


The Influences of Task-based Approach on Young Adult Learners' Listening Comprehension

Tran Thanh Phuong¹, Ngo Nhat Phuong Quynh^{1*}

¹ Faculty of Foreign Languages, Van Lang University, Vietnam

*Corresponding author's email: quynh.nnp@vlu.edu.vn

*  <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2229-4810>

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: listening comprehension, Task-based approach, the learners' attitudes

This study aimed to explore the effect of the Task-based method on the learners' attitudes toward learning listening skills using this approach. In this paper, thirty university students who are at the intermediate level learned the Task-based method in classes at Van Lang University, and after that, they expressed their minds in the questionnaire so as to explore whether this type of teaching could help them improve or not. What is really important here is their attitudes in completing the listening tasks as well as indicating their views by responding to the questionnaire. Additionally, the specific descriptive data provided in this paper after collecting their responses are yielded to reach the planned targets at the end. More specifically, students held positive attitudes towards the Task-based approach in developing listening skills and believed it was useful in enhancing their listening competencies. The task-based approach to listening will help the teacher select a more compatible method for every class in the foreseeable future.

Introduction

It is generally challenging for a teacher to find the appropriate listening approach for students. Another consideration is that it seems arduous to assess listening because listening comprehension appears ambiguous and complicated for the learners. Additionally, teachers really want to know how to use listening activities that reflect real-life listening, which is another problem. The fact that teachers should involve all activities in authentic language and contexts to make listening more motivating and useful for students seems quite complicated.

In Vietnam, the development of listening skills has not been a major focus in language education (Bui, 2024). When learning English listening skills, students can face quite a lot of listening difficulties. The first problem students may have is the topic of listening to texts. In fact, how familiar the listening topic is to students is very important. It can arouse students' interest in

paying close attention to the listening text, facilitating their listening comprehension. Conversely, students easily get bored with the topics like politics and society. Vocabulary and different pronunciations are another problem for most students, which may prevent them from getting the specific meanings of the listening test no matter how they realize every word from the text.

Due to this educational background, this study aims to find out the learners' attitudes toward task-based approaches in listening comprehension. As an English teacher, the instructors have applied this method in traditional classes and observe my students' progress in the long run. It is commonly believed that utilizing this method appropriately will pursue for the learners' adherence as well as encourage them to study or complete the tasks frequently.

Research questions and aims

This study seeks to answer the question:

- What are the young adult learners' attitudes toward task-based approach in listening comprehension?

Thus, this paper will attempt to collect students' views from a task-based approach that is integral to their listening skills.

Definitions of key terms

Task-based approach: The approach that emphasizes activities that reflect real-world language use, making it a practical framework for improving listening skills (Samuda & Bygate, 2008)

Listening comprehension: Richards (2005) defines listening comprehension as "including both comprehension and acquisition activities, allowing learners to interact with vocabulary and syntax in the listening material" (p. 89).

Literature review

By and large, learning English is becoming more and more popular worldwide due to its enormous benefits. David (2003) indicates that English is an emergency in the globe, which has a significant influence on both policies and practices in all countries surveyed. However, to access English effectively, it is crucial to master English skills, especially listening skills. While listening is a vital language skill, many learners still find it frustrating and difficult to master (Tran, 2022). What is really important here is that the teachers should know which method is best for their students to master in listening. Therefore, the article "The effect of task-based listening activities on improvement of listening self-efficacy among Iranian intermediate EFL learners" by Motallebzadeh and Defaei caters to education as a specific way of improving students' listening self-efficacy.

In this context, the authors make an effort to figure out the function of task-based listening activities in EFL classes. In order to reach their findings, they conducted the study with male and female students at Kish Air English Institute, Iran. The questionnaire, experimental groups,

