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### Research Paper

## The Comparative Effect of Task-Based and Situational Language Teaching on Learning English Military Terminology: A Study of Iranian Army Ground Forces

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### Abstract

In the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), mastering specialized vocabulary is a critical challenge. Military personnel need a precise understanding of English military terms to communicate effectively during training and operations. This study explored the effectiveness of two teaching methods—Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Situational Language Teaching (SLT)—in improving the learning of English military terminology in the Iranian army ground forces. Sixty participants from this group were involved, divided into TBLT, SLT, and control groups, with 20 learners in each. A pretest-posttest control group design was used, employing the Quick Oxford Placement Test (QOPT) to confirm that participants were at the A2 level. The two researcher-created tests served as the pretest and posttest measures, respectively, to assess participants' knowledge of military terminology before and after the interventions. Employing two paired-sample t-tests demonstrated significant improvements in the learners in the TBLT and SLT groups from the pretest to the posttest. On the other hand, the results of two one-way ANOVAs and a post-hoc test indicated that although the three groups were homogeneous in terms of the knowledge of military terminologies at the beginning of the study, TBLT outperformed both SLT and control groups at the time of the posttest. Also, SLT was significantly superior to the control group. These findings suggest that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Second Language Teaching (SLT) are effective in enhancing the acquisition of military terminology can be incorporated into military English training programs to improve communication among

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personnel.

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## **1. Introduction**

General English has proven insufficient for the specific language needs of individuals in academic and work settings (Belcher, 2006). Consequently, the development of ESP gained significance from the late 1960s onwards (Jendrych, 2013). This branch of English language education focuses on creating specialized courses tailored to specific fields to help learners reach their goals. (Dou, 2024). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) referred to ESP as a necessary concept that enables the analysis of adult learners' language needs. It has been considered that learners in this age group engage with English not only in their daily lives but also in their professions and fields of expertise (Teodorescu, 2010). The military is one of the realms in which high proficiency in English is necessary to navigate various situations, including cross-cultural interactions, international collaborations, and the precise use of military terminology (Rua, 2004). Effective communication within the military requires not only a command of general English skills but also a deep understanding of military terminology, protocols, and procedures (Biderkesen et al., 2019). In fact, vocabulary is regarded as one of the most crucial components of language acquisition (Atai & Dabbagh, 2010), with the aid of which military personnel can accurately convey critical information, follow orders precisely, and maintain clear lines of communication to ensure mission success and operational safety. However, the complexity and specificity of military English terminology, such as technical jargon, abbreviations, and acronyms, can pose significant obstacles for language learners (Noguera-Díaz & Pérez-Paredes, 2020), because the military lexicon is in a constant state of evolution, with new terminology emerging to address the ever-changing requirements and circumstances within military operations (Hashimova & Sattorov, 2021). This highlights the critical necessity for pedagogical approaches that facilitate more efficient acquisition of this specialized vocabulary.

With regard to challenges, the Iranian army may struggle to comprehend and effectively use military terms due to their low language proficiency levels, as they do not have real exposure to English outside the class context (Goodrich, 2020). Secondly,

military English, as an ESP domain, presents a multifaceted obstacle that requires careful analysis and consideration. Its specialized lexicon, specific needs, and diverse military topics necessitate tailored language instruction to equip military personnel with the communication skills for their professional roles (Mahdavi Zafarghandi & Jodai, 2012). It has been stated that the existing instructional methods primarily rely on rote memorization (Rashidi & Omid, 2011), which may not effectively enhance understanding and retention of the terminology. In addition, historically, military English instruction concentrated on grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills. However, recent developments in military English teaching mirror broader educational trends that now emphasize practical communication abilities (Abdurazakova, 2024). In military contexts, this change involves not only teaching methods but also strategic efforts to prepare personnel for successful international collaboration and missions (Thain et al., 2008). Approaches that focus on interactive learning and promote active student participation stand in contrast to the traditional, authoritarian military training methods (Azizovna, 2024). Limited exposure, lack of practical experience, and deficiencies in overall language proficiency particularly hinder Iranian military personnel from attaining fluency and functioning effectively in international operations. Consequently, adopting a more targeted, context-specific pedagogical strategy is crucial to address these specific challenges within the Iranian military.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes the utilization of authentic, real-world tasks as foundational elements for language acquisition. In TBLT, learners engage in meaningful and purposeful activities that necessitate the employment of language to achieve specific tasks or objectives (Ellis et al., 2019). Such tasks may include simulations or problem-solving exercises, which prioritize communication and contextual language use over explicit instruction. Learners are encouraged to interact, negotiate meaning, and enhance their language skills through substantive engagement with these tasks (Ellis, 2009). Conversely, Situational Language Teaching (SLT) concentrates on equipping learners with language skills and knowledge that are directly

