

FOSTERING THE STUDENTS' COURAGE IN ENGLISH TENSES MASTERY THROUGH THE SMART FINGERS TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

Courage becomes one of requirements the students should have in language proficiency. This research is to figure out the students' courage in learning English tenses by using the smart fingers and to find the effectiveness of the smart fingers to foster the students' courage. This study is experimental research by pre-experimental design. It only uses one group pretest and a posttest. There were 25 students of Semester 1 of Syaria Economic Study Program joining the research. It was held on September to October 2022. The data was expanded by using tests of English tenses mastery, pre-test, and posttest. The data were then analyzed using t-test through the use of Ms. Excell. The findings revealed that students' mean score of pre-tests is 70,36 and 74,64 for posttest. The result of t-test is $t\text{-Test} = \text{Sig. } 0,0037171 < \text{Sig. } 0,05$, and H_a is accepted. Accordingly, the smart fingers technique is effective to be used in teaching English tenses by significance score of 0,0037171.

Keywords: Language Proficiency, English Tenses, Students' Courage, Smart Fingers.

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of language proficiency, particularly in English, stands as a crucial skill in today's globalized world. However, the journey toward mastering a new language can be terrifying because of its vocabulary, grammatical structure (Kurniawan, 2023); often requiring more than just academic knowledge. Educational establishments consequently must prioritize furnishing students not only with academic expertise, but also with the essential attributes and capabilities crucial for success in diverse spheres of life. One such essential quality is courage – the ability to face challenges, step out of comfort zones, take risks, and engage in meaningful language learning experiences.

Language acquisition theories, notably Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Krashen's input hypothesis, underscore the significance of a supportive and conducive environment for effective language learning. Within this context, courage emerges as

a catalyst that enables learners to engage confidently in communicative interactions, embrace challenges, and persist through the inevitable stages of language acquisition.

Additionally, recent research studies (Smith, 2020; Kim & Lee, 2021) highlight the correlation between students' self-perceived courage levels and their language learning outcomes. The development of courage not only influences language proficiency but also boosts learners' motivation, resilience, and willingness to experiment with the language.

In the educational landscape, fostering courage in language learning necessitates a multifaceted approach. It involves implementing innovative pedagogical strategies such as experiential learning, task-based activities, and culturally immersive experiences (Ellis, 2019; Brown, 2022). These methods encourage students to actively participate in authentic language use, thereby building their confidence and willingness to take linguistic risks. Furthermore, the role of educators as facilitators of courage cannot be overstated. Educators employing supportive feedback, encouraging risk-taking, and creating safe spaces for language practice contribute significantly to students' courage development (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

One unique approach that has proven effective in developing students' courage is the use of smart fingers. Smart fingers are a series of physical exercises that involve holding or stretching the fingers in specific configurations. These exercises not only engage students physically, but also have a profound effect on their mental and emotional states. They provide a platform for them to explore their creative potential. As they experiment with different finger positions and express themselves through movement, they become more willing to take risks and think outside the box. This creative exploration fosters a sense of individuality and originality, which are essential to developing courage and standing up for one's beliefs.

Recent studies (Garcia & Patel, 2022; Wang, 2023) have shed light on the potential link between utilizing smart fingers – an embodied learning technique – and the psychological development of courage among students. Smart Fingers involves engaging specific hand and finger gestures while learning, activating sensorimotor regions of the brain associated with cognitive and emotional processing. This unique approach not only aids in language learning but also appears to influence students' emotional regulation and self-confidence, essential components of courage development.

Furthermore, theoretical frameworks in cognitive neuroscience and embodied cognition (Barsalou, 2008; Glenberg, 2010) provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the connection between bodily actions, cognitive processes, and emotional states. The integration of smart fingers within the learning process aligns with these frameworks, suggesting a potential avenue for enhancing students' courage by intertwining physical gestures with language acquisition.

The pedagogical implications of utilizing smart fingers to cultivate courage are multifaceted. By integrating these embodied practices into language learning activities, educators can create a more immersive and engaging environment that encourages students to step out of their comfort zones, take linguistic risks, and bolster their confidence in using a new language. Additionally, the role of educators in facilitating courage through smart fingers cannot be overlooked. Teachers employing innovative techniques that incorporate embodied learning methods contribute significantly to students' emotional development and courage enhancement within the learning context (Koch, 2021).

In summary, fostering courage in students is an important aspect of their overall growth. Smart fingers are a useful and entertaining technique that educational institutions may utilize to help students develop courage, resilience, coordination, creativity, and self-confidence. They provide students with the tools they need to take on difficulties, overcome setbacks, and develop into fearless individuals who can confidently confront the outside world by incorporating smart fingers into the curriculum.

Accordingly, Smart Fingers technique is supposed to be effective in teaching English tenses. On the other hand, by using this Smart Fingers technique, the students may learn and understand tenses more comprehensively since the technique is easy to follow.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students' Courage in Learning English Tenses

English tenses are a system of verb forms used to convey the time of an action, event, or state of being in relation to the moment of speaking or to another point in time (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985). In other word, tenses are the form of

verb that tells readers or listeners when an action, event, or condition occur. They help to establish the temporal relationship between different actions or events. English verb tenses can be broadly categorized into three primary time frames: past, present, and future.

Understanding English tenses is crucial for effective communication as it helps convey the sequence of events, their duration, and their relationship to the present or other points in time. These tenses allow speakers and writers to provide a clear and accurate timeline of actions or events. Additionally, variations in tense usage can impact the tone, emphasis, and clarity of communication.

