



TASK-BASED VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION AT A VIETNAMESE HIGH SCHOOL: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract:

Task-based vocabulary instruction has been increasingly popular in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at tertiary institutions in Asia, including Vietnam. However, this type of instruction at high schools is mainly focused on traditional way and, this approach is widely held to prevent students from having opportunities to learn, communicate, and interact with other peers in English. This paper therefore reports on students' perceptions of task-based vocabulary instruction within a high school context. Data through tests and questionnaire were administered to two groups of seventy tenth graders at a high school in a Mekong Delta region. The findings indicate that students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group, suggesting that task-based vocabulary instruction was useful to tenth graders using the new textbook. The findings also reveal participants' perceived need for the inclusion of task-based vocabulary in their learning process. Implications for language teaching and administration are also presented.

Keywords: task, vocabulary acquisition, perceptions, English 10-new version, high school

1. Introduction

Research on teaching and learning vocabulary has witnessed the vital role vocabulary plays in helping learners to become proficient in foreign or second language proficiency and use ([Adams & Newton, 2009](#); [Ahour & Dogolsara, 2015](#); [Ellis, 2000, 2003, 2009](#); [Laufer & Nation, 1999](#); [Nation, 2001](#); [Newton, 2013](#); [J. C. Richards, Gallo, & Renandya, 2001](#); [Le & Nguyen, 2012](#); [Van den Branden et al., 2009](#); [Willis & Willis, 2007](#)). From these perspectives, sufficient vocabulary knowledge is a powerful tool for learners to successfully communicate in English or to improve learning opportunities; otherwise lack of vocabulary turns to be a barrier for them to tackle the use of a foreign or second language. Research has shown that vocabulary acquisition is of great importance in

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understanding spoken and written texts and performing all language skills through implementing tasks (Ahmed & Bidin, 2016; Bava Harji & Gheitanchian, 2017; [Coady & Huckin, 1997](#); Fallahrafie, Rahmany, & Sadeghi, 2015; [Gu, 2003](#); [Laufer & Nation, 1999](#); [Marion, 2008](#); Munirah & Muhsin, 2015; [Nation, 2001](#); [Read, 2000](#); [Schmitt, 2010](#); Skehan, 2014, Van den Branden, 2016). Vocabulary knowledge therefore enables learners to use the language, and as a result, this type of language use feeds back vocabulary knowledge.

Of the trends in vocabulary teaching, using tasks to teach vocabulary has been widely addressed in the literature. Over the last few decades, tasks have been recognized as useful vehicles for language teaching contexts ([Ellis, 2003](#); [Erlam, 2016](#); [Samuda & Bygate, 2008](#)). Ellis (2003) claims that “*tasks hold a central place in current second language acquisition research and language pedagogy*” (p. 1). The early application of task-based instruction was in the Prabhu’s Bangalore project ([Prabhu, 1987](#)), where vocabulary teaching through tasks (VTTT) was conducted within a communicative framework for language teaching. During the instruction, learners were presented with a task or problem to solve and they are not required to concentrate on or to produce any language feature in their performance. The tasks chosen are meaning-focused ones and they have non-linguistic outcome ([Ellis, 2003](#)). Although task-based language teaching has been recognized as a growing interest that attracts teachers and students in Asia, including Vietnam ([Barnard & Nguyen, 2010](#); [Le, 2014](#); [Le & Nguyen, 2012](#); [Tran, 2011](#); [Phuong, 2016](#)); there has not been any research that investigates the use of tasks to teach vocabulary to high school students who have had little exposure to English outside the classroom and particularly the focus of the lesson is strictly on language content. Therefore, this paper is aimed to fill in this gap and examines students’ perceptions of vocabulary teaching through tasks and its effects. The research question that guided the study reported on in this paper was, ‘How do tenth graders perceive the effects of vocabulary teaching through tasks when using the new textbook? The concepts of task elements and principles of vocabulary teaching through tasks are clarified in order to address the research question for this study.

2. Task elements in relation to vocabulary instruction

Tasks can be conceptualized in terms of goals, input, setting, activities, roles, and feedback ([Candlin & Murphy, 1987](#); [Nunan, 1989](#)). A search of literature relevant to this study identifies six key elements of task, as briefly described below.

Firstly, a task generally involves learners in a communicative, socio-cultural, and cognitive process ([Clark, 1987](#)). This involvement of task performance therefore serves as a point of contact between the learner, task itself and the curriculum ([Nunan, 1989](#)). This interactive process suggests a focus on meaning-making through lexical knowledge or learners’ vocabulary learning, rather than providing learners with merely knowledge of new words.

Secondly, input represents verbal or non-verbal materials that learners can manipulate when performing a task. Particularly, with regard to real-world language,

input data can be derived from a wide range of sources in a real world context. Given the importance of vocabulary acquisition or learning, have proposed a long list of all rich and various kinds of written sources which are in existence around us and are likely to be faced in real life situations ([Brosnan, Brown, & Hood, 1984](#); [Hover, 1986](#)). Thus, tasks to teach vocabulary should be taken into account to allow for more communicative and productive language use during instruction.

