Task-Based Language Teaching in Promoting Students' Speaking Fluency

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Abstract: This study is conducted to investigate the use of task-based language teaching in promoting students' speaking fluency. The students are exposed to four different tasks: sequencing task, picture narration task, question and answer task, and problem-solving task. The participants of the study were thirty-six tenth grade students in one of the senior high schools in Bandung. From thirty-six students, six students were selected as the representatives whose speaking performance were analysed. The students' speaking performance were audio recorded and were analysed by looking at several linguistic aspects, such as segmental errors, speech rate, and grammatical accuracy. The findings of the study revealed that task-based language teaching promotes students' speaking fluency. The students' speech production showed improvement in the rhythm, segmental, speech rate aspect. The students showed positive responses during the task-based implementation in terms of awareness of the different aspect of English pronunciation. In addition, the students' participation in communicating in English was increased based on the observation result in each meeting and students' interview. The study recommends that the students need to be exposed and learn the different aspects of pronunciation to further improve their speaking performance.

Keywords: *fluency, speaking skill, task-based language teaching.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini meneliti penggunaan pengajaran Bahasa Inggris berbasis tugas (task-based instruction) untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara Bahasa Inggris siswa. Dalam penelitian ini, siswa diberi empat macam tugas (tasks): menyusun, narasi gambar, tanya-jawab, dan pemecahan masalah. Siswa yang terlibat sebagai partisipan dalam penelitian ini berjumlah tiga puluh enam siswa kelas sepuluh dari salah satu SMP di Bandung. Dari tiga puluh enam siswa ini, enam di antaranya diambil contoh ujaran-ujarannya untuk diteliti lebih jauh mengenai irama, segmental. Data diambil dari observasi, interview, dan penilaian performa berbicara Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pengajaran Bahasa Inggris berbasis tugas dapat meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa terutama dalam hal irama, aspeck segmental dan kecepatan berbicara. Siswa juga menunjukan respon positif dari pelaksanaan pembelajaran berbasis tugas ini yang terlihat dari meningkatnya kesadaran akan berbagai aspek dari pengucapan Bahasa inggris. Lebih lanjut, motivasi dan partisipansi siswa juga meningkat dalam berbicara berbahasa Inggris berdasarkan observasi dan interview. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan supaya siswa terus diberi paparan Bahasa Inggris yang baik dan diberikan pelajaran tentang berbagai aspect dari pengujaran Bahasa Inggris.

Kata-kata kunci: *kelancaran berbicara, kemampuan berbicara, pengajaran bahasa berbasis tugas.*

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Task-based language teaching is one of the alternative strategies that the teacher can use to gain students' confidence and motivation in learning speaking. The main aspects of task-based language teaching strategies are gaining learners' active participation in the classroom and reducing the speaking anxiety problems faced by the learners. According to Chuang (2010), task-based language teaching is an approach that uses tasks as the main instruction. It emphasizes the importance of learners' ability to do activities through the target language. A task is an activity that promotes learners to practice the language by focusing on meaning to reach the learning outcome (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001). Therefore, in teaching-learning process, providing variety of activities to encourage students' participation in English speaking classroom is essential.

Speaking is one of the skills that should be mastered by English as Foreign Language students. However, in English speaking class, some students are struggling to speak English communicatively. Most of the students are afraid of making mistakes and feel nervous when they are asked to speak. It is found that during English speaking classes, most students are reluctant to speak and need more time to deliver their speech (Bashir et al. 2011; Harmer, 2007; Stepani, 2016). This leads to the poor improvement of their English-speaking skills and affect the accuracy as well as fluency in their speech production.

Prior studies have been highlighting the strategies that the learners of English Foreign Language may use to overcome their speaking problems (Lam, 2007; Nakatani, 2010). In Indonesian context, there have been several studies about the implementation of task-based language teaching. Munirah and Muhsin (2015), in their study, highlight the students' improvement in terms of their speaking fluency after the students are taught with task-based approach. The study administered classroom action research in which the students' speaking improvement are measured throughout the cycle. The indicator for their speaking fluency improvement is based on their self-confidence that can be seen from each cycle. Another study regarding the task-based language teaching implementation is conducted by Stepani (2017). This study emphasizes the benefits and challenges that the students and the teacher may encounter in administering task-based language teaching.

