

## **Teachers' Perceptions in the Implementation of Text-Based Learning in Indonesian Secondary Education**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to uncover the new evidence on how reform works based on Indonesian experience of adopting a text-based learning (TBL) approach in differing perceptions and teacher activities at the beginning of curriculum implementation. The secondary schools in Makassar city were used as the case studies while the study design had two questions. Data collection was conducted in two parts, A and B, which dealt with teachers' perceptions of TBL and the involvement at the beginning of its implementation, respectively. The sample comprised 46 secondary school teachers from Makassar city, including 33 civil servants and 13 non-civil servants. These individuals had various teaching experiences in four categories, including 1 year or less, and more than 1 to 5, more than 5 to 10, and more than 10. Moreover, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results showed that the teacher's proportion with the same TBL perception in various aspects ranged from half to all. The proportion with the same activity was less than half of their number to nearly all of them. Generally, Indonesian secondary school teachers responded positively towards text-based learning implementation.

**Keywords:** implementation of text-based learning; Indonesian secondary education; teachers' perceptions; learning and teaching process

### **Introduction**

Text-based learning (TBL), otherwise called genre-based, is popular today, outperform among other techniques (Richards, 2006) in the Indonesian language curriculum agenda over the last decade. Although the agenda initially raised various perceptions and debates among teachers, its studies have not been published in scientific reports to date. Generally, the plan focused more

on classroom use (Haryanti & Sari, 2019; Dirgeyasa, 2016; Saragih, 2016; Arimbawa, 2012; Putra, 2019; whereas the emerging views and teacher initiation or involvement from the beginning to implementation successfully went through the three curriculum development stages, as stated by Fullan (2001), providing new evidence on how curriculum reform took place. Furthermore, the Indonesian teacher's perceptions and involvement are closely related to the subsequent TBL acceptance or rejection, making this study critical.

Teacher's TBL perceptions and activities toward early implementation were critical because they were the basis for effective decision-making (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012) and determined whether TBL would succeed as a curriculum reform initiative in Indonesia. Contrastingly, information on such views and activities at the start of implementation was useful in explaining a country's TBL development. Furthermore, the information is essential in assessing the factors influencing Indonesian education progress reform over the last decade, especially the application of "new methodologies" for language learning.

Experts believe that teachers are the key to success in any curriculum reform because their knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions are fundamental in making the process effective. Moreover, they interpret the changes experienced since curriculum reform is a subjective process, and without a teacher, they do not exist (Park & Sung, 2013). Consequently, teachers are important in the Indonesian TBL implementation, hence, every related aspect needs to be traced to them.

The Indonesian language learning process has used a natural approach that prevailed in many linguistic contexts worldwide during the last two decades. TBL started in 2013 when Indonesia reformed the primary and secondary schools by enacting the Kurikulum 2013 to substitute the Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) effective at that time according to Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 81A of 2013. Although it has been officially used since the Kurikulum 2013 took effect, in practice, English learning was similar to materials such as English for Specific Purposive (ESP) and English for Academic Purposive (EAP), the then TBL examples (Lin, 2006), or the syllabus (Richards, 2006).

TBL application, as an integral part of the 2013 Indonesian Curriculum implementation was a fundamental change in curriculum reform because it transformed the familiar language learning tradition and was well-established among teachers. Further, it affected the learning ecosystem massively since it covered all learning components, including the planning portfolio prepared by the teacher, students' and teachers' textbooks, learning methods, and learning outcome assessments. Moreover, its language learning changes became complicated due to material delivery which used a scientific method. Consequently, a debate arose from the start, not only because the approach was foreign, but every agenda relating to Indonesian curriculum change was always polemic (Saud et al., 2020; Amalia, 2015).

Although it was initially debated, in the end, the teachers adapted to the changes and used TBL as a language learning approach widely. Consequently, Indonesia's success in implementing TBL has been achieved step by step, involving grades I and IV, VII, and IX of elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, respectively, in several schools. Further, the 2016 Indonesian language learning outcomes measurements in TBL senior high school students also used mixed questions between TBL and non-TBL content (Ramly & Abduh, 2018). This gradual process caused several schools to be in transitional periods of applying the learning approach in the classroom, making some praise the mastered methodology and exaggerate their TBL pessimism.

