Journal of Language
Volume 8 Number 1, pp 75-88
e-ISSN: 2685-8878 | p-ISSN: 2655-9080
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v8i1.13205

The Effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in Enhancing Junior High School Students' Simple Sentence Construction

Fany Anggreini, Devi Pratiwy
Faculty of Literature, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara
Medan, Indonesia
e-mail: fanyanggreini3@gmail.com

Article Info

Article history:
Received: March 10, 2026
Accepted: April 24, 2026
Published: May 11, 2026

Keywords:
English language teaching;
grammar;
junior high school;
simple sentence;
Task-Based Language Teaching;

Abstract

This research investigates the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving simple sentence construction among second-year students at *MTS Asmah Zaijuli Hamid*, Hamparan Perak. Using a quantitative pre-experimental design with one group pretest-posttest, 20 eighth-grade students were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through written tests measuring five aspects of simple sentences: main clause, subject, predicate, verb, and vocabulary. The treatment followed Willis's three-stage TBLT procedure: pre-task, task-cycle, and language focus. The findings indicate that TBLT significantly enhances learners' grammatical performance, particularly in constructing simple sentences. This improvement can be attributed to the interactive and meaning-focused nature of TBLT, which facilitates both linguistic accuracy and communicative competence. The mean score improved from 64 (good category) in the pretest to 81 (very good category) in the post-test. Hypothesis testing using paired sample t-test revealed t-count (2.98769) > t-table (2.10092) at $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating a significant effect of TBLT. These findings demonstrate that TBLT significantly enhances students' ability to construct simple sentences. The approach proves effective because it provides authentic contexts for language use, encourages student interaction, and offers systematic scaffolding. This research contributes empirical evidence of TBLT's effectiveness in teaching grammar at the Indonesian junior high school level. Recommendations are provided for teachers, students, and future researchers.

Corresponding Author:
Fany Anggreini
Faculty of Literature, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
E-mail: fanyanggreini3@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Despite its central role in language proficiency, grammar instruction in EFL classrooms remains largely form-focused and ineffective in promoting communicative competence. In Indonesia, many students struggle to produce correct English sentences even after years of study. This persistent difficulty stems not from a lack of grammatical knowledge but from teaching approaches that prioritize rule memorization over meaningful use. Mammadova (2020) confirms that grammar serves as the foundation of language, yet without practical application, students cannot transfer knowledge into productive skills.

One of the most fundamental yet problematic areas for Indonesian EFL learners is simple sentence construction. Errors in subject-verb agreement, verb choice, and clause structure are common, particularly among junior high school students. These errors are not merely mechanical; they reflect a deeper gap between knowing grammatical rules and using them communicatively. Alexander (2005) states that grammar is the support system of communication, but traditional teaching methods often fail to bridge this gap.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers a potential solution. Unlike conventional approaches, TBLT places students in real-world situations where language use is necessary to complete meaningful tasks (Richards, 2006). Willis (2007) proposes three stages—pre-task, task-cycle, and language focus—that systematically integrate meaning and form. This shift from form-focused instruction to meaning-oriented practice addresses the core weakness of traditional grammar teaching.

However, existing studies predominantly focus on speaking and reading skills, leaving the role of TBLT in developing grammatical accuracy—particularly simple sentence construction—underexplored in Indonesian EFL contexts. Adam and Magfirah (2020) examined TBLT in reading comprehension, while Rudi, Syarfuni, and Syahputra (2023) focused on speaking skills. Sumardeni, Astawa, and Maryati (2023) investigated communication and collaboration skills in social studies. None of these studies specifically addressed how TBLT affects students' ability to construct simple sentences, a foundational skill for all subsequent language development.

This study addresses that gap by examining the effectiveness of TBLT in improving simple sentence construction among junior high school students in North Sumatra. Specifically, this research seeks to answer: (1) How is TBLT implemented in teaching simple sentences? and (2) How does TBLT impact students' ability to use simple sentences?

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to grammar pedagogy. For teachers, it provides an evidence-based alternative to form-focused instruction. For curriculum designers, it offers insights into task-based approaches for teaching foundational grammar. For researchers, it extends TBLT literature into an underexplored area: grammatical accuracy in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Task-Based Language Teaching

2.1.1 The Nature of Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching is a teaching method used by teachers to improve English skills. According to Rad and Jafari (2013), TBLT suggests that it is important for teachers to be able to manage a variety of different task demands and provide support to facilitate language learning. Dailey (2009) states that TBLT places students in real-world situations without too much intervention from the teacher, which can arouse students' motivation to use the target language to complete tasks.

