The Implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to Improve Students' Reading Skills

Sindi Klodia[1], Budi[1], Mashuri[1], Sriati Usman[1]

[1]Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia
*Correspondence: sindiklodia4si.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyzed the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) improve the reading skills of the eighth-grade students at SMPN 9 Sigi. The population in this study is all grade VIII students totaling 41 students. This study used a quasi-experimental method where researcher used two classes to get the results of the study, the class was class VIIIA as an control class with 19 students, and class VIIIB as an experimental class with 22 students. The population of this study is all grade VIII students totaling 41 students. The data collection technique used tests in the form of pretests and posttests. Based on the results of the study, the experimental class's students' reading skills significantly improved once the TBLT approach was implemented. This is shown by the calculation using SPSS, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000 < 0.05. The experimental class obtained a higher post-test average score of 20.06 points compared to the control class. This mean, H_1: The implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) significantly improves the reading skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 9 Sigi is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a difference in the average learning outcomes between the experimental class using the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) model and the control class using the conventional model.

1. Introduction

Reading holds a crucial position in academic achievement as it equips students with the ability to gather information, broaden perspectives, and enhance critical thinking abilities. According to Dreyer & Nel (2003), reading stands out as a fundamental skill for learners of a second language, particularly in academic environments. Furthermore, Campbell (1995) adds that reading is the most useful skill for foreign language learners since mastery of reading skills is the key to a successful academic life, a broader horizon, and access to new knowledge and information.

Reading involves obtaining information from a text and enhancing one's insight. Moreover, reading enhances cognitive, emotional, and social skills (Pruhandoko et al., 2019; Yaumi et al., 2024; Ko et al., 2025; Cahyani et al., 2025). Students who develop strong reading skills can easily identify main ideas, recognize important details, understand text structures, and analyze relationships between ideas (Said et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2019; Suheri et al., 2025). Thus, reading is not merely recognizing words but comprehensively understanding the content and meaning of a text.

In line with the Curriculum 2013 and the Independent Curriculum, reading is emphasized as a key element in mastering English. The curriculum highlights that in the 21st century, reading proficiency serves as the foundation for language learning, helping students build their ability to comprehend texts effectively. Liu et al. (2014) emphasize that critical reading is essential for higher education students as it enables them to evaluate and analyze information, arguments, and sources critically. This aligns with the P5 dimension in the Independent Curriculum, which encourages students to develop critical reasoning skills. Therefore, enhancing students' reading skills is imperative.

However, research shows that Indonesian students' reading skills, especially in English, are still low. Hamra & Syatriana (2012) reported that many junior high school students in Indonesia face serious difficulties in reading comprehension, including identifying main ideas, understanding details, and interpreting implicit meanings. These findings align with observations at SMPN 9 Sigi, where eighth-grade students consistently experience challenges in comprehending texts, particularly in identifying main ideas, summarizing key points, and interpreting implied meanings.

These difficulties are frequently associated with underlying factors, such as limited vocabulary knowledge, which can hinder students' ability to process and understand unfamiliar words within a text. In addition, students tend to lack the necessary reading strategies and engagement skills required to navigate and comprehend written materials effectively. This condition is further exacerbated by the use of traditional, teacher-centered instructional methods, which rarely offer opportunities for students to actively practice and apply comprehension strategies in meaningful and interactive ways.

Several studies have demonstrated that alternative approaches to teaching, such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), can effectively address the reading comprehension issues faced by students. These studies have shown that TBLT offers practical solutions to many of the difficulties outlined previously. For instance, Putri & Ratmanida (2021) found that TBLT helps learners to better grasp main ideas and specific information through structured and interactive reading tasks. Similarly, Sukardi et al., (2024) emphasized that meaningful tasks led to higher student engagement and enhanced understanding of reading materials. In line with these findings, Poedjiastutie et al., (2018) reported that students who were taught using TBLT showed improved engagement and comprehension outcomes compared to those taught using traditional methods.

