

# The Effect of Using Different Types of Tasks on the tenth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement

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**Abstract:** This research was aimed to know the effect of using different types of tasks on students' reading comprehension achievement. The research design of was a quasi-experimental with non-equivalent group post-test-only design. Cluster random sampling was used to determine the respondents of the research. . The research area was at MA Al-Qodiri Jember. The research respondents were the tenth grade students chosen as the experimental and the control groups by lottery. The data of this research were obtained by doing interview, documentation and test. The research data were analyzed by using t-test. The result of t-test showed that there was a significant mean score difference between the two classes. Therefore, using different types of tasks gave a significant effect on the eighth grade students' reading comprehension achievement at MA. Al-Qodiri Jember.

**Keywords:** reading comprehension achievement, different types of tasks.

Recently, English has been widely spoken around the world and it is regarded as an international language. As the evidence, it is the first language of over 300 million people, a second language for over 300 million people, and it is being studied as the primary foreign language in most other countries by over 150 million children (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002:2-3). The rise of English as an international language makes non-English speaking countries, such as Indonesia, puts concern on the teaching of English. Therefore, the Indonesian ministry of education includes English in the curriculum as a compulsory subject that should be taught in school, from junior up to university level.

Based on the 2006 Institutional-Based Curriculum (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan 2006*), one of the objectives of teaching English at the level of Senior High School is to develop the ability to communicate. This ability will be reflected through the four language skills, namely listening, reading, speaking and writing. It is in line with Widdowson's (1978:1) statement that the aims of a language teaching course are very often defined with reference to the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. He further states that speaking and listening are said to relate to the language expressed through the aural medium, while reading and writing are said to relate to the language expressed through the visual medium.

For many students, reading is regarded as the most important skill among the four skills mentioned above, especially in English as a second or foreign language (Carrel et al., 1995:1). They further state that without solid reading proficiency, foreign language students cannot perform at levels they must in order to succeed and they cannot compete with the native English. The importance of reading is also supported by Eskey (1970:315) saying that the ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate with good comprehension has long been recognized to be as important as oral skills. According to Kim & Krashen (1997:26), those who read more, have larger vocabularies, do better on test of grammar and write better. What we can infer from Kim & Krashen's statement is that reading reinforces learner's other language skills. It is in line with what Chastian (1988:218) says that all reading activities serve to facilitate communication fluency in each of the other language skills. Further, a research conducted by Devine (1988) revealed that there is a strong correlation between reading and academic success. Regarding the importance of reading, a comprehensive way should be equipped to teach reading.

Recently, the trend of English language teaching has turned to the framework of communicative language teaching. An approach that suits to this framework is Task-Based Approach. It is in line with Sidek's (2012) statement saying that the features of Communicative Language Teaching can be found in a more specific communicative approach to language instruction such as Task-Based Approach (TBA). Task-Based Approach (TBA) has been strongly advocated and promoted by many world-leading linguists such as Prabhu (1987), Nunan (1989), Willis (1996) and Ellis (2001) since early 1980s. Even they share some differences, they all emphasize that language teaching should create genuine use of the language, and that language proficiency can be achieved by doing tasks (Mao, 2012:2430). In line with this is Willis & Willis' (2007) statement saying that the most effective way to teach a language is by engaging learners in real language use in the classroom. He further states that engaging learners in real language use can be done by designing tasks. What is meant by "tasks" in Task-Based Approach is different from those presented as a label in general text book. As Willis (1996:23) states, tasks in Task-based Approach are always activities where the target language is used by the learners for a communicative purpose to achieve an outcome.

There are so many different types of tasks in Task-Based Approach. Different experts share different opinions. Prabhu (1987), for example, classifies tasks into three types namely information-gap, opinion-gap and reasoning-gap tasks. Different from those classified by Prabhu, Willis (1996) classifies tasks into 6 types namely listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experience and project and creative tasks. Moreover, Richards (2001:162) classifies tasks into five, namely jigsaw tasks, information-gap tasks, problem-solving tasks, decision-making tasks, opinion exchange tasks.

