



TEACHING ENGLISH BY USING COMMUNICATIVE TASK BASED LEARNING

Firmansyah Diyata

Institut Teknologi Nasional (ITENAS) Bandung
firmansyah@itenas.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Communicative task-based learning is a teaching method that combines communicative approach and task-based learning process. This method provides some spaces of interactions and the tasks that support those interaction. The spaces of interactions between teacher and students and among students are provided by the lead in questions about the topic of the text that are asked by the teacher before he instructs the students to do the tasks in the text, during the discussion when the teacher discusses the solution of the tasks, and after the students do the tasks through some questions about the text's content. By analysing this paper, teacher is hoped to have another reference to create a method of teaching that provides some spaces to assist students to speak in English and help to grow their creativity in creating meaningful tasks that can help the students understand the functions and the rules of grammar in real contexts presented by a text that its level of difficulty is adjusted based on students' English background.

Keyword: communicative, task, interaction, meaningful

INTRODUCTION

Some teachers consider the appropriate way of teaching English in order to make the teaching atmosphere interesting is by using communicative approach (Brown, H. & D, Heekyeoung, 2015). There are many kinds of perceptions related to communicative approach. All perceptions of communicative approach basically consider that building interactions among students and teacher has fulfilled the idea of teaching English communicatively (Ellis, R., & Shintani, 2014). Besides having intention to create an interesting teaching atmosphere, the communicative approach is also designed to help students to produce English language orally (Nunan, 1991). In order to assist the students to let out the English sentences orally, the teachers need to create some creative ways and usually they act as facilitators. Taking role as a facilitator makes a teacher does not speak more than the students he teaches. By playing this role, the teacher can invite their students to speak more than him (Long, 1985).

Related to this case, many investigations have been able to prove that communicative approach can contribute significantly on the effectivity of how students produce oral English sentences. Those investigations also reveal how communicative approach can be applied by the teachers if they aim to create an interesting learning atmosphere as long as they can manage it in a creative way (Scrivener, 2011). Most of the investigations show that the communicative approach can effectively be applied if the students have courage to let out words or sentences in English after being invited by some questions or statements delivered by the teacher. In this situation, the teacher must feel confidence that the question or statement sentences he uses are able to build oral English interaction with his students. The questions and statements sentences spoken by the teacher in this case must fulfil the condition



that can develop students' courage to speak English. Students' courage comes from their self-confidence. To Have self-confidence that encourages students to practice their spoken English in order to answer and respond the questions delivered by their teacher, students need to have adequate background of English and other knowledge which support them to elaborate their answers or responses. (Widdowson, 1983).

Teachers who teach English as foreign language acquisition find more difficult situation in order to apply communicative approach (Sabaruddin & Rahma, 2022). The problem comes from the fact that English is not used in daily interaction in the countries which apply English as foreign language acquisition (Carter, R., & McCarthy, 1997). The intention that most English learning process in schools is aimed to comprehend text in order to help students answer their national test also makes the activity in the classrooms mostly applied with less conversation in English (Haidara, 2016). Another classical problem in English learning process in English foreign language acquisition countries is the number of the students in the classroom is too big (Nurilhuda, 1999). This condition certainly creates difficulties for teacher to create more interaction in spoken English when he is teaching.

To Help English teachers develop some ways in creating communicative approach in teaching English, they can combine the interaction and tasks in a package of learning. In this package, teacher can build some interactions by inviting questions and statements related to the topic of the lesson, the target language the students must acquire after they learn the teaching material, and the tasks that the students must do in the teaching material. Since the package of the lesson consists of interactions and tasks, the writer names it 'communicative task based-learning'. It is hoped that the steps applied in this method of teaching can provide spaces that become references for teachers to create places of interaction. Through this teaching method, the writer also hopes that he can suggest how to apply the meaningful tasks that can help the teachers to strengthen their students' comprehension of the lesson material they are learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word communicative in English learning means the interactions that occur between the teacher and his students or among the students in the learning approach applied by the teacher during his teaching time (Itkonen, 2010). These interactions can be in the forms of questions, statements, and responses (Hasan, 2014). The questions, statements, and responses that occur during the process of learning the material are intended to assist students to produce spoken languages, master the target language they must acquire, open the opportunity to get more vocabularies, and acquire other knowledge that they have not known before (Ganta, T., 2015). To build the interactions between he and his students or among students in the classroom, the teacher needs to provide teaching materials that must be adjusted to the lesson topic and the knowledge that the students must acquire after they learn them (Harmer, 1998). If the interactions that occur during the lesson can give students the abilities of speaking, getting new vocabularies, understanding new grammar knowledge, and acquiring new knowledge through the lesson topic, it is considered to successfully achieve the aim of a learning process (Robinson, 2001).