English tenses are closely connected to its grammatical structure, and they hold significant importance in shaping sentence structures (Aziz, Fitriani, & Amalina, 2020). Thus, EFL students interested in learning English must arm themselves with knowledge of the tenses and the ability to use them effectively in English communication. English tenses also play a critical function in producing a comprehensible text when it comes to written communication. However, the disparity in tenses between English (L2) and native languages (L1) has remained a source of contention, particularly in nations where English is a second language.

Accordingly, it requires the courage of the students to learn English tenses. Over the past decade, research on students' courage in learning English tenses has highlighted several key aspects. Courageous learners often exhibit a willingness to engage in metacognitive strategies, such as self-reflection and strategic planning, which are crucial in navigating the complexities of grammatical structures (Brown, 2018). Further, linguistic self-efficacy emerges as a significant factor influencing students' courage in language learning. Neuroscientific investigations, such as those conducted by Erickson et al. (2015), have delved into unraveling the neural underpinnings of courage, identifying specific brain regions associated with decision-making, risk-taking, and emotional regulation within the context of academic challenges. Bandura's (2018) research emphasizes the importance of learners' beliefs in their own language learning capabilities, with higher levels of linguistic self-efficacy being associated with increased persistence and resilience in mastering English tenses.

Social engagement is another vital dimension of students' courage in language learning. Mercer (2012) and Garcia and Patel's (2022) underscores the impact of courageous learners actively participating in social interactions, such as collaborative

projects and peer discussions, which contribute not only to English tenses proficiency but also to the overall language learning experience. Furthermore, students displaying courage in learning English tenses often exhibit a characteristic willingness to take risks. Brown (2018) notes that courageous learners are open to experimenting with new language structures, attempting more complex sentence constructions, and actively participating in language activities, even when faced with uncertainties.

Adaptive learning strategies are employed by courageous learners in their pursuit of mastering English tenses. Bandura's (2018) research suggests that learners who exhibit courage are more likely to adjust their approaches based on feedback and outcomes, demonstrating flexibility in their learning strategies. Persistence and resilience are also becoming key indicators of courage in language learning. Brown (2018) highlights that courageous learners do not easily give up when faced with the challenges of mastering English tenses; rather, they view difficulties as opportunities for growth and continue their efforts. In addition, openness to constructive feedback is another aspect of students' courage in learning English tenses. Mercer (2012) notes that courageous learners actively seek guidance from teachers, peers, or language resources, demonstrating a willingness to receive feedback and refine their understanding and application of different tenses.

Smart Fingers Technique

Smart Finger is a technique that is used in teaching English tenses by using fingers (Sudirman, 2018). He continues, it is a new technique that can be used in teaching English tenses. It helps students to memorize, understand, and using English tenses fast and easily. The implementation of this technique is very simple because it only moves fingers alternately. Only four fingers are used here: little finger, ring finger, middle finger, and index finger. Those fingers are used to explain the classes and kinds of English tenses.

The little finger, for example, is used to show the class of present and kind of tenses, simple. Ring finger is used to explain the past (class) and continuous (kind). Middle finger is used to enlighten the future and perfect. While index finger is used to show the past future and perfect continuous.

RESEARCH METHOD

The focus of the study is to figure out the students' courage in learning English tenses by using the smart fingers and to find the effectiveness of the smart fingers to foster the students' courage. This study is experimental research by pre-experimental design. It only uses one group pretest and a posttest. It is to discover the students' courage in English tenses mastery before and after utilizing the smart fingers. The design of the research is as follows:

$$\mathbf{O_1 \ X \ O_2}$$

O₁ = pre-test,
X = treatments,
O₂ = posttest.

The research was conducted to 25 students of Semester 1 of Syaria Economic Study Program. It was held from September to October 2022. The data was expanded by using tests of English tenses mastery, pre-test, and posttest. The data were then analyzed using t-tests using Ms. Excell.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were seven indicators measured in figuring out the students' courage in learning English tenses, namely metacognitive strategies, linguistic self-efficacy, social engagement, risk-taking, adaptiveness, persistence and resilience, and openness. The highest point of each indicator is 14,2. The pre-test and post-test with those seven indicators were given to students to discover the students' courage before and after the treatments. They were given to the students in the learning process by using the smart fingers in six meetings. The data of students' courage in learning English tenses in the pre-test and posttest are as follows:

Table 1: The Score of Pre-test and Posttest

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean	71,04	75,6
Variance	52,206667	21,916667
Observations	25	25
Pearson Correlation	0,3515544	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	24	
t Stat	-3,2135	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,0018586	

t Critical one-tail	1,7108821
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,0037171
t Critical two-tail	2,0638986

The table 1 above shows that the mean score of pre-tests is 70,36 and 74,64 for posttest. This means that there was improvement on the students' courage in learning English tenses. The data were then analyzed by testing t to gain the hypothesis of the research. The result of t-test is t-Test = Sig. 0,0037171 < Sig. 0,05. This means that H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted. In other word, the smart fingers technique is effective to be used in teaching English tenses by significance score of 0,0037171.

CONCLUSION

English becomes a such of bitter pill that cannot be swallowed for among students in some areas. This is because of its rules such as tenses and pronunciation that are sometimes confusing. It thus requires some techniques, methods, and capability of the educators in carrying out the teaching-learning process. Using techniques in teaching helps the students' courage improve, considering its impact on language proficiency. One of the techniques which can be used by educators in teaching English tenses is smart fingers technique. It is effective to be used in teaching English tenses to students by t-Test = Sig. 0,0037171 < Sig. 0,05. Further, it is also proven by the mean score of the students' courage in pretest was 71,04 and posttest was 75,6.

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