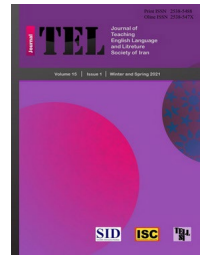


Teaching English Language, Vol. 16, No. 1, Winter & Spring 2022, pp. 203-234
DOR: 20.1001.1.25385488.2022.16.1.8.9

Teaching English Language Journal

ISSN: 2538-5488 – E-ISSN: 2538-547X – <http://tel.journal.org>

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Please cite this paper as follows:

Saragih, W., Saragih, N. A., Siregar, R. A., &, Natalia, Ch. H. (2022). Investigating EFL teachers' perception on task-based language teaching for speaking skills. *Teaching English Language, 16*(1), 203-234. <https://doi.org/10.22132/TEL.2022.151148>

Research Paper

Investigating EFL Teachers' Perception on Task-based Language Teaching for Speaking Skills

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Abstract

The capacity to communicate in English expands opportunities for acquiring and enriching knowledge, extending social life, and interacting with more people from all over the world. However, due to a lack of expertise and confidence, students have difficulty expressing their ideas in the target language. The study aimed to ascertain EFL teachers' perceptions of the benefits and problems associated with enhancing students' speaking abilities through task-based language instruction (TBLT). The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, involving an interview and the distribution

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of a questionnaire. The interview provided the primary data, while the questionnaire provided the secondary data. Ten English instructors from a school in North Sumatera were purposefully chosen for their experience utilizing TBLT to improve students' speaking abilities. The qualitative analysis of this study found that teachers had a favourable perception of TBLT implementation. They acknowledged that TBLT helps their teaching practice by encouraging students to engage in active practice and participation in completing communicative activities in the target language. However, difficulties arise in teachers' inventiveness in devising communicative assignments that match the students' requirements and expectations, given their diverse backgrounds and occupations.

Keywords: Communicative Tasks, EFL Teachers, Speaking, Task-Based Language Teaching

Received: February 28, 2022

Accepted: June 15, 2022



1. Introduction

Task-based Language Teaching has influenced English Language Teaching worldwide (Butler, 2011), and Indonesia as an Asian country is no exception to this trend. In many parts of Asia, traditional approaches to English language instruction, such as grammar translation and audio-lingual methods, have come under increasing scrutiny. These traditional methods of instruction can be categorized as synthetic techniques, and a typical criticism of them is that they do not assist students in developing a high level of communicative proficiency. In the synthetic approach, the target language is broken down into constituent parts and then provided in a linear fashion (e.g., grammar rules, words, phonemes, structures, and functions) to language learners. As an alternative to synthetic techniques, some Asian countries have included TBLT into their English language curricula and education programs.

Through the emergence of the communicative language teaching approach, task-based language teaching (TBLT) has become a significant

topic in the field of second and foreign language acquisition in terms of fostering process-focused syllabi and designing communicative tasks to enhance learners' real language use (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011). In the subject of teaching foreign languages, the task-based method is gaining increasing prominence. As a learner-centered method, it considers language as a tool for communication. The objective of a task-based approach is to provide opportunities for language mastery in both speaking and writing through learning activities designed to engage students in the natural, functional, and purposeful use of language (Lin, 2009).

Following this assertion, the concept of communicative ability may appear to be worth discussing. It is critical for kids to develop speaking abilities for communication objectives (Iman, 2017). Typically, speaking is imitative and reproductive, allowing pupils to practice language and communication patterns (Becker & Roos, 2016). Speaking is critical for expressing messages that differ from those written. These are visible in voice possibilities, facial languages, signals, pitch, articulation, emphasis, rhythm, and halting. Indeed, it may not be easy for novices to communicate in English. In this way, individuals may encounter difficulties speaking English, which appears to be more sophisticated than their native tongue. According to Gan (2012), the most typical difficulties encountered by students are insufficient vocabularies, confusing structure, improper intonation and pronunciation, a lack of exposure to English speaking, and a lack of language curricular growth.

In Indonesia, English speaking ability is required for graduating requirements, job interviews, and job promotion tests. It is also helpful for supporting a career. As English is considered an essential language to master, it is early taught to Indonesian students. However, despite having learned English for years, English speaking skill is considered the most complex and

challenging skill to master (Malihah, 2010; Stepani, 2016); Nurhayati et al., 2016; Mahmud, 2018). Most Indonesians are unable to use the language in communication. There are some factors causing students' inability to master English speaking, such as anxiety (Bhatti & Memon, 2016), students' lack of exposure, confidence, and motivation (Febriyanti, 2011), students' confidence and limited time (Bashir et al., 2011 & Oradee, 2012), and students' nervousness (Harmer, 2007).

Concerning speaking competence, linguistic anxiety, particularly speaking anxiety, may be considered. Language anxiety is a type of anxiety that is specifically associated with foreign language learning (Tsai, 2018). Additionally, anxiety can be thought of as a negative emotion composed of both state and trait components (Diehl et al., 2019). English language classroom activities, in this way, contribute to speaking anxiety. As a result, it has been associated with pupils' reluctance to speak English. This occurs when they do not have a complete command of a foreign language. Additionally, this reluctance diminishes pupils' desire in speaking English, resulting in their making no progress in the language (Ofiaz, 2019; Riasati, 2018).