Since the learning approach is conducted through task-based learning method, the main element of the learning process is providing tasks for the students (Nunan, 2004). Task is an activity given by the teacher with the intention to help the students to strengthen their knowledge about the material they have just acquired (Van den Branden, K., Verhelst, M., & Gorp, 2006). By finishing the task, students can measure how much achievement they have acquired related to the lesson material they are learning



(C. C., Arjulayana, A., & Sutikno, 2024). This measurement is very useful to give students reference on what they must improve after analysing some errors they probably make (Apriyanti, F., & Nurdini, 2021). The process of doing the task can also be an exciting moment for the students if they feel fun and comfortable because the teacher facilitates them with the task that is challenging and not too hard for them to finish (Brown, 2003).

To create a process of teaching that can lead the students comprehend the lesson material through some tasks, teacher needs to design the tasks that fulfil the qualification of meaningful tasks. Meaningful tasks will encourage students to make use all background knowledge they have to solve the questions or problems that the teacher gives in the tasks (Sholeh, 2021). Meaningful tasks ideally provide students an integrated process that the students must follow before they can finish the tasks with correct answers or intended solvation (Simanjourang, S., & Pulungan, 2021). In designing the meaningful tasks, teacher has to focus on the aim of the lesson, the target language that the students need to master, the topic that can be matched with the aim of the lesson and the suitable materials that can facilitate the given tasks. The tasks that are well planned and designed by the teacher also often help some students who less understand in the presentation stage to get better understanding after they do some instructions to solve the problems in the tasks (Dörnyei, Z., & Skehan, 2003).

Communicative Task-Based Learning is aimed to combine the communicative approach and task-based learning method. The combination is hoped to create an approach of English learning that facilitate the students with some interactions which are guided to help them to understand the lesson well and completely through the tasks they are instructed to do (Willis, D., & Willis, 2007). The writer designs the approach by providing some spaces for teacher to assist the students to speak before, during and after they do the tasks. The main idea of this approach is to make the teacher presents the target language that the students have to master through an English text which is completed with some tasks that are directed to give information related to what the students must know. After doing all the tasks in the text, students are hoped to completely comprehend the target language they are learning.

DISCUSSION

To apply the communicative-task based learning teacher must do some following integrated steps:

Before teaching

1. Analysing the aim of the lesson.
2. Choosing suitable lesson materials that are considered can provide some tasks to help students to achieve the aim of the lesson in the meeting.
3. Creating some meaningful tasks in the lesson material and developing some spaces to assist students to speak English.

When teaching

4. Explaining the aim of the lesson to students.
5. Elaborating how the tasks should be done by the students.
6. Giving students certain time to do the task.
7. Discussing and explaining the solution of the task.
8. Giving extended practice to the students.
9. Discussing the extended practice.



The followings are the explanation and examples how teachers are supposed to do in every step above.

1. Analysing the aim of the lesson

All teachers ideally refer to his teaching plan before they come to the classroom. On the teaching plan the teacher will find out what is the aim of his teaching for every meeting (Carter, 1997). For example, in meeting 3 the aim of the lesson is to help the students to understand simple present tense. After analysing the aim of the lesson, the teacher can decide the target language that the students need to master in simple present tense. In this case, the students need to comprehend the target language from both function and form. In simple present tense, the teacher must introduce the verb changes in singular subject (he, she, and it).

2. Choosing suitable lesson materials that are considered can provide some tasks to help students to achieve the aim of the lesson in the meeting.

Teacher can choose the lesson material from texts, listening dialogues or songs, and videos as long as they can represent the topic of the lesson (Sevy-Biloon, J., & Chroman, 2019). Since the aim of the lesson is to tell the students about simple present tense, the teacher needs to find some materials that provide some sentences related to simple present tense. To make the sentences are able to facilitate students' understanding of the target language, the teacher must be sure that the difficulty level of the sentences is not too hard for the students to comprehend (Harmer, 1998). The following is an example of a text that can be delivered to students related to simple present tense.

