Teaching and Learning English Verb Tenses in a Taiwanese University

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Abstract
This study compares the effect of inductive and deductive approaches in teaching English verb tenses to Taiwanese English-majored freshmen of field independent/dependent (FI/FD) cognitive styles. Research questions include: 1) what is the effect of the two approaches on students’ learning outcomes? 2) What are the learning outcomes of FI/FD students? 3) Do FI students outperform FD students in the inductive group? Do FD students outperform FI students in the deductive group? The Group Embedded Figure Test was used to identify student cognitive styles. A self-designed test was conducted to realize student learning outcome. T-test, ANOVA, and descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the data. Results indicated that both approaches were effective, and the deductive group had more significant improvement. Next, both FI and FD students improved significantly, and FD student improvement was especially evident. Moreover, FD students in both groups improved more than FI students, but the difference was not significant.

Keywords: Inductive, Deductive, Field independent, Field dependent

1. Introduction

The growth or the decline of an approach to language teaching often depends on which language skills students need at that time. In the last two decades, the focus of language education has shifted from an analysis of language forms to authentic use of the target language. Many scholars advocate not only teaching students correct linguistic forms, but also when and how to use those appropriate forms to express their meanings in various situations (Ho, 2007).

The importance of grammar instruction has also gone through three stages: the prosperous stage (the first half of the twentieth century), the period of recession (1950-1960), and the period of revival (1980- to date). During the prosperous stage, the Grammar-Translation Method, which stresses linguistic analysis and translation ability, was the main approach to English teaching, especially in the study of Latin and Greek literature. With the passage of time, the increased contact among Europeans required English communication competence. English teaching methods changed to (e.g. the Direct Method) stressing English usage instead of mechanical grammatical drills and pattern practices. During World War II, people needed to learn the target language in a short time for military purposes. The Audio-Lingual Method, which focuses on the development of listening and speaking skills, became the tide of fashion. Thus, the importance of grammar teaching declined and teaching approaches (e.g. The Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and The Total Physical Response Method) disregarded teaching grammar rules. These approaches paid much attention to student communicational skills; however, student communication was grammatically inaccurate or insufficient. Therefore, after the 1980s, teaching approaches (e.g. the Communicative Approach) emphasized combining functions, meanings, and forms of English (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

The recent trend of grammar instruction emphasizes the importance of meaningful practice and authentic communication. Instructors have applied teaching strategies that enhance structured input to direct the attention of students to sentences with the same structure, to raise student consciousness (Ellis, 2001; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Sharwood-Smith, 1993). For example, teachers first target a linguistic feature that is salient to students using underlining or italic fonts, and then ask students to use this target form in their communicative tasks. This method might awaken internalized grammatical knowledge of students to help them generalize structures on their own.

Some scholars (e.g. Ellis, 1999; McLaughlin, 1990; Van Patten, 1996) divide information processing of foreign language into three parts: input, processing, and output. Teachers who manipulate input of a target language (e.g. the
References


Thomas, A. C. (1987). The effects of inductive and deductive teaching strategies in computer-based language lessons on the performance of high school students identified as being field-dependent or independent (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The Ohio State University. Columbus, OH.


### Table 1. Students’ Test Difference between Groups (Independent t-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>(Post-Pre)-test</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>55.61</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>-1.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>58.86</td>
<td>15.05</td>
<td>74.37</td>
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</table>

A= Deductive group, B= Inductive group, **= p<0.01, ***= p<0.001

### Table 2. Students’ Learning Outcomes within Each Individual Group (pair t-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>N.</th>
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<th>Post-test</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>A (Deductive Group)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>55.61</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>-12.70</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (Inductive Group)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>58.86</td>
<td>15.05</td>
<td>-10.85</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
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***= p<0.001

### Table 3. Pre-, Post-, (Post-Pre)- test Scores Difference between FI/FD Students (ANOVA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Style</th>
<th>N</th>
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<th>(Post-Pre)-test</th>
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<tr>
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<td>p</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>FD</td>
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<td>FN</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57.00</td>
<td>15.61</td>
<td>0.083</td>
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</table>