TBL implementation, which initially caused mixed reactions among interested parties, including the teachers, has been running for almost a decade and completely replaced the more eclectic learning approach in the previous curriculum despite the different perceptions when it

began. Therefore, this study is useful in explaining how the conflicting teacher's opinions could end up with a consensus to accept the curriculum reform program. The aspects were limited to methodology, impact, policy synchronization, and benefits, while the scope of teacher involvement included the implementation extent in schools and types of activities, information access, participant status, training involvement, guidance, and reflection. Moreover, there were two problem formulations: (1) What are the teachers' perceptions of the involvement in TBL implementation? (2) what was the initial teacher tendency in various forms of involvement in responding to the TBL implementation?

## Literature review

### Perception of curriculum change

Perception, defined by Elnaga (2012) as a cognitive process with individuals choosing, organizing, and giving meaning to environmental stimuli, is important for the teacher in the curriculum change process, especially the Indonesian TBL implementation. Alternatively, it is a link from a series of mental dynamics to the emergence of behavior through which a teacher understands TBL presence with different meanings. For example, decisions taken in various professional activities were related to perceptions and professional activities relating to the overall job satisfaction level (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012), meaning that the teacher's response to TBL as a curriculum reform stemmed from their perceptions.

TBL for Indonesian language learning is a form of curriculum reform and part of the significant others being implemented by many countries over the last few decades (Park & Sung, 2013) to re-examine the education goals, hence, it can serve as a suitable investment for national development and stakeholder service (Alabi & Okemakinde, 2010). Through curriculum changes, new social, cultural, political, economic, and technological issues are incorporated into the curriculum, ultimately leading to the strengthening of internal and external school processes (Igbokwe Uche L Ph, et al., 2014).

Several studies confirm that teachers' perceptions of curriculum reform vary because each assigns a meaning different from the other's (Park & Sung, 2013) Further, Park & Sung, (2013) study on Korean primary school teachers' perceptions showed that it creates teacher groups with negative and non-constructive attitudes about reforms and are less interested in change. For the first group, reforms were considered to only increase workload without introducing significant new thinking into teaching practice, while the second one believed that the new curriculum might improve education quality but felt that they experienced dilemmas and tensions in implementing the changes (Park & Sung, 2013).

The perception that curriculum changes face obstacles was reported by Syomwene, (2013) and Madondo (2021). Such a reform in Kenya is effectively influenced by political issues, slow economic development, limited facilities, institutional leadership, evaluation ability, lack of proper facilities and social infrastructure, ignorance, and limited literacy (Syomwene, 2013). Further, a Zimbabwean experience shows that the main problems are that the new curriculum is rushed to be implemented, the teacher fails to interpret it because they, as change agents, have not been actively involved in curriculum planning, and limited resources to support successful implementation. Moreover, insufficient teaching resources contribute to the negative learning acceptance of the new curriculum (Madondo, 2021). Therefore, the perceived situation relates to various factors aggregating the analyzed curriculum implementation, specifically school support, including its social structure, materials and skills, and human resources motivation.

The impression about teachers' lack of access to become agents in determining the curriculum direction and the external obstacles was also shared by the young Singapore science

teachers. According to Lim & Pyvis (2012), they had not influenced the success of school educational change and initially experienced obstacles in delivering the revised curriculum. As a solution, they varied their learning approach to support reform, but it was still difficult to apply findings across countries and sectors due to social, economic, cultural, and political diversity.

The new curriculum implementation perceptions do not always harmonize with obstacles. For instance, an Indonesian study by Iskandar and Patak (2021) shows that the causes are teacher's understanding, their training or educational background, lack of guidance, and the role of textbooks. Furthermore, other contexts are student expectations, large class capacity, inefficient resources, and assessment, but the teacher's understanding and educational background are critical in determining the implementation degree. At the same time, participants showed positive perceptions, especially the discovery learning application (Iskandar and Patak, 2021). Therefore, according to them, the teacher accepts it as an approach to scientific learning, a component of the Indonesian curriculum change.