However, while these scholars highlight the motivational and interactive benefits of TBLT, concerns remain regarding its effectiveness in developing grammatical accuracy. Ellis (2009) acknowledges that the strong version of TBLT, which excludes explicit grammar instruction, may not sufficiently address learners' form-related errors. This tension between meaning-focused communication and form-focused accuracy is central to the present study.

TBLT is generally characterized as a development within the communicative approach, taking tasks as central elements in design and teaching. The focus is on the process rather than the product, as processes belong to the domain of methodology (Nunan, 1989).

2.1.2 Principles of Task-Based Language Teaching

According to Nunan (2009), TBLT has the following principles: a needs-based approach to content selection, an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language, the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation, the provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process, an enhancement of learners' own personal experiences as important contributing

Journal of Language
Volume 8 Number 1, pp 75-88
e-ISSN: 2685-8878 | p-ISSN: 2655-9080
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v8i1.13205

elements to classroom learning, and the linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

2.1.3 Teaching Procedures of Task-Based Language Teaching

Willis (2007) proposes three stages in TBLT implementation:

1. **Pre-task Phase**: Learners are introduced to the topic and explained about the task. The teacher asks students about words or phrases relevant to the topic.
2. **Task-cycle Phase**: Learners are provided opportunities to use their knowledge about the target language. Language form is not a priority; learners are allowed to use whatever language they know to solve problems in the task. This stage consists of task, planning, and report.
3. **Language Focus Phase**: This stage focuses on the use of specific language items through analysis and practice activities.

This three-stage procedure is adopted in the present study because it systematically integrates meaning-focused communication (task-cycle) with form-focused instruction (language focus), addressing the criticism that TBLT neglects grammatical accuracy.

2.1.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of TBLT

Ellis (2009) identifies several advantages of TBLT: it helps students interact spontaneously, allows students to understand material more easily, increases students' thinking ability through discussion, and makes teaching and learning more attractive. Disadvantages include potential lack of synchronization between student and teacher perceptions and students finding tasks difficult.

While Ellis (2009) highlights the communicative benefits of TBLT, concerns remain regarding its effectiveness in developing grammatical accuracy, particularly for beginner learners who lack basic sentence structures. This study directly addresses this concern by examining TBLT's effect on simple sentence construction, a foundational grammatical skill.

2.2 Simple Sentences

2.2.1 Definition of Simple Sentence

A simple sentence consists of just one independent clause that can stand alone. To form a clause, only a subject and predicate are needed. Alexander (2005) supports that a simple sentence is a complete unit of meaning that contains a subject and a verb, followed as necessary by other words that complete the meaning. Demireen (2012) explains that a simple sentence has one independent clause that can stand on its own with complete meaning.

2.2.2 Types of Simple Sentences

According to Demireen (2012), there are four basic patterns of simple sentences in English: Subject + Verb (S+V), Subject + Verb + Object (S+V+O), Subject + Verb + Complement (S+V+C), and Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object (S+V+IO+DO).

2.2.3 Aspects of Simple Sentences

Based on Hughes (2003), the aspects of simple sentences that need to be evaluated include: main clause, subject, predicate, verb, and vocabulary.

2.3 Synthesis of Previous Studies

Several previous studies have examined TBLT in various contexts. Adam and Magfirah (2020) investigated TBLT with authentic materials in reading comprehension, finding significant improvement in student learning outcomes. Rudi, Syarfuni, and Syahputra

(2023) studied TBLT effectiveness in teaching speaking at SMAN 2 Banda Aceh, reporting significant differences in students' speaking scores. Sumardeni, Astawa, and Maryati (2023) examined TBLT's effect on communication and collaboration skills in social studies learning, demonstrating positive influences.

These studies collectively suggest that TBLT promotes communicative competence, interaction, and motivation across different language skills. However, their impact on grammatical precision—particularly the ability to construct simple sentences accurately—remains inconclusive. Most previous research has focused on reading comprehension (Adam & Magfirah, 2020), speaking fluency (Rudi et al., 2023), or general communication skills (Sumardeni et al., 2023), rather than specific grammatical structures. None have systematically examined how TBLT affects junior high school students' mastery of simple sentence patterns in the Indonesian EFL context.

