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# Students' Perceptions and Engagement in Technology-Mediated Task Based Language Teaching (TMTBLT): A Thematic Analysis

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**Abstract**

Technology-mediated task-based language teaching (TMTBLT) has garnered more attention from educators over the past fifteen years. Although some teachers have exercised its effectiveness in language classes, little-known studies have centered on students' perspectives and their learning engagement with technology-mediated task-based language teaching (TMTBLT). The present study aims to investigate students' perceptions and engagement in technology-mediated task-based language teaching (TMTBLT). Thirty students from a management program at a university in Indonesia were interviewed using a semi-structured interview. Thematic analysis was performed using Braun & Clark's (2006) Sevan steps. The analysis resulted in five main themes: *positive perception*, *negative perception*, *motivation*, *learning awareness*, and *classroom interaction*. The participants felt that the use of technology helped them learn English easier. They also reported that discussing with peers and teachers became more enjoyable, and they gained greater self-confidence in learning. It was also revealed that all four types of engagement were basically interconnected. The findings show that most students show positive attitudes toward TMTBLT and increased their behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive engagement.

Keywords: *Engagement, TBLT, Technology-mediated task-based language teaching*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past fifteen years, a new trend has emerged called technology mediated task-based language teaching (TMTBLT) (Chong & Reinder, 2020). It emerges as a response of digital era by incorporating technology with task-based language teaching principles. Unlike technology-enhanced learning, technology mediated TBLT curriculum is based on the full integration of technology and tasks (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). It still strongly manifests communicative activities that can accompany more traditional form-focused approaches (Ellis, 2009) to more authentic everyday life activities that reflect real-world activities and interactions (Long, 1985, 1996). With the aim of achieving communicative competence and technology utilization, TMTBLT is seen as the ideal alternative of the traditional English teaching method (such as PPP-Presentation, Practice, Production) for today's digital generation.

The PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) approach is one of the most desired technique in Indonesian language instruction (Sofan, 2017; Sugiharti, 2016), but is not always effective. PPP is utilized because it is appropriate for the Indonesian setting, which involves high class sizes and aims to assist students in passing the exam (Arifin et al., 2019). PPP sees language as a collection of things that can be learned sequentially as accumulating entities, however SLA research demonstrates that language learners do not learn a language in this manner (Widyantoro, 2019)**.** PPP's lack of a firm foundation in second language acquisition (SLA) theory, linearity, behaviorism, and inability to take into account learners' developmental readiness phases make it unlikely to succeed in teaching taught forms (Parviz Maftoon & Saeid Najafi Sarem, 2015)**.** All these results cast doubt on the PPP method's effectiveness and show that TBLT must be used in actual practice.

Since the adaptation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the communicative competence has always become the central of English curriculum in Indonesia. Indonesian government recognizes English's global importance by requiring English in more schools, from elementary to university (Zacharias, 2013). Nevertheless, Indonesian students' English proficiency remains low despite years of study (Melvina & Julia, 2021). University students have learned English for 12 years, but few learn basic communication skills for job or life (Renandya et al., 2018). To address the issue, other Asian countries facing the same problems, such as China and Japan, have turned to task-based language teaching (TBLT) (Littlewood, 2007). It is increasingly being seen as a potential replacement for antiquated language education models that no longer result in graduates who are self-assured, proficient

communicators in the English language, capable of analysis and critical thinking (Littlewood, 2007).

Although aiming to develop communicative competence, Indonesia has never formally adapted TMTBLT's curriculum (Arif Ismail, 2017). Several practitioners, however, have expressed interest in implementing task-based language teaching (TBLT) in the Indonesian educational setting and some studies conducted (Arif Ismail, 2017; Maulana, 2021; Muzaki, 2021; Prianty et al., 2021; Sabaruddin & Melati, 2022; Sholeh et al., 2021; Somawati et al., 2019). However, still there have been few studies on TBLT and TMTBLT in Indonesia (Pohan et al., 2016) which runs counter to calls for its implementation there**.** In addition, as a western model being implemented in Asian context, TMTBLT is not always easy to be implemented. Ismail (2017) asserts that Indonesian students tend to be passive, in contrast to western students who are expected to demonstrate critical thinking during the learning process. The teachers are the only ones allowed to talk in class, in the students' eyes, as the teachers are the most knowledgeable. As a result, it makes the students so reliant on the teacher that they lack the confidence to speak out in class or voice their ideas. As a result, there is minimal student interaction in the classroom. Therefore, investigating students' perceptions and engagement in their language classroom under TMTBLT model is necessary to seek the best implementation of it. Another important factor is that most literature focus on examining students' perceptions and engagement on certain types of technology that support students' language learning rather than the combination of 'task' and technology support students' language development in classroom (Smith & González-Lloret, 2021; Ziegler, 2016; González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014).

