

THE EFFECT OF TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION (TBI) ON THE STUDENTS' GRAMMAR COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

Grammar is considered as basic foundation in learning English and becomes one of the most pivotal language elements. Task-based instruction (TBI) is a method in English teaching dealing with grammar teaching through communicative use of language. This study attempted to examine the effect of applying TBI on students' grammar competence. This study utilized pre-experimental with one group pre-test and post-test design applied in basic program of Kampung Inggris LC. This study was carried out in five meetings namely: (1) conducting a pre-test in the first meeting; (2) giving treatments in the second, third, and fourth meetings; and (3) giving a post-test in the last meeting. The data were gathered by utilizing multiple choice grammar test, and the data analysis utilized paired sample t-test formula. The result denoted a significant distinction between pre-test and post-test with value ($t = 0.000 < p = 0.05$). Additionally, The mean scores of the students comprised 58.82 for the pre-test and 75.82 for the posttest. Therefore, TBI is effective in teaching grammar competence.

Key words: *Task-based Instruction (TBI), Grammar competence*

INTRODUCTION

Learning English as foreign language encompasses four skills namely Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening. Mastering those skills is supported by some language components such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. As stated by Long and Richard (Widodo 2006), grammar has a

pivotal role in the language skills and vocabulary in which it serves as a tool in establishing communicative tasks. Therefore, grammar is considered as basic foundation in learning English and becomes one of the most pivotal language elements. It was also stated by Takala (2016) that learning a language fundamentally means learning its grammar. Besides, as conveyed by Swan (2005), grammar emerges as a rule showing the way of joining, organizing, or changing words so that sort of meaning can be demonstrated. Grammar serves as the pillar of one's ability in terms of expressing himself or herself. If one knows how it works, she or he will be capable of monitoring the meaning and the way how people effectively utilize a language (Crystal, 2004). As pointed out by Roberts (cited in NamazianDost, Bohloulzadeh, & Pazkakh 2017), grammar signifies numerous principles or special parameters in mastering mind words and distinctive elements into a proper or correct sentence of the grammar. It provides meaning to those utilizing the language. Moreover, (Afandi, Jufrizal, Narius, 2013) asserted that grammar appears to be a set of rules helping learners have a capability in writing and talking. Having sufficient knowledge of grammar and its elements emerges as the thing a person should reach if he or she intends to be capable of comprehending or utilizing English. It is due to the fact that it truly has relevancy to its prominent skills applied in everyday communication since framing a language properly cannot be accomplished if there is no information on its grammar. Grammar should be taught to English learners since formal instruction is crucial for acquisition (White, 1987 cited in Trimasse, 2016). As stated by Savage, Bitterlin, and Price (2010), through a skill in its own right, four language skills can be developed by mastering grammar. Therefore, grammar has a crucial role in the language skills since it takes part in establishing communicative task (Long and Richard, 1987; Widodo, 2006).

Learning grammar is not easy. It is because grammar has many formulas to be memorized, therefore the students are not able to apply grammatical form particularly in communication, and the method used by the teacher just focuses on written language, so it does not support the students to use grammatical form in their real life. There are a lot of teachers thinking that students do not sense enjoyment when learning grammar due to the fact that they merely learn the construction of a sentence utilized in a language. Additionally, when giving a material on grammar, the students merely concentrate on the grammatical rules, yet when they have to write or speak English, they frequently make grammatical errors. Hence, assisting students in applying grammatical rules into communicative skills (e.g. speaking or writing) emerges as a big challenge. It is supported by (Nho, 2005, p. 191) stating that acquiring grammatical competence should be balanced by acquiring communicative competence since being capable of utilizing grammatical structures does not merely focus on applying the accurate form. One should also pay attention to the meaningful semantics and proper pragmatics. Teaching grammar should stimulate students to be capable of applying the linguistic form properly and precisely due to the fact that communicative competence involves linguistic competence (Cahyono&Widiati: 2006). Accordingly, teachers, particularly in the EFL context, are necessary to learn optional approaches in teaching grammar so that they will be capable of integrating grammar into other language skills. It is also conveyed by (Larsen Freeman in Takala 2016) in which she does not consider grammar as an area of knowledge but actually as a skill or a dynamic process whereby the students learns how to use grammar meaningfully and communicatively. The way grammar is seen in this paper is in accordance with Larsen-Freeman's vision; grammar is needed by people in concrete circumstances to convey meanings. Hence, "successful communication" emerges as the objective of teaching grammar. It can be

