

TBLT Task and Framework: Insights from Indonesian Context

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Abstract

This study employs a document study to investigate the tasks and TBLT framework used in Indonesian English classrooms. Through a rigorous examination of existing literature and empirical research, this study will elucidate how these practices contribute to the development of communicative competence, a core tenet of the Merdeka Curriculum. Several recent studies (past five years) on TBLT practices have been identified through a review of open-access journals. The findings reveal a prevalence of authentic tasks, consistent with expert recommendations, but with varying levels of authenticity. In addition, implementing TBLT generally aligns with established principles, particularly those proposed by Willis, but only a few adaptations are made to suit local teaching and learning goals. While these findings suggest a positive trend, further analysis is needed to identify potential areas for improvement and inform future TBLT practices in Indonesian classrooms.

Keywords: TBLT Indonesia; Task-based Language Teaching; TBLT Framework; Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian Ministry of Education introduced the Merdeka Curriculum in 2020 as a groundbreaking educational reform designed to cultivate holistic and independent learners. Initially piloted in a select group of schools, the curriculum has since been adopted nationwide, marking a significant shift in Indonesia's educational landscape. A cornerstone of the Merdeka Curriculum is its student-centered approach, which empowers learners to take ownership of their education. By prioritizing active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving, the curriculum seeks to develop well-rounded individuals equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century. This paradigm shift away from teacher-centric instruction has spurred innovative teaching methodologies and a renewed focus on creating engaging and learner-centered classroom environments.

In the realm of English language education, the Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes the cultivation of communicative competence. The curriculum aligns with contemporary pedagogical trends emphasizing real-world communication skills by shifting the focus from rote grammar memorization to authentic language use. This approach recognizes the importance of language as a tool for interacting with the world, rather than merely a subject to be mastered. Task-based language teaching

(TBLT), a pedagogical framework centered on the completion of meaningful tasks, has emerged as one of the compatible methodologies for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum's communicative goals. This approach fosters students' ability to use language effectively in various contexts, thereby preparing them to become confident and competent communicators in the globalized world.

Specifically, Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a pedagogical approach that centers on the use of authentic tasks to foster meaningful communication in the target language (Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). The cornerstone of TBLT is the carefully designed task, which serves as a vehicle for students to actively employ language for real-world purposes. Unlike traditional exercises, these tasks demand that learners engage in authentic language use to achieve a specific outcome. By immersing students in problem-solving activities and collaborative interactions, TBLT promotes language acquisition and cultivates essential communicative competencies such as fluency, accuracy, and appropriate language use.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has garnered significant attention among English educators worldwide, proving its efficacy in fostering students' communicative competence (Nita, 2020). Numerous studies consistently demonstrate TBLT's positive impact on students' speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. While TBLT has shown potential in the Indonesian educational landscape, there remains a dearth of research specifically investigating the types of tasks employed and the underlying frameworks utilized. A more comprehensive understanding of these factors is essential for maximizing TBLT's effectiveness in Indonesian classrooms, ensuring that students develop the language skills necessary for success in both academic and professional settings.

Building upon the established effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing communicative competence, this study aims to conduct a comprehensive literature review to identify and analyze the specific types of tasks employed in TBLT implementations within Indonesian context. Examining the tasks will contribute to a deeper understanding of how TBLT tasks facilitate language learning. Furthermore, the study also investigates the theoretical frameworks underpinning TBLT implementation, exploring their conceptual foundations and implications for task design and implementation. This analysis will provide valuable insights into the theoretical underpinnings of TBLT and its potential for fostering effective language learning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Task-based language teaching

While variations may exist in the specific terminology and methodologies employed to describe Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), its core principles remain steadfast. Rooted in a learner-centered approach, TBLT prioritizes meaningful tasks, authentic communication, and language acquisition through active use. Nunan

(2004) underscores these principles, emphasizing the alignment of language content with learners' needs, fostering language acquisition through authentic communication, integrating real-world materials, and cultivating learner reflection. Furthermore, TBLT leverages personal experiences to enhance learning and bridges the gap between classroom language study and everyday language use.

Echoing this sentiment, Willis & Willis (2007) posit that TBLT is an approach that empowers learners to initiate speech, nurturing confidence and a willingness to communicate. Moreover, TBLT creates a classroom environment where students can practice speaking without the fear of grammatical errors. In contrast to traditional language teaching methods, which often prioritize accuracy over fluency, TBLT emphasizes oral production, allowing grammatical refinement to occur through gradual practice. This argument underscores TBLT's communicative nature, its learner-centered focus, and its prioritization of fluency. Additionally, it alleviates students' anxiety by minimizing the fear of grammatical errors.

Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) further elaborate by stating that TBLT is a communicative approach that prioritizes language acquisition through extensive use or exposure. Unlike task-based syllabi, which may overlook grammatical learning, TBLT effectively balances meaning and form. While alleviating students' anxiety about language form mistakes, TBLT ensures a harmonious blend of meaning and form. This is evident in its implementation framework, where the form is emphasized after meaningful target language production.

Long (2015) defines TBLT as a teaching approach that prioritizes students' ability to perform tasks in the target language. This definition underscores the significance of tasks and their role in facilitating language acquisition. In summary, TBLT is a communicative approach that balances meaning and form, fosters authentic communication, and seeks to bridge the gap between classroom language study and everyday language use. By emphasizing these core principles, TBLT offers a more engaging and effective learning experience for language learners.

Task in TBLT

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) places tasks at the forefront of language learning. Unlike traditional exercises, tasks are considered primary instruments for language development. Nunan (2004) differentiates between target tasks (real-world language use) and pedagogical tasks (classroom-based activities). Target tasks encompass activities conducted outside the classroom, regardless of whether they involve language use. Pedagogical tasks, conversely, are real-world tasks adapted for the classroom setting and designed to facilitate learners' comprehension, manipulation, production, and interaction with the target language.

Beglar & Hunt (2002) emphasize the importance of tasks in fostering the negotiation of meaning, a crucial aspect of effective language learning. An activity cannot be considered a TBLT task unless it involves meaningful target language production. Branden (2006) aligns with this perspective, defining tasks as activities

that require language use to achieve objectives. This definition echoes Beglar and Hunt's emphasis on using the target language for communication. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) further underscore the significance of meaningful and communicative tasks within the TBLT framework. Richards & Rodgers (2001) also argue that a task is the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching. As they add, tasks should be meaningful and communicative to support the learning process. Based on these explanations, task is essential element which influence the goals of language learning.

Task in TBLT ensures that the production of meaningful target language occurs. To refine this concept, Willis & Willis (2007) outline key characteristics of effective TBLT tasks: engagement, a focus on meaning, a clear outcome, outcome-based assessment, prioritized completion, and relevance to real-world situations. Skehan (1998) further supports these principles by emphasizing the importance of meaning focus, learner-generated meaning, real-world similarity, prioritized completion, and outcome-based assessment.

While real-world tasks should not always involve language use, Willis & Willis (2007) divide authenticity into three levels: meaning, discourse, and activity. The meaning level focuses on engaging students with real-world-relevant meaning production. The discourse level prepares students for everyday language use. The activity level ensures that the task closely resembles a real-world activity.

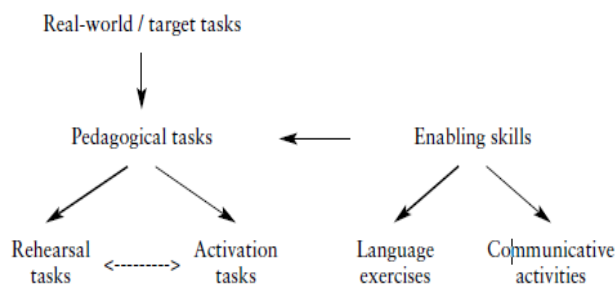
In essence, TBLT tasks are meaningful, communicative activities that align with real-world language use. They serve as a primary tool for language development, fostering negotiation of meaning and promoting language acquisition.

Framework of TBLT

Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed to guide the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Two prominent models are those of Nunan (2004) and Willis (1996). According to Nunan's framework, TBLT begins with a clear identification of the target task and the authentic language use that students are expected to achieve. This target task is then adapted and modified to create a pedagogical task suitable for classroom instruction. Nunan further distinguishes between rehearsal tasks and activation tasks. Rehearsal tasks, while not identical to real-world tasks, share essential features and serve as preparatory exercises, equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to perform similar tasks in the future. In contrast, activation tasks are designed to stimulate and activate students' language skills, focusing on the application of language in a controlled classroom setting.

Nunan (2004) emphasizes the importance of integrating form-focused instruction with meaningful and communicative language use. He proposes a framework of enabling skills that combines language exercises with communicative activities to foster a holistic approach to language learning. Beglar and Hunt (2002) expand on this concept by identifying specific communicative activities that can be

incorporated into TBLT, including clarification, confirmation, comprehension checks, requests, repairs, reactions, and turn-taking. The following framework outlines Nunan's (2004) approach to TBLT implementation.