Everyday Living

Kathryn Flory works from Monday to Thursday and some weekends. She is "on call" one day a week. On that day, the hospital calls her day or night when there is a problem or to deliver a baby. She has breakfast with her family and helps her two daughters get ready for school. She starts work at 8:30 a.m. She sees patients and sometimes goes to the hospital during the day. She gets home at 6:30 p.m. Her husband makes dinner. After dinner, she relaxes with her family.

Mindy Dodge gets up at 6:00 a.m. during the week. She does some exercise and then she goes to work. She has breakfast at work. She doesn't take a lunch break. She eats lunch at her desk. She interviews people and writes articles for most of the day. She talks to her editor and finishes her stories at the end of the day. She reads or watches TV in the evening. She goes to bed at 11:00 p.m.

Thomas Powers gets up at 5:45 in the morning and has breakfast at 6:15. He starts work at 7:00 a.m. He delivers packages for most of the morning. He has lunch from 12:15 to 2:00 p.m. He walks about 12 miles in a day and stops at about 90 offices. He picks up or delivers about 250-300 packages in a day. He finishes work at 6:00 p.m.

Taken from 'Know How' – Therese Naber & Angela Blackwell – Oxford University Press - 1999

3. Creating some meaningful tasks in the lesson material and developing some spaces to assist students to speak English.

From the chosen text above, teacher creates some tasks that lead the students to understand the functions and forms of the text. The task that can relate to the function of the simple present tense in the text above is to order the students to comprehend the content of the text. After that, the teacher gives questions about the activities that those three people do every day and compare them. Finally, to lead the students to know about the function of the simple present



tense, the teacher gives questions related to the conclusion of the text. The followings are the questions that can be delivered to be explored by the students in order to find out one of the functions of simple present tense.

1. How many people do their activities in the text?
2. What professions do the people have?
3. Write on the table each person does from morning to afternoon.
4. Do the people in the text do the activities every day?

After preparing the questions that show the understanding of simple present tense's function, the teacher can prepare the questions related to the forms of simple present tense. The questions can be referred to the letter S or ES that is put after the verb when the subject is singular subject (he, she and it). In this case, teacher can give the questions directly by orally asking the students or indirectly through the questions from the text. The questions then can be elaborated to explain about the forms on details. For example, the text above only gives sentences with singular subject, then to complete it, teacher can explain how the subject I and other plural subjects are used in simple present tense.

To show that the method applies communicative approach, the teacher needs to provide some interactions between the teacher and students and among students. The interactions in this case can possibly occur before and after the text is given. Before the text is given, the teacher can ask some questions related to the content of the text. For example, the teacher gives lead in questions to help the students to understand the general content of the text. The following are the examples of the lead in questions that can be asked related to the text above:

1. Do you usually wake up early in the morning?
2. Why do you do that?
3. After waking up, what do you usually do after that?
4. What about your sleeping time? Do you sleep late or early every night?

After the text is given and the questions are answered, teacher can also build interactions related to the discussion of the correct answers of the questions, presentation of the target language, and students' opinions related to the content of the text. Related to this case, the following are considered as questions that the teacher can ask:

1. What do you think the function of the simple present tense after you read the text?
2. Can one of you explain the forms of simple present tense?
3. Whose professions is the most interesting?
4. Who is the busiest person among them?

The illustration that the writer explains above shows that the method has fulfilled the communicative aspect to be considered as the approach of teaching that uses interactions to assist the students to speak and provided meaningful tasks to lead the students to achieve the aim of the lesson as an essential requirement for task-based learning.

4. Explaining the aim of the lesson to students.

All those previous three steps are done before the teacher does the teaching. The stage when the teacher explains the aim of the lesson to the students is the first step of teaching that the teacher does in the classroom after he opens the meeting. In this activity, the teacher explains



to the students the lesson's objective that they have to acquire in the meeting. In this activity, the teacher also can give brief explanation about simple present tense, or give the students a task related to comprehend the forms and functions of simple present tense by reading a reference about it. To build interactions with the students, teacher can discuss the tasks that he gives by asking some questions after the students read the reference about simple present tense. He also offers the students to respond other students' answers or opinions related to the forms and functions of the simple present tense.

5. Elaborating how the tasks should be done by the students.

In this stage, teacher discusses how the tasks must be finished by the students. To make students get better understanding of finishing the tasks, teacher can give example or offer students to ask questions about the things that they feel uncertain. This stage also provides the teacher the opportunity to assist the students to practice their English if the students make use the time of giving questions to ask about their uncertainty.

