Using Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to Improve Junior High School Students' Participation and Reading Comprehension Achievement

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Abstract: This classroom action research, with one cycle, was aimed at improving junior high school students' participation and reading comprehension achievement by using Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach**.** Observation, pre-test and post-test were used to collect the data. The collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics with percentage formula. The research results showed that the students' participation during the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension by applying TBLT improved from 73.9% in the second meeting, to 90 % in the third meeting, and to 100% in the fourth meeting. In addition, the students' reading comprehension achievement also improved from 35% in pre-test to 81% in post-test. Therefore, junior high school English teachers are suggested to apply TBLT in teaching reading comprehension.

Key words : Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), students' participation, reading comprehension achievement

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the important skills in learning English as a foreign Language (EFL). By this skill, learners can get many kinds of information, discover new things, enrich their vocabularies, and train their focus and concentration. In addition, in educational domain, reading is one of the most common and often compulsory activities that students have to do. They are required to read many kinds of texts for various types of purposes dealing with their assignments and other academic purposes. Reading is also very important because this skill cannot be separated from other skills as explained by Brown (2001) that reading skill could be developed well if it is integrated with writing, listening and speaking. In fact, teaching reading is not easy to do. Moreover, many students have problems when they are learning reading comprehension. Based on the interview with the English teacher in a junior high school, it was found that the students had some problems in reading an English text. The first problem was he students did not get the point of the reading text easily because they did not

know the meaning of most words used in the text. The second one was related to the way the students learn to understand the text. When the students were given the text, they tended to translate the text word by word by using the dictionary. Sometimes they got confused when they tried to translate the sentences because it did not make sense. The third one was related to interaction. The interaction between the teacher and students during the teaching and learning process especially in reading lessons was not optimum because the communication in the interaction only happened from the teacher to students.

Thus, TBLT approach in this research was used to make the students more active during the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension, and to.encourage them to improve their reading comprehension achievement. Some researchers also have discovered that TBLT created a positive learning environment by promoting learners' enjoyment (Mc Donough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007), boosting learners' confidence (Lopes, 2004)p, and increasing learners' motivation (Park, 2012). Considering the use of the task in reading comprehension, there were some stages that could be used. According to Mao (2012), there are three stage processes in teaching reading through TBLT, they are: 1) Pre-task 2) Task-cycle or while task and 3)Post-task. In the pre-task phase, the teacher is the guide. In pre-task, there are three options that can be done here: motivational, focus on cognitive demands or focus on linguistic demands. In this stage, the topic is introduced. The aim of this stage is to activate the background knowledge of the students, arouse their interest and set up a purpose for the students to read. In the while-task cycle, the teacher can design some tasks to make the students read the text efficiently and get the meaning of the text. In the post-task stage, the tasks are mainly designed to practice communicative output. The tasks are designed to offer the students to use the target language to communicate and use it in real life situations. The pair or group work can be used during this stage to make reading activities more communicative.

There were some previous studies conducted by some reasearchers related to TBLT on reading comprehension with an experimental design such as Madhkan and Mousavi (2017) and Mubarok and Soviana (2017). They were different in selecting the participants. Madhkan and Mousavi (2017) selected university students, meanwhile Mubarok and Soviana (2017) selected junior high school students as the participants. The results of the study showed that TBLT had a significantly positive effect on students' reading performance.

Besides, Wulandari (2017) did an action research of TBLT on reading comprehension. She selected junior high school students as the participants. The result of this research showed the improvement on the students' reading comprehension achievement. In addition, Setayesh and Marzban (2017) investigated the effect of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) on reading comprehension achievement by using comparative study. The participants of this research were university students. The research results showed that TBLT was more effective than CBLT in teaching reading. Setayesh and Marzban (2017) also investigated the probable difference between the students of law and mechanical engineering of the impact of TBLT on their reading skills. The result showed that the experimental group significantly performed better than the control group. The results of the studies above showed that TBLT had a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension achievement.

Based on the previous research results, it is understood that TBLT is an effective approach for teaching reading comprehension. It also can be used as an approach to improve students' reading comprehension achievement, and to improve students' active participation during the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension. Based on the explanation above, the research questions are formulated as the following: 1) How can the use of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) improve the students' participation in learning reading comprehension in Junior High School? 2) How can the use of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) improve the students' reading comprehension achievement in Junior High School High School?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research participants

The participants of this research were the eighth grade students of a junior high school in Jember in the academic year of 2020/2021. By interviewing the English teacher, it was known that the students still had difficulties in reading comprehension and their reading comprehension achievement was still low. The result of the pre-test showed that 35% of the students achieved the standard score, and 65% of them gained the score and more. Thus, this class was chosen as the subject of this action research to improve their achievement especially in improving students' reading comprehension**.**

Procedures

This research used a classroom action research design because this research aimed to improve the students' participation and their reading comprehension achievement through the use of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). The present research followed the cycle model of actions research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998, cited in Burns, 2010) which procedures of each cycle are: reconnaissance, planning, acting, observing, and doing the reflections.