Horwitz and Code (1986), referenced in Tsai (2018), identified three types of foreign language anxiety: communication apprehension (fear of communicating with others), test anxiety (fear of taking an exam), and fear of unfavorable evaluation (the fear of how other people listen). Additionally, there are several criteria that contribute to the assessment of oral or speaking proficiency, including accuracy, complexity, and fluency (Spring et al., 2019). Fluency has developed into the primary component of speaking or oral proficiency in this regard. To improve fluency, vocabulary and phonological production abilities are critical (Scarpino et al., 2019).

In Indonesia, most EFL learners have limited English-speaking skills despite learning them for years. Campo (2016) noticed that there are several factors causing the issue: (a) students do not have many opportunities to use the target language in communication to express their ideas and to interact spontaneously; (b) the use of target language is somewhat low even in the teaching and learning process; (c) the teaching practices focus on preparing the students for examinations, encouraging the teacher to focus more on teaching vocabulary, grammar and tenses without paying careful attention to the students' communicative competence.

Aiming to improve speaking skills, Willis (2007) stated that the approach and method applied in the EFL classroom should facilitate the learners' improvement. Celce-Murcia (2007) suggested that teaching materials should be learner-centered, requiring the learner to contextualize the knowledge into communication through tasks. Thus, the tasks need to be interactive and can be done through pair work, group work, role play, and other activities that actively encourage students to participate in the learning process. Willis (2007) assumes that language learning deals with two foci as the start of the process. It may focus on form or focus on meaning. Either start of focus expects the learners to develop their ability to produce meaningful sentences and use language for communication.

Concerning the higher demands of the skills in the future, many people in Indonesia, regardless of their educational level, are now preparing themselves to do better in English communication. Students at schools should be provided with excellent communicative skills in order to be able to blend well with the globalized world. In other words, EFL teachers in Indonesia are thoroughly responsible for qualifying students with extensive English communication skills so that they are capable of encountering their future.

Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to provide an effective learning process that allows students to engage in the communicative skills during the class.

To this end, an effective learning process occurs when students are truly engaged in a task and do not perceive themselves as a robot directed by the teacher (N.S Prabhu, 1987). Students need to be involved in their work and are encouraged to be motivated to accomplish the learning standards in the Students Centered Learning (SCL) arena (Rahmini Hadi, 2015). To address this issue, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is one of the SCL approaches that emphasizes a communicative approach that requires students to be active participants in the learning process. It is deemed critical to expose kids to communication skills when they are studying English. Nunan (2004) stated that TBLT would concentrate on the meaning of language rather than its form (grammar). As a result, it enables pupils to express themselves more freely through the use of English.

Although TBLT has long been a source of interest for instructors and educational researchers, few studies have been conducted on its application to the teaching of speaking skills, particularly from the perspective of EFL teachers. With the aforementioned studies in mind, this unique scenario was incorporated into a study aiming at filling a gap in the theme by examining teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing learners' English communication abilities. Additionally, this study sought to ascertain the benefits and drawbacks associated with the application of the approach.

2. Review of Literature

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is familiarly known in second language learning (Ellis, 2003; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Branden et al., 2009; Willis & Willis, 2007; 2011). It is considered as one of the compelling methods used in second language learning (Hasan, 2014; Robertson, 2014).

Richards (2004) says that it appears as an effective method to be implemented since it uses tasks as the primary point in teaching language. It provides learners with great opportunities to use the target language based on their needs, creating a natural learning environment. It focuses on language form and meaning in communication, enabling the students to use the language meaningfully in an appropriate situation (Willis, 2007). On the other hand, Long and Robinson (1998) claim that TBLT encourages learners to learn language by using it as a means of communication rather than focusing on the language forms and structures.

TBLT is proposed as one of the approaches that best facilitate learners' communicative needs improvement, as it aims to develop students' ability to communicate (Campo, 2016). Also, it assists learners in improving their fluency, listening comprehension, and vocabulary building (Chacon, 2012). In addition, it helps enhance target language use by learners (Tinker, 2007). It improves learners' ability to integrate theory into practice in daily life, either in formal or informal contexts (Macias, 2004).

It suits to be used in a speaking classroom as it has communicative tasks that require the students to interact with each other in the target language (Thomas & Reinders, 2010). Prabhu (1989) states that effective learning may be gained through tasks as students pay more attention to the task itself than the language used. In line with this, Harmer (2011) agrees that the tasks in TBLT are at the center of learning. However, Willis (1996) emphasizes that the main point of learning in TBLT is not the task itself but utilizing it to facilitate learners' developing their fluency without disregarding accuracy. The tasks require students' comprehension and ability to convey their expressions using the target language in a meaningful way. Whether the form used by students in expressing their idea is correct or not is not the main concern. What matters most is building students' confidence and

fluency in speaking. Then, accuracy comes in the next stage of learning (Willis, 1996).

