Increasing Students' Reading Skill Through the Use of Task-Based Digital Teaching Materials in Online Learning

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Abstract. With the advent of information literacy, media, and technology, the nature of reading proficiency undergoes profound transformations. Therefore, readers are now expected to engage cognitive processes of higher order thinking abilities, as merely gaining access to information is no more sufficient when information is accessible and controlled by various sources. Nonetheless, the language learning process is still dominated by the use of printed teaching materials, despite the fact that the current learning process has been conducted in a variety of ways, such as online learning, blended learning, and hybrid learning, so that printed teaching materials are inadequate to meet the expectations, situations, and personalities of students at this time. This. Based on this, the goal of this study was to assess if the use of task-based digital teaching materials in online learning improved students' reading skills. This is Research and Development (R&D) according to the Plomp model (1997). This article presents the effectiveness of the created product. The instrument for research takes the shape of a test. The research subjects were SMA N 2 Padang pupils. The results demonstrated that Task-Based Digital Teaching Materials in Online Learning improved students' reading abilities.

Keywords: Reading skill · Digital teaching materials · Task-based Learning · Online learning

1 Introduction

Online education is defined as a style of education in which participants and educators have access to content delivery and communication from geographically different locations using computers connected to the internet [1]. Online learning is, in the most basic sense, the transmission of knowledge, skills, and emotions to others through the use of symbols such as words, images, and graphics [2]. Online learning can consist of synchronous, live lectures and time-based evaluation of results, or asynchronous, time-delayed activities such as pre-recorded lecture notes and time-independent exams. [3]. Online learning is a combination of desktop e-learning tools, resources, communication, performance support, and structured learning activities [4].

In the midst of this unprecedented upheaval, the deployment of online learning activities can provide students with a number of benefits, including flexibility and safety in studying [5]. This learning process is driven by the needs of teachers and students because it offers cost savings for students, teachers, and institutions, increased teaching-learning flexibility, and increased accessibility to education [6]. By learning online, students can study wherever they are without any time or schedule restrictions [7], thus creating a highly dynamic educational environment [8]. In addition, numerous research have demonstrated that online learning is effective in the learning process [9], because it creates challenging activities that encourage learners to connect new information with old information, gain meaningful knowledge and utilize their metacognitive abilities [10]. Thus, online learning can be used as an alternative in education [8].

Online learning is a form of distant education in which class content and supporting materials are delivered via the web, and student-student and student-teacher interactions are facilitated using online discussion media and other communication tools [2]. With the rise of e-learning platforms leveraging established internet connectivity, the word is commonly used to characterize evolving ways to learning via advanced communication technologies (such as Blackboard, Moodle, YouTube, and virtual reality) either asynchronously or synchronously [11], [12], [13]. There has been a substantial increase in the use of technology in education (i.e., virtual tutoring, video conferencing tools, and software), therefore the online style of education aids in the development of digital skills [14].

Due to physical distance from classmates and instructors, online students are far more likely to feel lonely and decide to drop out; therefore, it is crucial to keep online students interacting and engaged with others as a retention strategy [15]. This pertains to markers of online learning success by focusing on student participation, self-regulation methods, and student happiness [16]. Effective online learning must consider several factors, including speed, student-teacher ratio, modality, pedagogy, student role, teacher role, synchronization of online communication, role of online assessment, & feedback [13]. Therefore, effective online learning is the result of rational instruction design and analysis, as well as the use of organized methodologies to build & improve teaching [3].

Online learning was carried out initially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. At that time, the learning process was carried out remotely. Based on observations made through a questionnaire filled out by Indonesian language teachers in West Sumatra, it shows that when learning is carried out online, the most widely used teaching materials are printed teaching materials published by the Ministry of Education and Culture [17]. Based on this, it shows that teachers have not been able to adapt learning to the current situation, namely online learning situations and increasingly rapid technological developments. As digital media facilities have become more prevalent in elementary schools and universities, digital teaching materials have become an integral component of education globally [18]. The significance of teaching materials in the learning process necessitates that teachers be able to design materials that meet the needs of students, curriculum requirements, and the character of students without relying on textbooks and government aid packages [19], [20], [21]. In addition, teaching materials are currently available not only on paper but also as audio teaching materials, interactive multimedia, web-based electronic teaching materials, and e-books [22], [23].

