

## TBLT IN PRACTICE: BRINGING TASKS TO ENGLISH CLASSROOM IN THE CURRICULUM 2013

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### ABSTRACT

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been one of an approaches used in EFL classrooms due to its effectiveness. It focuses on the authentic language of students in doing meaningful task using the target language. This study investigates the application of TBLT in EFL classroom in the Curriculum 2013. It examines the kind of tasks that can be applied to scaffold students' writing ability and its effectiveness in scaffolding students' writing ability. Classroom action research was used in conducting the research in which qualitative data was obtained through observation, interview and documentation. The site of the study was in one of Junior High Schools in Bogor in which class 8 grade was selected. The findings revealed that TBLT can be implemented in the Curriculum 2013 by using different kind of tasks. This study suggests that English teachers may find, modify, and create various kinds of tasks to be implemented in their own classes using TBLT approach.

**Keywords:** *TBLT, the Curriculum 2013, EFL Classroom*

### INTRODUCTION

English is a compulsory subject for students in junior and senior high school in many countries, including Indonesia. To master English, every student has to know the four main skills in every language, one of them is writing. In some cases, writing skill is the most complex task to complete and the most difficult skill among other English skills. Graham and Harris (2003) stated that this is because writing involves great integrated activities and processes such as cognitive effort, attentional control, and self-regulation to make it become coherent and meaningful (cited in Ariyanti, 2016). Consequently, students must have a lot of exercises in writing in order to improve their writing skill. Another reasons why English writing is quite difficult is English grammatical roles different with other languages.

Brown (2004) explains that the ability to write has become an

indispensable skill in our global literate community. It means that writing is a skill which is always related and needed by all students. He also identified that academic progress in school depends on students' ability to write fluently (cited in Umi, 2011). Through this statement, the school and also the teacher have to cooperate to concern in scaffolding students' English writing ability. Especially for the teachers, they need to find the effective way in teaching English for students in the classroom to be able to realise the intended goal in teaching writing.

In Indonesian context, schools use The 2013 curriculum as a basic of teaching and learning process in the class. One of the characteristics of 2013 curriculum is the curriculum content that contains competency, clarified in the form of core competence (KI) of class and further explained in basic competence (KD) of subject matters.

Arranging an oral and written text is a basic competence that is written in KD 4. All students are required to reach this competence. In class activity, arranging an oral and written interpreted as creating an oral and written text. It means, that this basic competence is categorized as a higher order thinking skill (HOTS). According to the Bloom's taxonomy learning pyramid, the steps or skills that must be achieved by the students are remembering, understanding, applying, analysing and evaluating before creating. Therefore, to achieve that KD 4 is a challenging activity for the students because they have to create oral or written text. This leads to problematic situations for most students.

One of the solutions that can solve the problem above is implementing task-based language teaching in the classroom. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) also known as Task-based language learning (TBLL) or Task-based instruction (TBI) is a method of instruction in the field of language acquisition. It focuses on the authentic language to students in doing meaningful task using the target language. As Willis (2006) stated that in TBLT the core of class activity is the task (cited in Umi, 2011). She also presents that there are three stages in TBLT. They are pre-task, main task and post task. There are many researchers assumed that the definition of task is as language learning goals (Skehan, 2014; Willis & Willis, 2007).

To implement TBLT, there are some steps that teachers need to do, such as (1) identifying a problem or a question; (2) carrying out an action; (3) observing and reflecting on the outcome; and (4) planning another action (Lewin, 1946). Some researchers have acknowledged that the role of using the task in TBLT really facilitates the second language learners in learning (Ellis, 2009; Samuda and Bygate, 2008; Van, 2006; Willis and Willis, 2007). Therefore, it can

be concluded that tasks have positive effects on second language learning. Tasks are also said to improve learner motivation and therefore promote learning. It is also claimed that specific tasks can be designed to facilitate the use of learning of particular aspects of language. Thus, TBLT appears to be effective in helping the acquisition of specific parts of the target language. Therefore, to help students in achieving written text in KD 4 mentioned above, the researchers intend to apply tasks framed in TBLT approach in English writing class and see to what extent the tasks scaffold students' writing ability.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Task***

The term task has been defined by many researchers. Task defined as "a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward" (Long, 1985). While Nunan (2004) mentioned that task is a piece of work which involves learners in comprehending, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused upon meaning rather than form. As defined by Ellis (2009) a task should meet the following four criteria; (1) primary focus on meaning; (2) some kind of gap observed; (3) reliance of the learners in their own linguistic resources to complete the activity; and (4) the specification of a non-linguistic outcome.

