

TWO-TENSE FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING ENGLISH TENSE FORMULAS: A ONE-GROUP PRETEST–POSTTEST STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose Learning English tense formulas can be challenging for Indonesian learners because English verb forms encode grammatical distinctions that are not expressed in the same way in Indonesian. This study examined whether a constructivist instructional sequence supported by an online visual presentation could improve university students' mastery of commonly taught sixteen tense formulas. Design Methodology Approach A one group pre experimental pretest posttest design was implemented with twenty eight students enrolled in a university wide English course at Musi Charitas Catholic University. Participants completed an open response test requiring affirmative sentence formulas for sixteen tense patterns. The intervention comprised three class meetings. Initial construction of a sixteen tense framework, explanation through a two tense present and past conceptual distinction, and guided practice. Prezi was used to present the material. Because Shapiro Wilk tests indicated non normal score distributions, pretest and posttest scores were compared using the Wilcoxon signed rank test. Findings The reported mean score increased from eleven point thirty nine with a standard deviation of eleven point seventy three before instruction to ninety eight point ninety three with a standard deviation of two point thirty four after instruction. The Wilcoxon test indicated a statistically significant difference, with a Z value of negative four point six four three and a p value below zero point zero zero one. The reported score distributions also became substantially less dispersed after the intervention. Research Implications The findings are consistent with the proposition that organizing tense formulas through a conceptual framework may support learners' restructuring of grammatical knowledge. However, the single group design does not isolate the effects of constructivism from those of the digital medium, instruction, or repeated testing. Practical Implications Teachers may adapt the two tense organizing framework and a zoomable visual presentation to make relationships among tense formulas more explicit, while checking whether learners can use the forms in meaningful communication. Originality Value The study provides classroom based evidence from Indonesian university learners for a compact, technology supported approach to organizing tense form knowledge..

Keywords: constructivist learning; English tense formulas; Prezi; pre-experimental study; university EFL

1. INTRODUCTION

English tense forms are often taught as a set of formulaic patterns, yet learners may struggle to select and construct them accurately. For Indonesian learners, the challenge can include mapping English verb morphology and auxiliary structures onto a first language that does not mark tense through an equivalent system of verb inflection. Research on EFL learners has documented persistent difficulty with tense-form recognition and use, including the influence of first-language patterns and confusion among verb forms (Tsai, 2017; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013).

The pedagogical challenge is not only how many tense patterns learners can memorize, but how clearly they understand the structural relationships among subject, auxiliary, and lexical verb. A presentation that treats each pattern as an isolated rule may encourage fragmented recall. A conceptual framework, by contrast, can help learners compare patterns, identify recurring components, and connect new information with prior knowledge. In this study, a two-tense organizing framework—present and past—was used to explain the traditional set of sixteen tense formulas.

Digital presentation tools may support such organization by making relationships among concepts visually navigable. Evidence comparing Prezi with other presentation modes suggests that the learning effect of a digital tool depends on instructional context rather than on novelty alone (Chou et al., 2015). Therefore, technology is best understood here as a medium for representing and exploring a structured explanation, not as an independent guarantee of learning.

The present study investigated whether a constructivist instructional sequence supported by Prezi was associated with improved mastery of sixteen English tense formulas among students taking a university-wide English course at Musi Charitas Catholic University. The research question was: To what extent did students' test scores differ before and after the instructional intervention? The study hypothesized that posttest scores would be significantly higher than pretest scores.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW / THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A constructivist perspective views learning as the active organization and reconstruction of knowledge rather than the passive reception of isolated facts. In grammar instruction, this perspective encourages learners to connect a new form with prior linguistic knowledge, compare examples, and infer relationships among structures. The instructor's role is to design a sequence of prompts and explanations that supports learners' conceptual work rather than merely asking them to memorize a list of rules. This learner-active orientation is consistent with constructivist accounts of foreign-language teaching and technology-supported learning (Aljohani, 2017; Gitakarma & Tjahyanti, 2012; Liu et al., 2020; Sasan, 2022; Supardan, 2016).

