

# On the Limitation of Task-based Language Teaching in Junior Middle School English Reading Class——A Case Study of Luzhou Laojiao Tianfu Middle School

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**Abstract:** Reading not only is an essential part of English teaching, but also is one of the most basic skills of English learning. In daily reading teaching, hosts of teachers will choose to use task-based teaching method to improve students' reading comprehension ability. The research shows that the implementation of task-based teaching method can stimulate students' interest in reading and improve reading efficiency. Task-based teaching method has many advantages, but whether there is limitation in the process of practice remains to be further studied. Based on the input theory, this paper explores its limitations from the application of task-based teaching method in reading teaching, so as to make task-based teaching method more effective.

**Keywords:** English teaching in middle school; English reading teaching; limitations of TBLT

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## Introduction

There is no doubt that adapting task-based language teaching in English teaching is conducive to develop students' command of language. However, in our middle school English teaching, this teaching method still has many limitations. There are lots of domestic theses that focus on the practical application rather than the shortcomings that may exist in task-based language teaching. This thesis explores the limitations of the task-based approach from the perspective of reading process. In order to explore the limitations of the task-based approach, the author decides to choose the way of experiment and interview with some students. Before the controlled experiment, the author takes a pre-test in order to make the experiment more precise. After that, the control experiment is conducted to explore whether the effect of task-based language teaching method is advisable in a certain period of time. Finally, the results of the experiment are analyzed, and the students whose grades declined are selected for further analysis and communication.

## 1. The meaning of task-based language teaching

Task-based language teaching is widely accepted around the world no matter what kind of teaching model in English teaching. Task-based language teaching method is a new language teaching model based on communicative teaching method. It was based on some second language acquisition researchers and language education researchers in the 1980s. Task-based language teaching focuses on tasks that are already designed through language communication, making classroom content real and interesting and allowing students to learn languages in real situations so that it can develop students' ability to learn and use second language. In task-based language teaching, teachers create contexts in class where students can use language as a tool to carry out their learning tasks one by one and then acquire language knowledge<sup>[1]</sup>.

## 2. Theoretical basis

Input theory is a distinguished theory put forward by Krashen, and it is also one of the significant theories of task-based language teaching. Krashen believes that when learners are exposed to comprehensible input, acquisition will occur. This kind of comprehensible input is slightly higher than the learners' already existing language capability, while the learners need focus on the understanding of meaning or information. This is the "i + 1" principle. "i" stands for learners' current level, while "1" stands for materials slightly higher than learners' current level. In addition, in input theory, Krashen proposes that language learning needs a number of comprehensible inputs. Only a few exercises are not enough to learn new knowledge. In addition, Krashen believes that in second language acquisition,

not only a comprehensible input environment is needed, but also learners' emotion is equally important. If learners are not interested in learning materials or have no motivation, they still cannot acquire the language. Language input must be filtered by emotion before it can be "absorbed" by language. Krashen points out that outgoing learners are easier and faster to acquire language than introverted learners. Therefore, personality is also important in language learning<sup>[2]</sup>.

### 3. Research design

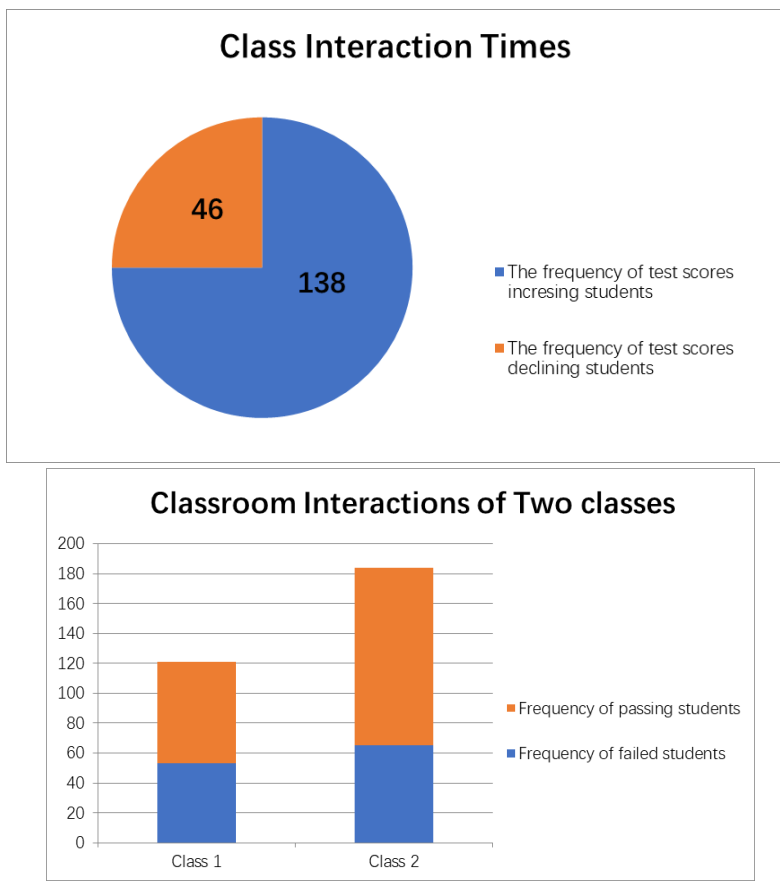
In order to further explore the limitations of task-based language teaching method in junior high school English reading, the author carried out a controlled experiment about a semester, including 75 students of class 1 and class 2 of grade 2 from Luzhou Laojiao Tianfu middle school. In order to ensure that the initial scores of the two classes are roughly the same, the author conducts a pre-test of English reading for the students of the two classes. The results of this test will not be released to the students, and the correct answers will not be given to the students, for the post-test needs to continue to use. For class one, the author uses the top-down model and bottom-up model to teach English reading. For class two, the author uses task-based teaching method to teach English reading. It takes about two months.