In contrast to Nunan's framework, Willis (1996) proposes a three-phase model for TBLT implementation: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. During the pre-task phase, teachers create a supportive context by engaging students in discussions related to the task topic, introducing relevant vocabulary and phrases, and providing authentic examples to clarify expectations. The task cycle, the central component of Willis' approach, involves students actively participating in the task, preparing their responses, and presenting their findings to the class. In the language focus phase, students analyze the linguistic features encountered during the task, identifying patterns, phrases, and grammatical structures. This analysis is followed by targeted practice activities to reinforce and consolidate these language elements.

While Willis and Nunan advocate for Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), their perspectives slightly diverge regarding the framework's implementation. Willis prioritizes a cyclical approach to task completion, emphasizing the importance of a structured process to ensure learners fully comprehend and engage with the task. His framework typically includes stages such as pre-task, task, and post-task. Nunan, on the other hand, places greater emphasis on learner autonomy. He suggests that learners should have significant control over their learning process, making independent decisions and taking ownership of their tasks. While both approaches align with the core principles of TBLT, they offer distinct perspectives on the optimal balance between teacher guidance and learner independence.

METHOD

This systematic literature review aims to comprehensively examine the existing research on task-based language teaching (TBLT) within the Indonesian context. A comprehensive search was conducted using relevant keywords such as "task-based language teaching," "TBLT," and "TBLT in Indonesia" across reputable, open-accessed journals via Google Scholar, ERIC, and JSTOR. To ensure a focused analysis of classroom implementation, the search was limited to studies that reported on classroom-based TBLT practices, including experimental and classroom action research in the last five years. This approach facilitated a detailed examination

of the specific tasks and theoretical frameworks utilized in these Indonesian TBLT contexts. Critical thinking and argumentation were employed to analyze the collected data, identifying key trends, patterns, and potential areas for further research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Studies on TBLT Practice in Indonesia

Following a meticulous search of several familiar databases, eleven studies were randomly identified that met the criteria for this review. These studies, all conducted within the Indonesian context in the last five years, focused on classroom-based implementations of task-based language teaching (TBLT) across several senior high schools and universities. The following list summarizes the key details of these studies.

Table 1. The List of Research about TBLT in the Past Five Years

No	Authors	Publication year	Research title	Language Skill
1	Inayati & Halimi	2019	The Use of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as to Improve Descriptive Writing Skills	Writing
2	Afifah & Devana	2020	Speaking Skill Through Task-Based Learning in English Foreign Language Classroom	Speaking
3	Astuti & Priyana	2020	Improving Students' Reading Comprehension through Task-based Language Teaching	Reading
4	Sukma, et.al	2020	Reading Tasks Analysis and Students' Perception: An Approach to Task-based Language Teaching	Reading
5	Nita et al.	2020	The Use of Task-Based Learning to Enhance Speaking Skills of Senior High School Students	Speaking
6	Ardika et.al	2021	Implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching on Reading Comprehension by the Polytechnic Students	Reading
7	Panduwangi	2021	The effectiveness of task-based language teaching to improve students' speaking skills	Speaking
8	Mulyadi, et.al	2021	Effects of Technology enhanced Task-based Language Teaching on	Listening and speaking

				Learners' Listening Comprehension and Speaking Performance	
9	Putri Ratmanida	&	2021	The Effect of Using Task-based Language Teaching on Students' Reading Comprehension at SMAN 1 Bangkinang Kota	Reading
10	Priyanti, et.al		2022	Task-Based Language Teaching: Perceptions and Implementation in Teaching Speaking	Speaking
11	Lume Hisbullah	&	2022	The Effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching to Teach Speaking Skills	Speaking

The table above shows that the focus of the eleven studies on language skills varies widely. Speaking skills are a common area of investigation, while writing skills have been the least frequently studied for the past five years, at least in the open-accessed databases.

The Task Analyses

To delve deeper into the task within Indonesia's educational context, several studies obtained from the database were analyzed. While some research provides explicit details about the specific tasks used in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) implementations, others, such as Inayati & Halimi (2019), Afifah & Devana (2020), Astuti & Priyana (2020), Ardika et al. (2021), Panduwangi (2021), and Lume & Hisbullah (2022) lack this specificity. This raises the question of whether the same or different task was used throughout the meetings. Regardless, task variation is essential for effective language teaching. As Richard et. al., cited by Nunan (2004) emphasize, varying tasks help to make language teaching more communicative. Additionally, it prevents student boredom and ensures continuous challenge, as different tasks demand varying levels of complexity and outcomes.

