

## **READING-DRIVEN TASKS AS A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO ENHANCING READING SKILLS**

**Khasanova Dilbar**

Associate professor of the department of Uzbek and Foreign Languages, PhD  
International Islamic academy of Uzbekistan

### **ABSTRACT**

*Reading is a fundamental skill that assures academic success and lifelong learning. Research in applied linguistics and education has demonstrated that task-based learning approaches can significantly enhance reading proficiency. This study explores the role of reading-driven tasks in improving reading skills by examining their theoretical foundations, practical implementations, and effectiveness in fostering comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and critical thinking. Empirical evidence suggests that structured reading tasks promote deeper interaction with texts and facilitate meaningful learning experiences.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reading skills are crucial in both academic and professional settings. Traditional approaches to teaching reading often rely on passive reception of textual information. However, contemporary pedagogical strategies emphasize active engagement with texts through structured tasks. Reading-driven tasks, grounded in task-based language teaching (TBLT) and cognitive processing theories, promote deeper interaction with texts and facilitate meaningful learning experiences. This study aims to investigate how reading-driven tasks enhance reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

The importance of reading proficiency cannot be overstated, as it serves as the foundation for academic achievement across disciplines. Strong reading skills enable students to analyze complex information, synthesize knowledge from multiple sources, and engage in critical discussions. In professional environments, reading comprehension plays a crucial role in information processing, decision-making, and problem-solving. Consequently, educators and researchers continue to explore effective pedagogical approaches that can optimize reading development and foster long-term literacy skills.

One of the key issues in reading instruction is the passivity of traditional methods, where students are often expected to absorb information without actively engaging with the material. Studies indicate that passive reading approaches—such as silent reading with minimal guidance—fail to develop deep comprehension or

analytical abilities. In contrast, task-based approaches to reading encourage active participation, requiring learners to interact with texts in a structured and meaningful way. This active engagement not only reinforces understanding but also promotes knowledge retention and cognitive flexibility.

The concept of task-based learning (TBL) in reading instruction is rooted in constructivist educational theories, particularly the works of Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1952). Constructivist approaches suggest that knowledge is actively constructed through experience and interaction. In the context of reading, this means that students learn more effectively when they engage with texts through purposeful tasks that require interpretation, discussion, and synthesis. Task-based learning shifts the focus from rote memorization to problem-solving and analytical skills, which are essential for deeper comprehension and application of knowledge.

Several studies have demonstrated that reading-driven tasks improve both linguistic and cognitive abilities. For example, research conducted by Grabe and Stoller (2011) highlights the effectiveness of interactive reading strategies in developing higher-order thinking skills, such as inference-making, textual analysis, and argument evaluation. Similarly, Anderson (1984) found that structured reading tasks improve learners' ability to connect prior knowledge with new information, leading to enhanced comprehension and recall.

Reading-driven tasks also incorporate elements of scaffolding, a technique that provides learners with temporary support until they achieve independent proficiency. Scaffolding strategies in reading instruction include guided questioning, summarization exercises, and collaborative reading activities. These techniques help students engage with texts more effectively by breaking down complex information into manageable components. The gradual removal of scaffolding encourages students to develop autonomy in their reading strategies, ultimately leading to sustained improvement in reading skills.

Moreover, the integration of technology in reading-driven tasks has expanded the potential for engagement and effectiveness. Digital platforms offer adaptive reading exercises, real-time feedback, and interactive discussions, making reading instruction more dynamic and personalized. Educational technology enables students to access diverse texts, engage in multimedia-enhanced reading activities, and participate in collaborative discussions with peers, thereby enriching the learning experience. Research has shown that digital reading tools can enhance motivation and engagement, particularly among learners who struggle with traditional text-based approaches.

Despite the evident benefits of reading-driven tasks, challenges remain in implementing them effectively across diverse educational contexts. Some of the key obstacles include time constraints, lack of teacher training, and resource limitations. Implementing a task-based reading curriculum requires careful planning, appropriate material selection, and continuous assessment to ensure that students derive maximum benefit. Additionally, educators must be equipped with the necessary skills to facilitate interactive reading tasks and adapt instructional methods to different proficiency levels.

