

INTEGRATING JOYFUL LEARNING PRINCIPLES IN TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING TO BUILD STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN ENGLISH CLASS AT SMPN 2 SIMPENAN

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ABSTRACT

Student participation is an important aspect of successful English language learning, activities. However, many students are reluctant to participate actively due to low motivation, lack of confidence, and limited opportunities for meaningful interaction. This study aimed to investigate how joyful learning principles integrated into Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) build students' participation in English classes and to identify the challenges encountered during its implementation. This study employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through classroom observations, student interviews, and teacher interviews and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model of qualitative data analysis. The findings revealed that integrating joyful learning principles within TBLT encouraged students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Students actively participated in learning activities, collaborated with peers, completed assigned tasks, and engaged in discussions and problem-solving. Students also stated that enjoyable and interactive activities made them feel more comfortable, motivated, confident, and willing to participate. In addition, these learning activities provided meaningful opportunities for students to communicate, collaborate, and express their ideas in a supportive classroom environment. Several challenges were identified, including classroom management, differences in students' motivation, confidence, and language proficiency, difficulties in designing tasks, and time constraints. Overall, the findings indicate that integrating joyful learning principles into TBLT supported students' participation by creating a more engaging learning environment.

Keywords: Joyful Learning, Task-Based Language Teaching, Student Participation, English Language Learning.

ABSTRAK

Partisipasi siswa merupakan aspek penting dalam keberhasilan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, yang mencerminkan keterlibatan siswa secara perilaku, kognitif, dan emosional selama kegiatan di kelas. Namun, banyak siswa yang enggan berpartisipasi secara aktif karena motivasi yang rendah, kurangnya kepercayaan diri, dan terbatasnya kesempatan untuk berinteraksi secara bermakna. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana prinsip-prinsip pembelajaran yang menyenangkan yang diintegrasikan ke dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Berbasis Tugas (TBLT) dapat meningkatkan partisipasi siswa dalam kelas bahasa Inggris serta mengidentifikasi tantangan yang dihadapi selama pelaksanaannya. Penelitian ini

menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara siswa, dan wawancara guru, serta dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif analisis data kualitatif Miles dan Huberman. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa mengintegrasikan prinsip-prinsip pembelajaran yang menyenangkan dalam TBLT mendorong keterlibatan perilaku, kognitif, dan emosional siswa. Siswa berpartisipasi secara aktif dalam kegiatan pembelajaran, berkolaborasi dengan teman sebaya, menyelesaikan tugas yang diberikan, serta terlibat dalam diskusi dan pemecahan masalah. Para siswa juga menyatakan bahwa kegiatan yang menyenangkan dan interaktif membuat mereka merasa lebih nyaman, termotivasi, percaya diri, dan bersedia untuk berpartisipasi. Selain itu, kegiatan pembelajaran ini memberikan peluang yang bermakna bagi siswa untuk berkomunikasi, berkolaborasi, dan mengekspresikan ide-ide mereka dalam lingkungan kelas yang mendukung. Beberapa tantangan teridentifikasi, antara lain manajemen kelas, perbedaan dalam hal motivasi, kepercayaan diri, dan kemahiran bahasa siswa, kesulitan dalam merancang tugas, serta keterbatasan waktu. Secara keseluruhan, temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa penerapan prinsip-prinsip pembelajaran yang menyenangkan dalam TBLT mendukung partisipasi siswa dengan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang lebih menarik.

Kata Kunci: Joyful Learning, Task-Based Language Teaching, Partisipasi Siswa, Keterlibatan Siswa, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris.

A. Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction positions the classroom as the primary environment where students acquire and practice the target language. Unlike learners in second-language contexts, EFL students have limited opportunities to use English beyond the classroom, making classroom instruction a critical determinant of language acquisition. Consequently, English language learning should not merely emphasize the mastery of grammar and vocabulary but should also foster students' ability to use English as a means of authentic communication

through active, interactive, and meaningful learning experiences.

However, the learning conditions in several junior high schools in Simpenan Subdistrict indicate that students' participation in English classes remains relatively low. Preliminary observations revealed that students tend to become passive, particularly during examination periods. This decline in learning motivation is exacerbated by teacher-centered instructional practices and the limited variety of classroom activities. Monotonous learning experiences often lead to boredom, reduced self-confidence, and

reluctance to participate actively in classroom interactions. As a consequence, students have limited opportunities to develop speaking skills, critical thinking, and communicative competence, which are fundamental objectives of English language learning.

Student participation is widely recognized as a key indicator of successful learning because it reflects students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement throughout the instructional process. Learners who actively communicate with teachers and peers, express ideas, and practice English in meaningful contexts are more likely to develop communicative competence than those who remain passive recipients of information. Therefore, promoting active student participation has become an essential objective in designing effective English language teaching strategies.

One instructional approach with considerable potential to address this issue is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). TBLT places meaningful communicative tasks at the center of the learning process, enabling students to acquire language through authentic interaction,

collaboration, and negotiation of meaning. By engaging in meaningful tasks, students are encouraged to communicate, think critically, and apply English in real-life contexts. Nevertheless, the implementation of TBLT does not always produce optimal outcomes because many students continue to experience anxiety, low self-confidence, and discomfort when performing language tasks, particularly in classrooms that provide insufficient emotional support.