pertinent to particular situations or contexts. Its objective is to cultivate learners' capacity to comprehend and appropriately deploy language within specific real-life scenarios (Smith & Loewen, 2018). SLT frequently involves presenting learners with dialogues or role-plays that depict particular situations, such as ordering food in a restaurant or conducting a job interview. The emphasis is placed on teaching functional language expressions and situational vocabulary that learners can utilize in explicit contexts (Madatovna, 2022). While both methodologies have demonstrated their value in general language acquisition settings, the comparative effectiveness of these approaches within ESP domains, such as military English, remains insufficiently investigated. Several studies have been conducted with regard to teaching English in military forces in general. For instance, Jonáková et al. (2022) analyzed different aspects that were effective in influencing the ESP syllabus design of military education. In another analysis, military English learning has been studied with regard to theme-based instruction (Yao & Hung, 2020). Literature review in the realm of EAP revealed that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been utilized to teach English to military forces (Kolumbán, 2020); in a similar vein, this study has employed TBLT and SLT, which are reflections of CLT, comparatively, for this purpose, specifically teaching military terminologies in the context of Iran. To the researchers' knowledge, no prior study has examined these two methods within the Iranian military context to evaluate which is more effective in enhancing military vocabulary acquisition. By addressing the mentioned challenges specific to teaching and learning military terminologies (Hashimova & Sattorov, 2021), the main purpose of this research was to investigate the effects of TBLT and SLT on learning English military terminologies in the context of Iran.

## **2. Literature Review**

ESP is a branch of English language teaching that focuses on teaching English to learners who have specific goals and needs related to their professional or academic fields. Based on what Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) stated, "the international community recognized the importance of learning English not only as a means to

achieve the transmission of knowledge and communication but also as a neutral language to be used in international communication” (pp. 301-302). There are various rhetorical patterns and linguistic features across different disciplines in ESP (Paltridge & Starfield, 2016). With the rapid advancement of technology and scientific discoveries across various fields, new words and terms have emerged to represent new concepts. As a result, the significance of terminology as a distinct lexical subsystem has grown. Terminology involves the study of terms and their specific usage in different contexts, including their collection, description, processing, and presentation (Georgieva, 2007).

Military terms, similar to legal and political terminology, often incorporate technical language and may involve self-censorship when discussing military matters (Hashimova & Sattorov, 2021). This specialized vocabulary, consisting of terms related to weaponry, tactics, logistics, and operations, is meticulously crafted to convey precise meanings and instructions (Malenica, 2013). Accurate use of military terminology is vital for mission success and the safety of military personnel. Whether on the battlefield or during routine operations, the ability to convey information with the utmost clarity and precision is fundamental. Errors or misunderstandings can result in negative outcomes, which make the mastery of military terminology a paramount concern for the army (Saidazimkhon, 2022). Several studies have been conducted regarding the importance of different approaches to teach general and ESP vocabulary.

### **2.1 TBLT: General and ESP Vocabulary**

A study by Sarani and Sahebi (2012) examined the teaching of vocabulary in ESP courses using a task-based approach. The research focused on Persian literature students at Birjand University in Iran, with two groups. The pretest assessed technical vocabulary knowledge, followed by traditional vocabulary instruction for the control group and task-based instruction for the experimental group. At the end of the semester, a posttest measured the impact of the teaching methods. Results showed that the task-based approach was more effective in teaching technical vocabulary, with male learners

outperforming female learners in the experimental group. Fallahrafie et al. (2015), in a study conducted at the Islamic Azad University of Hashtgerd, focused on incidental vocabulary learning within task-based activities. Their primary aim was to improve the vocabulary acquisition of students who were studying Mechanical Engineering in ESP courses. This study involved 55 students, both male and female, enrolled in ESP courses and divided into control and experimental groups. The groups' homogeneity was ensured through the Nelson Proficiency Test. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods were used for the control group, while the experimental group received instruction based on the task-based approach. A teacher-designed test assessed technical vocabulary knowledge as a pretest, followed by a posttest at the end of the semester to evaluate the effect of the treatment on the experimental group. Data analysis using SPSS indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the posttest.

Khoshsima and Saed (2016) investigated vocabulary learning among Iranian intermediate EFL learners within the framework of TBLT. This study incorporated the use of jigsaw and information-gap tasks for instructing the learners. The participants consisted of 60 intermediate EFL learners, all of whom were female and fell within the age range of 16-17 years. The experimental groups, one engaged in jigsaw tasks and the other in information-gap tasks, received task-based instruction once a week for five weeks. In contrast, the control group followed the standard curriculum. Post-study assessments were administered in the form of a 50-item multiple-choice vocabulary test. Data analysis employing one-way ANOVA indicated that TBLT significantly influenced the enhancement of vocabulary knowledge among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Furthermore, significant differences in performance were observed between the experimental groups in the assigned tests.

Similarly, Kamalian et al. (2017) investigated how task-based reading activities affect vocabulary learning and retention among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Three intact classes participated, engaging in activities such as text completion and

student-generated questions. The study showed significant and meaningful improvements in vocabulary learning and retention through these task-based reading activities. Additionally, Mashhadi and Saki (2018) conducted a study to examine how the task-based approach impacts vocabulary learning among Iranian EFL learners, specifically within ESP classes. This research focused on accounting students at the Scientific and Applied University of Technology Center in Ilam, Iran. Two groups of students, a control group and an experimental group, took part in the study. Before the treatment, a teacher-created test measured technical vocabulary knowledge as a pretest. While the control group received traditional vocabulary instruction, the experimental group learned technical vocabulary through a task-based approach. At the end of the course, a posttest was given to evaluate the effect of the treatment on the experimental group. The data analysis showed that the task-based approach had a greater impact on teaching technical vocabulary compared to traditional methods. Overall, the results indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group. Similarly, Nychkalo et al. (2020) aimed to assess the effectiveness of a task-based approach in teaching business vocabulary to master's degree students studying business English. This research involved two groups: one followed traditional vocabulary learning methods, and the other participated in a task-based approach. The task-based method emphasized real-world business problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills. The results demonstrated notable progress in business vocabulary acquisition among students in the task-based group, not only facilitating vocabulary learning but also boosting students' confidence in their professional and communication abilities.

