A Case Study of English Teacher's Strategies in Implementing Task-Based Learning at SMAN 1 Plemahan

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Abstract

This study investigates the strategies used by an English teacher at SMAN 1 Plemahan in implementing Task-Based Learning (TBL) during English lessons. The idea for this research came from the observation that, although TBL is widely discussed in theory, its real application in Indonesian high school classrooms is still not commonly documented. The aim of this study is to describe how the teacher applies TBL, including how tasks are planned, delivered, and assessed, as well as the challenges faced during implementation. This research uses a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through an in-depth interview with one English teacher and supported by documentation such as lesson plans and task instructions. Initially, classroom observation was planned, but due to schedule limitations, the data collection focused on interview and document analysis. The findings show that the teacher tends to place TBL activities at the end of a unit, such as video projects and group role plays, allowing students to apply what they have learned in a creative way. The teacher provides guidance without limiting student's ideas, and tasks are often prepared a week in advance. Although some challenges were noted like noise disruptions or time constraints, students responded positively and participated enthusiastically. The study concludes that TBL, when applied with flexibility and planning, can help improve student engagement and support language development in an enjoyable and meaningful way.

Key words: Task-Based Learning, teaching strategies, English teacher, EFL classroom, SMAN 1 Plemahan

Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language requires an approach that not only focuses on theory and memorization but is also able to improve students' ability to communicate in real-life situations. To address this issue, many approaches have been developed in recent decades. One of them, Task-Based Learning (TBL) places tasks at the core of the learning process and aims to provide real, meaningful, learning experiences that focus on language use in everyday life (Long, 2014). Task-Based Learning emphasizes that students should be actively involved in completing specific tasks that have clear communication goals. These tasks allow students to improve various language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. East (2021) states that TBL encourages students to build knowledge through real language use, not just grammatical learning. In addition, TBL fulfils the characteristics of modern learning as it teaches them to think critically, communicate, cooperate, and innovate.

Many studies show that TBL can improve students' language skills (Rashid, n.d.; Sami & SairaNiaz, 2025), but the use of TBL in Indonesia, especially in senior high schools, has not been fully implemented well and there is insufficient evidence. For several reasons, including time constraints, curriculum, or a lack of in-depth understanding of TBL concepts, many teachers still use conventional approaches. Therefore, it is important to look at what teachers who have attempted to implement TBL effectively in their classrooms are doing.

The purpose of this study is to see how an English teacher at SMAN 1 Plemahan uses TBL as part of learning. The focus of the research is on how the teacher creates tasks, gives them to students, supervises their implementation both inside and outside the classroom, and evaluates students' work. In addition, the study revealed the problems that teachers face when using TBL. They also reveal how teachers overcome these problems.

The interview results show that teachers use TBL as reinforcement at the end of the lesson by giving assignments related to the subject, such as making a procedure video or role-playing. Teachers give students the freedom to experiment with their own ideas, but they still follow general guidelines that direct the working process. This method not only increases student's participation, but also allows them to learn modern skills such as cooperation, creativity and responsibility. This research is expected to provide an in-depth and contextualized picture of how TBL is used in the English classroom. It will also provide suggestions for other teachers and school authorities in designing more relevant and useful learning. It was conducted using a qualitative case study approach.

Method

Case study type is the type of qualitative approach used in this research as it allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of teachers' strategies using Task-Based Learning (TBL) in English classes. This approach is considered appropriate as the focus of the research is not only on the outcomes but also on the processes, experiences, and social context of learning in the classroom. East (2021) states that a qualitative approach allows researchers to understand TBL practices from the perspective of teachers and the local context, which often cannot be achieved with a quantitative approach. Case studies as a research design allow flexibility in exploring

data thoroughly through various sources of information, including observations, documents, and interviews.

Research Subjects and Locations

The subject of this research is an English teacher at SMAN 1 Plemahan, Kediri Regency. The teacher was purposively selected based on the criteria that she had implemented Task-Based Learning in her teaching. SMAN 1 Plemahan was chosen because this school has a curriculum that provides room for innovation for teachers, including the use of alternative methods such as TBL.