It is found that the use of task-based language teaching can enhance the students' speaking skill and active participation.

In addition, Crowther, et al. (2015) stated that by implementing tasks can enhance speech comprehensibility in English language learners. The study focuses on investigating the effect of speaking tasks to measure language learners' speech by looking at several linguistic domains, such as pronunciation, fluency, lexis, grammar, and discourse. For the fluency aspect, the study highlights the segmental, word stress, rhythm, and speech rate categories as one of the measurements. Hence, by implementing task-based language teaching can be the best alternative to facilitate students gaining their speaking proficiency, such as fluency. Moreover, the language practice activities can enhance learners' confidence and improve learners' fluency in English speaking skills (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004).One of the suitable tasks that can be used as a tool to promote students' speaking fluency is picture description task (Albino, 2017). According to Harper (2002), the use of pictures may allow the students to focus on the real-world language.

Furthermore, the previous study conducted in one of the school in Angola found out that the students make an improvement after they are taught with task-based approach in terms of their speaking fluency and linguistic form (Albino, 2017). The task used in this study is picture-description in which the students' are required to describe the same picture before and after the task-based language teaching learning process. However, the limitations for this study are the use of the same pictures that may allow the students to memorize several aspects from the pictures. And then, another limitation is the number of the cases that are being analyzed is small(Albino, 2017).

Based on the previous research above, the present study is concerned with promoting students speaking proficiency through the use of task-based language teaching. The study will use variety of tasks which focus on pedagogical purpose as proposed by Pattison (1987) and Willis and Willis (2007). The tasks that will be used for the present study are sequencing, picture narration, question and answers, and problem solving. In addition, students' responses in the learning process and their speaking fluency improvement will be examined.

Following the analysis of the previous studies proposed by Lennon (1990) and Crowther et al. (2015), the present study focuses on the students' speaking improvement by examining several linguistic domains such as fluency (specifically, segmental, word stress, rhythm, and speech rate) and grammatical accuracy throughout each task.Therefore, in this study, task-based language teaching approach is conducted to investigate students' speaking improvement and their responses toward the approach in one of the senior high school in Bandung.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design by using document analysis, observations, and open-ended interview to collect the data. It is in line with the qualitative characteristic in which it focuses on collecting multiple data, such as interviews, observations, and documents to obtain more detailed information (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the use of qualitative study is suitable in order to give a more detailed description regarding the problem.

The method used in this study is a case study. Cases are restricted by time and activity in which the researchers collect variety of data in a certain period of time (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2012 in Creswell, 2014).Thus, case study is an applicable and suitable design for this study as it looks into how students' can improve their speaking fluency through the use of task-based language teaching in a certain time period.

Research Site and Participant

This study was conducted in one classroom of 10th grade students in one of senior high schools in Bandung. The school was chosen because it could provide an access for the researcher to conduct the research. The study involved 36 students in one class. They attended four meetings in the second semester. Since the present study used the case study research, there were seven students who were selected to see their improvement in speaking fluency. Then, the students' presentation of each task given was audio-recorded in each meeting.

Data Collection

In collecting the data, the researcher employed several techniques to answer the research questions, such as observation, stu-

dents' document and, interview. In doing the observation, the researcher used observation sheet and field notes to throughout the learning process. In addition, the students' document such as, students' transcription of audio-recorded of the four tasks were analyzed. Moreover, in interviewing the participants, the researcher used a set of open-ended questions. The participants' answers were transcribed and analyzed to support the findings.

In this study, there were four meetings conducted in order to observe the students. The researcher acted as a teacher and a participant observer. According to Creswell (2012), participant observer will be involved throughout the process of observing the situation and the participant. Thus, the researcher is required to actively participate in the activities that the researcher tries to observe.

