



SNAP TO READ

THE EFFECT OF TBLT IN ENGLISH PAST TENSE ACQUISITION USING TEST-ENGLISH.COM FOR 8TH GRADERS

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Abstract:

In such a modern world like nowadays, English is important to be mastered by students as it is the international language used in the world. Recalling the importance of English, it is essential to find out various learning methods to teach English to students in countries where English is a foreign language. Therefore, this pre-experimental paper sought to find out whether teaching using the Task-Based Language Teaching method and web-based learning can improve students' knowledge simple past tense. There were thirty-one 8th grade students from SMP Katolik Wijana Jombang were chosen to be samples of this study. The students had a pre- and post-test at the beginning and the end of the TBLT process. Before taking the post-test, the students went through four meetings to learn simple past tense using test-english.com in hybrid mode (face to face and virtual meetings). The null hypothesis is rejected at $p \leq 0.05$. This suggests that there is a change in the 8th-grade students' pre- and post-test results on grammatical mastery (past tense) in SMP Katolik Wijana Jombang following the practice of task-based learning (TBLT) utilizing test-english.com.

Keywords: *past tense, TBLT, web-based, 8th graders*

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the ability to use English language is become a global standard. It is undeniable that the better one's ability in English is, the better job opportunities one might get (Pandey & Pandey, 2014). In mastering and understanding English, the knowledge of grammar cannot be neglected or forgotten as it helps students to improve their written and spoken works (Debata, 2013). One of many areas to learn when it comes to English grammar is the tense or the time of a verb which has an important role in constructing a sentence (Aziz et al., 2020; Declerck, 2015). However, in contradiction to its vitality in a language, the process of learning English grammar, especially tenses itself, is not an easy thing. Particularly, most students in Indonesia only learn English as the foreign language taught as a compulsory subject. Previous research also shows that students find learning English grammar as the most difficult component as they need time to practice the grammar construction, yet they always lack opportunities (Thamrin et al., 2019a).

Along with the demand for English as a foreign language in society, technological progress has been accelerating as well, for the most part because worldwide pandemic COVID-19, which forced everything to be done digitally. Egbert (2020) mentioned that during the pandemic, the easiest way to do the learning process is to provide various content about the materials than to make the content. This teaching approach employs tasks as its main pedagogical tool in the process (Braden et al., 2009). Previous studies have proven that task-based language teaching (TBLT) is useful and convenient for both teachers and students to promote language learning. It is said that TBLT made students have learner- centered learning which then is able to improve their communicative proficiency (Wu et al., 2016). TBLT also boosts students' motivation to work on the language they are learning (Aliasin et al., 2019; Tan, 2016). As stated by Jeon and Hahn (2006) in their research, TBLT gives students lots of chances to practice the language in the classroom. This is beneficial, especially for EFL students in Asia as students will understand the use of English daily.

Task-Based Language Teaching

There are various methods that can be used by a teacher in teaching. One method is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) which can be defined as “an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching” (p.223) (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This type of learning process has a cycle that consists of pre-task, task cycles, and language focus (Willis, 1996). The application of TBLT during the learning process is proven to be useful and favourable by the students as the tasks give students an opportunity to explore the language itself rather than just paying attention to the language item (Bygate et al., 2001; Mehmood & Sabuncuoglu, 2021). It is said that TBLT made students have learner-centered learning which then able to improve more on their communicative language proficiency (Lai et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2016). TBLT also boosts students’ motivation to work on the language they are learning (Aliasin et al., 2019; Tan, 2016). As stated by Jeon and Hahn (2006) in their research, TBLT gives students lots of chances to practice the language in the classroom (Jeon & Hahn, 2006). This is beneficial, especially for EFL students in Asia as students will understand the use of English once daily.

Previous studies have shown how TBLT was used to improve one’s grammar ability, Doşt et al. (2017) sought out how TBLT affected the motivation and grammatical achievement of EFL students in a high school in Ahvaz, Iran. In this study, the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test scores. The questionnaire also showed that the motivation of learning from the experimental group increased significantly. In Samsun, Turkey, Yildiz and Senel (2017) also did a similar study which then brought the same result. Their study proved that TBLT yielded a remarkable result in studying grammar. Ellis (2018) wrote that even though back then researchers doubted how task gave a major impact on learners’ understanding, tasks are conceptualized well nowadays owing to the studies done in the past.

Web-Based Language Learning

Website has a long history in the world of education, especially in language learning. Web-based materials are defined to be useful in serving both students and teachers the things that they want to learn with new approaches (Ngai et al., 2007). With the help of internet that can be accessed everywhere, web-based gained its popularity.

