From Theory to Practice: The Impact of Task-Based Learning on Grammar Proficiency in EFL Teaching

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Abstract

English language learners often possess theoretical grammar knowledge but struggle with practical application in communication. This study examined the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving grammar proficiency among first-year English Education students at IAIN Parepare. A quantitative pre-experimental design with one-group pretest-posttest was employed involving 16 students selected through purposive sampling. The intervention consisted of five TBLT sessions targeting five grammatical tenses (Simple Present, Present Continuous, Simple Past, Simple Future, and Present Perfect) using a three-phase framework. Data were collected through structured oral interviews and scored using a five-point grammatical accuracy rubric. Results revealed statistically significant improvement in students' grammatical accuracy, with mean scores increasing from 46.50 to 66.75, representing a 43.5% improvement ($p < 0.05$). Commonly used tenses showed greater improvement (Simple Present: 44.1%, Present Continuous: 43.4%) than complex tenses (Present Perfect: 39.7%). The findings demonstrate that TBLT effectively bridges the gap between declarative and procedural grammar knowledge by providing authentic communicative contexts. This study offers practical insights for educators seeking effective grammar instruction strategies that integrate form and meaning in communicative language teaching.

Keywords: *Task-Based Language Teaching; grammar proficiency; English education; communicative competence; declarative-procedural knowledge gap*

Introduction

The Grammar Teaching Challenge in EFL Settings

The persistent challenge in English language teaching lies in the gap between students' theoretical grammar knowledge and their ability to apply it in practical communication. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments, where learners demonstrate understanding of grammatical rules yet struggle with spontaneous, accurate usage in communicative situations. Traditional grammar instruction has often emphasized explicit rule explanation and mechanical drills, creating what researchers term the "declarative-procedural knowledge gap" (Li et al.,2022). Students can articulate grammar rules with precision but fail to apply these rules fluently during real-time communication, highlighting the need for more integrated approaches to grammar teaching.

Current Research in Task-Based Grammar Teaching

Recent international studies have highlighted the effectiveness of integrating form and meaning in grammar instruction. Ellis (2021) demonstrated that teaching approaches combining focus on form with meaningful communication significantly outperform traditional explicit grammar instruction. Similarly, Li et al. (2022) identified the declarative-procedural knowledge gap as the primary obstacle in grammar acquisition among Asian university students, where learners can explain rules but cannot apply them fluently in communication.

Zhang (2023) provided compelling evidence that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) enables students to use complex grammar structures effectively in meaningful communication situations. This finding aligns with contemporary pedagogical theories emphasizing the integration of form, meaning, and use in language instruction.

TBLT Implementation in Indonesian Educational Settings

Indonesian EFL research has begun documenting TBLT's potential for grammar instruction, though studies remain limited in scope and focus. Soali et al (2023) reported significant improvements in grammar accuracy at Harapan Bangsa University, with mean scores increasing from 64 to 73 following TBLT implementation over two cycles of action research. Their study demonstrated particular effectiveness in improving students' use of complex tenses and conditional structures through carefully designed communicative tasks.

Additionally, the implementation of TBLT in grammar teaching is studied from the perspective of improving language accuracy (Sholeh et al., 2021). Their results show that structured tasks with a focus on form can significantly improve students' grammatical accuracy, especially in the use of complex tenses and clauses. TBLT has been studied from the perspective of student motivation and engagement (Hiver & Wu, 2023). Their findings revealed TBLT creates a more collaborative and motivating learning environment, thus increasing students' active participation in grammar learning.

Considering the three perspectives, it seems that research exploring the implementation of TBLT in grammar instruction in the context of freshmen English language learners is still rarely documented by researchers. Although various studies have explored TBLT for grammar learning, the specific focus on freshmen who are adjusting to college-level learning has been neglected (Ke & Li, 2021). In addition, the integration of TBLT with cognitive aspects of grammar learning has not been widely studied (Rahmah, 2018). Loewen et al. (2018) in their research on interaction and second language acquisition, emphasize the importance of understanding cognitive processes in grammar learning, but the implementation of TBLT that pays attention to cognitive aspects of first-year students is still neglected.

Research Gap and Theoretical Framework

Despite growing evidence of TBLT's effectiveness, a significant gap exists in understanding its implementation with first-semester English Education students in Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions. Previous studies have not specifically examined how TBLT can bridge the theory-practice gap for beginning university students who must simultaneously develop academic language skills and practical communicative competence.