To address these issues, this study proposes the implementation of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach, which has been proven effective in overcoming reading difficulties. TBLT emphasizes meaningful and relevant tasks, positioning students as active participants in the learning process. As highlighted by Adam & Magfirah (2020), TBLT is a language learning approach that focuses on the use of instructional tasks, engaging students in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language, with an emphasis on meaning rather than form. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether the application of TBLT can effectively improve students' reading skills.

To provide a clearer understanding of how Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is implemented in classroom settings, Willis (1996) proposed a three-stage framework that serves as the foundation for task-based lesson design. The stages—Pre-task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus—are designed to guide both teachers and learners through meaningful, structured tasks that enhance language skills, particularly in reading. The following table outlines the stages and key activities involved in each phase of the TBLT framework.

Pre-task

Introduction to topic and tasks

Teacher explores the topic with the class highlights useful words and phrases. Learners may be exposed to examples.

Task-Cycle

Task	Plannings	Report
Students do the task in pairs or small groups. Teacher monitors; mistakes do not matter.	Students prepare to report. Accuracy is important, so the teacher stands by and gives advice.	Students exchange or present report. Teacher listens and then comments.

Language focus

Analysis	Practice
Students examine then discuss	Teacher conducts practice of new words

The table above explains Willis' (1996) framework of Task-Based Language Teaching, which consists of three main stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. These stages guided the implementation of TBLT in this study

2. Methodology

This study will employ a quasi-experimental design with a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group will receive an intervention using the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), while the control group

will receive conventional teaching. This design is chosen to evaluate the effectiveness of TBLT in improving students' reading skills.

2.1 Research Design

To represent the research design, the researcher adopts the quasi-experimental design chart proposed by Arikunto (2006):

Table 1. Research Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-Test
Experimental (E)	01	X	02
Control (C)	03	-	04

Table 1 illustrates the research design used in this study. The experimental group received the TBLT treatment, while the control group received conventional instruction. Both groups completed a pre-test and a post-test to measure improvement.

2.2 Participants

The researcher chose eighth grade students in SMPN 9 Sigi to be the population in this study. As mentioned by Janssen & Cresswell (2005) defines population as "A complete set of elements (people or objects) that have some common characteristics defined by the sampling criteria set by the research." The eighth-grade students of SMPN 9 Sigi are divided into two classes with a total of 41 students. The researcher will use class VIII A as the control class and Class VIII B will as the experimental class. The selection of classes is based on the availability of existing classes in the population, ensuring that all eighth-grade classes are included as research samples.

Table 2. Participants

Class	Number of Students
VIII A (control class)	19
VIII B (experimental class)	22

Table 2 presents the total number of participants involved in the study, divided into two groups: the control class (VIII A) with 19 students and the experimental class (VIII B) with 22 students.

2.3 Research Variables

This study has two main variables. The independent variable is the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach, while the dependent variable is the students' reading skills, measured through reading skill tests before and after the treatment.

2.4 Technique of Data Collection

In this study, tests will be used as the main technique for the collection of quantitative data. In this study, pre-test will be conducted before the treatment to determine the initial reading ability of students. This pre-test is designed to measure students' abilities in reading aspects such as main ideas, specific information, and vocabulary in context. After the pre-test and treatment, a post-test will be conducted to evaluate the improvement of students' reading skills following the application of the TBLT approach. In this study, the treatment aims to improve students' reading skills through the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach. The treatment consists of 5 meetings, each lasting 90 minutes.

2.5 Instruments

In this section, the researcher explains the instruments that will be used. The primary tools are the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test will be conducted to assess students' initial reading ability before the treatment, while the post-test will be conducted to evaluate their learning outcomes after the treatment. Both tests will be in the form of multiple-choice

questions, consisting of 20 items covering indicators such as literal and inferential comprehension, and vocabulary. The research instruments in this study aim to measure students' improvement in reading ability following the implementation of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach.

Table 3. The Scoring Rubric For Multiple-Choice

No	Explanation	Score
1.	Correct answer	1
2.	Wrong Answer	0
3.	No Answer	0

Table 3 shows the scoring rubric used for the multiple-choice reading test. Students received one point for each correct answer and zero points for incorrect or unanswered items.