Teaching materials are a collection of written and unwritten resources that are carefully structured so as to create an atmosphere conducive to student learning [24]. Teachers employ instructional materials to attain learning objectives [25]. Materials for instruction are one of the most significant components in education [26], It enables teachers to effectively deliver material to pupils [27]. Currently, neither teaching materials nor learning programs are interactive; nevertheless, teaching materials can be packed in digital format, specifically teaching materials that mix textual content with appealing visuals, audio, and animation [24]. Accessible via electronic devices, instructional materials can be used not only in classrooms, but also in other settings. Therefore, digital teaching materials serve as a means of communication between teachers and students to facilitate more efficient access to learning materials [25]. These digital instructional resources are accessible via electronic devices such as computers, notebooks, and mobile phones. Therefore, the provision of high-quality instructional resources will influence student motivation, interest, and creativity, resulting in improved student learning outcomes [21].

The integration of technology into language learning has been carried out by many teachers in a principled manner [28], but the specific forms of technology available are numerous and a particular choice as to which technology is appropriate needs to be made depending on the uniqueness of the learning environment [25]. An online learning environment can take advantage of teaching materials to improve students' reading skills. Reading materials have become important materials for educators to guide, help, increase students' motivation, and improve everyone's reading skills [29]. Reading skills emerge as language skills that are effective in obtaining and interpreting information and for using that information in various ways and situations and are closely related to other language skills [30].

Reading skills are very important for every language learner as the main means of obtaining information to construct meaning [30]. Reading as a skill is preferable to reading as a topic because it implies that reading can be learnt and improved as a cognitive and metacognitive skill through acquiring specific knowledge and getting suitable instruction [31]. In addition, readers must now engage cognitive processes of higher order thinking abilities because accessing information is no longer sufficient if information is abundant and manipulated by several sources [32]. Following the investigation of information sources, the evaluation of information credibility, and the identification of textual truth and error, information should be constructed [33]. However, teaching reading skills can pose significant challenges for educators at different levels of education. Empowering students to better handle their language learning can address this problematic situation. Therefore it is very important for the teacher to know how to achieve it; such as by setting learning goals and tasks that shift focus from teacher to student and utilizing technology [34].

Based on observations made through a questionnaire filled out by Indonesian language teachers in West Sumatra, it shows that when learning is carried out online, the most widely used learning model is the Task Based Learning model [35]. This learning model is one of the popular learning models in CLT and has promoted learner-centered language [36]. This popularity may be partly due to the desire to promote tangible rather than form-focused communication among teachers [37]. TBLT, usually recognized as a

strong version of communicative language teaching (CLT) [38], refers to several theoretical foundations of CLT such as communication needs, meaningfulness of the language used, and tasks. Will do [39].

TBLTT is a communicative approach to language teaching that takes task design as important in the development of instructional units [40]. As the name implies, assignments are a core concept of the TBLT course and lesson development [41]. Although definitions vary in terms of what constitutes a 'task' in the task-based language teaching (TBLT) literature [42], Long (2014) recommends that they should be defined as real-life activities that people do when planning and executing their day. In language learning, tasks have been defined as language activities that require students to pay attention to meaning and how language is used in real life [43]. Generally, assignments are considered student-centred, authentic, holistic and communicative in nature because they focus on content rather than message form, 'although pre-assignments and post-tasks or pedagogical assignments, depending on the TBLT model, may focus on the language itself' [44]. In this concept, not only is the input the learner receives authentic and "kept intact," but it is also relevant to the learner in question. By using realistic and relevant language, students prepare for the linguistic demands of the actual world and develop functional use [45].

TBLT consists of a needs analysis, a task design period based on a needs assessment, a sequence of instructional activities leading to real-world assignments based on the syllabus, and an acceptable time frame for students to actively engage and implement a specific real-world work assignment [46]. Through the dual use of assignments as the basic structural unit of the syllabus and the vehicle for teaching, TBLT supports the use of organic contextual language as permitted by the learner's present level of development through the dual use of assignments as the basic structural unit of the syllabus and the vehicle for instruction. In other words, learning occurs according to the internal syllabus of the learner. Learners participate in a variety of interactions that require them to negotiate meaning and use feedback to attain task objectives as a result of thorough task design [45].

