

Implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching on Reading Comprehension by the Polytechnic Students

1st* IWD Ardika
Civil Engineering Department
Bali State Polytechnic
Bali, Indonesia
wayandanaardika@pnb.ac.id

2nd IMD Sumartana
Accounting Department
Bali State Polytechnic
Bali, Indonesia
madesumartana@pnb.ac.id

3rd Putu Dyah Hudiananingsih
Accounting Department
Bali State Polytechnic
Bali, Indonesia
dyahhudiananingsih@pnb.ac.id

4th Cahya Dewi
Mechanical Engineering Department
Bali State Polytechnic
Bali, Indonesia
gstcahya@pnb.ac.id

5th Rai Widanta
Mechanical Engineering Department
Bali State Polytechnic
Bali, Indonesia
maderaijayawidanta@pnb.ac.id

6th Gede Santanu
Civil Engineering Department
Bali State Polytechnic
Bali, Indonesia
santanu@pnb.ac.id

Abstract - This study was aimed at determining the students' comprehension of reading after TBLT method being implemented by knowing the effectiveness of TBLT for students, especially for the polytechnic students. TBLT learners are specifically faced with a challenge or problem to solve. This research used Classroom Action Research, which deliberately chose to obtain a detailed understanding of the reaction of the students to the application of the method during classroom activities. After conducting TBLT method, it showed that the students' perception of reading seems to be 22 out of 28 students in the class (78.5 percent) pass the minimum passing grade of 70 and even 6 out of 28 (21.5 percent) students get above 80 for the ranking. In terms of their reading awareness, the introduction of the TBLT had a positive effect on the students.

Keywords: TBLT, Reading Comprehension, Classroom Action Research

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a method that requires a great deal of experience and practice. Active reading is a gist of understanding that blends reading with the process of critical thinking, so it eventually becomes basic to the learning process[1]. Students need to read some literature that is suitable for their major in the sense of a vocational college that applies English for a particular reason such as in Polytechnic which has engineering and commerce programs. The reading material of students in the English classroom situation needs proper reading for engineering and commerce that creates understanding of students and often deals with

other subjects in the major ones. A strong emphasis on English for specific purposes and on the target discipline should be to establish a language course. The aspirations of learners using the target language are different and deal with their

professional objectives, which could be seen as a significant case in defining the needs of learners[2]. It can be inferred that reading material for the major is intended to meet the needs of students and can be their source of knowledge that can serve their professional purposes.

Nowadays, there has been a rapid interest in the application of TBLT in various fields of second and foreign language teaching. Between the various tasks given, the more integral tasks of the reading-based ones seem to be more promising as they may involve the learners in the most essential and important activity of their academic life. Understanding reading is a cognitive task, almost a magical one, and it is a long learning process like other abilities. A considerably complicated matter is teaching literacy. Reading is by far the most significant language ability relative to other abilities. In the same way as speaking and listening are in a first language, reading is not an automatically normal activity (L1)[3]. In fact, a great deal of research has been done on the implementation of language teaching tasks, in particular tasks involving learner interaction[4],[5] and[6].

Unfortunately, despite several efforts made to improve its standard, English teaching in Indonesia has so far been unable to achieve its

declared objectives[7]. According to Thalal [8], there are many cases that indicate that the proficiency of many students in English is still very poor and that, after many years of research, their English skill is negligible. Dardjowidjojo [9] and Nur [10] argue that in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia, large class sizes and poorly or unqualified English teachers are two obvious factors that contribute to this on-going issue. According to Musthafa [11], other explanations for these problems are also identified, such as a lack of opportunity to actually practice English in the classroom due to the grammar and syntax emphasis and the use of the first language (L1); some authentic materials and a lack of opportunity to socialize outside the classroom with English. However,[12] also argue that the lack of encouragement of students and the weak attitude of students to learning English are also factors leading to their low English skills. Actually, the conditions demonstrated the students' ability to learn their English.

In Task Oriented Language Teaching, the execution of the task becomes the center of the learners' approach and activities, and when the task is finished, the instructor examines, corrects and changes the language that is used. [13] and [14] A task can include many techniques; a problem-solving task, for example, can include grammatical interpretation approaches, teacher-initiated questions, small group work, and oral reporting[15]. The students must be able to exploit the examples given by the teachers or textbook of imaginative language use while conducting the assignments, in which they attempt to build their language by recombining some common words, phrases, and structures. The imagination they perform in carrying out the tasks illustrates how they can maximally participate in the learning of language[16]. Placing the language as the key communication tool in the course of language learning means providing more opportunities for students to use the word effectively. Therefore, this research is intended to examine the efficacy of the introduction of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to enhance the ability of polytechnic students to understand reading.