and results are shown in a t-test to determine the students' listening level. Moreover, the authors pay attention to the influence of self-efficacy, which is pivotal in helping the students complete their listening activities; thus, Bandura (1997) also states that the learners' success depends partly on their self-efficacy. Apart from the importance of self-efficacy, task-based language teaching receives more support since it contributes to the learners' completing tasks. Prabhu (1987) is the first supporter of this method. He concludes that TBLT helps the students get involved in the tasks, not just the language itself. In their paper, the two authors try to provide the readers with more particular evidence to prove the benefits of the task-based approach. therefore, after defining the general knowledge regarding self-efficacy and the task-based method, they are able to determine their research question, which draws more potential vision for the viewers at first glance. Their research question is whether applying task-based listening activities impacts Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension self-efficacy beliefs or not. As a result, after they conducted their research and divided the participants into the experimental and the control groups, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to evaluate the students' listening comprehension. Although there is a diverse mixture of complicated in finishing the listening tasks for most of the students additionally, according to Brindley and Slatyer (2002), the vocabulary, structure, accent, and so on will become more sophisticated when linking to uncertain listening strategies may distract the learners from the tasks, this paper still illustrates the favorable aspect of the experimental group in which the task-based approach was utilized in order to cater the outstanding benefits to the learners. Furthermore, the t-test also demonstrates the improvement in the students' listening self-efficacy; hence, the task-based approach is taken into account as an enjoyable method for teaching and learning listening skills. Furthermore, Brown (2018) affirms that the task-based approach is relevant to learners' needs since it can be applied to the adjustment of listening tasks, making the listening tasks meaningful and practical in real-life situations. The author also points out that it also fosters active learning because this approach allows learners to monitor and assess their listening process before, during, and after the task. Sharing a similar view, Van den Branden (2012) asserts that the application of a task-based approach in developing listening skills can fit learners' needs since it can integrate real-life contexts, motivate learners, and foster their communication skills. Additionally, the Task-based approach centers around providing learners with authentic tasks that mirror real-life situations (Luo, 2024). Similarly, Oglu (2023) affirms that Task-based learning, a departure from traditional methods, prioritizes authentic language use and focuses on tasks as the core of instruction.

It is obvious that the paper also has some limitations in relation to the attitudes of the learners when they are taught or experimented with that type of method. In addition, the authors do not provide a more detailed description of the learners' learning strategies so that they can compare and come up with an overwhelming outcome in their paper. What is really significant here is not only how well the task-based method is but also the effect and opinion of the learners toward the task-based approach in their daily learning styles not just in an experimental or control group. Nonetheless, it is clear that these writers made some great contributions to the educational system by proposing such a feasible paper. Even though there are still unexpected

and limited observations in their studies, we should be satisfied with what we explore at present and then make more attempts for future research. All in all, capable teachers know which is the best way to follow and may lead their students to more successful outcomes if they conduct their suitable and beneficial teaching method properly and moderately.

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The participants in this paper are about 30 students from Van Lang University. Their major is English language. They have learned to listen using the task-based method in advance, and a completed questionnaire is distributed to them in order to work out their attitudes toward the task-based approach. In fact, both 30 students may obtain a level ranging from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate, who are able to adhere to the constructions and have enough responsibilities to take part in my descriptive research after collecting data. Additionally, gender impact was not controlled in this study.

Design of the Study

In this paper, the researchers employed the quantitative method to collect data. The teacher prepared the completed questionnaire about the students' attitudes when using the Task-based method in learning listening skills to figure out whether that approach may help the learners boost their listening level or strengthen their ability to understand or reach their goal in learning English. This paper also adapted the Pyun (2013) questionnaire, which is an outstanding questionnaire about attitudes of College Korean Language Learners regarding the Task-based method. However, due to the shortage of time, it would be ideal to slash the questions from 24 items to 15 items in this paper's new questionnaire to transform it into a more compatible one for my students. Furthermore, each item is measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Intriguingly, these questions are feasible for all the real situations that the students can cope with when learning listening skills; hence, they can calculate their own understanding of task-based methods or other related listening contexts. Besides, the primary aim of this questionnaire is to collect, compare, and come up with crucial findings regarding the participants' levels of listening comprehension before and after the study.

Data collection & analysis

It was unambiguous that this paper would reach the attitudes and understanding of university students by applying task-based methods to teach them to study listening. Therefore, it is essential to check the students' levels after the listening tasks in the long run so that the researchers always cater to the continuous assessment in my classes to make sure that they are aware of what they are learning and create a highly motivating value. The questionnaire was designed to help the learners, who were able to consider themselves after obtaining enough associated knowledge in the task-based approach; they could answer these items to help both teachers and them to narrow down the matters that they were encountering and their teachers

may provide the advice or suitable improvements for each situation. After distributing the questionnaire, the students will be evaluated on the outcomes and attitudes related to listening tasks using a task-based method.

