

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In this rapidly changing world, the education system is required not only to prepare students and acquire knowledge, but also to develop skills, creativity, and problem solving for critical thinking. In the 21st century, students are required to adapt to a dynamic global environment, work in different cultures, and communicate effectively in a foreign language, especially in English. In response to these requirements, English language learning (ELT) is experiencing a transfer of traditional grammar-focused approaches for more interactive and meaningful ways to promote student participation and language use in real-world contexts.

Furthermore, this study is important to do because creativity is one of the key skills in the 21st-century learning process and is a key focus of the Merdeka Curriculum. In the English language learning process, creativity provides students with the opportunity to express their thoughts, find solutions, communicate effectively, and generate relevant responses in various learning contexts. Therefore, it is important to understand how creativity develops through classroom learning activities to support more effective and meaningful English language learning.

Among the various aspects of learning English, this study specifically highlights creativity because of the strong connection between creativity and the student-centered learning principles promoted by TBLT and the Merdeka Curriculum. While previous research has largely focused on the impact of TBLT on language skills such as speaking, writing, reading, and vocabulary mastery, this study seeks to explore how students' creativity develops through task-based activities. Creativity was chosen as

the focus because it reflects students' ability to generate ideas, collaborate, solve challenges, and express themselves during the learning process.

Furthermore, SMKN 1 Tanjung was selected as the research site because this institution has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum and provides a learning environment aligned with the objectives of this study. Based on initial observations, the English learning process in the studied classroom involves many task-based activities such as group discussions, presentations, role-playing, and the use of Canva. These activities provide opportunities for students to interact, collaborate, and express their ideas creatively, making the school an appropriate setting for this study.

According to Oglu (2023) the field of English language teaching (ELT) is constantly evolving, and educators are constantly seeking to adopt innovative methods to promote language acquisition and learner engagement. A methodology that has received much attention and application in recent years is task-based teaching, learning and assessment (TBLT). TBLT is a new field of study for second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and practitioners, increasingly recognized for its focus on meaning construction and responding to real-world language needs. The increasing use of TBLT in ELT courses around the world is a testament to its effectiveness and appeal. TBLT is currently mandated by various educational authorities around the world.

Task-based language learning is an approach that emphasizes the use of meaningful and authentic tasks in language learning activities. In practice, students participate in language activities and tasks designed to simulate real-life situations where they need to use language to accomplish a task. This research was conducted to determine students' experiences of developing creativity in English learning through task-based language teaching in Merdeka curriculum. According to Oglu (2023) in his research "Future research could examine task-based practices in different educational settings, such as online learning environments, or with different learner populations, such as young learners or learners with

special learning needs.” So I would like to consider a different topic which is younger students aged between 15 - 18 years old or in high school.

The Quran offers several verses that relate to creativity and the development of students’ potential. There are QS. Al-Baqarah : 31 and QS. Al-Mulk : 15.

Surah Al-Baqarah: 31

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝ ٣١

صَادِقِينَ ۝ ٣١

This verse illustrates how Allah endowed Prophet Adam with knowledge and the capacity for creativity by teaching him the names of things. Allah gifted humans with the ability to think and understand the world around them, which includes the potential to innovate and create. In the context of education, this verse emphasizes the importance of creativity as part of the learning process, where students can use knowledge to explore new solutions and gain fresh insights.

Surah Al-Mulk: 15

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذُلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ ۝ ١٥

This verse encourages humans to explore the earth and use the resources Allah has created. It inspires the development of creative and exploratory abilities, urging individuals to innovate by using the world around them. In education, this can serve as an inspiration for students to seek innovative ideas and solutions, drawing upon the resources in their environment

B. Definition of Key Terms

To understand this research more clearly, the researcher defines important terms related to the research title as follows :

1. Students’ Creativity

It is the ability of students to generate original ideas, solutions or expressions when participating in learning activities. In the context of English language learning, this refers to the ability to think imaginatively and develop innovative language use, especially in task-based activities.

2. Learning English

The process by which students acquire or improve English language skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. This process involves various educational approaches, such as task-based language learning, to improve language proficiency.

3. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

A method of language teaching that focuses on accomplishing meaningful tasks. In TBLT, students use the target language to achieve specific goals and encourages active participation, problem solving and practical use of language in context.

4. Merdeka Curriculum Implementation

Refers to the implementation of an “Merdeka curriculum” in Indonesia, with an emphasis on flexibility, student-centered learning, and the development of critical thinking and creativity. This curriculum gives teachers the freedom to design learning experiences that suit the needs and interests of their students.

C. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the questions of the research to be discussed are as follows:

1. How do students experience English learning through task-based language teaching in the Merdeka curriculum implementation?
2. How does TBLT support students' creativity in English learning?
3. Which types of task-based activities are perceived by students as most supportive of their creativity?

D. Objectives of Study

Based on the research questions above, the purpose of the research are:

1. To explore students' experiences in learning English through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum.
2. To investigate how Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) supports students' creativity in English Learning.
3. To identify the types of task-based activities that are perceived by students as most supportive of their creativity in English Learning.

E. Significance of Study

The significance of this research regarding task-based teaching, learning and assessment in English language teaching (ELT) is twofold. That is, teachers and students will benefit :

1. For Teachers
 - a. Enhanced Instructional Strategies

This research provides practical outcome insights for student teachers in integrating task-based language teaching (TBLT) to enhance students' creativity. The study provides concrete examples of tasks that can be adapted to different learning needs and situations in line with the Merdeka curriculum.

- b. Professional Development

Teachers can develop their teaching skills by learning how to design and implement tasks that promote creativity and active language use. This approach supports continuous professional development and adaptation to modern educational demands.

- c. Student Engagement

By using the TBLT method, teachers can create a more engaging and motivating classroom environment. This not only improves language skills but also makes learning more fun and meaningful for students..

d. Curriculum Implementation Support

This research provides guidance for effectively implementing the principles of a Merdeka curriculum and helps teachers balance flexibility and structure while focusing on student-centered learning outcomes.

2. For Students

a. Enhanced Creativity and Critical Thinking

Students benefit from tasks that stimulate their imagination and problem-solving skills. TBLT encourages students to think creatively and fosters a deeper understanding of language concepts and their application in the real world.

b. Improved Language Proficiency

Through meaningful and task-oriented activities, students practice and develop their English language skills in authentic contexts. This method encourages better retention and application of language skills.

c. Active Participation and Autonomy

TBLT allows students to take charge of the learning process themselves. They participate actively, build confidence and develop independent learning skills essential for lifelong learning.

d. Real-World Application

Tasks designed in TBLT often reflect real-life situations and help students understand the practical value of learning English. This association increases students' motivation and participation in the learning process.