The Effects of Task-Based Language Teaching on Students' Reading Comprehension Ability at A High School in Mekong Delta

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Abstract:

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in language learning; however, it remains a challenge for many EFL students, necessitating effective instructional approaches. This study examines the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on high school students' reading comprehension and their attitudes toward reading. A quasi-experimental design was employed with 79 students at Ban Tan Dinh High School, Kien Giang province, divided into an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG). The EG received instruction through TBLT-based reading tasks, while the CG followed traditional reading instruction. Pre- and post-tests assessed students' reading performance, and a questionnaire evaluated their attitudes toward reading. Statistical analysis using SPSS revealed a significant improvement in the reading comprehension of the EG compared to the CG. Furthermore, students in the EG demonstrated a more positive attitude toward reading, indicating that TBLT fosters both linguistic development and learner engagement. The findings suggest that TBLT can serve as an effective alternative to conventional reading instruction, enhancing students' comprehension skills and motivation. Implications, limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), reading performances, EFL students, learner engagement.

1. Introduction

English serves as a global lingua franca, playing a pivotal role in various domains, including education. In Vietnam, the increasing importance of English has driven efforts to improve language instruction, with a particular focus on reading comprehension, as emphasized in Vietnam's Education Law (2005). Despite its critical role in academic achievement and real-world communication, reading comprehension remains one of the most challenging aspects for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Developing effective instructional approaches to enhance reading proficiency is therefore a pressing concern in EFL education.

While Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been widely recognized as an effective approach in second language acquisition, research on its impact on reading comprehension remains limited, particularly in Vietnamese high school settings. Existing studies have primarily focused on TBLT's effectiveness in general language proficiency or speaking skills, with insufficient empirical evidence on its role in improving reading comprehension. Furthermore, little attention has been given to how TBLT influences students' attitudes toward reading, an essential factor in sustaining long-term language learning motivation. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by investigating both the cognitive and affective effects of TBLT in a high school EFL context in Vietnam.

Specifically, this study aims to examine the extent to which TBLT enhances students' reading proficiency and whether its implementation fosters positive attitudes toward reading comprehension among upper secondary EFL learners at Ban Tan Dinh High School. To address these objectives, the study is guided by two principal research questions:

1. What are the effects of task-based language teaching on students' reading ability?
2. What are students' perceptions of learning reading through task-based language teaching?

By addressing these gaps, this research contributes to the ongoing efforts to enhance English language education by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of TBLT as a pedagogical strategy for developing reading comprehension skills. The findings are expected to inform educators and policymakers on innovative, student-centered approaches to improve reading instruction in Vietnamese secondary education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and Classification of Tasks in Teaching Reading

2.1.1 Definition of task

Tasks in language learning are defined differently by various academics. Willis (1996) analyses tasks as activities requiring learners to communicate using the target language to achieve a goal within a set timeframe, focusing on meaning rather than grammatical structures. In the context of English reading classrooms, tasks involve understanding meaning, practicing language use, and producing output with teacher and peer support. Skehan (1996) proposed five criteria for effective TBLT tasks: focusing on meaning, solving communication problems, referencing real-world activities, prioritizing task completion, and evaluating outcomes. Willis (2007) added six criteria, including learner engagement, meaningful focus, outcomes, real-world relevance, and task completion. Nunan (1989) and Ellis (2003) categorized tasks into three types: First, *pedagogic tasks*, which include classroom activities like

role-playing or information gap exercises, are designed to activate learning by encouraging interaction and engagement. Second, r*eal-world tasks*, which involve activities reflecting real-life situations, enable learners to practice authentic language use in contexts that simulate their daily experiences. Lastly, f*ocused tasks*, targeting specific language features such as verb classification, aim to enhance learners' awareness and understanding of particular linguistic aspects.

In summary, a pedagogical task needs to involve aspects such as focused meaning, integrated skills, communication, and outcome achievement, while real-world tasks related to the activities that students would be assigned to practice in their real-life. In this current research, reading comprehension tasks refers mainly to task-based tasks. They can be defined as reading activities in which students are involved in comprehending reading materials to produce their own language output, including oral or written forms, practicing the language usage in the materials, or interacting with the partners to obtain a communicative purpose.

2.1.2 Classification of tasks in teaching reading

Many researchers classify tasks in TBLT into many types. This study is only to review some important tasks which are applicable for reading skill and especially reading tasks related to teaching reading skills.

2.1.2.1 General reading tasks

According to Prabhu (1987), Willis (1996) and Nunan (2004), there 3 kinds of tasks in cognitive tasks, including information-gap, opinion-gap, and reasoning-gap tasks.

An information-gap activity involves students exchanging information to complete a task. In a task-based reading activity, students read different paragraphs of a text, sharing information to aid comprehension. This cooperative learning structure, part of a jigsaw structure, can effectively enhance reading comprehension.

An opinion-gap activity involves students providing their personal opinions or feelings to complete a task, such as a social problem reading text, thereby enhancing their critical thinking and communication skills.

A reasoning-gap activity requires students to infer new information from given one. For example, students are given a railroad timetable and asked to find the best route to get from one particular city to another, Prabhu (1987) shows that reasoning-gap tasks can work best since they encourage a sustained engagement with meaning.