The spotlight on the centralized curriculum has also caused perceptions. For example, according to Gökmenoğlu & Clark (2015), the mandated reform initiatives showed teacher's limitations in fulfilling the innovation demands. Furthermore, the school effectiveness study, especially in Turkish teacher professional development, reinforced the notion that the centrally mandated curriculum has weaknesses. Although several reforms in the past one to two decades have changed the classroom teacher's role, it is ultimately perceived that no matter how well a curriculum change is implemented, its success is determined by the interpretation and success of schools and classroom adjustments, and without paying attention to teacher problems, reform efforts will still be implemented, but imperfectly (Gökmenoğlu & Clark, 2015).

Literature information shows that teacher's curriculum change perceptions are highly contextual and relate to various educational variables. Therefore, the differences in teacher backgrounds as a social, economic, and political community, and in educational context and training experience from one to another lead to varied implementation perceptions of the newly reformed curriculum.

### The TBL concept and its perspective

The TBL referred to in this study relates to the concept by Richards (2006) in which the approach was oriented towards developing communicative competence through mastering various texts, therefore focusing more on the product or learning outcomes, unlike the task-based and content-based approaches which paid attention to the process (Richards, 2006). Further, it uses the term TBL genre-based technique from Halliday's theory of functional linguistics (Dirgeyasa, 2016; Saragih, 2016).

The term "text" is used in various study contexts with different meanings, including as a contextual functional linguistic unit (Saragih, 2016), representation of ideas in written form like prose (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1992), or a series of questions used in tracking down language concepts misunderstood by students (Çaycı, 2018). Further, in the TBL concept, it is used in a special sense to refer to a structured linguistic sequence in a certain perspective and way such as conversational, procedural, informative, storytelling, and persuasive texts (Richards, 2006).

TBL is used in several countries, but in Singapore, it was adopted with a new trend (Richards, 2006), including teaching grammar integratedly in the text rather than separately. There are five stages of TBL as follows:

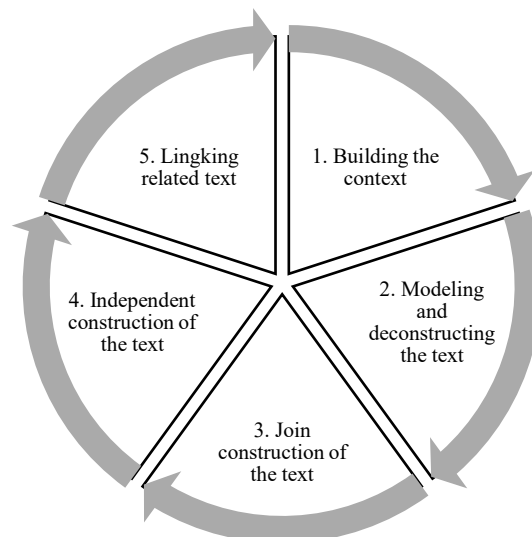


Figure 1. TBL stages by Mumba & Mkandawire (2019)

The learning activities for each stage described by Richards (2006) include:

Stage 1 : Students are introduced to the text's social context and cultural features.

Stage 2 : They investigate the model's structural patterns and language features and compare them with other examples in the same text.

Stage 3 : They are introduced to the text's social context and general cultural features.

Stage 4 : They work independently with texts, including understanding various forms of materials and activities.

Stage 5 : They investigate the text being studied by comparing others in the same context, various fields, or the same field.

The Indonesian TBL implementation was conducted according to the Kurikulum 2013 implementation guidelines (Dewantara et al., 2019), and its effect accommodated teacher innovations and new thoughts in learning English (Arimbawa, 2012). Furthermore, it effectively improved English narrative text writing skills, especially in terms of style and language expression quality, logical grouping, and grammatical error reduction (Haryanti & Sari, 2019). Consequently, this positively affected the Indonesian learning nuances, although the participating teacher still experiences difficulties (Putra, 2019).