Furthermore, Nunan (2004) elaborates that in applying TBLT, teachers should be aware that the tasks are the learning aid that fulfills what students need. The communicative tasks in the learning process should reflect the actual situation that engages their experience and the daily language they need. Therefore, to make the students use the language, the classroom instruction should employ the target language. However, the focus of learning is not merely gaining the target language knowledge but also enjoying the learning process. The point that follows is the more thorough explanation of the task to get a more vivid understanding of it.

Nunan (2004) divides tasks into real-world or target tasks and pedagogical tasks. They are different based on their use. Target task is the use of language outside the classroom, while pedagogical task occurs and is completed in the classroom. In this case, the task implemented is a pedagogical task as it is done as classroom activities to encourage students to practice the target language.

Pedagogically, Willis (2007) states that the task provided in TBLT focuses on the outcome obtained. The teacher should assess the students' performance in doing the activity based on the outcome expected. He also emphasizes Skehan's (1998) suggestion that the activity or tasks should relate to the actual world activity. Willis and Willis (2001) state that the target language is used in completing the classroom activity to achieve a communicative outcome. In line with this, Ellis (2003) agrees that a task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically to attain a learning outcome in which the target language can be used based on context. In 2009, He added that using tasks in language teaching can enhance the students' learning process, increasing their motivation. It also should be

understood that the tasks in TBLT are flexible that meet the students' goal expectations. In short, the pedagogical task in TBLT aims to facilitate the learners to practice the target language as a part of the learning process, leading them to increase motivation and obtain the expected learning outcomes.

Completion of communicative task is suggested to be in pairs or groups. It intends to build interactions between learners in the classroom and also helps them in learning language spontaneously. Willis (1996) claims that doing a task in pairs or groups may increase learners' confidence and encourage learners to participate in the activity. Furthermore, it gives learners opportunities to figure out their communication strategies, experience spontaneous interaction, deal with interlocutors' expressions, practice negotiating meanings, and manage the communication despite the limitations.

Regarding the Task-based Language Teaching, there have been known some researchers conducting studies under a similar theme. Firstly, Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2011) conducted a study to highlight the role of task-based language teaching as a powerful approach for maximizing language teaching and learning. They considered the task-based approach as an instructional method that uses tasks as its primary pedagogical instruments to organize language instruction. They found that the task-based method is a demonstrable improvement over Communication Linguistics due to its shared teaching concepts. To illustrate, they both agree that real-world communication activities are of utmost importance in language learning and that using language to accomplish meaningful tasks can boost language acquisition.

Secondly, Nget et al. (2020) conducted a study addressing the effect of TBLT on ninth-grade students' English-speaking skills and their

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satisfaction with this strategy. A total of 78 students participated in the study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected by employing speaking tests and administering students' satisfaction questionnaire. Comparing the pretest and posttest within the experimental group or the posttests between groups, quantitative and qualitative evaluations revealed that the TBLT significantly improved the experimental group's speaking skills in general and in all sub-skills. According to analyses of the satisfaction questionnaire, the experimental group was 'satisfied' with their TBLT experiences. Despite the difficulties of the language of instruction, students evaluated TBLT as a strategy that offered them adequate settings for language acquisition, improved their speaking skills, enhanced their confidence in speaking, and motivated them to study English.

Thirdly, Chen (2019) conducted a study to evaluate the effects of technology-mediated TBLT (task-based language teaching) tasks. For this, students must collaborate within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course designed to increase their English-speaking skills. A total of 25 students were assigned to groups of four to six for this study. Over the course of one semester, each group was required to create seven five-minute video productions in English using their mobile phone camera on topics specified by the teacher. Pre- and post-test findings suggested that the exercises were successful in enhancing students' English-speaking skills. Students' Facebook posts and classroom observations revealed overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward the assignment of creating videos with their various groups using technological resources. The biweekly video productions and the end-of-term survey revealed that the participants believed that technology-mediated TBLT in a collaborative learning environment enhanced their English-speaking abilities, highlighting the

need for a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered activities in a collaborative learning environment.

Finally, Albino (2017) conducted a study attempting to assess how English as a foreign language (EFL) ninth-grade students at PUNIV-Cazenga, a Luanda high school, improved their speaking fluency using a task-based language teaching (TBLT) strategy. In an eight-week case study design involving picture description tasks, learners' speech was recorded before and after instruction, and recasts and prompts were employed as feedback methods. Learners enhanced their speaking fluency by maximizing their pace of speech production, boosting grammatical accuracy, extending their utterances, and generating interactional language, according to the findings. The learners felt encouraged to speak, believed in their abilities to use the target language, increased their vocabulary, and recognized the usefulness of the TBLT approach, according to the results of a survey regarding their perceptions of TBLT instruction.