achieved by letting the students practice grammar in meaningful communicative contexts. It indicates that drilling grammatical structures will not suffice. In this way, they can transfer the skills learned in the classroom to everyday situations.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT), a subclass of communicative approach, serves as part of pivotal methods applied in English teaching dealing with grammar teaching through communicative use of language. A branch of communicative approaches balancing "focus on form" and "focus on meaning" is provided by TBLT. (Ellis, 2008: 7 cited in Tayyib M, 2014). In other words, precluding the learning and teaching of grammar is not part of task-based approach. In this approach, grammar is perceived as a tool to an end rather than a body of knowledge (Curriculum Development Council, 2002). TBI emerges as a language teaching method which is grounded on communicative activities and entails tasks, and learners try to accomplish those tasks in a classroom when mutual interaction is positioned at the highest level. As defined by Skehan (1996), task signifies an activity in which meaning is crucial, defining a task as an activity in which meaning is crucial, in which a problem occurs and it should be resolved, in which there is a relationship to the real life, or there is a goal that is likely to be evaluated. From the TBI viewpoint, there are two categories of tasks namely pedagogical task and target task. Pedagogical task is a specifically designed classroom in which its application is aimed at requiring the utilization of specific interactional strategies or particular kinds of language (skills, grammar, vocabulary). The example of this kind of task is depicted in a task showing that two learners are necessary to seek numerous distinctions between two pictures that look alike. The task itself is not a thing that a person could generally find in the real life. Nonetheless, valuable input to the development of a language is provided in the interactional process. Nunan (2004, p. 4)

interprets pedagogical task as a work in a classroom involving students and triggering them to comprehend, manipulate, generate, or have an interaction in the target language; in the meantime, they concentrate on their attempts to mobilize their grammatical knowledge so that meaning can be expressed. Additionally, it focuses on conveying meaning, instead of manipulating form. Real-world tasks depict real-world utilizations of language and they are probably perceived as a rehearsal for real-world tasks. Besides, this sort of task is portrayed in a role play exhibiting that students attempt to practice a job interview.

In grammar class, students are expected to achieve better through TBI. TBI encompasses pre-task, on-going task, and post-task activities explained as follow.

1. Pre-task Activities (Introduction to Topic and Task)

It gives assistance for students in comprehending the theme and purpose of the task such as brainstorming ideas, utilizing pictures, mime, or personal experiences for the topic introduction. The possible tasks the students may apply in this task are topic-based and odd-word-out games. In addition, highlighting salient words or phrases will possibly be carried out by the teacher, yet he or she will not pre-tech new structures.

2. Cycle Task

Students carry out this task in groups or pairs. They are given an opportunity to utilize whatever language they have had to show their expressions, and they are freely allowed to convey anything they would like to utter. It is associated with reading a text or listening to a recording. In the meantime, the teacher walks around and is in charge of monitoring and motivating students to enhance their communication capability in the target language. Besides, teacher assists them in formulating what they intend to convey, yet he or she will not interfere or make a correction to the form errors. It emphasies on spontaneity or exploratory talk, and it

builds self-assurance. Students' motivation can be helped by the success in pursuing the task goals. The teacher makes preparations for the next steps such as instructing the students to report succinctly to the entire class on how they completed or accomplished the tasks, including the outcome they achieved. Drafting and rehearsing what students intend to write or utter becomes the next step the students should undertake in this type of task. The teacher then gives a piece of advice for the students regarding the language, suggests phrases, and assists students in polishing or correcting their language. The teacher can suggest peer-editing or using dictionaries if the reports are in writing. In short, it emphasizes on precision, and it should be clear, organized, and proper for a public presentation. This opportunity is frequently taken by individual students to propose questions concerning particular language items. The teacher subsequently gives an instruction to several pairs to report succinctly to the entire class so that findings can be compared by the students, or eventually a survey can be begun. Occasionally, merely one or two groups will give a full report; meanwhile the others convey their comments and additional points. Taking notes is also allowed. Teacher guides and gives his or her comment on the content of the students' report. Also, rephrasing will be probably carried out by the teacher, yet overt public correction will not be given.

3. Post-task

Teacher sets some language-focused tasks which are in accordance with the texts the students read the transcripts of the recordings they hear. For instance, students are instructed to find phrases or words regarding the topics of the transcript. Then they are instructed to read the transcript, spot words having an “s” ending, and they have to convey the meaning of the “s”. They have to spot all words in the form of simple past tense. They are asked to convey or mention the words that belong to the past tense

and the words that do not belong to it. Underlining and classifying the questions in the transcript becomes the next step the students should carry out. Then, students continue, frequently in pairs. Afterwards, the teacher conveys her or his reviews on the analyses, probably writing related language up on the board in list form; in the meantime, students are allowed to take notes. The teacher carries out practice activities grounded on the language analysis on the board, or she or he can utilize the examples from the transcripts. Practice activities encompass: (1) choral repetition of the identified and classified phrases; and (2) matching the past-tense verbs (jumbled) with the subject or objects they have in the text.