The two-tense framework in this study is an instructional organizing strategy, not a claim that all tense and aspect distinctions in English can be reduced linguistically to two forms. It foregrounds present and past as an entry point for discussing verb forms and auxiliary patterns, while the instructional materials retain the conventional sixteen-form inventory used in the course. This distinction matters: pedagogical simplification can reduce cognitive load, but it should not obscure differences in aspect, temporal reference, or communicative meaning. Linguistic descriptions distinguish tense from aspect and caution against treating pedagogical labels as complete accounts of temporal meaning (Bielak & Pawlak, 2013; Depraetere & Salkie, 2015; Leech & Svartvik, 2013). Related work has examined temporal interlanguage among Taiwanese college EFL learners (Chou & Wu, 2007) and proposed a two-tense alternative for grammar teaching (Stephens & Sanderson, 2022).

Studies of tense instruction have explored visual charts, graphic systems, analogy, sentence-pattern approaches, games, and physical action as ways to make patterns more visible and

memorable (Aki & Rorintulus, 2023; Ferikoğlu, 2018; Hafidah, 2016; Koh, 2021; Song & Lee, 2007; Tsai, 2017; Yoke & Hasan, 2014). Research has documented difficulties with tense forms and sentence construction among EFL learners (Abdulbari & Abdulmalik, 2017; Ahmad, 2011; Garrido & Rosado Romero, 2012; Handayani et al., 2022; Listia & Febriyanti, 2020; Wahyuningtyas & Bram, 2018). Error studies have also considered first-language influence and differences across written text types (Darus & Subramaniam, 2009; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013; Zheng & Park, 2013), while Sriphrom and Ratitamkul (2014) focused on lexical aspect and simple past use.

The present study brings these ideas together in a classroom intervention: students first encounter a broad map of the sixteen formulas, then examine the two-tense organizing concept, and finally practise the patterns. The expected outcome is improved performance on a test of formula construction. The study evaluates immediate test-score change; it does not directly measure communicative competence, long-term retention, or learners' attitudes.

Digital tools and meaningful grammar instruction. Digital tools may help teachers display relationships among grammatical forms and support learner engagement, but their value depends on instructional design rather than novelty alone. Studies have considered teachers' perceptions of ICT in Indonesian EFL contexts, attitudes toward internet integration, and barriers to computer-assisted language learning (Al-Munawwarah, 2014; Bolandifar, 2013; Dashtestani, 2012). Research on Prezi has examined learning performance and student experience (Chou et al., 2015; Ustun, 2019). In this study, Prezi and MindMeister were used as visual supports for organizing the tense framework; the design does not isolate the effect of either tool.

Grammar in context. A formula-focused activity can provide an initial scaffold, but grammar instruction also needs to connect sentence patterns with meaning and communicative purpose. Communicative language teaching emphasizes language use beyond the isolated sentence (Littlewood, 1986), and grammar-in-context approaches similarly argue for connecting grammatical choices to discourse and use (Thakur & Al-Mahrooqi, 2015). Research on English tense errors and sentence-pattern instruction offers relevant background for this balance (Koh, 2021; Garrido & Rosado Romero, 2012). The present study therefore interprets its test results narrowly as performance on affirmative tense-formula construction, not as a direct measure of communicative competence.

Visual and digital supports. The use of visual and multimedia supports in the present intervention is informed by research on graphic representations of tense, visual materials, and digital presentation tools (Aki & Rorintulus, 2023; Blake, 2020; Chou et al., 2015; Ferikoğlu, 2018; Tsai, 2017; Ustun, 2019). Research on teachers' use of ICT and internet-based instruction highlights the importance of teachers' readiness and contextual barriers when integrating technology in EFL classrooms (Al-Munawwarah, 2014; Bolandifar, 2013; Dashtestani, 2012). These sources provide pedagogical context; the current study did not separately test the effect of any single technology.

