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## Task-Based Language Teaching; Potential Benefits and Possible Criticisms in Indonesian Contexts

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### ABSTRACT

The primary aim of English language teaching in Indonesia is to equip Indonesian students with communicative competence in English. However, due to the prevalent utilisation of traditional student-centered approaches that accentuates linguistic structural properties as well as the lack of exposure to and usage of the target language in the classroom, research has found that Indonesian school graduates' English communicative skills are still low. Very few students can deliver ideas, thoughts, and feelings through English as a medium of communication. This conceptual review article aims to promote the viabilities of task-based language teaching (TBLT) method to accelerate students' communicative skills in Indonesia. Drawing on a wide range of theories and research findings, it critically explores some potential benefits as well as addresses some possible criticisms of employing TBLT in Indonesia. It argues that TBLT promotes natural learning, generates students' intrinsic motivation, and develops language skill development that can lead the students to accelerate their communicative competence.

### KEYWORDS:

communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching, natural learning, intrinsic motivation, language skills,

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## Introduction

For decades, various Indonesian national curriculums have mandated that communicative competence is the primary aim of English language teaching in Indonesia (Ariatna, 2016; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016; Musthafa, 2001). Instead of focusing merely on English linguistic properties like grammar, English language teaching in Indonesia is organized to enable Indonesian students to communicate using English. However, due to the prevalent use of traditional teacher-centered approaches that accentuated English linguistic forms or grammar (Kustati

et al., 2018) as well as the lack of exposure to and usage of the target language in the classroom (Musthafa, 2001), it was found that Indonesian school graduates' English communicative competence remained low (Gani et al., 2015; Madya, 2002; Nur, 2004). In the classroom, Indonesian teachers only use English at the beginning of the lesson to greet the students and at the end of the lesson to end the lesson (Musthafa, 2001). Furthermore, instead of encouraging the students to use the target language, classroom learning activities mostly focus on the teaching of grammar (Kustati et al., 2018). Consequently, very few students in Indonesian senior high school level can clearly deliver their ideas, thoughts, and feeling through English as a medium of communication (Gani et al., 2015). It was argued that English education administered in Indonesian schools has failed to produce graduates who were competent in English communication (Lie, 2007; Musthafa, 2001).

This conceptual review article aims to promote the application of task-based language teaching (TBLT) as a viable language teaching method to achieve the communicative competence goal of English language teaching mandated by the Indonesian national curriculum. It critically explores the benefits of employing TBLT in Indonesian and other similar EFL contexts in three specific scopes including natural learning, students' intrinsic motivation, and students' language skill development. In addition, this article also addresses some of the major criticisms directed to TBLT in wider EFL contexts that might have caused reluctance, hesitation, and resistance among EFL teachers. Even though there were myriads of research-based and conceptual-based articles about TBLT in various EFL contexts, the ones which holistically elucidated its benefits in the three scopes and addressed its criticism in Indonesia are indeed limited. It is frequently written from a certain specific point of view to examine its effectiveness in accelerating one of the four core language skills. Overall, this article argues that the benefits of employing TBLT in Indonesian and

other similar EFL contexts in the three specific scopes: natural learning, students' intrinsic motivation, and students' language skills outweigh its sceptic criticisms. Indeed, its criticisms mainly originated from a misunderstanding or a lack of understanding on the concept of tasks and a misconception that TBLT is a rigid, instead of an adaptive method of language teaching. It is expected that this article can inform Indonesian teachers about the adaptability, viability, and affordances of TBLT to accelerate Indonesian students' communicative competence, the primary aim of English language teaching in Indonesian formal educations.

Following this introduction section, this article continues with literature review section as a point of departure. It discusses the state of English language teaching in Indonesia as well as the nature of communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT). Next, this article continues with the method section. After that, it discusses the benefits of employing TBLT in Indonesian or other similar EFL contexts and how these benefits can lead to communicative competence. Finally, this article ends with conclusion and implications for English teaching practices in Indonesia.

### **English language teaching in Indonesia**

As a result of the increasing global need for individuals who are able to communicate using English as an international language, since 1994 the Indonesian government has explicitly mandated communicative competence, which covers four macro-skills of English including reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as the primary goal of English learning in Indonesia (Musthafa, 2001). Consistently, in the year 2004, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture initiated Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi (competence-based curriculum) and two years later in 2006 introduced Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (school-based curriculum) both of which emphasized communicative competence as the English language

learning objective (Ariatna, 2016). Even in the currently-enacted Indonesian national curriculum 2013 (K13), the use of communicative approach is still consistently mandated (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). Through these formal curriculum documents, the Indonesian government has attempted to alter the English language teaching approach from a structure-based to communicative-based approach and transformed the teacher-centered paradigm into the student-centered paradigm. Instead of merely focusing on English formal linguistic structures, English learning in Indonesia holistically aims to enhance the students' English communicative competence in the four language macro skills.