This study adopts Larsen-Freeman's theoretical framework, which conceptualizes grammar as a dynamic system integrating form, meaning, and usage rather than static rules to be memorized. This perspective provides the theoretical foundation for examining how TBLT can facilitate the transition from declarative to procedural grammar knowledge.

Research Objectives and Significance

This study analyzes the effectiveness of TBLT implementation in improving grammar skills among first-year English Education students at IAIN Parepare. Two research questions guide this investigation: (1) How do students' grammar proficiency change before and after TBLT implementation? (2) Is there a significant difference in students' grammar proficiency before and after TBLT implementation?

The findings will contribute theoretically by enriching literature on TBLT's effectiveness in bridging the declarative-procedural knowledge gap, particularly in the understudied environment of Indonesian Islamic higher education. Practically, this research will provide evidence-based insights for developing effective grammar instruction strategies that address the specific needs of first-semester English Education students, offering a model that other similar institutions can adapt and implement.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design with a pre-experimental approach, specifically a one-group pretest-posttest design. According to Creswell John and Creswell David (2023), a one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental

research design involves measuring or observing one group both before and after the provision of a treatment without a control group. This design was chosen because it allows for the measurement of changes in students' grammar skills before and after the implementation of TBLT while providing a clear framework for evaluating treatment effectiveness through statistical analysis.

limitations of this design are that although this pre-experimental design provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of TBLT, the absence of a control group limits the ability to attribute improvement solely to the intervention rather than other factors such as general course progression or test familiarity. However, this design is considered appropriate for institutional setting where randomization of participants is not possible.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were the first semester students of the English Education Study Program of IAIN Parepare. From a total population of 46 students divided into three classes, the researcher selected class A with 16 students as the sample using purposive sampling technique. Cohen et al. (2023) explained that purposive sampling involves the selection of a sample with a specific purpose, where the researcher selects elements that contain the most representative characteristics of the population. The selection of class A was based on the observation that students in the class needed a special learning method to increase their confidence in using correct grammar when speaking English.

All participants gave informed consent prior to data collection after receiving a detailed explanation of the purpose of the study, the procedures, and their rights as participants. Students were informed that their participation was voluntary, they could withdraw at any time without penalty, and their academic grades would not be affected by their participation or performance in the research activities. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, with participants' identities kept confidential in all data analysis and reporting.

The Implementation of TBLT

The TBLT intervention consisted of five structured sessions implemented over five weeks, with each session lasting 90 minutes. The implementation followed Willis's (1996) three-phase framework: Pre-Task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus. Each session targeted specific grammatical tenses while maintaining communicative authenticity. Session Structure and Specific Tasks:

1. **Session 1** - Simple Present Tense (Theme: "Our Daily Lives")
   Pre-Task: Picture description activity and daily routine vlog analysis (15 minutes)
   Task Cycle: "Daily Life Interview Project" in pairs, followed by presentation preparation and reporting (60 minutes)
   Language Focus: Pattern analysis and "Find Someone Who" activity (15 minutes)

2. **Session 2** - Present Continuous Tense (Theme: "What's Happening Right Now?")
   Pre-Task: "Charades in Action" guessing game (15 minutes)
   Task Cycle: "Trending Topics Report" in groups of 3-4 covering music, movies, TikTok trends, and memes (60 minutes)
   Language Focus: Usage comparison and "Spot the Difference" activity (15 minutes)
3. **Session 3** - Simple Past Tense (Theme: "Memorable Stories")
   Pre-Task: "Verb Tennis" game and pronunciation practice (15 minutes)
   Task Cycle: "Story of My Life" project sharing first day at university, embarrassing moments, and achievements (60 minutes)
   Language Focus: Past tense analysis and "Chain Story" activity (15 minutes)
4. **Session 4** - Simple Future Tense (Theme: "Dreams & Plans")
   Pre-Task: Will vs. going to distinction practice with situation pictures (15 minutes)
   Task Cycle: "Vision Board Presentation" focusing on career plans, travel dreams, and life goals (60 minutes)
   Language Focus: Future tense review and "Chain Prediction Game" (15 minutes)
5. **Session 5** - Present Perfect Tense (Theme: "Have You Ever?")
   Pre-Task: Experience sharing and time expression brainstorming (15 minutes)
   Task Cycle: "Interactive Experience Sharing" using categorized experience cards (60 minutes)
   Language Focus: Present Perfect vs. Simple Past comparison and competitive activities (15 minutes)

