

Introduction

Task-based instruction is a fundamental property of today's communicative teaching. Task activity has long been employed as the unit of performance in most curriculum projects, and task-based methods view such activities as milestones in the learning process. The task-based method is particularly useful in enhancing learner communicative competence. This is particularly true in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context, where task engagement exposes the learners to interactive language practice (Kassim, Rehman & Price, 2018). Thus, it is imperative to understand what degree of learning is encouraged through learner task engagement. From a psychological standpoint, it has been theorised that learners prioritise the significance of form when they are exposed to task engagement (Tabari, 2016). Surveys such as that conducted by Kassim et al. (2018) showed that specific task forms support learners to take part in cognitive procedures that improve reading comprehension. In this regard, task repetition (TR) enhances cognitive competences for speech learning and functionality.

Previous studies have reported that repetition improves oral performance by easing learners' memory recovery of their mental demonstrations that represent previous readings or utterances. In a recent article, Bui, Ahmadian and Hunter (2019) asserted that experience creates complex, eloquent or precise speech functionality. Learners apply cognitive functions to adopt, organise and verbalise information during TR. Therefore, the ability for cognitive procedures or attentional resources is discharged (Bayat, 2018). Based on the assumptions about TR, this study aims to shine new light on this aspect of language learning through an examination of the effect of TR on Saudi EFL learners' reading comprehension. A case study approach was adopted in this research to allow a deeper insight into the role of TR in the observed EFL classes.

Justification for the Study

The rationale for task repetition efficacy depends on its influence on learner cognitive development, called the Working Memory (WM). WM is described as a succession of mechanisms involved with progressive information handling (Cho, 2018). Although extensive research has been carried out on WM, the issue has its focus limited capacity. Researchers believe that WM stores a small amount of data per time (Hopp, 2014). Whenever there are lexical problems, verbal recognition controls more resources than syntactic processing (Hopp, 2014). This assumption affirms the suggestion that cognitive tools are limited and primarily utilised to learn unfamiliar data. However, as repeated activities stimulate understanding and familiarity with the elements of cognitive benefits, this process overcomes the effects of restricted or limited capability. Such hypotheses are examined through activity repetition studies, and most of these studies have sought to determine if replicating similar activities influenced learner L2 learning (Bayat, 2018; Cho, 2018; Dawadi, 2019; Hopp, 2014). For example, a study conducted on college students examined whether replicating a story and meeting a task after a 10-week interval would help them perform better in most complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF) regions (Bayat, 2018). The research engaged all procedures according to T-units and reasoned that complexity and fluency improved significantly. In terms of accuracy, the T-unit step might have been too conservative and thereby neglected to discover significant improvements.

Given the number of investigations on TR, researchers need to be cautious about study outcomes, particularly its impact on learner performance. Results found in most works of relevant

literature lack generalisability because of their small sample size (Ellis, Li & Zhu, 2019; Hsu 2019; Jung 2018; Iizuka 2019; McDonough & Crawford 2018). Therefore, among the novelties of the current study is the fact that the activities are part of the customary classroom curriculum, which considerably lessens the artificiality of the events. Few researchers have examined the impact of TR on learners' reading comprehension or any difference of learners' reading comprehension on TR.

Purpose of the Study

This research aims to examine the impact of task repetition (TR) on EFL learners' reading comprehension. The study is conducted on individual reading performance and group differences in familiar and recycled tasks. In particular, this study examines two main research questions:

1. What is the impact of task repetition on EFL learners' reading comprehension?
2. Is there any substantial correlation between TR and CAF?

Literature Review

Theoretical Background

The first activity, known as pre-task action, is a preliminary activity that enables learners' successive performances. The reason for the facilitative function of TR relies on Levelt's model, which postulates that in an oral presentation, learners undergo three distinct phases. Based on this theory, learners conceptualise, plan and articulate oral presentations (Ellis, Li & Zhu, 2019). Under the conceptualisation phase, the intended significance of the speaker's presentation is created. The pre-verbal information is delivered to the formulation phase, where it is transformed into a phonetic strategy by using suitable punctuation and lexicon rules. Under the articulation phase, the learner analyses the linguistic components to create sounds.