In short, those tasks describe the activities that can help student to deal with difficult language skills including receptive skills and productive skills (shown in Figure 2.1).
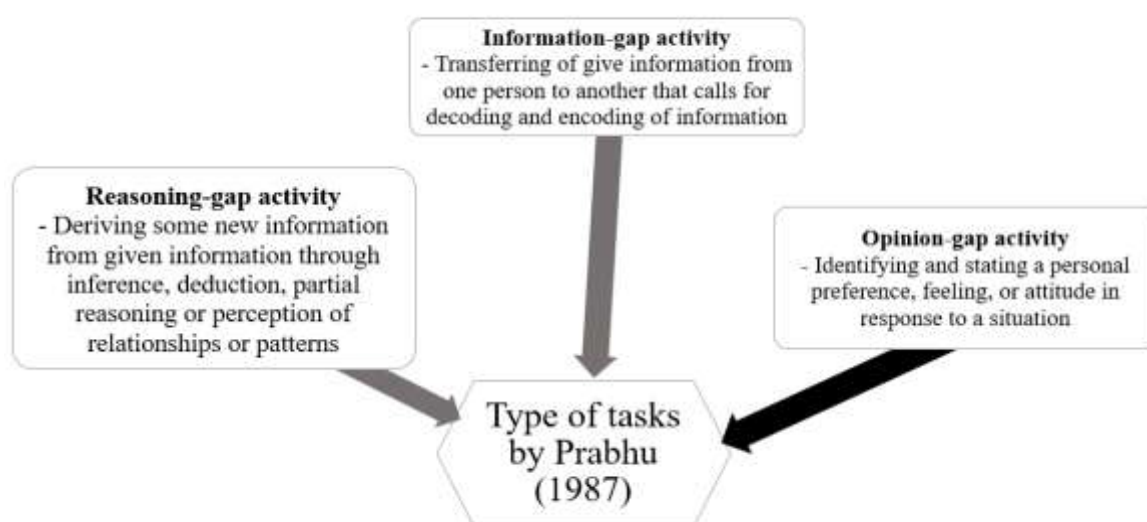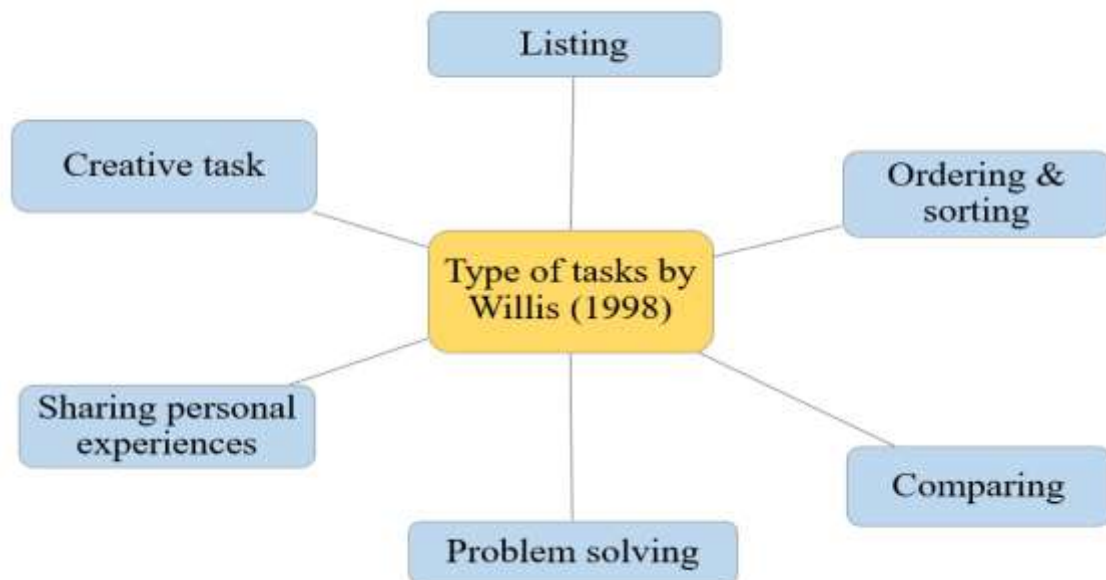

Figure 2.1 Task classification adapted from Prabhu (1987)

In addition, Willis (1998) suggested six types of tasks comprising listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, and creating. Listing reading tasks can be given to help students build up skimming skills. The next type of tasks, which is ordering and sorting tasks, refers to four main types: sequencing items, actions, or events in a logical or chronological order; ranking items according to specified criteria; classifying items into small groups or under given headings; and organizing items in different ways, where the categories themselves are not provided. For example, students may be asked to read a story and arrange pictures illustrating the events in the correct order. The third type is comparing tasks, where students are asked to discover similarities and differences between pieces of information in the same or different sources. The processes involve matching to identify specific similarities or differences and relating these points to one another. As with type 4, problem-solving tasks require learners to apply their intellectual and reasoning abilities. The processes and time allocation can vary greatly depending on the type and complexity of the problem. Real-life problems may involve hypothesizing, describing experiences, comparing or evaluating

alternatives, and ultimately finding a solution. For instance, completion tasks may include reading short extracts from texts and predicting the ending or piecing together clues to guess it. Sharing personal experience tasks in type 5 encourage students to talk more freely about themselves and share their experiences with others. For example, after reading a passage about an embarrassing situation, students can be encouraged to share their own similar experiences. Finally, creative tasks involve performing creative projects or works, which often combine multiple task types. These tasks typically have more stages than others and require organizational and cooperative skills to accomplish. The outcomes are evaluated and appreciated by the teacher and other group members. (shown in Firgure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Task classification adapted from Willis (1998)

2.1.2.2 Specific reading tasks

According to Willis (1996), when carefully selected, texts can become one of good sources to start designing communicative tasks which would make reading activity become more communicative. Willis (1996) suggests six different types of tasks which can be employed specifically in teaching reading skills.

Table 2.1 Task types for reading adapted from Willis (1996)

No	Task	Description
1	Prediction tasks	From the headline and early a text, selected parts of text, and pictures of video with or without words
2	Jumbles	Jumbled sections of text, a jumbled key point of a summary, jumbled picture from a series
3	Restoration tasks	Defining words, phrases, sentences skipped from a text or added to a text
4	Jigsaw/split information tasks	Each student in a group reads, hears different parts of a whole text and then combines to make a whole
5	Comparison tasks	Two accounts of the same incident, event A picture to compare with a written account, descriptions
6	Memory challenge tasks	After a single brief exposure to the text, students list, describe, write a quiz question about what they can remember to show other pairs.

In short, the type of tasks that would be used in TBLT including both general reading tasks and specific reading tasks would be made use of in all language skills. However, For the purpose of the current research, the general tasks are more applicable for reading skills and reading comprehension.