In addition,[17] also demonstrated the strength of TBLT for teachers of the English Foreign Language. It was more necessary to give them the real meaning and condition of language acquisition, considering that the object of teaching was more than helping the learners to achieve the scheduled goals. The introduction of TBLT found it beneficial to give students more chances to be exposed to the target language and to internalize language skills naturally, and also taught students

how to deal with real-life issues. In short, the distance between the classroom setting and the real-life scenario was blocked by TBLT. It gives both learners and lecturers many advantages.

Standing at the same perception as previous studies on the intensity of TBLT to improve the reading comprehension skills of students, this recent study wants to demonstrate the effectiveness of TBLT for students, especially polytechnic students. This research used Classroom Action Research, which deliberately chose to obtain a detailed understanding of the reaction of the students to the application of the method during classroom activities. Communication exists between the author and the reader in the course of reading activities. The duties given by the lecturers will lead the students to a better understanding of the author's writing. Hopefully, Task-Based Language Teaching offers solutions for students to engage in reading comprehension.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1 Concept of Task-Based Language Teaching

A recent extension of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and has become a common tool for teaching second language communicative acquisition. TBLT is primarily about the social contact between learners as a source of feedback and means of acquisition, and includes the negotiation of meaning, communication techniques and efficacy of communication," according to [13]." [18] describes TBLT as follows: "TBLT refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of language teaching planning and instruction." This means that a task or problem to be solved is primarily addressed in the implementation of TBLT learners.

2.2 Reading Comprehension

Reading is by far the most critical language skill for most individuals across the globe. In the same way as speaking and listening are in a first language, reading is not an automatically normal activity (L1) [19]. The overabundance of numerous textbook materials and other forms of reading such as magazines, journals, newspapers, etc., and the amount of time spent on going through all these written sources of knowledge denote the reality; the other three language skills can be fostered by positive access to potential educational opportunities and learning environments.

III. METHOD

In this study, the Collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR) design was used to determine the students' comprehension of reading after TBLT method being conducted by knowing the effectiveness of TBLT for students, especially for the polytechnic students. [20]. This study was conducted in the Polytechnic State of Bali, and the subject was 28 students of Project Construction Management who took the five semester English for Business. The preliminary research was performed by offering them a reading comprehension test on October 7, 2020. It was done to figure out the real challenge faced by students in Project Construction Management. Some indicators were referred to in 5 items: (1) identify the subject of the text, (2) identify the key concept of each paragraph, (3) discover the contextual reference pronoun, (4) identify the detailed details from it, and (5) discover the implicit sense. The outcome showed that 20 out of 28 learners (71 percent) had a preliminary score below 70, and only 8 out of 28 students (29 percent) had a preliminary score above 70. It showed that students in Project Construction Management still face some reading comprehension difficulties.

The form of the cycle proposed by [21] was considered sufficient to be used in this research based on the outcome of the preliminary study. Four phases have been covered: planning, execution, observation and reflection. Three methods were used for data collection: an evaluation checklist, field notes and a reading comprehension test. Via expert validation, all instruments were tested. The primary data, observation checklist and field notes were used as a reading comprehension test to gather the supporting data for the study. The goal of the observation checklist and field notes was to find out the reaction of the students to the implementation of the strategy. Intentionally used both observation checklist and field notes to know how effective the applied technique is to improve the understanding skill of students.

The preparation of the action is in the first stage of the preliminary period. In order to define the issue found in the context of the classroom, preparation was performed and it would then be the basis for implementing an action plan. The preliminary research was part of this process and was conducted at the beginning of the analysis. It was done to define the real issue the topic of the study was facing. In order to facilitate the application of the strategy, these points should be considered as a consequence of the planning stage: designing the teaching scenario, lesson plans, and

even reading comprehension tasks. The three stages in TBLT (pre-work, task cycle, and post-task) during the teaching and learning activities should be considered to establish the teaching scenario and lesson plan. The content for reading comprehension tasks should be involved in addition to the teaching scenario and lesson.

In relation to the study's reading comprehension tasks, the researcher agreed that the tasks were highlighted in how to enhance the reading comprehension of the students, including finding main ideas and supporting facts, finding explicit and implicit information, and deciding the word's synonym. In addition, the other forms of reading practice associated with the goals of the courses were also included in the assignments. The activities were also intended to sharpen the capacity of the students to summarize the text so that they could present the text in front of many people adequately and communicatively. Company on Project Construction Management texts used the materials for reading tasks in the form of report texts.

The pre-task stage was the first step in the teaching and learning activities. The pre-task was started after confirming the attendance list of students and telling the study goals. The lecturer gave the students some activities in the pre-task activity that were aimed at stimulating the background awareness of the students about the subject and the task of the day. The exercises included brainstorming, performing or demonstrating the model of similar tasks with a different subject, as well as providing some photos or video to be viewed by the students. The students constantly showed a positive response by paying attention during the pre-task exercises, and most of the students quickly answered the questions of the lecturer, and only some of them remained silent.