To overcome these limitations, integrating the principles of joyful learning into TBLT offers a promising pedagogical alternative. Joyful learning promotes a positive, engaging, and supportive classroom atmosphere that motivates students to participate actively in learning activities. The incorporation of enjoyable activities, such as language games, role-plays, and collaborative group discussions, within the TBLT framework enables students to use English more naturally without excessive fear of making mistakes. Such a learning environment is expected to enhance students' motivation, self-confidence, and classroom engagement while

fostering more meaningful language learning experiences.

Although Task-Based Language Teaching and joyful learning have been extensively investigated independently, studies integrating both approaches with a specific emphasis on enhancing student participation remain limited, particularly at the junior high school level. Existing research has predominantly focused on learning achievement or the development of specific language skills, whereas student participation as an indicator of learning engagement has received comparatively less attention. This gap highlights the need for empirical research examining how the integration of TBLT and joyful learning can simultaneously promote students' active participation in English language learning.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating joyful learning principles into Task-Based Language Teaching with a primary focus on fostering students' participation in junior high school English classrooms. Unlike previous studies that mainly evaluated learning outcomes or language proficiency, this research positions student participation as the principal

indicator of instructional effectiveness.

Therefore, this study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically by providing evidence-based insights into the development of participatory English language teaching strategies and by offering English teachers an alternative instructional approach that is interactive, communicative, enjoyable, and aligned with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to investigate how the integration of joyful learning principles into Task-Based Language Teaching enhances students' participation and to identify the challenges encountered during its implementation in English classrooms at SMP Negeri 2 Simpenan.

B. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the implementation of joyful learning principles within Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and their role in fostering students' participation in English language learning. A qualitative descriptive design was selected because it enables an in-depth description of naturally

occurring classroom phenomena. The study was grounded in the constructivist paradigm, which views knowledge as socially constructed through interaction and learning experiences; therefore, student participation was conceptualized as a dynamic process emerging from interactions among teachers, students, learning tasks, and the classroom environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consistent with Creswell (2014), this approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how joyful learning is integrated into TBLT and how students respond throughout the instructional process.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Simpenan, Sukabumi, Indonesia, from February to June 2026. The school was selected because it represents an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context in which students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, making it an appropriate setting for investigating the implementation of joyful learning principles within task-based instruction.

The research instruments consisted of an observation checklist and semi-structured interview guidelines. The observation checklist

was developed to examine students' behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching, and the application of joyful learning principles. The observation indicators were adapted from the student engagement framework proposed by Fredricks et al. (2004) and were aligned with the principles of TBLT and joyful learning. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students to explore their emotional engagement, including their comfort, motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, willingness to participate, and learning experiences during classroom activities. In addition, interviews with the English teacher were carried out to identify challenges encountered in integrating joyful learning into TBLT, including instructional planning, student characteristics, classroom management, time allocation, and strategies employed to address implementation constraints. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian to ensure participants could express their perspectives clearly and were subsequently translated into English for analysis.

Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-

structured interviews. Classroom observations documented students' participation during task-based and joyful learning activities, while student interviews explored their perceptions and experiences of the learning process. Teacher interviews focused on the challenges and instructional strategies involved in implementing the integrated approach.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data condensation, observation notes and interview transcripts were reviewed, reduced, and categorized according to three dimensions of student participation: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. The organized data were subsequently presented in narrative, tabular, and matrix formats to facilitate pattern identification and interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified through triangulation of observation and interview data, cross-checking with field notes, and peer debriefing to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

C.Result and Discussion

Result

This study investigated the implementation of joyful learning principles in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to enhance students' participation and identify the challenges encountered during its implementation. Data were collected through classroom observations and interviews with an English teacher and 28 eighth-grade students at a junior high school in Simpenan. The students demonstrated diverse levels of English proficiency, motivation, and confidence. The classroom context reflected an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment with limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Prior to the implementation of joyful learning-based TBLT, instruction was predominantly teacher-centered. The integration of joyful learning through pair and group activities provided students with opportunities to interact, communicate, and actively use English during classroom tasks.

The findings were organized into two main themes: (1) the contribution of joyful learning principles in TBLT to students' participation based on Fredricks et

al.'s (2004) dimensions of engagement, including behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement; and (2) the challenges encountered in implementing joyful learning within TBLT.

1. The Integration of Joyful Learning in TBLT to Build Students' Participation

Regarding behavioral engagement, students demonstrated increased participation through their attention to teacher instructions, readiness to engage in tasks, collaboration in pair and group activities, and independence in completing assigned tasks. Activities such as *Guess My Ability* and *Find Someone Who* encouraged students to interact, take initiative, and assume responsibility for their learning process.

In terms of cognitive engagement, students actively asked questions, provided relevant responses, shared ideas, applied learning strategies, and solved problems during task implementation. Interaction and collaboration within task-based activities facilitated students' development of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and self-regulated learning.