2.1.2.3 Task-based language teaching

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emerged in the 1980s as a significant approach in second language acquisition, gaining considerable attention for its effectiveness in teaching and learning. TBLT, also known as Task-Based Instruction (TBI), emphasizes the use of authentic language and meaningful tasks to engage learners in communicative activities using the target language.

According to Prabhu (1987), TBLT involves communicative tasks that provide learners with opportunities to develop communicative competence and facilitate natural language processing through meaningful classroom interactions.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) defined TBLT as a method where tasks serve as the fundamental unit of planning and instruction, creating an optimal context for activating learning processes compared to form-focused activities. Similarly, Skehan (1998) viewed TBLT as instruction centered on task completion, reflecting real-life experiences. Willis (2001) highlighted its motivational potential, where tasks drive learners to achieve communicative goals in specific contexts.

The theoretical foundation of TBLT encompasses language acquisition theory, psycholinguistics, constructivism, sociolinguistics, and cognitive psychology. This diverse foundation supports its emphasis on meaningful and natural language exposure. Nunan (2004) further distinguished TBLT classrooms from traditional ones, highlighting the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction. These differences are illustrated in Table 2.2, offering educators and learners insights into how TBLT activities diverge from traditional classroom practices.

Overall, TBLT is recognized as an effective approach to foster language acquisition by integrating real-life tasks, promoting communicative competence, and aligning learning activities with learners' cognitive and social experiences.

Table 2.2 Traditional classroom and TBLT classroom adapted from (Nunan, 2004)

Traditional form-focus of pedagogy	TBLT classroom
Rigid discourse structure	Loose discourse structure
Teacher controls topic development.	Students able to control topic development
The teacher regulates turn-taking.	Turn-taking is controlled by the same rules
Students' role is responding and performing a limited scope of language functions.	Students' starting and responding roles and performing wide range of language functions.
Little negotiated meaning	More negotiated meaning
Scaffolding for enabling students to produce correct sentences	Scaffolding for enabling students to Say what they want to say
Form-focused feedback	Content-focused feedback
Repeat what the students say	Repeat the task with a different task

This study compares two frameworks, Willis (1998) and Ellis (2006), to design reading task-based activities that effectively develop students' reading comprehension. Willis proposes three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. The pre-task phase introduces the topic, while the task cycle phase allows students to plan, execute, and report the task. Ellis (2006) offers three stages: pre-task, while-task, and post-task. Both models align with foreign language learning and teaching, emphasizing meaningful and natural language exposure. Ellis's model emphasizes reflection in post-task activities, requiring students to take responsibility for their learning process. Willis's model emphasizes conscious and explicit learning through language analysis and practice, which can be more effective in foreign language learning environments with limited teaching time (see in 2.3 below).

Table 2.3 A framework for task-based reading lessons adapted from Willis (2007)

A pre-reading task	Activate prior knowledge and introduce the task. Set the context and explain the purpose of the reading task. Preview any necessary vocabulary or concepts. Provide any necessary background information. Find the main idea of the passage
A while reading task	Students work on the reading task to find specific information Provide the reading material and any necessary instructions. Students read the text individually or in small groups. Students complete a task that requires them to use the information from the text in a meaningful way. Students share and compare their responses with classmates.
A post-reading task and language focus task	Highlight language features that emerged during the task. Review any language structures, vocabulary, or discourse features that emerged during the task. Provide explicit instruction on any language features that were problematic for students Provide a similar reading task, either with a new text or with a different task that requires similar language skills. Encourage students to apply the language focus from the previous step to their new task. Reflect on the task and evaluate student learning.

	Discuss the success of the task and what students learned. Reflect on what worked well and what could be improved in future tasks. Evaluate student learning and provide feedback.

2.2 BENEFITS OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

TBLT has been widely recognized as beneficial for EFL learners, particularly in the domain of reading comprehension. It facilitates authentic engagement, fosters meaningful interaction, and supports the development of vocabulary and critical thinking skills. However, Thornbury (2005) cautions that TBLT may inadvertently prioritize task completion over explicit instruction in reading strategies, necessitating a balanced pedagogical approach that incorporates skill-focused activities.

2.3 EMPIRICAL STUDIES

A growing body of research has examined the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on reading comprehension across different learning contexts. Numerous empirical studies have provided evidence supporting the efficacy of TBLT in enhancing students' engagement and linguistic proficiency.

Amer (2017) conducted an empirical study to assess the effectiveness of TBLT in fostering reading comprehension among EFL learners. The findings indicated that learners exposed to task-based instruction exhibited significantly higher engagement levels and demonstrated improved comprehension outcomes compared to those instructed using traditional methodologies.

Chalak (2015) implemented a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the impact of TBLT on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. The results revealed statistically significant improvements in comprehension performance, suggesting that TBLT serves as a conducive approach to developing students' reading proficiency.

Ardika et al. (2022) examined the application of TBLT among polytechnic students and reported that task-based instruction not only enhanced reading comprehension but also fostered a more engaging and interactive learning environment. The study underscored the role of TBLT in improving students' motivation and active participation in reading tasks.

Pham and Nguyen (2018) investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of TBLT implementation, highlighting its effectiveness in promoting student motivation and linguistic competence. The study revealed that educators perceived task-based instruction as a beneficial framework for improving reading comprehension and fostering communicative skills.

Iranmehr et al. (2011) conducted a comparative analysis between TBLT and traditional grammar-translation methods in teaching reading comprehension. The findings demonstrated that students who engaged in TBLT-based reading tasks outperformed those following conventional instructional approaches, reinforcing the advantages of TBLT in language acquisition.

Despite the substantial body of research affirming the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing reading comprehension, further investigations are required to explore its implementation across diverse educational settings. In particular, studies focusing on TBLT application in secondary education, especially in Vietnamese contexts, remain limited. This study aims to bridge this research gap by examining the effects of TBLT on secondary students' reading comprehension and their attitudes toward English language learning. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing literature on task-based pedagogy and inform best practices for reading instruction in EFL classrooms.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this section, the research design and method of investigation will be justified by examining the three fundamental aspects of approach, method, and techniques in relation to the topic being investigated.

