

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Education system across the globe focuses on facilitating their learners to meet 21st century learning goal. Students are not only expected to have a better academic achievement but more to achieve communicative competence in a second language and acquire basic skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and research gathering (Erdogan, 2019; Pardede, 2020). In line with that, an integration of the key academic subjects and skills is developed into a unified learning framework and known as the Framework for 21st Century Learning (Batteleforkids.org, 2019). The framework presents the interconnected components to prepare young people for today's world challenges.

In accordance with 21st century learning, Indonesian education system has revised the curriculum to meet the global and national needs. Curriculum 2013 (2017 revision) is the latest curriculum that is being implemented in Indonesia. One of the legal bases of curriculum 2013 is *Permendikbud No. 21 year 2016* which states that in order to meet the future needs as well as aim to have Indonesian gold generation in 2045, a graduate standard competency should be based on 21st century learning competencies. One of the 21st century competencies is learning and innovation skills that becomes the essential skills to be implemented in the teaching and learning process. Learning and innovation skills comprise four important skills

namely communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity which are also called as 4C skills (Halvorsen, 2018). Therefore, teacher needs to design learning activities that not only reach the learning objectives but also enable student to achieve the 4C skills.

English as one of the key subjects in 21st century learning copes with a great challenge in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. In Curriculum 2013, English is a non-compulsory subject in primary school level. One of the reasons is because the government intends young learners to have a better Indonesian proficiency before they learn foreign language (Putra, 2014). In contrary, it is mentioned that learning English at earlier stage can promote children's progress and support the achievement of constant result in language learning and in other areas of learning (European commission, 2011). A study from Bot (2014) also provides a reference on the benefit of learning English at early start which leads to higher levels of English proficiency. Inadequate time to learn the international language at the early stage in school provides less supportive development of student's communicative target language ability. The consequence of the latest curriculum is the children will begin to intensively learn English at secondary school level. Thus, the challenge is to facilitate the beginner students achieving the expected competencies in English subject. The design of conducting teaching and learning English in this level should fulfil the needs of the students along with the demands of the curriculum to enable students using the target language in oral and written form as well as meet the 21st century learning expectation.

There have been numerous teaching methods offered for conducting English teaching and learning such as grammar translation method (GTM), direct method, audio lingual method and communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT is a method aiming at using the language instead of focusing on the language usage. It means that CLT emphasizes the ability to use the target language in a meaningful appropriate way in discourse construction (Ellis, 2003). Several principles of CLT have developed into a teaching approach. The principles are first, activities that support real communication is important for language learning; Second, activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning; Third, language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Linking up to these principles, tasks are then proposed as beneficial vehicles to implement communicative competence components. The development of communicative language teaching establishes Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Ellis (2003) states that tasks can function as useful devices for planning a communicative curriculum, particularly in context where there are few opportunities for more authentic communicative experiences like in EFL class.

The benefits of TBLT in English language teaching have been listed by Ellis (2009) such as first, TBLT provides the opportunity for ‘natural’ learning inside the classroom. Second, it underlines meaning over form but can also emphasize learning form. Third, it allows a rich input of target language. Fourth, it supports a students-centred approach as well as allows for teacher input and direction. Fifth, it accommodates the development of communicative fluency without neglecting

accuracy. According to Nunan (2004), TBLT is beneficial for students because they can learn the target language by communicating interactively while engaging in meaningful tasks. Thus, TBLT creates opportunities for collaborative knowledge building in which students take active participation in pairs or group work and the teacher facilitates them with meaningful classroom tasks.

The selection of the teaching method should in line with the intended classroom setting, in this case, EFL setting. The learning should be able to encourage students to express their ideas or opinions in the target language (Somawati, Astuti, Kanca, Widanta & Ardika, 2017). It is in line with 21st century learner expectation to have a communicative competence. Communicative competence includes learning the grammatical rules and knowing when, where, and with whom to use the target language in a contextually appropriate way (Sad, 2008). Moreover, taking into account the general characteristics of students this age, middle school level, can help teacher in selecting any method of learning. Harmer (in Anwar & Arifani, 2016) summarizes the characteristics of the learners at this level such as 1) the students are at the beginning of adolescence with a habit to communicate intensively with their peers. It is viewed as the best period of learning English. 2) this initial adolescent student has stronger and close loyalty to groups rather than to their own teachers or parents, 3) group dependability is quite dominant. By considering the presented explanation, English teaching should provide opportunities for EFL students to use the target language as a means of communication that they can learn collaboratively. By this point, Task Based

Language Teaching as a teaching approach is considered appropriate for EFL class needs.