Results/Findings and discussion

The collected data from three focus group interviews related to the writing challenges that they As mentioned in the very early part of this paper, this study aims at finding whether applying the Task-based method in teaching and learning is beneficial for both teacher and students or not that will pave the way for boosting the method in learning listening as well as gaining the learners' attitudes regarding Task-based approach. In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, this paper will make an effort to provide descriptive statistics to reach the discussions. The following tables will show my illustrations:

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of the learners' attitudes toward Task-based approach

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Feel nervous before listening	30	1	5	2.73	1.112
Not worry if you cannot listen to one or two sentences	30	1	5	2.93	1.202
Task-based help to brainstorm	30	1	5	2.93	1.311
Listening task performance based on the task-based method is beneficial	30	1	5	3.23	1.278
Task-based makes use of expressions and grammar	30	1	5	3.43	1.104
Complete tasks better after learning task-based	30	1	5	3.30	1.022
Easier when applying real contexts that relevant to tasks	30	1	5	3.07	1.172
Put priority on completing tasks	30	1	5	3.53	.973
Familiar with task-based in listening	30	1	5	3.17	1.020
Focus on task improves listening	30	1	5	3.10	1.029
Valid N (listwise)	30				

As Table 1 indicates, there is a significant outcome in the learners' attitudes toward using the Task-based method, and several improvements were made by the students in learning listening skills. The mean ranges from 2.73 to 3.53, which shows that listening performances are enhanced after employing this method.

The following tables highlight the crucial improvements as well as the positive attitudes of the learners in terms of utilizing the Task-based method.

Table 2.

Feel nervous before listening

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	11	36.7	36.7	46.7
	Neutral	10	33.3	33.3	80.0
	Agree	3	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Strongly agree	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that the learners do not feel nervous if they fully use this type of method; in fact, a relaxing mood may help to ease the learners' stressful attitudes before they come to do the tasks.

Table 3.

Do not worry if you cannot listen to one or two sentence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Disagree	6	20.0	20.0	33.3
	Neutral	12	40.0	40.0	73.3
	Agree	4	13.3	13.3	86.7
	Strongly agree	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Through this table, it is clear that most learners do not just pay attention to completing one or two sentences since it is more important to finish the whole task rather than making an effort in just one single sentence; therefore, it does not matter if they cannot catch up with one or two sentences.

Table 4.

Task-based help to brainstorm

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Disagree	6	20.0	20.0	36.7
	Neutral	10	33.3	33.3	70.0
	Agree	4	13.3	13.3	83.3
	Strongly agree	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Regarding brainstorming benefits, most students do not appreciate this highly, resulting in the neutral opinion being the highest. (33.3%)

Table 5.

Listening to task performance based on the task-based method is beneficial

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	6	20.0	20.0	30.0
	Neutral	8	26.7	26.7	56.7
	Agree	7	23.3	23.3	80.0
	Strongly agree	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

This table also highlights the advantage of using the Task-based method in learning listening skills as well as a better listening performance is shown. The percentage from 23.3 to 26.7 indicates a high interest in the learners' attitudes.

Table 6.

Task-based makes use of expressions and grammar

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	16.7
	Neutral	10	33.3	33.3	50.0
	Agree	10	33.3	33.3	83.3
	Strongly agree	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The task-based method also plays an integral part in helping the learners perform better. A third of the learners believe that they may use expressions and grammar better.

Table 7.

Complete tasks better after learning task-based

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	16.7
	Neutral	12	40.0	40.0	56.7
	Agree	10	33.3	33.3	90.0
	Strongly agree	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

As Table 7 experiences, the task-based method can improve the learners' attitudes toward using

it and applying it to completing the listening tasks.

Table 8.

Easier when applying real contexts that relevant to tasks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Disagree	5	16.7	16.7	30.0
	Neutral	8	26.7	26.7	56.7
	Agree	11	36.7	36.7	93.3
	Strongly agree	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

It is generally clear that the majority of learners find it easy to complete the relevant tasks if they are aware of this situation beforehand. Thus, they may predict the information, which is really beneficial in fulfilling the listening tasks.

Table 9.