FI:GEFT 14-18,  FD:GEFT 0-10,  FN=GEFT 11-13

### Table 4. Learning Outcomes Difference within Individual FI/FD Students (pair t-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive style</th>
<th>N.</th>
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<th>Post-test</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>58.88</td>
<td>13.91</td>
<td>76.79</td>
<td>13.67</td>
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<td>FD (GEFT 0-10)</td>
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<td>54.74</td>
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<td>10.37</td>
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<td>FN (GEFT 11-13)</td>
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<td>57.00</td>
<td>15.61</td>
<td>80.33</td>
<td>11.43</td>
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***= p<0.001
Table 5. The Interactive Effect of Inductive/Deductive Approaches and FI/FD Cognitive Styles on Student Performance Difference (ANOVA) (N=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>N.</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>p</td>
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<td>0.243</td>
<td>80.52</td>
<td>13.74</td>
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<tr>
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<td>FD</td>
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<td>52.14</td>
<td>10.74</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>11.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FN</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53.71</td>
<td>14.38</td>
<td></td>
<td>83.57</td>
<td>10.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58.90</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td></td>
<td>72.50</td>
<td>12.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FD</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>57.54</td>
<td>13.07</td>
<td></td>
<td>73.38</td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FN</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59.88</td>
<td>16.53</td>
<td></td>
<td>77.50</td>
<td>11.11</td>
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Table 6. Summary of FI/FD Students’ Pre-test, Post-test, and Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Score</th>
<th>Deductive Group</th>
<th>Inductive Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>FI&gt;FN&gt;FD</td>
<td>FN&gt;FI&gt;FD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>FN&gt;FI&gt;FD</td>
<td>FN&gt;FD&gt;FI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Post-test)-(Pre-test)</td>
<td>FN&gt;FD&gt;FI</td>
<td>FN&gt;FD&gt;FI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FI/FD Cutoff score = Mean+0.5SD

Appendix    English Tenses Comprehension Test

1. “Hurry up! We’re waiting for you. What’s taking you so long?”
   “I ___ for an important phone call. Go ahead and leave without me.”
   A. wait        B. will wait          C. am waiting        D. have waited
2. “Robert is going to be famous someday. He ___ in three movies already.”
   “I am sure he’ll be a star.”
   A. has been appearing    B. had appeared      C. has appeared      D. appeared
3. “Where’s Polly?” “She ___.”
   A. is in her room studying       C. studies in her room
   B. in her room is studying        D. has in her room studied
4. “Hello? Alice? This is Jeff. How are you?”
   “Jeff? What a coincidence! I ___ about you when the phone rang.”
   A. was just thinking  B. just thought    C. have just been thinking    D. was just thought
5. “What ___ about the new simplified tax law?”
   “It’s more confusing than the old one.”
   A. are you thinking        B. do you think      C. have you thought      D. have you been thinking
6. “When is Mr. Fields planning to retire?”
   “Soon, I think. He ___ here for a long time. He’ll probably retire either next year or the year after that.”
   A. worked        B. had been working   C. has been working     D. is working
7. “Why did you buy all this sugar and chocolate?” “I ___ a delicious dessert for dinner tonight.”
   A. make        B. will make       C. am going to make   D. will have made
8. “Les’s go! What’s taking you so long?” “I’ll be there as soon as I ___ my keys.”
   A. found         B. will find      C. find            D. am finding

9. Next week when there ___ a full moon, the ocean tides will be higher.
   A. is being       B. is           C. will be         D. will have been

10. While I ___ TV last night, a mouse ran across the floor.
    A. watch         B. watched       C. was watching   D. am watching

11. Fish were among the earliest forms of life. Fish ___ on earth for ages and ages.
    A. existed       B. are existing  C. exist          D. have existed

12. The phone ___ constantly since Jack announced his candidacy for president this morning.
    A. has been ringing B. rang           C. had rung       D. had been ringing

13. The earth ___ on the sun for its heat and light.
    A. is depend     B. depending      C. had depend     D. depends

14. I don’t feel good. I ___ home from work tomorrow.
    A. am staying    B. stay           C. will have stayed D. stayed

15. Today there are weather satellites that beam down information about the earth’s atmosphere. In the last two decades, space exploration ___ great contributions to weather forecasting.
    A. is making     B. has made       C. made           D. makes

16. On July 20, 1696, Astronaut Neil Armstrong ___ down onto the moon, the first person ever to set foot on another celestial body.
    A. was stepping  B. stepped         C. has stepped    D. was step

17. The plane’s departure was delayed because of mechanical difficulties. When the weary passengers finally boarded the aircraft, many were annoyed and irritable because they ___ in the airport for three and a half hours.
    A. are waiting  B. were waiting   C. have been waiting D. had been waiting

18. If coastal erosion continues to take place at the present rate, in other fifty years this beach ___ anymore.
    A. doesn’t exist B. isn’t going to exist C. isn’t existing D. won’t be existing

19. Homestead High School’s football team ___ a championship until last season, when the new coach led them to win first place in their league.
    A. has never won B. is never winning C. had never been winning D. had never won

20. Non-native speakers need many years of intensive language study before they can qualify as interpreters. By the end of this year, Chen ___ English for three years, but he will still need more training and experience before he masters the language.
    A. will be studying B. has studied C. will have been studying D. has been studying

21. We ___ for a couple of days, so you won’t be able to call us.
    A. travel        B. will travel   C. will be traveling D. will have traveled

