

THE EFFECTS OF USING TASK-BASED TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING READING SKILL IN ENGLISH FOR STUDENTS AT THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

VU KIEU HANH

Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry

Abstract: This study determined the effectiveness of Task-based Approach in teaching English reading comprehension to Second Year students at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry, second semester of Academic Year 2023-2024. The experimental method of research with lesson plans and tests were used by the author to collect the data from students - respondents. A teacher - made achievement test was validated and administered as a pre-tests and post-test to both groups. Lesson plans were prepared for teaching students in the experimental group. The t-test of independent sample means was employed to compare the pre-test mean of the two groups and post-test mean of the two groups. The t-test of dependent sample means was also used to compare the pre-test and post-test mean of experimental group.

Keywords: effect, task-based technique, reading skill, second year students, Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry

1. Introduction

Vietnam has a socialist education with popular, national, scientific and modern characteristics, based on Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thoughts. With the goal of educating Vietnamese into comprehensively developed individuals who possess ethics, knowledge, physical health, aesthetic sense and profession, loyal to the ideology of national dependence, Vietnam has gained a great deal of achievements relative to the world's development, keeping up with the latest modern technology in recent years. In order to gain this progress, Vietnam has implemented and encouraged international co-operation in education as well as in other fields with different countries all over the world, in which English is the golden key to open the regional and global integration doors.

For the first time, Ministry of Education and Training conducted a statistical survey of foreign language needs in late 1993s (MOET, 1993b). This work has contributed to the building of "A National Strategy for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning through all Levels of Education" (MOET, 1994c). Foreign language, especially, English, is increasingly widely used in education and daily activities. As a matter of fact, English was reconfirmed by an Order, signed by Prime Minister (August 15th, 1994) in which government officials would be required to study foreign language, mainly and favorably English. It should be noted that this is the first time Vietnam has a strong and clear decision concerning foreign language policy and planning made by the highest- level authority.

The choice of English has a great influence to the national education. Thus, the demand for using English as means of communication, make English teaching and learning more necessary. On the other hand, English is considered as a vital requirement for employment, job promotion, overseas studies as well as higher education. English nowadays has become the main foreign language in almost school levels. Language centers, both private and public have been established with different courses, program and type of training to meet all the needs in society.

Richard 1994; 76-77 said of all the approaches in teaching English that the author has ever known is the indirect approach. The indirect approach interprets competence as following:" The product of engaging learners in conversational interaction".

The Indirect approach based on a notion laid out by Krashen SLA theorists (Schmitt 2002) which stated that languages can be unconsciously acquired through conversation and exposure to "comprehensive input". Speaking pedagogically, classes where the indirect approach is emphasized tend to provide lots of opportunities for students – students interaction with an aim to complete a task; the methodology that evolved from this approach is Task-based language teaching (TBLT) (Schmitt 2002); (Richards, 1994). In fact, in recent years in English language teaching and

learning, the idea of task-based learning and teaching has become keen contemporary interest, and different task-based approaches exist today.

Consequently, the Task-Based Language Teaching can be an appropriate approach in teaching English reading to students. The application of this method in teaching - learning process is expected to get students' achievement in English in particular and in English reading in general.

2. Research design

The study used the experimental design of research to determine the effect of Task-based approach to student's reading comprehension performance.

The experimental group was given lessons using Task-based approach while the control group wasn't. The performance of the two groups resulting from their Pre and Post Tests were evaluated by using T-test to find out the difference between two groups, and the effectiveness of TBT in teaching reading comprehension. The difference between two mean scores of the two groups were computed and tested for significance.

3. Respondent of the Study

The respondents in this study were 110 - second year students at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry during the 2nd semester of academic year 2023-2024. They were chosen purposely and strategically from the students' profile supplied by the Department of Training.

4. Result and discussion

Mean pre-test score of Control Group and Experimental Group

Table 1 shows the distribution of the pre-test scores of the control and experimental groups. In the control groups, the highest score was 8 which was obtained by students number 24 and 37 and the lowest score was 3 which was obtained by student number 21. Meanwhile, in the experimental group, the highest score was 9 which was gained by student number 29 and the lowest score was 4 which was obtained by 6 students in the table.