Before conducting the research, reconnaissance or fact-finding activities was done by interviewing the English teacher about students' difficulties in reading comprehension, and the activities that the teacher used during the teaching and learning process of reading. In addition, pre-test was given in order to know the students' score before they were treated by TBLT. Afterwards, some tasks with strategies which was designed to improve the students' participants and reading comprehension were given to the students.

In implementing the actions, the procedures of teaching reading by using TBLT adopted from Mao (2012) for the while-task stage and Willis' classification task for post-task were implemented. There were 5 meetings in the cycle: one meeting for pre-test, three meetings for executing the action, and one meeting for the post-test. The time allocation for each meeting was 60 minutes. Some leading questions related to the learning materials to activate students' background knowledge, and to get students' interest were given in the pre-reading task. Then, the scope of the learning materials about the descriptive text including the definition, generic structures, language features were informed. Next, telling the learning objectives of the reading class, as the last step in the pre-reading task, was done. In the whilst -reading task, some tasks were applied to make the students read the text efficiently and get the meaning of the text appropriately. In here, some words related to the texts were given to the students. Simple grammar was also reviewed. Then, using the scanning strategy to find specific information of the text, and skimming strategy to find general information of the text was implemented. The students did the tasks related to scanning and skimming strategy. Meanwhile, the post – reading task was mainly designed to practice communicative output. The task was designed to offer the students to use the target language to communicate and use it in the real life situatios. In this research, The students did the tasks in a group. The researcher gave some missing pictures or sentences. related to the descriptive text about

animals and places, then the students were asked to complete the missing parts in group. Then, they discussed their work with other groups. In here, the task of TBLT was in the form of matching the pictures and their description. During implementing the action, observation on the students' participation in joining the reading comprehension class by using TBLT was carried out..

The next step was doing the post–test of reading comprehension in order to know the different scores of the students before and after implementing TBLT approach. Then, analysing the result of observation and the result of reading comprehension test quantitatively by using percentage formula was done. Then, the last step was doing reflection on result of the classroom observation and reading comprehension test. This step was done to decide whether the next cycle was needed or not.

Data Analysis Method

The observation was used in this research to collect the data dealing with the students' participation. There were five indicators to measure students. There were five indicators to measure students' participation as the following: **1)** The students asked the questions related to materials, 2) The students answered the questions related to materials, 3) The students did the task given by the teacher, 4) The students discussed with their group, and 5) The students applied the skimming and scanning as well as matching strategy given by the researcher in reading activities. The students were categorized as active if they could fulfill at least 3 indicators.Meanwhile, they were categorized as passive if they only fulfilled one or two indicators.

Meanwhile, the scores of reading comprehension test were analyzed by using descriptive statistics by calculating the number of the students who achieve a score ≥ 75, as the standard score at the school. The following formula was used to analyze the students' reading comprehension achievement (**t**Purwanto, 2009, p.112)

$$S = \frac{R}{N} \text{x } 100\%$$

Notes :

S = The percentage of the students whose score was ≥ 75 in the reading test.
R = The total number of the students whose scores ≥75

N = The total number of the students

(Purwanto, 2009, p. 112)

In addition, the collected data from observation were analyzed by using the following formula:

$$E = \frac{A}{N}\text{x } 100\%$$

Notes :

E = The percentage of the total number of the students who participated actively during teaching and learning proses of reading comprehension by using TBLT.

R = The total number of the students who participated actively

N = The total number of the students

(Cohen *et al*, 2000, p. 326)

The were two success criteria of this research: 1) at least 75% of the students were actively participated in joining the teaching learning process of reading comprehension by using TBLT; 2) at least 75% of the them gained the score at least 75.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Results of Observations

Observation was held to know the students' participation during the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension by using TBLT. The results are presented in the table below :

Table 1. The Result of Observation in the Second Meeting

Criteria	Active	Passive
Total	17 students	6 students
Percentage	73.9%	21.7%

Table 1 showed that there were 17 or 73.9% of 23 students who were categorized as active students. The students already knew how to apply this skimming and scanning strategy. They said that this strategy could make them easier to do the reading task. Moreover, they could find the main idea and spesific informations of the text. There were 6 or 21,7% of 23 students who were categorized passive during this activity. They were

categorized as passive because they did not submit their tasks or did not know how to apply this TBLT. This is because these students were absent in the previous meeting.