### ***Task-Based Language Teaching***

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) also known as task-based language learning (TBLL) or task-based instruction (TBI) is a method of instruction in the field of language acquisition. It focuses on the authentic language to students in doing meaningful task using the target language. Willis & Willis (2007) believed that in TBLT, the core of class activity is the task. There are three stages performing TBLT.

### 1. Pre-task phase

The purposes of the pre-task phase is to prepare students to perform the task in ways that will promote acquisition. Lee (2000) describes the importance of 'framing' the task to be performed and suggests that one way of doing this is to provide an advance organizer of what students will be required to do and the nature of the outcome they will arrive at.

The activities in this phase are introducing the topic and task for the students and activating the students to find related words and phrases which are suitable to the topic, telling them the objectives of the lesson, and additionally, the teacher may explain the students about the correct way in doing the task, how to make a good organization, content, grammatical construct (syntax), mechanics and vocabulary in order to encourage the students to be able to complete the task. The teacher may also presents them a model of task by doing it by him/herself or using picture, audio or video to demonstrate the task. The aims of this phase are to introduce the students the topic and task then prepare them to perform the task.

### 2. Main task phase

The methodological options available to the teacher in the during-task phase are two basic kinds. First, there are various option relating to how the task is to be undertaken that can be taken prior to the actual performance of the task and thus planned for by the teacher. Second, there are a number of 'process options' that involve the teacher and students in one-line decision making about how to perform the task it is being completed (Ellis, 2009).

This section is the main phase in performing the task. After presenting the students the task that they have to do, the task must be completed in this phase. Completing the task in this phase is the

main activity. The activity can be distributing the worksheets or tasks to the class and letting the students to finish the task. This phase offers the students to use the language they already know in order to complete the task and to improve their ability under teacher's guidance. The main task phase required them to input the data while performing the task. In this phase, Ellis (2009) states that the teacher can elect to allow students to complete the task in their own time or can set a time limit. Therefore, the teacher will require the students to perform the task under pressure. However, teacher also have to ensure that the time limit is an adequate time for the students to finish the task.

### 3. Post Task

The post-task or language focus phase affords a number of options. These have three major pedagogic goals; (1) to provide an opportunity for a repeat performance of the task; (2) to encourage reflection on how the task was performed; and (3) to encourage attention to form, in particular to those forms that proved problematic to the learners when they performed the task (Ellis, 2009).

The first goal means that students can repeat their performance again in order to improve their ability after they already know the weaknesses from his/her first performance. The relevant to the second goal, Willis & Willis (2007) recommends asking students to present a report on how they did the task and on what they decided or discovered. It is also possible if the students are asked to reflect and evaluate their own performance. The reflection will help teacher to decide whether to use the similar task in the future or look for a different type in order to improve their ability in another chance.

Related to the third goal, once the task is completed, students can be invited to focus on the forms. Students will be

able to know what their problems are in doing the task. Therefore, under teacher guidance, students will be able to fix and improve their errors and the teacher can give more attention to the certain students who need it. So those are some activities or actions can be done in post-task phase by the teacher and students.

Generally, Ellis (2009) states that the purpose of task-based language teaching methodology is to create opportunities for language learning and skill-development through collaborative knowledge-building. For the teacher, the following principles can be used to guide the selection of options for designing lessons:

- a. Ensure an appropriate level of task.
- b. Establish clear goals for each task-based lesson.
- c. Develop an appropriate orientation of performing the task in the students.
- d. Ensure that students adopt an active role in task-based lessons.
- e. Encourage students to take risks.
- f. Ensure that students are primarily focussed on meaning when they perform a task.
- g. Provide opportunities for focusing on form.
- h. Require students to evaluate their performance and progress.

### **Writing Sub-Skills**

Every language skill, has its own sub skills. Included writing skill. The following is the list of writing sub skills and its aim:

- 1) Copying, to give students examples to promote success rather than failure.
- 2) Parallel writing, to encourage creative or guided writing with reference to model examples.
- 3) Editing and drafting, to give practice in finding and correcting mistakes (own and others) in grammar and spelling and content.