There are numerous studies done related to Web-Based Learning (WBLL) and English grammar. A study in that was done Malaysia resulted in the increased mean of the post-test compared to the pre-test in the group of students who learned using web-based materials (Yusof & Saadon, 2012). In 2019, there was a study done in Central Sulawesi that showed how web-based learning gave positive attitude to students throughout the learning process (Thamrin et al., 2019b). Another study that was done in Thailand also showed positive result in students' grammar proficiency (Mayanondha & Soontornwipast, 2020).

Thus, as both learning methods have been proven to give good results in the students' English grammar, it is essential to explore how Task-Based Language Learning in which the tasks given are in the form of web-based tasks would result on students' English grammar proficiency. This study is held since there is no previous study related to this issue. There is no specific study that involves the website test-english.com itself as the instrument of the study used in the TBLT learning process. Hence, the research questions are formulated as follows: Is there any significant difference in the 8th-grade students' pre-test and post-test results after task-based learning using test-english.com on their grammatical mastery in SMP Katolik Wijana Jombang?

METHOD

This study is a single-group pre-experimental study that is also popular by the names 'before and after' and 'pre- and post-test' design (Marsden & Torgerson, 2012). Jimenez-Buedo (2018) described pre-experimental research as one kind of experimental research that the subject of study is only

one group to be observed before, during, and after the treatment (Jimenez-Buedo, 2022). The sampling that was used in this study was a purposive sampling. This sampling was acquired as the writer wanted to seek how TBLT and web-based tasks work on simplas past tense that is learned by students in the VIII grade.

Research Participants

This research was held in a private school, SMP Katolik Wijana, in Jombang, East Java. The writer chose to have this research in Jombang as it is aimed to generalize a theory in a small city instead of the big one. As the population of this study was a number of ninety-six students, the samples that were taken for this research were thirty-one VIII graders. The reason why this research took the VIII graders was because the only grade that learn past tense for recount text is the VIII grade level. The contents that were used during the learning process were taken from test- english.com as they are relevant to the curriculum for students in SMP VIII level. As written in KD 3.3, KD 4.3.1, and KD 4.3.2, students need to pay attention to simple past tense as it is important for personal recount text that they have to master by the end of the learning process.

The sampling that was used is a non-probability purposive sampling. There are two types of sampling which are probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Singh, 2006). Meanwhile a purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling where the researcher is the one who makes the criteria concerning who will be included as the sample in the study (Oliver, 2006). Non-probability purposive sampling was acquired as it purposively gave the opportunity only to the VIII grade students to be the sample of this study. There were thirty-one students (VIII grade) who participated in this study from the total of population ninety-six students.

Instruments

The pre- and post-test used the same test from <http://bit.ly/test-smpkwijana>. The test was made and designed by the writer as the writer wanted to suit the capability and ability of students in SMP Katolik Wijana

Jombang. For the test, there are thirty multiple choices questions that the samples need to do. The writer decided to have thirty multiple choices questions after doing a discussion with the English teachers where the population study and the English teachers where the instrument was tried out. The formula that will be used to count the score is as followed:

Since instruments that are used in the study must be valid and reliable, the content for these tests was validated by testing the pre- and post-test to twenty-two 8th- grade students from SMP Negeri 1 Tembelang that is in the same city as SMP Katolik Wijana Jombang. Students from SMPN 1 Tembelang were chosen so that the characteristics of students in SMPN 1 Tembelang will be approximately similar to the characteristics of students in SMPK Wijana Jombang. The result of the validation and reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha was a reliability test with $\alpha = 0.925$.

In Cronbach's Alpha, when the alpha coefficient is closer to zero, the reliability is low. And when the alpha is close to one, the reliability will be high as well (Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Goforth, 2015). It has been revealed that when Cronbach's Alpha is ≥ 0.8 then the reliability and internal consistency are good. If it is approximately equal to 0.7, then the instrument may or may not be acceptable (van den Berg, n.d.). Thus, as the alpha value is positive and is closer to one, the set of questions is good and ready to be used as an instrument for pre-test and post-test.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of items
21.82	53.870	7.340	30

Alongside that, four lesson plans were validated by the English teacher of SMP Katolik Wijana Jombang and a lecturer from Universitas Negeri Malang. This validation process is important for the scores resulting in this study need to be stable and dependable (Creswell, 2015). The validation sheet was made by the writer by putting the important things on the lesson plans that need to be validated.

Procedures

The writer performed several steps to attain the research objectives. As shown in Table 2 below, before the interventions were delivered to the students, a pre-test (O1) was conducted to establish the students' initial ability to use the past tense. Following the collection of pre-test scores by the writer, the treatment (X) was held by carrying out the TBLT approach and website used in the learning process for the next four weeks. There were two cycles of TBLT in which each cycle took two meetings. The learning process was done in a month through face-to-face and online meetings using Google Classroom.

