

## GROUP DISCUSSION AS COMMUNICATIVE TASK IN THE PRACTICE OF TBLT METHOD

Hikmah Ismidiana Marwah, Nuraeni, Indah Sri Redjeki

English Education Program  
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education  
Universitas Ibn Khaldun, Bogor  
hikmah.is.marwah@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

Penerapan metode Pengajaran Bahasa Berbasis Tugas (TBLT) yang berfokus pada praktik dan komunikasi kehidupan nyata bisa menjadi tantangan untuk diterapkan. Guru EFL prajabatan yang mempelajari metode ini harus memahami metode ini agar dapat menerapkannya dalam kegiatan pembelajaran. Situasi ini mendorong guru EFL prajabatan untuk mempraktikkan kegiatan tersebut, yang menunjukkan tujuan dari metode TBLT. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana metode TBLT dengan tugas-tugas komunikatif menggunakan diskusi kelompok mempengaruhi aktivitas komunikatif siswa. Dalam menyelidiki topik ini, peneliti menggunakan studi kasus eksploratori. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan observasi dan kuesioner, untuk melengkapi persepsi guru dalam mendukung hasil observasi. Kemudian data dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis tematik. Peneliti menemukan bahwa tugas komunikatif dalam metode TBLT menggunakan diskusi kelompok memiliki dampak yang baik terhadap komunikasi siswa. Kegiatan tersebut memaksa siswa untuk menyelesaikan tugas mereka dengan berinteraksi dengan teman-teman mereka dalam kegiatan diskusi kelompok. Untuk penelitian lebih lanjut, peneliti menyarankan agar persepsi siswa juga dimasukkan dalam menyelesaikan temuan, tidak hanya dari sudut pandang guru tetapi juga dari sisi siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** Diskusi kelompok, Tugas Komunikatif, Pengajaran Bahasa Berbasis Tugas (TBLT)

### ABSTRACT

*The implementation of the task-based language teaching (TBLT) method that focuses on real-life practice and communication could be challenging to apply. Pre-service EFL teachers who study this method should have to understand this method in order to apply it for learning activity. This situation led the pre-service EFL teacher to practice doing the activity, which indicates the objective of the TBLT method. Therefore, this study examined how the TBLT method of communicative tasks using group discussion impacts students' communicative activity. In investigating this topic, the researcher used an exploratory case study. The data were collected by using observation and a questionnaire, due to enclosing the teacher's perception in supporting the observation result. Then the data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. The researcher found that communicative tasks in the TBLT method using group discussion had a good impact on students communication. The activity forces students to finish their task by interacting with their friends in group discussion activity. For further research, the researcher suggests including students' perceptions in completing the finding not only from the teacher's point of view but also from the students' side.*

**Keywords:** Group Discussion, Communicative Task, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching English in Indonesia has several challenges. The bold cultural habits lead the people to have nationalism and respect traditional cultures. This situation draws to the opinion that learning and mastering English is not that vital. Moreover, many Indonesian students struggle with implementing English for communication due to its cultural differences and lack of motivation (Jon et al., 2021). In addition, Redjeki and Muhajir (2022)

stated that EFL students face limited English communication skills, making numerous errors in pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary. They struggle with distinguishing sounds and pronunciation, lack fluency due to lack of knowledge, and often become passive in speaking classes due to anxiety and fear of failure. Poorly prepared learning resources and limited practice opportunities might contribute to this issue. Teachers frequently employ English in their

lessons, but students' backgrounds and personal traits also affect how well they understand the language, which leads to poor proficiency levels (Fajriah et al., 2019). Based on the situations above, pre-service teachers have to master teaching methods that facilitate and stimulate students to use English frequently in learning activities.

With a communicative approach, TBLT is one of the teaching methods that can be used to give an experience doing interaction as a task that needs to be done by students. According to Boston (2008), TBLT is a teaching approach that involves students in meaning-focused activities that should be viewed as having positive value. As they complete the tasks, students typically receive and provide feedback from teachers and classmates to help them notice language items while completing their assignments. Another theory also explained that Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) is the process of developing a curriculum that emphasizes on tasks rather than providing students with a pre-digested version of a language's structures, concepts, or functions (Howatt & Smith, 2014). According to Willis (1996), using TBLT as a teaching method is supposed to give students the opportunity to negotiate turns to speak and assist them reach communication goals by building confidence. Additionally, Prasetyo and Farhana (2021) stated that in TBLT, learners are permitted to practice using the language that they are confident in.