In contrast, several authors have explicitly mentioned the specific tasks used in their TBLT implementations. Sukma et al. (2020), for instance, employed task variations inspired by Willis & Willis (2007), including corrupted text, ordering tasks, cognitive tasks, and creative tasks. These tasks were text-based ones, integrating TBLT with reading comprehension. In another study, Mulyadi et al. (2021) utilized online presentation tasks, role-play tasks, and online group discussion tasks, which effectively mirrored real-world scenarios. They use online methods to integrate task-based learning with technology. Putri & Ratmanida (2020), on the other hand, focused on tasks such as matching and using illustrations and reorganizing information to enhance reading comprehension skills.

The tasks used in the studies above can be analyzed from two perspectives: authenticity and task component. Presentation, role-play, group discussion, cognitive, and creative tasks (in reading) are authentic in the sense that they reflect

real-world situations at the discourse and activity levels. These tasks prepare students to produce discourse similar to that found in everyday life. In contrast, corrupted text, matching and illustrating, ordering, and reorganizing information tasks are less authentic, as they primarily focus on meaning rather than real-world contexts. According to Ellis (2003), these tasks can be categorized as interactional authenticity tasks due to their limited resemblance to real-world situations. The choice of these less authentic tasks may be influenced by their common traditional use as exercises after explanations or presentations in the classroom by the teachers. However, it's important to note that all of these tasks are valuable if considered from all levels of authenticity.

Furthermore, Nunan (2004) proposes that tasks can be analyzed in terms of their components: goals, input, and procedures. The tasks used in the studies above, when implemented within a TBLT framework, likely have specific goals, whether explicitly stated or implied. For example, online presentation tasks, role-plays, and group discussion tasks aim to develop communicative competence by providing opportunities for extensive use of the target language in authentic communication situations. In contrast, ordering tasks, corrupted text tasks, and matching and illustrating tasks emphasize language and cultural awareness since they focus on meanings and how structures are formed in English. These task goals align with the broader objectives of TBLT, which prioritize meaningful language learning experiences.

Nunan (2004) defines task input as the data (written, spoken, or visual) learners engage with during task completion. This study found that task input was provided strategically within the TBLT framework. During the pre-task stage, teachers offered various resources to support students. These resources included vocabulary lists, pictures, videos, authentic materials, and any other tools that could facilitate successful task completion. For instance, Mulyadi et al. (2021) demonstrated the effectiveness of using videos as input for role-play tasks. Similarly, Sukma et al. (2020) employed authentic historical texts as input for high school students' reading comprehension tasks. By providing such task-specific input, teachers ensured the tasks went beyond simple exercises. These tasks became springboards for meaningful language use, a key characteristic of task-based learning.

Nunan (2004) defines task procedures as the specific instructions or steps learners follow to complete a task using the provided input. This study observed that the tasks incorporated clear procedures that guided learners in utilizing the input effectively. For example, in cognitive tasks involving historical texts, students were instructed to recall details like dates and years of events. While this may not entirely mirror real-world activity levels (Willis & Willis, 2007), it reflects a fundamental aspect of real-life reading: scanning for specific information. As Clark & Silberstein (in Nunan, 2004) note, readers often scan texts to find details. Similarly, procedures for role-play, online group discussions, and online presentations, even if set within specific

nursery themes (Mulyadi et al., 2021), reflect authentic procedures used in real-life situations. People engage in discussions in various settings, online and offline, including hospitals. Presentations occur frequently in real life, with nursery materials presenting a possible scenario. Role-playing medical procedures is another potential real-world activity. By outlining clear task procedures, the observed tasks fulfill all the key components of task-based learning as defined by Nunan (2004).

In conclusion, the analysis of tasks employed in Indonesian English classrooms reveals a clear tendency toward authenticity or real-world relevance. While the tasks demonstrate a range of authenticity levels, from discourse-based to meaning-based, they generally reflect authentic practices. Furthermore, the tasks align with the essential components of task-based learning. They have well-defined goals, including both communicative and language system recognition. The provision of clear input, often within a pre-task framework, supports learners in engaging with the tasks effectively. Finally, the tasks incorporate clear procedures that guide learners in utilizing the input, ensuring a structured and purposeful learning experience.