During these four meetings, the students were asked to work on some exercises provided by test-english.com on A1 and A2 grammar levels in two cycles of TBLT. One cycle of TBLT consists of pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. First, during the pre-task phase, the writer will introduce the topic of the study that is past tense in relevant to personal recount text. Alongside with the topic, the participants will also be introduced to some vocabularies that they will employ throughout the task cycles. The writer is going to highlight some important things to help students in understanding the material so that they are able to do the tasks. Next, during the task cycle, students need to do the tasks provided in the test-english.com and then plan a report based on their works. After they feel sure about their reports, they need to report it to their classmates. The last phase is the language focus phase which enables them to do analysis and take a closer look on the works they have done to observe on the language structure.

The post-test (O2) was the final evaluation that the students must do so that the writer could understand the abilities achieved by students after the end of the intervention. During language focus at the end of each TBLT process, students had to do analysis and practice. The analysis allows students to examine and discuss the task, whereas practice allows students to make action.

Table 2. Pre-Experimental Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O1	X	O2

Notes:

O1: pre-test (before)

O2: post-test (after)

X: treatment (learning English past tense using test-english.com (website) in TBLT approach).

Data analysis

The pre-test and post-test scores were analysed using paired samples t-test or that is also known as dependent samples t-test. Shier (2004) defined paired t-test as a test that is used to compare the means of two populations where there are two samples and one can be paired with another (Shier, 2014). Before calculating the t-test, the writer worked on the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis.

The hypothesis of this study are as followed:

H0: There is no significant difference in the 8th-grade students' pre-test and post-test results after task-based learning using test-english.com on their grammatical mastery in SMP Katolik Wijana Jombang.

Ha: There is a significant difference in the 8th-grade students' pre-test and post-test results after task-based learning using test-english.com on their grammatical mastery in SMP Katolik Wijana Jombang ($p \leq 0.05$).

Besides, the researcher used SPSS to test the normality on the pre-test and post-test scores which aims to evaluate whether the scores are normally distributed or not.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to get data fill the gap in the world of research and education related to the use of TBLT and web-based in learning simple past tense and to find whether there is a significant difference in the 8th grade students pre-test and post-test results on their simple past tense after

going through the treatment. The website that was used in this study was test-english.com and the English grammar that was learned by the students is simple past tense. Thus, to address this issue, the author administered pre- and post-tests to the students, and four meetings using test-english.com in between. The scores achieved by the students in the post-test (after the intervention) were then compared to the ones they got in the pre-test (before the intervention). There were thirty-one students who were looked over in this study. All of them went through one-month of blended learning in February 2023. Throughout the process, data were collected to be statistically analysed and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The scores obtained by the students in the pre- and post-test are described as seen in Table 3 as followed.

Table 3. Students' overall scores on pre-test and post-test

Group	N	Min*	Max*	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	31	7	93	51.4194	24.31430	4.36698
Post-test	31	10	97	66.3548	27.55304	4.94867

From the scores obtained in the pre- and post-test, it can be construed that students' understanding on English grammar (past tense) increased after learning using test-english.com in TBLT method. In the pre-test, the lowest score acquired by students was 7 and the highest was 93. Even though the scores gotten by the students were not drastically changing during the post-test, the lowest score was 10 and the highest was 97 which was higher than the pre-test. By looking at the mean obtained in the pre- and post-test, the score went higher by 14.94% in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

The writer perceived that the dependent samples t-test is the most appropriate way of analysing the data as the four assumptions in the dependent t-test were all fulfilled. The variables measured were on a continuous scale (test performance 0-100) and the two samples were gotten before and after treatments on the same subject, which were thirty-one 8th grade students.

Table 4 and Table 5 show that there were no spurious outliers in the data distribution. In Table 5, it was found that the Sig. value was $.768 > .05$ which means that the data was normal (Grande, 2017).

Table 4. Test of Normality Shapiro-Wilk

	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Difference	.978	31	.768

Table 5. Case Processing Summary

Difference	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
	31	100%	0	0%	31	100%

After the test of normality, the writer then did the paired samples t-test. In this test, if the sig level is higher than the alpha value (0.05), it means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The alpha of 0.05 indicates that the data being tested has a less than 5% possibility of occurring under the null hypothesis.

Table 6. Paired samples t-test on pre- and post-test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test - Post-test	-14.935	11.32235	2.033	-19.088	-10.78	-7.345	30	.000

Based on the paired samples t-test results in Table 6, it can be concluded that the Sig. (2-tailed) of .000 with the df of 30 is lower than .05 ($.000 < .05$). Hence, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is a difference in the 8th-grade students' pre- and post-test results after the practice of task-based learning (TBLT) using test-english.com on their grammatical mastery (past tense) in SMP Katolik Wijana Jombang.