The students began to do the task in the task cycle, and the instructor gave them an opportunity to use their own vocabulary to discuss the task. The students also had the opportunity to work with a couple and a large group, so they could begin to communicatively discuss the assignments. The assignments have provided an incentive for the students to discuss the tasks by using their own vocabulary to make mistakes without fear. During this process, various exercises were used to encourage learners to understand reading, such as group discussion, knowledge gap, reasoning gap, outline drawing, poster presentation, and video presentation. The lecturer asked the students at the beginning of the activity to read the text individually at the given time. Then, they were assigned to a group and performed tasks relevant to the subject. The task activity was a knowledge gap

in the first meeting, and for the second meeting, the task activity was a thinking gap activity. Especially in the first and second meetings, before moving to the longer text, the students had to read the shorter text. The more succinct text was aimed at encouraging students to practice more to find the word's meaning and synonym.

The students were asked to draw an outline relevant to the key ideas and supporting information from the given text in the drawing outline activities for the third meeting. The students were divided into four groups, and two separate texts had to be written for each of the two groups. The job tasks were knowledge gap activities in the fourth and sixth meetings. In relation to the Project Construction Management journal post, the subject is about industry. The students had to read the article separately in both meetings before the group discussion, and highlighted some relevant points from the article. Each student must share the data they have obtained from the article fluently during the group discussion. In the time administered, the instructor asked the group's members to talk about the results of the discussion and some input could be given by the other students.

Post-task was the last process. The lecturer provided the students with changes and feedback related to the tasks assigned in the task cycle at this point. The post-task exercises were planned to make sure that the text was already understood by the students and that they could use their own words to construct a description. The response of the students during post-task activities was very positive in the first and second meetings. By using their own words, most of them might make a description relevant to the article and, of course, some of them still used mixed language. Also, the post-task operation ran so well. In each meeting, the lecturer also provided the students with input about the text. In addition, for today's activity, the students also had the same opportunity to provide feedback.

The observation phase was undertaken during the implementation of TBLT in classroom activities. This approach was the data collection measures that showed the progress of the strategy in the class to solve the problem[20]. To solve the problem, the emphasis was on the implementation of the strategy. There were two kinds of data that were obtained during the observation phase of the implementation of the strategy. When monitoring the execution of the plan, the collaborator had an obligation to complete both the observation sheet and field notes. The data was taken as supporting data from the observation checklist and field notes, and the data from the reading test as the main data. During the implementation of TBLT for the

teaching and learning activities in the cycle, the observation checklist was mandatory to collect the data qualitatively. In the classroom context, there were several variables, including the response to the execution of the plan.

Field notes were the second instrument. The field note was used to gather qualitative data that was broader or above the checklist of findings. The field note was used to anticipate the likelihood of uncovering the data for teaching and learning activities during TBLT implementation. The last instrument was a measure for reading. During TBLT implementation, the reading tests were conducted to gather the quantitative data of the reading comprehension score of the learners. At the last meeting of the cycle, the reading test was given to find out how well TBLT will specifically increase the achievement of students in reading comprehension.

At the end of the cycle, the reading comprehension test was administered to assess the effect of the application of the strategy to enhance the achievement of reading comprehension by students. The test measures were developed on the basis of reading comprehension micro-skills and also the outcome of the preliminary research. The researcher conducted the test for the experiment after being checked by the expert to ensure the instruments relevant to the item discrimination of the test. Another group of students, who had the same characteristics as the focus of the study, tried it out. The metrics of performance is the assessment of the efficacy of the execution of the plan. The requirements for success were determined for this study based on the results of the preliminary study and also the response of the students to the implementation of the strategy.

The reflection phase was performed after the reading comprehension test was administered. It was done deliberately to test the strategy's execution. The data evaluating the method to determine how much the data obtained shows the progress of the implementation of the strategy in solving the problem in the classroom was reflected[20]. In addition, some factors that supported the problem and progress that could occur during the implementation of the strategy were seen in the reflection phase. The method of review involved the comparison of the two data obtained during the observation. It would be the basis for determining the performance criteria that one had not yet achieved and the potential explanation why those criteria had not yet been achieved. The outcome of the reflection was used to assess which aspect of the method requires enhancement. If the criterion of success had not yet

been reached, and the researcher needed to repeat the cycle, a revision of the strategy was required.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of the students' comprehension of reading show that 22 out of 28 students in the class (78.5 percent) pass the minimum passing grade of 70 and even 6 out of 28 (21.5 percent) students get above 80 for the ranking. It meant that the first performance criteria were fulfilled. Therefore, the introduction of the TBLT had a positive effect on the students in terms of their reading comprehension from the outcome of the final reading comprehension test.