While most studies reviewed demonstrate TBLT's effectiveness in enhancing vocabulary learning in both general and ESP contexts, they were primarily conducted in academic or professional environments rather than military settings. Although their results support TBLT's utility for acquiring technical and domain-specific vocabulary, they overlook the unique communicative demands, hierarchical structures, and high-pressure scenarios typical of military contexts. The core principles of TBLT align



closely with the needs of military English learners, especially when adapted to simulate mission-critical communication, report writing, briefings, and command exchanges. This is particularly relevant given the rapidly changing military lexicon (Hashimova & Sattorov, 2021), where learners must employ precise terminology in urgent, often unpredictable situations.

## **2.2 SLT: General Vocabulary and ESP Vocabulary**

Selayar (2010) investigated the improvement of students' vocabulary achievement through the application of the situational language teaching method. This research was carried out with second-year students at MTs.S Ujung Jampea. The central research question focused on understanding how the use of this approach affected students' proficiency in English nouns, adjectives, and verbs. It employed purposive sampling, comprising a total of 70 students distributed across two classes. One class, specifically class VIII-1, consisting of 35 students, was selected as the sample group for the research. Data analysis was conducted by comparing the results of the pretest and posttest, and the outcomes of this analysis revealed significant improvements in students' vocabulary achievement in English nouns, adjectives, and verbs. For English nouns, the mean of pretest score was 4.2, which increased to 7.7 in the posttest, indicating an improvement of 83.3%. In the case of English verbs, the pretest mean score was 3.8, rising to 7.0 in the posttest, resulting in an improvement of 84.2%. Lastly, for English adjectives, the mean of the pretest score was 3.4, which improved to 6.6 in the posttest, demonstrating an impressive improvement of 94%. These findings demonstrated the positive effect of the SLT Method in enhancing students' vocabulary proficiency in English nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

In another study, Pu and Zhong (2018) developed a mobile augmented reality game, which was situational gaming, to enhance preschool English vocabulary learning. Their study incorporated augmented reality and mobile devices to create an interactive learning experience. The results of this experiment showed that the

situational interaction gaming approach not only achieved similar learning achievements but also significantly increased students' learning interest and reduced cognitive load. In a qualitative study by Masna et al. (2020), elementary school teachers' perceptions of using the situational language teaching method for teaching vocabulary were explored. The advantages of this method include enhancing student motivation and facilitating effective teaching and learning. However, challenges were identified, such as the preparation of course materials and addressing student boredom.

Moreover, Martaputri (2020) aimed to investigate how elementary school teachers perceived the situational language teaching method when teaching vocabulary. The objectives were to explore the benefits of using this method for teaching vocabulary and to identify the challenges faced by English teachers when implementing it. This research employed a qualitative approach by utilizing semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. The participants consisted of five English teachers responsible for teaching English at elementary schools in Aceh Barat. The findings indicated that using this method had advantages, such as increasing student motivation and facilitating effective teaching and learning processes. However, challenges included the preparation of course materials and addressing student engagement issues.

While existing studies demonstrate the potential of SLT in facilitating vocabulary acquisition and enhancing learner motivation, they primarily concentrate on young or general EFL students within non-specialized educational environments. Consequently, they do not sufficiently address the intricate linguistic and communicative requirements of military personnel, who function within rigid structures and must acquire precise, high-stakes terminology. Unlike classroom interactions focused on academic subjects, military communication frequently employs scenario-specific vocabulary in briefings, reports, orders, and intercultural exchanges.

### **2.3 English Military Terminologies Instruction**

Sylwia (2016) carried out a study on teaching methods for the law of armed conflict

vocabulary aimed at military personnel, such as the conduct of hostilities, prisoners of war, and special signs. It was revealed that teaching the law of armed conflict vocabulary in a military setting required specific methods tailored to the professional needs and context of military learners. Boeru and Cizer (2017) conducted a study at the Naval Academy to examine effective teaching strategies for improving naval students' acquisition of specialized vocabulary. The project consisted of various stages, including assessing the current teaching and learning situation, creating and testing teaching materials, and analyzing feedback from teachers and students. This study hypothesized that establishing a clear connection between lexical content, learning tasks, and the occupational context could optimize the process of acquiring specialized vocabulary and developing communicative skills. Furthermore, they found that learners who were more aware of explicit learning strategies achieved greater success in their language-learning endeavors.

Additionally, Kurganov (2019) analyzed the unique characteristics of military terminology, with a specific focus on the Uzbek and English languages. The primary aim of this article was to conduct a comparative analysis of military terminology in English and Uzbek by enabling the comparison of military terms in both languages while highlighting their distinct features. It became evident that one of the defining attributes of military terminology in English and Uzbek, among other terminological characteristics, was their specialized domain of application. This specialization was determined by various features that classify specific words or phrases as military terminology.

