Gortaire Díaz et al. (2023) highlighted that task-based instruction encouraged collaborative learning and enhanced students' motivation.

Nevertheless, most existing studies have been conducted in senior high schools or higher education, leaving a gap in research at the junior high school level in Indonesia. This

study seeks to fill that gap by investigating how TBLT is implemented in an EFL classroom at a junior high school in Karawang and examining students' perceptions of its effectiveness in improving their speaking skills.

moderately active, and two less active.

This purposive sampling ensured diverse perspectives on how TBLT influenced speaking development. Data Collection, Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews.

Classroom observations were conducted during three TBLT-based speaking lessons to document how the teacher implemented pre-task, task cycle, and post-task stages. Field notes and an observation checklist were used to capture student participation, interaction patterns, and engagement.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the English teacher and six students to gain insights into their perceptions, experiences, and challenges regarding TBLT implementation. Data Analysis, Thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), was used to analyze the data. The analysis followed six phases: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. This approach enabled systematic identification of recurring patterns in students' experiences and teacher practices,

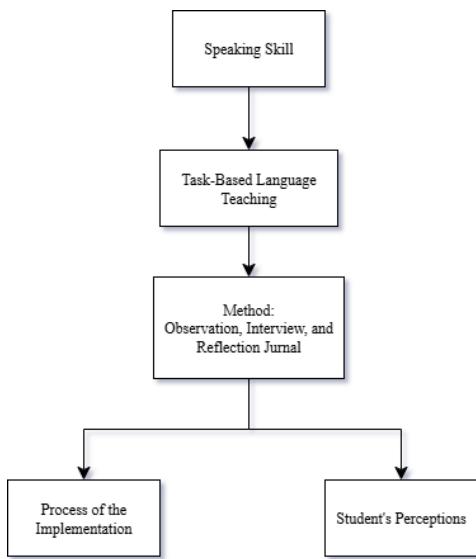
B. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in teaching speaking and to investigate students' perceptions of its application in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. A qualitative case study is appropriate for examining teaching and learning processes in depth and within a real-world context, as it allows researchers to capture detailed classroom practices and participants' experiences (Yin, 2014).

Research Site and Participants. The research was conducted at a junior high school in Karawang, Indonesia, focusing on one eighth-grade class consisting of 40 students. One English teacher served as the main instructor, while six students were purposively selected as interview participants to represent varying levels of speaking engagement—two highly active, two

ensuring a comprehensive understanding of TBLT implementation in the EFL classroom.

Gambar 1. Conceptual Framework



C. Results and Discussion

Implementation of TBLT in Teaching Speaking Classroom observations showed that the teacher implemented TBLT through three main stages: pre-task, task cycle, and post-task. In the pre-task stage, scaffolding such as vocabulary introduction and clear instructions helped students feel more prepared, as reflected in student interviews: “Awalnya malu, tapi setelah dijelaskan sama guru jadi lebih ngerti” (R1)

Teacher support at this stage was crucial to reduce anxiety and build readiness.

During the task cycle, students collaborated in pairs and groups to

produce recount texts, which they later presented orally. Observations recorded that “students work in pairs” and “peer interaction promotes the use of English,” showing that collaboration encouraged participation and provided scaffolding among peers

. This finding confirms Willis's (1996) TBLT framework, which emphasizes interactive task cycles to promote communication.

In the post-task stage, the teacher provided direct feedback on pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Students reflected positively, with one noting that the activities were “seru sih, soalnya bisa kerja kelompok dan diskusi sama teman” (R4)

This aligns with Nunan's (2004) view that TBLT fosters authentic communication and learner-centered instruction.

Students' Perceptions of TBLT, Students expressed a generally positive perception of TBLT. Interview data indicated that learners felt more confident and motivated: “Saya jadi lebih percaya diri ngomong meski masih salah-salah” (R5)

Teacher reflections also noted improvement: “Students who were

usually passive started contributing small parts" (Teacher Journal, Aug 11)

These perceptions are consistent with findings by Nugrahaeni (2022), who showed that TBLT increased students' willingness to participate, and Gortaire Díaz et al. (2023), who highlighted its motivational benefits through collaboration.

However, challenges remained. Some students reported difficulty with vocabulary and pronunciation, and observations confirmed reliance on notes during oral presentations. A student mentioned: "*Tantangan aku tuh susah banget cari kosakata baru, apalagi dalam Bahasa Inggris*" (R3)

Such issues mirror the difficulties described by Carless (2007), who noted that while TBLT enhances fluency, students may struggle without explicit form-focused support.

Discussion, Overall. The findings demonstrate that TBLT can create a supportive and engaging learning climate that enhances participation, confidence, and motivation. The approach provides authentic opportunities for language use while promoting collaboration and peer scaffolding. Nevertheless, the research also indicates practical

constraints, such as time management, large class sizes, and varied proficiency levels, which affect implementation. These results reinforce the importance of balancing communicative tasks with teacher scaffolding, as suggested in previous studies (Nunan, 2004; Willis, 1996).

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in junior high school EFL classrooms effectively enhances students' speaking skills by promoting active participation, collaboration, and confidence. The systematic use of pre-task, task cycle, and post-task stages created meaningful opportunities for learners to practice authentic communication, while teacher scaffolding and peer interaction supported comprehension and engagement. Despite challenges such as vocabulary limitations, pronunciation difficulties, and time management constraints, students perceived TBLT positively, highlighting its motivational value and relevance for their language learning. These findings contribute to the growing evidence that TBLT is a powerful learner-centered approach

for developing speaking skills in Indonesian junior high school contexts, and they provide practical implications for teachers to design communicative, task-based activities that balance fluency, accuracy, and learner support.

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