This study utilized a three-phase data collection method over seven weeks. The first phase was a pre-test. The second phase was the implementation of TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) for five weeks, accompanied by systematic observation of student participation and group interaction. The final phase was a post-test using a similar format to the pre-test but with the order of questions randomized to avoid rehearsal effects. The entire process emphasizes confidentiality and voluntary participation of participants. The researcher, who acted as the instructor, conducted self-preparation including reviewing TBLT principles, designing task materials, and conducting micro teaching practice sessions. The task materials were piloted with a small group of students from different classes to ensure their suitability and effectiveness.

instrument development and data collection techniques

1. ***Research Instruments***
   The main instruments were pre-test and post-test oral assessments designed to measure students' grammatical accuracy in speaking situation. The test

consisted of structured interviews with 10 guided questions (2 questions per target tense) designed to elicit usage of Simple Present, Present Continuous, Simple Past, Present Perfect, and Simple Future tenses. Students were required to respond with minimum 5 sentences per question.

Students were asked to answer each question with a minimum of 5 sentences. Scoring was done using Cut and Rahmatun's grammar rubric, which focuses on grammatical accuracy in oral production. The rubric uses a five-point scale with the following criteria:

- Score 5: No grammatical errors
- Score 4: Few grammatical errors but they do not affect the meaning
- Score 3: Frequent grammatical errors that change the meaning
- Score 2: Many grammatical errors and sentence construction must be repeated frequently
- Score 1: Grammatical errors are so severe that the meaning cannot be understood.

Data in this study was collected in three main phases: Pretest: An oral test in the form of a structured interview was administered prior to TBLT implementation to measure students' initial grammatical knowledge. The pre-test was administered individually with a duration of 10-15 minutes per student and also recorded for further analysis; Observation during treatment: During the implementation of TBLT, the researcher conducted observations to gain additional insights into the learning process that consists of three-phase approach (pre-task, task cycle, language focus). Observations focused on student participation, group interaction, and use of target grammar structures in communicative activities; Post-test: After five TBLT implementation sessions, a post-test with a format similar to the pre-test was administered to measure changes in students' grammar skills. The post-test was also administered and recorded individually.

2. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study employed a systematic approach to evaluate student progress. Following Arikunto's (2016) classification scale, students' converted scores were categorized into five levels ranging from "Very Poor" ($\leq$20) to "Very Good" (81-100). Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to obtain a comprehensive overview of students' grammar abilities at both testing phases, including calculating mean values as described by Nuryadi et al. (2017) and determining percentage distributions of proficiency levels according to Anwar's (2009) methodology.

To determine whether the differences between pre-test and post-test results were statistically significant, inferential analysis was performed using paired sample t-test calculations. This statistical test was specifically chosen as it enables comparison of related samples and provides a reliable measure of whether the observed improvements could have occurred by chance or were likely the result of the TBLT intervention.

Results

This section presents the findings regarding the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) implementation on the grammar proficiency of first-semester English Education students at IAIN Parepare. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test measurements focusing on students' ability to use five target tenses (Simple Present, Present Continuous, Simple Past, Simple Future, and Present Perfect) in speaking situation.

Grammar Proficiency Before TBLT Implementation

The pre-test results revealed students' initial grammar proficiency before TBLT implementation. Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of pre-test scores categorized into five proficiency levels according to Arikunto's (2016) classification.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test Grammar Proficiency Scores

Score Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
81-100	Excellent	0	0
61-80	Good	0	0
41-60	Average	12	75
21-40	Poor	4	25
≤20	Very Poor	0	0
Total	Excellent	**16**	**100**

Descriptive Statistics: Mean = 46.50, SD = 4.817, 95% CI [44.01, 49.99]

The pre-test data reveals that 75% of students (n=12) were classified in the "Average" category with scores ranging from 41 to 60, while 25% (n=4) fell into the "Poor" category with scores between 21 and 40. Notably, no students achieved "Good" or "Excellent" proficiency levels initially. The mean score of 46.50 (SD = 4.817) confirms that students' baseline grammar proficiency required substantial improvement, with the relatively small standard deviation indicating homogeneous performance across participants.