During the observation, the researcher focused on the stages of task-based language teaching implementation. The students' interaction, activities, and participation were taken into account. The researcher also took notes on the whole learning process and wrote down important aspects that needed to be improved in each meeting. During the classroom observation, video camera and teacher field notes were used to gather the data. And then, the video and teacher field notes were analyzed to check the whole learning process as an insight regarding the improvement of students' speaking fluency through task-based language teaching.

The document used in this study is students' fluency transcription. The students' speech of each task is audio recorded first, and then their speech is transcribed in order to be analyzed. The transcription of students' speech was analyzed by categorizing it into various linguistic aspects, specifically the number of segmental and word stress errors, rhythm, speech rate, and grammatical accuracy.

The questions used were open-ended questions. The open-ended questions provide a more detailed explanation based on the participants' perspective and the participants are able to express their ideas freely (Creswell, 2012). This study used the semi-structured interview in which this type of interview is a combination of structured and unstructured approach (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006).

The interview questions were designed by considering the research question of this study. There were six students who became

the representative of the class. And then, the interview data was transcribed and analyzed to check the participants' fluency improvement and their perspectives regarding the speaking tasks.

Data Analysis

In this study, the data analysis is administered to answer the research questions proposed in this study. Thus, the analysis technique used is based on the analysis of previous studies conducted by Crowther et al. (2015). These previous studies used different method in analyzing the data, therefore, the researcher administered the data analysis by focusing on the qualitative description analysis of these previous studies.

The first stage in analyzing the data was collecting the teaching learning process recording of four meetings and the written draft of teacher's field notes. The audio recording in each meeting was transcribed to identify the students' participation during the implementation of task-based language teaching. The aspects analyzed in observing the data was examined by looking at the stages in task-based language teaching process: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus following the framework by Willis, (1996) and Alwasilah, (2015).

The second stage is analysing the students' document, the students' audio recording in each meeting was transcribed first. And then, each student's transcription was analysed by looking at the segmental and word stress errors, rhythm, speech rate, and grammatical accuracy to identify the students' performance in each meeting. The next stage is analyzing the students' interview, the students' audio recording was transcribed and examined to find out their responses toward the implementation of task-based language teaching.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion below are based on the research question in this study and supported by excerpts taken from the data. In this study, the findings are concerned on the students' speaking performance of the various tasks conducted in four-meeting and students' responses toward the learning process of task-based language teaching.

In this study, it is revealed that the use of task-based language teaching can promote students' speaking performance ability and create a meaningful learning process in the classroom. This was proven by the data collection techniques administered in this study such as, observation, document analysis, and interview. Through observation and supported by interview, task-based language teaching is essential in providing opportunity for the students to practice their speaking skill. Moreover, as it is mentioned in Pattison (1987) and Willis and Willis (2007), the variety of tasks used are able to increase students' interest in interacting using the target language. Moreover, it is in line with Nunan (2004) statement that mentioned the use of tasks in learning process supports the students' active participation in learning speaking.

In this study, the students were able to practice their speaking skill through the implementation of task-based language teaching. However, most of the students' speech productions are still lack of improvement in each meeting.

Therefore, to provide a clear understanding of the research findings, the discussion below highlights the students' speaking fluency performance by looking at the segmental errors, word stress errors, rhythm, speech rate, and grammatical accuracy encountered by the students followed by the students' responses toward the implementation of task-based language teaching.

Students' Speaking Fluency Improvement

In this study, it is revealed that the students' speaking fluency improvement is not really significant. The students' performance throughout the four meetings showed little improvement in certain aspects, especially in pronouncing the word, placing word stress, and grammatical accuracy. However, some students also made a progress in some aspects, such as rhythm and speech rate. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Albino (2017) in which the students made an improvement in terms of speech rate after being taught by task-based language teaching. But, the improvement in these aspects still needs to be exposed frequently to maintain the sustainability (Brand &Götz, 2011).

Based on the observation and the students' speech analysis in four meetings, it is revealed that the segmental errors in students' speech are the commonly found problem. In overall, the difficulties that the students encountered are still related to the pronuncia-

tion of the particular words that are not found in Bahasa Indonesia.