Henceforth, to bridge the gap in the literature review, this study aims to enrich the understanding of students' perceptions and engagement learning with TMTBLT in Indonesian context. Two research questions have been developed to achieve the aim:

RQ1: What are the learners' perceptions of technology mediated Task-Based Language Teaching (TMTBLT)?

RQ2: How do students engage in their English learning under technology mediated Task-Based Language Teaching (TMTBLT) model?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A New Trend: Technology Mediated Task-Based Language Teaching (TMTBLT)

Our modern reality is being defined by incredible technological advancements, which have an impact on how we approach society, plan, and advance education (Cilliers, 2017). Many students have grown up in schools and universities, at least in the majority of the western world, surrounded by computers, laptops, and a variety of technologically advanced communication tools that facilitate personal, portable, wireless networked communication (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). Today's students view cellphones, tablets, and e-books as necessary for their daily lives (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). Generations z and alpha are regarded as "technology literate" generations (Tafonao et al., 2020). This age tends to be more personalized and easily bored because they are conversant with technology and devices (Tafonao et al., 2020). Given these distinctive qualities, educators are expected to create lesson plans that consider the needs of their students, with a special focus on creative ways to incorporate technology into the teaching and learning of languages.

Technology mediated task-based language teaching is a method of curriculum design that can be very useful for educating and harnessing the potential of technological advancements for language learning (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). This method uses technology to facilitate task-based language instruction (TMTBLT). The task can be defined as a "workplan" for language learning or teaching that includes input (i.e., knowledge students are supposed to absorb and apply) and instructions on the aim students are expected to attain (Ellis, 2000). Students can learn a language in an engaging and enjoyable way using technology, such as smart phones, computers, digital games, software and licenses, social media, and many others to avoid becoming easily bored. TMTBLT offers students the chance to engage in a more meaningful individual learning process through assignments that teachers can flexibly adapt, in addition to its communicative and communal qualities. In line with the purpose mentioned, González-Lloret and Ortega (2014) propose five principles of TMTBLT: (1) meaning-oriented (2) a clearly defined outcome other than language (3) the task should adapt resources to students' needs (4) the task should be authentic and (5) tasks should involve cycles of reflection to engage learners in intellectual knowledge and personal growth.

## Theories of TMTBLT

The theories of TMTBLT are rooted from second language acquisition theory. There are various theories that underpin TBLT, but this research mainly focuses on the two major division of SLA perspectives: cognitive and social theory (Myles, 2012).

### *Cognitive Theory*

Cognitive theory describes how students arrange, interpret, and retrieve information (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). Connectionism and symbolism are cognitive paradigms (Hulstijn, 2003). Connectionism holds that language development is the result of billions of associations made during language use, which produce predictable patterns in learner performance that may appear to be rules but are actually frequency-based associations preferences (Myles, 2012). Language is a set of probabilistic patterns that learners regularly activate to improve (Nelson, 2013). Unlike connectionism, symbolism views language as symbols and laws (Ellis, 2015). In terms of learning, symbolism uses an information processing model that examines how different memory stores—including Short-Term Memory (STM) and Long-Term Memory (LTM)—and handles new L2 (second language) information and how it is automated and reorganized through reiterant activation (Myles, 2012). Automaticity drives L2 development, and retrieval improves it (Ertmer & Newby, 2013)The cognitive method also views development as U-shaped rather than linear (Ramscar & Yarlett, 2007). As more complex material replaces less complex information, performance declines, then rises once students master it (McLaughlin, 1990).

### *Social Theory*

The dominant cognitive paradigm was "individualistic and mechanical" and "failed to consider the interactional and sociolinguistic components of language (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Learning requires social engagement, according to the "social turn" social philosophy (Ellis, 2015). This theory's interactionist, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural branches share the same concept, however they emphasize different elements (Myles, 2012). They all regard language as integrated in its social and interactional environment and are interested in how context affects research issues depending on their conceptual framework (Myles, 2012). Sociolinguists suggest social and pragmatic norms and practices are often learned later in life, making them difficult for L2 learners to grasp (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2008; Richards & Sampson, 2015). Interactionists argue that input, output, and negotiation help language learning (Robinson et al., 2013). Input is considered linguistic "data" that initiates acquisition and often

underpins negotiation and output (Han & Ellis, 2019). This reflects TBLT's real-world assignment feedback.