Table 1. Mean pre-test scores of Control Group and Experimental Group

| <i>Students no.</i> | <i>Pre-test scores of control group</i> | <i>Pre-test of experimental group</i> | <i>Students no.</i> | <i>Pre-test scores of control group</i> | <i>Pre-test of experimental group</i> |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | 6 | 6 | 29 | 4 | 9 |
| 2 | 5 | 5 | 30 | 6 | 5 |
| 3 | 4 | 7 | 31 | 7 | 7 |
| 4 | 7 | 4 | 32 | 5 | 5 |
| 5 | 6 | 5 | 33 | 6 | 7 |
| 6 | 5 | 7 | 34 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | 7 | 6 | 35 | 7 | 7 |
| 8 | 6 | 8 | 36 | 4 | 6 |
| 9 | 5 | 5 | 37 | 8 | 8 |
| 10 | 6 | 6 | 38 | 7 | 6 |
| 11 | 7 | 4 | 39 | 5 | 5 |
| 12 | 5 | 7 | 40 | 6 | 7 |
| 13 | 6 | 6 | 41 | 7 | 5 |
| 14 | 4 | 8 | 42 | 6 | 7 |
| 15 | 6 | 5 | 43 | 5 | 6 |
| 16 | 5 | 6 | 44 | 7 | 4 |
| 17 | 4 | 7 | 45 | 6 | 6 |
| 18 | 7 | 5 | 46 | 5 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 19 | 4 | 8 | 47 | 7 | 8 |
| 20 | 5 | 6 | 48 | 4 | 5 |
| 21 | 3 | 7 | 49 | 5 | 4 |
| 22 | 6 | 5 | 50 | 7 | 8 |
| 23 | 7 | 7 | 51 | 6 | 7 |
| 24 | 8 | 6 | 52 | 5 | 6 |
| 25 | 5 | 7 | 53 | 7 | 4 |
| 26 | 6 | 4 | 54 | 6 | 7 |
| 27 | 7 | 8 | 55 | 5 | 5 |
| 28 | 5 | 7 | <i>Mean</i> | <i>5.7091</i> | <i>6.1091</i> |

Table 2. Summary of Pre-Test Scores of Control Group.

| <i>Student's scores</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>VI</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 8.6-10.0 | 0 | 0 | <i>Excellent</i> |
| 6.6-8.5 | 16 | 29.09 | <i>Good</i> |
| 5.0-6.5 | 30 | 54.55 | <i>Fair</i> |
| 4.0 and below | 9 | 16.36 | <i>Poor</i> |
| Total | 55 | 100.00 | |

As shown in table 2, 30 out of 55 students-respondents or 54.55% obtained the scores ranged from **5.0-6.5** described as *fair*; which means that in the test there are still some incorrect choices. Some answers are different from the key but still can be acceptable; 16 out of them 29.09% obtained the score ranged from **6.6-8.5** described as *good* which means that in the test there are a few incorrect choices and the answers for questions are various. And none of them acquired the score from **8.6-10.0** described as *excellent* that means that in the test there are few incorrect choices and answers for questions are various, correct grammar and structure.

Table 3. Summary of Pre-Test Scores of Experimental Group.

| <i>Student's scores</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>VI</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 8.6-10.0 | 1 | 1.82 | <i>Excellent</i> |
| 6.6-8.5 | 22 | 40.00 | <i>Good</i> |
| 5.0-6.5 | 26 | 47.27 | <i>Fair</i> |
| 4.0 and below | 6 | 10.91 | <i>Poor</i> |
| Total | 55 | 100.00 | |

It could be seen in table 3, 26 out of 55 students-respondents or 47.27% obtained the scores ranged from **5.0-6.5** described as *fair*; which means that in the test there are still some incorrect choices. Some answers are different from the key but still can be acceptable; 22 out of them or 40.00% obtained the score ranged from **6.6-8.5** described as *good* which means that in the test there are a few incorrect choices and the answers for questions are various. And only one of them acquired the score from **8.6-10.0** described as *excellent* that means that in the test there are few incorrect choices and answers for questions are various, correct grammar and structure.