The positive improvement during the teaching and learning activities was shown by data from both the observation checklist and field notes. During the pre-task, task period, and post-task, the students demonstrated constant progress in class participation. This therefore meant that the learning process was very successful with the use of the proposed technique. Therefore, the results showed that the second performance criterion were also fulfilled and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) was shown to increase the understanding of reading by the students so that the research could be stopped and published.

Based on the outcome, the students' positive responses to the introduction of Task Based Language Teaching and the improvement of the reading comprehension score of students in the test were shown. During the classroom activities, TBLT proved to give students more opportunities and to bridge the contact between partners and teachers in the classroom[22]. Based on the results, during the teaching and learning phase in the class, the students displayed a constant positive response. TBLT was implemented in three steps in this study: pre-work, task cycle, and post-task. The lecturer does in the pre-task: (1) the brainstorming exercise, (2) showed the model of similar activities, or (3) gave some photos and video to students to observe. In each meeting, the activity was conducted differently but had the same purpose to stimulate the context awareness of the subject of the students. In the pre-task, some stimulus was provided to the students to explore their background knowledge of the current subject. The use of pre-task activities helped build a good mindset in the minds of the students before reading the text[23] began.

V. CONCLUSION

It can be inferred from the results and discussion that the application of TBLT in reading

comprehension brings many advantages. First, the students become more involved in the activities of the classroom, then the introduction of the TBLT raises the consciousness of the students to understand the meaning of the vocabulary from the text's context. Furthermore, it provides students a wider view of the reading method that is beneficial for them to understand the text. However, for other text genres, this technique may also be used by English lecturers from the other major departments who want to develop the reading comprehension skills of students.

REFERENCES

- [1] Chesla, E. (2001). *8th Grade Reading Comprehension Success* (First Edit). Learning Express.
- [2] Chostelidou, D. (2010). *A needs analysis approach to ESP syllabus design in Greek tertiary education: a descriptive account of students' needs*. 2(2),4507-4512. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.721>
- [3] Alderson, J. C. (2000). The relationship between grammar and reading in an English for academic purposes: selected papers from the 1990 language testing research Colloquium. In D. Douglas, & C. Chapelle (Ed.), *VA: TESOL. Assessing reading* (pp. 203-219). NY: Cambridge University Press.
- [4] Breen, M. P. (1987). Contemporary paradigms in syllabus design, part I. *Language Teaching*, 20(2), 81-91. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800004365>
- [5] Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667305>
- [6] Prabhu, N. S. (1987). *Second language pedagogy. A perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [7] Madya, S. (2002). *Developing Standards for EFL in Indonesia as Part of the EFL Teaching Reform*. Retrieved from <http://staff.uny.ac.id/sites/default/files/pengabdian/prof-hj-suwarsih-madya-phd/developing-standards-epl-indonesia-part-epl.pdf>.
- [8] Thalal, M. (2010). *New Insights into Teaching of English Language to Indonesian Students*. Retrieved from http://www.lkas.org/pendidikan/detail/15/new_insights_into_teaching_of_english_language_to_indonesian_students.html.
- [9] Dardjowidjojo, S. (2000). English Teaching in Indonesia. *English Australia Journal*, 18(1), 22-30.

- [10] Nur, C. (2004). *English Language Teaching in Indonesia: Changing Policies and Practices*. Singapore: Eastern University Press.
- [11] Musthafa, B. (2001). Communicative Language Teaching in Indonesia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Education*, 2(2), 1-9.
- [12] Kam, H.W., & Wong, R. L. (2004). *English Language Teaching in East Asia Today: Changing Policies and Practices*, 2nd ed. Singapore: Eastern University Press.
- [13] Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [14] Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* Fourth Edition. Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- [15] Brown, H.D, & Heekyeoung, L. (2015). *Teaching by Principles* Fourth Edition. New York, NY: Pearson education
- [16] Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [17] Hismanoglu, M., & Hismanoglu S. (2011). Task-based language teaching: what every EFL teacher should do. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 15, 46-52. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.03.049.
- [18] Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approach and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [19] Alderson, J. C. (1993). The relationship between grammar and reading in an English for academic purposes: selected papers from the 1990 language testing research Colloquium. In D. Douglas, & C. Chapelle (Ed.), VA: *TESOL. Assessing reading* (pp. 203-219). NY: Cambridge University Press.
- [20] Latief, M.A. (2015). *Research Methods on Language Learning: An Introduction*. Malang: Universitas Negeri Malang Press.
- [21] Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2007) Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere. In: Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y., Eds., *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, 271-330.
- [22] Valli, S.K, & Priya, V. (2016). A Task-Based Approach to Develop the Writing Skills in English of Students at College Level. *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research* 11, 2145-2148.
- [23] Greenwood, J. (1981). *Comprehension and Reading. The Reading of English as International Language: A Practical Guide*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Limited.