Along with the elucidation above, TBLT is suitable with the requirements of 21st century learning. This method is not only promoting students' language learning but also supporting their critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creative skills development. There are four aspects of TBLT which are pointed out by Ellis (2009). By examining each aspect of TBLT, they are in accordance with the 4C skills understanding. The first aspect of TBLT is task requires to primarily focus on meaning. It means that it needs a collaboration among students to get the meaning across (Bekteshi, 2017), for instance, the students work in a collaborative learning environment in the form of a small group or pair to accomplish a task activity. When the students rely on each other and negotiate meaning, they promote communicative language acquisition (Shashikala, 2018). Working in collaboration offers them a true communication interaction as well as teaches them to address a problem and pitch solutions while they learn to understand different perspectives or ideas they share (Erdogan, 2019). The second aspect is there should be a gap (for example, a gap that stimulates the students to communicate). Tasks with gap information elements enable students to practice their creative and critical thinking. The type of tasks they do in a TBLT lesson, from simple tasks like listing, to more complex ones such as problem solving and creative task, allows them to question and interpret facts and information and point out their viewpoints (Costa, 2016). The third aspect of TBLT is learners rely on their linguistic and non-linguistic resources to accomplish the activity. When students do

their task in the task cycle phase, the role of teacher is to observe students' performance from a distance in which this allows students to apply their own linguistic or non-linguistic resources and reduce asking questions to the teacher all the time (Costa, 2016). This aspect of TBLT requires students to practice their communication skills and find creative ways to deliver their meanings to the interlocutor. The fourth aspect is, there is a clearly defined outcome than the use of language. Defined outcome is the outcome of the task that can be judged in terms of content such as a story or a list of differences (Ellis, 2003). Meanwhile, at the language focus phase, students and teacher evaluate the specific features of the language. The students analyze a specific feature of the material, like in text or conversation, and practice the features. The student can compare their preceding utterance with their analysis and teacher's feedback (Shashikala, 2018). This activity enables them to put their critical thinking into practice.

In line with the explanation above, a document analysis was conducted by the researcher. This study analyzed the seventh grade English handbook entitled "When English Rings a Bell". The handbook has provided activities that facilitate the input of the target language. It included pictures completed with labels to help the students learning the vocabulary. Activities such as scripted role play were provided to enable the students to learn phrases and practice pronouncing language expressions. The handbook also applied audiolingual method, in which each chapter involved drilling the language expressions. For instance, there would be a conversation or text that the teacher read out first and then the students repeat it. According to Willis (1996), drilling a particular language pattern does not

necessarily support students' communication. Generally, the handbook has provided the input for the students' vocabulary and phrases yet there is a need to provide activities that support the students communicative use of the target language and encourage them to use their own linguistic resources in order to deliver their intentions. In relation with the expected 21st century skills, the learning activities arrange in the handbook provide inadequate support for students to practice their learning and innovation skills maximally. Therefore, there is a need to design activities that involve students in practical communication along with supporting the implementation of learning and innovation skills.

The function of a task in Task Based Language Teaching encourages students to take a more active involvement in their learning and acquire fluency rather than solely on accuracy. Even though seventh grade students can be considered as a relatively beginner learner in English, they need to be provided with activities that support their communicative competence. The exercises in the existing seventh grade handbook can scaffold the students at the early stage of their learning such as in order to introduce vocabulary, phrases and simple language pattern for the beginner students. As exercise is more focused on form instead of meaning and language use in context (Ellis, 2003), this study has a purpose to design tasks that can serve as complement activities to the exercise activities provided in the existing handbook to maximize the opportunities for the students practicing their skill in using the target language.