Content Familiarity

Content familiarity is described as the information associated with the content domain, which is applied to oral or reading discourse. Although the impact of content familiarity and reading ability has been studied in many works of literature, its impact on the learner's comprehension has not been explored (Ahmadian, Tavakoli & Dastjerdi, 2015; Ellis, et al., 201; Hsu, 2019; Phung, 2017; Qiu & Lo, 2017). A study conducted on Iranian learners tested the influence of text familiarity on classroom activities, specifically the impact on text reading and language (Sample & Michel, 2014). The findings showed that text familiarity significantly influenced the learner's listening pattern. Another survey on content familiarity investigated its impact on the CAF of L2 learners (Qiu & Lo, 2017), with the researchers highlighting the need to study content familiarity as a task in the classroom curriculum and learner development.

Task Repetition

TR involves restructuring the measures from which learners must complete tasks. L2 learners are mandated to repeat similar activities for a specified period (Reynolds & Shih, 2019). TR is often claimed as an execution process of oral tasks since it improves their L2 operation by replicating similar actions and patterns (Jung, 2018). TR could be procedural or replicating related content material (Jung, 2018). Based on these assumptions, TR describes repeating similar activity and content. Thus, TR integrates knowledge and functionality and can facilitate changes in the way learners conceptualise and plan the stages of production.

TR and content familiarity enhance reading performance. Bozorgian and Kanani (2017) investigated the impact of TR on the precision and fluency of the learner's language ability. The outcomes suggested that learners who complete repetitive tasks performed better than the other learners in the management group. Besides, the findings showed that TR improved the intermediate learner's precision and fluency in reading comprehension. Qiu and Lo (2017) explored the influence of familiarity in oral reading. The findings revealed that TR negatively affected the learner's behavioural and cognitive reasoning. However, the researchers observed that learners were more relaxed during the TR sessions. The authors suggested that participants were interested in replicating unfamiliar subjects, though they showed noticeable declines in their learning curve.

Task Engagement

Task participation has been discussed in L2 studies, such as learner participation in corrective criticism. Researchers believe that task participation stimulates the learner's learning curve (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Despite its function in enhancing the learner's performance, task engagement studies have been unexplored in much task-based language teaching (TBLT). Thus, instructors should design and execute different classroom activities to engage and improve cognitive learning development, as student classroom engagement is a multidimensional construct that in turn enhances performance.

This multidimensional construct could be thought of as behavioural, cognitive, affective and social. The behavioural construct describes the learner's attentiveness, attention and determination towards class activities. This construct is measured by time and commitment. The cognitive construct describes the learner's mental input and conceptual knowledge during class activities (Sanajoo, 2016). Therefore, the learner's attention and self-determination are a few components of cognitive engagement (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Just as cognitive and behavioural participation is evaluated with language skill, psychological commitment involves a learner's affective reaction in classroom activities. In addition, emotional engagement is a component of the learner's involvement in L2 activity (Lambert, et al., 2017). Social participation reflects the societal aspect of the discussion, which includes back channels and shared goals (Takashima & Verhoeven, 2019). However, the researcher will exclude social engagement from the present study.

TR influences the cognitive and behavioural engagement of L1 and L2 learners. Mayo, del Pilar & Agirre (2016). studied the impact of TR among novice learners. The authors selected 120 students and divided them into two groups, with age range serving as the dividing element. Each dyad was invited to play a 'spot-the-difference' activity. The analysis noted a significant influence of TR on dyadic patterns. The authors also observed a shift in the collaborative pattern of the sample groups. Azkarai and Oliver (2019) tested the influence of TR on learners' feedback, and their results showed differences between the culture and control groups. These research findings were consistent with the reports in some works of literature on TR (Ahmadian et al., 2015; Ellis, et al., 2019; Mayo, et al., 2016; Hsu, 2019; Qiu & Lo, 2017). Azkarai and Oliver (ibid) studied the influence of TR on L1 and L2 learners. The authors engaged 42 participants in the procedural and content activity, and their research findings showed that L1 use significantly influenced L2 events.

