

Task-Based Language (TBL) Teaching: A Method to Improve Grammar Usage for Mahaganasha Students

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Abstract-Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a student-centered approach designed to enhance language proficiency through meaningful, real-world tasks. This study investigates the implementation of TBLT to improve grammar usage, particularly the past tense, in a speaking context. The research targets first-semester pharmacy department students at Mahaganasha University. A mixed-method approach is employed, incorporating quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative insights from interviews, with a sample of 30 participants. The study examines the effectiveness of TBLT in addressing grammar proficiency challenges and offers educators practical strategies for integrating task-based methodologies. Preliminary findings are anticipated to reveal significant improvements in students' ability to apply grammar in communicative contexts, contributing valuable insights to language instruction practices.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching, Grammar Proficiency, Past Tense, Language Instruction, Speaking Skills.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool for conveying thoughts, ideas, and facilitating interaction between individuals (Rabiah, 2018). This interaction, mediated through language, is known as communication. In daily interactions in Indonesia, regional languages (such as Balinese, Sasak, Batak, and others) and Indonesian, as the national language, are commonly used as means of communication.

However, with the advent of the technological era, mastering an international or second language (L2) like English has become increasingly essential for individuals to remain competitive in today's global society (Zhao, Xiao, & Zhang, 2022). Proficiency in a second

language helps students develop effective communication habits in English (Nguyen Van Huy, Nguyen Thanh Nam, & Bui Ngoc Bon, 2024).

In Indonesia, students typically begin learning English during secondary school and continue through to college (Zein, Sukyadi, Hamied, & Lengkanawati, 2020). However, the psychological and cognitive development stages of learners at these different levels significantly influence their ability to acquire the language. According to Noam Chomsky, an expert in linguistics, there is a "critical period," a neurologically determined phase during which the brain is highly receptive to language acquisition (Kuhl, 2010). This critical period ends

around the onset of puberty, after which the ability to achieve complete mastery of a language becomes significantly more challenging (Siahaan, 2022).

This implies that the most sensitive period for acquiring a foreign language occurs during early childhood to adolescence, typically from preschool (kindergarten) through junior high school. During this period, children are better equipped to absorb and master a language naturally and efficiently. Conversely, as individuals transition to senior high school and college, their ability to acquire a new language tends to diminish, largely due to cognitive and neurological changes that occur after the critical period.

The next phase in language acquisition occurs during high school and college, marking the onset of puberty, which is known as the "critical period" (Singleton & Leśniewska, 2021). During this time, students continue to study English in preparation for competing in the job market or in the global arena. Proficiency in English is crucial, as it enhances students' self-confidence and self-image.

For students living in Bali, mastering English is especially important, as Bali is a renowned international tourism destination frequently visited by foreign tourists. The demand for international services in areas such as hotel accommodations, transportation, restaurants, healthcare, pharmacy, and other industries continues to grow. As a result, students entering the workforce must be well-prepared, particularly in terms of English proficiency.

One field of study in high school that requires strong English skills is pharmacy. In the pharmaceutical field, English plays a vital role in both academic and non-academic contexts. Academically, English is the primary language for scientific publications, international collaborations, and advancements in pharmaceutical technology. A strong command of English enables pharmacy students to access the latest research, engage in global communication with colleagues, and stay informed about new developments in medical procedures.

In non-academic settings, English serves as an international language of communication, facilitating interactions with tourists visiting Bali and providing a valuable skill in the workplace.

English encompasses four essential aspects to learn: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Mastering all these areas requires guidance on

proper grammar to ensure the effectiveness and correct English application (Sadiku, 2015). Proper and effective English is beneficial to enhance the students' confidence in communication. While the linguistic perspective, grammar involves "studying language aspects related to word forms and structure (morphology), the arrangement of words in typical phrases and sentences (syntax), as well as sound patterns (phonology) and word meanings (semantics)" (Ogawa, Niikuni, & Wada, 2020). Additionally, grammar should be understood as "a kind of framework for generating sentences in a language." According to Noam Chomsky, grammar is a system of rules underlying the structure and use of language in the human mind (Barman, 2014). Chomsky introduced this concept within his theory of generative linguistics, emphasizing that grammar is a part of linguistic competence, the intuitive knowledge native speakers have about their language. Furthermore, Chomsky differentiates between competence (internal language ability) and performance (actual language use in real situations). Grammar encompasses rules that enable individuals to generate and understand an unlimited number of sentences, including those they have never encountered before.

Teaching grammar, according to modern linguistics, emphasizes a more contextual, communicative, and comprehension-based approach compared to traditional prescriptive methods. Teaching grammar requires an appropriate method with the reason that the students often feel uncertain about the correctness of their language, make it challenging for the teachers to instruct and assess accurately (ris 9). Additionally, students' declining interest in learning English presents an extra challenge for lecturers to create a comfortable learning environment that alleviates boredom.