This study extends previous research by shifting the focus from general communicative competence to specific grammatical accuracy, addressing an underexplored area in TBLT literature.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes TBLT as a pedagogical approach that integrates meaning-focused interaction with form-focused instruction, hypothesizing that such integration enhances learners' simple sentence construction ability. The framework is built on two theoretical foundations.

First, from Ellis (2003), TBLT provides authentic contexts where learners must use language to complete meaningful tasks. This communicative pressure pushes learners to retrieve and apply grammatical knowledge, transforming declarative knowledge (knowing rules) into procedural knowledge (using rules).

Second, from Willis (2007), the three-stage procedure (pre-task, task-cycle, language focus) systematically balances meaning and form. The pre-task stage activates prior knowledge, the task-cycle encourages spontaneous use, and the language focus stage explicitly addresses grammatical errors observed during task performance.

The present study hypothesizes that this integration directly addresses the weakness of traditional grammar instruction. Rather than memorizing rules in isolation, students learn simple sentence patterns through meaningful tasks, receive feedback during the language focus stage, and practice correct forms. The five aspects of simple sentences (main clause, subject, predicate, verb, vocabulary) serve as measurable indicators of grammatical accuracy. The conceptual framework is illustrated as follows:

TBLT (Willis's three-stage procedure) → Meaningful task completion + Form-focused feedback → Improved simple sentence construction (measured through five aspects)

This framework guides both the treatment design (Section 3.4) and the selection of measurement instruments (Section 3.5).

3. Research Method

This research employed a quantitative pre-experimental design with one group pretest-posttest. According to Hatch and Farhady (1982), quantitative research uses statistics as measurement in drawing conclusions. The design aimed to determine whether TBLT effectively improves students' ability to use simple sentences. The design can be presented as:

T_1 X T_2 (Setiyadi, 2006)

Where:

- T_1 = Pretest administered before treatment
- X = Treatment (teaching simple sentences using TBLT)
- T_2 = Posttest administered after treatment

Journal of Language
Volume 8 Number 1, pp 75-88
e-ISSN: 2685-8878 | p-ISSN: 2655-9080
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v8i1.13205

Although the study employs a pre-experimental design—which lacks a control group and randomization—it provides preliminary evidence of TBLT effectiveness in teaching simple sentences. This design was chosen due to classroom constraints and the existing teaching schedule at the school. The findings may inform future quasi-experimental or fully experimental research with more rigorous controls.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this research was all second-year students of MTS Asmah Zaijuli Hamid, Hamparan Perak. The researcher used purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2018) to select one class of 20 students as the sample.

The sample was selected purposively based on two criteria: accessibility (the class was available during the research period) and instructional relevance (the teacher confirmed that simple sentences were part of the current semester's curriculum). This sampling strategy was practical given the school's scheduling constraints. However, this limits the generalizability of the findings to other populations or contexts.

3.3 Variables

The research involved two variables:

1. Independent variable: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)
2. Dependent variable: Students' ability to use simple sentences

3.4 Research Procedures

The research procedures were as follows:

1. Selecting and determining the population sample: One class of second-year students was selected using purposive sampling.
2. Determining research instruments: Simple sentence tests were prepared for tryout, pretest, and post-test.
3. Conducting tryout: A tryout test was administered to ensure the test was appropriate for students before conducting the pretest.
4. Administering pretest: The pretest was given to identify students' ability before treatment.
5. Conducting treatments: Treatment was implemented using TBLT following Willis's (2007) three-stage procedure: pre-task (introducing topic and task, activating background knowledge), task-cycle (students completing tasks in groups, planning reports, presenting results), and language focus (analyzing language features, practicing specific forms).
6. Administering posttest: The posttest was given to evaluate students' ability after treatment.
7. Analyzing data: Data were analyzed using statistical techniques including normality test, homogeneity test, and hypothesis testing.