Yao and Hung (2020) conducted a study aimed at helping cadets learn military English by focusing on decision-making about “to kill or not to kill” as a theme and incorporating gamified learning into theme-based instruction. Sixteen college-level cadets participated in the course, which included vocabulary tests, vocabulary presentations, a gamified platform called Kahoot, and role-plays. The teachers used the film “Fury” as a resource to facilitate discussions on the theme. The cadets discussed

how they would respond in four situations taken from the film, helping them make decisions about whether to kill or not kill people on the battlefield. The research findings showed that theme-based instruction improved the participants' military English skills, as demonstrated by significant gains in their vocabulary test scores related to decision-making concepts.

In the same vein, Kolumbán (2020) explored the application of communicative language learning principles in teaching military English at all levels by highlighting the shift from viewing language as a system to emphasizing contextual and meaning-related language use, which aligns well with the needs of military professionals who use English in specific situations. The results favored using these tasks to learn military English. In another study, Imomova (2023) focused on examining military terminology translations between Uzbek and English. The primary research goal was to identify the challenges involved in translating military terms from Uzbek to English and vice versa. Additionally, this study aimed to offer practical recommendations for improving the quality of military translations across these languages. Data were collected from various sources, including military documents, articles, and dictionaries. The analysis concluded that translating military terms poses several difficulties due to the complex nature of the terminology, cultural differences, and the lack of equivalent terms in both languages. To address these challenges, the study also recommended using specialized dictionaries, fostering collaboration among language experts, and establishing a standardized terminology system to improve the quality of military translations.

While these studies offered valuable insights into ESP vocabulary in general and military vocabulary instruction in particular, there was a gap in the comparative study of TBLT and SLT approaches within the specific context of military terminology. A study that systematically compares and contrasts the effectiveness of these two approaches in teaching military vocabulary could provide practical guidance for instructors in this field. Therefore, these research questions were presented:

1. Does the employment of TBLT and SLT result in a significant enhancement of military terminology knowledge from pretest to posttest among Iranian army ground forces?
2. Are there any significant differences among TBLT, SLT, and control groups in terms of military terminology learning of Iranian army ground forces?

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Participants**

The participants were selected using convenience sampling. A total of 100 male participants were included who were members of the army forces in Ahvaz. Their age range was 25 to 40, and they all had a bachelor's degree. Then, they were homogenized by taking a proficiency test at the A2 level, and 60 homogeneous learners were randomly assigned to three groups: the task-based group, the situational group, and the control group, with 20 participants in each group. Although their initial selection was not random, random assignment to groups ensured that each member had an equal chance of being assigned to any of the groups, which minimized the potential bias in group composition. The pretest-posttest control group design is a type of quasi-experimental design commonly used in research studies to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention or treatment (Ary et al., 2018). Concerning potential biases, it is important to recognize that convenience sampling might restrict the broader applicability of the findings, since participants were not randomly chosen from the general population. Variables such as previous military background or English exposure could also affect learning results. To address these biases, all participants shared the same English proficiency level, verified through their A2-level test scores. This measure helped reduce the chance of biases related to proficiency differences between groups.

#### **3.2 Instruments**

##### **3.2.1 Quick Oxford Placement Test (QOPT)**

The second version of the QOPT (2020) was used to standardize participants' proficiency levels. This test includes 60 multiple-choice questions covering grammar, vocabulary, and cloze tests. According to this assessment, scores of 10-24 correspond to the A2 proficiency level. The A2 level indicates a basic ability to manage simple, everyday conversations. For military personnel, possessing a foundational understanding of English is crucial for key military interactions, such as issuing and receiving basic commands, understanding safety instructions, or engaging in routine communication with international partners. While the A2 level may not encompass all specialized military language aspects, it offers a solid foundation and a starting point for learners to gradually develop their language skills and proficiency in specific military contexts. As a standardized test, the QOPT's reliability and validity have been extensively tested and confirmed in previous studies. It has been validated across diverse populations and settings, ensuring it accurately assesses the intended language proficiency levels.

### **3.2.2 Pretest/Posttest of English Military Terminologies**

The researchers designed a pretest-posttest to evaluate the participants' knowledge of English military terminology. This self-created test was specifically developed to measure the participants' understanding and use of military-specific vocabulary and abbreviations. The test included 32 items, such as multiple-choice questions, true/false statements, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and matching tasks based on words from the textbook titled 'Workbook for Learners of Military English' (Hatzilou & Romoudi, 2014). This source consists of 14 units, each focusing on a specific topic. The topics ranged from boot camp and military organization to convoy and patrol, with different types of exercises like multiple choice, matching, elaboration exercises, and fill-in-the-blank. While both tests should evaluate similar language skills or terminologies, it is recommended to include different items or tasks in the pretest and posttest to avoid repetition (Knapp, 2016). In other words, these two tests were similar but not identical to prevent practice effects. Therefore, the items in the pretest and posttest of this study were similar in level of difficulty, variation, and thematic content (Dimitrov &