Data Collection Technique

Data in this study were collected through in-depth interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted directly with the teachers concerned using a list of open-ended questions that had been compiled previously. This interview aims to explore the teacher's strategy in designing, implementing, and evaluating task-based learning. In addition, documentation was used in the form of teaching modules and descriptions of teaching and learning activities, especially the 6th meeting which featured the implementation of a text procedure video project as a form of final assignment. Classroom observation was initially planned as part of data triangulation, but due to schedule constraints, the observation could not be carried out. Therefore, the analysis focused on the interview data and available documents.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques. Interview data were transcribed and coded based on relevant themes such as: teachers' understanding of TBL, task planning strategies, classroom implementation, learning outcomes assessment, and challenges and solutions. Each theme was then analyzed descriptively to describe patterns, trends and meanings that emerged from the data.

Data Validity

To ensure data validity, source triangulation and member check techniques were used. Triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews with supporting documents in the form of teaching modules and task instructions. In addition,

reconfirmation was done to the interviewees to ensure that the interpretation of the data was in accordance with the actual intention. Validity and credibility were also strengthened by presenting direct quotes from the interviewees in the discussion of the results. With this method, the research is expected to be able to provide a complete, contextual, and in-depth picture of the teacher's strategy in implementing Task-Based Learning in English classes, as well as its contribution to students' engagement and language skill development.

Result and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to find out the methods used by an English teacher at SMAN 1 Plemahan to implement task-based learning (TBL). The results of interviews and analysis of learning documents show that there are five main aspects related to the implementation of TBL: (1) Teachers' Understanding of TBL; (2) Task Planning and Design; (3) Classroom Implementation; (4) Mentoring and Assessment Strategies; and (5) Challenges and Solutions.

Teachers' Understanding of TBL

Task-based learning is an approach that prioritizes tasks as the core of learning. Teachers say that TBL assignments are not only a final assessment but also a learning method that encourages students to be creative and active. As the assignments usually have to be done at home in groups, TBL allows students to study outside of school time. Long (2014) defines TBL as authentic task-centered second language learning, with the main goal of improving communication skills in real-world situations.

Task Planning and Design

Teachers create tasks based on the theme of the ongoing lesson. For example, on the topic of procedure text, the teacher assigns students to make a procedure video in groups. Students can choose a theme for the video, such as making food, handicrafts, or daily activities, but the guidelines provided by the teacher do not limit students' creativity. According to the learning document from the sixth meeting, this assignment is given after students understand the structure of the procedure text (purpose, materials, steps), as well as its language characteristics. The teacher gives students one week to talk, come up with ideas and make a video. As explained by Willis (in Mei

et al., 2025), the pre-task and cycle task stages in TBL are similar, where students are given initial understanding before working together to complete the main task.

Classroom Assignments

The implementation of TBL is done in stages. Teachers teach the material, exercises and project-based assignments are given after students demonstrate understanding. Students are given tasks once they are considered cognitively and linguistically ready. In the interview, the teacher said that she places TBL assignments at the end of a unit of material, such as before a daily exam. The aim is to enhance learning and find out the students' level of understanding in an applicative way. Since students not only memorize the material but also use it in real-world situations, this strategy proves to be successful. Zhang (2025) stated that task-based learning placed at the end of a learning session encourages students to integrate all previously learned information, thus strengthening knowledge retention and transfer.

Mentoring and Assessment Strategies

Although teachers provide an outline of the task, they give students complete freedom to conceptualize and convey them. This approach shows that educators embrace the idea of student-centeredness, which means students become active subjects in the learning process. Teachers look at liveliness, ability to convey video content, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition during the assessment process. An informal assessment method based on direct observation is used by the teacher. He marks students who are active and gives notes to students who are less able to communicate. This shows that the assessment is not only formative but also authentic. Helmie et al. (2025) state that assessment in TBL should consider student engagement, creativity, and the quality of communication, not just grammatical accuracy. This has been reflected in the practices of the teachers who were the subjects of this study.