However, despite these persistent and frequent curriculum revisions, ELT practices in Indonesia did not automatically alter in a unidirectional way. It was found that in spite of their positive perceptions and attitudes towards communicative approaches (Prianty et al., 2021), Indonesian teachers are still employing traditional teacher-centered approaches focusing on linguistic structures in their actual instructional practices (Kustati et al., 2018). Even though Indonesia has a philosophy of *Gotong Royong* which means working collaboratively, English teaching processes was mainly administered through teacher-centered paradigm (Sutiah, 2011). Teachers are still dominating the classroom and administer the learning individually (Sutiah, 2011). In the context of East Asian countries, teachers pragmatically wrote formal reports that were congruent with the curriculum and policy expectations and requirements, but still stick to the traditional teacher-centered approach in their actual teaching practices (Littlewood, 2007). Just like "old wine in a new bottle" (Nunan, 2004, p. 14), teachers seem to embrace innovative methodologies, but stick to their traditional practices in the classroom. This reality makes it crucial to maintain the reverberation of the conceptual maps and actual forms of communicative language teaching (CLT) which relied on the student-centered paradigm as well as its positive affordances toward students'

communicative competence in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia and other similar settings.

### **Defining communicative language teaching (CLT)**

CLT is generally defined as a broad student-centered pedagogical approach to language teaching designed specifically to burgeon the students' communicative competence in a target language (Brown, 2007; Richards, 2002). Brown (2007) asserted that since CLT is related to a broad theory of language, it is better to be considered an approach rather than a method or a technique of teaching. Therefore, as an approach, CLT can be implemented differently through various methods in diverse contexts. Modifications and adjustments of CLT can be administered to cater for distinctive contextual situations and characteristics of the settings where it is employed. However, even though CLT is a broad and adaptive approach, it has several principles that underlie its implementation. According to Brown (2007), the implementation of CLT should cover four major concepts, including communicative competence, meaningful communication, fluency, and spontaneity. Jacobs & Farrell (2003) also added that since CLT was strongly rooted in the student-centered paradigm, it specifically intends to achieve the notion of autonomous learners who can function effectively in various communication contexts.

CLT emerged as a result of dissatisfaction with the prevalent use of traditional structure-based approaches focusing on English formal linguistic properties. Teachers and relevant stakeholders were concerned about the insignificant implications of this approach to the students' communicative competence. It is argued that the traditional methods such as grammar translation and audiolingual methods have failed to significantly accelerate the students' communicative competence and isolated the classroom learning from the real-world communication (Ariatna, 2016; Brown, 2007; Richards, 2002). As a result, since its initiation

in around 1970s, CLT has transformed into a leading language teaching approach implemented not only in inner circles of English users, but also in outer and expanding circles (Ariatna, 2016). It is employed to provide more exposure to English as a target language as well as plentiful opportunities for the students to use English in classroom interactions (Harmer, 2015; Richards, 2002). In addition, it also provides meaningful contexts of communication so that the students can actually use the language beyond the classroom walls (Thompson, 1996). Thus, in CLT, communicative competence and meaningful communication are the key aspects (Harmer, 2015). It holistically intends to nurture the students' communicative competence and connects what the students learn in the classroom with the real world beyond (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003).

CLT referred to the theory of communicative competence which accentuates the interdependent relationship between language and communication (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). In this respect, the notion of communicative competence, which was coined by Hymes (1972), includes some core communicative competencies related to the ability to use the language. According to Canale & Swain (1980), this notion consists of four areas including grammatical competence (the ability to apply linguistic rules and patterns to construct meaningful language), discourse competence (the ability to maintain communication using the language), sociolinguistic competence (the ability to use appropriate language according to social situations), and strategic competence (the ability to understand key ideas of discourse despite inadequate inputs). Thus, in CLT, both fluency and accuracy of using the target language are two important aspects of CLT. However, even though these two aspects are indeed pivotal, it is worth noting that CLT prioritizes fluency over accuracy (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). When students conduct interactions among themselves or when teachers interact with the students, it is important to remember that immediate corrections to the students' error are mainly administered when

it distracts the meaning they would like to deliver. As such, Trial and errors are a part of learning in CLT (Richards, 2002). As long as communication is intelligible, feedbacks could be delayed after the end of the interactions.