- 4) Describing a picture or series of pictures, to further encourage creative or guided writing, but with a given situation or stories line to keep words flowing.
- 5) Sentence/paragraph completion, to give guided practice in writing from given clues (Harmer, 2004).

In this study, the sub skill that the researchers focus on is sentence or paragraph completion.

### **METHOD**

This study was conducted by using classroom action research design (Creswell, 2012) to observe and analyse the using of task-based language teaching in the classroom to scaffold students' writing ability.

In using classroom action research as the learning method, the researchers used two cycles in conducting the research. The cycle that was used was the model of cycle of Kurt Lewin (1946). The steps of each cycle were planning, action, observation and reflection. The researcher used two cycles in this study to get the clearer and more accurate result.

The setting of this research was in one of Junior High School in Bogor. The participants of this research were eighth grade students that consisted of twenty four students. During the research process, the teacher taught the students and implemented the task-based language teaching to see how TBLT could scaffold students' writing ability.

Observation and documentation are used to collect the data in this research. In addition, the researchers conducted the focus group interview to know students feeling, perception and reflection on how and to what extent the tasks scaffold their writing ability and the data was also equipped with the records of the interview result.

There were some steps that the researchers conducted in analysing the

data, first, the researcher observed and took field notes of the teaching learning process and collected the documents such as the lesson plan, worksheets and the materials of each meeting simultaneously. It was carried out to observe them to see the progress of each students completing the task.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

After conducting all actions in this research, the researcher found that there are four types of tasks can be used to scaffold students' writing ability in recount text. They are storytelling performance, multiple choice task, comparing task and ordering task.

Story telling task is the task where the students are asked to retell their personal experiences in writing form, or in this case is in recount text or paragraph. This task gives chance to the students to learn how to write recount text correctly by paying attention to the past form of verbs, the simple past tense form, the generic structure and also the elements of writing. This task was given three times, before first meeting to see their writing ability, at the fourth meeting and at the last meeting of implementing TBLT in the class to know their achievement or their progress after actions.

Multiple choice is a form of an objective assessment in which respondents are asked to select only correct answers from the choices offered as a list. Task used in this research asked the students to answer the right and suitable past form of verbs in an incomplete recount text. It scaffolds the students in deciding and identifying which form of verbs that are suitable with the context.

Comparing is the task that asked the students to find the similarities and differences of text or pictures. In this research, the researcher asked the students to answer the available questions

by finding the similarities and differences between the given tables on the worksheet. The answers are the complete sentences in simple past tense form. This aimed to scaffold the students in producing a simple past tense sentences referred to the given questions.

Ordering task is a task to put a group of words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs in order. This can be sequencing, ranking, or classifying. In this research, the researcher used ordering task to make a correct sequence of arranging sentences to be a complete paragraph. Through this kind of task, teacher tried to help the students in understanding the generic structure of recount text as one aspect that should be fulfilled in writing recount text.

## **Writing subskills scaffolded by TBLT**

### ***Identifying information about activities or events in the past***

When the teacher asked about the using verb form on those texts, the students could identify that those texts were telling about the past activities because they used the past form of verb in arranging the sentences. The texts that were given in the beginning of the meeting were used as their reference in making their own recount text during the lesson. So, it indicates that giving example in the pre-task phase in implementation of TBLT scaffold students in identifying the information about activities or events in the past.

### ***Understanding the structure of sentence in simple past form***

One of the students' statement about the task indicates that the students already understand about the structure of sentence in simple past form. The given task was beneficial in scaffolding the students in understanding it and the students learn to creating simple past sentences during answering the questions

on the worksheet. It can be seen from the following script.

*“It is subject plus verb 2 plus object. We also can add some adverbs of time like yesterday, last week, etc.”(Student1)*

#### ***Understanding the organization of text***

One of the given tasks to the students has proven can scaffold students in understanding the organization or the generic structure of recount text. Not only understand the concept, but also able to apply in arranging sentences become the complete paragraph.

#### ***Understanding the elements of writing***

The example that the teacher showed before the main task phase in implementing TBLT in the classroom help them in understanding the using of elements of writing. So, this is the foundation for the students in applying them when they create a recount text.

#### ***Arranging simple past form sentences become a recount text***

The students are able to create a recount text through some steps. From thinking the content of the story, then turning it into the sentences until arranging those sentences become a complete paragraph. This is also suitable with the steps or level that the students have done in doing tasks. It started from the smallest thing which is the word or the past verb, then arranging the sentences using simple past form and arranging the paragraph suit to the generic structure.

