

TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) APPROACH: IMPLICATIONS ON READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT *Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has exceedingly been written in many research reports but research examining the impacts of TBLT on student's reading comprehension remains limited. Recent studies indicate that TBLT is promoting real communication or the exchange of meanings rather than forms. The reading intention is to excerpt meaning from text by developing the literal, inferential, and extrapolative comprehension of readers, and this depends upon both decoding and language comprehension skills. Recently there has been growing interest in developing students' ability to read comprehensibly in a classroom situation. One way to develop students' reading ability is by committing Task-Based Language Teaching in teaching reading. This article explores the impacts of TBLT on three levels of students' reading comprehension, the literal, inferential, and extrapolative comprehension. This research employed a quasi-experimental method involving fifth-semester students of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Panakukang Makassar. The instruments were reading tests and questionnaires. The data from reading tests were used to figure out the effect of TBLT on students' reading comprehension (literal, inferential, and extrapolative comprehension) by using a t-test while the data from the questionnaire were to figure out the students' motivation. The findings revealed that TBLT has an impact on students reading comprehension. Sequentially, the most evolving level of comprehension was inferential, extrapolative, literal comprehension. Moreover, the result of the questionnaire displayed that the students who were taught through TBLT became more motivated to read in the domain of reading efficacy, reading curiosity, and reading challenge motivation.*

Keywords: *Task-Based Language Teaching, Reading Motivation, Reading Comprehension*

A. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process that requires a great deal of practice and skill. Active reading is a gist of comprehension which combining reading with the critical thinking process, thus, inevitably it becomes basic of the learning process. (Chesla, 2001)

In the context of a private college that applies English for a specific purpose such as in *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Panakukang* which has a Nursing major, students need to read some literature that is appropriate for their major. Students' reading material in English classroom situation requires proper reading for nursing that constructs students' comprehension and always deals with other subjects in the nursing major. Developing a language course should be a clear focus on English for Specific Purposes and on the target discipline. Learners' expectations using target language are various and it deals with their professional purposes, which might be considered as an important case in identification the learners' needs (Chostelidou, 2010). It can be concluded that reading material for the nursing major is supposed to accomplish with students' needs and can be their information source that can support their professional purpose in nursing.

As a receptive skill, reading has a great contribution to the students' internal knowledge. To gather knowledge, students need to achieve comprehension of reading. Reading comprehension is not easy to achieve. Many aspects must be considered if the teacher wants to successfully conduct the teaching-learning process. One of the important aspects is giving the students a chance to read during the lesson and also make sure that they completely understand what they read. To fulfill this aspect, the teacher needs to apply a method or an approach that can lead students to their comprehension and reading motivation. One of the approaches that are assumed to develop students' skills in communicative ability is Task-Based Language Teaching. The key assumption in the research and academic literature that tasks are the main organizing unit of the syllabus, and that transacting tasks is a pedagogically viable way for learners to acquire elements of the linguistics system (Samuda et al., 2018). For example, giving learners tasks to transact provides an environment that best promotes the natural language learning process. By enrolling in tasks, the learners' interlanguage system is stretched and encouraged to develop. The students performed better in tasks which involved creativity and gave them the experience of playing (Keyvanfar & Modarresi, 2009)

Task-Based Learning (TBL) has its popularity among teaching and education practitioners. Some reasons for this attention are the desire of educators to promote real communication or the exchange of meanings rather than forms. A task is an activity "where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) to achieve an outcome". It is more effective to use a meaning-based approach than a form-based approach. Students express their thoughts even if some of the languages are inaccurate (Willis, 1996). Another reason is the fact that practitioners advocate better language learning when students are not focused only on linguistic forms. If task-based instruction takes place, language learning is more meaningful and natural. Tasks primarily focus on meaning and resemble real-life situations. Since tasks are goal-directed activities, participants decide which language forms to use to achieve the goal (Skehan, 1996). Task-Based Learning as an approach requires teachers to plan lessons, not only for class activities but also for real communication. In second language research, tasks have been used to study language production, interaction, negotiation of meaning -all aspects to improve second language acquisition (SLA) (Van Den Branden, 2006) The students' reading comprehension achievement developed after learning reading comprehension by using real and authentic materials or communication (Assiddiq, 2019).