Reading Comprehension

Researchers agree that reading is the main language ability. Reading is not an inherently natural procedure in precisely the same manner as talking and listening are at a primary language level (Van de Guchte, Braaksma, Rijlaarsdam & Bimmel, 2017). The availability of distinct text materials such as journals and magazines prove that language skills could be fostered from educational prospects and instructional settings. Reading comprehension is decoding and constructing meaning through interaction with text language. TR enhances fluency and accurate reading performance because the cognitive function utilised to internalise, arrange and verbalise information remains accessible (Van de Guchte et al., 2017). Grammatical accuracy seems to gain from procedural repetition because the attentional resources and systematic memories are present in morphology rather than in task procedures.

The phrase 'decoding and constructing meaning' highlights the value and the inadequacy of text used as a determinant of reading comprehension. Reading training must consider different learners and their needs. Many learners do not understand foreign language texts because of their inadequacy in acquiring the reading ability. They appear to read with less comprehension and more slowly than they could in their original language. The research on reading relies on the fundamental premise that studying involves understanding what we read. The development of the meaning to understand a text depends on word-level abilities, proper background knowledge and comprehension strategies (Webster, 2019). These variables require attention in academic backgrounds and early phases of learners' reading ability (Wang, 2019). From the perspective of language learning and communication, reading skill occupies a place of inherent significance. Text reading is a challenge of cognitive discipline. Comprehension can be described as being conscious of the communicative function and settings within the text. Reading comprehension is a creative, complicated and dynamic ability involving many procedures that have become the focal point of classroom orientation and psychological research (Webster, 2019). The significance of understanding the practice of language acquisition or learning has been accepted in most current theories of education, as authors have asserted that understanding is a mutual collaboration of textual features and learner knowledge. Text comprehension is an intricate cognitive ability where the reader must build meaning by using available tools from the text and related lessons. However, related knowledge provides support for understanding in several contexts.

Reading in Task-based Language Teaching Context

Task-based language teaching facilitates learning in the conventional classroom environment. Webster (2019) maintained that an engaging and interactive reading pattern improves learners' reading skills. Ho (2017) conducted research on the potency of the applications as executed in classroom settings or perhaps the theoretical problems regarding ESP design. The author emphasised the need for extensive reading design and TR in college courses (Ho, 2017). The findings imply that studying for information has a beneficial impact on learners' reading capability. Ahmadian et al., (2015) examined reading skills in web learning, and their findings showed that studying abilities, such as browsing and surfing, are essential to Internet education. The authors reasoned that assigning activities conveys the value of studying to extract the message and affects comprehension. They also believed that excellent readers within an academic context orientate themselves into the particular needs of reading and engage in the practice of studying (Ahmadian et al., 2015). Fukuta (2016) said that the essence of classroom activities must be

directly associated with the reading materials because it is a foundation for additional tasks. Given that language learning is affected by the intricate interactions of many factors – to include substances, actions and evaluative opinions – TBLT has a positive influence on these factors (Fukuta, 2016). By implication, TBLT offers learners the natural resources of purposeful materials that create perfect situations for real-life activities.

Methodology

The study focus is on the impact of TR on reading comprehension used a quasi-experimental design because it controls extraneous factors and lacks randomisation. The number of participants was not sufficient for this study. However, the research is a case study on the influence of TR on EFL learners. Based on the constraints of time and data collection procedures, the researchers measured the effect of TR on the learners' complexity, accuracy and fluency during reading comprehension. Since the study observed two related samples, *T*-tests and ANOVA (analysis of variance) were used to analyse the encoded data. To measure complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF) in this study, the researchers used equal-length samples from the study subjects including temporal units as well as syntactic and lexical productions. Ratios and indices were employed to quantify the gleaned CAF segments for the purposes of the study analysis. Subsequently, L2 performance in reading comprehension has been examined.

Participants

A total of 50 students participated in the current study. Recruited randomly from classes across the English Language Department at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia, participants were divided into two sample groups, each comprising 25 male and female respondents. The population in the first course was assigned to perform repeated tasks. In each activity, individuals whose reading comprehension formed the basis of the analysis were randomly chosen (Noble & Smith, 2015). The participants were given a pre-test experience on IELTS to allow them to understand the structure of the current study.