Table 1. Example of Segmental Errors

Student's speech	(uhh) (If) If we had a magic hammer, I would help and give some wealth to get people in need
Phonetic transcription	ɪf wi: hæd ə ˈmædʒ.ɪk ˈhæm.ər, aɪ wʊd hɛlp ænd gɪv sʌm wɛlθ tu gɛt ˈpiː.pḷ ɪn ni:d
Segmental Errors	ɪf wɪ hɛd ə mædʒ.ɪk hæm.ər, aɪ wold hɛlp ænd gɪf sʌm wəlt tu get ˈpipḷ ɪn ni:d

From the table above, the underlined words in segmental errors column are the mispronounced words produced. The student had difficulties in pronouncing certain words in the sentence above. For instance, the word *had* was pronounced as /hɛd/ instead of /hæd/. The student seemed unfamiliar with the sound [æ], therefore, the student tended to pronounce the word using the [ɛ] sound. Another error found in the utterance's above is the pronunciation of the word *would* was pronounced as /wold/ instead of /wʊd/. This problem may be caused due to the unfamiliarity on how to pronounce the word. The student tended to read the word as the way it is without concerning the way it is pronounced. This will cause misunderstanding to the listeners. Another mispronounced word is the word *wealth,* the word with the [θ] sound in English is quite difficult to pronounce for Indonesian students (Dardjowidjojo, 2009). Thus, from the example above, it can be seen that the student found difficulty in producing the sound [θ]. In the end, the student pronounced the word wealth as /wəlt/ instead of /wɛlθ/ due to unfamiliarity to the sound. Dardjowidjojo further points out that the Indonesian students tend to struggle in producing particular sounds which are not available in Bahasa Indonesia. The reason is because the students rarely exposed to the way the words are sound and pronounced. Therefore, they may not aware of the distinction of certain sounds. This problem can lead to the comprehensibility of the students' speech. As it is stated in Jung (2010), the students need to be encouraged to practice the foreign language to avoid misunderstanding.

Moreover, the students' awareness of pronouncing the correct words needed to be increased through a lot of practice during the learning process. In planning the report in the present study, there were some students who practice the pronunciation correctly before the presentation, but most of them did not practice for the presentation beforehand. According to Ellis (2003), having a well-planned activity is essential in order to achieve the learning outcome. Therefore, when the students' presented in front of the class, they seemed to struggle when they found unfamiliar words. To tackle this problem, the students need to be continuously exposed to the certain sound in the learning process. However, due to the limitation of time in this study, the students could not improve significantly in terms of pronouncing unfamiliar words.

In this study, the number of words produced by the students cannot be used as a measurement of students' speech fluency improvement since the students' oral report are varied in each meeting according to the tasks used. Thus, to check their fluency improvement, it is more focused on the existence of dysfluency markers, such as hesitation, repetition, filled and unfilled pauses (Lennon, 1990). Based on the students' document analysis, it is found that the students made progress in terms of the use of repetition and pauses. They tend to produce an excessive repetition and misplace the pauses in their speech. Moreover, the placement of pauses in non-native English speaker is different compared to the native speaker (Lennon, 1990). In addition, Fillmore (1979, in Segalowitz, 2010) also mentioned that fluency is the ability to speak with a smooth flow and less pauses.

Table 2. Speech Rate in Sequencing Task

Student 1	106 words per minute
Student 2	109 words per minute
Student 3	76 words per minute
Student 4	102 words per minute
Student 5	80 words per minute
Student 6	108 words per minute

In terms of grammatical accuracy, the students showed little improvement in this aspect. In analyzing speaking fluency, it is not always related to accuracy. However, speak-

ing fluency and accuracy is complementary, in which to produce comprehensible speech needs to be clearly understood by the listeners (Crowther et al., 2015; Albino, 2017). It is found that the students' problem related to grammatical accuracy still needs to be improved.