Rumrill, 2003). To ensure the validity and reliability of the test, it was piloted with a similar group of 15 participants at two different times, spaced two weeks apart. Test-retest reliability was used, and the correlation between these two sets of scores was acceptable (.79 for pretest and .81 for posttest). By administering the test to a small, similar group and analyzing their responses, issues such as ambiguous wording, confusing instructions, or items with extremely high or low discrimination were identified for final revision (Gudmundsdottir & Brock-Utne, 2010). Additionally, to verify the content validity of the tests, they were reviewed by two experts in the field, who assessed whether the test items accurately represented the key military vocabulary and terminology covered in the textbook. Their feedback confirmed that the tests included the essential concepts and specific terminology central to the course's objectives, ensuring the tests measured what they were intended to measure. They also confirmed that the tests covered a comprehensive range of item types (e.g., multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank) aligned with the learning outcomes. This process helped verify that the items were relevant, appropriate, and suitable for assessing the participants' proficiency in the military vocabulary and concepts taught in the course.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

Initially, 100 participants were selected based on convenience sampling by taking their availability and accessibility into consideration. Then, a QOPT was administered to choose 60 participants who had similar characteristics and language proficiency levels at A2. These participants were randomly assigned to three groups: a task-based group, a situational group, and a control group, with 20 members in each group. During the piloting phase, a small group of individuals (N=15) who were similar to the target participants took the tests. Their performance and feedback were analyzed to identify any possible issues with the clarity of the questions, answer choices, instructions, or potential bias (Read, 2012). Before the intervention began, a pretest was administered to assess the participants' initial knowledge and understanding of English military terminology. This pretest served as a baseline measure against which the posttest scores were compared. The participants in the task-based group and situational group

underwent a series of treatment sessions over a period of five weeks, with a total of 15 sessions. Each session lasted for 90 minutes and involved interactive activities, exercises, and discussions that aimed to enhance the participants' understanding and usage of the terminologies. The specific content and activities were adjusted to each approach.

In the task-based group, participants engaged in tasks such as simulations and problem-solving activities that required them to use English military terminology to solve the task. These tasks were designed by the researcher based on the words in the mentioned textbook (Hatzilou & Romoudi, 2014). For instance, they were given a plan for a military operation. They communicated with their team members by using the appropriate terminology to solve the problem. The tasks were designed to promote active engagement and application of the terminologies in practical contexts. In the situational group, participants were presented with various military-related situations, such as scenarios involving military operations, negotiations, or communication with foreign counterparts. These situations were generated by the researcher based on the words in the mentioned textbook (Hatzilou & Romoudi, 2014). They were guided to analyze and respond to these situations by using the relevant terminology. For instance, they practiced giving commands, reporting incidents, or participating in military briefings. The participants in the control group did not receive any specific treatment with regard to task-based and situational language teaching. In other words, the terminologies in the textbook were taught to them with their regular English language learning activities or instruction, such as memorizing the words during the study period and doing the exercises. After the completion of the treatment sessions, a posttest was administered to assess the participants' progress and the effectiveness of the interventions. The posttest was similar to the pretest and evaluated the participants' knowledge and usage of English military terminology.

#### **4. Results**

Before any statistical analysis, it was confirmed that the necessary assumptions for using parametric tests were met. Firstly, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated



that the scores for the dependent variable had a normal distribution. Furthermore, the homogeneity of variance for both pre- and posttests was assessed by using Levene's test. The results indicated non-significant p-values (pre= .370, post= .069); therefore, the assumptions were satisfied, and the parametric tests were utilized.

The initial research question aimed to assess the effect of TBLT and SLT approaches on the development of military terminology. For both groups, descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, have been provided for the pretest and posttest (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest of TBLT and SLT Groups*

|      |          | Mean  | N  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------|----------|-------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| TBLT | Pretest  | 11.00 | 20 | 1.806          | .403            |
|      | Posttest | 22.75 | 20 | 4.127          | .923            |
| SLT  | Pretest  | 10.90 | 20 | 2.149          | .480            |
|      | Posttest | 14.20 | 20 | 1.955          | .432            |

Prior to the instructional intervention, the mean score for the pretest was 11.00 in the TBLT group. However, there was a noticeable improvement in the posttest assessment, where the mean score increased to 22.75. The pretest mean for the SLT group was 10.90, and an improvement was observed in the posttest assessment (M = 14.20). Thus, two paired sample t-tests were conducted to determine the significance of these differences (Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Paired Sample T-Tests for the TBLT and SLT Groups*

|      |          | Paired Differences |                |            |                         |        |        |    |               |
|------|----------|--------------------|----------------|------------|-------------------------|--------|--------|----|---------------|
|      |          | Mean               | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% confidence interval |        | t      | df | Sig(2-tailed) |
|      |          |                    |                |            | Lower                   | Upper  |        |    |               |
| TBLT | Pre-post | -11.750            | 3.537          | .790       | -31.40                  | -10.09 | -14.85 | 19 | .000          |
| SLT  | Pre-post | -3.300             | 1.866          | .417       | -4.17                   | -2.42  | -7.90  | 19 | .000          |

The paired sample t-test results for the TBLT group indicated a statistically significant enhancement in learning military terminologies from Time 1 (pretest mean = 11.00, SD = 1.806) to Time 2 (posttest mean = 22.75, SD = 4.127),  $t(19) = -14.85$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed). Additionally, the eta squared statistic (.92) showed a substantial effect size, which means that a large proportion of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Also, the paired-sample t-test results for the SLT group demonstrated that the SLT approach had a significant impact on students' scores in military terminology. There was an increase from Time 1 (pretest mean = 10.90, SD = 2.149) to Time 2 (posttest mean = 14.20, SD = 1.935), and this difference was statistically significant,  $t(19) = -7.90$ ,  $p < .05$  (two-tailed). The effect size, as measured by eta squared (.76), indicated a large effect size.