2.6 Data Analysis

This research using SPSS 25 to find out the result. First, the researcher conducts a descriptive analysis to summarize the data. After that, a paired sample t-test is performed to compare the pre-test and post-test results within each group. Then, a homogeneity test is conducted to examine the similarity of variances between groups. Finally, an independent sample t-test is used to compare the post-test results between the experimental and control groups.

3. Result and Discussion

After conducted the research, the researcher presents the findings of the research on improving the reading skills of the eighth-grade student through Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) at SMPN 9 Sigi. The researcher has research in class VIII A as the control class and class VIII B as the experimental class to collected the data. The purpose was to determine whether TBLT significantly improved students' reading skills.

3.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

At this stage, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to describe and summarize the research data, including the number of data points, maximum and minimum scores, means, and standard deviations.

The table below presents the descriptive analysis of the individual pre-test and post-test scores for both the experimental and control classes:

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Experimental Class	22	10	60	31.82	12.203
Post-test Experimental Class	22	35	95	72.95	15.327
Pre-test Control Class	19	10	55	30.79	11.933
Post-test Control Class	19	30	85	52.89	15.663
Valid N (listwise)	19				

From the table, we can see that the experimental class's average score increased from 31.82 to 72.95 after the TBLT treatment. The control class also experienced an increase, from 30.79 to 52.89, but the improvement was not as significant. The relatively large standard deviation in the post-test also indicates variation in students' performance, especially in the experimental class.

3.2 Tests of normality

The normalcy test is the next step in this study. To ascertain whether or not the research data is regularly distributed, the normality test is performed. Before doing parametric statistical analysis, such as the independent sample t-test or the paired sample t-test, normal data is a must. The Shapiro-Wilk test and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test are the two common forms of normalcy tests in this investigation.

The following table shows the results of the normality test for the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental class and control classes:

Table 5. Tests of Normality

		Result of Test Class			
		Pre-test Experimental Class	Post-test Experimental Class	Pre-test Control Class	Post-test Control Class
Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]	Statistic	.124	.151	.133	.167
	df	22	22	19	19
	Sig.	.200*	.200*	.200*	.175
Shapiro-Wilk	Statistic	.978	.933	.971	.949
	df	22	22	19	19
	Sig.	.885	.140	.802	.384

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

It is evident from the above table that the significance value (Sig.) for all data in the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests is 0.000 > 0.05 (0.000 is more than 0.05). Consequently, the research data can be said to be regularly distributed. The researcher can utilize parametric statistics, such as the independent sample t-test and the paired sample t-test, to assess the research data because it is regularly distributed.

3.3 Paired Sample t-Test

A paired sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the means of the two paired samples. The requirement for this paired sample t-test is that the data is normally distributed (as mentioned above, the data was found to be normally distributed). This test was conducted to answer the research question, "Can the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) improve the reading skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 9 Sigi?" Therefore, the paired sample t-test was conducted on the pre-test and post-test data of the experimental class and the pre-test and post-test data of the control class.

The following table shows the results of the paired sample t-test in both samples:

Table 6. Paired Samples Test

			Pair 1	Pair 2
			Pre-test Experimental Class - Post-test Experimental Class	Pre-test Control Class - Post-test Control Class
Paired Differences	Mean		-41.136	-22.105
	Std. Deviation		12.996	13.572
	Std. Error Mean		2.771	3.114
		Lower	-46.898	-28.647

95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Upper	-35.374	-15.564
t		-14.847	-7.099
df		21	18
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000

Based on the table above, Pair 1 and Pair 2 obtained a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there is an effect on the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) learning model in improving the reading skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 9 Sigi.

3.4 Test of Homogeneity

The purpose of the homogeneity test is to ascertain if the variance of data from two or more groups is heterogeneous, or different, or homogeneous. In the independent sample t-test, homogeneous data is one of the conditions (albeit not the only one). The homogeneity test was used in this study to ascertain whether or not there was a homogenous variance between the post-test data of the experimental class and the control class.