3. Methodology

To probe into an in-depth investigation of the issue, this study was conducted as a sequential explanatory study. This approach is a part of mixed-method research design. The basic rationale for choosing this research technique is that it enables investigators to gather and evaluate data, integrate findings, and draw inferences in a single study utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). In other words, it is a study in which the data are calculated and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. In a nutshell, mixed methods research is governed by philosophical assumptions that allow for the incorporation of qualitative and quantitative methodologies throughout the study process (Hanson, et al., 2005).

3.1 Participants

The participants were 10 English teachers, three males, and seven females, from 3 different schools in the North Sumatera of Indonesia. The teachers applied TBLT as the method in the teaching process. The participants were purposively chosen due to their extensive experience regarding the TBLT implementation in teaching English speaking skills.

3.2 Data Collection

The data were obtained from both semi-structured interviews adapted from Long (2016), and Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2011) and Campo (2016). To gain in-depth data, the primary data were obtained by disseminating a questionnaire to all participants. To support, secondary data were collected by conducting a semi-structured interview with four selected participants. The semi-structured interview method was chosen because it allows both participants and the researcher to go beyond the pre-planned questions while maintaining focus and consistency for interview comparison and analysis (Hamilton & Corbertt-Whittier, 2013). The four participants, all females, were chosen as they were considered more experienced in applying the TBLT.

Furthermore, the questionnaire's instructions were written in the Indonesian language. The modified questionnaires were adapted because they were valid and dependable. The construct validity of the instrument was valid, and the instrument was closely related to the purpose of the study. Initial review of the draft items was conducted by the responding research members, who eliminated unsuitable and unnecessary issues. The second step involved testing the remaining items with graduate students, who determined that further things needed to be eliminated. The remaining items were then presented to the experts for validation in accordance with the test content and pilot testing. After passing through multiple steps, the outcome demonstrated that the items were reliable. Nevertheless, several of

the items on the adapted instrument needed to be adjusted to meet the requirements of this study. The results of adaptation are presented in Appendix A. Furthermore, the construct validity of the instrument was valid and consistent with the objective of the study. In a prior study, the instrument was validated by testing with many participants and research assistants.

Additionally, it was used to conduct the interviews and assist the participants in providing pertinent and constitutive information about the targeted data. The questionnaire results were categorized based on the domain and analyzed through the descriptive statistics including mean score and standard deviation. In addition, the transcripts of the interviews were returned to the research subjects to ascertain whether or not the information gathered during the interview corresponds to what the research subjects intended. Known as member verification, this step was also taken to determine the degree of credibility. Through data collection, the participants shared their responses to TBLT implementation as well as portrayed the benefits and challenges they confronted during the practice.

4. Results

4.1 Teachers' perception of TBLT implementation in English speaking classroom

Table 1 presents the summary of mean scores and standard deviations from the questionnaires that show teachers' responses to TBLT implementation in English-speaking classrooms.

Table 1.

The Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Responses toward TBLT

Statements	N	Mean	SD
I am interested in implementing TBLT in the speaking classroom.	10	3	0
TBLT is proper for controlling classroom arrangements.	10	2.8	0.4
The task in TBLT is any activity in which learners use the target language.	10	3	0

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The tasks in TBLT involve the primary focus both on meaning and form.	10	2.7	0.64
The tasks in TBLT are suitable with communicative goal-directed.	10	2.8	0.6
The tasks in TBLT have a clearly defined outcome.	10	2.8	0.4

It can be seen on the first statement that all the teachers are interested in applying TBLT in their speaking classroom ($M = 3$). They claim that it is an appropriate and effective method to support speaking improvement. Moreover, through the tasks in TBLT, the teachers can create a classroom atmosphere that engages the students in the learning process. It is emphasized in all teachers' excerpts that:

TBLT is the best method as it directs the students to speak a lot, and it makes the teacher feels much easier to control the students' speaking practice and improve their speaking skills. (*T2/Sept19*)

I am interested in implementing it since it helps students a lot in practicing English students are motivated to speak more, and they feel easy to use grammar in their speaking daily. (*T3/Sept19*)

I am interested in using TBLT in my speaking classroom because it is an efficient and effective way to facilitate the students' speaking activities. (*T4 /Sept19*)

The teachers, furthermore, realized that the tasks in TBLT, which are suggested to be designed based on a real-life context and students' needs, help the students to directly practice the target language learning in their daily communication ($M = 3$). As they are not forced to imagine the situation but be in the particular atmosphere of the set situation, the students can directly experience the target language as it has a communication goal ($M = 2.8$). It assists them in being able to manage the communication flow and get

used to using the target language in communication. In addition, T1 as the most experienced teacher among all, claimed that:

As I have attended several training and seminars about TBLT and applied it in my speaking classroom for years, I may conclude that TBLT is very appropriate for speaking class. It helps the teacher create a natural speaking atmosphere through the tasks given, which match students' needs. *(T1/Sept19)*

Further, most teachers perceive that TBLT helps improve both accuracy and fluency ($M = 2.7$). However, fluency is gained much more than accuracy through communicative tasks. Meanwhile, the teachers emphasize that accuracy cannot be put aside, and it is more critical compared to fluency as by improving their accuracy, students will be able to speak more fluently. Therefore, they pay more attention to students' accuracy while guiding and supervising them in the speaking practice.