Grammar, communication, and learning context. Communicative approaches place grammatical knowledge in relation to language use (Littlewood, 1986), and grammar-in-context work argues for attention beyond isolated sentence boundaries (Thakur & Al-Mahrooqi, 2015). Studies of learner errors and tense acquisition reinforce the need to address

both form and use (Chou & Wu, 2007; Garrido & Rosado Romero, 2012; Sriphrom & Ratitamkul, 2014; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013). Other instructional discussions have considered basic sentence patterns and analogical reasoning as possible scaffolds (Koh, 2021; Yoke & Hasan, 2014). Blake (2020) describes an online tense-and-aspect identifier, illustrating another digital resource that could be explored in future instruction.

Research and educational context. The design and interpretation of this classroom study draw on general guidance for educational and quantitative research (Arikunto, 2019; Creswell, 2014; Sugiyono, 2015; Unaradjan, 2019; Yusuf, 2014), while descriptive and inferential results are reported with reference to educational statistics (Ghozali, 2013; Mundir, 2018; Nuryadi et al., 2017). Two additional works in the supplied bibliography address educational development and learning context rather than English tense instruction specifically (Susanto, 2014; Al-Munawwarah, 2014); they are included in the broader bibliography supplied for this paper, but are not treated as direct evidence for the intervention.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Research design and setting. The study used a one-group pre-experimental design with pretest and posttest measurements. It was conducted in the university-wide English course (MKWU) at Misi Charitas Catholic University, Palembang, Indonesia. The report identifies 28 students from the Nursing Study Program, Faculty of Health Sciences, as the experimental class. The class was selected from classes taught by the researcher; accordingly, the report's description of random selection should not be interpreted as individual random assignment to treatment and control groups. The single-group pretest–posttest format was treated as a preliminary classroom evaluation, with no random assignment or comparison group; standard research-design guidance cautions that this design limits causal inference (Creswell, 2014; Arikunto, 2019; Sugiyono, 2015; Unaradjan, 2019; Yusuf, 2014).

Participants and instrument. The participants were 28 university students. The instrument was an open-response test of the affirmative formula for each of sixteen tense patterns. Items were presented in random order. The report does not provide item-level scores, a full scoring rubric, or reliability estimates; these are therefore not inferred in this paper.

Instructional procedure. The intervention involved three meetings. In the first meeting, students constructed an initial framework for the sixteen tense formulas. In the second, the instructor explained the two-tense concept, focusing on present and past as organizing categories. In the third, students completed practice activities. Prezi was used as the main online presentation medium; the report also lists MindMeister among the prepared media. The sequence is summarized in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Sequence of the instructional intervention.

Data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize scores. Shapiro–Wilk tests were used to assess normality; because both tests were reported as significant, a Wilcoxon signed–rank test was used to compare paired pretest and posttest scores. The report records the Wilcoxon statistic as $Z = -4.643$ and the two–tailed significance as .000 in the software output. This is reported conventionally as $p < .001$, not $p = .000$. An approximate effect–size index can be calculated from the reported Z and N ($r = |Z|/\sqrt{N} \approx .88$); this derived value is not a substitute for access to the raw paired data. Descriptive and inferential analyses were interpreted in line with standard educational–statistics references (Ghozali, 2013; Mundir, 2018; Nuryadi et al., 2017).

4. RESULTS

Descriptive results showed a marked increase in test performance after the intervention. The mean rose from 11.39 at pretest to 98.93 at posttest, while the standard deviation decreased from 11.73 to 2.34. The posttest median was 100, and the interquartile range was reported as zero, indicating that at least the middle half of scores was concentrated at the maximum score. Table 1 summarizes the reported descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest Scores

Statistic	Pretest	Posttest
N	28	28
Mean	11.393	98.929
Standard deviation	11.7263	2.3401
Median	6.000	100.000
Minimum–maximum	0–50	94–100
Range	50	6
Interquartile range	17.5	0.0

Note. Values are transcribed from the research report’s SPSS output. Scores are reported on the scale used in the original study.

The Shapiro–Wilk results were significant for both measurements: $W = .837$, $p = .001$ for pretest and $W = .468$, $p < .001$ for posttest. These results indicated that the score distributions departed from normality, supporting the use of a non-parametric paired comparison for the analysis reported here.