In this investigation, a communicative task was implemented in the form of a group discussion activity in the TBLT method. A communicative task is a type of assignment where students analyze, manipulate, produce, or engage in the target language that focuses on the meaning rather than language structure. A sense of completion and the ability to function independently as a communication act are also necessary for the activity (Nunan, 1989; Krahne, 1987).

To support the data findings, this research also included teacher's perceptions that provide the teacher's point of view of the activity. Perception is an important aspect of communication in which people convey information by choosing stimuli and connecting senses and memories. It requires prior knowledge to interpret stimuli perceived by the senses. Perception is subjective and situational, combining

external and internal variables. Cognitive processes, reality, consciousness, memory, thought, and language all influence an individual's ability to think and experience, and sensory responses vary accordingly (Prasetya, Nuraini & Sabhir, 2022).

Draws to the explanation above, this study aimed to find out how the TBLT method using group discussion impacts students' communicative activity and the teacher's perception of this matter.

## **METHOD**

This study used a qualitative approach, particularly case study, to investigate phenomena in specific contexts. The case study method, commonly used in investigations, involves the experiences of participants, providing a clear purpose and direction for the investigation (Hancock et al., 2021). The case study method is often utilized in examining phenomena (Gammelgaard, 2017), which will be investigated in this type of approach and method. This study investigates the case using an exploratory case study, which has a clear objective and path to follow (Yin, 2009).

The data of this current study were acquired by participant observation and a questionnaire. Observation can be defined as a method of collecting data by using the senses (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018), particularly the observing and listening senses, to observe data directly or by recording. Naturalistic observation, also known as qualitative observation, is the practice of observing naturally occurring behaviors. One example of how to use this observation is to monitor students' behaviors during classroom activities that are relevant to our current research. In this research, the students who were observed were 10 students who did group discussions in practicing as an activity in the TBLT method.

In addition to observation, this study used open- and closed-ended questionnaires to collect data on teacher's perceptions. From the perception of the lecturer as a participant, the researcher can excavate the impact of practicing group discussion on students' communicative activity. An open-ended questionnaire is designed to elicit a brief answer or an essay in order for participants to explore and provide additional detail in their response (Hyman & Sierra, 2016). In this type of inquiry, participants are encouraged to

construct their own answers based on their memories, with some complicated and detailed responses relying on a controlled retrieval process and minimal clues (Desai & Reimers, 2018).

The researcher also used thematic analysis to make the data code. Thematic analysis involves data coding, a process of understanding participants' perspectives by identifying topics, issues, similarities, and differences. It involves six steps: understanding the data, creating initial codes and labels, identifying potential themes, reviewing and defining themes, and creating a report or manuscript (Sutton & Austin, 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The observation was done in two meetings by observing the activity through video recording. The important points that became the focus of observation were noted and commented on in the observation sheet. After the researcher did the observation, the researcher shared a questionnaire with the participants to dig deeper into this topic study. After collecting the data, the researcher use thematic analysis to process the data finding.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results found that group discussion as a communicative task in the TBLT method has a positive impact on students. By doing group discussion, students got the chance to interact using the target language, which is English. This activity also supports the practice of the TBLT method using a communicative approach. In the group discussion activity, every student had a task to speak up, delivering ideas and responses. By the task, the students tried to speak in English in order to finish their responsibilities.

The group discussion activity in the first observation aimed to lead students to explore their understanding of the TBLT method. The task was to find out the appropriate activity in the TBLT method from students' perception. The discussion topics were about the TBLT method, what TBLT was, the activities that could be implemented in the TBLT method, the teachers' role in TBLT, the distinctive characteristics of TBLT, and the students' role in TBLT. Those topics had been explained by the lecturer before. In the first meeting, the communicative activity did not run really well. Only four students who participated in sharing their understanding. The other students

prefer to be passive due to their hesitation to speak up. Uneven participation of the group members impacts ineffective communication. The exchange of information and perception happened alternating with silence. In this meeting, the lecturer monitored the activity and gave some suggestions and clarified the results of the group discussion. As a participant, the lecturer mentioned the same perception about uneven participation, which influenced the effectiveness of group discussion. From the lecturer's perception, running effective group discussions could be done by finding a balance that works for the learning goals, the topic's nature, and the group dynamics, which were crucial. Group size issues can be minimized with the aid of clear instructions and effective management.

The second meeting, group discussion, ran better than the meeting before. At the beginning of the group discussion activity, some students still hesitated to speak up. The task was that the students had the responsibility to deliver their opinion about themes and give responses to their friends opinions. In order to do this task, the students were willing to speak up. One student who was not really fluent in speaking English also tried to speak full English. In line with the finding from the observation, the participant also noted that group discussion can help students gain confidence since it requires communicative ability, which allows students to speak up about their thoughts. Not only their confidence and speaking, but their collaborative behavior also enhanced in the second meeting. Their self-awareness emerged when some of them had a problem with the device error and unstable internet connection. Several students were initiated to give additional ideas to spin out time for their friends. Due to this action, the communicative activity still went on while giving the other students who had problems a chance to join the discussion. Two students also handled the friends' role when the friends were out of the group discussion unpurposedly because of losing signal.