3.5 Instruments

The instrument for data collection was a simple sentence test consisting of 20 questions covering five aspects: main clause, subject, predicate, verb, and vocabulary. The scoring rubric was adapted from Hughes (2003), with scores ranging from 1 to 3 for each aspect:

- Score 3: Excellent to very good (knowledgeable, substantive, fluent expression, effective constructions, sophisticated vocabulary)
- Score 2: Fair to poor (limited knowledge, non-fluent, major problems in construction, frequent errors)
- Score 1: Very poor (does not show knowledge, does not communicate, dominated by errors).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity: Construct validity was used to ensure the test measured what it intended to measure. The test items were developed based on the theoretical framework of simple sentences described in Section 2.2.

Reliability: Stability reliability was calculated using the rank-difference correlation formula (Harris, 1974). The tryout test result showed a reliability coefficient of 0.431. The reliability coefficient (0.431) indicates moderate consistency, suggesting that further refinement of the instrument is necessary in future studies. This moderate coefficient may be attributed to the small sample size (20 students) and the limited number of test items. Future research should revise the instrument to improve internal consistency.

Index of Difficulty: Calculated using formula FV = R/N. Results showed 16 easy items, 6 average items, and 2 difficult items.

Discrimination Power: Calculated to determine items' ability to distinguish between high and low achievers. Items with negative discrimination were omitted, leaving 18 items for pretest and post-test.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved several steps:

1. Calculating mean scores using formula $Mx = \Sigma fx/N$
2. Calculating standard deviation using formula $SD = \sqrt{(\Sigma fx^2/N)}$
3. Normality test using Lilliefors test to determine if data were normally distributed
4. Homogeneity test using F-test to determine if variances were homogeneous
5. Hypothesis testing using paired sample t-test

The criteria for hypothesis testing: H_0 is rejected if t-count > t-table at significance level $\alpha = 0.05$.

Scores were interpreted using Arikunto's (1988) category system:

- 81-100: Very good
- 61-80: Good
- 41-60: Fair
- 21-40: Poor
- 0-20: Very poor

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Pretest Results

The pretest was administered to assess students' ability to use simple sentences before implementing TBLT. Table 4.1 presents the pretest results for 20 students across five aspects: main clause, subject, predicate, verb, and vocabulary.

Table 4.1

Pretest Results

No.	Name	MC	S	P	V	Voc	Total	Score
1.	Alfi Syahri Abidin	3	3	3	2	2	13	86
2.	Aya Linar Hafiza	2	2	2	2	1	9	60
3.	Dinda Ramadhani	3	2	2	1	2	10	66
4.	Fardan Fahrezi Siregar	2	2	2	1	1	8	53
5.	Fatin Muhsan	2	2	2	1	1	8	53
6.	Jihan Talita Syaki Harahap	3	3	3	3	3	15	100
7.	May Rizky Amanda	3	2	2	1	2	10	66

Journal of Language
Volume 8 Number 1, pp 75-88
e-ISSN: 2685-8878 | p-ISSN: 2655-9080
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v8i1.13205

8.	Mesaroh Nabila	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
9.	Mu'ammar	2	2	2	1	1	8	53
10.	Muhammad Arzan	2	2	2	1	1	8	53
11.	Muhayati	2	2	1	1	2	8	53
12.	Mutiara Kinanti	2	2	2	1	1	8	53
13.	Nur Intan Kamalia	2	2	2	2	2	10	66
14.	Poppy	2	2	2	2	1	9	60
15.	Rifay Hayyan	2	2	2	2	2	10	66
16.	Sakila Ramadhan	2	2	2	2	1	9	60
17.	Shafira Al-Zahra	2	2	1	1	2	8	53
18.	Silvana Nazwa	2	2	1	2	1	8	53
19.	Syakila Armaya	3	2	2	2	1	10	66
20.	Shafa Az-Zahra	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
M		**2.4**	**2.2**	**1.9**	**1.7**	**2.0**	**9.6**	**64**

Note.
MC = main clause, S = subject, P = predicate, V = verb, Voc = vocabulary, M = mean. Scores are based on Hughes's (2003) rubric (1-3 per aspect). Total score = sum of five aspects (maximum 15). Percentage score = (total ÷ 15) × 100

The pretest results show that the lowest score was 53 (8 students) and the highest score was 100 (1 student). The average score was 64, which falls into the good category according to Arikunto's (1988) classification (61-80 = good). Analysis of each aspect reveals that the verb aspect had the lowest average score (1.7), while the main clause aspect had the highest average (2.4).