In the term of reading activity, communication happens between the author and the reader. The tasks which are provided will lead students to a good comprehension of the author's writing. Task-Based Language Teaching hopefully provides solutions for students to engage in comprehension in reading.

Considering the issues above, the researcher formulates research questions as follows:

1. Does the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach affect students' reading comprehension in terms of literal, inferential, and extrapolative comprehension?
2. How are students' reading motivation regarding the application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in teaching reading?

B. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Concept of Task-Based Language Teaching

To develop students' competence in using a second language effectively and easily, students need to face some kinds of situations that they meet outside the classroom, they need to experience a situation where the language is used as a communication tool. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a teaching process that uses language as a communication tool. (Nunan, 2004)

The theory of language learning is a basic theory of TBLT. TBLT proposes to foster processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation and the use of tasks as a central component in the language classroom because it provides better contexts for activating learner acquisition processes and promoting L2 learning. (Shehadeh, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The Methodology of Task-Based Language Teaching

There have been many task-based TBL models for class lessons. (Nunan, 2004) presents a model that focuses on the meaning and real-world activities that demand learners to process language for real situations:

Table 1. A framework for designing task-based lessons

	Framing the activity (e.g. establishing the outcome of the task)
Pre-task (consciousness-raising activities)	Regulating planning time Doing a similar task
During task	Time pressure

	Regulating topic
	Number of participants
Post-task (Focused communication activities)	Learner report
	Repeat task
	Reflection

This model shows English language development occurs when learners have enough time to prepare and perform a task. The pre-task shows students the grammar that they will master in the future and form is engineered by the design of the task. On the other hand, the task stage focuses on communication activities, which means performance is crucial. The way teachers handle error correction and how students react to the task is important. Teachers are required to let communication flow and find strategies to make error correction in such a way that indirect focus on form is accomplished. Finally, students report to class. They may be exposed to any kind of input and then share with the group about their understanding.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a reader's activities that interact with the writer through written text which involves a simultaneous process of comprehending, understanding, and getting information. Reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language simultaneously (Dole, 2000). The phrase of *extracting and constructing meaning* is to highlight the text importance and insufficiency as a reading comprehension determinant. It can be noticed that the role of readers' background knowledge has a contribution to achieving a real understanding of a written text.

Moreover, reading comprehension is a process that occurs before, during, and after a person reads a particular piece of writing intentionally, active, and interactive. Comprehending a passage is a complicated process to get the text's meaning which is a combination of the explicit, literal meaning of the words and sentence, as well as the inferred meaning that can be uniquely generated by the reader (Green & Roth, 2013). Reading comprehension entails three elements. They are the reader, the text, and the activity. Every reader has their level of reading comprehension. Different types of reading comprehension are distinguished according to the readers' purposes and the type of reading they use (Richards, 1985). Reading comprehension levels involve literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and extrapolative comprehension (Smith et al., 1980).

To conclude, reading comprehension is a simultaneous active process in which readers gain information and purposes of the author from a written text with full comprehension and understanding.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

Design and Sample

The researcher employed a quasi-experimental method to measure the effect of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach on students' reading comprehension at *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Panakukang* in academic year 2017/2018. This method involved two groups, the experimental and the control group. The experimental group received the TBLT approach in the reading teaching process while the control group was taught by the conventional teaching approach which was Silent Reading. This research was a descriptive quantitative research design to figure out the answers to the research problems. A total sampling technique was used in this research. Total sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique in which the sample is chosen to examine the entire population that has a particular set of characteristics. The researcher took two classes as the sample that became the experimental group and control group. The number of each class was 25 students, thus the total number of samples was 50 students.

Instrument and Procedure of Collecting Data

Quantitative data were collected through the reading test and questionnaire. The reading test was used in the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test aimed to know the basic reading comprehension of students before giving treatment. Meanwhile, the post-test that was given after the treatment was aimed to figure out the progress of students' reading comprehension. So, the reading test was aimed to know the effect of TBLT on students' reading comprehension. The experimental group was given a questionnaire to figure out the attitude of students toward the TBLT approach.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher used statistical analysis to two instruments. To analyze the students' reading comprehension, the researcher did it in three steps. They are scoring the student's answer, classifying the student's score and calculating the mean score, standard deviation, and t-test by using SPSS 20.0 program for Windows to acquire accurate quantification. After all calculating mean score, standard deviation, and t-test are found, the data are analyzed

through inferential statistics, then described based on the frequency, percentage, mean score, and standard deviation. Meanwhile, to analyze the students' motivation, the researcher used SPSS 20.0 to find the P-value of the T-test of the questionnaires given to the students.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the data were gathered, descriptive statistics applied to know the significant differences between students' reading comprehension achievement of the experimental and control group. Students' achievement of the experimental and control groups on the pre-test and post-test were provided using the SPSS program. See the tables below.