Problems also occur in Africa, especially in the TBL contribution to communicative competence and teacher understanding of the grade 4 English learning approach. Learning covered by various methodological and language problems results in the ability to answer students' questions suboptimally because they can only respond to low-level questions (Mohlabi-Tlaka et al., 2017). Furthermore, the TBL implementation information showed the similarities in Indonesia and elsewhere and also confirms the previous recent literature that has not included it as a TBL user like Australia, New Zealand, Singapore (Richards, 2006), Canada (Derewianka, 2003).

## Method

### Research design

A descriptive study was used to examine and present the image and capability of Indonesian and English teachers in Makassar City senior high schools in responding to the language learning approaches renewal.

### Population and sample

The study population included all the Indonesian and English teachers at Makassar City senior high schools, while the sample comprised language teachers in schools that met the criteria of teaching Indonesian and English, apply the Kurikulum 2013 (pioneer and expansion groups), secondary schools (High School, Vocational High School, Madrasah Aliyah), and with teachers whose statuses are instructors, resource persons, and regular teachers. Furthermore, sample distribution with these criteria was grouped into two, including work status and teaching experience bases. The following is a sampling frame based on its characteristics:

Table 1. Sampling frame

Work Status	Participant	Percentage
Civil Servant	33	71.7
Non-Civil Servant	13	28.3
Total	46	100
Teaching Experience (years)		
≤ 1	4	8.6
>1 - 5	8	17.4
>5 -10	11	23.9
>10	23	50.0
Total	46	100

Data collection in this study used a questionnaire with open, semi-open, and closed- ended questions. The procedures of data collection were the questionnaires sent to participants of the study and they return the questionnaires to the researchers.

### Data analysis technique

The data in questionnaire responses and a list of questions were analyzed descriptively, either by narrative or descriptive statistics, while the sample's perception and activity were described in percentages.

## Results

### Teacher's initial TBL perception

Table 2. Teacher/participant perceptions of the methodology, impact, policy synchronization, and benefits of TBL

Aspect	Teacher presentation by the perception type	Description
Methodology	easy to apply (95%), easy to find materials (80%)	Agree

Impact	sharpening literacy (69%), learning is more interesting (50%), ensuring students can generate texts (98%).	Agree
Policy	TBL fulfills learning demands in the Kurikulum 2013 (100%), supported by the school environment (96%).	Agree
Synchronization		
Benefit	ease students review lessons (43%), prepare students to master real-world languages (95%), and fulfill learning methodology developments (60%).	Agree

A total of 46 teachers were participating in TBL activities, and Table 2 shows that their perceptions were generally positive in methodology, impact, policy considerations, and benefits, although, for impacts and benefits, the pattern was not entirely the same as the other two aspects perceived as easy to implement and easily obtainable except for a few people. Moreover, all teachers viewed TBL as a consequence that should be implemented to synchronize policies, especially to fulfill the Kurikulum 2013 demands, and almost all perceive it to be supported by the school environment. However, less than half of the teachers view it to ease the students' review lessons since 57% of them perceive the opposite. Further, almost all thought it was useful in making students master real-world languages and most also perceived its implementation as a welcome to fulfill the learning methodology developments. The percentage of teachers in each perceived aspect was 43% to 100%, leaving some of them with different perceptions. Table 3 contains the teacher's perception that contradicts other teachers' opinions.

Table 3. Teachers' Contradictory Perceptions of TBL Implementation in Methodology, Impact, and Benefit

Aspect	Participants (P)	Perception	Description
Methodology	P1, P17	The concept is still new and has little implementation experience.	Doubt
	P23	The old mindset in teaching has not been changed by the learning impression that students have.	Doubt
	P17	TBL materials are available everywhere but are difficult to construct; therefore, they must be gradual.	Doubt
	P1, P17, P23	TBL seems monotonous.	Doubt
Impact	P1	Only develops the ability to compose text	Doubt
Benefit	P17	Ignores pragmatic abilities other than text	Doubt

Table 3 shows that not more than 6.5% of teachers had different perceptions in general. In the methodological aspect, TBL was viewed as not easy to implement because the concept was still new and teachers had difficulty changing old mindsets, and the students' impressions of previous learning had been formed. Further, it was perceived that the material was not easy to construct to be completely ready to use, hence, it needed to be prepared in stages. Moreover, TBL impact was thought to only develop text-composing ability, while benefit was perceived to ignore pragmatic abilities other than texts.