Group discussions that require students to interact and provide ideas and responses encourage students to speak up and participate in communicative activities. Students can participate and express themselves during group discussions. This helped them become accustomed to applying their linguistic competence in learning activities. As a result, they can participate more actively and

with greater confidence. Furthermore, while studying the TBLT method, students require communicative contact to practice their grasp of the learning materials, particularly the TBLT method. The current study discovered that while group discussion may not directly enhance students' motivation, it does have an effect on their behavior during group discussions. Even while students' interest and participation did not greatly increase, they were accustomed to speaking up and were eager to participate in group discussions.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the challenges in execution, communicative activity in group discussion offered many beneficial impacts. Group discussion also has certain advantages that lead students to explore TBLT in the activity of information exchange and communicative method. By this activity, students can also improve their speaking skills and collaboration. From the results of this current study, some students appeared to be more comfortable speaking up because unforeseen questions and situations forced them to do so. This type of environment lets students feel comfortable sharing their views and thoughts. The rules encourage students to do their best and try to participate and play their responsibilities. The findings also mentioned two important matters that could be the effective factors of doing group discussion. The first factor was the capacity of the teacher to conduct the group discussion, which affects the success of its implementation. The second one: students also have an impact on the effectiveness and success of group discussions in which they participate in equal amounts.

## REFERENCES

- Boston, J. S. (2008). Learner mining of pre-task and task input. *ELT Journal*, 62(1), 66–76. Link DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccm079>
- Braun V, Clarke V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual Res Psychol*. 3(2):77–101.
- Desai, S. C. and Reimers, S. (2018). Comparing the use of open and closed questions for Web-based measures of the continued-influence effect. *Behavior Research Methods*, 51: 1426–1440. Link DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-018-1066-z>
- Fajriah, N., Gani, A. S., & Samad, A. I. (2019). Students' perception toward teacher's teaching strategies, personal competence, and school facilities. *English Education Journal (EEJ)*, 10(1): 16–34.
- Gammelgaard, Britta. (2017). Editorial: the qualitative case study. *The International Journal of Logistics Management*, Vol. 28 Issue: 4, pp.910-913, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLM-09-2017-0231>.
- Hancock D. R. et.al. (2021). Doing case study research: a practical guide of beginning researchers (4th ed.). New York: Teacher College Press.
- Howatt, A. P. R. & Smith, R. (2014). The history of teaching English as a foreign language. *British and European Perspective, Language & History*, 57(1): 75-95. Link DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1179/1759753614Z.0000000028>
- Hyman, M. R. and Sierra, J. J. (2016). Open- versus closed-ended survey questions. *Business Outlook*, 14(2): 1-5.
- Jon, R. B. et al. (2021). The challenges of English language teaching in Indonesia. *IJEAL (International Journal of English and Applied Linguistics)*, 1(3): 158-168. Link DOI: [doi.org/ijeal.v1n1.1157](https://doi.org/10.1179/1759753614Z.0000000028)
- Krahne, K. (1987). Approaches to syllabus design for language teaching. USA: Prentice Hall.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prasetya, E. P., Nuraeni, N. and Shabir, M. (2022). Teachers' perception of peeragogy in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic(a digital ethnography research). *Journal of English Educational Study (JEES)*, 5(2): 141-151, E-ISSN: 2566-0776. Accessed on November 2024, Link: <https://jurnal.stkipppersada.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/JEES/article/view/1781/1290>
- Prasetyo, Y. D. & Farhana, S. (2021). *Methods in language teaching* [Power Point Slides]
- Smit, Brigitte and Onwuegbuzie, Anthony J.

- (2018). Observations in qualitative inquiry: when what you see is not what you see. *International Journal of Qualitative Method*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918816766>
- Redjeki, I. S. & Muhajir, R. (2022). Supporting Students' Self-Directed Learning in EFL Speaking Classroom by Using Cake Application. *Journal of English Language Learning (JELL)*, 6(2), 212-219 ISSN 2599-1019.
- Sutton, J. and Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian Journal of Hospitality and Pharmacy*, 68(3): 226–231. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>
- Willis, J. (1996). A framework for task-based learning. ebook edition 2012.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). Case study research: design and method (4th ed.). London: Sage Inc.