Mean Post-test Scores of Control Group and Experimental Group

Table 4. Mean post-test of Control Group and Experimental Group

| <i>Students no.</i> | <i>Post-test scores of control group</i> | <i>Post-test scores of experimental group</i> | <i>Students no.</i> | <i>Post-test scores of control group</i> | <i>Post-test scores of experimental group</i> |
|---------------------|--|---|---------------------|--|---|
| 1 | 6 | 7 | 29 | 8 | 6 |
| 2 | 7 | 6 | 30 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | 5 | 8 | 31 | 9 | 8 |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 32 | 5 | 9 |
| 5 | 7 | 7 | 33 | 6 | 6 |
| 6 | 5 | 8 | 34 | 7 | 7 |
| 7 | 6 | 6 | 35 | 6 | 8 |
| 8 | 4 | 7 | 36 | 8 | 5 |
| 9 | 5 | 4 | 37 | 5 | 7 |
| 10 | 6 | 5 | 38 | 6 | 8 |
| 11 | 7 | 8 | 39 | 7 | 6 |
| 12 | 5 | 6 | 40 | 8 | 9 |
| 13 | 4 | 7 | 41 | 6 | 7 |
| 14 | 8 | 9 | 42 | 7 | 9 |
| 15 | 6 | 6 | 43 | 5 | 8 |
| 16 | 7 | 8 | 44 | 8 | 5 |
| 17 | 4 | 6 | 45 | 6 | 6 |
| 18 | 5 | 7 | 46 | 7 | 7 |
| 19 | 7 | 8 | 47 | 5 | 8 |
| 20 | 6 | 6 | 48 | 9 | 5 |
| 21 | 9 | 7 | 49 | 4 | 7 |
| 22 | 8 | 8 | 50 | 5 | 6 |
| 23 | 7 | 6 | 51 | 7 | 7 |
| 24 | 6 | 8 | 52 | 6 | 5 |
| 25 | 4 | 6 | 53 | 8 | 6 |
| 26 | 5 | 7 | 54 | 7 | 7 |
| 27 | 7 | 5 | 55 | 5 | 8 |
| 28 | 6 | 9 | <i>Mean</i> | <i>6.2545</i> | <i>6.8545</i> |

Table 4 shows the distribution of the pre-test scores of the control and experimental groups. In the control groups, the highest score was 9 which was obtained by students number 21, 31 and 48 and the lowest score was 4 which was obtained by 5 student. Meanwhile, in the experimental group, the highest score was 9 which were gained by 4 students and the lowest score was 4 which was obtained by student number 4 in the table.

Table 5. Summary of post-test scores of control group

| <i>Student's scores</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>VI</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 8.6-10.0 | 3 | 5.45 | <i>Excellent</i> |
| 6.6-8.5 | 21 | 38.18 | <i>Good</i> |
| 5.0-6.5 | 26 | 47.27 | <i>Fair</i> |
| 4.0 and below | 5 | 9.09 | <i>Poor</i> |
| Total | 55 | 100.00 | |

As shown in table 5, 26 out of 55 students-respondents or 47.27% obtained the scores ranged from **5.0-6.5** described as *fair*; which means that in the test there are still some incorrect choices. Some answers are different from the

key but still can be acceptable; 21 out of them 38.18 % obtained the score ranged from **6.6-8.5** described as *good* which means that in the test there are a few incorrect choices and the answers for questions are various. And 3 of them acquired the score from **8.6-10.0** described as *excellent* that means that in the test there are few incorrect choices and answers for questions are various, correct grammar and structure.