Based on the data in Tables 2 and 3, teacher's TBL perceptions were generally positive, but their tendencies varied. Generally, certain aspects were positively viewed by all teachers, especially the sub-aspect of policy synchronization.

### Teacher involvement at the TBL beginning

Table 4. Teacher involvement at the beginning of TBL implementation (N= 46)

Main Activities	N	Percentage
<b>Types of activities within the school</b>		
1) join team teaching	15	0.33
2) have scheduled discussions with fellow teacher	26	0,56
3) work alone	5	0,11
<b>Information access</b>		
1) search on own initiative	42	0.91
2) waiting to be notified	4	0.09
<b>Participation status</b>		
1) trainer/ informant	7	0.15
2) committee	4	0.09
3) participant	35	0.76
<b>TBL training involvement</b>		
1) 2-6 times per semester	11	0.25
2) 1 time per semester	9	0.19
3) 1 time per year	6	0.13
4) only 1 time	14	0.30
5) Never	6	0.13
<b>Involvement in external agency guidance activities</b>		
1) Involved	32	0.70
2) No	14	0.30
<b>Reflection intensity</b>		
1) routine and regular	8	0.17
2) often	27	0.60
3) seldom	7	0.15
4) never	4	0.08

Table 4 shows two kinds of teacher involvement, including (1) their free choice and (2) the external parties' initiative. Further, the highest proportion of those involved in the same activities based on free choice and the school external parties' initiatives was 56% to 91% and 30% to 76%, respectively. Involvement with the teacher's free choice included scheduled discussions with colleagues, seeking information, conducting reflection activities, while those for the external parties' initiatives included TBL activity participation status, training participation intensity, and guidance by external institutions' experience. This data means that there are high percentage of activities organized by external organizers.

### Discussion



The first question of this study was whether teachers' initial perceptions harmonized with their decision to accept TBL in the future, and the results showed that almost all of them viewed it positively in all aspects. Furthermore, the results confirm that the initial opinion was followed by their positive attitude to accept TBL in the future, strengthening the previous opinion, which confirmed the suitability of perception and response. According to Cristina-Corina & Valerica (2012) how teachers perceive their professional responsibilities affects how their general mentalities, including positive attitudes, interact.

Although, in general, the teachers positively perceived all aspects, some held a different perception, which is common in every policy related to innovation, reform, or curriculum implementation. For instance, the idea of a new curriculum in implementing Norwegian school reforms in 2006 was originally targeted to expand teacher freedom but was perceived as an expansion of demands (Mellegård & Pettersen, 2016). Furthermore, the Korean experience in implementing the new elementary school curriculum caused teacher groups with different views (Park & Sung, 2012), showing resistance to the new curriculum idea. The same thing happened to the Pakistani "cloning curriculum" implementation, causing teacher dissatisfaction because it was assumed to be a result of an outside party's idea or a replica that was not locally contextual. However, even with these objections, others still can accept the curriculum in question, but with modifications (Shaukat & Chowdhury, 2020).

TBL, perceived by the teacher differently from the start in several ways, was finally fully implemented without involving them at the initiation stage, which according to Fullan (2001), widened the gap between the curriculum and its implementation. Generally, a gap without providing teachers' innovation space results in continuous problems (Molapo & Pillay, 2018). Another consequence is the disagreement on certain aspects of the curriculum, like the caning abolition in Ghana (Yeboah, 2020). However, the Indonesian TBL is running without any problems triggered by differing teacher perceptions, and such an acceptance without turmoil with the literature information background explains the other side of the way curriculum reform works.

Generally, the diverse responses to the curriculum implementation are not always followed by factual "counteractions" that hinder the implementation's sustainability. Therefore, this study's results ensured that the differences can be ignored toward a consensus to accept TBL as long as there are factors that needed to be prioritized and fought for. Furthermore, they confirm that further studies are needed to ensure that complying with the existing regulations determines the approval of curriculum reform, but 100% of the teachers view TBL as a policy requirement that must be realized.