In the context of language learning, sociocultural theory is viewed more as a synthesis of cognitive and social factors (Han & Ellis, 2019)**.** According to sociocultural theory, learning occurs through the process of interaction rather than through interaction itself (Ellis, 2000). Learners internalize a new activity after successfully completing it with assistance so they can carry it out alone (Ellis, 2013). As a result, fostering linkages between students and their local community and culture expedites the growth of their linguistic skills (Vygotsky, 1980 cited in Ellis, 2013). As suggested by TBLT, it emphasizes the significance of authentic materials and meaningful context for facilitating learning.

As a social theory that places interaction and environment as the foundation for language development, TBLT concentrates on interaction. This is the rationale behind the strong focus placed on group activities and independent interaction with rich input (Ellis, 2013). The primary goal of TBLT is to promote meaningful engagement, with students' attention being called to language form when needed (Ashraf et al., 2014)**.** There are "output-prompting" tasks that encourage students to talk or write in addition to "input providing" tasks (Ellis, 2013). Additionally, interaction encourages knowledge sharing, which helps learners negotiate meaning. According to the interaction theory, meaning negotiation offers learners the chance to produce modified output and intelligible input, both of which are essential for language development (Edwards & Willis, 2004). In particular, Long (1983b, 1996) contends that information interchange affords students the chance to get feedback on the depth of their L2 knowledge. A positive setting for the negotiation of meaning is created as a result of the students' attention to the feedback (both input and output), which "serves as the means by which learners' 'data needs' can be effectively met" (Ellis, 2000). It is believed that "tasks" can encourage meaning negotiation and so contribute to developing the conditions needed for language development (Edwards & Willis, 2004). The principle of information gap, which is incorporated into the 'tasks' in TBLT, is especially conducive to meaning negotiation. To put it another way, TBLT encourages input, output, and negotiation—three things that are crucial to the social learning theory. Additionally, the idea of authenticity is imposed by interactions between students and their surroundings. Real-world tasks are meant to provide "situational authenticity," which is what is needed in TBLT for students' language development**.** situational authenticity is tasks that are genuine examples of what the learners can be expected to have to

do outside the classroom (Bygate, 2016). Furthermore, this automaticity is designed to help learners get used to the functional language of the real-life situation of L2.

**Types of Engagement**

There are four or more dimensions of engagement proposed by experts, but this dissertation will mainly focus on four dimensions of engagement such as behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive and social engagement (Baralt et al., 2016)**.**

Positive attitude and participation in academic work, time spent on task, and involvement in academic and extracurricular activities are all examples of behavioral engagement (Zhang, 2020). This encompasses behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. Due to its perceived ease of operationalization and measurement and direct observability, this kind of engagement is frequently evaluated (Nguyen et al., 2018)**.** In addition, Nguyen et al. (2018) offer three dimensions of behavioral engagement, the first of which is related to how students behave in relation to norms, expectations, or rules in the classroom or school. The most evident example of pupils abiding by school standards is their wearing of proper uniforms in accordance with the regulations. The second dimension focuses on students' involvement in school-related activities, including their involvement at school or in the classroom, such as their enthusiasm for participating in extracurricular activities or their active engagement in class (A. R. Anderson et al., 2004)**.** The students' interest in their academic assignment, which is measured by the outward behaviors they display to demonstrate their want to participate in classroom activities and their willingness to master difficult subject, is the final dimension (Birch & Ladd, 1997)**.** Examples of behavioral engagement in L2 learning include learners' initiative during interactions, duration spent on task, amount of semantic information created while on task, and perseverance on task without assistance or direction (Philp & Duchesne, 2016)**.**

Another type of engagement is emotional engagement, which frequently shows up in learners' subjective feelings as they engage in activities or tasks using the target language (Hiver et al., 2021). When it comes to language, related learning tasks, and peers, emotionally engaged learners are described as having a "positive, intentional, willing, and independent disposition" (Svalberg, 2009). Students who demonstrate positive emotions, for instance, display happiness, zeal, and situational curiosity. On the other hand, if they exhibit negative emotions, students may become bored, irritated, anxious, etc. (Oga-Baldwin, 2019). Given this, emotions are a fundamental aspect of all human beings and can be a key component of

language development. The subjective attitudes or impressions that students bring to a class or through language-related tasks are essential to the other dimensions of engagement, therefore it also affects those (Henry & Thorsen, 2020)**.** Consequently, one of the options for teachers to assist pupils in learning language at their best is to provide support and inspiration by all methods possible.