The second research question aimed to investigate any significant differences among the TBLT, SLT, and control groups. To this end, descriptive statistics for the pretests and posttests, where the categorical independent variable is the classroom type (TBLT, SLT, and control), and the continuous variable represents military terminology scores, have been presented (Table 3).

**Table 3**  
*Descriptive Statistics for Pretests and Posttests of the Three Groups*

|          |         | N  | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error |
|----------|---------|----|-------|----------------|------------|
| Pretest  | TBLT    | 20 | 11.00 | 1.806          | .403       |
|          | SLT     | 20 | 10.90 | 2.149          | .480       |
|          | Control | 20 | 10.55 | 1.669          | .373       |
| Posttest | TBLT    | 20 | 22.75 | 4.127          | .923       |
|          | SLT     | 20 | 14.20 | 1.935          | .432       |
|          | Control | 20 | 11.55 | 1.700          | .380       |

The pretests for these three groups were quite similar, with a slight superiority for the TBLT group (M=11.00), followed by the SLT (M=10.90) and control group (M=10.55), respectively. The results of the posttest revealed improvements from the pretest within each group, with the TBLT group achieving the highest mean score (M = 22.75), followed by the SLT group (M = 14.20), and the control group (M = 11.55). To determine whether these slight differences were significant or occurred by chance, two one-way ANOVAs were employed (Table 4).

**Table 4**

*One-way ANOVA for the Pretests and Posttests of the Three Groups*

|          |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Pretest  | Between Groups | 2.233          | 2  | 1.117       | .314   | .732 |
|          | Within Groups  | 202.750        | 57 | 3.557       |        |      |
|          | Total          | 204.983        | 59 |             |        |      |
| Posttest | Between Groups | 1370.433       | 2  | 685.217     | 86.813 | .000 |
|          | Within Groups  | 449.900        | 57 | 7.893       |        |      |
|          | Total          | 1820.333       | 59 |             |        |      |

The first p-value from the one-way ANOVA was not significant ( $p=.732$ ), which indicated the homogeneity of participants regarding military terminology knowledge during the pretest. The results of the posttest indicated a significant difference among the mean scores for the three groups. Put simply, a p-value of .000 revealed statistical

The Comparative Effect ...

significance at the  $p < .05$  level with this result:  $F(2, 57) = 86.813, p = .000$ . The effect size was measured by using eta squared and turned out to be large ( $\eta^2 = .75$ ). To ascertain the specific source of difference, a post-hoc Tukey HSD test was employed to assess the statistical significance of the differences between each pair of groups (Table 5).

**Table 5**  
*Multiple Comparisons Based on Tukey HSD*

| Dependent Variable | (I) class type | (J) class type | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | Lower bound | Upper bound |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| Pretest            | TBLT           | SLT            | .100                  | .596       | .985 | -1.335      | 1.535       |
|                    |                | Control        | .450                  | .596       | .732 | -.985       | 1.885       |
|                    | SLT            | TBLT           | -.100                 | .596       | .985 | -1.532      | 1.335       |
|                    |                | Control        | .350                  | .596       | .828 | -1.085      | 1.785       |
|                    | Control        | TBLT           | -.450                 | .596       | .732 | -1.085      | .985        |
|                    |                | SLT            | -.350                 | .596       | .828 | -1.785      | 1.0852      |
| Posttest           | TBLT           | SLT            | 8.550                 | .888       | .000 | 6.412       | 10.687      |
|                    |                | Control        | 11.200                | .888       | .000 | 9.062       | 13.337      |
|                    | SLT            | TBLT           | -8.550                | .888       | .000 | -10.687     | -6.412      |
|                    |                | Control        | 2.650                 | .888       | .012 | -.512       | 4.787       |
|                    | Control        | TBLT           | -11.200               | .888       | .000 | -13.337     | -9.06       |
|                    |                | SLT            | -2.650                | .888       | .012 | -4.787      | -.512       |

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Post-hoc comparisons based on the Tukey HSD test demonstrated that although there were no significant differences among the three groups at time one, the posttest results were not similar. Specifically, the mean score for the TBLT group ( $M = 22.75, SD = 4.127$ ) significantly differed from both the SLT group ( $M = 14.20, SD = 1.935$ ) and the control group ( $M = 11.55, SD = 1.700$ ). Also, a significant difference was found between the SLT and control groups ( $p = .012$ ) in favor of the situational language teaching approach. These findings are depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Posttests of the Three Groups*