Table 4.2
Frequency Distribution of Pretest Results

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Category
80-100	4	20	Very Good
60-79	8	40	Good
40-59	8	40	Fair
20-39	0	0	Poor
0-19	0	0	Very Poor
Total	**20**	**100**	

Note:
N = 20. Categories are based on Arikunto's (1988) classification. Percentage values are rounded to the nearest whole number.

4.1.2 Post-test Results

After implementing TBLT treatment, the post-test was administered to assess students' improvement. Table 4.3 presents the post-test results.

Table 4.3
Posttest Results

No.	Name	MC	S	P	V	Voc	Total	Score
1.	Alfi Syahri Abidin	3	3	3	3	2	14	93
2.	Aya Linar Hafiza	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
3.	Dinda Ramadhani	3	3	2	2	3	13	86

4.	Fardan Fahrezi Siregar	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
5.	Fatin Muhsan	2	2	2	2	1	9	60
6.	Jihan Talita Syaki Harahap	3	3	3	3	3	15	100
7.	May Rizky Amanda	3	3	3	3	2	14	93
8.	Mesaroh Nabila	3	3	2	2	3	13	86
9.	Mu'ammar	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
10.	Muhammad Arzan	3	3	3	2	3	13	86
11.	Muhayati	2	2	2	2	2	10	66
12.	Mutiara Kinanti	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
13.	Nur Intan Kamalia	3	3	3	2	2	13	86
14.	Poppy	2	2	2	2	1	9	60
15.	Rifay Hayyan	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
16.	Sakila Ramadhan	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
17.	Shafira Al-Zahra	3	3	3	2	2	13	86
18.	Silvana Nazwa	2	2	2	2	2	10	66
19.	Syakila Armaya	3	3	2	2	2	12	80
20.	Shafa Az-Zahra	3	3	3	2	2	13	86
M		**2.8**	**2.8**	**2.4**	**2.2**	**2**	**12.5**	**81**

Note:
MC = main clause, S = subject, P = predicate, V = verb, Voc = vocabulary, M = mean. Scores are based on Hughes's (2003) rubric (1-3 per aspect). Total score = sum of five aspects (maximum 15). Percentage score = (total ÷ 15) × 100.

The posttest results show that the lowest score was 60 (2 students) and the highest score was 100 (1 student). The average score increased to 81, which falls into the very good category according to Arikunto's (1988) classification (81-100 = very good).

Table 4.4
Frequency Distribution of Post-test Results

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Category
80-100	16	80	Very Good
60-79	4	20	Good
40-59	0	0	Fair
20-39	0	0	Poor
0-19	0	0	Very Poor
Total	**20**	**100**	

Note:
N = 20. Categories are based on Arikunto's (1988) classification. Percentage values are rounded to the nearest whole number.

4.1.3 Comparison of Pretest and Post-test Results

Table 4.5
Comparison of Pretest and Post-test Results

No.	Name	Pretest	Post-test
1.	Alfi Syahri Abidin	86	93
2.	Aya Linar Hafiza	60	80
3.	Dinda Ramadhani	66	86
4.	Fardan Fahrezi Siregar	53	80
5.	Fatin Muhsan	53	60

Journal of Language
Volume 8 Number 1, pp 75-88
e-ISSN: 2685-8878 | p-ISSN: 2655-9080
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v8i1.13205

6.	Jihan Talita Syaki Harahap	100	100
7.	May Rizky Amanda	66	93
8.	Mesaroh Nabila	80	86
9.	Mu'ammar	53	80
10.	Muhammad Arzan	53	86
11.	Muhayati	53	66
12.	Mutiara Kinanti	53	80
13.	Nur Intan Kamalia	66	86
14.	Poppy	60	60
15.	Rifay Hayyan	66	80
16.	Sakila Ramadhan	60	80
17.	Shafira Al-Zahra	53	86
18.	Silvana Nazwa	53	66
19.	Syakila Armaya	66	80
20.	Shafa Az-Zahra	80	86
	M	**64**	**81**

Note:
N = 20. M = mean. Scores are percentage scores calculated from total scores (maximum 15) multiplied by 100/15.

The comparison shows a clear improvement from pretest (average 64, good category) to posttest (average 81, very good category), representing a 17-point increase.

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Normality Test

Normality tests were conducted using the Lilliefors test to determine whether the data were normally distributed.