Educators that are receptive to creative learning are more likely to successfully apply the TBLT implementation principle [47], combining online learning technology and TBLT can maximize learning [36]. This appears to be an appropriate method that can be integrated with technology. This conforms to the present trend in which technology plays a key role, so that students acquire material outside of the classroom through the use of technology [48]. The combination of technology and TBLT, can make learners bold and motivated to carry out their language skills with their real-world communicative tasks [49]. Numerous eminent scholars, including Doughty and Long (2003, 2009), Skehan (2003), and González-Lloret (2003, 2014), have acknowledged TBLT as a framework that may be applied into technology to modify the learning design for learners [50]. Based on this explanation, the purpose of this study was to determine the improvement of students' reading skills by using task-based digital teaching materials in online learning.

2   Method

This research is part of Research & Development (R & D) [51]. According to the stages of this research, one of the processes involves testing the product once it has been pronounced genuine. The product is a digital teaching resource for online distance learning that is based on Task-Based Language Learning (TBLT). The proceeding was held at SMA Negeri 2 Padang. The research participants were students from SMA class X, with 30 students in each of the control and experimental classes. The research was conducted during online distance learning due to distance restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning is done synchronously and asynchronously. Synchronous learning is carried out using the Zoom Meeting application and asynchronous learning using digital teaching materials developed with the ISpring application. The trial was carried out from September to October 2021. The trial schedule was adjusted to the school curriculum so that the product developed was suitable for use at that time, namely in learning procedure texts carried out in odd semesters. The research instrument used for the data in this article is a test, so the results of this study explain the effectiveness of the product developed on students' cognitive abilities. The data analysis technique is descriptive data using SPSS.

3   Result

This research is part of development research, so that the trial is carried out after the product developed is declared valid. The effectiveness of the developed digital teaching materials is the final stage of the assessment. Effectiveness can be seen from three assessments, namely the assessment of students' knowledge through cognitive tests, assessment of attitudes, and students' writing skills. One of the three assessments is a cognitive assessment which is characterized by the reading skills of students' understanding of the material being studied, namely procedural text material. The tests carried out to test this knowledge are objective tests and essays. The material tested on the test relates to the nature of the text, the purpose of the text, the structure of the text, the linguistic features of the text, and the content of the text. This test was given with the aim of knowing the effectiveness of the teaching materials developed by looking at the differences in student learning outcomes who were taught with TBLL-based digital teaching materials containing environmental education (experimental class) with classes whose learning used printed teaching materials (control class). Table 1 displays the findings of the examination of student learning outcomes in the experimental class and the control class.

Based on student learning outcomes (reading skills), the average value of learning outcomes in the experimental class (83.33), which is taught with TBLL-based digital teaching resources, is greater than the value of learning outcomes in the control class (69.00). In addition, prior to evaluating the hypothesis, the requirements analysis test is conducted. Normality and homogeneity tests are conducted during the investigation of test criteria. The test for normalcy was conducted using SPSS 17. The results of the normalcy test are displayed in the Table 2.

Based on the output Table 2, the df value (degrees of freedom) for the experimental class group and the control class group are 30 students each. This means that the number

Table 1. Learning outcomes

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Learning Outcomes	Experiment Class	30	83.83	8.375	1.529
	Control Class	30	69.00	10.700	1.953

Table 2. Test of normality

Group		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Learning Outcomes	Experiment Class	.169	30	.028	.933	30	.059
	Control Class	.133	30	.184	.941	30	.099

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 3. Test of homogenity of varience

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.640	1	58	.110

of data samples for each group is less than 50, so to determine the normality of the data using the Shaporo-Wilk technique. Based on the Shapiro-Wilk technique, Sig. For the experimental class of 0.059 and for the control class of 0.099. Because Sig. Both groups < 0.05, as a result, based on the normality test, it is possible to conclude that the data regarding student learning outcomes are not regularly distributed. Next is the homogeneity test, which is depicted in the Table 3.

Table 4. Idependent sample t-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differenc e	Std. Error Differenc e	Lower	Upper
Learning Outcomes	Equal variances assumed	2.640	.110	5.979	58	.000	14.833	2.481	9.868	19.799
	Equal variances not assumed			5.979	54.837	.000	14.833	2.481	9.861	19.805

Based on the output Table 3, it is known that the significance value (Sig) is 0.110 > 0.05; so it can be concluded that the variance of the control class and the experimental class is the same or homogeneous. Because the data were normally distributed and homogeneous, it can be concluded that an independent sample t test was employed to assess the differences between the control group and the experimental group in terms of student learning outcomes. The table below presents the results of the independent sample t test using the SPSS 17 test outcomes.