The next question related to what the initial teachers' tendency in various forms of involvement in responding to the TBL implementation was. The results showed that there were two kinds of teacher involvement with different percentages, specifically first, based on free choice, which included 56%, 91%, and 60% of scheduled discussions, seeking information on their own initiative, and intensive reflection activities, respectively. Second, on the initiative of an external school party, which captured the TBL activity participation status as a regular participant, one-time training participation intensity, less than seven times participation, and guidance by external institutions involvement at 76%, 30%, 25%, and 70%, respectively.

The first trend of the Indonesian teacher involvement in responding to TBL shows that not less than half of teachers were always involved in the same activity if it was an initiative of their own choice. Implicatively, this shows that they psychologically accept it because every act of involving themselves in any activity is personal involvement with an emotional dimension (Mellegård & Pettersen, 2016). In this case, this study did not examine the psychological

dimension, hence, it cannot be ascertained whether teacher involvement was jointly driven by voluntary motivation equally with each other or some got involved because they were influenced by others, given the different nature of teachers, including introverts, ambiverts, and extroverts whose differing responses can be analogized to social codes (Benett, 1980).

Another trend shows that the proportion of teachers who came into contact with TBL issues through its designs and guidance from outsiders dissemination during this study was quite large, but very few participated in the training. This was due to the massive and widespread escalation of the new curriculum socialization activities then, but with limited training activities. For instance, in 2014, the government targeted to train 1.3 million teachers gradually and in stages, but only 283,000 were trained before the new school year (Alawiyah, 2015).

### Conclusion

Based on the diverse teachers' perceptions and the involvements in responding to TBL, various conclusions were drawn. The Indonesian perception and involvement toward TBL during the transition period between the initiation and the implementation stages triggered its acceptance as curriculum reform. The success in changing the curriculum was actualized by the positive views and an impartial attitude as teachers engaged in several activities related to the implementation.

Furthermore, the acceptance of innovations like TBL does not have to be based on the concerned parties' uniform perception as long as the general trend is intentionally relevant to accepting the development. Indonesian teachers prioritized consensus to accept TBL rather than maintaining different views and gradually ignored the less supportive views to its acceptance for the sake of sustaining the educational process and synchronizing the accompanying policies.

The pessimistic view by a small teachers' group did not lead to rejection because, in reality, there was no trade-off between continuing or stopping TBL during its implementation. Therefore, the perception of such a group can be ruled out, hence, the tendency held by the majority, in general, can turn into a consensus for togetherness.

### Declaration of conflicting interest

Authors in this study declare no conflict of interest in this paper.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire

1. In your opinion, the implementation of Text-Based Learning (TBL) can be carried out (1) Yes, or (2) No. If Yes, select the reason 1. Easy 2. Difficult; if not, write down the reason
2. Getting suitable learning materials for TBL is 1. Easy 2 difficult
3. Concerning literacy, TBL has an impact in 1. Sharpening literacy 2 has no impact 3. Others ...
4. What do you think about TBL's appeal? 1. Interesting 2. Mediocre 3. Unattractive
5. The impact of TBL on language skills is 1. Allows students to compose a variety of texts 2. TBL has nothing to do with text production skills 3. TBL only makes a limited contribution 4. Others, describe .....
6. The main considerations in TBL acceptance are 1. New programs 2. Policy synchronization 3. Enrichment of learning methodologies

7. What are the benefits of TBL? (1). Eases students in reviewing lessons (yes, no) (2) Prepares students to master real-world languages (yes, no) (3) Fulfills developments in learning methodologies (yes, no) (4) Others, describe .....
8. What types of activities do you do at school 1. Join the teaching team, 2 Scheduled discussions 3. Others, describe...
9. How do you get information about TBL?
10. Your participation in TBL socialization is 1. Informant 2. Regular participant 3. Committee
11. Your experience in TBL training is (1) 1 time per semester (2) 2-6 times per semester (3) 1 time per year (4) only 1 time (5) Never
12. Have you ever been involved in mentoring by an outsider? Yes, No
13. What is the intensity of your reflection on TBL-related activities? Describe: ....