Previous research about TBI was conducted by Yildiz & Senel (2017) through experimental design with two sample groups of the 8th grade students of a state school in Samsun, Turkey. To analyze the data, this research used mean, standard deviation, frequencies, percentage, ANOVA variance and paired sample T-test. The cut-off value for significance was accepted as $p < 0.05$. It denotes that TBLT significantly increases the grammar knowledge. Another study was accomplished by Thayyib M (2014) in which he investigated the contribution of TBI giving grammar review for nursing academy students through pre-experimental design. The results indicated that TBLT allowed attention to grammar by concentrating on form at some of its stages, facilitated remedial grammar activities. Additionally, TBLT developed the students' intrinsic motivation to review grammar. The last previous researcher was conducted by NamazianDost, Bohloulzadeh, & Pazkakh (2017). This research dealt with students' motivation and grammatical achievement. It was conducted in Junior high school of Ahvaz. Through test and motivation questionnaire the researcher tried to find out the students' motivation and grammatical achievement by using TBI. Independent

and paired t-test were utilized for the data analysis. The results demonstrated that the experimental group significantly indicated a better performance compared to the control group. In addition, the result of motivation questionnaire indicated a significant distinction between the experiment and control group motivations. The results suggested that TBI can be applied in English class since it can take part in developing the grammar ability.

The previous researches above deal with TBI and its relation with several particular variables. The researchers conducted them in different places and institution which have different learning environment, so the results are also not same. Besides, learning process in formal schools is different from learning process in such a course. This research and the previous researches share the same main key concept which is TBI in grammar class. The researcher is interested in conducting a research about TBLT in teaching grammar since TBLT is a part of communicative approach that can help the students to bring grammatical items into communicative interaction and also there is no previous research about TBLT which is conducted in an English course. This research aims to investigate whether students achieve better score in grammar competence after being taught through TBI or not by conducting an experimental research with the title "The Effect of Using Task-based Instruction on The Students' Grammar Competence".

Theoretically, this research is expected to validate an essential core of constructivism theory in which learners are capable of constructing their own knowledge and meaning from what they have experienced and the learning process. Practically, the result of research is hopefully useful to provide input for students, teachers, and researchers. Also, the results of the research expectantly enrich larger knowledge and positive contribution about TBI as a teaching method in teaching grammar that will be able to increase the students' achievement in grammar. At this way, this research assists teachers

in attaining a lot of information on the utilization of TBI for teaching grammar. Additionally, by applying TBI, students will be capable of developing their interest and capability in learning English. Furthermore, they will find a distinctive experience in learning English when TBI is applied.

METHOD

Experimental is defined as a way to spot the casual relationship between two factors raised by the researcher intentionally through the reduction or elimination of the distracting factors. As conveyed by Borg, W.R., Gall, M.D (cited in Latief 2017), experimental research emerges as a powerful research method applied to build cause-and-effect relationship with the involvement of numerous variables. In this study, the independent variable was TBI. Meanwhile, the dependent variable was Grammar Competence. This study utilized pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and pos-test design. It was intended to examine how TBI could affect the students' grammar competence.

Subject

The subjects of this study were the Intensive basic program of Kampung Inggris Language Center (LC) in period September 25. This batch comprised seven classes (A1-A7). Each class comprised 20-22 students, and A7 class was the subject chosen.

Treatment

This treatment of this study used TBI as the method in teaching tenses. The researcher treated the group using TBI. After administering pre-test, researcher gave treatment to the subjects. The treatment was carried out in five meetings based on syllabus of Kampung inggris LC including the implementation of pre-test and post-test.

Instrument

This study utilized grammar test as the data instrument. There were two tests, namely pre-test and post-test. The type of the test was objectively scored using multiple choice. Pre-test was carried out to examine the prior knowledge of subjects, including the significant distinction before giving treatments. Initially, the students did the test prepared by the researcher in 45 minutes. The test comprised 25 items (multiple choice about simple present, present perfect, simple past and past perfect tense). Meanwhile, the post-test was held after accomplishing all treatments. It was also applied to compare the subjects' grammar competence before and after giving the treatments. In post-test, the students were tested about grammar materials which were discussed while treatment. The test also comprised 25 items.