With these aforementioned tenets which CLT suggested into English language teaching, this particular approach has successfully attracted excitement and interest from policy makers and teachers. However, while supports are prevalent, it is inevitable that resistance and rejection also emerge as the result of this innovative approach. Bax (2003), for example, argued that CLT, which was originated from western pedagogies, might not be contextually applicable in EFL contexts. Through his notion of contextual approach, he argued that the selection of the teaching approaches should stem from distinctive contextual situation and characteristics (Bax, 2003). As an adopted approach, CLT was seen to possibly ignore the distinctive contextual characteristics of EFL students (Bax, 2003). In the contexts of East Asian countries, for example, CLT was regarded as the incompatible approach in English language teaching due to the relatively large classroom management, students' avoidance of using English, minimal demands of language competence, incompatibility with national assessments, and conflicts with local education culture and values (Littlewood, 2007).

In a similar fashion, in Indonesian context, the issues of teachers' expertise with CLT, students' low participation, structure-oriented textbooks, class size, limited teaching periods, and non-communicative assessment remained as reasons to tentatively reject the notion of CLT (Ariatna, 2016). Therefore, advocates of this approach stated that additional efforts should be administered to ensure that CLT can be appropriately tailored into English language teaching in EFL contexts. It includes providing professional development for teachers, conducting in-class collaborative activities, initiating extracurricular learning opportunities, and developing alternative assessments (Ariatna, 2016). It is argued that all the challenges encountered during the implementation of

CLT in EFL contexts should be seen as a natural process of innovative curriculum implementation conducted to achieve greater outcomes in English language teaching (Ariatna, 2016). While these challenges will always exist, it should be recognized that it is not impossible to overcome it. Greater efforts need to be done to achieve greater outcomes. In addition, it should also be recognized that CLT is not a rigid approach. It can be flexibly adapted and adjusted to the contingencies of contextual situations. Therefore, measurable adjustment should be carefully administered to adapt the EFL students with this innovative English language teaching approach.

### **Defining Task-based language teaching (TBLT)**

TBLT (alternatively task-based instruction or task-based learning) is identified as one of the leading teaching methods which represents the actual use of CLT approach in English language teaching (Richards, 2002). For a relatively long period of time, it has transformed into a viable alternative of the traditional structure-based approach in forms of grammar translation and present-practice-produce (PPP) methods (Bryfonski & McKay, 2017). In alignment with the tenets of CLT, task-based language teaching (TBLT) also accentuates on extensive exposure and meaningful use of the target language in classroom learning interactions. It is primarily premised on the significance of social interaction, usage-based learning, and implicit or incidental language acquisition in language learning (Ellis, 2019). Through the use of TBLT, both cognitive and interactive aspects of language learning where the students are thinking and simultaneously using the language are facilitated (Smith, 2018). Instead of “making a systematic attempt to teach language bit by bit”, TBLT believed that English language learning will most successfully advance when it provides meaningful contexts in which the students’ natural learning capacities can be facilitated and nourished (Ellis, 2009, p. 222).



The key distinctive aspect of TBLT lies in the provision of tasks as the main classroom activities (Ellis, 2009; Sukma et al., 2020). Advocates of TBLT have conceptualised tasks in different ways. Long (1985), for example, broadly defined tasks as anything that happens in real-world communication that directly or indirectly resembles how language is actually used beyond the classroom walls. In this respect, numerous mainstream daily activities such as making hotel reservations, asking for direction, ordering foods, asking and giving opinions on important issues, or taking a driving license test are included in the notion of tasks. Prabhu (1984), who was among the earliest developer of TBLT, defined task as “an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process” (p. 24). Meanwhile, Nunan (2004) defined tasks as any classroom activities which demand the students to comprehend, manipulate, produce, or interact in a target language. To do this, the students are required to draw on their prior linguistic and multimodal repertoires as the primary references to construct and convey meaning in the target language (Ellis, 2009; Nunan, 2004). Therefore, in TBLT, the language learning process engages the students with real language use and provides them with wide opportunities to actually use language by themselves (Willis & Willis, 2007). The provision of these real-world tasks is expected to shorten the distance between classroom discourse and the real-life communication contexts (Campo, 2016; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011).