Table 4.6
Normality Test Results

Data	L-count	L-table	Information
Pretest	0.27317	0.319	Normal
Post-test	0.04467	0.319	Normal

Note:
N = 20. Significance level α = 0.05. Data are considered normally distributed if L-count < L-table.

Both pretest and post-test data showed L-count < L-table at significance level α = 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed.

4.2.2 Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was conducted using the F-test to determine whether the variances were homogeneous.
F-count = 1.5579
F-table = 2.1682 (α = 0.05, df = 20)
Since F-count (1.5579) < F-table (2.1682), the data were homogeneous, indicating that the sample came from a homogeneous population.

4.2.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using paired sample t-test with the following calculations:
Pretest:

- Mean (M_2) = 64
- Standard Deviation (SD_2) = 22.6
- Standard Error (SE_2) = 5.18

Post-test:

- Mean (M_1) = 81
- Standard Deviation (SD_1) = 10.3
- Standard Error (SE_1) = 2.36

Standard Error of Difference:
$SE(M_1-M_2) = \sqrt{(5.18^2 + 2.36^2)} = \sqrt{32.402} = 5.69$
t-count calculation:
$t_0 = (M_1 - M_2) / SE(M_1-M_2) = (81 - 64) / 5.69 = 17 / 5.69 = 2.98769$
t-table value:
At significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ with df = n - 2 = 20 - 2 = 18, t-table = 2.10092
Comparison:
t-count (2.98769) > t-table (2.10092)

Since t-count > t-table, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. This means that *there is a significant effect of Task-Based Language Teaching in improving students' ability to use simple sentences*.

4.2.4 Effect Size

To determine the magnitude of the treatment effect, Cohen's d was calculated using the formula:
$d = (M_1 - M_2) / SD\_pooled$, where $SD\_pooled = \sqrt{[(SD_1^2 + SD_2^2)/2]}$.
$SD\_pooled = \sqrt{[(10.3^2 + 22.6^2)/2]} = \sqrt{[(106.09 + 510.76)/2]} = \sqrt{(616.85/2)} = \sqrt{308.425} = 17.56$
Cohen's d = (81 - 64) / 17.56 = 17 / 17.56 = 0.97

According to Cohen's (1988) conventions, a d value of 0.97 indicates a large effect size ($d \geq 0.8$ = large). This confirms that TBLT not only produced a statistically significant improvement but also a practically meaningful one. The large effect size suggests that the intervention had substantial educational relevance, not merely statistical significance.

4.3 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that TBLT significantly improves students' ability to construct simple sentences. However, beyond simply reporting this improvement, this section interprets what the results mean theoretically and pedagogically.

4.3.1 Interpretation of Pretest Results

Before implementing TBLT, students' ability to use simple sentences was at a moderate level with an average score of 64. Analysis of individual aspects revealed that students struggled most with the verb aspect (average 1.7). This finding is not surprising because verb selection and conjugation require learners to integrate multiple grammatical rules simultaneously: tense, subject-verb agreement, and transitivity. Traditional grammar instruction, which presents these rules separately, does not prepare students for this integration.

The relatively higher score in the main clause aspect (2.4) suggests that students could identify basic sentence structure but lacked the grammatical precision to execute it correctly.

Journal of Language
Volume 8 Number 1, pp 75-88
e-ISSN: 2685-8878 | p-ISSN: 2655-9080
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v8i1.13205

This gap between recognition (identifying a correct sentence) and production (constructing one) is characteristic of declarative knowledge that has not yet become proceduralized.

4.3.2 Interpretation of Post-test Improvement

After implementing TBLT, students showed significant improvement with an average score of 81. Improvement was observed across all aspects, with main clause and subject aspects reaching the highest averages (2.8 each). The verb aspect improved from 1.7 to 2.2.

The improvement suggests that TBLT facilitates proceduralizing of grammatical knowledge, enabling learners to move from declarative understanding (knowing the rules of simple sentences) to functional language use (applying those rules during communication). The task-cycle required students to use simple sentences to complete meaningful tasks, forcing them to retrieve and apply grammatical knowledge under real-time pressure. This retrieval practice strengthens procedural memory, making correct forms more automatic over time.

The large effect size (Cohen's d = 0.97) confirms that this improvement was not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful. An effect size of this magnitude indicates that the average student in the TBLT group performed better than approximately 83% of students who would have received traditional instruction, based on Cohen's distribution overlap estimates.