Challenges and Solutions

In implementation, teachers face problems from outside the classroom, such as noise outside the classroom and hot or stuffy weather. Student focus and the effectiveness of the activity are affected by these issues. To overcome this, educators try to close

the door and organize the classroom to keep it comfortable. However, the uncomfortable condition of the space is still an issue that has not been fully resolved. The teacher also said that her colleagues still do not use the TBL approach much when collaborating with other teachers. However, teachers like cross-subject collaboration, such as with ICT teachers to develop AI-based language learning programs. Al Kandari and Al Qattan (2020) argue that TBL in the modern era should be combined with digital tools to maximize students' learning potential.

Student Response to TBL

According to the teacher, students responded very positively to TBL. Teachers consider this enthusiasm as an early sign of the effectiveness of the TBL method. This is supported by Sami & SairaNiaz (2025) who say that TBL increases students' intrinsic motivation because it gives them a sense of responsibility for their own learning outcomes. They also show high enthusiasm when given video assignments, role plays, or other projects that demand cooperation and creativity. Students are more emotionally and cognitively engaged in the learning process when they are given the freedom to choose materials and delivery methods.

Interim Conclusion

From the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that English teachers at SMAN 1 Plemahan have implemented TBL quite effectively through planned and flexible strategies. Although there were challenges, especially in terms of the physical environment and cooperation between teachers, the implementation of TBL successfully increased student participation and motivation. This study reinforces previous findings in the literature that TBL has the potential to be implemented in secondary level English classrooms in Indonesia, provided there is sufficient support from schools and training for teachers.

Conclusion

This study aims to identify and describe the strategies used by an English teacher at SMAN 1 Plemahan in implementing the Task-Based Learning (TBL) approach in the classroom. Through a qualitative case study approach, data was collected through in-

depth interviews and analysis of learning documents to obtain a comprehensive picture of TBL practices in the field.

The results show that teachers can use TBL flexibly as a reinforcement of the material that has been taught. Teachers can include tasks such as making procedure videos or role play activities at the end of the learning unit. This strategy is intended to give students the opportunity to use their language knowledge and skills in real-world situations. Although teachers provide general guidelines, they still give students the freedom to develop and structure the tasks according to their own interests and abilities.

In addition, teachers use a structured and adaptive approach to planning tasks, carrying them out in class and assessing learning outcomes. By looking at students' liveliness, communication skills and the quality of their work, assessment is done correctly. This strategy boosts students' morale and encourages them to work together and learn on their own outside of formal class hours.

Nevertheless, this study found that teachers face a number of problems. These include time constraints, physical environmental distractions, and a lack of strong support from the school or other teachers in terms of cooperation or professional development. However, teachers are very committed to continuing to use TBL and are even open to using technology in task-based learning.

The conclusion of this study is that TBL can be effectively implemented in secondary schools if teachers have a good conceptual understanding, are able to design tasks that are relevant to the teaching material, and have adaptive classroom management strategies. In addition, support from educational institutions, teacher training, and technology integration are important supporting factors for TBL to be implemented more widely and optimally.

As a recommendation, it is suggested that schools provide greater space and support for teachers to experiment with approaches such as TBL, including training, module development, and collaboration between teachers across subjects. Further research can also be conducted involving more than one teacher or school to obtain more comprehensive data and broader generalizability.

Author's biography

Moch. Arif Alifian Daffa is a sixth-semester student majoring in English Education at Universitas Islam Kadiri, Kediri. He has a strong interest in language learning, particularly in exploring innovative and contextual teaching strategies. During his studies, he served as a tutor at Uniska Camp for two months, where he guided participants in improving their English skills through intensive practice. His commitment to education and teaching practice has driven him to further investigate effective instructional approaches, such as Task-Based Learning, especially within the context of secondary education in Indonesia.

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