Instrumentation

The research used distinct opinion gap tasks because they involved learners in moving beyond the information supplied by providing personal thoughts. The opinion gap activities offered variations for language use. Participants were asked to complete verbal and pictorial tasks to eliminate the challenges with complex activities. For the pictorial opinion gap, participants were requested to discuss the challenges of each topic as it affects people's lifestyles and culture. The reading task provided the opportunity to assess the impact of TR on learners' reading comprehension. Inter-rater reliability measures have been taken into consideration during the data collection and analyses phases of the current study. Two raters agreed upon the tasks used in this study. This has been measured using Cohen's kappa coefficient, with rater A = 0.532 and rater B a kappa = 0.575 respectively.

Experiment Procedure

The researchers divided the participants into two groups of experimental and control samples. The reading task began and lasted for 10 hours of class lessons and instruction. Based on the treatment procedure, the control team worked on some brief discussions and the grammar lesson, and new vocabulary words were added during the class lessons. They were asked simple, open-ended

questions during the second phase of the experiment. A new vocabulary was provided for the experimental group. Participants were given simple grammar and distinct, illustrated lessons. The demonstration was conducted on the white classroom board to avoid ambiguities. The researchers asked students to make sentences with the new vocabulary and to pronounce the words individually. During the second session, the instructor reviewed some new vocabulary and grammar lessons. The subject was introduced to the learners, and clear directives as to what they needed to do were provided. The participants were asked to recall some lexicon. The pre-task phase frequently contained a similar activity to give learners a clear view of what to expect. The participants completed the task independently and in pairs with the language tools, while the researchers tracked their progress and offered encouragement.

After performing the class activities, the participating students were requested to prepare a brief written report to inform the class about what had occurred during their experiment session. The researchers were accessible for the learners to ask questions and to explain any language issues they may have encountered. The instructor tested each task according to the test design and scored their performances. The scores obtained for each task type were used to test the effect of activity form on the participants' reading comprehension. The students in the experimental group were unaware of the test and were excluded from the results process.

Data Collection Process

During the first phase, two classes of participants were assigned to TR activities. After the pre-test, a variant of the IELTS reading test was administered to understand the context of the research experiment. The researchers had informed knowledge of IELTS learning, having years of teaching experience. Participants completed the reading tests as part of the routine work, and their performance and comprehension were recorded. Their next operation was repeated and recorded at the end of the course.

The instructor, particularly in the very first performance to avoid reading familiarity during the second session, supplied no corrective comments, either explicit or implied. Towards the end of the course, participants were requested to replicate the tasks from the communication objectives and rubrics. Though there was anxiety that the second activity generated artificiality, it should be emphasised that the tasks used in this research were part of the course's syllabus. Classroom instructors must integrate repetition in the curriculum because it is a feature of normal discourse. Participants did not practice for the second task because the next operation was unexpected. At the end of every reading session, the researchers transcribed and coded the values of students' performance. The frequency and CAF analysis were computed in each category of the experiments to test the significance between task duplication and activity recycling.

Data Analysis

Participants' reading demonstrations on all task repetitions were transcribed. For this function, two analysts analysed the samples. The researchers were experienced teachers with informed knowledge in the classroom curriculum. The data were analysed, and the inter-rater consistencies for the CAF values were assigned (Yin, 2014). Based on the study questions, the researchers performed ANOVA and *T*-test analyses.

Results

Phase I

Since the study investigated the impact of TR on the reading performance of the experimental group, *T*-tests were used to compare the averages of the sample population. The researchers conducted a statistical analysis to test the performance of all groups; ANOVA was applied to investigate the significance of TR on the test scores. The first phase showed the reliability index for the test results; Table one below presents the performance distribution of both groups. The reliability index was 0.876.

Table 1. *T*-test results for reading comprehension

Leven's test for equality of variance			T-test for equality of means					
	F	Sig	T	df Sig (2-tailed)	Mean dif.	Std. error of differences	95% confidence interval of difference	
							Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	12.093	.001	5.746	.000	4.8000	.7013	3.51	6.0910
Equal variances not assumed			5.737	.000	4.8000	.7013	3.51	6.0910

Phase II

The researchers compelled the students to repeat the reading session to test the impact of content familiarity. The test scores were graded and coded for the analysis. The results of the reading sessions are summarised in Table two below.