Thirdly, setting refers to a certain environment in which every task is performed within the classroom setting. This arrangement enables learners to work in the form of pair, small groups, and even the whole class ([Wright, 1987](#)).

Fourthly, tasks are defined as activities which engage learners in reaching a particular goal to enhance their communication strategies ([Grellet, 1981](#)). Specifically, Prabhu ([1987](#)) proposes three types of gaps: information, reasoning, and opinion activities. One example of information gap activity is the effective use of role-play, claimed as a meaningful activity that necessitates student motivation and involvement to practice and develop their target language use ([Crookall & Oxford, 1990](#)). Similarly, reasoning and opinion gap activities involve learners in sharing their knowledge and practicing real-life communicative language use. From a psycholinguistic perspective, tasks are means to guide learners to process information for successful language use and vocabulary learning ([Ellis, 2000](#); [Newton, 2001](#)).

Fifthly, a task itself, no matter how meaningful and purposeful it is, does not ensure its successful implementation unless the teacher understands and manages how tasks are implemented in different classroom contexts. Thus, the role of the teacher and that of learners need to be considered as complementary or intertwined to promote active and positive learning environment targeting task completion and performance.

Sixthly, feedback refers to task assessment. This kind of assessment is believed to encourage learners to use communication skills when working in groups ([Johnson & Johnson, 1994](#)). Assessing task-based performance is a challenge because it is totally different from assessing traditional formal tests which observe only behaviors in the real world or a simulation in a pedagogical setting ([Bachman, 2002](#); [Norris, Hudson, & Bonk, 2002](#); [Weigle, 2002](#)).

Drawing on the literature on tasks as communicative oriented activities, for the study reported in this paper, the term *task* is used to refer to any activity or assignment that is meaningful-based and communicative oriented in students' vocabulary learning process.

2.1 Principles of task-based vocabulary instruction

Student-centered vocabulary tasks are likely to be preferred in pre-reading or pre-listening while guessing new words from context is frequently done in post-reading or post-listening within the context of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL). In particular, follow-up tasks and exercises focusing on the use of words in the text are presented to motivate learners to try to use the new words by themselves ([Scrivener, 2005](#)).

According to Nation and Hamilton-Jenkins (2000), three principles of task-based vocabulary instruction (or vocabulary teaching through tasks) linked to this study are examined. They include deliberate attention, negotiation of meanings, and using or hearing words. First, vocabulary learning can be enriched or supplemented by paying deliberate attention to learning from word lists. Although there is evidence that incidental vocabulary learning contributes to learners' vocabulary gains by doing tasks such as solving a problem or reading for comprehension, intentional vocabulary learning with deliberate focus on vocabulary is more efficient. Second, learners are found to acquire vocabulary when there is negotiation of word meanings. Joe, Nation and Newton (1996) claim that when there is an explanation of the meanings of words during a speaking activity, this type of instruction allows learners to make sense of the lexical meaning-making process, and as a result, task-based words are accumulated. Newton (2013) indicates that learner-learner task-based interaction results in peer assistance when learners focus on the negotiation of the meaning of the word to carry out tasks together. Finally, vocabulary learning is facilitated when learners use the word or hear the word being used in ways that enrich or construct new knowledge the learners have about the word. Thus, in the speaking activity, teachers may observe learners during the activity to see whether the word is not changed, slightly changed, reasonably changed or significantly changed.

From the perspectives of task elements and its principles, this paper is drawn on Willis's (1996) framework of task-based language learning, as shown in Figure 1. This framework includes three stages: pre-task, task cycle and language focus.

A. Pre-task

Teacher explores the topic	Students take notes of useful words and phrases, preparing for task performance
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B. Task cycle

Task	Planning	Report
Students do the tasks in pairs or small groups	Students report to the class	Students present reports
Teacher facilitates communication	Teacher provides language use	Teacher provides feedback

C. Language focus

Analysis	Practice
Students work on text features	Teacher Guides and directs practice of new words (phrases)
build on new words (phrases)	Students perform the task
Teacher analyses the activity	

Figure 1: Willis's (1996) task-based learning framework

2.2 Task-based vocabulary instruction and vocabulary acquisition

It is widely held that integrating task-based instruction with vocabulary acquisition promotes students' engagement in various communicative tasks. While doing tasks

with peers, students experience less psychological burden, which facilitates cognitive growth by bridging information gap and discussion, and promotes language competence by repetitive use of newly learned vocabularies and negotiations. In recent years, task-based language teaching has received a growing interest in EFL contexts; however, the implementation of exercise types on foreign language vocabulary learning in EFL contexts still remained scarce.