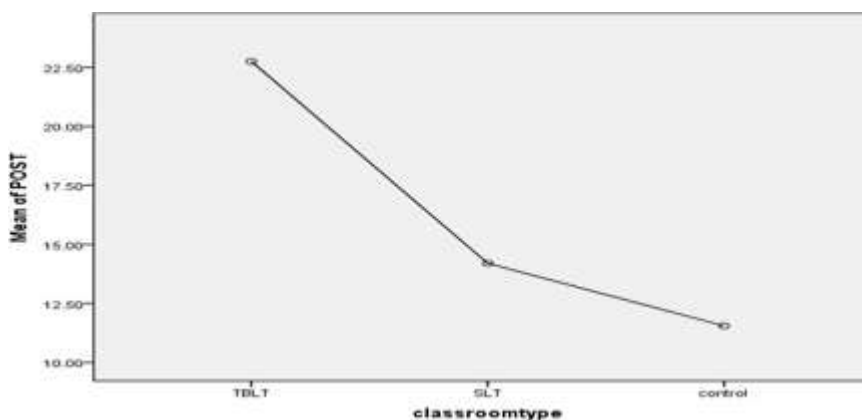


Figure 1 illustrates that the posttest scores were significantly different in favor of the TBLT, SLT, and control groups, respectively. In other words, although TBLT was significantly superior to the SLT group, SLT outperformed the control group.

## **5. Discussion**

The aim of the first research question was to investigate whether the use of TBLT and SLT leads to a significant improvement in the knowledge of military terminology from pretest to posttest among Iranian army ground forces. The results indicated that both TBLT and SLT had a significant positive influence on learners' vocabulary development. Learners in both the TBLT and SLT groups displayed significant improvements in their vocabulary knowledge from the pretest to the posttest assessments. These positive results can be justified by the fact that military terminology is highly specialized and context-

dependent. Both TBLT and SLT emphasized contextualized language use (Moghaddas, 2013), which aligned well with the specific context of military language.

Through practical tasks in TBLT and real-life situations in SLT, learners were exposed to the use of military terms in context. This contextual relevance enhanced the retention and application of the vocabulary (Franco & Galvis, 2013), as it reflected the way military personnel used these terms in actual scenarios. Learning military terminology can be challenging and potentially boring if presented through traditional methods. TBLT and SLT showed an element of engagement and motivation by making learning more dynamic and relevant (Namaziandost et al., 2017; Sitawati et al., 2022). Learners were not passive recipients of vocabulary lists but actively engaged with the terms through tasks, scenarios, and conversations in the current study. Rather than memorizing long lists of terms out of context, learners acquire vocabulary naturally through exposure and use, which reduces the cognitive burden associated with rote memorization (Pu & Zhong, 2018).

TBLT, a methodology emphasizing contextualized language use through practical tasks, demonstrated its effectiveness in promoting vocabulary acquisition. This result was consistent with several studies in the literature, such as those by Sarani and Sahebi (2012) and Fallahrafie et al. (2015). Both of these studies reported significant improvements in vocabulary learning when employing TBLT in ESP courses. Additionally, Kamalian et al. (2017) found positive outcomes of task-based reading activities on vocabulary learning. However, it is essential to consider the context and participant characteristics, as evidenced by the study by Khoshshima and Saed (2016), where effectiveness varied between different task types. In other words, the type of the task is highly important as significant differences in performance were observed between the experimental groups who were exposed to jigsaw and information-gap tasks separately (Khoshshima & Saed, 2016). Similarly, SLT, which is a method that focuses on language use within specific real-life situations, also yielded significant improvements in vocabulary learning. This result was congruent with the findings of Selayar (2010), who found that SLT was effective in enhancing vocabulary proficiency in English nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Likewise, in a study by Masna et al. (2020) and Martaputri (2020), SLT was associated

with effective teaching and learning. However, it is important to note that there are situations where its impact might be more limited, such as in a study by Pu and Zhong (2018), where combining SLT with other methods like augmented reality gaming was more effective. Not only did students improve their learning, but it also significantly increased their interest and reduced cognitive load (Pu & Zhong, 2018). Therefore, the effectiveness of SLT may vary depending on the context and the way it is implemented. The aim of the second research question was to investigate any significant differences among the TBLT, SLT, and control groups regarding military terminologies used by the Iranian army ground forces. The results showed significant differences among the groups in acquiring military terminologies, with the TBLT group outperforming the others. The TBLT group achieved the highest mean score, followed by the SLT group and the control group. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated a significant difference between the SLT and control groups in favor of the situational language teaching approach. These findings can be explained by several factors. First, it is essential for soldiers to learn military terminology that they will use in real-world situations. The focus of TBLT on authentic, task-based activities aligns well with this need. Learners in the TBLT group likely found the vocabulary more relevant and applicable to their roles, which may have enhanced their retention. Conversely, the limited improvement seen in the control group can be attributed to traditional instruction methods where learners memorized lists of words (Torlaklı, 2019). In contrast, TBLT emphasizes active learning and engages learners in tasks (Qiu & Cheng, 2022) that require them to actively use and apply military terminology. While SLT also emphasizes contextualized learning, it may not provide the same level of active engagement and practical application of military terms as TBLT does. SLT might focus more on presenting language in context rather than task-based interaction and problem-solving. Therefore, TBLT fosters deeper cognitive processing, as learners interact with language in ways that mirror actual military operations, improving both retention and practical use (Milon et al., 2023). By participating in tasks designed to reflect real military situations, learners not only memorize vocabulary but also learn how to use it dynamically. According to Saaedi