### 4. Data analysis

There were pre-test and post-test in this control experiment, and the total score of both tests was 36. The author defined 21 as the passing score. After the experiment, the number of passing pre-test and post-test students respectively was 8 and 9 in Class 1, while that was 11 and 24 in Class 2. It shows that task-based language teaching has good applicability and advantages in English reading teaching, and has a certain effect on the improvement of students' performance.

According to data, about 70% of the students' reading scores have been improved, due to the advantages of task-based language teaching method. In addition, nearly 30% of the students' grades have dropped about 10 students. Besides, less than 1% of students' grades remain unchanged. Therefore, in order to explore whether the reason for their score decline is related to the classroom participation, the author made statistics on the number of classroom interaction in the past two months, and the result is shown in the table.

After two-month experiment, the author empowered the person in charge of English to record the frequency of classroom interactions and wrote down the list. In this statistics, 184 times of classroom interactions were recorded. Among them, 138 times of classroom interactions were related to students with higher grades, accounting for 75%. Only 46 times came from the students, whose grades dropped, accounting for 25%, with an average of 4.6 times per person. It can be seen that task-based teaching method can help



distinguished learners improve the English reading level. In fact, for students with poor English foundation, the effect of task-based teaching is not so obvious.

Furthermore, the author analyzed the classroom interaction frequency of two class students' who failed in the post test. The study found that, in Class 1, the frequency of classroom interaction was 121, of which the times of classroom interaction of failed students was 53, accounting for about 43%. In the Class 2, using task-based teaching method, the number of classroom interaction was 184, of which the times of classroom interaction of failed students was 65, accounting for about 35%. In terms of Input theory, in the classroom using task-based teaching method, the students with poor academic performance have less classroom interaction, so they should have less comprehensible input in the interaction. To some extent, this also affected their scores.

From the perspective of classroom interaction, in the class using task-based teaching method, the classroom environment is more active and interesting, the classroom interaction increases, and the improvement for students with good foundation is more obvious. However, according to the data, the effect of task-based method is not so efficient for students with poor English foundation. Compared with Class 1, using the traditional teaching method, the students with poor foundation in the experimental class are even more reluctant to interact with classmates. In terms of Input theory, they are exposed to less comprehensible input, so their scores declined.

## 5. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the students with lower grades, the author finds that the students with lower grades do not want to take participant in the classroom. They are afraid of making mistakes in front of better students, so they are not willing to participate in classroom activities. As a result, they receive less comprehensible input, which leads to a decline in performance.

Obviously, the application of task-based teaching method is better for students with better basic level. But for the students with poor foundation, it will inhibit their desire to learn and receive less comprehensible input, so it will make the situation worse.

To be sure, task-based language teaching as an effective way of English reading teaching has been recognized by the majority of teachers. Task-based language teaching not only emphasizes the learning process, but also underlines the learning results. As an advanced teaching mode, task-based teaching method not only guides many teachers' good teaching, but also needs further development and improvement to overcome some of its own shortcomings. No matter which teaching method, there will exist some virtues and limitations. Therefore, as teachers, they should choose an advisable teaching method that is suitable for themselves and for the teaching content, constantly overcoming and making up for its defects, so as to make English teaching more effective.

## References:

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