Table 2. *ANOVA results of final scores*

	Sum of squares	df.	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between groups	84.002	3	24.651	26.456	.000
Within groups	96.045	98	.969		

Table two shows the results of the *F* (26.456) at a significance level of .000 showed a higher value as the critical value of 2.47. The results indicate a positive impact of TR on learner's reading comprehension and CAF. During the second phase of the experiment, most students were familiar with the text and showed positive signs of fluency and accuracy. However, students who made errors during the first reading phases tried to avoid similar errors during the second experimental session. The results showed a significant impact of content familiarity and TR on learners' reading skill. The Tukey test was used to analyse differences with the sample groups.

Table 3. *Tukey test results*

(I) VAR00007	(J) VAR00007	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% confidence interval	
					Lower-bound	Upper-bound
1	2	-1.13000*	.26849	.000	-1.8581	-.5219
	3	1.16000*	.26849	.000	.4319	1.8881
	4	-.46000	.26849	.570	-1.2881	.3481
2	1	1.13000*	.26849	.000	.5219	1.6581
	3	2.29000*	.26849	.000	1.6619	3.0181
	4	.84000*	.26849	.012	.1319	1.4981
3	1	-1.16000*	.26849	.000	-1.5881	-.5219
	2	-2.39000*	.26849	.000	-3.0181	-1.1619
	4	-1.42000*	.26849	.000	-2.2481	-.8619
4	1	.46000	.26849	.570	-.3181	1.4881
	2	-.67000*	.26849	.012	-1.2981	-.1319
	3	1.62000*	.26849	.000	.7919	2.2481

Note: 2, reading task 2; 3, reading task 3; 1 and 4, reading task 1 = reading task 4.

The analysis presented in Table three demonstrates the Tukey test values of the students' reading performance. The findings showed that TR has a positive impact on EFL learner's reading comprehension.

Discussion

In applying task-based language teaching, learners are exposed to reading skills through naturalistic language. Most educators or teachers have tried to integrate the learning design for L1 and L2 processes. TBLT considers TR an essential and adequate motivation for speech and reading development (Ellis et al., 2019; Jung, 2018). The illation of this study describes TBLT as a practical, functional and innovative teaching system. The findings show that task-based approaches can improve the reading comprehension of EFL learners. In this study, task-based reading helped EFL learners gauge their reading performance and development. The investigations and findings validate the relevance of the TR technique for active and passive learners. By implication, the approach can be used in a classroom environment with conventions and knowledge-oriented designs. Thus, TBLT is an effective method for reading comprehension. Teachers offer learners a much better understanding context through executing activities in their lesson plans because they can control the variables facilitating the reading skill.

Based on these findings, teachers should combine the emphasis on form and meaning to provide an effective strategy in task-based teaching. In answering the research question, the researchers seek to test the impact of TR on reading performance. The findings showed that TR stimulates the learners' drive to fluency and better reading patterns. Thus, task familiarity influenced the reading pattern during the second activity. During TR, the cognitive burden of these

tasks is considerably reduced, as learners are acquainted with the content and instructions. By implication, learners can show accuracy and sophistication, and create utterances that are more eloquent.

Regarding precision and complexity, EFL learners can draw lexical and syntactic details either independently or in groups. Finding a positive effect of TR on learners' reading performance was consistent with the recommendations of Bayat (2018), who suggested that repetition enhanced the learners' usage of the language program, reading fluency and consciousness. Findings on CAF were consistent with those of previous works in preserving the reading form and meaning (e.g. Ahmadian et al., 2015; Ellis et al., 2019; Hsu, 2019; Jung, 2018; Iizuka, 2019; McDonough & Crawford 2018). Because of content familiarity, learners were confident in addressing the reading form. The researchers investigated the individual and collaborative impact of TR on the learners' reading performance. Collaborative task activity creates intermittent breaks in the reading pattern, which affects fluency; in addition, the pauses related to turn-taking raised the number of fractures that affect fluency. In answering the second question, the researchers tested the impact of TR on CAF. The results confirmed that TR influenced the results of CAF (see Table three). The results were consistent with other findings, which suggested that learners concentrate on text content and language (Ahmadian et al., 2015; Ellis, et al., 2019; Hsu, 2019; Jung, 2018). It is a common belief among language educators and practitioners that language rehearsal is a tactical plan that enhances task performance (Ellis et al., 2019). Language rehearsal solves the challenges of text complexity. It inspires learners to apply thorough content mining and draw inferences from the language rule system.