The reliability of the test was measured before it was given to the subjects. Latief (2017) mentioned that reliability of language assessment deals with precision of the language skill assessment result in representing the actual level of examinees. The reliability analysis used tryout test in order to examine the quality of the tests given to the subjects. The class given the tryout tests was dissimilar to the experimental group. Additionally, the reliability of tests was analyzed by utilizing split half coefficient through SPSS.

Data Analysis

This study utilized paired sample t-test for the data analysis. The data were attained from the students' pre-test and post-test. The data were analyzed by utilizing SPSS 2.1 with the significance level set at 0.5 (5%). Therefore, if the finding has 95% for being true, the theoretical hypothesis is supported by empirical finding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher showed the result of reliability analysis to examine the test quality and students' pretest score to examine the students' knowledge before conducting the treatment. The researcher utilized Guttman Split-Half Coefficient to find out the reliability scale of the test used in this study.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	15	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	15	100.0

The table denoted the information about the number of respondents. There is no blank data of respondents, so it is valid amount 100%.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.640
		N of Items	15 ^a
	Part 2	Value	.391
		N of Items	15 ^b
	Total N of Items		30
	Correlation Between Forms		.693
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length	.818	
	Unequal Length	.818	
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient		.806	

The reliability output table indicated that the result of reliability scale with Guttman split half coefficient comprised 0.806. based on the criteria of reliability in table (see appendix 2). In brief, 0.806 is reliable.

Tests of Normality

Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.139	22	.200*	.957	22	.433
Score Posttest	.216	22	.009	.879	22	.012

The table above denoted that df (degree of freedom) for the pretest and posttest accounted for 22. Since the number of sample data is less than 50, the researcher used SPSS with the Shapiro-Wilk to test the normality of data. The result indicated that significant value of posttest is 0.012 denoting that $0.012 > 0.05$. In short, the data is normally distributed.

The description of the mean score of pre-test and post-test

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pretest	58.82	22	7.601	1.621
Posttest	75.82	22	6.702	1.429

The result indicated that the mean score comprised 58.82 for the pre-test and 75.82 for the post-test. Hence, there is a distinction in result ($58.82 < 75.82$).

Additionally, whether there is a significant distinction between pre-test and post-test is described in table of paired sample t-test below.

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 pretest & posttest	22	.579	.005

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mea n	Std. Deviasi on	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pai pretest – r 1 posttest	- 17.0 00	6.612	1.410	-19.931	-14.069	- 12.0 60	21	.000

The significant value (p) was $0.000 < 0.05$. It denoted that there were significant differences between pre-test and post-test. Hence, students achieve better on Grammar after being taught by applying TBI in Kampung Inggris LC.

The result exhibited that there were significant distinctions between pre-test and post-test of students taught through TBI. The significant effect was reflected by the students' post-test scores which were better than the students' pre-test score in the use of TBI students' grammar competence.

During the TBI implementation in grammar lesson, it could be viewed that this method truly gave assistance for students in comprehending grammar effortlessly. The students could understand how to implement the task by working in group or individually. Besides, the students could also manage the rest of the task with their group. Then, the students evaluated their task by themselves that make them feel confident. Finally, they could practice and share their ideas.

Implementing TBI can help the students to build interaction as they need to communicate to complete the task given, and it also assists the students in understanding language deeply as it is used in realistic contexts. As pointed out by Ellis (2008), TBI can balance 'focus on form' and 'focus on meaning'. There are some reasons why TBI is considered as appropriate method. The environment of classroom where TBI is applied is more motivating and more fun. The students can feel as if they were not in a classroom since real-life situation that takes their attention, students' needs can be given as a task instead of using a course book. It is supported by Skehan (1996) defining a task as an activity in which meaning is crucial, in which a problem occurs and it should be resolved, in which there is a relationship to the real life, or there is a goal that is likely to be evaluated.

To the end, this method has strength and weakness. This method can help the students to work and cooperate one another in group which build bound them. When they work in a group, they are capable of displaying and producing meaningful interaction on a given task. However, the students will do the bare minimum to complete the task, avoid the target language, and use the simplest words they know if the topic of task is not well planned or not interesting for them.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, TBI can encourage the students do the task that relates to the real life both in group and individually. Also, they do not only focus on the form but also focus on meaning. The results of this study indicate a significant effect of using TBI on students' grammar competence of basic program of Kampung Inggris LC. Moreover, the mean score of students' post-test (75.82) is higher than that of the students' pre-test (58.82).

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