The basis for making decisions on the Independent Sample T Test is as follows. (1) If Sig. (2 tailed) > 0.05 then H0 is accepted or Ha is rejected, which means that there is no difference in the average student learning outcomes between the experimental class and the control class. (2) If Sig. (2 tailed) < 0.05 then H0 is rejected or Ha is accepted, which means that there is a difference in the average student learning outcomes between the experimental class group and the control class group.

Based on the output table "Independent Sample Test" in the "Assumption of the same variance" it is known that the value of Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.000 < 0.05, as a result, based on the independent sample t-test, it is possible to conclude that either H0 is rejected or Ha is accepted, indicating that there is a difference in the average student learning outcomes between experimental class groups using digital-based teaching resources. Task relative to the control group (Table 4).

4   Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, it was determined that Task Based Language Learning (TBLL)-based digital teaching materials utilized in online distance learning were beneficial for reading instruction. This is consistent with prior research indicating that digital teaching tools and Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) impact students' reading abilities. Chalak (2015) discovered that pupils who utilized TBLT had a higher level of reading comprehension than those who utilized conventional approaches. In addition, pupils with a high command of grammar who were taught with TBLT had greater reading comprehension scores than those treated with conventional approaches [52]. Similarly, Madhkhan & Mousavi (2017) examined the effect of Task-Based Language Teaching

(TBLT) on the reading comprehension performance of Iranian EFL students. The results demonstrated that TBLT had a much greater impact on students' reading performance than conventional reading instruction. In addition, the second sort of work examined in this study, namely reading, taking notes, and discussing, was found to be more helpful for enhancing students' reading skills [53].

Setayesh and Marzban (2017) investigated the influence of TBLT on the growth of ESP Reading Comprehension Skills among Iranian EFL students. According to the outcomes of his study, TBLT can improve the ESP reading skills of kids. The findings of this study can be applied in many second/foreign language teaching and learning scenarios to facilitate and improve the language learning process [54]. In addition, Chen & Wang (2019) reported that the application of TBLT in Chinese English teaching classes was highly effective and advantageous for the development of Chinese English learners. The TBLT framework can be viewed as a factor in the reconfiguration of the current pedagogy and curriculum. Therefore, TBLT should be well-structured and planned within the curriculum, offering a variety of instructional purposes to lessen students' resistance [55].

In addition to TBLT, digital instructional tools have a substantial impact on reading acquisition. According to the International Reading Association (2009) and Common Core State Standards (2010), educators are responsible for incorporating new literacy and technology, as well as the skills and strategies required to use new digital technologies, into the language arts curriculum in order to prepare students for the future of literacy. According to Anderson (2018), e-readers are not a substitute for traditional books, but rather an effective addition that enables students to use digital tools (technology) to become avid readers. Utilizing digital tools for the first time is merely one of several methods for engaging students in reading. A descriptive case study records the experiences of participants using e-readers, illustrates the perceived benefits for diverse users, and provides information to teachers who include these digital tools [56].

Reviewing and synthesizing current concepts and research findings on digital reading in the context of EFL, Pardede (2019) provides a firmer theoretical foundation for the use of digital texts in reading comprehension programs. He argued that digital text technology has evolved, and the ever-increasing volume of digital text necessitates the development of new comprehension skills and techniques [57]. In accordance with this, Gavel (2021) describes numerous ways in which authentic task-based learning resources can be utilized. By employing this method, reading classes are dynamic, engaging, and efficient [58]. Samosa, Ilagan, Ballaran, Margallo, and Sunga (2021) used PowToon as an innovative teaching tool to improve students' reading comprehension and story analysis skills. According to the study's findings, these instructional resources were successful in enhancing and strengthening students' reading comprehension and fluency [59].

5   Conclusion

On the basis of research and discussion, it was determined that teaching materials must be adapted to the needs of students and the contemporary environment. As a learning alternative, it is possible to create digital teaching resources based on TBLL. Digital teaching materials are developed using the i-Spring application and linked to the Edmodo

application so that learning can be done online. The products that have been developed are validated and tested in the classroom. Based on the results of the study, it was shown that the developed product was effectively used to improve students' reading skills. This digital teaching material is expected to be an alternative for teachers in language learning, especially in learning to read. Although learning is carried out face-to-face, digital teaching materials can be used for students because the advantages can be read anywhere and anytime using a mobile device that is easy to carry.

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