6. Giving students certain time to do the task.

After explaining how the tasks are done, the teacher provides some time for the students to finish the tasks. In this stage, the teacher gives the duration of the time to let the students do the tasks based on his prediction. This prediction can be based on the tasks' level of difficulty or the certain time that the teacher thinks after finishing the tasks he still has enough time to discuss them.

7. Discussing and explaining the solution of the task.

When the teacher discusses and explains the solution of the tasks, he must make sure that he discusses it interactively. In this case, the teacher has to invite the students' opinions to discuss every answer for each question in the task. After a student answers one of the questions correctly, teacher must tell him to explain where the correct answer comes from. This way will give much time for students to produce their spoken English. Besides that, this stage also provides opportunities for the teacher to give detail explanation about the forms dan the functions of simple present tense through students' elaboration of their answers on each question.

The ending of this stage can be used by the teacher to conclude the functions of simple present tense and its forms. Teacher's presentation of this conclusion is hoped to improve students' complete understanding about the lesson material they have just acquired. This full understanding will be very useful for the students when they are dealing with questions that need their comprehension related to simple present tense, both in its forms and functions.

8. Giving extended practice to the students.

Extended practice in communicative task-based learning has its usefulness to measure how good the students have comprehended the lesson they have just acquired. The best way to measure it, teacher can start by giving a task that contains incomplete sentences. To complete each sentence, the students are asked to change the verb into the correct one based on the forms they have learnt about simple present tense. The followings are the example of this case:

1. Bill _____ (drink) coffee twice a week.
2. A: _____ Julian dan Ken (go) to Jakarta once a month?
B: No, they _____.



3. Father _____ (not drive) his car to his office every day.
4. Anton and Kamal often _____ (have) lunch in our school cafeteria.
5. A: _____ the manager _____ (hold) an important meeting every year?
B: Yes, he _____

The extended task above contains some questions that will reveal how good students' understanding in changing the verb based on the subject of the sentences after they finish doing it. The extended questions can also contain other questions related to students' previous lesson acquisition. For example, students' knowledge of present continuous tense, or other previous knowledges that they have acquired beforehand.

To make sure that the students have understood all grammar knowledges that the students have acquired, the teacher can give a task that contains a text with some gaps that they need to complete. This kind of task can be delivered as the extension after the previous one. Through this task, teacher can find out how good his students' understanding related to the subject he teaches. The following is the example of a task taken from a text that contains all questions related to what the students have acquired previously.

Richie Travers, Computer Department

A man with many talents!

Choose the best answer for the missing gaps in the text.

Many (1) **(students/student)** in our computer classes already know Richie Travers. He (2) **(is/am/are)** a very popular teacher for our classes in computer programming and website design. Students appreciate how much (3) **(I/you/we/they/he/she/it)** knows about computers. But, many of you don't know how many other talents and abilities Richie (4) **(is having/have/has)**. In addition to his computer know-how, Richie can act, and he sometimes (5) **(is doing/do/does)** radio commercials. He is very artistic too. He can draw and paint, and he makes jewellery. He makes beautiful gifts for (6) **(her/his/their/our/my)** friends. And he's a good cook! It's difficult to find something Richie can't do. He (7) **(is playing/play/plays)** the guitar and drums, but he can't play the trumpet. He can't speak French, but (8) **(want/is wanting/wants)** to learn. He thinks that people can do anything if (9) **(I/you/we/they/he/she/it)** have confidence and believe they can. He says, "If someone (10) **(is asking/ask/asks)** me if I know how to do something, I say, 'Sure I can,' and then I go and buy a book to learn!" At the moment, Richie (12) **(teaches/teach/is teaching)** in my class and **(looks/look/looking)** at me because he thinks that I am daydreaming.

Taken from 'Know How' – Therese Naber & Angela Blackwell – Oxford University Press - 1999

9. Discussing the extended practice.



The main activity of this stage is to elaborate the answer of the extended practice. The essential function of this stage is to remind students of all the materials they have learnt previously. The interactions in this stage between teacher and students will also produce much time for students to practice their spoken English in larger area of knowledge because the topic of the discussion delivered by the teacher also about other lesson materials that the students have learnt before. This stage is also a stage when the teacher closes the meeting.