(2023), tasks can facilitate meaningful interaction essential for EFL learners. This contrasts with traditional methods, where vocabulary is often taught in isolation, leading to a more passive learning experience (Arslan, 2024). TBLT's emphasis on task-based learning typically provides greater opportunities for learners to internalize and apply military terms, resulting in more significant vocabulary gains. Additionally, the small sample size may have contributed to greater individual variation, which could have enhanced the differences between groups, especially in the TBLT group, where learners had more personalized engagement. Consequently, TBLT encourages deeper cognitive involvement, as learners interact with the language through methods that imitate real military operations, boosting retention and practical application (Milon et al., 2023). Engaging in tasks that simulate actual military scenarios helps learners not only memorize vocabulary but also apply it dynamically. Saaedi (2023) notes that tasks foster meaningful interaction crucial for EFL learners, in contrast to traditional methods that often teach vocabulary passively in isolation (Arslan, 2024). It is clear that the focus of TBLT on task-based learning offers learners more opportunities to internalize and utilize military terminology, leading to greater vocabulary development. The small sample size may also have increased individual differences, potentially amplifying the observed group differences, especially in the TBLT group, where learners had more personalized involvement.

These results aligned with several previous studies in the literature that have highlighted the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and language learning across various contexts. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has compared these two approaches within the context of army ground forces. However, it can be stated that the effectiveness of the TBLT group was consistent with studies by Sarani and Sahebi (2012), Fallahrafie et al. (2015), Khoshsiman and Saed (2016), Kamalian et al. (2017), Mashhadi and Saki (2018), and Nychkalo et al. (2020), which demonstrated that TBLT effectively improves vocabulary learning and knowledge among different groups of learners. In this context, the emphasis of TBLT on real-world activities (Oura, 2001) seemed to positively influence the acquisition of specialized



vocabulary, such as military terminology. Since SLT outperformed the control group, the findings supported research by Selayar (2010), Pu and Zhong (2018), Masna et al. (2020), and Martaputri (2020) regarding the benefits of situational language teaching in advancing vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, the results aligned with Yao and Hung (2020), who employed theme-based instruction and proposed four scenarios to improve participants' military English skills, as evidenced by significant improvements in their vocabulary test scores. These studies suggest that the situational language teaching method can be a valuable approach to vocabulary learning as well. In contrast, although both experimental groups showed improvement, the superiority of TBLT over SLT indicates that the effectiveness of teaching methods may vary depending on the specific domain and learners' needs.

## **6. Conclusion**

The effects of two teaching approaches, TBLT and SLT, were examined on military terminology knowledge among learners in the army ground forces. Although both TBLT and SLT groups demonstrated significant improvements from the pretest to the posttest separately, SLT was outperformed by the TBLT approach. However, it is worth noting that there was a significant difference between the SLT and control groups, with SLT showing better results. This outcome may suggest that SLT, which focuses on providing contextual language input (Franco & Galvis, 2013), can be effective in some instances but might not be as effective as TBLT in enhancing the specialized terminology required within military settings. However, it is essential to mention that the effectiveness of these methods may also depend on various factors, including the instructor's expertise, the choice of tasks and situations, and the specific language skills targeted. A combination of TBLT and SLT might offer the best of both approaches, allowing learners to benefit from the contextual relevance. In conclusion, the effectiveness of these two approaches may vary depending on the instructional strategies, learner characteristics, and specific learning objectives, highlighting the importance of pedagogical flexibility in this specialized domain (Andreou et al., 2008). In other words, to ensure the best results,

instructors should carefully consider the characteristics and needs of their learners and adapt teaching methods accordingly.

TBLT presents a valuable approach to enhance military vocabulary instruction for teachers. It leads to active engagement and critical thinking (Marashi & Mirghafari, 2019). Learners benefit from the problem-solving nature of TBLT, which not only improves their understanding but also increases motivation (Yahya, 2019). While SLT was not as effective as TBLT for military vocabulary acquisition in this context, it still has its merits. Teachers can employ SLT to introduce learners to specific situational contexts where military terminology is applied by emphasizing clarity and accuracy in communication (Thamarana, 2015). Learners can appreciate SLT for its focus on immediate language use in relevant military scenarios. Since both approaches indicated significant improvement in the learners from the pretest to the posttest, a hybrid approach may be beneficial. Teachers should be open to combining elements of TBLT and SLT to create a dynamic language learning environment. Finally, material developers can create resources that are in line with both TBLT and SLT by offering practical tasks that allow learners to explore real-world military situations while also incorporating elements of controlled practice for accuracy.

The limited sample size of participants may restrict how broadly the findings can be applied. This analysis focused on a specific period of 15 sessions and may not capture the long-term effects of the teaching methods, which could evolve over time. Future research should consider longitudinal studies to examine the long-term retention of military terminology learned through TBLT and SLT, providing deeper insights into their enduring impact. Comparing results across different military branches, such as the Navy or Air Force, or across military institutions in other countries, would also shed light on how contextual and cultural factors influence learning outcomes. Combining quantitative data with qualitative insights can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of teaching methods. Additionally, a larger sample size in future studies could yield more generalizable results and explore how individual differences—such as language proficiency, motivation, or learning styles—interact with the effectiveness of SLT/TBLT.

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