The term "cognitive engagement" describes the effort and energy that students put forth when learning (Hiver et al., 2021). Students eventually retain and learn what they think about since active thought is what creates memories (Willingham, 2008)**.** Cognitive engagement covers topics like verbal displays, peer interactions, students' questioning, hesitancy, and repetition, as well as areas like presenting solutions, sharing ideas, giving feedback, giving instructions, informing, and explaining (Hiver et al., 2021). Another illustration of a learner's cognitive engagement is completing a task or assignment on time, responding to challenges in the classroom, doing their homework, or making a clear effort to learn (Zhang, 2020). Cognitive engagement pertains to metacognitive methods, which involve students being aware of their learning, using learning techniques, and monitoring and evaluating their learning, in addition to memory use (Blumenfeld et al., 2012).

The quality of these social connections, as well as the social forms of activity and involvement that are prevalent in communities of language learning and usage, are used to describe the social side of engagement (Mercer, 2019). When taking into account that the social component is expressly relational in character and that its goal is interaction with and support of others, it can be separated from other forms of involvement (Hiver et al., 2021). Interaction or connection between students and professors, including active participation in class discussions, readiness to follow directions during role-playing exercises, participation in group activities, and giving and accepting criticism, is based on social engagement (Novash, 2022). While support from teachers and peers helps to determine levels of fear and delight and to secure participation through the method of interaction in this context, social engagement promotes good emotional engagement (Mihai et al., 2022)**.**

**How TMBLT Facilitates Learners' Engagement**

TMTBLT improves students' social and cognitive engagement. Tasks delivered by "technology" are the foundation of technology-mediated task-based language training. One of the examples is email tandem learning. Tandem learning is a situation in which two native speakers of different languages routinely communicate with one another with the aim of one

acquiring the other's language (O'Rourke, 2005). Appel and Guerrero (2006) reported on a two-month study that contrasted the language production of email tandem pairs on tasks presented to them with that of pairings who were not. They discovered that students who were given assignments created more language and were more consistent in their language production, the frequency of their tandem partner exchanges, and their desire in continuing their exchanges. Another study is about augmented reality (AR) which makes use of virtual objects or information overlaying real-world objects or environments and is a part of web 4.0 development (Chen & Wright, 2017). his technology can enhance learning experiences by allowing virtual objects and real-world environments to coexist in meaningful ways (Dunleavy et al., 2009). Moreover using mobile augmented reality (AR) in a variety of writing tasks increased the creation of descriptive language (Reinders et al., 2015).

Both studies make the most of the capabilities of technology to promote the production of written language while utilizing real-world or authentic sources. Via a series of tasks, email, and mobile AR both impair cognitive and communication processes. The fundamental idea of email tandem language learning is to support autonomy, which calls for the learner to take initiative and control over their own language learning in this situation (Little & Brammerts, 1996). The fundamental driving force for increased language creation in the classroom has become autonomy. This is consistent with the concept of cognitive engagement, which calls for students to be more mindful of their academic work (Blumenfeld et al., 2012). Mobile AR platforms enable embodied interaction in physical and virtual worlds, emphasizing the formative role of the environment in when cognitive development a tightly coupled system evolves from direct conversations between individuals and their surroundings (Kim, 2013). AR also helps language production by linking language learning to the broader environment outside the classroom. With information in the target language about that environment, teachers can scaffold learners' linguistic interactions in or around that environment as they access, respond to, or assimilate this information based on their own experiences (Reinders et al., 2015; Shirazi & Behzadan, 2015).

Since mobile AR and email both attach real-world content, learners' social engagement also rises because of these strategies. Along with promoting autonomy, email tandem language learning emphasizes the reciprocity principle, which emphasizes the necessity of both learners contributing equally to the communication (Little & Brammerts, 1996). Because there is a sense of needs among speakers, it enforces active communication among students, whether in group projects or classroom discussions (Novash, 2022). Like desktop AR, mobile AR offers

scaffolding through peer engagement and cultural context alteration because of authentic materials incorporated. Such activities fit in nicely with a task-based framework where the focus is on engaging activities with some connection to the actual world and a real communication goal (Ellis, 2003)**.** Students are nuanced in their active involvement due to the scaffolding and interaction. This kind of active participation is a typical benefit of social technology like AR (Thomas & Reinders, 2010).