In alignment with the CLT approach, TBLT also prioritizes fluency over accuracy. It puts its emphasis more on meaning (both semantic and pragmatic) rather than specific grammatical patterns (Ellis, 2009; Nunan, 2004; Hashemi et al., 2011). Therefore, Ellis (2009) specifically postulated that the intended objectives of a task-based language teaching should be other than the use of certain language items or grammar. Nevertheless,

even though fluency is more prioritized, it does not mean that form is not important in TBLT (Nunan, 2004). According to Ellis (2009), tasks can be divided into two categories including unfocused and focused tasks. Unfocused tasks are organized to allow the students to use the target language in general communication contexts (Ellis, 2009). In this type of task, the students are free to use any language structures to achieve the task outcomes. No specific grammatical rules should be employed during the tasks. On the other hand, the focused tasks are organized to allow the students to interact using specific grammatical patterns (Ellis, 2009). However, this focused task is different from situational grammar exercises. While the situational grammar exercises explicitly tell the students of what kind of language patterns they are supposed to produce, “the target linguistic feature of a focused task is hidden” (Ellis, 2009, p. 223). TBLT is administered in ways that are different from situational grammar exercises.

TBLT relies heavily on three meaning-making phases including pre-task, main task, and post-task (Ellis, 2009; Hashemi et al., 2011; Roberson, 2014). Even though only the main task phase is obligatory in TBLT (Ellis, 2009), the other task phases are very useful to administer both for planning and evaluation of main task performance. In the pre-task and post-task phase, explicit language learning can take place (Ellis, 2009). Hashemi et al. (2011) argued that the pre-task is administered to sufficiently prepare the students to do the main task. It primes the learners to the coming main task (Willis & Willis, 2007). Therefore, in this specific phase, the teachers can present a set of examples of how to do the main tasks as well as encourage the students to organize a strategic planning before the task begins (Hashemi et al., 2011). Building and activation of the students’ schemata to engage with the topic of discussion can also be conducted during this phase (Shabani & Ghasemi, 2014; Willis & Willis, 2007). In addition, teachers can also introduce the main vocabularies associated with the topic to engage the students in more complex and rich language use (Yuan & Ellis, 2003;

Willis & Willis, 2007). On the other hand, in the post-task cycle, the teachers can give the opportunities for the students to do reflection on their performance in the main task. During this phase, they can also be invited to scrutinize on grammatical forms that were problematic during the main task (Hashemi et al., 2011). This action, according to Willis & Willis (2007) is beneficial for the students at least for three reasons. First, it accommodates the learners to have clear understanding of the language they have used. Second, it prevents future errors. Last, it enhances the students' motivation.

However, while these tenets and procedures of TBLT have proposed a viable alternative to develop the students' English communicative competence, it also encountered some criticisms. It was claimed that TBLT is only appropriate for experienced teachers who intend to achieve high level of proficiency (Willis & Willis, 2007). It does not emphasize on grammar and is unsuitable for exam preparation (Willis & Willis, 2007). According to Ellis (2009), these accusations were merely based on a misunderstanding that TBLT is a method with a rigid protocol. In fact, TBLT is an adaptive pedagogy. There is no single protocol of TBLT (Ellis, 2009). Teachers are supposed to adapt this teaching method to suit their distinctive contextual situations (Campo, 2016; Robertson, 2014). As such, they need to take their students' needs into account (Campo, 2016; Jackson & Burch, 2017; Long, 2016). These needs, which typically stem from a variety of factors, such as curriculum, school levels, learning objectives, teaching tradition and expectations, could be facilitated by TBLT (Jackson & Burch, 2017). The syllabus of TBLT can be designed and tailored based on students' needs, culture, learning objectives, and teaching context (Smith, 2018).

## Method

This paper is a conceptual review article. According to Hurland (2020), conceptual review is defined as “a thoughtful synthesis of and reflection upon existing research in a specific domain” (p. 27). It collects, assesses, and integrates existing literature (secondary data analysis) including theories and empirical research findings in a specific domain and scope to identify key insights, gaps, tensions, inconsistencies, or to propose future research agenda (Hurland, 2020). The result of conceptual review can be used to refine, reconceptualize, or even replace ways of seeing the specifically-discussed social phenomena (Hurland, 2020).

In the current article, the researcher collected, synthesised, and assessed the existing literature of the use of TBLT method in Indonesian and other similar EFL contexts to identify the key benefits and common criticisms of employing this method. It aims to promote the viability, adaptability, and affordances of the use of TBLT in English language teaching practices in Indonesia so that teachers TBLT to accelerate Indonesian students’ communicative competence. There are several stages administered in this research. Firstly, the focus and scope the study are established. Secondly, relevant literature is selected, integrated, and synthesized. Then, the result of the literature review is utilized to develop arguments. Finally, the author provides suggestions and recommendations for employing TBLT in English teaching practices in EFL contexts especially Indonesia.