Table 2. The Results of Observation in the Third Meeting

Criteria	Active	Passive
Total	18 students	2 students
Percentage	90%	10%

The table 2 showed that there were 18 or 90% of 20 students who were categorized as active students. They showed enthusiasm in this activity because they had never done this matching task in doing the reading task activities before. This task could also help them experience the new model of reading activities. This task could let them work in group. Meanwhile, there were 2 or 10% of 20 students who were categorized passive during this activity. These students were categorized as passive during this activities because they did not ask, answer and do the task in group.

Table 3. The Results of Observation in the Fourth Meeting

Criteria	Active	Passive
Total	20 students	0 student
Percentage	100%	0%

Table 3 showed that there were 20 or 100% of 20 students who were categorized as active students. They really showed enthusiasm during this activity. They could discuss both with their own group and other group. In addition, they were not afraid of stating their opinions when the researcher asked some questions related to the task.

Based on the analysis, it was found that the students' participation improved 16.1 % from the second meeting to the third meeting, and improved 10% from the third meeting to the fourth meeting. Further, the students showed enthusiasm in doing the task by applying some strategies in TBLT, discussing, listening to their friends' presentation and presenting their tasks. When the teacher asked them to do their tasks, they could answer them well.

After finding out the students' participation in each meeting, it was continued to find the students' participation in average as reported in the following table.

Table 4. The Average of the Students' Participation

No	Meeting	Percentage

		Active	Passive
1	Meeting 2	73,9%	21,7%
2	Meeting 3	90%	10%
3	Meeting 4	100%	0%
Total		**263,9**	**36.1**
Average		**87,9%**	**12,1%**

Table 4 above showed that the average of the students' participation in joining the teaching learning process of reading comprehension by using TBLT was 87,9%. It showed that the criteria of the research success, that was at least 75% of the students were active, could be achieved. In addition, the students' participation was improved from meeting 2 up to meeting 4.

The Results of the Students' Reading Comprehension Test.

It has been mentioned that a pre-test was conducted in this research. It was done to know the students' reading comprehension ability before and after being taught reading comprehension by using TBLT. During this activity, three students were absent, so the class had 23 students. The result of students' reading comprehension pre-test is presented in following table

Table 5. The Result of the Students' Reading Comprehension Pre-Test

Criteria	Achieved	Not Achieved
Total	8	15
Percentage	35%	65%

Based on the result of the pre-test above, it is known that 8 or 35% of 23 students could achieve the standard score. In other words there were 15 or 65 % of the students could not achieve the standard score decided. After conducting the pre-test, then the action was applied, the post-test was administered. And the result was reported in the following table.

Table 6. The Result of the Students' Reading Comprehension Post-Test

Criteria	Achieved	Not Achieved
Total	17	4
Percentage	81%	19%

Table 7 showed that 17 or 81% of 21 students were successful in achieving the scores ≥75 in the reading comprehension achievement test and there were 4 or 19% of 21 students who got the score ≤ 75. So, it could be stated that the success criteria of this research was achieved. Thus, the cycle was stopped, and cycle 2 was not conducted.

The results of this study indicated that TBLT has been successful in improving the students' participation from 73,9%, in the second meeting to 90% in the third meeting and to 100% in the fourth meeting. In addition,the students showed enthusiasm during the task group because they could discuss with their own group and other group. They actively actively participated in the teaching learning process of reading comprehension by using TBLT. The research finding is in line with Wulandari's research finding (2017) that the students were motivated to learn in groups because they could learn and discuss the learning materials with their friends. It was a good opportunity for them to interact with their friends, so they could comprehend the text well. The research finding was also relevant to, Madhkan and Mousavi (2017) who claimed that TBLT could motivate the students since the tasks given require the students to deal with the real task.

In addition, this study also found out that the implementation of TBLT could help the students improve their reading comprehension achievement from 35 % in the pre-test to 81 % in the post-test. The result was relevant with the research finding conducted by Setayesh and Marzban (2017) who reported that there was an improvement on the students' reading comprehension achievement after being taught by using TBLT.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, The implementation of TBLT could improve the eighth grade students' active participation in the teaching and learning process of reading comprehension The evidence of the research success was proven by two improvement evidences. It was proved by the result of the observation that there was improvement in the percentage of the students' participation from the second meeting up to the fourth meeting. The second evidence was proved by the results of the students' reading comprehension achievement test. The students' reading comprehension achievement was improved after joining the teaching learning process of reading comprehension by applying TBLT

It is suggested for the next researcher to use this research result as the reference for further research which has the similar topic dealing with using TBLT in improving reading

comprehension achievement and students' participation for different skills or different levels of the participants.

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