

TASK BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACH FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AT 9TH GRADE OF SMPN 2 TONJONG

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the task based language approach for teaching English at 9th grade of SMPN 2 Tonjong, Brebes, which includes: to describe the strategies in teaching grammar and mastering vocabulary of an EFL and to explain the factors influencing the students in mastering both materials. The participants of this research are 37 students that consist of male 20 and female 17. The data is collected through observation, by which the writer records all activities of teaching and learning activities. The result shows that the task based language approach applied in teaching English in this junior high school is very important and significantly has positive effects to the students' mastery of grammar material.

Keywords: 9th grade students, Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), grammar

A. Introduction

Task Based Language Teaching Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) refers to the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. It has been defined as “an approach to language education in which students are given functional tasks that invite them to focus primarily on meaning exchange and to use language and to use language for real world, non-linguistic purposes” (Van Den Branden, 2006).

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has become a significant topic in the field of second language acquisition in terms of fostering process-focused syllabi and devising communicative tasks to enhance learners' real language use via the emergence of the communicative language teaching approach in the early 1980s and much stress of learners' communicative abilities during the past twenty years (Jeon and Hahn, 2000). Little was written about tasks before Prabhu's (1987) work. Since then, the deployment of tasks has become crucial not only as a tool of gathering data from participants but also as an object of study in and of itself. The number of books published on this topic since 2000 (containing Bygate, Skehan, and Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Leaver and Willis, 2005; Van den Branden, 2006; Van den Branden, Bygate, and Norris, 2009; among many others) overtly displays the increasing importance of tasks in research (Adams, 2009).

Recent research studies indicate three major characteristics of task-based language teaching relevant to classroom practice: TBLT is in line with a learner centered educational philosophy (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2005), it is made up of specific constituents such as goal, procedure,

specific outcome (Skehan, 1998; Murphy, 2003; Nunan, 2004), and it supports content-oriented meaningful activities rather than linguistic forms (Beglar & Hunt, 2002; Carless, 2002; Little wood, 2004). Through the proliferation of task-based language teaching and research, there has become a wide diversity in the settings, methods, and theories paving the way for comprehension of tasks and learning.

Structured in such a way that people will have to talk differently when they are speaking about things that are happening now, a story of the past, or even a plan for the future. When an Indonesian speaks English, the person has to change his/her point of view of the way he/she uses a language since there no time-related-pattern in Bahasa Indonesia, unlike in English. Thus, it is very interesting to see how Indonesian learners of English express their capability in mastering grammar and vocabulary. There are two questions of this research: What strategies are used by Indonesian teacher to deliver the material of grammar and mastering the vocabulary by using Task Based Language Teaching? And hat factors influence those students in mastering both materials?

B. Literature Review

Task-Based instruction model is one of the language teaching methods based on communicative activities and consists of tasks in which learners try to perform these tasks in classroom environment where mutual interaction is at the highest level. TBLT has the same several principles with Communicative Language Teaching. TBLT is based on communication like in CLT. In CLT, communicative activities are used as a part of the lesson, but in TBLT, the tasks are used as a part of the lesson. These

tasks should be related to the daily life that may happen to all students so as to draw students' attention to the lesson and to the task.

According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995), a task is 'a piece of work to be done, esp. one done regularly, unwillingly or with difficulty'. Dictionary meaning is a bit formal when compared to tasks performed in a classroom environment. According to Bygate et al., "A task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (in Branden, 2006: 4). Students are busy with the use of the language, but not acquiring the minimal grammatical details or rules of the language. They have a task to perform by using the target language and at the same time they are expected to learn about language functions.

Grammatical tasks require learners to use a particular language items to complete the task. Learners have to use some predetermined linguistic items. Rashtchi and Keyvanfar (2007: 173-174) underline that a grammatical task is different from an exercise in that learners are free to say anything that comes to their mind regarding the situation; it is a task in that learners' attention is primarily to the meaning they want to convey to their partner and is focused in that for the best performance they have to use the suitable grammatical form. Learners try not only to convey meaning but also to use definite grammatical items to complete the task.

C. Method of Investigation

This is descriptive method, which attempts to describe the Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) used by the teachers of 9th grade in SMP Negeri 2 Tonjong, Brebes. The writers choose descriptive

qualitative method because this study tries to describe the Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in teaching.