Moreover, TMTBLT promotes behavioral and emotional engagement. Students were more motivated and engaged while completing writing activities utilizing technology, according to a study that employed TMTBLT to improve students' writing skills (Ahmad et al., 2020). This is consistent with Munoz's (2016) findings, which unambiguously showed that the usage of appropriate technology, such blogs in L2 classrooms, may raise students' motivation levels. When using technology, students in both studies express enthusiasm and joy, which encourages them to use the second language more frequently. The excitement and satisfaction experienced while learning are indications of positive affective responses to learning, which encourage participants to engage in activities or tasks involving the target language (Hiver et al., 2021). The source of all other engagement dimensions, including the one that in this situation results in behavioral engagement, is emotional engagement (Hiver et al., 2021). These two studies demonstrate how incentive encourages language learning "actions" such freely providing peer criticism or suggestions or sharing knowledge with other friends.

## METHOD

### Setting and Sample

Participants in the study were students enrolled in one of the management programs at Bumigora University. The students were in their second semester of learning English. They should meet requirements, such as being 18 years or older at a university in Indonesia and having experience learning English using TMTBLT. However, since it is not a common method in Indonesian educational curriculum (Ismail, 2017), the researcher made a lesson plan to be applied before students were interviewed. The researcher designed the lesson plan based on the technology-mediated task criteria proposed by Gonzalez-Loret (2014), such as a primary focus on meaning; goal orientation; learner-centeredness; holism; and reflective learning. The lecturer then employed it in the first meeting of the English class at the end of February. The following week, 30 students were interviewed.

***Data Collection***

The research method for gathering data was a semi-structured interview. Due to the distance between the researcher and the participants, the interview was conducted online through Zoom. The interview consisted of eight main questions which evaluate students' perceptions and four types of engagement proposed by Baralt et al. (2019), such as cognitive engagement, social engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement. Several probe questions were also followed flexibly based on the circumstances during the interview on the ground of validating or confirming the participants' statements.

***Data Analysis***

Thematic analysis, a technique for investigating, interpreting, and outlining patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), was used to analyses the interview's data. This was chosen because it is a very flexible method which particularly beneficial in researching teaching and learning context (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017) and its suitability for interview technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun & Clarke (2006) provide a six-phase guide for thematic analysis: become familiar with the data, generate initial codes, search for themes, review themes, define themes, and write-up.

Table 1.

*Thematic analysis steps*

| Analytic steps (Braun and Clarke 2006) | Analytic steps of the study |
|---|---|
| Familiarization with the data | Verbatim transcription was carried out with an emphasis on uniformly and methodically transcribing every interview. Since the interview was conducted in Indonesian, the transcript was then translated into English. Each interview was read multiple times, and their first precedes and ideas were individually recorded. |
| Generating initial codes | The researcher started to organize and analyse the data by reducing the complex data into several short sentences/phrases. The abductive method was used in this stage. The narratives that seemed relevant to the research |

| | |
|---|---|
| | questions were coded through each transcript. Then, by using the NVIVO software, the codes were compared, reread, and modified. |
| Themes searching | Themes and sub themes were used to group the codes. Critical analysis was conducted on the variations between the interviews. The applicability of the topics and sub-themes for the goals of the research was also examined. |
| Themes reviewing | After being closely examined to make sure of their fundamental meaning, the first themes that shared a certain pattern of similarities were gathered into one theme. To ensure that during the analysis process, all relevant themes had been recorded, the interview transcripts were once again read through. |
| Defining and naming themes | The researcher's goal in this phase was to determine the quintessence of each theme and the relationships between them. |
| Producing the report | The researcher created narrative explanations which were written in result section (chapter 4) and created a table to report the themes along with some sample narratives. |

Additionally, this study used an abductive technique to avoid limiting the data by the framework, detect developing themes, and allow transition between deductive and inductive approaches (Vila-Henninger, 2019). This study used a framework developed by Baralt et al. (2016) that categorizes student engagement into four kinds to analyses it. It was deemed appropriate because it allows for flexible analysis as opposed to the rigidity of the previous framework and because it allows for significant, previously unrecognized insights to emerge from the data analysis. In other words, abductive research strives for the best sensible solution and practical explanation for phenomena (Thompson, 2022).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Five themes were identified, with a total of twelve subthemes, presented in table 1. The five main themes were *''positive perception''*, ‘’*negative perception'''*, *''motivation''*, *''learning awareness''*, and *''classroom interaction''*.