## Result and Discussion

### *TBLT promotes natural learning*

Krashen (1982) differentiated the notion of language learning and language acquisition as well as its consequences toward the students’ language development. Language learning is defined as an explicit process in which individuals consciously learn a target language through learning its

grammatical rules (Krashen, 1982). Through this language learning process, these individuals are enabled to know about the language rules, be aware of them, and talk about them (Krashen, 1982). On the other hand, language acquisition involves a natural and implicit process where individuals are subconscious that they acquire the language (Krashen, 1982). This process is identical with the ways children acquire their first language where instead of specifically learning the language rules, individuals are required to simply use the language (Krashen, 1982). The result of the language acquisition process makes these individuals able to communicate using the language (Krashen, 1982). However, while some second language education theorists argued that this language acquisition process can only apply to children, research studies have found that acquisition is indeed an important aspect for adults too (Krashen, 1982). It is argued that the ability to naturally acquire the language does not vanish in between child and adult periods (Krashen, 1982). Thus, this natural learning environment can be applied in school settings.

As mentioned in the previous section, the primary goal of English learning in Indonesian school context is communicative competence. It intends to nurture and accelerate the students' ability to not only know about certain linguistic items but to be able to communicate using the language. As such, the Krashen's notion of language learning which accentuates the knowledge of grammatical rules of the target language is not enough. Instead, the process of language acquisition should be employed. The students should not only be guided to "knowing about a language", but to "picking-up a language" (Krashen, 1982, p. 10). Therefore, they should be given more opportunities to use and interact using the language to naturally internalize the language and communicate using the language accordingly. Indeed, "language acquisition occurs when language is used for what it was designed for, communication" (Krashen, 1982, p. 1). TBLT, as the actual and leading representation of CLT approach, can be a

viable alternative to achieve this language acquisition process. It proposed a natural learning process in which exposure to, usage of, and engagement with the language is required during the language learning to accelerate the students' communicative competence.

While TBLT is not an entirely monolithic entity and “there is no single way of doing TBLT” (Ellis, 2009, p. 224), all advocates of TBLT substantially includes the provision of natural language use where exposure to and usage of English as the target language are emphasized within the classroom learning (Campo, 2016; Ellis, 2009; Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 1986). It specifically focuses on meaning rather than form (Ellis, 2009; Nunan, 2004). Therefore, Long (2016) asserted that teachers' role in TBLT is upgraded. First, they are required to provide sufficient and extensive comprehensible language exposure or inputs to their students as well as prompts to induce the students' responses during classroom interactions (Long, 2016). To do this, they should possess confidence with their English fluency and be ready with every single spontaneous response that the students might deliver in classroom learning activities. Second, the teachers also need to have willingness to engage their students in English communication (Willis & Willis, 2007). They have to allow their students to use the target language freely and give them every opportunity to actually use the language for themselves (Willis & Willis, 2007). Since language is a system of choice, the students should be given opportunities to make the choice of language they use inside the classroom (Thompson, 1996). They need to be granted a sense of control over the learning process (Thompson, 1996). This way, classroom interaction using the target language can be enriched and intensified.

In addition to exposure to and usage of English, TBLT also improves the aspect of the students' engagement with the language learning process. While the aspects of extensive exposure to and usage of English have indeed increased the engagement, the use of tasks which contain

meaningful communication contexts makes the engagement even greater. As mentioned before, TBLT intends to shorten the gap between classroom interaction with real-world communication. In this respect, tasks are organized to resemble the actual use of language in the real-world. Therefore, Nunan (2004) asserted that the theoretical blueprint of TBLT is experiential learning which means that the point of departure for the language learning experiences should stem from the students' immediate personal experiences. It has to be relevant to what the students experience in their life. This meaningful communication context that connects the students' actual experiences with the language learning experiences can enhance the students' engagement with the language classroom learning.

Moreover, TBLT method also emphasized on active interaction using the target language (Campo, 2016; Oliver et al., 2017). This interaction is pivotal as it represents the students' understanding and attention to connections between language patterns and meaning (Oliver et al., 2017). Not only teacher-student interaction, but this active interaction can absolutely also be induced through student-student interactions. TBLT can be implemented through whole-class instructions, in pairs, in groups, and individually (Ellis, 2009). Nevertheless, when doing tasks in TBLT, the students typically work in pairs or in groups (Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2011; Sholeh, 2020). Therefore, collaborative learning holds a pivotal role in TBLT. This technique, which is based on learner-centered paradigm, will allow the students to control over and be responsible for their own learning and the learning of their partners (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). They could both receive and provide assistance to their peers (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003). In addition, it can also provide a safe environment and wider opportunities for the students to develop their ideas cooperatively and communicatively before delivering them to the whole class (Thompson, 1996; Sutiah, 2011). It was found that, through the use of cooperative learning, the students'

academic achievement can be accelerated (Sutiah, 2011) and their engagement with their learning process is enhanced (Herrmann, 2013).