CONCLUSION

Communicative task-based learning shows that through delivering some tasks teacher can assist students to speak. The given tasks can be elaborated by inviting students' answers and responses through spoken language in order to find out the function and grammar rules of the delivered material. This interaction can also invite students' opinions that come from their background knowledges which he expresses by using his English spoken skill. By expressing their other knowledges when the students answer and respond means that they have done some good effort to practice their spoken English in various topics. This case will be very useful to upgrade their courage to speak English more and more in the future in every occasion they have, so that their English is getting better soon. Besides that, by applying this method of teaching, the teacher has more time in presenting the lesson material through the discussion when he explains it on details during the task discussion and when he concludes it.

REFERENCES

- Apriyanti, F., & Nurdini, R. A. (2021). Error Analysis on Using Simple Past Tense in Diary Writing Made by EFL Students. *Globish: An English-Indonesian Journal for English, Education, and Culture*, 10(2), 103–109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31000/globish.v10i2.4688>
- Brown, H. & D, Heekyeoung, L. (2015). *Teaching by Principles* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Brown, H. D. (2003). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. Pearson Education.
- C. C., Arjulayana, A., & Sutikno, E. U. (2024). Examine Task-based Learning (TBL) in students' writing skills. *International Undergraduate Conference on English Education*, 3(1), 327–336.
- Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (1997). *Exploring Spoken English*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carter. (1997). *Investigating English Discourse*. Taylor and Francis-library: Routledge.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Skehan, Z. (2003). Individual Differences in Second Language Learning. In C. J. Doughty, & M. H. Long (Eds.). In *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 589–630). Blackwell Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470756492.ch18%09%09>
- Ellis, R., & Shintani, N. (2014). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. Routledge.



- Ganta, T., G. (2015). The strengths and weaknesses of task-based learning (TBL) approach. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 3(16), 2760–2771. <http://oaji.net/articles/2015/11174-1426660685.pdf>
- Haidara, Y. (2016). Psychological factor affecting English speaking performance for the English learners in Indonesia. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(7), 1501–1505. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1106229.pdf>
- Harmer, J. (1998). *How to Teach English: An Introduction To The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Longman.
- Hasan, A. A. (2014). The effect of using task-based learning in teaching English on the oral performance of the secondary school students. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 3(2), 250–264. <https://doi.org/10.12816/0003003>
- Itkonen, T. (2010). *Spoken language proficiency assessment: Assessing speaking, or evaluating acting?* <https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/19327/spokenla.pdf?...1>
- Long, M. H. (1985). A role for instruction in second language acquisition: Task-based language teaching. In *Modelling and Assessing Second Language Acquisition*. Multilingual Matters.
- Nunan, D. (1991). Communicative Tasks and the Language Curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(2), 279–295.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nurilhuda, H. (1999). *Language Learning and Teaching*. IKIP Malang Publisher.
- Robinson, P. (2001). Task complexity, task difficulty, and task production: Exploring interactions in a componential framework. *Applied Linguistics*, 22(1), 27–57.
- Sabaruddin & Rahma, M. (2022). Task-Based Language Teaching (Tbtl) to Increase English Speaking Skill of Indonesian Secondary High School Students. *Journal of Literature English Education Study Program*, 03, 47–53. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47435/jle.v1i2>
- Scrivener, J. (2011). *Learning Teaching* (3rd ed.). Macmillan.
- Sevy-Biloon, J., & Chroman, T. (2019). Authentic use of technology to improve EFL communication and motivation through international language exchange video chat. *Teaching English with Technology*, 19(2), 44–58.
- Sholeh, M. B. (2021). Implementation of Task-Based Learning in Teaching English in Indonesia: Benefits and Problems. *Journal of English Teaching, Applied Linguistics and Literatures (JETALL)*, 4(1), 129–140.
- Simanjorang, S., & Pulungan, A. H. (2021). Students' Difficulties in Writing Process of Recount Text for Eight Grade of Junior High School. *Journal of English Language Teaching of FBS-Unimed*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.24114/reg.v10i3.29980>
- Van den Branden, K., Verhelst, M., & Gorp, K. (Eds). (2006). *Task-based language education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1983). *Learning Purpose and Language Use*. Oxford University Press.
- Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing Task-Based Teaching (Oxford Handbooks for Language Teachers Series) (1st Ed.)*. Oxford University Press.