### Positive Perception

The participants expressed a favorable attitude towards the implementation of technology-mediated task-based language teaching (TMTBLT) in their English classes. Most participants reported that this was their first-time learning with TMTBLT, although others stated that they had learned using this method in high school, specifically during Covid-19. They associated TMTBLT with an e-learning platform. They may not have had TMTBLT-style learning activities, but the learning pattern was comparable, with a series of tasks and technology becoming the core activities. Furthermore, as the foundation of TMTBLT, participants noticed technology as the most beneficial instrument for improving their learning. They also described TMTBLT as a fun and interesting learning method.

### Negative Perception

In general, participants described positive reactions to TMTBLT, but they encountered certain difficulties during the learning process, which led to negative perceptions. This theme relates to the student's perceptions of learning difficulties during their learning with TMTBLT, which is connected to the disadvantages of technology, internal barriers that emerge from within students themselves, and their skepticism concerning TMTBLT. According to the participants, the major obstacle in the use of technology is a lack of access to the internet and pop-up online apps as constant distractors.

### Motivation

Individuals' levels of motivation prior to and after learning with TMTBLT were connected. In other words, the participants were motivated to learn more because of both internal and external factors. Regarding internal factors, participants reported that they had always been driven to study English because they had goals, such as looking for better work opportunities in the future. Some participants also admitted that English is the Lingua Franca and that failing to use it will leave them behind in the global competition. Regarding the external element, participants indicated good attitudes towards the integration of technology and 'task', emphasizing the importance of technology in understanding the lesson.

**Learning Awareness**

Participants in the current study expressed some extent of learning awareness, manifested through being critical of the method, making recommendations for better learning, and employing learning strategies. Participants were engaged in their learning with TMTBLT by reflecting on and evaluating their learning process. It was also discovered that participants put forth suggestions that were directed at the teacher and the technology.

***Classroom Interaction***

Under this notion, participants emphasized the idea of peer interaction and teachers-students interaction. Participants expressed how their linguistics knowledge was enhanced by the diversity of ideas and viewpoints shared during the group work process. Furthermore, they also expressed how the feedback and teaching approach had given them some confidence in developing a better relationship with the teacher for academic success.

Table 2.

*Presentation of the themes and sub themes*

| Themes | Frequency of occurrence | Sample narratives |
|---|---|---|
| *Theme 1: Positive perception* | | |
| Helpful learning | 58 | *I think it is very helpful. Integrating language learning with technology makes it more sophisticated and up to date.*<br><br>*I think it's very helpful especially for students whose English ability are low, like me. Google can be the most useful and precious thing.* |
| Interesting and fun learning | 15 | *Well, I was quite tired last week. I worked in the morning and the English class was at afternoon. But then I was happy that the class wasn't boring. It was quite good.*<br>*To me, it wasn't a boring class at all.* |
| *Theme 2: Negative perception* | | |
| Technology drawback | 21 | *Yes, I have, however sometimes I got problem with unstable Internet connection.* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | *Based on my experience, mostly it's about internet connection and then since I use smartphone, I got distracted from other apps while I was learning.* |
| Non-technology drawback | 7 | *I think there is because my English proficiency is not that good. I am still learning.*<br><br>*Sometimes it's hard because I am not used to use it.* |
| Doubt | 6 | *I don't think so since it's just beginning. Perhaps if we accustomed to this method. It could be.*<br><br>*Well, not really. I want to learn English but not that much. But maybe a consistent fun and productive English class will be motivating.* |
| *Theme 3: Motivation* | | |
| Helpful method | 15 | *Yes, because it is more effective and efficient. And I also prefer watching movies through subtitles.*<br><br>*Thank God. I indeed feel more motivated. And even since I was in the first semester. I think the class was satisfying and effective.* |
| Learning goals | 8 | *Yes, I did. Not to mention the fact that English as an international language. You've got your own value when you can speak English.*<br><br>*Yes, I do. Technology has already become the part of our life and English will help reach a better future.* |
| *Theme 4: Learning awareness* | | |
| Being critical | 5 | *The challenges. Sometimes the meaning is not accurate.*<br><br>*I enjoyed it but I think having two students will be more effective.* |
| Learning effort | 12 | *I do, but I think I need to be more disciplined.* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | *Yes, it is. Yesterday, I was also asked to do assignments, I thought it was homework but apparently, I was asked to do it in class, so I finished it until lectures.* |
| Giving recommendations | 24 | *And perhaps, the games can boost my friends' motivation and help them to be more enthusiastic about their learning.*<br><br>*I think the university should provide better access to the internet.* |
| *Theme 5: Classroom interaction* | | |
| Peer interaction | 43 | *In my opinion, it's good because we can collaborate with other students more effectively. We were given more than enough time and space to discuss.*<br><br>*I think so. Discussion went smoothly with technology.* |
| Teacher and student interaction | 27 | *Yes, I do. And every time I ask a question, he seems very care and enthusiast to answer. It's encouraging.*<br><br>*I think it was positive. The way the teacher brings the class gave me a positive impression. It was just good.* |