Put priority on completing tasks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	2	6.7	6.7	10.0
	Neutral	12	40.0	40.0	50.0
	Agree	10	33.3	33.3	83.3
	Strongly agree	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

This table aims at completing the tasks, which is also the priority of the Task-based method for each individual, as most of them try to finish the tasks.

Table 10.

Familiar with task-based in listening

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	5	16.7	16.7	23.3
	Neutral	11	36.7	36.7	60.0
	Agree	10	33.3	33.3	93.3
	Strongly agree	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Using the Task-based approach means that the learners focus on doing as much as possible in listening exercises that may help them get familiar with these situations for the next time.

Table 11.

Focus on task improves listening

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	20.0
	Neutral	14	46.7	46.7	66.7
	Agree	8	26.7	26.7	93.3
	Strongly agree	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

In Table 11, the learners' attitudes toward task-based methods are nearly positive, and they also consider it a useful method for learning listening.

This study's findings align with those from Brown's (2018) study, which affirms that the task-based approach supported learners' listening comprehension because they were motivated to develop listening and communicate in real-life situations. Additionally, the use of a task-based approach enables learners to plan and control their listening process and suits the learners' needs. Furthermore, this study shares findings similar to those of Pyun (2013), who found that a task-based approach facilitated learners' listening comprehension. The learners believed that by using this approach, they could complete the listening tasks more easily and effectively, and they were able to make use of English grammar and expressions.

All in all, the majority of learners have positive attitudes toward applying the task-based method to study listening skills, which not only improves their performances but also reduces the pressure to complete the tasks.

Conclusion

All things considered, this study focuses on the learners' attitudes toward the Task-based method of teaching and learning listening skills. The results displayed by the tables show that the Task-based approach is beneficial to the students in improving their performance, and their positive attitudes are shown clearly in the descriptive numbers.

Also, descriptive statistics pay more attention to finding and concluding about my students' attitudes in learning to listen using a task-based approach, and they express their opinions that they are interested in this type of teaching method. As an English teacher, I play an important role in appreciating these results and making an effort to explore more and more effective methods in teaching English skills in the foreseeable future. Indeed, the higher the positive attitudes the learners express, the more usable that method can be.

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Appendix A

Interview Questionnaire

Dear Students,

Thank you for the time you are taking to complete this survey. Your answers will be helpful in Identifying the usefulness of written corrective feedback and errors corrections. Your response will only be used for survey purposes.

Questionnaire (Adapting by Danielle Ooyoung Pyun “Attitudes toward task-based language learning: A Study of College Korean Language Learners”)

Part 1. Student background information

1. Gender: Male Female
2. What is your age?
 18-20 21-23 23-25
3. School year
 Freshmen Sophomore Junior Senior
4. Academic major: _____
5. What is your most dominant/ prominent second language: _____

Part 2. For each sentence below, please circle the answer that best represents your attitudes, using the following scales

1= Strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= Neutral

4= Agree

5= Strongly agree

1. I usually feel nervous before listening to a new task.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I do not worry if I cannot listen to one or two sentences in the task.
1 2 3 4 5
3. Task-based method can help me brainstorm effectively to complete the task.
1 2 3 4 5
4. Listening task performance based on task based method is beneficial to me.
1 2 3 4 5
5. Using task-based method in listening helps me make actual use of expressions and grammars that I have learned.
1 2 3 4 5
6. I can complete the task better after I learn about task-based method.
1 2 3 4 5
7. I may feel it is easier when applying some real contexts that are relevant to the tasks.
1 2 3 4 5
8. When using task-based method, I try to put the priority in completing the tasks.
1 2 3 4 5
9. I can get familiar to the task-based method in learning listening.
1 2 3 4 5
10. I focus more on the task outcomes so as to improve my listening comprehension.
1 2 3 4 5

Biodata

Tran Thanh Phuong is an English lecturer at Van Lang University. She holds an M.A in TESOL from Edith Cowan University. She has taught English for 6 years. Her areas of interests are blended learning in Listening, Reading, and Writing.

Ngo Nhat Phuong Quynh is an English lecturer at Van Lang University. She holds an M.A in TESOL and Linguistics from Benedictine University. She has taught English for 8 years. Her areas of interests are blended learning in Listening, Reading, and Writing.