Regarding emotional engagement, interview findings revealed that students experienced positive learning through enjoyable, interactive, and practice-oriented activities. Students reported increased motivation, comfort, confidence, and reduced fear of making mistakes. Game-based activities and role-play were perceived as effective in improving material comprehension, encouraging willingness to communicate, and strengthening peer collaboration. These findings support Fredricks et al.'s (2004) framework, which emphasizes the interconnected relationship between emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement in fostering students' overall participation.

2. Challenges in Implementing Joyful Learning in TBLT

Although joyful learning positively influenced students' participation, several challenges emerged during implementation. In terms of classroom management, interactive activities sometimes created a more active classroom atmosphere, requiring clear rules, structured instructions, and consistent classroom management strategies to maintain students' focus.

Regarding student-related factors, differences in motivation, language proficiency, and confidence affected students' participation. Therefore, additional support through differentiated assistance and scaffolding was necessary to ensure that all students could participate effectively.

In relation to task design, teachers needed to balance enjoyable elements with instructional objectives to ensure that students remained focused on learning outcomes rather than merely engaging in playful activities. Furthermore, time and curriculum constraints became challenges because task-based activities required more time for discussion, practice, and presentation. Effective lesson planning and time management were therefore essential to maintain a balance between student engagement and curriculum requirements.

Another challenge involved resources and institutional support. Adequate learning media, classroom facilities, and teacher professional development were required to support the successful implementation of joyful learning. Such support enabled teachers to design creative,

meaningful, and sustainable learning activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that integrating joyful learning principles into TBLT effectively enhanced students' participation through behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. However, successful implementation requires effective classroom management, appropriate task design, support for diverse student characteristics, efficient time management, and adequate institutional support.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the integration of joyful learning principles into Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) effectively enhanced students' participation through behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Regarding behavioral engagement, students showed active involvement through paying attention to teacher explanations, following instructions, initiating tasks independently, collaborating with peers, and completing learning activities. These findings support Fredricks et al. (2004), who define behavioral engagement as students'

observable participation, effort, and involvement in academic activities.

The researcher found that interactive activities such as *Guess My Ability* and *Find Someone Who* created meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences that encouraged students to participate voluntarily. These findings extend Chen (2023), who emphasized the importance of task design in promoting active participation, by showing that integrating enjoyable learning experiences into TBLT further strengthens students' behavioral engagement.

In terms of cognitive engagement, students demonstrated active thinking through asking questions, clarifying instructions, sharing ideas, solving problems, and applying learning strategies during task completion. These findings are consistent with Fredricks et al. (2004), who explain that cognitive engagement involves strategic thinking, self-regulation, and deeper investment in learning. The joyful and low-pressure environment created through TBLT encouraged students to process information, negotiate meaning, and construct understanding collaboratively. This finding supports

Chen (2023) and Liu and Loy Chee Luen (2024), who reported that interactive task-based activities promote meaningful communication and learner involvement. However, this study contributes further evidence that the integration of joyful learning principles within TBLT specifically strengthens cognitive engagement by encouraging students to actively question, collaborate, and apply problem-solving strategies.

Regarding emotional engagement, students reported positive learning experiences characterized by increased enjoyment, comfort, confidence, willingness to participate, and reduced fear of making mistakes. Games, role-play, and collaborative activities created a supportive classroom atmosphere that encouraged students to communicate more freely and engage actively in learning. These findings align with Fredricks et al. (2004), who describe emotional engagement as learners' affective responses, including interest, enjoyment, enthusiasm, and sense of belonging. Consistent with Liu and Loy Chee Luen (2024), this study confirms that interactive TBLT activities enhance students' confidence and

participation. Furthermore, the present study extends previous research by demonstrating that joyful learning-based TBLT simultaneously strengthens multiple emotional aspects, including motivation, emotional comfort, collaboration, and willingness to take part in classroom activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement are interconnected dimensions that collectively shape students' participation in English learning. This supports Fredricks et al. (2004), who conceptualize student engagement as a multidimensional construct in which these three dimensions reinforce one another. The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating that the combination of joyful learning principles and TBLT creates a meaningful, interactive, and supportive learning environment that not only increases students' participation but also promotes deeper thinking, confidence, and sustained motivation in English language classrooms.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of joyful learning principles

within Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) effectively enhanced students' participation in English learning activities. The improvement was reflected through three dimensions of student engagement: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Students demonstrated greater involvement in classroom activities, increased cognitive effort in completing tasks, and positive emotional responses, including improved confidence, comfort, and motivation. These findings indicate that joyful learning-based TBLT creates a more interactive, meaningful, and supportive learning environment that encourages active student participation.

However, the implementation of joyful learning within TBLT also involved several challenges, including classroom management, differences in students' motivation and English proficiency, limited instructional time, task design complexity, and constraints related to resources and institutional support. These challenges were addressed through effective strategies such as establishing clear classroom procedures, adapting tasks to students' needs, and providing continuous guidance and motivation.

Overall, this study demonstrates that integrating joyful learning principles into TBLT is a valuable approach for promoting active, engaging, and enjoyable English learning experiences while requiring appropriate pedagogical planning and institutional support to ensure effective implementation.

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