3.1 Participants

The participants were a total of 79 students participating in this study, with 40 in the EG and 39 in the CG. All participants were 18 years old and had studied English for 9 years, from grade 3 to grade 12.

3.2 Approach

The quantitative model was employed in this study based on the significant background of the current research. In this case, the effects of task-based language teaching on students' reading ability and their attitude towards reading skills were investigated. Secondly, TBLT can improve students' reading comprehension skill, and they hold positive attitudes toward the application of TBLT in the classroom.

3.3 Method

Before the treatment, there was a reading test for the two groups whose aim was to make sure that before the experiment, they were supposed to be equal in English reading proficiency of an intermediate level. The experimental group received a treatment that included various tasks such as prediction tasks, restoration tasks, split information tasks, comparison tasks, memory challenge tasks, finding the main idea of the passage or paragraphs, finding specific information, and finding grammatical structures in the passage

when the Control Group (CG) only took traditional teaching activities without task focus or TBLT.

This study adopted an experimental design, particularly the quasi-experimental model, to investigate how the task-based approach could enhance the students' reading comprehension.

3.4 Instruments

In order to collect the data to answer the two research questions, two kinds of research instrument were employed in this study. The first instrument is the questionnaire delivered to the EG after completing the treatment with four units. The second instrument is reading tests including a pre- and post-test for the two groups. Two groups received the same pre-test and the same post-test.

3.3.1 Tests

The research employed two reading comprehension tests, including a pre- and post-test, to measure the student's reading comprehension achievement before and after the treatment. The reading comprehension tests were delivered to all the participants in both the experimental group and the control group before and after the intervention. The pretest was administrated to check the level of reading comprehension achievement of the two groups at the beginning of the study. The post-test was employed to measure the reading comprehension achievement of the two groups after the experiment. It was then compared with the pretest to evaluate the achievement of the two groups in the two conditions.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was to evaluate the students' attitude towards their reading comprehension skills. Both the Vietnamese version and the English version were delivered in a survey paper because of the limited level of the students' English proficiency at my upper secondary school.

In the present research, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree, was designed to measure the participants' level of attitude in learning reading comprehension before and after the intervention. There were 40 items in this questionnaire which were adapted from many researchers including Ryan and Deci (1995), Mokhtari et al. (2008), Nguyen (2022) and 10 items were self-design by the researcher, which were aimed to measure the students' attitude towards reading comprehension skills. The questionnaire divided into 3 main sections including students' attitude toward benefits of task-based language teaching and students' attitude towards learning reading with TBLT, and students' suggestions and recommendation.

4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study took the quantitative approach, particularly the quasi-experimental design and the survey design, to carry out the research purpose. Those sets of data were then undergone various analytical processes shown in the SPSS 22.

4.1 Tests

4.1.1 Pre-test

The results of the pre-test conducted for students in the Experimental Group (EG) and the Control Group (CG) were categorized into four meaningful levels: Fail, Pass, Strong Pass, and Credit, as illustrated in Figure 4.1.
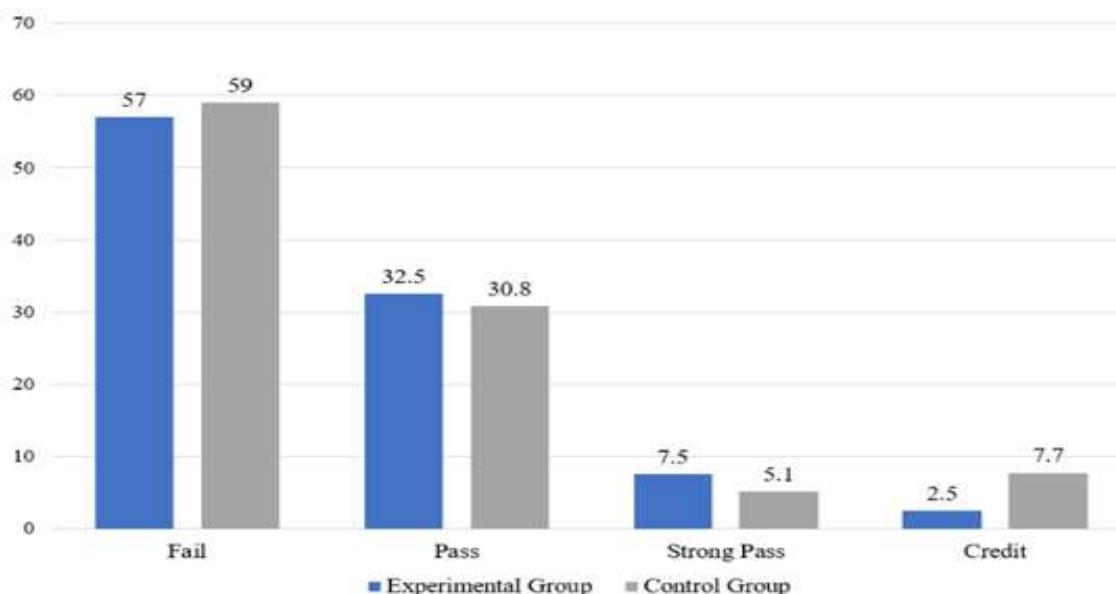
Figure 4.1 The distribution of pre- test grade

The data analysis reveals that the Fail rate in the experimental group (57%) and the control group (59%) showed a minimal difference of 2%. Similarly, the Pass rate was 33% in the EG and 31% in the CG. Differences in the Strong Pass and Credit levels were also marginal. These results indicate that students in both groups had comparable reading comprehension abilities before the implementation of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach.

Table 4.1 presents descriptive statistical features, including mean scores, minimum and maximum values, and standard deviations. The mean score of the experimental group (4.7) was slightly higher than that of the control group (4.6). Additionally, the standard deviation (SD) for the experimental group was 1.3, slightly lower than 1.4 in the control group, indicating minor variations in score distribution between the two groups.