The following table presents the homogeneity test results for both samples:

Table 7. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Result of Test	Based on Mean	.158	1	39	.694
	Based on Median	.194	1	39	.662
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.194	1	38.526	.662
	Based on trimmed mean	.190	1	39	.665

Based on the above results, the significance value (Sig.) Based on Mean is 0.694 > 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variance of the post-test data for the experimental class and the control class is the same or homogeneous. Thus, one of the (non-absolute) requirements of the independent sample t-test has been fulfillment.

3.5 Independent Sample t-Test

The independent sample t-test was used to determine whether there was a difference in the mean of two unpaired samples. Normal distribution and homogeneity (not absolute) of data are the main requirements in the independent sample t-test. From the results of the analysis table above, it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed and homogeneous.

This test was conducted to answer the research question, "Can the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) improve the reading skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 9 Sigi?" Therefore, a paired sample t-test was conducted on the post-test data of the experimental class and the post-test data of the control class.

The following is a presentation of the independent sample t-test table for both samples:

Table 8. Independent Samples Test

		Result of Test	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	.158	
	Sig.	.694	
t-test for Equality of Means	t	4.137	4.130

		39	37.877
df		39	37.877
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
Mean Difference		20.060	20.060
Std. Error Difference		4.849	4.857
95% Confidence Interval of theLower Difference		10.252	10.227
	Upper	29.868	29.893

Based on the table above, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000 < 0.05. The experimental class obtained a higher post-test average score of 20.06 points compared to the control class. This indicates a difference in the average learning outcomes between the experimental class using the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) model and the control class using the conventional model.

Thus, H_0: The implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) does not significantly improve the reading skills of the eighth-grade students at SMPN 9 Sigi is rejected, and H_1: The implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) significantly improves the reading skills of eighth-grade students at SMPN 9 Sigi is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a difference in the average learning outcomes between the experimental class using the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) model and the control class using the conventional model.

4. Conclusion

In order to determine the primary issues that students encountered with comprehending English reading, researchers first observed students directly in class VIII of SMPN 9 Sigi. The observation's findings demonstrated that the majority of students struggled to comprehend a text's primary concepts, specific details, and implicit meanings. These issues were brought about by a small vocabulary, a dearth of efficient reading techniques, and teacher-centered, repetitive instructional approaches. To address this issue, researchers used the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach as an innovative solution that focuses on learning through meaningful tasks, in line with Adam and Magfirah (2020), who stated that TBLT enables students to interact actively and understand language through relevant and meaningful contexts.

The three stages of Willis' (1996) framework—pre-task, task cycle, and language focus—were employed by researchers to construct TBLT. Student involvement in this process was very high; they participated more actively in discussions, asked more questions, and voiced their thoughts on their own. Instead of only receiving information, these events gave students the opportunity to take the lead in their education. This improvement suggests that TBLT improves students' literal and inferential reading skills more effectively than traditional techniques. According to previous research findings, including those of Astuti et al., (2020) and Sianturi et al., (2021), TBLT not only enhances students' comprehension of texts but also encourages them to participate more actively in the learning process.

Furthermore, the success of TBLT in reaching students with a range of abilities is further supported by descriptive and inferential studies. Most of the students in the experimental class showed notable progress, even though the standard deviation showed heterogeneity in student achievement. This demonstrates that TBLT is advantageous for students with low starting reading skills as well as for high-ability students. Thus, including TBLT into reading instruction is a powerful and practical way to improve students' reading abilities in secondary schools. The experimental class's students' reading skills significantly improved once the TBLT approach was implemented. On average, they scored 31.82 on the pre-test and 72.95 on the post-test. Only the control class, which received instruction using traditional techniques, saw an increase from 30.79 to 52.89. An independent t-test with a significance level (two-tailed) of 0.000 < 0.05, which showed a significant difference between the two classes, supports these findings. This improvement implies that TBLT is a more effective way to develop student's literal and inferential reading skills than traditional techniques.

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