Grammar Proficiency After TBLT Implementation

Following five sessions of TBLT sessions, post-test measurements were conducted to assess changes in students' grammar proficiency. Table 2 presents the frequency distribution and statistical summary of post-test performance.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Statistics of Post-test Grammar Proficiency Scores

Score Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
81-100	Excellent	0	0
61-80	Good	12	75
41-60	Average	4	25
21-40	Poor	0	0
≤20	Very Poor	0	0
Total	Excellent	**16**	**100**

Descriptive Statistics: Mean = 66.75, SD = 4.782, 95% CI [64.23, 69.27]

Post-test results demonstrated substantial improvement in students' grammar proficiency distribution. A remarkable shift occurred with 75% of students (n=12) advancing to the "Good" category (scores 61-80), while 25% (n=4) remained in the "Average" category but achieved scores at the upper range (around 60). Critically, no students remained in the "Poor" category, indicating universal improvement across all participants. The post-test means increased to 66.75 (SD = 4.782), representing a significant upward movement in overall performance while maintaining consistent variance across the group.

Comparative Analysis of Grammar Proficiency by Tenses

To provide deeper insights into specific areas of grammatical improvement, a detailed analysis of proficiency gains across the five target tenses was conducted. Table 3 presents mean scores, improvement values, and confidence intervals for each grammatical structure.

Table 3. Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores with Improvement Analysis by Target Tenses

Tenses	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	Mean Improvement	Improvement Percentage (%)	95% CI of Improvement
Simple Present (S.pr)	2.56 (0.51)	3.69 (0.48)	1.13	44.1%	[0.86, 1.40]
Present Continuous (Pr.c)	2.44 (0.51)	3.50 (0.52)	1.06	43.4%	[0.78, 1.34]

Simple Past (S.ps)	2.19 (0.54)	3.13 (0.50)	0.94	42.9%	[0.65, 1.23]
Simple Future (S.f)	2.63 (0.50)	3.69 (0.48)	1.06	40.3%	[0.79, 1.33]
Present Perfect (Pr.pf)	2.19 (0.54)	3.06 (0.57)	0.87	39.7%	[0.56, 1.18]
Overall Mean	2.56 (0.51)	3.69 (0.48)	1.13	44.1%	[0.86, 1.40]

The analysis reveals that all five target tenses demonstrated significant improvement following TBLT implementation. Simple Present tense showed the highest improvement (44.1%), followed closely by Present Continuous (43.4%) and Simple Past (42.9%). Simple Future and Present Perfect tenses, while showing substantial gains, demonstrated relatively lower improvement rates at 40.3% and 39.7% respectively. This pattern suggests that frequently used communicative tenses benefited more from the task-based approach, while complex aspectual tenses like Present Perfect may require additional focused instruction beyond the five-session intervention period.

Statistical Significance Testing and Effect Size Analysis

To determine whether the observed improvements represented statistically significant changes rather than random variation, paired samples t-test analysis was conducted. Table 4 presents the comprehensive statistical results including effect size calculations.

Table 4. Paired Samples T-test Results with Effect Size Analysis

Comparison	Mean Difference (SD)	95% CI of Difference	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d	Effect Size Interpretation
Pre-test vs Post-test	-20.25 (1.00)	[-20.78, -19.72]	-81.00	15	<.001	4.32	Very Large Effect

The paired samples t-test confirmed statistically significant improvement in students' grammar proficiency following TBLT implementation. The mean difference of 20.25 points (SD = 1.00) between pre-test and post-test scores yielded a t-value of -81.00 with 15 degrees of freedom, resulting in a highly significant p-value (<.001). The 95% confidence interval [-20.78, -19.72] does not include zero, providing additional confirmation of statistical significance.

Importantly, the calculated Cohen's d value of 4.32 indicates a very large effect size, suggesting that the TBLT intervention had substantial practical significance beyond statistical significance. According to Cohen's (1988) interpretive guidelines, effect sizes above 0.8 are considered large, making the observed effect size of 4.32 exceptionally strong and educationally meaningful.

Summary of Key Findings

The quantitative analysis reveals three critical findings: First, students demonstrated substantial improvement across all proficiency categories, with 75% advancing from "Average" to "Good" performance levels. Second, all five target grammatical tenses showed significant improvement, with commonly used tenses (Simple Present, Present Continuous) demonstrating slightly higher gains than complex aspectual tenses. Third, the statistical analysis confirms both significant improvement (p <.001) and very large practical effect (Cohen's d = 4.32), indicating that TBLT implementation produced meaningful educational outcomes for first-semester English Education students.