The source of the data in this study is the process of teaching and learning activity of 9th grade in SMP Negeri, 2 Tonjong, Brebes. The writer conducts a non-participant observation as a technique to collect the data needed to answer the research questions. Non-participant observation is less subjective which latter involves observing actions and interactions, perhaps sitting in a corner of the room, silent, but attentive (Koshy, 2005). The writer analyzes the exercise given to the students in the last part of their teaching and learning activity.

D. Findings and Discussion

This part will discuss two things that are the teaching English process and the problem as well as solution in teaching using Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach.

1. Teaching English Process in SMP Negeri 2 Tonjong, Brebes by Using Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Approach

The teacher gives the direction to the 9th grade students of SMPN 2 Tonjong, Brebes to create group consisting of 4 or 5 students each group. Then they are requested to search the Present Perfect Tense which covers the definition, the function, the pattern (positive, Negative and Interrogative), the use and the example of present perfect tense and the form of past participle (Regular and Irregular verbs) on the internet. The report of the work can be in Indonesian and English, here the teacher does not ask the student to report in English in order the students understand what they report about.

After the students finish their work they delegate one student to write down the result of group works on the board. Almost all groups do their work correctly, only one group that is wrong in their work, that they search Present Tense. Then the teacher corrects them to search Present Perfect Tense. Each group writes down the result for each topic. Group 1 covers the definition of Present Perfect Tense, in which Present Perfect Tense is tense that describes an activity in one specific time that occurs in the past but still continue today. Group 2 covers the pattern of Present Perfect Tense ((+) S + Have/Has + Past Participle + O, (-) S + Have/Has + Past Participle + O, and (?) Have/Has + S + Past Participle + O). Group 3 covers the functions of past participle, which are explaining about the activity or action that occur several times in the past (For example: she has called you for several times) and explain about the activity has/ just finished (For example: the sailors have just come back from the sea). Group 4 covers Past Participle of regular verbs (cooked, accepted, tired, walked, answered, added, allowed, kicked, borrowed, and started) and irregular verbs (written, drove (X), put, sang (X), ate (X), saw (X), brought, cut, stole (X), and read).

2. The Problems Encountered of Teaching English Language in SMP Negeri 2 Tonjong, Brebes by Using Task Based Language Teaching Approach and Solution

The problems faced by the students based on the result of the observation above are that some of students cannot differentiate the form of participle and past participle. They are still confused to determine the participle and past

participle; it appears from the last group that 5 of 10 irregular verbs that they find from the internet are wrong.

The problem that may face by the student or the teacher itself if the source of the tasks is from the internet, in the internet there are so many definition and theories of the grammar that the validity of those theory are doubtful. If the source of the internet are from the open source or any kind of the source that there is no the stated accredited author or publisher, to avoid it the students or teacher should enclose the source of the link. Therefore, the knowledge about the English material especially grammar and other theories understood by the students is valid. Because they are still in junior high school by understanding the incorrect theory it will risk for their understanding.

If the teacher wants to ask the students searching any theory or definition of any material or subject, it should be decided or shown to the students to the valid source, in order they can get the correct and the accredited or famous author with the correct knowledge.

In teaching Vocabulary Mastery the teacher should not only give the students task to look for the past participle form. She also should give the students the vocabularies, the regular form and irregular form of a verb. The teacher should give the sample of the Infinitive, Past, and Past Participle, they should memorize it as many as possible, because the irregular verbs must be memorized. It is because of its unstructured form.

After they get all of the material the teacher should give the more tasks to the students with various tasks which can improve their skill

in using the all grammar pattern and the vocabulary mastery. The task also should be done by their self or to the text book, not depending on the source of the internet.

E. Conclusion

Teaching English by using Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for the students especially in 9th grade of SMPN 2 Tonjong, Brebes, is very important, because it becomes the foundation for the next levels of education, that are senior high school and college. Because of the importance of English, the teacher must think the best technique of teaching in order the students especially in Junior high school, not only one approach that is used in teaching activities. The teacher must know the students' character to decide which technique that will use in teaching.

In the activity of teaching in 9th grade of SMPN 2 Tonjong, Brebes, the teacher should be more active but it should not be teacher-centered when she gives the task to the students. The active here means that the teacher should give the certain accredited sites of English so the students will know the trusted link of it. It will be very useful for the next level of English learning on the higher level of education. In giving the example, the teacher also should ask the students to make example of the pattern in the teaching activities. They should not be just given the pattern. It is aimed that in order to the teacher can assess the student mastery of the material, so that the teacher can rearrange the strategy to the next teaching method or approach to improve the students' skill in using English.

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