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistical features of the central tendencies in the pre-test

Group	Pre-reading comprehension test				
	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Experimental Group	40	2.0	7.5	4.6625	1.28795
Control Group	39	1.5	7.5	4.6154	1.35948

To determine whether the observed differences were statistically significant, an independent samples t-test was conducted, as shown in Table 4.2. The significance value (Sig.) of 0.875, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold, confirms that there was no statistically significant difference in the pre-test mean scores between the two groups.

Table 4.2 Results of the independent samples t test for the pre-test scores

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t test for equality of means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig(2.t)
Reading comprehension					
Equal variances assumed	.188	.666	.158	77	.875
Equal variances not assumed			.158	76.52	.875

These findings establish that the similarity in reading comprehension proficiency between the two groups before the intervention ensures the objectivity of the study. This allows for a precise evaluation of the impact of TBLT on students' reading comprehension without external factors influencing the results.

4.1.2 Post-test

The post-test scores of students in the experimental and control groups were categorized into five meaningful levels: Fail, Pass, Strong Pass, Credit, and Distinction, as presented in Figure 4.2.
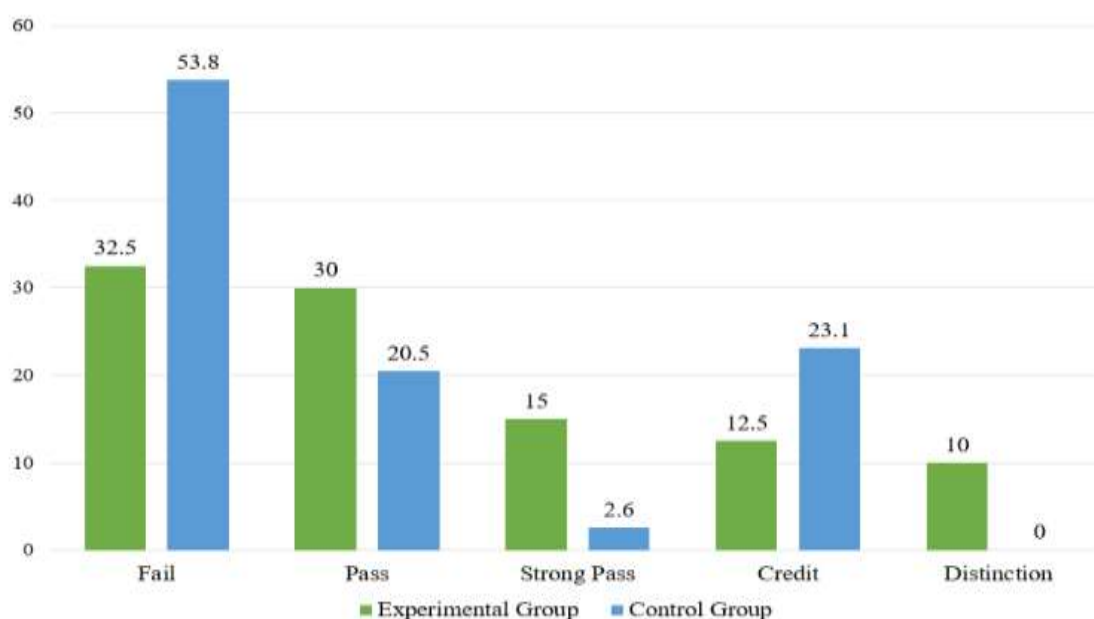
Figure 4.2 The distribution of post-test grades

A comparison of these categories indicates clear differences in reading comprehension proficiency between the two groups. Specifically, 32.5% of students in the experimental group failed the test, whereas this proportion was notably higher (53.8%) in the

control group. Regarding the Pass level, 30% of students in the experimental group achieved this category, compared to 20.5% in the control group. A similar trend was observed in the Strong Pass category, where 15% of students in the experimental group attained this level, as opposed to only 2.6% in the control group. Conversely, at the Credit level, 12.5% of the experimental group met this standard, whereas the control group had a higher proportion at 23.1%. Notably, 10% of students in the experimental group achieved Distinction, whereas no students in the control group reached this level.

These results suggest that while both groups exhibited improvements in reading comprehension, the experimental group demonstrated significantly greater progress. To further validate these observations, Table 4.3 presents descriptive statistics for the two groups.

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistical features of the central tendencies in the reading post-test

Group	Post-reading comprehension test				
	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Experimental Group	40	3.5	8.5	5.8000	1.34355
Control Group	39	3.0	7.5	5.1410	1.39524

The mean score in the experimental group (5.80) was higher than that of the control group (5.14), indicating improved reading performance after the intervention. Additionally, the standard deviation (SD) for the experimental group (1.34) was slightly lower than that for the control group (1.39), suggesting lower variability in post-test scores within the experimental group. A difference of 0.66 in mean scores suggests that the task-based learning approach significantly contributed to students' reading improvements. However, further analysis was necessary to determine whether this difference was statistically significant.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to verify the significance of the difference in mean post-test scores.
Table 4.4 presents the results:

Table 4.4 Results of the independent samples t test for the posttest scores.

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t test for equality of means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig(2.t)
Reading comprehension					
Equal variances assumed	.178	.674	2.139	77	.036
Equal variances not assumed			2.139	76.692	.036

The Levene's test for equality of variances yielded a p-value of 0.674, which exceeds the threshold of 0.05, confirming no significant difference in variance between the two groups. Therefore, the equal variances assumed row was considered in the t-test.

The t-value (2.139) with a significance level of 0.036 (< 0.05) indicates a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension scores between the two groups. This confirms that students in the experimental group performed significantly better than those in the control group after the intervention.

4.2 Questionnaire

4.2.1. Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis of the questionnaire is presented in **Table 4.5**, which reports the **Cronbach's Alpha coefficient** for different sections. The overall reliability score for all **50 items** was **0.910**, significantly exceeding the acceptable threshold of **0.70** (Pallant, 2007). The three main components also demonstrated high reliability: **attitudes toward the benefits of TBLT ($\alpha = 0.816$), attitudes toward learning reading with TBLT ($\alpha = 0.765$), and suggestions and recommendations ($\alpha = 0.723$).** These results confirm that the questionnaire applied in this study was **statistically reliable**.