Considering the above classification, the researcher came to the idea to investigate the effectiveness of the use of different types of tasks following the framework of Task-Based Approach to teach reading comprehension. According to Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi (2014:112) carrying out a variety of tasks influences students' progress and attitudes towards the lesson. By this argument, we can infer that task is one of the useful units that can be used to foster students' English language skill, including reading. Furthermore, Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi (2014:110) state that implementing different tasks in the classroom is really helpful. It is in line with Linse (2005:62) who says that well-planned lessons activities are those where students are interested and stay on tasks. Numerous experimental studies dealing with tasks within Asian contexts have also been conducted and have shown how oral tasks can be used in different ways to influence learners' second language skills (Thompson & Millington, 2012:161). Long (1990, in Cuesta 1995:93) also notes that materials involving tasks are "stimulating, intellectually challenging . . . especially those of a problem-solving nature . . . of a kind which seems meaningful to teachers in planning and implementing lessons".

The effectiveness of using different types of tasks had been documented in many studies. The research done by Shabani & Ghasemi (2014) and by Keyvanfar & Modarresi (2012) proved that the students who were taught by using different types of tasks got better reading comprehension achievement than those taught without using different types of tasks. Their research result showed that there was a significant effect of using different types of tasks on students' reading comprehension achievement. Another research was conducted by Nahavandi (2011) who reported that reading comprehension could be improved by using Task-Based

Approach (TBA), especially using information-gap, opinion-gap, reasoning-gap and problem-solving tasks.

Related to the research findings above, this present research did not only have some similarities but also differences with those researches in many ways. The similarity between those three researches and the present research was the research design which used an experimental research design. In addition, another similarity between those three researches and this present research was that they had similar independent variable that was using different types of tasks in teaching reading comprehension and also the same dependent variable which focused on reading comprehension achievement.

Despite some similarities, they also shared some differences. Shabani & Ghasemi (2014) had applied a true experimental research. It was known from the random assignment done to the subjects. In contrast, this research used quasi experimental research in which there was not a random assignment to the subjects. The other difference was that the respondents of the research. The respondents of Shabani & Ghasemi and Nahavandi's (2011) research were University students at the age of 20 to 25 years old, Keyvanfar & Modarresi chose young learners at the age of 11 to 13 years old as the respondents of their research, and this research chose grade X senior high school students at the age of 15 to 16 years old as the respondents. In addition, the difference between Keyvanfar & Modarresi's research, Nahavandi's research, and the present research was the types of tasks used. The types of tasks Keyvanfar & Modarresi used were map reading, creative product tasks, mystery tasks and journalist tasks. The types of tasks Nahavandi used were information-gap, opinion-gap, reasoning-gap and problem-solving tasks, and this research used prediction task, listing task, ordering & sorting tasks and general knowledge tasks.

At MA Al-Qodiri Jember, English lesson for grade X is taught twice a week with the duration 2 x 45 minutes for each meeting. Based on the interview carried out by the researcher with the English teacher of grade X at MA al-Qodiri Jember, teaching reading for grade X MA Al-Qodiri Jember is usually done by lecturing and question answer (Q-A) technique followed by doing tasks in the form of multiple choice only. Moreover, the teacher said that she never employed Task-Based Approach and different types of tasks to teach reading comprehension.

Considering all rationales above, the research entitled ‘‘The Effect of Using Different Types of Tasks on Grade X Students’ Reading Comprehension Achievement at MA. Al-Qodiri Jember’’ was conducted to investigate whether or not there was a significant effect of using different types of tasks on students’ reading comprehension achievement.

### **Research Design**

The research design used was a quasi experimental design with the non-equivalent group post-test-only design. The design involved two classes; one was used as the experimental class and the other one as the control class. The experimental class was the one that received the treatment, that is using different types of tasks to teach reading comprehension. In contrast, the control class was the one that did not receive the treatment as this class was not given different types of tasks in teaching reading comprehension, but it was taught by using the teacher’s ordinary technique, that was lecturing and question-answer (Q-A) technique then giving the students one type of task only in the form of multiple choice questions. The two classes, the experimental and the control classes, were selected from the six available classes of grade X at MA. Al-Qodiri Jember in 2015/2016 academic year, based on the result

of the homogeneity test. Since the population was homogeneous, the respondents of this research were randomly chosen through a lottery.

Purposive method was used to determine the area of this research. According to Singh (2007:108) purposive method, as the name suggests, is done with a purpose, which means that selection of the units is purposive in nature. Moreover, as it is stated by Ranjit (2011:191), the primary consideration in purposive method is the researcher's judgment as to whom can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. The objective of this research was to know whether or not there is a significant effect of using different types of tasks on grade X students' reading comprehension achievement at MA Al-Qodiri Jember. Based on the result of the interview, the English teacher of grade X at MA Al-Qodiri Jember has never used different types of tasks to teach reading comprehension as the teacher usually teaches reading comprehension by lecturing and Q-A technique then provides multiple choice questions as the task usually given to the students. Therefore, the researcher came into conclusion that MA. AL-Qodiri could provide information to achieve the objective of this research and therefore the researcher chose MA. Al-Qodiri as the area of this research.

