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## List of Abbreviations

TBL.....	Task based language
TBLT.....	Task based language teaching
RC.....	Reading comprehension
EFL.....	English as foreign language
TBLL.....	Task based language learning
ESL.....	English as a second language
e.g.....	for example
OPT.....	Oxford Placement Test
SLA.....	Second language acquisition
TBA.....	Task based approach
ELT.....	English language teacher
TTM.....	Traditional teaching method

## **Abstract**

Increasing learners' performance in all skills especially in reading ability has always been the primary concern of language teachers. The present study examined the possible outcomes of the effectiveness of one type of TBLT's task, creative tasks, on improving reading comprehension of EFL high school learners in Kerman. In total 70 male high school learners and 70 female high school learners in Kerman joined this study and after a homogenizing test was taken each gender of intermediate level was assigned to two homogenous groups of experimental and control consisted of 25 students. Data was collected in a Pretest and Posttest design. Pretest showed that control and experimental groups were not different regarding their reading comprehension. After using creative tasks as treatment in experimental groups, the statistical results demonstrated a significant difference between the pretest and posttest in that experimental group outperformed the control group in posttest reading comprehension test. Findings indicated that using creative tasks can effectively contribute to enhancing the ability of EFL high school learners in reading comprehension.

### **Key words:**

Task, Creative Tasks, Reading Comprehension, EFL Learners.

# **Chapter One**

## **Preliminaries**



## 1.1 Introduction

Well-developed reading comprehension ability is considered the major goal to students' educational success. Since reading is a complex cognitive process; it is of great importance for teachers to train students to be able to take active control of their own comprehension process. Therefore, one of the basic parts of learning a foreign language is mastering learning. The process of creating learners who become successful and autonomous at various stages of learning, results in learning the content more successfully and contributes to the development of lifelong learners (Rausch.,2000).

According to Grabe and Stoller (2001), amongst the four skills reading is considered to be the most important academic language skill because reading is the central means for learning new information. We read a text for a variety of purposes including: (1) to get the main idea, (2) to search specific information, (3) to learn new information, (4) to synthesize and evaluate information from multiple texts, (5) for general comprehension, (6) for pleasure. Freese (1997) indicated that some students encounter problems while reading. They read the words in the text but still they do not know what they have read. Sellers (2000) noted that the nature of reading is complex and the reading process is also difficult because learners need to coordinate attention, perception, memory, and comprehension.

Aebersold and Field (2005) emphasize that to become better readers, students need to become aware of how they are reading and what they could do to improve comprehension. In such situation most researches on reading focus on the effective reading strategies that increase students' comprehension.

Task -based approach is a new approach in education practice. In task-based classroom, the chief focus is the performance of tasks. The task, rather than being a unit of grammar to be digested or a collection of lexical items to be remembered, is a means of learning the language by doing tasks. It requires exposure to comprehensive input and opportunities to interact in the language. The task has to be negotiated by the learners with the help of the teacher, whose job is to facilitate learning opportunities in class. The task probably needs the cooperation of learners. This study is intended to explore TBLT in teaching reading on the basis of the notion of task-based language teaching (TBLT)

Willis (1996) suggests the use of tasks as the main focus in language classrooms, claiming that tasks create a supportive methodological framework. Often, when faced with various problems, language teachers are in search of finding something that could create a difference in their classroom.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been strongly advocated and promoted by many world-leading linguists (Long, 1985;Prabhu, 1987;Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Bygate & Ellis, 2001) since early 1980s. Despite differences they may hold, they all emphasize that language teaching should interact with learning to create genuine use of the language, and that language proficiency can be achieved by doing tasks.

This study attempted to illustrate that TBLT can be feasible and is an effective teaching approach for English reading classroom. This research aims to discover the

importance and effects of using tasks, especially creative tasks, in improving reading comprehension skill on foreign language learners who are not in real context of learning language. Therefore different tasks are very essential help for them to improve and get involved in learning actively.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The ability to read and comprehend is considered as one of the most important and basic skill for a person to learn and educate. This skill becomes more important in Iran because of scoring systems at final tests. Reading comprehension plays an important role in learning a foreign language; however, not every learner can enjoy and get its meaning easily. A few reasons can be stated for this deficiency. First of all, the reading texts are not familiar and understandable for foreign language learners that are far apart from real situations and don't study authentic sources like foreign language magazines, books. Second some texts are full of the words that students don't know and they don't know how to find or guess their meaning. And the third, Reading classes or exercises are not interesting enough for students to take part. The reading exercises are teacher centered and students only listen and sometimes answer the questions passively.

Between students and the reading texts there is no familiar connect. In reading comprehension students focus on teacher; therefore in new texts they cannot act correctly. They get confused what to do and how to answer the questions. The students usually think about translation not comprehension. This causes a time consuming procedure that is not useful for answering the questions. In final exams and entrance exam there is no translation questions. The lack of ability to comprehend, to extract the main points of the text is seen at high school students that is result of learning passively not learning by doing”(Nunan,1986, p.26)

Education researchers have believed for decades that creative reading is a part of all successful reading experiences (see, for example, Harris & Sipay, 1990; Stoodt, 1989); recent work by Popov (1993) also shows the importance of creativity for reading comprehension.

## **1.3. Significance of the Study**

This study is important to carry out because of the importance of reading comprehension in the tests and the evaluations in Iran. The majority parts of scores are related to the reading comprehension part and unfortunately the students are not successfully in this domain. It can help students to act in the exams more successful, they can improve their ability in reading comprehension. Grellet (1981) suggests that understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently. Reading is an active process, during which the reader tries to understand the meaning of a given text.

Freese (1997) indicated that some students encounter problems while reading. They read the words in the text but still they do not know what they have read. Sellers (2000) noted that the nature of reading is complex and the reading process is also difficult because learners need to coordinate attention, perception, memory, and