The thematic analysis of the major learning experiences identified two divisions of perceptions: positive and negative. The positive and negative perceptions are attributed to emotional engagement toward TMTBLT. As noted in the result section, almost all participants had positive attitudes regarding TMTBLT. However, only three students expressed doubt before agreeing at the end of the interview that the method had helped them learn the language. One student also voiced dissatisfaction with TMTBLT but continued to value some of the method's other features. Students generally expressed favorable opinions of TMTBLT in their language learning and emphasized its advantages, consistent with previous research (Yanto & Saifullah, 2020; Maufuroh et al., 2022; Payant & Bright, 2017; Ziegler, 2016). Additionally, difficulties that the participants had when learning with TMTBLT led to negative perceptions emerging.

The participants benefitted from TMTBLT in several ways. Firstly, they described TMTBLT as a helpful method. Using easily accessible information through technology such as laptops, mobile phones, and online applications facilitated through internet connectivity has helped them learn English easier. Mobile phones and social media, specifically, have promoted language acquisition (González-Lloret, 2017; Smith & González-Lloret, 2020). More specifically, they valued specific software programs and search engine technology such as Google and Google Translate, as these tools allowed them access to more and simpler learning resources. This is consistent with Smith and González-Lloret's (2020) assertion that TMTBLT can potentially increase accessibility to language learning. Additionally, like another study, with the use of technology like Google Translate, they were able to learn vocabulary far more quickly and easily. (Thornbury, 2002; Maufuroh et al., 2022). Secondly, the 'task' or learning activities integrated into TMTBLT had aided students' learning, particularly in understanding the lesson, and had made them more engaged in class. According to Chong (2018), using technology in task-based language instruction increases students' understanding while completing tasks in blended and online learning**.** The participants described how TMTBLT improved their proficiency and self-confidence (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007). Nevertheless, the task alone cannot achieve communicative competence, and the teachers' clear instructions were highlighted. The teacher was praised for being emphatic, humorous, and giving clear, in-depth explanations. As a result, teaching methods impact how students perceive their learning environment and how much they participate in class (Biggs & Telfer, 1987; Dornyei, 2000; Lam et al., 2012).

Despite the favourable perception, as TMTBLT is a newly applied method, the students experienced several challenges while learning with it. Under this study, the learning difficulties are considered negative perceptions since it is attributed to how students perceive the implementation of the method in their language learning. The lack of internet access is the biggest problem. Participants also reported issues inherent to the technology itself, such as online applications' distraction potential, the technology's simplicity, and a lack of access to the internet. It is consistent with Wiannastiti (2016) study that technology has inherent flaws, and it is impossible to find a faultless tool that supports language learning. Secondly, some participants claimed that because they were inexperienced with the technique, it was difficult to change their preferred learning approach, learning English through teacher explanation. This is not surprising considering that TBLT is not widely used among students in most Asian nations (Adams & Newton, 2009; Littlewood, 2007), especially in Indonesia (Ismail, 2017).

This issue of unfamiliarity is strengthened by Maufuroh et al. in their study from 2022, which found that students considered employing mobile technology in task-based language learning confusing because they were not accustomed to it.

Some themes were found which were related to engagement such as *motivation*, *learning awareness,* and *classroom interaction.* Meanwhile, *positive,* and *negative perception* outlined above was particularly attributed to emotional engagement.

The 'motivation' theme represents behavioural involvement. It was discovered that students are more motivated to study because of their favourable impression of TMTBLT. In other words, their emotional engagement fosters behavioural engagement. The intrinsic motivation stems from the students' own goals in learning, such as wanting to have a proper profession in the future. Under this circumstance, students with mastery-approach goals (e.g., to find job opportunities) are more likely to enjoy their learning, be more curious, and be intrinsically motivated (Oudeyer et al., 2016; Collins, 2009). Furthermore, in this study, some students emphasized the significance of easy 'tasks' and clear classroom instructions, which provided them with a more secure feeling of learning. The sense of security sparks students' interest in the TMTBLT method. This extrinsic motivation pushes students to work hard on their academic assignments for reasons unrelated to their learning goals (Chow & Yong, 2013).