Table 4.5 Reliability statistics on items related to the students' attitudes toward learning reading

	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
All items	50	.910
Attitude towards the benefits of TBLT	14	.816
Attitude towards learning reading with TBLT	25	.765
Suggestions and recommendations with TBLT	11	.723

4.2.2. Data analysis and interpretation of questionnaire

a. Students' Attitude Towards the Benefits of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Reading Comprehension
This section presents the findings from items 1-14, which assess students' perceptions of the benefits of TBLT in reading comprehension (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Students' attitude towards the benefits of task-based approach in learning reading

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
1. TBLT helped me improve my reading comprehension ability.		1 2.5	1 2.5	34 85	4 10	4.0
2. TBLT brought me more opportunities to communicate in English.			13 32.5	27 67.5		3.7
3. TBLT helped me form my habit of learning English reading comprehension.		1 2.5	11 27.5	27 67.5	1 2.5	3.7
4. TBLT allowed me to discuss and negotiate freely in pairs or groups.		6 15	11 27.5	18 45	5 12.5	3.6
5. TBLT made me interested in reading passages with different topics.			4 10	29 72.5	7 17.5	4.1
6. I learned a lot of useful knowledge related to what is happening in real life.			4 10	35 87.5	1 2.5	3.9
7. In the reading lesson, I joined reading comprehension activities without any pressure.			9 22.5	30 75.5	1 2.5	3.8
8. Integrated tasks provided me with many benefits in terms of improving reading and other skills.			9 22.5	30 75.5	1 2.5	3.8
9. Reading tasks creates a comfortable environment that encourages me to use the English language.		1 2.5	9 22.5	30 75		3.7
10. TBLT was useful for improving my language knowledge such as grammar, and vocabulary.		1 2.5	2 5.0	37 92.5		3.9
11. TBLT made me more motivated in learning reading and completing reading tasks.		2 5.0	9 22.5	29 72.5		3.7
12. TBLT created confidence when speaking English with my peers.		5 12.5	15 37.5	10 25	10 25	3.6
13. TBLT helped them get more comfortable to share and express ideas with my friends and teacher.				30 75	10 25	4.3
14. In the reading lesson, I and my peers didn't feel nervous when making English language mistakes.			11 27.5	22 55	7 17.5	3.9

The results indicate a strongly positive attitude toward TBLT among students. Specifically, 96% of participants agreed that TBLT improved their reading comprehension ability (85% agreed, 10% strongly agreed). Furthermore, 68% acknowledged that TBLT increased their opportunities to communicate in English. A significant proportion (70%) also affirmed that TBLT helped them develop a habit of learning reading comprehension.

Regarding interactive learning, nearly 60% of students felt that TBLT allowed them to discuss and negotiate freely in pairs or groups. Additionally, 90% expressed interest in reading passages on various topics, and an equal percentage stated that TBLT provided useful real-life knowledge. The stress-free learning environment was also highlighted, with 76% agreeing that TBLT reduced pressure during reading comprehension activities.

Students reported improvements in language proficiency, with 93% recognizing the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, 75% of students agreed that TBLT motivated them to complete reading tasks. In terms of communication, 62% stated that TBLT increased their confidence when speaking English, and 75% acknowledged that it encouraged them to express ideas comfortably with peers and teachers. Finally, 72% of students felt less anxious about making mistakes during English reading lessons.

Overall, with a mean score of 3.8 (ranging from 3.6 to 4.3), the findings confirm that students held a highly favorable attitude toward the effectiveness of TBLT in improving reading comprehension.

b. Students' Attitude Towards Learning Reading with TBLT

Table 4.7 presents the results of items 15-39, which explore students' experiences with reading instruction through TBLT.

Table 4.7 Students' attitude towards learning reading with task-based approach

Items	SD	D	N	A	Mean
15. I was into doing English reading comprehension tests.			9 22.5	31 77.5	3.8
ɔ. I was satisfied with my performance in reading comprehension activities.			7 17.5	33	3.8

Items	SD	D	N	A	Mean
			82.5		
. I enjoyed doing different types of tasks, and reading activities held my attention during reading sessions.			30 75	10 25	4.3
. I became more confident in reporting in front of the class.		9 22.5	24 60	7 17.5	4.0
. I took a fancy to passages with different topics in reading.	1 2.5	4 10	33 82.5	2 5	3.9
. I liked the way that the teacher introduced the topics to students.	2 5	4 10	33 82.5	1 2.5	3.8
. I relished the way that the teacher activated students' existing knowledge and background knowledge.		8 20	32 77.5	1 2.5	3.8
. I loved the teacher's method of teaching reading comprehension .	4 10	9 22.5	25 62.5	2 5	3.6
. I preferred reading techniques by predicting and brainstorming.		3 7.5	35 87.5	2 5.0	4.0
. I felt interested in the teacher's reading lesson and excited about the reading skills after class.		9 22.5	24 60	7 17.5	4.0
25. I think my reading skills was better improved.	1 2.5	1 2.5	35 87.5	3 7.5	4.0
. I knew how to quickly find the information in the reading text through reading comprehension activities.		6 15	32 80	2 5	3.9
. I could improve my English knowledge with the teacher's assistance and feedback.	1 2.5	9 22.5	30 75		3.7
. I think I could find the main idea of the reading comprehension text easier through skimming.		1 2.5	37 92.5	2 5	4.0
. I think it was not necessary to translate every single word or phrase to understand the passage.	2 5	13 32.5	25 62.5		3.6
. I think my background knowledge enhanced a lot after each reading lesson.	5 12.5	13 32.5	19 47.5	3 7.5	3.5
. I think I could summarize the whole passage by my own words to make sure I understood it more clearly.	3 7.5	13 32.5	22 55	2 5	3.6
. I tried to use the new words and grammar points during the reading lessons.	1 2.5	1 2.5	34 85	4 10	4.0
. I could communicate with my peers in English naturally and used English more often outside the classroom.		4 10	35 87.5	1 2.5	3.9
. I usually worked well with my peers and share my knowledge and ideas while doing reading activities.		5 12.5	32 80	3 7.5	4.0
. I wanted to report my topic or my summary in front of the class regularly.		9 22.5	28 70	3 7.5	3.9
. I didn't need to use a dictionary to look up every single word when doing reading comprehension tasks.	2 5	6 15	30 75	2 5	3.8
. I would practice more English speaking outside the classroom.		1 2.5	36 90	3 7.5	4.0
. I would perform better in reading comprehension sessions compared to other sessions.	1 2.5	8 20	28 70	3 7.5	3.8
. I could do more English reading comprehension tasks at home when the teacher assigned me.		15 37.5	24 60	1 2.5	3.7

A majority of students (78%) indicated that they enjoyed taking English reading comprehension tests. Additionally, 82% expressed satisfaction with their reading performance. Notably, 100% of students agreed that they remained engaged during different reading tasks, with 75% agreeing and 25% strongly agreeing.