Moreover, the students' difficulties in producing the target language could lead to the intelligibility and comprehensibility of their speech. Most students who were struggling in pronouncing particular words could not comprehend the meaning of their own speech. Thus, when the students encountered unfamiliar words, they tended to produce the words that are unavailable either in English or in Indonesian language. In addition, the lexical and grammatical errors produced by the students could also affect the students' speech performance. Therefore, these issues affect the way the listeners perceive the meaning of the students' speech. As it is mentioned in Jung (2010), it is essential for the students to be able to deliver the meaning of their speech to acquire comprehensibility. Therefore, the students need to be more exposed to pronunciation practice, word stress, and grammatical accuracy in teaching learning process by giving a clear instruction and increasing their confidence in speaking English (Jung, 2010; Thomson &Derwing, 2014).

Students' Responses toward Task-Based Language Teaching

For the students' responses toward task-based language teaching, the students showed positive responses since they find the learning process becomes more fun and interesting. The positive responses shown by the students can be identified as gaining students' confidence in speaking English, increasing students' active participation in learning English, honing students' critical thinking, and improving students' collaborative skill. Meanwhile, the negative response toward the task stated by the students was related to the technical problems during the learning process. This finding is also in line with Siburian and Prawati (2013) study which stated that the use of task-based language teaching could gain students' interest and motivation in learning English. However, despite the students' positive responses toward the learning process of task-based language teaching, the students' speaking performance still needs to

be improved.

Gaining Students' Confidence in Speaking English

Through the use of task-based language teaching in learning English, the students could increase their confidence in speaking English. The stages in task-based language teaching allow the students to be more interactive since all of the tasks require them to work in group to complete the task. This condition can be the opportunity for the students to practice their speaking skill. Therefore, in the interview, the students stated that task-based learning can improve their confidence in speaking English.

Excerpt 30
T: What are the benefits that you can get from task-based language learning?
S6: *Yang pasti sangat membantu meningkatkan speaking juga karena…hmm…bahasa Inggris kan bukan bahasa ibu aku, bukan bahasa sehari-hari. Dan speaking itu menurut aku paling susah, dengan aku berbicara uhh berdiskusi dengan bahasa Inggris diKBM bahasa Inggris jadi lebih melatih kemampuan berbicara aku. Terus, lebih membuat aku percaya diri untuk ngomong bahasa Inggris.*
(It really helps me in improving speaking because…hmm…English is not my first language, not the language that I use in everyday life. And personally, speaking is the most difficult, through speaking *uhh* discussing in English in learning process can improve my speaking skill. Moreover, it makes me feel confident in speaking English.)

Based on the students' interview above, Student 6 stated that he actually felt that by learning through task-based language teaching could increase his confidence in speaking English.

Increasing Students' Active Participation in Learning Process

Based on the students' interview, it is revealed that learning through task-based language teaching can give an opportunity for the students to be more interactive in learning process. Moreover, the tasks given in each meeting required the students to speak more. They can express their ideas freely during the discussion. It is supported by the students'

responses below.

Excerpt 31

S2: *Seru tugasnya, bias interaksi sama mengemukakan ide sama teman sekelompok.*
(The task is fun, (I) can interact ande xpress the ideas with my group.)

From the excerpt above, Student 2 stated that he can freely express his ideas in a group discussion. The use of task that can engage the students' interest is essential in learning process. As it is mentioned in Long and Robinson (1998), they also stated that the task-based language teaching can give the opportunity for the students to interact using the target language. In addition, Nunan (2004) explained that task-based language teaching can give an opportunity for the students to be more active and practice their linguistic knowledge throughout the learning process.

Honing Students' Critical Thinking

The use of different tasks in each meeting allows the students to increase their critical thinking skill in completing the task. It is found that the students find it interesting to think about the solution and the answers regarding the topic that is being discussed in each meeting. Thus, the tasks used can contribute to the way the students finish the task.

For instance, in fourth meeting, the students had to share their experiences related to bullying and also find the solutions to stop bullying. They seemed really enthusiastic in doing the task and some of them even got emotional in completing the task since it is related to their experience. Not only problem-solving task, the other tasks used in this study were proven to be essential in activating students' critical thinking. It can be seen in the following students' interview result.