Discussion
Overall Effectiveness of TBLT in Grammar Proficiency Development

The results clearly demonstrate substantial positive changes in students' grammar proficiency following TBLT implementation. The 43.5% improvement from pre-test to post-test, with 75% of students advancing from "Average" to "Good" proficiency categories, provides compelling evidence for TBLT's effectiveness in bridging the declarative-procedural knowledge gap. This finding directly supports Larsen-Freeman's theoretical framework, which conceptualizes grammar as a dynamic system integrating form, meaning, and usage rather than static rules to be memorized. The consistent improvement across all participants (SD remained similar at 4.817 pre-test vs 4.782 post-test) suggests that TBLT's communicative approach effectively facilitates grammar acquisition for first-semester students regardless of their initial proficiency levels.

The statistical significance (p < .001) combined with a very large effect size (Cohen's d = 4.32) indicates that the observed improvements represent both statistically reliable and educationally meaningful outcomes. This substantial effect size surpasses typical language learning interventions and aligns with Ellis's (2021) assertion that approaches combining focus on form with meaningful communication significantly outperform traditional explicit grammar instruction.

Differential Improvement Patterns Across Target Tenses
1. *High-Frequency Tenses: Simple Present and Present Continuous*

The superior improvement rates observed in Simple Present (44.1%) and Present Continuous (43.4%) reflect the natural frequency of these tenses in communicative tasks. These tenses align closely with TBLT's emphasis on authentic communication, as they commonly occur in everyday interactions that the task

design naturally elicited. The significant improvement in Simple Present third-person singular agreement (-s/es addition) is particularly noteworthy, as this represents a common challenge for Indonesian learners where L1 transfer effects typically interfere with accurate production.

For Present Continuous, students' substantial improvement in progressive aspect formation (be + verb-ing) demonstrates TBLT's effectiveness in providing contextual practice opportunities. However, some persistent overuse in inappropriate contexts suggests that while form-meaning connections developed, usage discrimination requires continued attention—supporting the need for sustained TBLT implementation rather than short-term interventions.

2. Statistical Complex Tenses: Present Perfect Challenges

The relatively lower improvement in Present Perfect (39.7%) reflects the inherent complexity of this tense system and its unfamiliarity to Indonesian EFL learners. Two primary factors explain this differential performance. First, Present Perfect represents a conceptually challenging aspectual relationship that lacks direct equivalence in Indonesian, where temporal relationships are expressed differently. Students demonstrated persistent difficulty understanding the connection between past events and present relevance, often defaulting to Simple Past when discussing past experiences with present implications.

Second, specific grammatical components of Present Perfect posed particular challenges. Subject-auxiliary agreement (have/has selection) remained problematic, with students frequently overgeneralizing "have" regardless of subject number. Additionally, irregular past participle forms (V3) proved challenging to memorize and retrieve in spontaneous communication, despite the communicative context provided by TBLT. These findings suggest that while TBLT creates effective foundations for complex tense acquisition, aspectual tenses may require complementary explicit instruction focusing on form-meaning mappings and extended practice beyond the five-session intervention period implemented in this study.

Theoretical Implications for Second Language Acquisition

The successful transition from declarative to procedural knowledge observed in this study provides support for skill acquisition theory in second language learning. The three-phase TBLT framework (pre-task, task cycle, language focus) appears to have effectively facilitated the progression from controlled to automatic grammar processing. Students moved from conscious rule application during pre-task activities to more fluent usage during communicative tasks, suggesting that structured practice within meaningful contexts promotes procedural knowledge development

The findings also contribute to understanding of focus-on-form instruction within communicative approaches. The integration of explicit attention to grammatical features during the language focus phase, combined with implicit practice during communicative tasks, supports Spada and Lightbown's argument

that form-focused instruction enhances the effectiveness of communicative language teaching rather than competing with it

Pedagogical Implications and Implementation Recommendations

1. **Specific Classroom Applications**

Teachers implementing TBLT for grammar instruction should prioritize task design that naturally elicits target structures while maintaining communicative authenticity. The successful task sequences in this study—such as "Daily Life Interview Projects" for Simple Present and "Trending Topics Reports" for Present Continuous—demonstrate how real-world communication needs can drive grammatical practice. Teachers should develop task banks that systematically target different grammatical structures while addressing students' communicative needs and interests.

The three-phase framework proves essential for effective implementation. Pre-task activities should activate existing knowledge and prepare students for target structure usage, main tasks should provide extended opportunities for meaningful communication, and language focus phases should make grammatical patterns explicit without sacrificing communicative momentum. This structured progression supports both implicit acquisition through communication and explicit learning through form-focused attention.