As the learning goal is students' speaking ability, fluency and accuracy must be balanced. However, if they can talk fluently without paying attention to the accuracy, what is their difference with those who do not take any English-speaking class? If fluency is the main goal in learning, they can do self-taught from any source. I focused more on how the students could arrange the sentence well. So, for me, they should make it not too slow, but their accuracy is well-arranged. *(T1/Sept 19)*

It can be concluded that the teachers had a positive attitude toward the implementation of TBLT. However, they have different views on what should be prioritized in teaching and practice.

4.2 Benefits of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Table 2
The Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perceived Benefits toward TBLT

Statements	N	Mean	SD
TBLT assists teachers in getting a better teaching performance.	10	2.7	0,64
TBLT provides a relaxed atmosphere to promote target language use.	10	2.2	0,74
TBLT activates learners' needs and interests in learning.	10	2.7	0,45
TBLT promotes learners' speaking improvement.	10	2.8	0,4
TBLT improves learners' interaction skills.	10	2.9	0,3
TBLT encourages learners' intrinsic motivation.	10	2.6	0,48
TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.	10	2.8	0,4
TBLT provides the opportunity for natural learning in the classroom.	10	2.7	0,64

Table 2 elaborated that most of the teachers agree that TBLT helps them to have a better teaching performance ($M = 2.7$). It helps the teacher to maintain the classroom atmosphere and create enjoyable learning. Moreover, the tasks benefit students' motivation improvement, and they are encouraged to practice more.

The task is helpful as a guide for the students to produce words or sentences. It also should be based on the students' real-life situations to be applicable in their daily conversation. *(T1/ Sept19)*
 TBLT is helpful to improve students' speaking because they are encouraged to practice a lot through the tasks. As my students already have a particular goal in mind toward the practice, they have got their motivation. However, tasks in TBLT bring them a new perspective in learning language, as they feel easy to use the language through tasks. *(T2Sept19)*

The teachers admitted that task in TBLT helps them to manage the classroom activities. Moreover, the students can enjoy the interaction in the classroom ($M = 2.9$). As the students get the chance to practice a lot without being pressured to produce strictly correct sentences, they become more

interested and motivated in using the target language in speaking. Also, the different instructed situations and interest give them a chance to share their knowledge about certain things in the actual practice related to the topic being discussed. It can also influence their motivation in learning (M = 2.6). Through the tasks provided, students have more opportunities to practice using the target language. They stimulate them to practice the language in authentic communication (M = 2.7).

I think TBLT is practical to be implemented because it requires the task to be in a real-situation design. It helps the students as it provides a context in use. The students are prepared with the specific situation where it is possible to use the language. This extent also hinders the students from boredom in practicing. As my class consists of students from various fields of interest, the tasks provided help them share more general valuable knowledge for speaking in their daily lives. Compared to the traditional teaching method, TBLT is far more effective as it shows how the English language is used and, of course, it helps me a lot in teaching English speaking. They can feel the atmosphere directly based on the concept provided to the students, such as the airport situation. So, I can say that TBLT helps the students to learn English naturally.” (T4/ Sept19)

I think it works for students in my class, and it is what students need. It is applicable in the speaking classroom with mixed-ability as it does not force the students or give them much pressure to practice considering that they have different knowledge about the English language. (T3/ Sept19)

However, there is another perspective delivered by T1. She stated that TBLT encourages the students to speak up. She views that the tasks provide students with an enjoyable learning environment and give them less pressure.

I assume that TBLT increases students' motivation to speak, not learn, because it makes them feel like they are not under pressure to use the language. The class atmosphere becomes fun through the tasks, and the students relate it with their daily conversation without paying too much attention to the language form. It makes them more interested in speaking because it is easier than the traditional method they got in school. In practice, students do not open their books or dictionary because they are triggered to speak up. *(T1/Sept19)*

The data obtained also show that teachers believe that the tasks promote the students' improvement in learning. Regarding a good relationship between all the participants in the teaching and learning process, it may help the learners increase their motivation so that they will be encouraged to participate in accomplishing the tasks. In implementing the tasks, the teachers make the students work in groups or pairs. Teachers set the students to complete the tasks by competing with other groups through the tasks. By doing this, the students will not feel that they are learning.

The students are motivated because they do an activity that has a goal. I usually set the students to compete in the task completion to have something to achieve. It makes the students spirited because they want to be the best, especially when they sit in groups, they have the togetherness. Regarding such a situation, they did not feel like they were learning. So, I can say that they would be more focused on the English itself while finding ways to be a winner. Therefore, they are not aware that they are learning since all they need is to be the

winner, and they feel interested and energetic to be the winner. (T4/Sept19)

4.3 Challenges in implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Table 3.
The Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perceived Challenges Toward TBLT