22. “When are you going to ask your boss for raise?”
    “___ to her twice already! I don’t think she wants to give me one.”
    A. I’ve talked    B. I’ve been talking C. I was talking   D. I’d talked

23. “Do you think Harry will want something to eat after he gets here?”
    “I hope not. It’ll probably be after midnight, and we ___”
    A. are sleeping  B. will be sleeping C. have been sleeping D. be sleeping
24. Paul, could you please turn off the stove? The potatoes ___ for at least thirty minutes.
   A. are boiling   B. boiling   C. have been boiling   D. were boiling

25. “Is it true that spaghetti didn’t originate in Italy?”
   “Yes. The Chinese ___ spaghetti dishes for a long time before Marco Polo brought it back to Italy.”
   A. have been making   B. have made   C. had been making   D. make

26. “I once saw a turtle that had wings. The turtle flew into the air to catch insects.”
   “Stop kidding. I ___ you!”
   A. don’t believe   B. am not believing   C. didn’t believe   D. wasn’t believing

27. “Could someone help me lift the lawnmower into the pickup truck?”
   “I am not busy. I ___ you.”
   A. help   B. will help   C. am going to help   D. am helping

28. Just relax, Antoine. As soon as your sprained ankle heals, you can play soccer again. At this time next week, you ___ soccer again.
   A. will play   B. are playing   C. play   D. will be playing

29. “Are you going to be in town next Saturday?” “No, I ___ my aunt.”
   A. will be in Chicago visiting   B. visit   C. am visiting   D. will have visited

30. I know you feel bad now, Tommy, but try to put it out of your mind. By the time you’re an adult, you ___ all about it.
   A. forget   B. will have forgotten   C. will forget   D. forgot

31. Mary was born in 1975. By the year 2025, she ___ on this earth for 50 years.
   A. will have been living   B. is living   C. lives   D. had lived

32. After ten unhappy years, Janice finally quit her job. She ___ along with her boss for a long time before she finally decided to look for a new position.
   A. hadn’t been getting   B. isn’t getting   C. didn’t get   D. hasn’t been getting

33. They ___ about something when I walked into the room.
   A. were arguing   B. argued   C. had argued   D. have argued

34. At one time, huge prehistoric reptiles dominated the earth. This Age of Dinosaurs ___ much longer than the present Age of Mammals has lasted to date.
   A. lasted   B. was lasting   C. has lasted   D. had lasted

35. Jim, why don’t you take some time off? You ___ too hard lately. Take a short vacation.
   A. worked   B. work   C. were working   D. have been working

36. The city is rebuilding its dilapidated waterfront, transforming it into a pleasant and fashionable outdoor mall. Next summer when the tourists arrive, they ___ 104 beautiful new shops and restaurants in the area where the old run-down waterfront properties used to stand.
   A. will find   B. will be finding   C. will have found   D. will find

37. A minor earthquake occurred at 2:07 A.M. on January 3. Most of the people in the village ___ at the time and didn’t even know it had occurred until the next morning.
   A. slept   B. had slept   C. were sleeping   D. sleep

38. The little girl started to cry. She ___ her doll, and no one was able to find it for her.
   A. has lost   B. had lost   C. was losing   D. was lost

39. What? He got married again? At this rate, he ___ a dozen wives by the time he dies.
   A. has had   B. had had   C. has   D. will have had
40. Jane’s eyes burned and her shoulders ached. She ___ at the computer for five straight hours. Finally, she took a break.
   A. is sitting    B. has been sitting     C. was sitting       D. had been sitting

41. She will _____ almost $1000 by then.
   A. save   B. have saved    C. have been saving     D. be saving

42. By the time I go to bed tonight, I ___ my work for the day.
   A. will finish    B. have finished     C. will have finished   D. finish

43. By next year, Roger will _____ here for 10 years.
   A. live    B. be living    C. have been living     D. be going to

44. Fatemach looked down to discover a snake at her feet. When she saw it, she ___.
   A. was screaming   B. had screamed     C. screamed        D. screams

45. By the time Alfonso finally graduated from high school, he ____seven different schools because his parents moved frequently.
   A. attended      B. was attending    C. had attended     D. had been attending

46. By April, I ______ my new car for a year.
   A. have driven    B. will have been driving   C. will have been driven
   D. will drive

47. I borrowed four books on gardening the last time I ___ to the library.
   A. go             B. went              C. had gone       D. have gone

48. Before I started the car, all of the passengers ___ their seat belts.
   A. will buckle    B. had buckled   C. buckle        D. have buckled

**Twelve Tenses and Their Corresponding Test Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenses</th>
<th>Question numbers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Present Perfect</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16. 34. 44. 47.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4. 10. 37. 33.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Past Perfect</td>
<td>19. 38. 45. 48.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17. 25. 32. 40.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Future</td>
<td>7. 18. 27. 36.</td>
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