4.3.3 Why TBLT Worked for Simple Sentence Construction

Several factors contributed to TBLT's effectiveness:

1. Proceduralizing of grammatical knowledge: Traditional instruction emphasizes declarative knowledge (knowing that "subject + verb + object" is a pattern). TBLT, through its task-cycle, forces learners to use this knowledge procedurally (producing "I read a book" when describing a task). The improvement from pretest to post-test represents this transition.
2. Integrated form-meaning mapping: During the language focus stage, the teacher could address specific errors observed during task performance. This just-in-time instruction is more effective than decontextualized grammar lessons because learners see the immediate relevance of the correction.
3. Collaborative scaffolding: Group work allowed stronger students to model correct forms for weaker students. Peer explanations are often more accessible than teacher explanations because they use familiar language and address specific points of confusion.
4. Reduced affective barriers: The task focus shifts attention away from grammatical correctness toward task completion, reducing anxiety. Students who fear making errors in traditional grammar drills may participate more freely when the primary goal is completing a task.

These factors collectively explain why the verb aspect, which was the weakest area in the pretest, showed substantial improvement. Verbs are the most demanding aspect because they carry tense, agreement, and semantic meaning. The communicative pressure of task completion pushed students to retrieve correct verb forms repeatedly, strengthening procedural memory.

4.3.4 Limitations and Remaining Challenges

Four students (20%) still scored below the Minimum Completeness Criteria after treatment. This finding supports Ellis's (2009) observation that one disadvantage of TBLT is the potential lack of synchronization between student and teacher perceptions. Some students

may perceive tasks as games rather than learning activities and fail to attend to the grammatical features targeted during instruction.

Additionally, the moderate reliability coefficient (0.431) suggests that the test instrument itself may have contributed to measurement imprecision. Some students' posttest scores may underestimate their true ability if test items were ambiguous or inconsistently interpreted.

4.3.5 Comparison with Previous Studies

These findings extend previous research in three ways. First, while Adam and Magfirah (2020) demonstrated TBLT's effectiveness in reading comprehension, the present study shows that TBLT also improves grammatical accuracy—a skill not directly targeted in reading instruction. Second, while Rudi, Syarfuni, and Syahputra (2023) reported speaking improvement, the present study provides evidence that TBLT affects sentence-level writing as well. Third, unlike previous studies that measured general communication skills (Sumardeni et al., 2023), this study measured specific grammatical aspects (main clause, subject, predicate, verb, vocabulary), offering more precise diagnostic information.

However, direct comparison with these studies is limited by differences in design: previous studies used control groups, while the present study used a pre-experimental design. The large effect size (d = 0.97) is encouraging but should be interpreted cautiously given the absence of a control group.

4.3.6 Theoretical Implications

The findings support Ellis's (2003) claim that tasks provide natural contexts for language learning. More specifically, they suggest that grammatical accuracy can emerge from meaning-focused tasks when supplemented by form-focused instruction during the language focus stage. This challenges the strong version of TBLT, which excludes explicit grammar teaching. The present study indicates that a balanced approach—meaningful tasks plus targeted feedback—is more effective for developing grammatical accuracy in beginner learners.

4.3.7 Pedagogical Implications

For classroom practice, the findings suggest that teachers should:

1. Use the three-stage TBLT procedure (pre-task, task-cycle, language focus) rather than omitting the language focus stage
2. Design tasks that naturally require the target grammatical structures (e.g., tasks requiring students to describe actions for practicing subject-verb-object patterns)
3. Provide corrective feedback during the language focus stage based on errors observed during task performance
4. Recognize that TBLT may not work equally well for all students; additional support may be needed for weaker learners

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in improving simple sentence construction among second-year junior high school students. The findings demonstrate that TBLT significantly enhances students' ability to construct simple sentences, with the mean score increasing from 64 (good category) in the pretest to 81 (very good category) in the post-test. Hypothesis testing confirmed a significant effect (t-count = 2.98769 > t-table = 2.10092), and the large effect size (Cohen's d = 0.97) indicates that the improvement was both statistically significant and educationally meaningful.

Journal of Language
Volume 8 Number 1, pp 75-88
e-ISSN: 2685-8878 | p-ISSN: 2655-9080
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30743/jol.v8i1.13205

The improvement was observed across all five aspects of simple sentences: main clause, subject, predicate, verb, and vocabulary. The verb aspect showed the lowest pretest score (1.7) but improved to 2.2, suggesting that TBLT was particularly effective in helping students master the most demanding grammatical element.