The Frameworks of TBLT

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a prominent approach in Indonesian English classrooms, aligning with the communicative focus of the Merdeka Curriculum. Analyses of TBLT implementation in Indonesia reveal a diverse range of language skills being targeted, including speaking, reading, writing, and listening (Nita et al., 2020; Prianty et al., 2020; Panduwangi, 2021; Sukma et al., 2020; Astuty & Priyana, 2020; Inayanti & Halimi, 2019; Mulyadi et al., 2021). Given the various TBLT frameworks available, it is crucial to investigate the prevailing trends and tendencies among Indonesian teachers in their application of these approaches.

All of the selected studies in this article utilize Willis' (1996) framework for implementing TBLT, either with adaptations or by simply adopting the framework. Willis' framework is structured around three main phases: pre-task, during-task, and post-task (Sukma et al., 2020; Prianty et al., 2020), aligned with Willis' framework (1996). The pre-task stage involves establishing a shared understanding of the topic while considering students' needs. Teachers often introduce a preparatory task to familiarize learners with the task format before the main activity (Prianty et al., 2022). Pre-task is the point where adequate supportive equipment is prepared for the students before engaging with complex and challenging tasks (Beglar & Hunt, 2002). As they argue, in pre-task, the learners' existing structure of the interlanguage system will be reorganized. In addition, pre-tasks will help learners interpret the task in more fluent, complex, and accurate ways.

In addition to introducing the topic, teachers often equip students with essential vocabulary to facilitate task completion (Prianty et al., 2022). This pedagogical approach aligns with Willis' (1996) assertion that vocabulary is a cornerstone of effective task-based language teaching. By pre-teaching relevant lexical items, teachers empower learners to engage more confidently and

meaningfully with the task, enhancing their overall language performance. This strategic vocabulary input serves as a scaffold, supporting students as they navigate the complexities of the target language and strive to achieve task objectives.

Another crucial step in the pre-task phase is providing clear and comprehensible instructions to students (Prianty et. al., 2022). While sometimes displayed on the blackboard, instructions are typically delivered through a combination of spoken and written modalities. This dual approach is prevalent in Indonesian classrooms due to its effectiveness in ensuring student understanding. By repeating instructions two or three times, teachers reinforce key points and accommodate diverse learning styles. Explicitly outlining task expectations is essential for student engagement and successful task completion.

In task-cycle, the Indonesian teachers would instruct the students to work and complete the task in the group, forcing them to discuss using English instead of Indonesian (Sukma, et.al., 2020; Astuty & Priyana, 2020). After discussion several times, the teacher asked them to prepare how they would report their task in front of the class. Then, they report the task. The teachers try to be more creative by adjusting the appropriate text relevant to their students' English level (Sukma, 2020, et. al., Astuty & Priyana, 2020).

In the last cycle, namely post-task, the teacher focuses on language analysis. In this step, the teacher analyses the language mistakes produced by the students during group discussions and while presenting the task' report. Therefore, in implementing TBLT, the teachers are not perfectly passive. Teachers must facilitate student-centred language use by circulating the classroom and minimizing direct error correction. The corrections occur only after the students present their task. Modification can also be made in this last cycle as Astuty & Priyana (2020) argue that they ask the students to write a text again through jumbled sentences, text completion, or summarization. This way they believe will ensure students' understanding of the text they read.

In conclusion, the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Indonesian classrooms closely aligns with established theoretical frameworks, primarily that of Willis'. The widespread adoption of Willis' model among Indonesian teachers indicates a strong understanding and positive perception of TBLT's potential for effective language learning. This suggests that the pedagogical approach has been well-received and integrated into classroom practices, fostering a conducive environment for language development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of tasks employed in Indonesian English classrooms, it can be concluded that the prevailing trend in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) practice in Indonesia is a strong emphasis on speaking skills and a commitment to authenticity or real-world relevance. The tasks examined in this study demonstrate a variety of authenticity levels, ranging from discourse-based to meaning-based, but

still generally reflect authentic practices. Moreover, these tasks align with Nunan's (2004) essential components of TBLT, including well-defined goals, clear input, and structured procedures. The findings suggest that Indonesian English teachers effectively implement TBLT practices that promote meaningful language acquisition and communicative competence. To ensure comprehensive language proficiency, however, it is recommended that these tasks be diversified to encompass a wider range of language skills. In addition, framework modification should be emphasized since it will suit the teaching situations including students' features, materials availability, time constraints, etc.

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