However, while TBLT has proposed a more natural language acquisition process through extensive exposure to, usage of, and engagement with the target language, there has been a critique which stated that TBLT is inappropriate to be applied to students with low proficiency levels, for example in EFL contexts (Swan, 2005). This view sounds reasonable because when the students are still struggling with grammar, teachers should not demand them to interact and communicate using the target language. Nevertheless, this opinion has been strongly criticised by Ellis (2009) stating that the earliest level of proficiency does not depend on grammar, but it depends on the repeating scaffolded utterances in which the TBLT tries to facilitate. It means that exposure to, usage of, and engagement with the target language are really crucial to naturally help the students get accustomed to the target language. The grammar is learned through internal self-regulating processes which is useful to deliver intended meanings in various contexts (Rozati, 2014).

### *TBLT generates students' intrinsic motivation*

Students' motivation is inevitably one of the most determining factors of successful English language learning (Bradford, 2007). Learning takes place not only when teachers provide wide varieties of pedagogical assistance, but also when students are engaged and motivated to try to make sense of what they are learning. Therefore, when deciding on the pedagogical assistance, English language teachers should also make sure that their pedagogical decisions can induce their students' motivation to get engaged with the language learning. As asserted by Daniels, 2010, p. 25), "teachers cannot make someone motivated, but they can create motivating learning environment". Bradford (2007) argued that motivation is associated with diverse variables, such as extrinsic and intrinsic



motivations. Extrinsic motivation is closely related with the notion of external reward and punishment, typically from teachers, which is aimed to control the students immediate classroom behaviour (Daniels, 2010). On the other hand, intrinsic motivation concerns with factors which come from the students which then foster their desire to learn and act to achieve desirable outcomes (Daniels, 2010). Different from the extrinsic motivation that results in short-period of behavioural changes, the intrinsic motivation generates the students' long-term intention to learn without any obvious external rewards or punishment (Daniels, 2010). The presence and inducement of this intrinsic motivation are important to maintain the sustainability of the English language learning process.

According to Gardner & Lambert (1972), the presence of students' intrinsic motivation can be identified from three major aspects including (1) their attitudes toward the learning activities, (2) their desire to achieve a goal, and (3) their efforts to achieve the goal. When these three aspects are present, it implies that the learning process has been relatively successful to provide a motivating learning environment. Accordingly, the possibility of the students learning the language autonomously increased. In relation to TBLT, experimental studies have found that the use of TBLT increases EFL students' intrinsic motivation (NamazianDost et al., 2017; Pietri, 2015). In a similar vein, in Indonesian context, Sukma et al. (2020) and Saputro et al. (2021) found that TBLT enhanced the students' motivation and enthusiasm to learn English through meaningful tasks. The Indonesian students enjoyed TBLT classroom learning activities and got engaged with it (Saputro et al., 2021). The use of TBLT has created a motivating learning environment for the EFL students. They possess positive perception toward TBLT, and the use of TBLT increases their desire and efforts to achieve their respective English learning goals.

Even though TBLT is regarded as an imported method of English language teaching which can possibly incur resistance among EFL

students, research studies have found that EFL students have positive attitudes toward this method. Sariçoban and Karakurt (2016), for example, conducted a study in Turkey and found that students have positive perception toward TBLT during and after its implementation. Further, when TBLT is appropriately tailored into EFL teaching by considering the students' needs and expectations, it can enhance the EFL students' interests and motivation in their English language learning (Vieira, 2017). In EFL contexts, it was found that the students perceive TBLT as satisfying (Smith, 2018) and enjoyable (Shabani & Ghasemi, 2014). The EFL students are satisfied with TBLT including its contents, structures, and grammar integration portion (Smith, 2018). They prefer this method compared to other methods (Khand & Memon, 2010) and intend to take other courses employing TBLT in their future language learning (Kim & Tracy-Ventura, 2017). In addition, they find TBLT enjoyable as it provides wider opportunities for the students to actively participate and interact with peers, materials, and texts (Shabani & Ghasemi, 2014). This active learning gives the students control over their choices, thoughts, and actions in their learning process which can increase their intrinsic motivation to achieve their learning goals (Daniels, 2010). Research studies in Indonesian context echoed these findings. Indonesian students have positive perception toward TBLT (Sahrawi, 2017; Yulianti, 2020). They perceived TBLT as more fun and interesting compared to their previous learning experiences (Saputro et al., 2021). As such, when TBLT is employed, the students were very enthusiast to get engaged with their language learning (Yundayani & Ardiasih, 2021).