Table 2. The P-value of T-test of The Students' Score on Experimental and Control Group

Variables	P-value	(α)	Remarks
Pre-test of Experimental and Control Group	0.371	0.05	Not Significantly Different
Post-test of Experimental and Control Group	0.000	0.05	Significantly Different

Based on the result of the data analysis in the t-test hypothesis in the table above, the researcher found that the p-value at the pre-test of the experimental and control group was 0.371 which means there was no significant difference between experimental and control group when the pre-test was gathered. While the p-value at the post-test of the experimental and control group was 0.00 with the degree of freedom 48 which means there was significantly different between experimental and control group after the post-test was gathered. Those results prove that the application of the Task-Based Language Teaching approach affects students reading comprehension.

To investigate the students' motivation for reading towards the application of Task-Based Language Teaching at experimental class, the researcher used Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) After analyzing the result of students' questionnaires using SPSS, the researcher gained the data as can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. The P-value of T-test of The Students' Motivation on Reading Before and After Treatments were Applied

		Paired Samples Test								
		Paired Differences								
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Motivation before – Motivation after	-12.520	4.022	.804	-14.180	-10.860	-15.564	24	,000	

Based on the result of the data analysis in the t-test hypothesis in the table above, the researcher found that the p-value of students' motivation for reading before and after giving treatments was 0.000 with the degree of freedom 24. It means that the p-value of students' motivation for reading before and after treatments was greater than the level of significance which was 0.05.

To support or strengthen the data above, the researcher also analyzed the mean scores and standard deviation of each domain of motivation scores in the table below.

Table 4. The Rate Percentage of the Students' Motivation on Reading

Domain	Before Treatments		After Treatments	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Reading Efficacy	5.40	1.78	8.72	1.59
Reading Challenge	11.68	1.80	14.52	1.50
Reading Curiosity	16.40	2.31	19.92	1.35
Reading Involvement	14.68	2.08	15.96	1.74

Important of Reading	5.04	1.17	5.40	1.12
Reading for Grades	10.36	1.47	11.56	1.69

As shown in the table above, from the six domains of reading motivation, the students at the experimental group had positive changes in means of all domains when the questionnaire was given to students after treatments. The students' motivation which had significant progress after applying Task-Based Language Teaching was on the domains of students' reading efficacy, reading challenge, and reading curiosity.

By comparing the frequency and percentage of students' achievement, students at the experimental group had a different level of the score, who mostly got a poor level of the score, and students at the control group, who mostly got the average level of score. The results of both groups were seen differently but the mean score of the experimental group and control group was found similar which the students' reading comprehension achievement of the experimental and control group before conducting the treatment was a poor level. However, after conducting the treatment, the researcher found a significant difference in the students' reading comprehension achievement between the experimental group treated through Task-Based Language Teaching and the control group treated through Silent Reading. In this case, the students' achievement of the experimental group was at a good level (mean score was 73.07) after learning. On the other hand, the students' achievement of the control group was at the average level (mean score was 63.20). Certainly, it can be concluded that the application of Task-Based Language Teaching was more effective to develop the students' reading comprehension achievement than of the application of Silent Reading.

The conclusion above is supported by the significance t-test result taken from the inferential statistical data. It was found that the significance value was 0.00 that is smaller than the significance level (α ; 0.05); 0. Based on this analysis' result, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis declared that the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach does not affect students' reading comprehension was rejected. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis declared that the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach affects students' reading comprehension was accepted.

Furthermore, the detailed information about reading comprehension achievement of students based on the three levels of comprehension; literal, inferential, and critical

comprehension, before and after conducting the treatment was also included. Inevitably, the implication of the application of Task-Based Language Teaching in helping the students to build up reading comprehension achievement is also clearly seen from the three levels of comprehension.