Excerpt 32

S2: *Bagus sih tugasnya, jadi kan intinya kita bias nyari tahu bagaimana cara menghentikan bullying baik itu di sekolah maupun di mana saja. Kita juga jadi belajar berpikir kritis tentang masalahnya.*
(The task is good, so the point is we can find out how to stop bullying either in school or in anywhere. We can also learn to think critically about the issue.)

Based on the excerpt above, Student 2 explained that by doing the problem-solving task, he can also learn to think critical-ly regarding the bullying issue. Therefore, through this opportunity, the student can increase his understanding related to the topic and find the solution on how to stop the bullying.

Improving Students' Collaborative Skill

From the students' interview result, it is revealed that the students feel more engaged in doing the task because they can work as a team. They feel motivated in completing the task since they can also discuss it first with their friends. It is believed that the students can practice their speaking skill during the group discussion. During the task learning process, the students get the feedback not only from the teacher but also from the other students. Therefore, the students can get many benefits through the group discussion, especially in completing the task. It can be seen in the example of students' interview below.

Excerpt 33

S3: *Belajarnya the jadi mudah. Terus, ngerjain tugasnya efektif karena kerja kelompok.*
(Learning becomes easy. In addition, doing the task is more effective since (we) work in a group.)

Based on the students' interview above, the students explained that the learning process became easier and more effective since they can finish it through a group discussion. Moreover, it is supported by Willis (1996), Nunan (2004), and Chuang (2010) who stated that task based language teaching activity allows the students to work collaboratively with other students to complete the task and enhance their participation in learning the target language.

Technical Problem

Based on the students' interview, it is also revealed that some students also showed negative response toward the implementation of task-based language teaching. The drawback stated by the students is related to technical problems. Especially, in the third and fourth meeting when the teacher used song as a media in the learning process. The technical problem is related to the low volume of the song. It can be seen in the following example of students' interview.

Excerpt 34

S1: *Kekurangannya sih suaranya kurang*

gedek karenakan duduk di belakang jadi kurang terdengar.
(The drawback is the volume is low because (I) sit at the back, so (I) cannot hear it well.)
S4: *Kalau kekurangannya ya… itu bu… uhh kurang kedengeran lagunya samabingung nentuin kata-katanya.*
(The drawback is … uhh… (I) cannot listen to the song and confuse in deciding the words.)

From the students' interview above, Student 1 and Student 4 explained that the volume of the audio is low that makes them cannot hear the song well. This is really important for the teacher to be more aware of the media and the equipment that will be used in learning process. The teacher needs to check first whether the audio can be heard throughout the class or not. It is very essential since it can affect the students' performance in completing the task.

CONCLUSION

Task-based language teaching could encourage the students' active participation in learning process, especially in learning speaking. The use of task in learning process provided an opportunity for the students to practice their speaking and improve their linguistic aspect. Moreover, the students were able to increase their confidence in speaking English through variety of tasks used in each meeting.

Despite the low improvement in students' speech performance, the students showed positive responses toward the implementation of task-based language teaching. The students were able to increase their active participation in learning speaking, develop their critical thinking in completing the tasks, and improve their chance to work collaboratively with other students throughout the implementation of task-based language teaching.

From the findings of the study, there are implications for the teachers and students. For teachers, this study is expected to give a new insight regarding the use of variety of tasks in teaching learning process. This study may encourage the teacher to make a careful consideration in choosing the appropriate task that is meaningful to improve students' speaking ability. The use of task-based language teaching in learning process can increase students' interest and active par-

ticipation in learning speaking. In addition, the teacher can also create more opportunity for the students to learn about pronunciation, word stress, and language structure to enrich students' speaking skill performance. Furthermore, for students, they have to keep practicing their English through interacting and discussing with other students to reach the expected outcome in learning speaking.

This study has some limitations that are related to the participant and the variety of tasks used in learning process still needs to be more explored. Therefore, involving more students to investigate the use of task-based language teaching in promoting speaking is expected to find a deeper understanding of the study. In addition, the speaking tasks used in this study can be widely explored in order to provide opportunity for the students to maximize their speaking fluency.

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