

The Impact of Task Repetition on Reading with Reference to Government College Students

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Abstract

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of the significant methods in the second language learning context. This paper makes use of TBLT, particularly with regard to Task Repetition. Task Repetition is nothing but using the similar piece of learning input time and again as may be required. The biggest advantage is the mindset of the learner is tuned in such a way that he/she not only comprehends the item to be learned but is able to reproduce it (this is the result of his/her retention capacity). Hence, in this context, a study with a small group of ESL learners from one of the government colleges of Tamil Nadu was undertaken to prove the hypothesis. So, this study makes use of YouTube based Tasks (Interesting YouTube videos) with repetition as a central concept, to see the effect on the ESL learners reading comprehension. The scores of the learners on their reading comprehension prove that there is a significant difference between the two groups of students selected for the study.

Keywords: Reading, Task-based language teaching, Task Repetition, college students

1. Introduction

Task-based language teaching gives importance to employment of different types of tasks and their learning input. This paper makes use of task repetition as a central concept. Task repetition is considered to be a major phenomenon that improves learning in L2 (Larsen-Freeman, 2012). Task- repetition has drawn much attention as an important aspect of TBLT since it is considered primarily useful in making learners alter their language production (Bygate, 1996).

During the second performance of the task in task repetition “part of the work conceptualization, formulation, and articulation carried out the first occasion is kept in

learner's memory store" and "can be reused on the second occasion" (Bygate,2001; P.29) that is, they can integrate their previous knowledge into what they are doing. Another important point to be noted on task repetition is "the integrative planning for task repetition" (Rod Ellis 2005)

There are several empirical research papers which highlight the impact of task-repetition in second language reading. Yet there is not enough evidence to show the relationship between task repetition and language proficiency in reading. It is assumed that the task repetition fastens the rate of students' involvement, which in turn results in the improvement of students' performance. It is also assumed that the students gain opportunities to concentrate on meaning and form in two or more times as the case may be.

Hence, the present study makes use of task repetition as a central concept to examine the effectiveness of reading comprehension through YouTube video input.

2. Significance of the Study

Though there are a number of studies on Task Repetition in the global context, very few studies were done in the south Indian context, particularly in the District of Thanjavur and not a single study in Task Repetition among the Government Colleges has been done previously. Therefore, this study concentrates on Government College students and it attempts to improve their reading comprehension in L2.

3. Students' Profile

A group of twelve students were selected for this experimental study. Those twelve ESL students majoring in Chemistry were chosen from Rajah Serfoji Government College, Thanjavur. They were from proper rural background and they did not have sufficient exposure to use English. The comprehension level with regard to reading in L2 is somewhat mediocre.

4. The Research Question

How does task repetition influence the reading skills of L2 learners, who study in the government college of Thanjavur?

Methodology

At the outset, 2nd year Chemistry students from Rajah Serfoji Government college were met and were introduced to the study. Volunteers who wanted to participate in the study were selected. They were given student profile cards to get basic information about the individual participant. (Roll numbers, branch, Name of the college, age, etc.) Once it was filled in, they were told about the contact hours, scheduled for them. In the next scheduled hour, they were given a baseline test. It included a cloze passage and reading comprehension of a passage. After this, their performance was evaluated. According to their calibre they were put in two groups. In the next contact hour, they were given YouTube videos(with the

help of a Laptop) which deal with a variety of interesting topics. (Each ran roughly about 3 to 5 minutes.)

Once they finished watching, the same video was played/repeated twice, they were given worksheets containing passages and comprehension questions corresponding to the video they had watched. This was followed by comprehension test that consisted of ten questions per passage and their work sheets were received for evaluation.

The control group of students were not given the YouTube video input. Like a normal reading comprehension test, worksheets containing passages and comprehension questions were given to them. Besides they were given assistance in terms of glossary and helpful phrases and idioms. They were given sufficient time to complete the worksheets. The worksheets were received for evaluation.

The testing time, conditions, criteria for assessment were similar for both the groups.

6. Criteria For Evaluation

To analyze the ESL students' performance of L2 study reading comprehension, specific criteria were developed to analyse the students' reading comprehension (i.e., Knowledge of Phrases, Idioms and Words, Reading speed, Analytical/Critical Insight & Overall Comprehension).

This study made use of descriptive statistics to evaluate the results obtained.

Results

Table 1: Control Group

S.No	Roll No	Knowledge of Phrases, Idioms& Words	Reading Speed (Max:5 marks)	Analytical/ Critical Insight (Max:5)	Overall Comprehension (Max:10 marks)	Total (Max:25 marks)
1	18CT 1433	3	2	3	5	13
2	18 CT 1438	4	1	2	4	11
3	18 CT 1446	3	2	3	4	12
4	18 CT 1414	3	2	3	5	13
5	18 CT 1409	4	3	2	3	12
6	18 CT 1403	3	2	2	3	10

Table 2: Experimental Group

S.No	Roll No	Knowledge of Phrases, Idioms & Words (Max:5 marks)	Reading Speed (Max:5 marks)	Analytical/Critical Insight (Max:5 marks)	Overall Comprehension (Max:10 marks)	Total (Max:25 marks)
1	18CT 1440	4	5	4	9	22
2	18CT 1443	3	4	4	8	19
3	18CT 1423	4	5	4	9	22
4	18CT 1444	3	4	3	7	17
5	18CT 1421	4	5	4	9	22
6	18CT 1418	4	4	4	8	20

Discussion

There is a significant difference between control and experimental group of students. Overall, the performance of the experimental group of students was better than the control group students. Interestingly, the students who watched YouTube videos have performed well. Invariably all their answers were accurate and to the point. This is an obvious fact that a video input has helped them a great deal to comprehend the corresponding passage. Their reading speed was also good, (i.e., an indication of their comprehension) whereas the scores of the control group of students were not up to the mark. This shows that their answers to the comprehension questions highlighted their weakness in terms of reading comprehension. An important point to be noted in this context is that both the groups were homogenous with regard to their proficiency in reading comprehension (i.e., their scores in the baseline test were almost similar).

The students of the experimental group were able to correlate the reading comprehension passage with the video input. This was possible as they were able to watch YouTube items twice. They performed the task in two different worksheets. The second worksheet showed improvement. Their answers were accurate in comparison to the first worksheet.

In contrast, the worksheets of the control group were not so accurate because they neither repeated the task nor worked on the video input. Besides, the reading speed was also very low (an indication that their comprehension was poor).

9. Limitations

It was limited to a single task and it was limited to a few samples. It cannot be generalized as of now. It was also done with a homogenous group. It was also limited to a government college in the district of Thanjavur.

10. Conclusion

Thus, the results of the study prove the fact that repeating task using interesting YouTube videos among the Government college students do have a significant impact on their reading comprehension. Further, the study gives the following recommendations: the same task with a different type of modifications or combinations could be used to improve upon the other skills like speaking (i.e., Speaking task based on video input, writing assignment based on a video input) and listening task based on Video input (listening to YouTube video and answering comprehension questions).

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