Literal Comprehension

Based on the findings, the literal comprehension achievement of the students of the two groups was categorized as good before learning reading through the methods applied by the researcher. Some students are hard to get the primary direct literal meaning of a word, idea, or sentence in context. Otherwise, after learning reading comprehension through Task-based Language Teaching, the students' achievement on literal comprehension of the experimental group significantly improved. The students' scores had been changed from good to very good. It can be concluded that the application of Task-based Language Teaching significantly improved the students' achievement in terms of literal comprehension. The application of Task-based Language Teaching can help the students to develop their skills to understand ideas and information explicitly stated in the reading materials. Otherwise, the students' achievement on literal comprehension of the control group was still in the good category. In other words, there is no improvement in their achievement after learning through pedagogic materials. Therefore, it can be inferred that the students' achievement on literal comprehension at the experimental group by content was better than the control group after learning.

Inferential Comprehension

Inferential comprehension is not an easy one. It deals with what the author means by what is said. The reader must simply read between the lines and make inferences about things that are not directly stated. Based on the students' achievement on this level at pre-test or before Task-based Language Teaching applied by the researcher, inferential comprehension seemed extremely difficult for the students. Most of the students felt confused to make inferences about things that were not directly stated. As a result, the students got confused to acquire the main idea, supporting ideas, supporting details, sequence, and, cause and effect relationships in reading text. For this evidence, the students' achievement in terms of inferential comprehension was only categorized as poor.

However, after conducting the treatment, the researcher found that the students' achievement on inferential comprehension of the experimental group moved from poor to the

average level. Some students could simply read between the lines and make inferences about things that were not directly stated. The students still confused to get ideas in reading text which was not directly stated. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the students' achievement on inferential comprehension at the experimental group was better after Task-based Language Teaching applied.

Extrapolative Comprehension

By looking at the fact, extrapolative comprehension is the most difficult level for the students because it requires the reader to use some external criteria from his/her own experience to evaluate the quality, values of the writing, the author's reasoning, simplifications, and generalizations. However, the researcher found that students' achievement in terms of the extrapolative comprehension at the post-test seemed better than at the pre-test. It can be seen that students' achievement of extrapolative comprehension improved from very poor to average. This can be seen from the result of students' reading comprehension test before and after conducting the treatment. Before conducting the treatment, most of the students were hard to answer the question related to the extrapolative comprehension, it indicated that the students failed to evaluate the quality, values of the writing, the author's reasoning, simplifications, and generalizations in a reading text. However, after conducting the treatment, it was identified that the error answers in terms of extrapolative comprehension making by the student in the experimental group decreased.

Regarding the finding of the motivation for the reading of the students in the experimental group, the researcher found that the students were more motivated to read after the students were given treatments. The result which p-value of students' motivation on reading before and after giving treatments was 0.000 with the degree of freedom²⁴, indicated that there were significant differences between the students' motivation on reading before and after the treatments were applied. Therefore, it can be concluded that the application of Task-Based Language Teaching significantly developed the students' motivation for reading. The finding of the analysis on the mean scores and standard deviation of each domain of motivation scores was also investigated to support the finding of reading motivation which showed that there were positive changes on the means of three domains of motivation, reading efficacy, reading challenge, and reading curiosity, after the application of Task-Based Language Teaching.

Post-test results indicated an increase in the mean of reading efficacy. Here, the focus of reading was on the content in which readers made an interaction with the text, and not on the linguistic features of the text. Reading challenge was another domain of motivation that had an increase. And the most increasing domain after the treatment was reading curiosity. After the application of Task-Based Language Teaching, students became more motivated to read about their favorite topics and new things. After the application of Task-Based Language Teaching, the goal of the students for reading was changed.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the researcher concludes the findings in developing reading comprehension achievement of the students as follows:

1. The reading comprehension achievement for the overall comprehension of the fifth-semester students of *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Panakukang Makassar* significantly developed after learning reading by applying Task-based Language Teaching. In terms of literal, inferential, and extrapolative comprehension after applying Task-Based Language Teaching, the most evolving comprehension was inferential comprehension, followed by extrapolative comprehension and the last was literal comprehension. This finding indicates that the application of Task-based Language Teaching was effective to evolve the reading comprehension achievement of the students.
2. The fifth-semester students who were taught through Task-based Language Teaching became more motivated to read. The result showed that the application of Task-based Language Teaching was effective to develop students' motivation for reading. Hence, it can be said that the higher students' motivation, the better students' achievement in reading comprehension and vice versa.

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