Statements	N	Mean	SD
TBLT gives much psychological burden to the teachers as a facilitator.	10	1.9	0.5
TBLT requires much teaching material preparation time.	10	2.5	0.5
Large class size is an obstacle to TBLT implementation.	10	2	0.63
L1 knowledge influences learners' speaking performance (accent, stress, pronunciation).	10	2.8	0.3
The target language is employed in classroom instruction.	10	2.5	0.5
Learners employ L1 when unfamiliar words appear.	10	2.6	0.48
Learners employ miming and body gestures as their communicative strategies for uncommon words.	10	2.3	0.78
TBLT requires teachers to have a high level of creativity and dynamism.	10	3	0
The teachers who are restricted to more traditional roles and do not have appropriate resources to provide in TBLT will find this method impracticable.	10	2.5	0.67
Learners are inclined to get caught up in finding the appropriate words without paying attention to the order of words in the sentence.	10	2.5	0.5
There is a danger for learners to attain fluency while disregarding accuracy.	10	2.2	0,6

Despite the positive responses towards TBLT implementation and the benefits gained in the teaching and learning process, the teachers also are faced with challenges. They acknowledge that TBLT puts the learners as the leading actor in the learning process and the teacher plays a role as the facilitator or guide.

The task in TBLT is helpful in facilitating the students improving their speaking ability. It is also expected that through the tasks, students are encouraged to actively participate in the communicative activities that use the

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target language to improve their speaking ability. Thus, the teacher must design a task that meets the students' needs and expectations. However, designing tasks with particular considerations requires the teachers' creativity and sensitivity towards the students' needs. The data obtained show that some teachers admitted that creativity in designing the tasks becomes a problem for them ($M = 3$), considering that the students in a classroom have different needs and expectations. T2 and T3, as it can be seen in Table 3, experienced this in their mixed-ability classroom. They had to consider students' ability in designing the tasks.

In preparing the tasks, I need to consider the students' abilities. It sometimes becomes a matter when the mixed-ability class consists of very striking ability differences students. (T2/*Sept19*)

“Sometimes I confront problems in preparing the teaching materials because we must facilitate understandable and easy-to-practice tasks. The biggest problem is how to connect the grammatical structure to the speaking task while considering the mixed-ability students in the classroom.” (T3/*Sept19*)

However, T1 and T4 give another perspective regarding this issue. They admitted that TBLT does require creative learning material. However, the use of the internet assists them a lot since it provides many references of materials that can be adapted and modified. It is also supported by the mean obtained from the questionnaire indicating that few of the teachers claim that TBLT implementation is such a burden for them ($M = 1.9$).

I do not think I have problems preparing the materials because we can find what we need from the internet. There are so many tasks that we can adapt from the creative creators who had designed

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such activities, although we sometimes need to adapt them to our class condition. (T4/Sept19)

I noticed that TBLT requires a high level of creativity in designing the tasks or activities, and it used to be a big deal for me; thus, I always connect with the internet and get the problem solved. (T1/Sept19)

Considering the fact that the speaking classroom is a mixed-ability class, the teachers find it hard to implement the communicative tasks that cover all the needs of the students. Such an extent leads to elongation of the preparation time, as admitted by most of the teachers ($M = 2.5$). Moreover, the students also have different expectations during their learning.

The difficulty that I found in that mixed classroom is the gap in their ability. The students have the same goal of learning to speak, but the problem is that they generalize the result of the method that I applied to them because they have different abilities. However, it cannot be denied that since they have a different purpose in learning, they also have different expectations. For instance, the students who need the speaking ability only to apply for specific job vacancies thought they would gain that skill only in a month. This mixed ability sometimes makes me distracted as I have to focus on several things or abilities at a time. I have to pay attention to my teaching speed as well. (T4/Sept19)

Meanwhile, the other teachers claim that they have no serious problem in implementing TBLT in the mixed classroom since the learning goal is the ability to use the language in the general context. It is just the students' experience in English learning, educational background, and occupation that influence them in the learning process and become the challenge for the teachers.

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I do not have any problem with their further education and occupation because, in speaking class, the student will not start their conversation in their specific needs or majority. However, our topic is in general use of English. However, as they have experienced much in English learning and have specific needs and knowledge, they sometimes ask some questions out of my prediction, which is specifically used in their field, such as the vocabulary. *(T1/Sept19)*

However, it encourages the teachers to prepare themselves for teaching better. They should enrich their knowledge to fulfill the students' needs in their communication. They should also build an English environment to make the students use the target language in their speaking practice. Therefore, teachers are suggested to use the target language in classroom instruction as it is suggested in the TBLT principles (Nunan, 2004).

Furthermore, they claimed that it gives learners a chance to experience the learning better since they can explore the knowledge through the tasks. However, it is nearly impossible to use the target language for the whole classroom instructions ($M = 2.5$). If the teachers force themselves to apply this in the classroom, they worry that the students will be demotivated as they do not grasp what the teacher is explaining.

I have tried this in my class. I meant to encourage my students to be brave to speak without realizing that they were lost. Then that day was a total failure for me. Starting from that day, I mix or translate my sentences to ensure they are with me in the class. *(T3/Sept 19)*

It can be seen that being aware of and familiar with students' abilities can be one of the solutions. Since TBLT requires the use of target language in the learning activity, in both teachers' instruction and students' responses,

teachers had difficulty using English in the instruction since students' mother tongue. Hence, body gesture is often employed when they deal with unfamiliar words ($M = 2.6$ and $M = 2.3$, respectively). In this condition, the teachers frequently mix or translate the language in the classroom instruction.