The population of the research was grade X students at MA. Al-Qodiri Jember consisting of 286 distributed in six classes. Cluster random sampling was used to determine the respondents of the research. Since the population was heterogeneous, two classes having the closest mean scores were taken. They were XC (67.1667) and XD (64.8387). Through a lottery, XC was taken as the experimental class and XD was taken as the control class.

There were two kinds of data used in this research, namely primary data and supporting data. The primary data were in the form of students' reading comprehension scores, and they were collected by administering a test, while the supporting data were obtained by interviewing the English teacher and the documentation. The researcher also conducted a try out test to a class which neither belonged to the experimental class nor the control class that was XB. The try out was done to know the reliability of the test items, the index difficulty of the test items, whether the time allotted was enough or not and whether the instruction of the test items was clear or not to understand.

The data obtained from the post-test was analyzed to find the significant mean difference of the two classes (experimental class and control class) by using independent sample t- test with 5% significant level. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected if the value of .sig column was lower than 0.05.

### **Research Results**

From the calculation, the result of the test reliability was 1. Saukah (1997:210) states that the standard reliability coefficient of a teacher-made-test is  $> 0.50$ . It means that a teacher-made-test was reliable if the reliability coefficient is at least  $> 0.50$ . The reliability coefficient of this test was 1, which means that the test was reliable.

The post-test was in the form of reading comprehension test consisting of 30 items in which 20 items were in the form of multiple choice and 10 items were in the form of true-false questions. The post-test was administered in 50 minutes. The total number of the respondents of the experimental group was 28 students and the control group was 29 students.



Based on the post-test score analysis, the mean score of the experimental group was 68.2857 and the mean score of the control group was 62.5172. In addition, the value of sig column was 0.036 which was lower than 0.05. It meant that there was a significant mean score difference between the experimental and the control classes.

## **Discussion**

The result of the data analysis in this research proved that using different types of tasks significantly affected the students' reading comprehension achievement at MA. Al-Qodiri Jember. It can be seen from the value of significant column (0.036) which was lower than 0.05. There was a statistically significant mean difference between the experimental and the control classes. It means that the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) formulated: "there is no significant effect of using different types of tasks on grade X students' reading comprehension achievement at MA. Al-Qodiri Jember" was rejected. On the other hand, the formulated hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>): "there is a significant effect of using different types of tasks on grade X students' reading comprehension achievement at MA. Al-Qodiri Jember" was accepted.

This finding is relevant to the theories that a wide range task types can give students' variety (Willis, 1996:40). Carrying out a variety of tasks influences students' progress and attitudes towards the lesson (Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi, 2014:112). Thus, it can be inferred that task is one of the useful units that can be used to foster students' English language skill, including reading. Moreover, as it is stated by Fatemipour & Nourmohammadi (2014:110) implementing different tasks in the classroom is really helpful.

In addition, this research finding was in line with the research outcomes that had been conducted by some previous researchers. Through an experimental study,

Shabani & Ghasemi (2014) found out that Iranian intermediate ESP students who were taught reading comprehension by engaging the students in completing different kinds of tasks within the framework of Task-Based Language Teaching outperformed those who were taught reading comprehension through Content-Based Language Teaching. Another research was carried out by Keyvanfar & Modarresi (2012) who reported that applying different types of tasks within the framework of Task-Based Language Teaching was an effective, practical and innovative teaching method, at least in teaching reading comprehension to English Foreign Learners.

However, there are some considerations that should be kept in mind when using different types of tasks to teach reading comprehension. From the researcher's experience, the limited time was the first problem. To cover this problem, the researcher had to follow the time allocated for each task stated in the lesson plan strictly. Another way was creating a competitive atmosphere by giving rewards to group/pair or individual who completed the tasks first. So, they competed to be the first one who finished the task. Giving reward was also done to cover the unmotivated students. They were very interested when the researcher gave them rewards after they answered the questions from the researcher.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the post-test result, hypothesis verification and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there was a significant effect of using different types of tasks on grade X students' reading comprehension achievement at MA. Al-Qodiri Jember in the 2015/2016 academic year. Knowing the significant effect of using different types of tasks, it is suggested to the English teachers, students, and other researchers to have a good use of different types of tasks since a wide range of task types gives students variety (Willis, 1996:40).

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