Table 2. Normality and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results

Analysis	Statistic	df / N	p
Shapiro–Wilk, pretest	$W = .837$	28	.001
Shapiro–Wilk, posttest	$W = .468$	28	< .001
Wilcoxon signed-rank test	$Z = -4.643$	28	< .001

Note. The original SPSS output displays .000 for posttest normality and the Wilcoxon test; these values are reported as $p < .001$ in accordance with statistical reporting conventions.

The Wilcoxon signed–rank test indicated a statistically significant difference between paired pretest and posttest scores, $Z = -4.643$, $p < .001$. The direction of

the change is consistent with the descriptive statistics, which show substantially higher scores after instruction. Using the reported Z and sample size, the approximate effect-size index is $r \approx .88$. Because raw paired observations and the full test scoring information were not available in the report, further analyses of individual change, confidence intervals, or item-level gains could not be conducted.

5. DISCUSSION

The central finding is a substantial immediate improvement in students' ability to produce the tested tense formulas following the instructional sequence. The result is consistent with the pedagogical rationale for helping learners organize grammar patterns into a connected framework rather than approaching each formula as an isolated rule. The progression from a broad sixteen-form map to a two-tense organizing explanation and guided practice may have made recurring structural components easier to notice and retrieve. It should be situated alongside previous reports of tense-learning difficulties and instructional approaches, rather than read as evidence that one technique will generalize to all learners or settings (Abdulbari & Abdulmalik, 2017; Handayani et al., 2022; Stephens & Sanderson, 2022).

The finding also aligns with work examining visual representations in tense instruction. Tsai (2017) reported benefits associated with comprehensive charts for some tense-form learning outcomes, suggesting that visible organization can support pattern recognition. The present study differs in its combination of a constructivist sequence and a zoomable online presentation; however, because these components were delivered together, the study cannot identify which component contributed most to the score increase. Likewise, Chou et al. (2015) caution indirectly against treating presentation software as a universal solution: tool effects should be interpreted in relation to learning tasks and comparison conditions. Visual scaffolds may take different forms, including graphic systems, comprehensive charts, and multimedia resources (Aki & Rorintulus, 2023; Ferikoğlu, 2018; Tsai, 2017); the present study cannot determine which specific component produced the observed change.

The result should be interpreted in relation to the outcome measured. The test assessed affirmative formula construction for sixteen tense patterns. It did not directly assess whether students could select tense forms appropriately in spontaneous speaking, extended writing, or authentic communicative contexts. The very high posttest mean and zero interquartile range also suggest a possible ceiling effect. Such a distribution demonstrates success on the administered test but limits the instrument's ability to distinguish among higher levels of mastery.

Several design limitations temper causal claims. First, the study had no control group, so improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to the constructivist approach or Prezi. Regular instruction, practice effects, and familiarity with the test may also have contributed. Second, the sample comprised one class of 28 students from a single study program, limiting generalizability. Third, the report does not provide the raw paired scores, scoring rubric, reliability evidence, or a delayed posttest. These omissions prevent independent verification of the scoring process and evaluation of retention. The reported effect should therefore be understood as a strong within-group change in this particular classroom context, not definitive evidence that the combined method outperforms other approaches.

For practice, instructors can use the two-tense framework as a scaffold, provided they subsequently connect formula work to meaning, aspect, time reference, and communicative use. A next-stage study should compare the intervention with a suitable control or comparison class, use a transparent scoring rubric and independent scoring where feasible, and include

delayed and contextualized tasks. Such a design would test whether gains persist and transfer beyond formula recall.

6. CONCLUSION

In this one-group study of 28 university students, scores on a test of sixteen English tense formulas were substantially higher after a three-meeting constructivist instructional sequence supported by Prezi. Mean scores increased from 11.39 to 98.93, and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated a statistically significant pretest-posttest difference ($Z = -4.643$, $p < .001$). The findings suggest that a visual, conceptually organized approach may be useful for introducing tense-form patterns to Indonesian university EFL learners.

The evidence remains preliminary because the study lacked a comparison group and measured immediate formula performance rather than communicative use or long-term retention. Future research should include comparison conditions, report instrument and scoring evidence, and evaluate transfer to speaking and writing. The main contribution of this study is a practical, classroom-tested instructional sequence that can be examined more rigorously in subsequent research.

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