In addition to the EFL students' positive perception toward TBLT, research studies have also found that the use of TBLT have increased EFL student' desire and efforts to achieve greater outcomes of their English language learning. It inspired the students to effortfully use and learn more complex forms of the target language. Ahlquist (2013), for example, found that when TBLT is employed in a language lesson, the students feel

emboldened to speak using the target language as well as understand spoken language inputs. It stimulated them to write longer sentences using more linguistically complicated texts (Ahlquist, 2013) and engages them in more complex and richer interaction using the language (Yuan & Ellis, 2003). In Indonesian context, research studies also echoed these findings. As a result of the students' higher motivation and engagement with their English language learning process that TBLT has generated (Sukma et al., 2020), it was found that the use of TBLT inspired the students to have significantly higher desire to communicate their thoughts through writing products (Yundayani and Ardiasih, 2021). Further, their writing products were of higher quality (Hakim, 2019). TBLT has successfully induced the Indonesian students to do more effort to write more complex writing products (Sundari et al., 2018). These positive results of the implementation of TBLT indicate that this method of English language has successfully induced the students' intrinsic motivation, marked by their increased efforts and desire, to achieve better performance in their language learning.

However, while TBLT can generate the students' intrinsic motivation, Swan (2005) and Butler (2005) criticised that TBLT has condemned traditional pedagogy that Asian teachers are still prevalently employing. This criticism has been answered by Ellis (2009) which asserted that TBLT is not proposed to diminish traditional pedagogies. On the contrary, TBLT is created to upgrade it. It can actually be combined with traditional pedagogy in some ways. Shabani & Ghasemi (2014), for example, explained that there are three sequential phases of TBLT called pre-task, main-task, and post-task phases of which every part plays different roles in supporting the students' language learning. The traditional pedagogies, mostly in forms of PPP (present-practice-produce) or grammar-translation methods, that promote teacher domination and deliver separate language items such as grammar and vocabulary (Long, 2016; Mao, 2012) can actually be delivered

during post-task (Shabani & Ghasemi, 2014). Therefore, TBLT can actually be combined with the traditional pedagogy (Ellis, 2009).

### *TBLT improves language skills*

TBLT is not limited to speaking skills. It can be used to improve EFL students' four English language macro skills including reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Through the provision of exposure to the target language and rich interactions using the language, TBLT accelerates students' English communicative competence in both spoken and written language (Smith, 2018; Zúñiga, 2016). It can be utilised to enhance both productive skills (output-prompting) and receptive skills (input-providing) (Ellis, 2009). Campo (2016), for example, found that TBLT succeeds to develop EFL students' oral and written communication competence comprising fluency, vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and accuracy. Numerous research studies have demonstrated positive impacts of the application of TBLT to the four macro skills of English in EFL contexts.

With regard to the spoken language, research studies have found that task-based activities play a significant role in improving the students' listening and speaking skills in EFL settings. Sariçoban & Karakurt (2016), for instance, found that the task-based activities have significantly accelerated EFL students' listening and speaking skills. Chou (2016) also found that TBLT has increased the EFL students' metacognitive awareness of listening strategies which then improved their listening skill. TBLT has successfully transformed into a viable option to minimize the typical difficulties encountered by EFL students to use English during oral communication including linguistic difficulty including the lack of vocabulary repertoire and non-linguistic difficulty comprising the lack of confidence (Ulla, 2020). In Indonesian context, Rohani (2011, 2013) and Safitri et al. (2020) found that TBLT helped the Indonesian students to minimize these difficulties. It was found that the use of TBLT in Indonesia

has resulted in an improvement in students' confidence as well as their vocabulary repertoire in spoken language (Rohani, 2011, 2013; Safitri et al., 2020). As a result of the TBLT implementation, the Indonesian students could speak using English more accurately and confidently using wider range of vocabularies (Safitri et al., 2020). In addition, they could also employ positive strategies to cope with speaking problems (Rohani, 2011, 2013). Similarly, in listening skill, the implementation of TBLT has enabled the Indonesian students to be able to comprehend oral inputs more effectively using positive strategies (Rohani, 2011, 2013).