The discussion about grammar indicates that every language has their own pattern and every grammar has its own role. It differs from a language to another and from one user to another. For those who learn about other language must pay attention to the grammar therefore the language that are used will be correct and effective. However, from a linguistic point of view grammar in all languages has the same in terms of complexity and they all share the same universal components. Even though those language would differ in the grammatical structure or the arrangement of words, yet its role remains imperative and instrumental in all

languages. One's attitude towards grammar lessons is deeply influenced by the way of how the teacher creates amusing techniques and activities to make grammar learning become favourite activities in the class.

Naturally, grammar involved in many dimensions and varies according to the situation and context in which it is used. It is based on skill of learning language such as speaking, listening, writing and reading. When the grammar is composed together with some words and word groups that make up sentences in the way they can be accurately put in a context. The reality that a native speaker can subconsciously utter a correct grammar sentence in their languages without deep thinking or formal guidance and they do not even know how to explain why or argue about some of its irregularities without having learnt them. However, speaking and listening are a kind of automatic for the natives, in which on the other hand become a very hard effort for the learner of second language to master.

In the writing and reading processes, grammar also has a very important part (Aprizani, Islamiah, & Furyanto, 2018). An efficient and effective writing professionally measured by how well one applies the grammar in every sentence. That would be kindly possible for the writer to articulate their intention and make it understandable for the reader. Grammar carries a way on how a writer would convey the ideas of past tense or present activities through the role of the grammar. The same situation occurs on the reading. Without understanding grammar well a confusion or doubt on the correct pattern will extremely disturb the process in reading another foreign language. If the reader has to go back and re-read a sentence several times because they are not quite sure what it means, it spoils their reading experience and they are quite likely to misunderstand the point or even to give up and not read any further. Mastering grammar definitely guides us to understand what makes sentences and paragraphs clear and interesting. The sentence becomes completely eligible and understandable.

Grammar is considered to be a mandatory part of language for effective communication. Its role in the communication exists in organizing words, clauses and phrases into meaningful sentences. The existence of these sentences results in a conversation. To this reason, the importance of grammar results that it is possible for each person to convey what they want to and can be understood by the other. Even though

grammar serves as a mechanism against ambiguity and confusion, grammar is lacking in a conversation, there is a good chance for misunderstanding and disagreement. That would be very weird that going to a foreign country and doing conversation and we always open the Google Translate or Chat GPT to express our thoughts for communication to the native person. This condition will open a funny thing or even dangerous.

Grammar in English language consists of many details and classes of words. These are attributes of the words and sentences. Words, in this case mentioned as vocabulary, will accommodate someone's utterance to some ideas and thoughts which cloud the mind. There are two things which enrich the sentences created are the collection of the speaker's vocabulary and the ability of interpretation and acceptance of the listener. For example, the stranger who travels to other countries without sufficient language of the visited country will communicate with the sense language, or body language or they will buy a small dictionary or occupy themselves with Google Translate or another translation tool. In that tool they will learn about simple grammar or utter a simple ready conversation set. This tool will only be useful for two or three weeks and after that they will be fluent in the new language or forget it all. This situation may show that, some instruction with simple grammar and some basic vocabularies would probably help them to express what they want without any consideration about the correct grammar and structure, but the meaning acceptance by the other person.

In terms of teaching and learning process, students prefer to do activities where they get to converse and interact to each other. The reason behind this case according to the teachers is the boring and exhausting lesson atmosphere for the students. Paper work and formed tasks are highly required as repetition exercises in order to form the grammar pattern in the student's mind. The more they do the exercises the more they remember the rule of grammar. In the practice some teachers also attribute this attitude to the way some teachers explain the lesson. They keep following the method of teaching grammar that way which is potentially worsens the students' motivation and mind set about how boring and difficult learning grammar is. This can decrease students' attention and desire to learn grammar.

In learning grammar, it was found that many students found a critical obstacle in practicing it in a class lesson conversation.

Basically, all students have taught about the forms and how to apply grammar on the paper exercises. Frequently, they get very high score in doing the paper exercise and they know the function well. Yet, at the moment of the grammar should be practiced in the sentence the students sadly fail and misuse the rule. Miss function and unobvious situation in using the grammar are greatly become the factor or this condition and in addition, the service of the teacher towards the grammar teaching also impacted this problem. Most of English teacher are grammar oriented. Focussing on the teaching of rules and its application theoretically by paper work and forget about teaching students how and when to use them in live is due to the fact that students didn't have enough training in their previous years of high school. Establishing a foundation about grammar in the earlier study is supposed to do. Without firm foundation, students cannot assimilate last year grammar.