A number of studies indicate TBLT as useful approach for EFL productive skills development (Albino, 2017; Anjum, Kayani & Jumani, 2019; Chairena, 2016;

Hanh & Tuan, 2018; Iswari, Mahpul & Putrawan, 2017; Kafipour, et al., 2018; Marsakawati, 2014; Marsakawati, 2016; Stepani, 2016; Somawati, et al., 2017). The result of the study conducted by Albino (2017) shows that TBLT supports the students' speaking fluency and interactional language as well as enhance their positive belief of their ability in using the target language. The following year Kafipour, et al. (2018) conducted an experimental study that shows the improvement of the EFL students' writing skill in terms of sentence organization, vocabulary, and content. Meanwhile, Elvi (2017) conducted a study to develop task based approach teaching materials for junior high school. The study indicated that TBLT was believed to prepare the students to use the language communicatively and prepare them to use the target language for real world context. Nonetheless, limited research has developed learning materials on the basis of TBLT framework. In order to fill this empirical gap, this study attempts to design TBLT learning activities by integrating the task with activity that facilitates the students to be able to think critically and creatively, work collaboratively as well as communicate their work.

Based on the explanation above, this study attempts to design task-based language teaching activities for supporting the 4C skills of the seventh grade junior high school students. The book is designed as a supplementary learning material to the existing seventh grade handbook. The product is in the form of a guidebook for teachers for the purpose of providing TBLT activities with clear guidelines or procedures in conducting the activities and completed with photocopiable handouts for students. Having a clear description of each phase in TBLT activities is

beneficial in achieving the objective of the activities. The guidebook is designed by following three-phase framework of TBLT by Willis (1996) and learning and innovation skills.

1.2 Problems Identification

Many studies have investigated TBLT as an advantageous learning approach to be used in English language learning. Nonetheless, research that developed learning material on the basis of TBLT framework is limited. Hence, this study is conducted to design and develop TBLT activities. Based on the document analysis toward the seventh grade English handbook, the activities have provided the students with the input of the language expressions and vocabulary. Yet, it is necessary to design activities that encourage the students to communicate using the target language interactively or exchange information. A variety of activities are also needed to support the students in achieving the learning and innovation skills maximally. Therefore, this study is needed to be conducted as an attempt to design TBLT activities while supporting the learning and innovation skills of the seventh grade junior high school students.

1.3 Limitation of Problems

This study is limited to design and develop TBLT activities for English subject following TBLT framework proposed by Willis (1996) and the 4C skills. The activities were specifically designed for seventh grade junior high school students in Indonesia by following the English basic competences in Curriculum

2013, for the first semester. Besides, this study is limited to evaluate the content of the product and the quality of the product as a guidebook.

1.4 Research Questions

According to the background of the study that has been elaborated above, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows.

1.4.1 How is the design and development of Task Based Language Teaching activities for supporting the 4C skills of the seventh grade junior high school students?

1.4.2 What is the quality of Task Based Language Teaching activities for supporting the 4C skills of the seventh grade junior high school students?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the problems stated above, the objectives of the study are as follows.

1.5.1 To analyze, design and develop Task Based Language Teaching activities for supporting the 4C skills of the seventh grade junior high school students.

1.5.2 To investigate the quality of Task Based Language Teaching activities for supporting the 4C skills of the seventh grade junior high school students.

1.6 Research Significances

This study is expected to be significant theoretically and practically.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The result of the research is expected to contribute to the theory of teaching English based on TBLT for EFL and develop students' 4C skills namely critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communicating.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For Students

This study is conducted to develop learning tasks that are suitable for 21st century learning outcome. The tasks developed will potentially contribute to students' communicative language use ability and support their experiential and contextual learning. Students will be encouraged to produce language as a means of communication rather than get perfect accuracy on form only. Thus, their process of acquiring the language is much respected and supported. TBLT activities for supporting 4C skills is designed to accommodate students' communicative needs.

b. For Teacher

TBLT is designed to assist English teacher for providing quality teaching and learning process in the classroom. TBLT teacher's guidebook provides a number of activities and instructions that can be applied by teacher in line with the syllabus of Curriculum 2013. Hence, this study can be a potential reference for teacher in conducting activities expecting communicative use of language. Further, the product developed can a guide for teacher to design and develop other types of tasks for upper or lower grades.

c. For Other Researchers

The result of this research is expected to be a reference for other researchers, specifically for those who take concern on developing TBLT and integrating learning and innovation skills in English language teaching.