The theme' learning awareness' represents cognitive engagement. In this study, students showed some effort during and after the learning process with TMTBLT, which is related to being critical, applying learning strategies, and giving recommendations. Under the idea of being critical, the participants evaluate their learning with TMTBLT, producing positive and negative results. While the positive evaluation was expressed as 'memorable learning,' the negative evaluation was attributed to the 'inaccurate information' gained from internet sources. During this evaluation process, students are actively involved in their cognitive processes, such as attention to specific information, information analysis and synthesis, visualization, and the ability to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information (Stoney & Oliver, 1999). Additionally, TMTBLT has motivated students to employ metacognitive strategy, the action of planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning processes (Blakey & Spence, 1990). In this case, the students expressed their willingness to employ a metacognitive strategy in which they wanted to develop self-discipline, set time management, and take benefits of technology in their English learning. Metacognitive strategy is more critical than other learning strategies in this process since language acquisition should move along more quickly once a learner is

aware of how to control his or her learning through strategies (Anderson, 2003). In addition, students made various recommendations to make the class more supportive of their learning by advocating for the refinement of technology and internet service. This subtheme is also an essential component of the metacognitive process, including making necessary learning adjustments (Rahimi & Katal, 2011).

In this study, 'classroom interaction' represents social engagement. Participants described how discussions with peers and teachers became more engaging and meaningful, encouraging them to participate in more classroom discussions. This aligns with Svalberg (2009), who links social engagement to interaction, learner initiation, and maintenance. Furthermore, students indicated that sharing ideas with friends increased their knowledge in interesting and meaningful ways, with some students with lower English proficiency learning from their friends with greater proficiency and vice versa. According to the interactionist perspective, the learners were exposed to meaningful input, output, and negotiation of meaning (Gass & Mackey, 2014). TMTBLT facilitates this through an 'information gap' activity which aims to promote input, output, and negotiation (Ellis, 2009) conducted in the 'discussion' model. As a result of the ability to negotiate meaning when communication breaks down with their peers, learners were able to understand the input under discussion and gain new information (Long, 1983). The negotiation of meaning occurred as the students paid 'attention' (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) to their classmates and teacher's ideas or speech during the discussion process. Additionally, some students described how technology even helped the discussion run smoothly, emphasizing the value of networking in digital technology and community relevance as the key to learning (Shirazi & Behzadan 2015). This concept is at the core of TMTBLT, which uses technology to facilitate student communication (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014).

Philp & Duchesne (2016) describe engagement as heightened attention and involvement, including cognitive, social, behavioural, and emotional components. This study found that the four categories were interrelated. It begins with the learners' affection for TMTBLT. Because the subjective attitudes or impressions that students bring to class or through language-related tasks are crucial to the other dimensions of engagement, emotional engagement influences the other types of engagement (Henry & Thorsen, 2020). Emotional engagement leads to behavioural engagement, and vice versa. Additionally, other engagements, like cognitive and social engagement, are impacted by behavioural engagement. The engagement constructs are thought to have a potential hierarchy of linkages, with

perception correlating with and predicting the other processes. Therefore, emotion sets the stage for class participation, at least in part, and cognition, emotion, and social are all influenced by students' early perspectives to engage or disengage in behavior.

## CONCLUSION

This study enriches understanding of how current TMTBLT is viewed from students' perspectives. This study also covers the obstacles and factors affecting TMTBLT implementation. It informs practitioners and researchers on localized TBLT forms that may be effective for Asian adaptation (Nunan, 1999).

This study has limitations. First, the researcher created the interview questions using Baralt et al. (2019) criteria to uncover perceptions and engagements. The interview questions were limited to eight main questions, which were insufficient to fully understand learners' perception and engagement with TMTBLT, compromising their validity. Second, the researcher interviewed participants online due to distance. The time zone difference and insufficient internet connection made interviews difficult. This resulted in incomplete data or information being obtained. Third, students' impressions of TMTBLT are biased by their positive image of the teacher due to his teaching style, limiting their description of the potential benefit of learning with this new method.

Nevertheless, this study should have employed the observation method in addition to the interview to gain a complete picture of the actual implementation of TMTBLT in the Indonesian context. This study is limited to students' opinions without considering other factors, such as teachers and the learning environment. The factual and empirical data from other factors are also necessary to create more robust findings about the implementation of TBLT. Secondly, some findings were addressed limitedly and need more exploration on motivation, learning awareness, and students' interaction with their peers and teachers to open a broader horizon about how these essential elements can be developed through TMTBLT. More research regarding the three elements is urged in future studies. Thirdly, since bias might be regarded as a threat to the validity of the research (Norris, 1997), prejudice, as shown by the qualitative thematic analysis, should also be addressed in the future.

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