The above illustration has shown how to implementing varied and appropriate English teaching methods impact great result to the students. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been chosen as the most suitable method to address teachers' challenges in teaching grammar to students. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach focused on communicative tasks relevant and meaningful to learners. This approach emphasizes using language in real situations where learners must use the language to complete specific tasks (ris 10). The point of interest of the researcher is in conducting research on the application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to improve grammar usage among Pharmacy students at Mahaganesha School of Pharmacy in Denpasar.

Statement Of The Problem

1. What is the role of grammar in students' speaking learning?
2. What is the impact of grammar learning using the TBLT method on pharmacy students at Mahaganesha School of Pharmacy in Denpasar?

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this research is to explore in greater depth the role of grammar in students' speaking learning. How the students implement the grammar in their natural conversation and how much mistakes they produce during the process. Additionally, this

study focuses on examining the impact of grammar learning using the TBLT method on pharmacy students at Mahaganesha School of Pharmacy in Denpasar. This study is also intended to see how is the impact of the TBLT method in improving the students' ability in grammar practice during their conversation....

II. METHODS

Research Location

This research was conducted at Sekolah Tinggi Farmasi Mahaganesha, a college located in the center of Denpasar. The institution offers two programs: a diploma in pharmacy (D1) and a bachelor's degree in pharmacy (S1). It is situated at Jalan Tukad Barito Timur No. 57, Renon, Denj



Picture 1. Sekolah Tinggi Farmasi Mahaganesha's Location

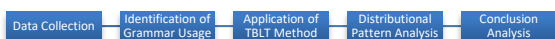
Data Source

To gain the data this research applied a field study. The data in this study were obtained through a qualitative descriptive method, with the research findings presented in the form of analysis and description. This research was conducted from mid-October to early December 2023. Data were collected through several stages and adjusted according to the required sample size. The researcher observed one class at the Mahaganesha School of Pharmacy in Denpasar, consisting of 49 students. These students come from various regions, such as East Nusa Tenggara, Lombok, or West Bali (Tabanan and Negara).

Data Analysis

This study is analysed using the distributional analysis method. The Distributional Analysis Method is a linguistic analytical approach that examines language data internally, focusing on the distribution of linguistic elements themselves. This method does not rely on meaning or external context but purely

on the relationships and patterns among elements within the language. It is commonly employed to study the grammatical structure of a language, such as morphological, syntactic, or phonological patterns. Below is the step of the analysis method.



Picture 2. Operational Steps of the Distributional Analysis Method Diagram

Research Procedure

This research includes a procedure to analyse students’ grammar skills in speaking, consisting of 2 rounds. Data recording is conducted twice, in the first and third rounds. In the second round, training and evaluation of the training are conducted; however, the results are not used as data. In the first round, students practice speaking on a past-related topic, with a time limit of 15 minutes. This speaking practice is monitored and recorded to obtain accurate results. The notes from the first round provide as baseline results before the students receive grammar training. The notes showed the real result of the students’ ability in the grammar. The second round produces some data which reflecting the students’ performance after receiving the grammar training. After recording the data for the second time they are converted into a transcription in order to get clear data. The steps taken are as follows:

Round 1

1. Divide students into groups of three.
2. Ask students to record a conversation about their high school experiences for 15 minutes.
3. Transcript the recorded conversation into a text form.
4. Analyse the students’ conversation results.

Round 2

1. Conduct a training on grammar for the students.
2. Evaluate grammar ability of the students after the training.

Round 3

1. Conduct a post-training conversation test by recording and transcript Ing students’ conversations.
2. Re-analyse the students’ conversation results.

3. Summarize the overall results from the first and second rounds.

Table 1. Range of the score

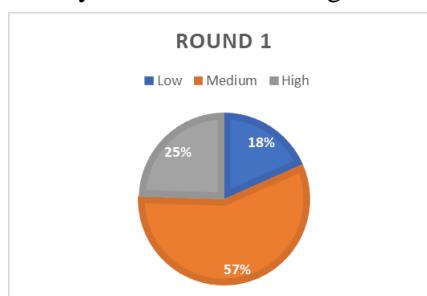
SCORE	
Low	0-50
Medium	51-75
High	76-90

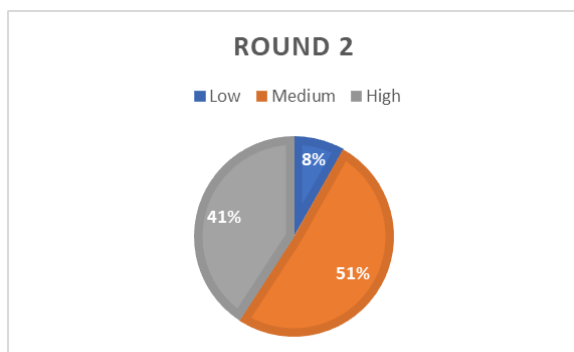
III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Mahaganesha School of Pharmacy is a college located in the center of Denpasar, Bali. The institution is home to approximately 200 students. However, for the first semester, only 49 students are enrolled in English language courses. These first-semester students come from a diverse range of backgrounds, having attended various high schools and vocational schools from different regions, including NTB, NTT, and several districts outside Denpasar in Bali, such as Negara, Tabanan, and Karangasem.