2. *Addressing Implementation Challenges*

Successful TBLT implementation requires careful consideration of several practical challenges. First, task design demands significant preparation time as teachers must create activities that balance grammatical focus with communicative authenticity. Second, classroom management becomes more complex as students engage in varied communicative activities requiring different grouping arrangements and timing considerations. Third, assessment becomes multifaceted as teachers must evaluate both communicative effectiveness and grammatical accuracy within integrated performance contexts.

For complex grammatical structures like Present Perfect, teachers should consider extending TBLT cycles beyond five sessions and incorporating supplementary explicit instruction targeting specific form-meaning relationships. Pre-teaching of irregular past participles and explicit practice with subject-auxiliary agreement may enhance the effectiveness of subsequent communicative tasks.

Study Limitations and Interpretive Considerations

1. *Methodological Constraints*

The pre-experimental design without a control group limits the ability to attribute improvements exclusively to TBLT rather than concurrent factors such as general course progression, increased familiarity with oral assessment formats, or Hawthorne effects from participation in research activities. Future research should employ randomized controlled designs to isolate TBLT effects more precisely. The relatively small sample size (n=16) from a single institutional context also

constrains generalizability, particularly to students with different L1 backgrounds, proficiency levels, or educational settings.

The five-session intervention period, while sufficient to demonstrate short-term effects, may not reveal the sustainability of observed improvements or potential delayed effects that might emerge with extended implementation. Longitudinal designs tracking students over full academic terms would provide more comprehensive understanding of TBLT's long-term impact on grammar acquisition and retention.

2. Implications for Future Research

Future studies should incorporate multiple measurement points to track acquisition patterns over time and include delayed post-tests to assess retention. Qualitative components examining student perceptions and learning processes would complement quantitative outcomes and provide insights into individual variation in response to TBLT approaches. Additionally, research comparing TBLT effectiveness across different proficiency levels and L1 backgrounds would enhance understanding of optimal implementation contexts.

Comparison with Existing Research and Generalizability

The current findings align closely with Soali et al.'s (2023) research demonstrating significant grammar improvement through TBLT implementation, though the present study achieved larger effect sizes (43.5% vs. their reported improvement from 64 to 73 points). This difference may reflect the particular effectiveness of TBLT with beginning university students who are simultaneously developing academic language skills and foundational communicative competence.

The results extend Zhang's (2023) findings by demonstrating that TBLT effectiveness extends beyond advanced learners to first-semester students in EFL contexts. However, the present study's focus on oral production differs from much existing research emphasizing written grammar performance, suggesting that TBLT may be particularly effective for developing procedural grammar knowledge required for spontaneous communication.

1. *Generalizability Considerations*

The findings appear most directly applicable to first-year university students in EFL contexts where English serves primarily academic rather than community communication functions. The Islamic higher education setting and Indonesian L1 background of participants may influence generalizability to other educational contexts, though the fundamental TBLT principles and task design framework should transfer across similar institutional settings.

The effectiveness observed with commonly used tenses (Simple Present, Present Continuous) likely generalizes well to other EFL contexts, while the challenges encountered with Present Perfect may be particularly relevant for learners whose L1 lacks similar aspectual distinctions. Teachers in different contexts should consider their students' L1 characteristics when adapting the TBLT approach for complex grammatical structures.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) significantly enhances grammar proficiency among first-semester English Education students. Following five TBLT sessions, students showed substantial improvement with mean scores increasing from 46.50 to 66.75 (43.5% improvement, $p < 0.05$), with 75% of participants advancing from "Average" to "Good" proficiency levels.

The results revealed differential improvement patterns across target tenses: frequently used tenses (Simple Present: 44.1%, Present Continuous: 43.4%) showed greater gains than complex aspectual tenses (Present Perfect: 39.7%). This pattern confirms TBLT's effectiveness in bridging the declarative-procedural knowledge gap by providing authentic communicative contexts that facilitate the transition from theoretical grammar understanding to practical application.

The study's limitations include the pre-experimental design without control group, small sample size (n=16), and short intervention period (five sessions). Despite these constraints, the large effect size (Cohen's d = 4.32) indicates educationally meaningful outcomes that support TBLT implementation in similar EFL contexts.

These findings contribute to second language acquisition theory by demonstrating how structured communicative tasks can effectively integrate form, meaning, and usage in grammar instruction. For practitioners, the study provides evidence-based support for adopting TBLT approaches that balance communicative authenticity with systematic attention to grammatical accuracy, particularly beneficial for beginning university students transitioning to academic English proficiency.

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