

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

The use of tasks in language learning plays a central role in encouraging students to use the target language meaningfully. Willis (2021) explains that tasks are the main in teaching units that help students develop communication strategies, while according to Nunan (2024) states that task-based learning creates opportunities for real interaction. Thus, the Task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach is highly relevant in this study to examine how students not only listen passively but also interact with communication demands in the classroom.

Listening skills are a highly demanding cognitive process because spoken input is often fast-paced and contains accents that are unfamiliar to students. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) describe this complexity as a significant cognitive load, while Moyo et al. (2023) emphasize that listening is a constructive activity that requires the integration of prior knowledge. Therefore, this study focuses on how students experience this cognitive load and linguistic challenges in real life when completing tasks in class.

Kasimi and Högl (2023) assert that successful understanding requires active engagement, a perspective that aligns with Islamic principles that encourage

attentive listening as a path to understanding. This value is reflected in Surah Al-A'raf verse 204:

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

in interpreting this verse, Shihab (2002) explains the distinction between *istima'* and *inṣāt*. While *istima'* refers to listening closely to the sound, *inṣāt* implies a state of silence and full mental presence to comprehend the meaning. Listening with such awareness is seen as a prerequisite to understanding, an ethic that resonates with the demands of task-based listening, where learners must remain attentive to meaning and purpose. The Qur'an further emphasizes critical listening in Surah Az-Zumar verse 18:

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ لِلْقَوْلِ فَيَتَبَعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ

According to Shihab (2002), this verse describes *ulul albāb* (people of intellect) as individuals who filter information, select what is meaningful (the best), and act upon it. In the context of TBLT listening tasks, learners similarly sift through input, identify relevance, and respond thoughtfully to complete communicative outcomes.

Although the potential of TBLT has been widely discussed in previous studies, most studies still have a different focus from this study. Hashem (2020), for example, reported a significant increase in student comprehension scores through task-based programs, but his study focused on quantitative results. On

the other hand, Afrizal and Herlina (2023) examined students' experiences using YouTube, which increased motivation, but the context was general media, not specific classroom task structures. Meanwhile, studies from the teacher's perspective, such as Nguyen and Nguyen (2023) and Siahaan (2024), highlight the logistical and time constraints in implementing TBLT. Collectively, these studies have not revealed how students subjectively navigate difficulties in structured TBLT classes. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by exploring students' personal narratives about their struggles behind the test scores.

The listening materials in U IN Antasari Banjarmasin's Academic Listening course are made to mimic academic settings, particularly in line with IELTS and other standardized proficiency assessments. These materials are described as "semi-authentic" or "simulated authentic" by Geddes and White (1978). They are scripted to preserve aspects of natural speech while still being understandable. These materials, according to Flowerdew and Miller (2005), are crucial scaffolds before exposing students to real-world inputs. However, the researcher positions this moment as a critical incident to thoroughly examine students' strategies and affective responses because the IELTS simulation is high-stakes and causes maximum cognitive processing.

This study employs Narrative Inquiry to comprehensively capture these lived experiences. According to Creswell (2013), this method enables participants to narrate events in a chronological and reflective manner. Moreover, utilizing the framework established by Clandin and Connelly (2000), the

researcher seeks to underscore that students' experiences are not discrete occurrences but rather dynamic interactions influenced by temporality (both past and present), sociality (individual and communal), and place (the classroom setting). This approach enables the researcher to understand not only what students experience but also how they interpret their struggle and survival during the learning process.

Based on theoretical foundations, Qur'anic principles, prior research, and contextual needs, the researcher concludes that exploring students' experiences through Narrative Inquiry will provide an in-depth understanding of how TBLT functions in the Academic Listening course. Therefore, this study aims to examine the narratives students construct as they navigate listening tasks in a task-based learning environment.

B. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid errors in interpreting the terms used in this study, the researchers provide the following operational definitions:

1. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an instructional approach that uses tasks as the central unit in teaching so that students can use language meaningfully. Willis (2021) explains that tasks serve to guide learners to achieve specific communication goals through the use of real language. Furthermore, Ellis (2003, as cited in Bao & Du, 2015) defines tasks as activities that require students to focus on the meaning of language rather than simply

memorizing grammar rules. Therefore, in this study, TBLT refers to the learning practices in the Academic Listening class at U IN Antasari Banjarmasin, where students complete IELTS simulation-based tasks.

2. Listening Skills

Listening skills are understood as an active cognitive process of constructing meaning from auditory input received by the ears. Brown (2006) states that listening is a constructive activity in which learners select and integrate auditory information to form meaning. This is in line with the views of Kasimi and Höl (2023), who mention that the listening process involves various mental operations such as perception, full attention, and integration of new information. Thus, listening skills in this study focus on students' ability to understand spoken English texts needed to complete communicative tasks in class.

3. Students' Experiences

Student experience is a series of subjective events and narrations of meaning that arise from interactions between students and their learning situations. Clandin in and Connelly (2000) explain that experience is shaped through the dimensions of social interaction, the continuity of events over time, and personal reflection on what has been experienced. This view is reinforced by Dewey (1986), who states that experience is a dynamic process of interaction that occurs continuously between humans and their surrounding environment. Therefore, this study positions student experience as a narrative

that includes feelings, physical and cognitive barriers, and the strategies they use while participating in the TBLT learning process.

C. Research Questions

The main focus of this research includes several key questions that need to be explored in depth to achieve the objectives of the study that have been set previously:

1. How do students narrate their experiences in learning listening through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)?
2. How do students navigate the challenges, meaningful moments, and learning processes that emerge during TBLT-based listening tasks?

D. Objectives of Study

in line with the problems outlined above, the objectives to be achieved through this research include:

1. To explore and describe how students narrate their experiences in learning listening through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).
2. To examine how students navigate the challenges, significant moments, and learning processes that emerge during TBLT-based listening tasks.

E. Significance of Study

This research is expected to offer several contributions, both to the theoretical discussion on TBLT and to classroom practice, especially in the area of listening instruction

1. Theoretical Significance

The study provides a qualitative perspective on how students experience learning listening through Task-Based Language Teaching. Most previous studies have focused on effectiveness, scores, or general perceptions; therefore, research that centres on learners' stories and day-to-day experiences is still limited. By presenting how students make sense of task-based listening in real classroom situations, this study aims to enrich the understanding of the experiential dimension of TBLT and listening pedagogy.

2. Practical Significance

In practical terms, this study provides a closer look at how students actually engage in TBLT-based listening tasks, how they respond to challenges, find suitable learning methods, and build understanding through daily experiences in the classroom. These findings can help teachers see dimensions of the process that are often overlooked, while for students, this study encourages awareness of their strategies and personal development. Additionally, the narrative-based approach used in this study also offers a foundation for future studies that seek to explore the human side of listening and TBLT learning.