I always try my best to use the target language in the classroom instruction, but sometimes I use my mother tongue when I notice that the students do not grab what I am saying. *(T1/Sept19)*

Nevertheless, it should be noticed that as the students mostly have their awareness of learning, they have their expectations and motivation in learning. Therefore, the implementation of TBLT encourages them more in practice. The tasks help the teachers. Students are suggested to complete the tasks in group work or pair work; they can interact with the other students by using the target language. Willis (1996) suggested that the task is best completed in groups or pairs as it will influence the students positively. This will increase their confidence as they think that all the students practice.

Moreover, this strategy of task completion improves their interaction skill and collaborative learning. However, T1 stated that teachers should first know the students' abilities in grouping or pairing them. They also claimed that the students should be grouped in small numbers so that no student is left silent, and the teacher can also control and guide their speaking practice ($M = 2$).

The teacher must be full of sensibility of what their students need. For example, in grouping the students, the teacher should be familiar with the students. The weak students should not be paired or grouped with the active students, dominating the discussion. *(T1/Sept19)*

5. Discussion

As stated by Willis (2007), language learning aims to enable the learners to use the target language in communication and produce meaningful and appropriate sentences. In other words, in EFL learning paradigm, learners are expected to master the English language knowledge and communicate in English. However, it should be admitted that students' ability is still far from the expectation. English might cause it is not commonly used outside or even inside the classroom. Students frequently feel shy and are not confident to practice the language in communication. Therefore, communicative tasks in TBLT assist the students in using the target language in communication and encourage them to get used to it. Through the tasks, students are encouraged to implement the language knowledge into practice by the teacher's guidance (Prabhu in Hung, 2014; Rost in Chang, 2009).

This study revealed that the teachers positively respond to TBLT since it benefits teachers' performance in teaching and facilitates the students' achievement of the goals that are students' communicative competence. This resonates with East's (2012) elaboration that TBLT has become a well-established means through which learners of a new language can effectively develop their communicative proficiency. However, regarding the characteristics and requirements of TBLT implementation, there are also some challenges encountered by them considering the students' various backgrounds.

The researchers found that teachers share positive responses towards TBLT implementation in the speaking classroom as they stated that they are interested in implementing TBLT despite the various needs and expectations of the students. They acknowledge that TBLT is an efficient and effective teaching method that facilitates the students' speaking improvement through the communicative tasks provided. Further, as the communicative tasks are

designed based on a real-life context, the students are readily engaged in the learning process. It gives them a clear outcome of the learning process.

TBLT focuses more on language production. The teachers admitted that students frequently produce the language without paying attention to the language forms. However, it does not mean that it is ignored. It becomes the teachers' concern. They monitor and guide the students to produce the correct language form without dominating the discussion. Students are at the centre of learning, so they should be the leading actor in the process and provided with many opportunities to practice the language. They can explore themselves in learning the language (Willis, 2007).

Based on the results, the teachers mentioned two significant benefits. The first is the classroom atmosphere representing a natural learning environment. The second is the students' interaction in the classroom, which increases their confidence and motivation to speak more. This finding is matched that of Stepani (2016), that TBLT contributes to students' speaking skill improvement and the students' engagement to interact in the classroom.

First, the role of communicative tasks related to authentic situations makes the students easily engaged in the learning process. Nunan (2004) mentioned that the principles underlying TBLT is that the learning process focuses on the students' needs, emphasizing usage, use and interaction in task completion. The other thing that is also important is that the communicative tasks are suggested to be authentic materials linked to the students' experience and use in the real world. As the students were college students and workers in this study, they had different expectations of the materials. The teacher should design a communicative task that is richer in content and reflects the actual context of university or working life. The benefit gained regarding this situation is that the students can share and get additional

information about the actual world situation and enrich their vocabulary regarding specific fields of interest.

Second, Willis (1996) suggests task completion be done in groups or pairs as it will give the students a chance to exchange their ideas using the target language. It will also increase students' confidence in producing the language by completing communicative tasks. When the students are engaged with the activities which draw their attention, they will enjoy the learning process and be unaware that they are learning (Willis, 2007). They will focus on task completion without feeling burdened by the language form and structure. This is in line with what Bao and Du (2015) stated that TBLT helps encourage learners to be actively involved in the communicative tasks, use the target language, reduce anxiety, and increase enjoyment in learning.

However, despite the benefits obtained, as the speaking classroom consists of students with various educational backgrounds and learning expectations, there are four challenges that teachers should deal with. Firstly, the classroom situation sometimes confuses the teachers in designing the communicative tasks. They should consider each student's ability and needs as appropriate for them (Nunan, 2004). It also should be related to the real-world activities that represent students' experiences, which means that the teacher should be able to design or adapt tasks that cover all students' needs in their daily activities. It is suggested that the teacher design activities that implement the students' experience.