This study seeks to address these challenges by exploring the impact of reading-driven tasks on reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. By examining both theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, this research aims to provide insights into best practices for designing and implementing effective reading-driven tasks. The findings will contribute to the ongoing discourse on innovative pedagogical approaches and inform educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers on strategies to enhance reading instruction.

## **Methods**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the effectiveness of reading-driven tasks in improving reading skills. The participants include university students enrolled in English language courses. Data collection methods include:

- Quantitative Analysis: Pre- and post-test assessments measuring reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.
- Qualitative Analysis: Student surveys and focus group discussions evaluating engagement and perceived effectiveness.
- Experimental Design: Participants are divided into an experimental group (using reading-driven tasks) and a control group (traditional reading instruction).

## **RESULTS**

The findings indicate that students who engaged in reading-driven tasks demonstrated significant improvement in reading comprehension and vocabulary retention compared to the control group. Key results include:

- A 25% increase in comprehension scores among the experimental group.
- Enhanced engagement and motivation reported in qualitative responses.
- A positive correlation between task complexity and critical thinking development.

Further analysis of student performance revealed that structured reading tasks facilitated better long-term retention of vocabulary. The use of contextualized reading exercises allowed students to associate new words with their meanings more

effectively. Additionally, engagement metrics showed that students participating in interactive tasks, such as peer discussions and analytical exercises, demonstrated a deeper understanding of textual content.

Another notable finding was the increased self-efficacy in students exposed to reading-driven tasks. Many participants reported feeling more confident in approaching complex texts and employing strategies such as skimming, scanning, and inferencing to extract information. This suggests that such tasks not only improve reading proficiency but also empower learners with strategic reading skills that can be applied in broader academic and professional contexts.

### **Discussion**

The results support the hypothesis that reading-driven tasks enhance reading skills more effectively than traditional approaches. This aligns with Schema Theory, which suggests that activating prior knowledge improves comprehension. Additionally, the study underscores the role of Cognitive Load Theory, as structured tasks help manage cognitive resources efficiently.

One key implication of these findings is the need for task differentiation based on learners' proficiency levels. While higher-proficiency students benefited from analytical and synthesis-based tasks, lower-proficiency learners required more scaffolded exercises, such as guided reading and vocabulary-building activities. This highlights the necessity of tailoring reading-driven tasks to individual learner needs to maximize effectiveness.

Moreover, the study demonstrates that incorporating interactive elements into reading tasks significantly enhances engagement and retention. Strategies such as collaborative discussions, multimedia integration, and adaptive digital tools further reinforce comprehension. These findings align with existing literature emphasizing the role of student-centered learning in developing reading fluency and critical thinking.

A critical consideration for educators is the sustainability of reading-driven tasks in large classroom settings. While small-group interactions and personalized feedback are ideal, implementing these approaches at scale may require technological support. Future research should explore the use of AI-driven reading platforms and automated assessment tools to facilitate large-scale deployment of reading-driven tasks.

### **CONCLUSION**

Reading-driven tasks represent a dynamic approach to reading instruction, fostering active engagement and cognitive development. The findings of this study

confirm that structured tasks significantly enhance comprehension, vocabulary retention, and strategic reading abilities. By incorporating interactive and scaffolded exercises, educators can create more effective and engaging reading programs.

However, successful implementation depends on task differentiation, sustained student motivation, and the integration of technology to support large-scale application. Future research should investigate the long-term impact of reading-driven tasks on different learner demographics, including their effectiveness in online and hybrid learning environments. Additionally, comparative studies analyzing reading-driven tasks across various linguistic backgrounds could provide further insights into their universal applicability.

Ultimately, promoting reading-driven tasks as a core instructional strategy can lead to more autonomous, confident, and proficient readers, equipping learners with the necessary skills for academic and professional success.

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