In terms of classroom interaction, 78% of students reported increased confidence in presenting in front of the class. Furthermore, 88% appreciated exposure to diverse reading topics, while 85% approved of the teacher's approach in introducing reading materials. Nearly 80% valued the activation of their background knowledge before reading.

Students also found TBLT effective in enhancing their reading strategies. 93% preferred prediction and brainstorming techniques, and 95% stated that their reading skills improved. Additionally, 85% agreed that they could efficiently locate information within reading texts, while 75% noted that teacher feedback contributed significantly to their English proficiency.

Notably, 93% of students agreed that skimming helped them identify main ideas more effectively. Furthermore, 63% confirmed that translating every word was unnecessary, while 55% felt confident summarizing passages in their own words.

Regarding language use, 95% actively applied new vocabulary and grammar during lessons, and 90% stated that they used English naturally outside the classroom. Group collaboration was also emphasized, with 88% agreeing that they worked well with peers in reading tasks.

Overall, the findings highlight a high level of engagement and positive perception towards learning reading with TBLT, with a mean score of 3.9 (ranging from 3.5 to 4.3). The students acknowledged TBLT's role in boosting confidence, improving reading strategies, and encouraging real-world language application.

c. Students' Suggestions and Recommendations for Improving TBLT Implementation

The final section of the questionnaire (Table 4.8) includes items 40-50, which collect student suggestions regarding TBLT application in reading lessons.

Table 4.8 Student's suggestions and recommendation with task-based approach

Items	SD	D	N	A	Mean
). TBLT should be employed regularly during the reading lesson.	6 15	11 27.5	19 47.5	4 10	3.5
. The teacher should be an instructor or a chairman during the reading lesson.			35 87.5	5 12.5	4.1
. The teacher should divide a class into a small group of four or five members to work effectively.	7 17.5	13 32.5	13 32.5	7 17.5	3.5
. The teacher should design various tasks when teaching reading comprehension lessons.	1 2.5	2 5	33 82.5	4 10	4.0
. The teacher should give more compliments while they were reporting or presenting a topic.	3 7.5	17 42.5	17 42.5	3 7.5	3.5
. The teacher should create more opportunities for more members in the group to report or present a topic.	1 2.5	9 22.5	28 70	2 5	3.8
. The teacher should assign the tasks equally and appropriately to students' abilities.	6 15	14 35	10 25	10 25	3.6
. Students should be encouraged to use English more often while doing reading tasks.		4 10	36 90		3.9
. Students should limit using dictionaries to translate unknown words and try to guess their meanings.	1 2.5	16 40	23 57.5		3.6
. Students should make use of grammar points and vocabulary to practice with their peers.	1 2.5	3 7.5	36 90		3.9
. Students should practice English regularly outside the classroom.	2 5	7 17.5	30 75	1 2.5	3.8

A majority of students (60%) recommended regularly incorporating TBLT into reading classes, while 88% suggested that teachers take on the role of facilitators during lessons. Additionally, 50% advocated for smaller groups of four to five students for more effective learning.

In terms of instructional design, 93% emphasized the need for diverse reading tasks, and 50% proposed that teachers provide more encouragement during student presentations. Furthermore, 75% recommended increasing opportunities for all students to participate in reporting and summarizing tasks.

Regarding language use, 90% encouraged reducing reliance on dictionaries, and 90% recommended that students maximize their use of grammar and vocabulary in peer interactions. Additionally, 80% expressed the need for more frequent English practice outside the classroom.

With an average mean score of 3.7 (ranging from 3.5 to 4.1), these recommendations highlight key strategies for optimizing TBLT implementation to further enhance student engagement and reading comprehension development.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study indicate that the **Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)** approach significantly improved students' **reading comprehension skills** compared to the traditional method. The analysis of pre-test data revealed no significant difference in reading ability between the **experimental group (EG)** and **control group (CG)**, suggesting that both groups initially had similar

proficiency. However, after 12 weeks of intervention, where the EG underwent TBLT with tasks focusing on both general and specific information, the results showed a notable improvement in the EG's performance. The EG outperformed the CG in reading comprehension, specifically in identifying main ideas and specific details within texts.

Statistical analysis, including t-tests, confirmed the significant difference in post-test scores between the two groups, reinforcing that TBLT was more effective than conventional methods. The EG demonstrated a deeper engagement with reading tasks, such as activating background knowledge, predicting, and identifying specific details, which led to their superior performance. In contrast, students in the CG, who relied on traditional reading strategies, exhibited lower levels of reading comprehension.

These results align with previous studies, such as those by **Tabatabaei and Hadi (2011), Rezaei et al. (2017),** and **Prasetyaningrum (2018),** which found that TBLT enhances reading comprehension. This study also corroborates the findings of **Lap and Trang (2017)** and **Thanh and Huan (2012),** who highlighted that TBLT positively influences students' reading ability and encourages them to engage more actively in learning.

Regarding students' **attitudes toward TBLT**, the analysis of questionnaire responses revealed overwhelmingly positive feedback. The majority of students in the EG acknowledged that TBLT not only improved their reading skills but also made the learning process more enjoyable and engaging. The method also fostered autonomy, teamwork, and confidence. Students reported a better ability to find key information in texts and showed greater interest in learning through various reading topics.