Table 6. Summary of post-test scores of experimental group

| Student's scores | Frequency | Percentage | VI |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|------------------|
| 8.6-10.0 | 5 | 9.09 | <i>Excellent</i> |
| 6.6-8.5 | 28 | 50.91 | <i>Good</i> |
| 5.0-6.5 | 21 | 38.18 | <i>Fair</i> |
| 4.0 and below | 1 | 1.82 | <i>Poor</i> |
| Total | 55 | 100.00 | |

As shown in table 6 that 28 out of 55 students-respondents or 50.91 % obtained the scores ranged from **6.6-8.5** described as *good*; meaning that in the test there are a few incorrect choices and the answers for questions are various. Some answers are different from the key but still can be acceptable; 21 out of them or 38.18% obtained the score ranged from **5.0-6.5** described as *fair* which means that in the test there are still some incorrect choices. Some answers are different from the key but still can be acceptable. And only one of them acquired the score from **4.0 and below** described as *poor* that means that in the test there are too many incorrect choices.

Significant Difference in post – test score Gained by Students Between Control Group and Experiment Group

Table 7. Significant difference in post – test score gained by students between Control Group and Experiment Group

| Variables | Sd | df | Mean | Mean of difference | t-critical | t-value | P-value | V.I |
|------------------|---------|----|---------|--------------------|------------|---------|---------|---------------------|
| Control Group | 1,33636 | 54 | 6.25455 | 0.6000 | 1.674 | -2.43 | 0.018 | <i>Significant.</i> |
| Experiment Group | 1,23855 | | 6.85455 | | | | | |

It could be seen from the Table 7 that the obtained p – value of 0.018 for control group and experiment group is less than the threshold p – value of 0.05 and/ or the absolute t – computed value of 2.43 being higher than t – critical value of 1.674 This is against the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference that exists in post - test score gained by students between Control group and Experiment Group, thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

Significant effect of Experiment Group to post – test score gained by students (pre-test and post-test scores)

Table 8. Significant effect of Experimental Group to post – test score gained by students

| Variables | Sd | df | Mean | Mean of difference | t-critical | t-value | P-value | V.I |
|-----------|---------|----|---------|--------------------|------------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| Pre-test | 1,28629 | 54 | 6.10909 | -0.745455 | 1.674 | -3.45 | 0.001 | <i>Significant</i> |
| Post-test | 1,23855 | | 6.85455 | | | | | |

It could be seen from the Table 8 that the obtained p – value of 0.001 for pre-test and post – test is less than the threshold p – value of 0.05 and/ or the absolute t – computed value of 3.45 being higher than t – critical value of 1.674. This is against the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant effect that exists in post - test score gained by students of Experimental Group.

5. Conclusions: In the light of the above findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There was significant difference on post-test scores between the experimental group and the control group.
2. There was an effect of task-based approach in teaching reading comprehension performance of the students Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry based on tests. Based on the findings, the hypothesis which indicated that there is no significant difference on post-test score between the control group and experimental group, and there is no effectiveness of task-based approach in teaching reading comprehension on performance of the students basing on tests have not been supported in this study.

6. Recommendations: Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. The results of the study prove that the mean scores of students using Task-based Approach is significantly higher than those of students using the traditional method. Therefore, teachers of English at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry in particular and teachers in Vietnam in general should adapt Task-based Approach in their teaching with regard to applying different activities following this method to motivate and improve student's reading comprehension skill in English.
2. The results infers that success in teaching reading English in particular, in English language in general to students may depend not so much on the teachers' competency or the students' capability but more than the approaches and strategies that the teacher may use. As a consequence, it is recommended that teachers of English should take into serious consideration all the conditions to apply these innovative approaches as well as combine harmoniously different methods in their teaching so that they could facilitate the students' learning to reach their utmost acquisition of the language.

REFERENCES

1. Dornyei (2001). *Teaching and Researching Motivation* [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
2. Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Lee, J. 2000. *Tasks and Communicating in Language Classrooms*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
4. LI Guan-yi(ed). (2000, 2003). *A New English Course (Revised Edition)*[M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language
5. Richards, J., J. Platt and Rodgers. 2001. *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. London: Longman.