The practice of TBLT using test-english.com

Table 5 revealed that there is an increasing number in the mean before and after the intervention using TBLT and test-english.com (website) and that there was an increase in the average score obtained by students. In the pre-test, students showed that they had a low performance in understanding past tense in English grammar with a mean score of 51.4194 and SD of 24.31430. There was an increase in the students' performance in the post-test with a mean score of 66.3548 and SD of 27.55304. In Table 6, it is confirmed that TBLT and test-english.com significantly improved students' grammar ability in past tense with the Sig. (2-tailed) .000.

Even though it was hard to find studies that linked English grammar, web-based learning, and TBLT all at once, the writer found some studies that are relevant to the topics of this study. In twelve sessions of learning process covered present simple tense, present continuous tense, possessive's and of, possessive adjectives, and also adverbs of frequency, 60 junior high Iranian students to study grammar using MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) showed an increasing number of scores in the post-test. With the $t = 33.462$ and $p\text{-value} = .000$, it was consequently concluded that the null hypothesis was rejected ($p < 0.05$) (Khodabandeh et al., 2017).

One more study that was done in Iran as well also discovered that the null hypothesis was rejected. The study was done using computer-based tasks in learning English grammar at junior high level. The result of this study rejected the null hypothesis as the $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ and $t\text{-observed} = 25.869 < 2.04$ ($t\text{-crit}$) (Alian et al., 2018). There was a study in Indonesia regarding TBLT and web-based learning which also resulted in the positive result in students' grammar. Nurhayati (2019) sought how analysing online media text could improve undergraduate students when they were taught using TBLT. In her study, she found out that acquiring TBLT and online media text could be helpful for students in learning English grammar generally. Yet, this study also indicated that only computer-literate students got more benefits compared to those who were computer illiterate (Nurhayati, 2019).

The writer assumes that there are several factors which contribute in the success of implementing TBLT using website when learning past tense. First, the students were given the freedom to discover how past tense works by themselves. After understanding the basic knowledge of past tense in the pre-task, students had the opportunity to discover past tense in their own pace when they were doing the tasks. The website that was used (test-english.com) is also a website completed with brief explanations about the topics discussed. Thus, the students could read the explanation first before doing the collection of tasks. Second, the website used in this study is a clear cut website for someone who has limited experience using website sources to study. The instructions are easy to follow, so in result, students had no difficulties when they were accessing the website.

All in all, the result of this study is in line with the previous studies (Alian et al., 2018; Khodabandeh et al., 2017; Nurhayati, 2019) that the implementation of TBLT and web-based learning altogether can enhance students' understanding in English grammar (more specifically past tense). Students got better scores after they went through four meetings in the TBLT setting and did the tasks provided by test-english.com as a free-accessed website.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, the performance of students was improved by 14.94% after the intervention of learning English grammar using the TBLT method and utilizing test-english.com. The mean score of the post-test is higher than the mean score of the pre-test ($51.42 > 66.36$). As there was a significant difference ($.000 < 0.05$) and gain scores in the students' understanding of past tense after the intervention, the null hypothesis is rejected.

In light of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made. One, teachers can use more CALL sources for students to learn and practice their knowledge of English grammar. test-

english.com is one example of web-based learning source that can be used easily and freely. This source is recommended by the writer for its directness and completeness in theories and exercises. Two, combining TBLT and CALL in teaching English grammar should be done more often as this kind of learning will give students to be independent in seeking information. In this way, students will also have the opportunity to adapt to the real-world situations where technology is developing rapidly. Three, the researcher who is interested in studying the same topic as this study might be able to find out more about how students feel when TBLT and website are applied in learning English grammar. As the studies concerning TBLT, website, and English grammar in Indonesia are very scant, the following studies might get to know the reasons why the learning process combining TBLT and website when teaching English grammar is rarely done.

This research, however, was subject to several limitations. First is time constraints. When taking the data, the process of this study could not be done for too long as it would affect other topics that students have to finish in one semester. Thus, the TBLT cycle could only be done in two cycles with limited topic that was simple past tense used in the recount text. Second, the difference regulations in schools in Indonesia. Even though technology is enhancing day by day, not every school in Indonesia allows the students to bring and to access mobile phone in school. Hence, the result of this study might only be effective for schools that provide sufficient numbers of computer and internet connection for the students or the schools who allows the students to bring and to use their mobile phones in school. And last one is the limitation of skills learned in this study. Language has four skills that can be used (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). However, in this study, the researcher only sought on the reading and writing skills. Thus, further study might be able to seek the TBLT and web-based learning's effects on students' grammar understanding in speaking and listening skills.

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