#### ***Answering the question about the activities or events in the past***

The comparing task has proven that it can scaffold students in answering the questions. The adequate information about the activities listed on the worksheet were able to make the students understand and answer of the questions about activities or events in the past.

#### ***Being able to use grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and capital letters correctly in writing***

The tasks reduced the problems of students in using grammar especially simple past tense, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and capital letters in writing recount text. The tasks were given by the teacher were related and beneficial for the students in teaching them creating a good recount text.

Some tasks have been designed in accordance with the objectives or the competencies and indicators in lesson plan based on the K-13 curriculum and syllabus that used by the school. British Council released an article that stated that there are six types of task for task-based learning. However, the findings show that there are four types of task can be used in this case.

First is multiple choice task that used to give the students' understanding in using the vocabulary and past form verb in creating simple past sentence. The second is comparing task. This task used in determining the suitable sentence between two different conditions that listed in two different tables information. Through this task the students were asked to make a complete sentence in answering the question. The third is ordering task. Ordering task used to scaffold the students understanding about the generic structure of recount text. The students were asked to arranging some sentences to be a complete and an organized paragraph. The last one is story telling task. Story telling task asked the students to create a complete and organized recount text using their own ability and integrating their knowledge of vocabulary and sentences from the previous tasks.

After the TBLT and the steps of scaffolding were implemented in the classroom, there are some proofs that

TBLT can be implemented to scaffold students' writing ability. This is obvious from all the process had been done by the teacher in teaching the students by implementing TBLT. Every meeting is completed with the three stages in implementing TBLT. They are the pre-task phase, main-task phase and language focus or post-task phase.

In pre-task phase the teacher always starts the class by reviewing the previous lesson in order to recall the students' memory in connecting it with the lesson will be learned that day. The teacher also scaffolds the students by modelling something or leading a brainstorming session to have a deeper understanding about the materials. The teacher mostly exemplifies them with the text and verbalization in addressing the materials. This phase is successful in helping the students to continue the next activity namely the main-task phase.

Main activity in main-task phase is doing tasks. Usually, the teacher already gave the instruction to the students in the pre-task phase about what to do with the worksheet. In this phase the teacher distributes the worksheets to the students then the students do the task. In the middle of this phase, the teacher scaffolds students by helping them when they have difficulties in doing the task. In helping them, the teacher tried to accommodate the students according to their needs.

In the post-task phase or language focus phase, the teacher invites the students to join the discussion about the task they have done. Some of them present their works then discussed it with others. Some students also ask the teacher when they have difficulties in understanding the task. In this phase, the teacher emphasizes the students that error is ok, so they can learn more in another day or another meeting. For the teacher, the error occurred in the class is an evaluation in designing the next task will be used in class.

The process in implementing TBLT in ELT classroom shows that the students also actively participated in all the actions that were carried out by the teacher. They took a part in some discussions, helped other friends, asked some questions to get a deeper understanding, presented their work and tried to sum up the lesson in every meeting.

All stages that have been done by the teacher show the compatibility between the theories raised in chapter II and the action carried out during four meetings. The theory of stages in implementing TBLT has been carried out in a systematic and complete way. So that the tasks given can be completed by the students and the materials conveyed clearly. Every action taken by the teacher is also based on the steps in implementing scaffolding.

## CONCLUSION

TBLT can be successfully conducted when the teacher do the teaching process with the right way or procedure. In this study, the teacher that also the researcher did the three stages of TBLT in every meeting. They are pre-task phase, main-task phase and language focus or post-task phase. The teacher prepared all the stages or the phases well. It is obvious from the lesson plan she made, the chosen and designed task and the organization of the activity in class. The teacher exemplified the recount text in class, used the verbalization to explain the materials clearer, also helped the students when they had difficulties during the lesson, moreover the teacher emphasized the students that error is ok and evaluated those errors to do something better in the next meeting. Those are the real actions of the teacher in implementing scaffolding to help students in learning writing. Thus, the prepared activity, tasks, texts and materials support the whole processes in implementing TBLT to scaffold students'

writing ability. Furthermore, all actions in implementing TBLT invited the students to actively participate in all the teaching and learning process.

The researchers expect that the next researchers can apply another kinds of task in TBLT to know that many kinds of task can support the implementation of TBLT. The researcher also expect that the next researcher can scaffold students' writing ability in more competencies.

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