In terms of the written language, numerous studies also have confirmed the effectiveness of TBLT to improve the EFL students reading and writing skills. It was found that the tenet of TBLT that requires the use of meaningful or real-world tasks facilitates the EFL students to have better performance in reading comprehension (Chalak, 2015; Sukma et al., 2020). Shabani & Ghasemi (2014), for example, conducted experimental research and found that EFL students who were taught using TBLT outperform their peers taught using CBLT (content-based language teaching) in terms of reading comprehension. In addition, the use of TBLT in reading activities has also been successful to improve EFL students' motivation and habit to reading (Chen, 2018). In Indonesian context, it was found that the use task-based activities, which offer more authentic use of the target language, has accelerated the students' creativity and reading comprehension (Sukma et al., 2020). Further, it also increased the students' interest as well as formed their habit in reading (Arifuddin, 2019).

Not only in reading skills, TBLT has also been scientifically proven to help EFL students to have better writing skills. It was found that the use of TBLT has resulted in various improvements in EFL students' writing. Campo (2016), for example, found that TBLT advanced the students' writing skills from merely translating and writing isolated sentences to writing meaningful short paragraph. In addition, Kafipour et al. (2018) also

discovered that various aspects of writing including content, vocabulary, organisation, language use, and sentence mechanics are also increased when TBLT is applied. In Indonesian context, Hakim (2019) found that students' writing products were of higher quality when they were taught using TBLT. Task-based learning materials facilitated Indonesian students to improve their writing skills as well as their desire to deliver their thoughts through writing products (Yundayani & Ardiasih, 2021). It led the students to have better writing organisation, content, format, grammar, and higher level of lexical complexity and accuracy (Sundari et al., 2018).

However, even though research studies have demonstrated the affordances of TBLT in accelerating the student's communicative competence including the four English macro skills, Swan (2005) claimed that TBLT gives very little attention to the grammatical features of language. This claim is not completely true. In fact, even though grammar might not be considered as a central of TBLT, it does have a significant role in it (Ellis, 2009). As mentioned in the previous section, task-based language teaching can cover not only unfocused tasks, but also focused tasks where teachers can talk about grammar, linguistic content, or sentence structures (Ellis, 2009). In addition, grammar can also be explicitly discussed through retrospective or inductive or whole-to-part approach in the post-task phase after the students meaningfully use the target language to do main tasks (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003; Long & Crookes, 1992). After the students are exposed with meaningful language inputs in pre-task and main task phase, the teachers can invite them to infer the general principles of certain discourse (Uddin & Ahmed, 2012). According to Musthafa (2001), this approach is deemed more effective as the grammar is learned in contextual communicative use. It recognizes the students' ability to make sense of the language inputs before coming into inferences or conclusions on the forms of language used in the texts (Thompson, 1996). In addition, it also

maintains curiosity, encourages independence, and prepares the students with real-life tasks (Valijärvi & Tarsoly, 2015).

## Conclusion and Implications

Drawing on a wide range of theories and research findings, this conceptual review article aims to promote the adaptability, viability, and affordances of employing TBLT in Indonesian contexts. delineate the core concept of task-based language teaching (TBLT) as one of the leading representations of communicative language teaching (CLT) approach as well as the benefits of employing this method in Indonesian contexts. It argues that TBLT is a viable pedagogical option to achieve the notion of communicative competence, the goal of English learning in Indonesian school contexts, as it promotes natural learning, generates students' intrinsic motivation, and improves language skills. First, the provision of exposure to, usage of, and engagement with English as a target language, which TBLT facilitates, generates natural language acquisition process. Second, EFL students' positive perceptions toward TBLT as well as their increased desire and efforts in TBLT learning activities indicate that this learning method has successfully generated the students' intrinsic motivation. Third, research studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of TBLT to accelerate the EFL students' four macro skills including speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. These benefits that TBLT brings make it into a viable option to accelerate the Indonesian students' English communicative competence.

In addition to the benefits, this article has also answered direct criticisms towards TBLT in Indonesian and wider EFL contexts. It was claimed that TBLT is incompatible with EFL students who relatively have low English fluency, condemns traditional learning approaches, and ignores grammar. These accusations are mainly originated from misunderstanding of the concept of TBLT as a rigid method of language teaching. In fact,

instead of adopting it, advocates of TBLT have suggested the adaptation of TBLT to contextual situations. TBLT is an adaptive method which should cater for the students' needs. Moreover, TBLT also gives place for explicit grammar through retrospective approach at the post-task phase. As such, it can be combined with traditional language learning.

This conceptual review article has extended the discussion of the use of imported method of language teaching in EFL settings especially Indonesia. It also has implication toward the practice of English teaching in Indonesian schools. Teachers can refer to this article to base their pedagogical decisions in using of employing TBLT in their instructional activities. This way, they can be effective teachers who know how to apply TBLT and why they choose TBLT. Indeed, "the most effective teachers ... have a clearly articulated framework of understanding that informs their teaching practices" (Robertson, 2014, p. 188).

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