Next is the number of students in a group. Most teachers agree that the students should be placed in a small group while considering their abilities. Since the students have different levels of enthusiasm in learning, the teacher must be aware of the students that may dominate the discussion. Students' group spreading should be equal so that the discussion will be practical and

the teacher can control the process. Thus, the teachers should know their students competently to be familiar with their student's abilities.

The third is the students' various fields of interest and experience, affecting their needs and expectations. Teachers are required to know certain specific knowledge that the students have to maintain the learning flow and meet the students' needs in learning. For instance, there are moments when they ask the teacher about a particular vocabulary that is specifically needed in their field, e.g., economics, medicine, law. This becomes one of the challenges for the teacher as they should prepare themselves for that kind of random question.

The last is that the students employ their mother tongue when they face unfamiliar words. This method suggests that the teacher should use the target language in the classroom instruction and interaction. Skehan (1998) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) stated that the target language should be employed in task completion to achieve the learning outcome. Employing target language in the classroom instruction and interaction is impossible to do considering the students' ability. To encounter this obstacle, the teacher should mix or translate the language. The teachers also think that fluency is not the only thing that should be mastered. Language form should also be a concern. They agree that accuracy plays a vital role in language production. Thus, it becomes their concern.

6. Conclusion

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has emerged in EFL learning, especially speaking, as a suitable method. The teachers also acknowledge it as they respond positively to its implementation. They admitted that it assists them to perform well in teaching and create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere and natural learning through the implementation of the tasks. It facilitates the students' engagement in the teaching and learning process and

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assists them in obtaining knowledge and improving their speaking skills. Nevertheless, designing the tasks is not easy to complete, considering the students have a particular expectation and various needs in the learning process related to their particular field interest or occupation.

Further, in completing the tasks, students are suggested to use the target language to make them get used to it and increase their confidence. However, using the target language for the classroom instruction is nearly impossible to do as the students cannot catch up with the whole meaning, so the teacher decided to mix or translate the language into their mother tongue. The students also often employ their mother tongue in their interaction; yet the teacher struggles to help the students in the learning process. The teachers were also concerned about the students' language accuracy in the interaction. They claimed that accuracy should be developed prior to fluency, which is the positive point of learning English. When the students get the accuracy, they will gradually speak fluently.

To sum up, it is admitted that TBLT is considered beneficial for developing students' communicative skills as perceived by English teachers, regardless the students' various schemata. It also brings many benefits for the teacher to promote students' communicative skills. Moreover, those various backgrounds of students provide the chance for the class to share more knowledge to enrich the vocabulary. However, the challenges regarding the task designing and knowledge capacity in fulfilling the students' needs and expectations should be carefully taken into account. Regarding the findings of this study, it is suggested for future researchers who work under the similar theme to probe into students' viewpoints about the implementation of TBLT. For more extensive results of study, researchers may need to conduct a study by involving more EFL teachers in order to gain more representative results. In addition, students' viewpoints

regarding such an issue can serve as a next level source of study in the future.

7. Limitations

The potential limitation of this study was the scope of the study as well as the number of teachers involved in this study. A total of 10 EFL teachers might not produce results that are extensively representative of the conditions of EFL teachers in Indonesia. Also, teachers' viewpoints might be different from those of the students.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire

No	Challenges	Scale		
		1	2	3
1	TBLT involves a high level of creativity and dynamism on the part of the teacher.			
2	Students' awareness of linguistic competence, such as: pronunciation, stress, intonation, words order, etc.			
3	L1 influences learners' performance in communication.			
4	Students are aware of the social and cultural context of the communication.			
5	Lack of TBLT materials.			
6	Students' low-level of English proficiency.			
7	Learners employ mother tongue in doing tasks when they face some difficulties.			
8	Learners employ body language or gestures in communication when they encounter some unfamiliar words.			
9	Students passive style of learning and tend to refuse participating in doing communicative tasks.			
10	Some learners are inclined to get caught up in making an effort to find the appropriate word.			
11	Large class size.			
12	Lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments.			

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13	Traditional grammar-based examinations which influence the teaching and learning focus.			
14	Learners do not pay attention to how words are placed into the discourse.			
15	There is a danger for learners to attain fluency at the expense of accuracy			
16	Other(s) (indicate).....			

No	Benefits	Scale	
		Yes	No
1	Implementing TBLT helps you get a better teaching performance.		
2	TBLT provides the opportunity for 'natural' learning in classroom context.		
3	TBLT offers learners a fertile input of target language.		
4	Tasks establish an enjoyable and fun learning atmosphere.		
5	Learning through tasks promotes good relationships among learners as well as between learners and the teacher.		
6	Learning through tasks increases learners' self-confidence in speaking English.		
7	Learning through tasks activates learner's needs and interests in learning.		
8	Tasks encourage learners' classroom participation.		
9	TBLT contributes to the improvement of communicative fluency while not disregarding accuracy.		
10	Learners can apply the knowledge in the classroom to use in their daily life after learning through tasks.		
11	Other(s) (indicate).....		



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