Conclusion

TR is a study tool as opposed to a teaching apparatus, which explains the research gaps in its utilisation. This study was carried out to examine the impact of TR on the reading comprehension of EFL learners. The classes were performed under similar conditions such as classroom space, reading directives, time allotment and corrective comments. The class participants were asked to repeat the task under the pretext that they failed the first reading session. No elaboration or corrective feedback was offered regarding their syntactic, lexical or pragmatic errors. Participants did not prepare themselves for this experiment because the likelihood of another activity was unexpected, and learners' performances were captured through sequential data collection procedures. The findings demonstrated a substantial effect of TR on accuracy and complexity as well as a significant impact on fluency and functionality, in addition to a considerable gap between TR and activity recycling. Based on the current research findings, teachers are encouraged to integrate TR in the course curriculum in order to improve learners' oral and reading performance. That is, course syllabi should be reviewed based on learners' performance. In addition, teachers should observe classroom settings and adopt effective strategies that may enhance behavioural and cognitive engagement and content familiarity.

Study Recommendations

The results of this study may well be beneficial to researchers, curriculum designers, class material creators and language teachers because it highlights the techniques that embody a better way to enhance reading abilities. Among the significant criticisms of TBLT, the impact of TR on learners' reading comprehension has been challenging. This study proves that TR and recycling are vital

options for improving reading comprehension. In general, the findings of this study suggest several courses of action.

As for classroom material creators and curriculum designers, the outcome of this study provides a springboard for enhancing the decision-making process. Material developers can choose from a variety of activities based on the findings of this research to improve the students' reading comprehension. Given the originality of this investigation of TR, class activity designers and developers may integrate such actions into the syllabus. For instance, TR is suitable and appropriate for L2 learners as it could improve their reading accuracy and fluency. Additionally, language teachers may use the findings of this research because of its outcomes. Test instructors can also gain insight from the results, as they can forecast learner behaviour and assemble activities to enhance learning. The outcomes of this research reveal certain ambiguities about TR in second language acquisition. Numerous possible future studies using the same experimental set up are apparent. In particular, future studies could focus on the correlation between TR and CAF variables in light of learners' levels based on The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Study Limitations

Regardless of the attempts to control many factors in this study, there were limitations that arose at distinct phases of the investigation. These variables may impact the outcome of the study. Thus, it is crucial to mention these limitations so they can be taken into account on prospective research. English proficiency of the participants has not been tested and this may have affected the results of this analysis because the learners had different levels of formal English education. The participants were given a three-week lecture before the experiment to enhance their grammatical and vocabulary mastery so as to convey their thoughts via the typical fluency rate. Since errors are numerous in nature, it makes error-free instruction too conventional, as an error of any type would prevent a task from being error-free. In future research, less-conservative precision and fluency levels that provide a much better account of progress with time would be recommended.

Another limitation that acted as a crucial factor in achieving the task was the brief amount of pedagogical intervention. The learners had three weeks of English lessons, and the number of TRs was not enough to outperform the management group. The sample had a limited capability to express themselves, and it influenced the outcomes of the experiment. Despite the efforts to ensure all learners had the same ability throughout the pre-test phase, the material per group exhibited rates which were considerably reduced compared to the controlled groups. The participants chosen for the experiment have been part of a program where the age gap was not a factor for selection. Investigations based on simple past or alternative task activities should incorporate a phonological precision rate. This study did not clarify the pronunciation criteria utilised to disseminate accurate or inaccurate phrases; however, it is pivotal to investigate pronunciation precision and grammar rating and to create measurements that could be used across disciplines. The sample population for this study was small; although the statistical technique could accommodate larger sample sizes, the researchers could not obtain the required number of participants due to logistical difficulties (e.g. time, resources, consent and research procedures).

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