The diversity in the students’ backgrounds is a crucial factor to consider in this study, as the need for and level of English proficiency varies by region. For example, regions such as Badung and Denpasar, which are closely linked to the tourism industry, have a higher demand for English proficiency. In contrast, regions like NTT may have lower urgency in mastering English. This regional disparity in English proficiency directly influences the patterns of English language teaching in each area, which in turn impacts the students’ learning outcomes. Consequently, it is essential for English instructors to align their teaching methods with the varying levels of proficiency among students to ensure effective learning.

This study aims to illustrate how the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) for teaching grammar can lead to significant improvements in students’ abilities. By applying a more practical, task-oriented approach, the TBLT method addresses the varied needs of students with different language proficiencies, offering a more tailored and effective way to enhance their English skills.





Picture 3. Diagram Result

The students' performance in grammar is illustrated in the following diagrams. In the initial round of trials, or pre-training assessments, the results revealed that 9 students scored at a low level, 28 students scored at a moderate level, and 12 students achieved high scores. These findings indicate that a significant number of students require additional training and focused attention to improve their grammar skills, particularly in the context of English speaking.

Following the first trial, the researcher conducted a training program aimed at improving students' vocabulary recall and reinforcing their understanding of past tense grammar for use in speaking practice. The training was carried out in two rounds. In the final phase of the training, students were asked to participate in a second round of trials, or post-training assessments.

After completing the training, the results demonstrated a noticeable improvement. The number of students achieving high scores increased from 12 to 20, indicating that 8 students showed significant progress. Additionally, the number of students scoring at a moderate level decreased slightly from 28 to 25, while the number of students with low scores dropped from 9 to 4. The reduction in low scores and the increase in high scores suggest that the training method effectively enhanced the students' grammar skills, providing strong evidence of its positive impact on their learning outcomes.

To address the first issue of this research, it was found that mastering proper grammar in English speaking activities in stills confidence in students, reinforcing their belief in their ability to use English effectively, especially in the past tense. This improvement boosts students' confidence, allowing them to produce a variety of sentences and engage in more constructive conversations. Observations made by the researcher also indicate that students became more enthusiastic about participating in English

classes. They started preparing thoroughly before classes, showing a more positive attitude and encouraging their peers. This positive atmosphere indirectly motivates students who face challenges with grammar, creating a supportive learning environment.

The second issue is illustrated by the significant differences observed between the results of rounds 1 and 2. Prior to the study, grammar instruction was delivered through conventional methods, where students primarily learned grammar by reading tables, memorizing formulas, and committing past tense vocabulary changes to memory. Unfortunately, this approach lacked opportunities for practice through free conversation, leading to boredom and a sense of irrelevance to the students' daily lives. Negative attitudes developed as students struggled to memorize word patterns, and many did not see the practical value of learning the past tense. This lack of engagement fostered apathy, making it difficult for students to grasp new concepts.

However, through the implementation of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) method, grammar instruction was revitalized. Clear guidelines were provided, tasks were assigned within set time frames, and regular feedback was offered to facilitate sentence revision. Open discussions were encouraged to help students engage more deeply with the material. Surprisingly, students exhibited a marked shift in their attitudes toward learning. They responded positively to the TBLT approach, which made grammar lessons more enjoyable and interactive. This not only enhanced students' engagement but also created a positive environment for the instructors conducting the research, demonstrating the effectiveness of this teaching method.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving students' grammar, particularly in using the past tense. Pre- and post-assessment data indicate a significant reduction in low scores and an increase in high scores, reflecting the method's impact. TBLT fosters a more engaging and interactive learning environment, enabling students to apply grammar rules in meaningful communication tasks.

The findings suggest that TBLT is a practical approach for addressing grammar challenges, as it emphasizes active participation, contextualized learning, and feedback. For

educators, selecting appropriate tasks and creating an engaging classroom atmosphere are critical to success. Moreover, regular practice and student motivation play a crucial role in overcoming language barriers.

Future research could explore the application of TBLT in different linguistic contexts, its impact on other language skills, and its long-term effectiveness. The study underscores the need for innovative teaching methods that make grammar instruction relevant and enjoyable, promoting better language acquisition outcomes.

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