Furthermore, the students' suggestions emphasized the need for continued use of TBLT to enhance reading comprehension. They recommended more diverse reading tasks, increased opportunities for group work, and more positive reinforcement during tasks. These findings support the view that TBLT offers a more dynamic and effective approach to teaching reading comprehension than traditional methods.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant benefits of using TBLT to improve reading comprehension and student engagement. The positive impact of TBLT on students' attitudes and skills provides a strong case for its continued application in reading instruction.

III. Conclusions

The researcher hoped that this study would contribute the following significant things. First, the findings form the current study would accumulate the literature review Second, the research results would contribute significantly to English learning in many high schools in Vietnam, especially in Ban Tan Dinh High School where there haven't been any researches on TBLT in enhancing reading comprehension so far. Third, this research makes an important contribution to the use of teaching methods according to real-life tasks of high school students in the classrooms and also create a learning community in the classroom where learners can learn from each other and interact with teachers.

 Lastly, the researcher hoped that the findings would help her colleagues in her high school as well as other English teachers in other high schools in other provinces to receive a positive attitude towards TBLT in teaching reading comprehension.

The findings of the study indicate:

1. The learners who learn reading with TBLT can significantly enhance their reading skills. Via employing TBLT in learning reading, they get more improvement in increasing vocabularies, and grammar structures, creating and sharing useful ideas, enriching background knowledge, and boosting reading ability. Moreover, the students' reading ability in the pre-test was of the same level while there was a statistically significant change in the post-test. Before the intervention, the students of the two groups had a very low level. However, after the treatment with TBLT, the students in the experimental group improved their scores dramatically whereas those in the control group who were taught using a conventional method enhanced their scores slightly. One more important finding is that the change in the mean scores between the two groups was statistically significant. It could be strongly proved that the treated method brought the students considerable improvement in their reading ability.

2. It was apparent that the students who learned reading via task-based approach really had positive attitudes towards their learning of reading. Firstly, the students had a positive attitude towards benefits of TBLT since they agreed and evenly strongly agree with all the statements for the first section. The verified that TBTL made them excited and confident in doing reading various tasks, finding the main ideas and specific information. Moreover, they also got a comfortable learning environment in the class and could apply what they learned for their real life. Secondly, after the treatment, many students confided that TBLT created a highly positive attitude toward learning reading. It is evident that they changed their reading attitude and behaviors such as discussing and sharing the main ideas about the different topics confidently, doing more reading assignments effectively, and getting on well with their peers or groups. They also confirmed some problems with the traditional teaching and learning such as employing translation so much, always looking up unknown words into dictionaries, working individually instead of pair work or groupwork. Finally, the participants emotionally show their suggestions and recommendations in learning reading through the task-based approach. Most of the students recommended that this method should be widely applied for many classes in the school. They also suggested that the limitation of using dictionaries during learning process was really necessary to avoid abusing translation too much and wasting a lot of time. Last but not least, practicing English very often inside the class and outside the class were very important to improve reading skills, vocabulary, and grammar points.

In short, students could learn considerably through different tasks of TBLT. They felt more excited and confident in learning reading.

Furthermore, they could easily read the different topics to improve their background knowledge, vocabulary,

IV. Recommendations

1 For teachers

When introducing a new topic, teacher should activate and build up students' background knowledge and make sure that students could understand the reading materials properly and quickly instead of being prevented by limited background knowledge. Additionally, TBLT promoting meaningful, active and cooperative learning and teaching could be innovative an alternative method to teach reading comprehension for EFL students in high school. Moreover, the English teacher in high school should be more active and creative in teaching reading comprehension. They should know how to start collecting different kinds of teaching materials, various types of activities about readiness activities to meet their instructional tasks. Next, teacher in high school should be regularly trained through employing TBLT in their teaching by participating in TBTL training course or workshop. Meanwhile, the educational leader should provide English teachers the best condition to help TBLT training effectively. Last but not least, TBLT should be included in the teaching curriculum and textbooks as well. It is the fact that more authentic tasks should be designed to provide learners with opportunities to gain their reading ability.

2 For students

Firstly, students should be exposed to the language skills through the meaningfully interactive learning process which could gain their academic achievement, interpersonal skills and increasingly get target requirements in number of educational settings. Secondly, to improve academic skills and knowledge, students were offered more opportunities to build up their vital interpersonal skills through authentic interaction and cooperation. Thirdly, Students should spend their spare time reading various reading topics in Vietnamese and English version to enhance their background knowledge and vocabulary. Another recommendation for students is that they shouldn't always use dictionaries to look up unknown words or translation to translate the word, phrase and the whole sentence into mother language, which will waste more time instead of working with their peers to discuss and solve the task quickly and effectively. Finally, students are advised to make use of their spare time to practice English more often with their peers, teachers even foreigners inside and outside the classroom, which could help them improve their reading skills.

In short, if those useful recommendations are carried out appropriately and seriously, it could help the teachers get an effective and interesting teaching method and students become more excited and confident in learning skills and easily improve their reading skills as well as other skills.

V. Suggestions for further research

Based on the discussions, weak points, and recommendations; the research would like to give some possible suggestions for further research. Firstly, the research could be extended on a larger group of students in the scope of the high school and other school in other places. It should include more participants of grade 10th, 11th, and 12th to make the study more generalizable. Secondly, the task-based approach could be made use of all type of tasks in literature review to investigate in particular how different tasks will help the students, especially students who are in both low and high level to enhance their reading skills and other language skills. Third, the researcher will use more authentic materials to design real tasks for students practice easily and effectively. Moreover, the researcher will conduct an intervention course with 8 lessons, instead of 4, and with 8 groups using the two different kinds of method (task-based approach and traditional method) including 2 groups of grades 10th, 2 groups of grades 10th and 4 groups of 12th. One more important is that the interview will be designed and employed in the next research because it is also an essential part to measure students' attitude toward task-based approach. Last but not least, the time should be expanded for the research; it is probably 6 months for the researcher to carry out the study more effectively and scientifically.

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