This study contributes to TBLT theory by demonstrating that a balanced approach—integrating meaning-focused tasks (task-cycle) with form-focused instruction (language focus)—is more effective for developing grammatical accuracy in beginner learners than either approach alone. This finding challenges the strong version of TBLT, which excludes explicit grammar teaching, and supports Ellis's (2003) weak version, which incorporates form-focused intervention. The proceduralizing of grammatical knowledge observed in this study suggests that tasks provide the communicative pressure necessary for learners to transform declarative knowledge (knowing rules) into procedural knowledge (using rules automatically).

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the pre-experimental design (one group pretest-post-test without a control group) limits causal inference. The observed improvement cannot be definitively attributed to TBLT without comparison to a control group receiving traditional instruction. Second, the purposive sampling method and small sample size (N = 20) limit generalizability to other populations, schools, or educational levels. Third, the reliability coefficient of the test instrument (0.431) indicates only moderate consistency, suggesting that measurement imprecision may have affected the results. Fourth, the study measured only short-term effects immediately after treatment; retention of learning over time was not assessed. Fifth, the study focused exclusively on simple sentences; whether TBLT generalizes to more complex sentence structures remain unknown.

For classroom practice, the findings suggest that teachers should implement all three stages of TBLT (pre-task, task-cycle, language focus) rather than omitting the language focus stage. The large effect size (d = 0.97) indicates that this approach is not merely statistically significant but educationally impactful. Teachers working with beginner learners should design tasks that naturally require target grammatical structures and provide corrective feedback during the language focus stage based on errors observed during task performance.

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence that Task-Based Language Teaching significantly improves junior high school students' ability to construct simple sentences. While the findings are promising, they should be interpreted within the study's limitations. Future rigorous research is needed to confirm these results and explore TBLT's potential for teaching other grammatical structures.

References

Adam, S., & Magfirah, S. (2020). Application of the Task Based Language Learning Model (TBLT) and Authentic Material in Reading Comprehension Learning at SMA Negeri 2 Ternate City. *Humanitatis: Journal of Language and Literature*, 7(1), 71-82.

Alexander, L. G. (2005). *Longman English grammar for ESL learners*. New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies.

Arikunto, S. (1988). *Prosedur penelitian: Suatu pendekatan praktik*. Jakarta, Indonesia: PT Rineka Cipta.

Atteberry, P. (2013). *Sentence types*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Dailey, A. (2009). *Implementing Task-Based Learning Teaching in Korean classrooms*. https://www.scribd.com/document/382175588/DailyLTMImplementingTask-BasedLanguageTeachinginKorean

Demireen, M. (2012). An analysis of the problem-causing structures of simple sentences for Turkish university students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(3).

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2009). Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 19(3), 221-246.

Harris, D. P. (1974). *Testing English as a second language*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Hatch, E., & Farhady, H. (1982). *Research design and statistics for applied linguistics*. Los Angeles, CA: Newbury House Publishers.

Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for language teachers* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Kosasih, E. (2017). *Ketatabahasaan dan kesusastraan*. Bandung, Indonesia: Yrama Widya.

Mammadova, T. (2020). *Exploring English language teaching in post-Soviet era countries: Perspectives from Azerbaijan*. London, England: Routledge.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (2009). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Rad, N. F., & Jafari, A. M. (2013). Teaching English and task-based method. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 2(4), 215-223.

Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Rudi, Syarfuni, & Syahputra, M. (2023). The effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in teaching speaking at SMAN 2 Banda Aceh. *Student Scientific Journal*, 4(1), 1-11.

Setiyadi, A. B. (2006). *Metode penelitian untuk pengajaran bahasa Inggris*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Graha Ilmu.

Sugiyono. (2018). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung, Indonesia: Alfabeta.

Sumardeni, N. N. W., Astawa, I. B. M., & Maryati, T. (2023). The influence of the Task-Based Learning model on students' communication and collaboration skills in social studies learning. *FPIPS Communications Media*, 22(1), 80-92.

Taaamneh, I. M. (2020). The effect of using task-based learning on EFL learners' grammar achievement. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 10(5), 128-136.

Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.