According to Jeon (2005), language acquisition in general and vocabulary acquisition in particular is an exceedingly sophisticated process involving the interaction and combination of different elements such as materials, feedback and activities. Thus, the effect of task based vocabulary instruction (TBVI) on these elements is positive. In the same vein, Jeon and Hahn (2006) confirm that task-based language teaching (TBLT) has a dramatic and positive influence on materials, activities, and evaluative feedback. In other words, TBVI provides its learners with authentic and meaning-based materials, real-life communicative activities and motivational feedback for vocabulary learning. It is therefore necessary to expose students to opportunities for target vocabulary use in the classroom because in such an Asian EFL context like Vietnam because students hardly have the opportunity of using English outside the classroom and lack access to using the target language on a daily basis.

A study by McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) reported on a task-based EFL course in Thailand showed that students needed time to shift from traditional instructional model to TBLT and then adapt to this new approach. One of the most prominent reasons was that teacher-fronted classes are norm. As a result, students required more grammar instruction and target language forms in their task-based course. Llach (2009) supported the effect of vocabulary exercises in promoting vocabulary knowledge. The finding was that using different exercises is essential and beneficial for vocabulary learning and retention. Similarly, Vosoughi and Mehdipour (2013) carried out a study on the effects of recognition task and production task on incidental vocabulary learning of Iranian EFL learners. Through this study, they investigated the effectiveness of each type of tasks (production and recognition) on Iranian EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning. The findings of the study indicated that both treatments (production and recognition tasks) had a significant effect on incidental vocabulary learning but this effect was reported to be greater in production group. Touti's (2013) research attempted to investigate the effectiveness of two task types (fill in the blank and writing) on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary learning. To this end, the study employed totally 64 Iranian intermediate EFL learners from two experimental groups named after the two task types. The finding showed participants' favor in writing tasks.

With regard to learners' perceptions towards TBVI, a study of Hashim, Selamat and Sulaiman (2014) revealed that students had positive thinking of learning Arabic language using this approach and that they were motivated to learn this language. A recent study by Ahour and Dogolsara (2015) examined the effects of vocabulary instruction using two task types (multiple-choice and sentence writing). The results

revealed that the group received sentence writing task instruction found this way more effective than the one did multiple choice tasks.

Although the above mentioned studies provide insights into the positive side of vocabulary learning through tasks, little discussion about how language learners perceive task-based instruction in learning vocabulary within the Vietnamese high school contexts is found.

3. The Study

A mix-methods design was used to explore students' vocabulary acquisition through tasks and their perceptions of this task-based vocabulary instruction within a high school context at a Mekong Delta region. This kind of design is viewed as powerful in examining the impact and effectiveness of the investigation (Creswell, 2014; Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2009). The two groups involved in this study were randomly assigned. Random assignment was chosen because it ensures every participating teacher had an equal probability or chance of being assigned to or involved in the conditions of any group under investigation (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009; Kazdin, 1992; Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005). After group assignment, both of the groups were pretested, each group received a type of treatment, then both groups were post-tested. The measurements were collected at the same time for both groups. In this design, random assignment can be seen as a strong technique that may eliminate the threats of extraneous variables to internal validity. Additionally, random assignment allows for forming equivalent groups right at the beginning of the study because the difference between the two groups is only by chance ([Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012](#)).

Seventy tenth-grade students at a high school in a Mekong Delta region participated in the study. Their age range was from 15 to 17. All participants had learned English as a required school subject for at least five years. Although participants came from different villages in an suburban district of the Mekong Delta, they were divided into two groups in which male and female portions in two groups were quite similar in terms of level of English proficiency. The control group consisted of 15 males and 20 females whereas in the experimental group there were 13 males and 22 females.

The data collected in the study included tests and questionnaire. The vocabulary achievement test was used as a pretest to measure students' vocabulary competence. The purpose of the post-test at the end of the treatment was to compare the students' vocabulary competence before and after the study. The vocabulary achievement test consisted of fifteen recognition items and fifteen production items; which and organized into five parts. Students' vocabulary recognition was checked in part 1 and part 2, while students' vocabulary production was checked in part 3, part 4, and part 5. The similar vocabulary test with 30 items was administered to the participants from two groups as the post-test after the treatment in order to see whether the task-based and the traditional instruction of vocabulary had any significant effects on students' vocabulary knowledge and which one outweighs the other.

The questionnaire was adapted from Deci and Ryan's (1985) intrinsic motivation questionnaire and Jeon and Hahn's (2006) Teacher Questionnaire. More importantly, the questionnaire was adapted with reference to current literature of the study. A questionnaire was administered to see how tenth graders perceived the importance of vocabulary learning using tasks. The questionnaire included five-point Likert-type items in the second and third parts and open-ended questions in the last part. The scale ranged from 'strongly disagree, disagree, no idea, agree, and strongly agree'. This scale has more to deal with quantitative rather than qualitative (Spector, 1992). The question sections and scope relevant to this study is briefly shown in Appendix A. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was .87 ($\alpha = .87$), indicating that the questionnaire was a reliable instrument.

The textbook entitled *Tieng Anh 10* (English for tenth graders) was the main source of material used in the present study. Approved by Vietnam's Minister of Education and Training, this book is the first of a three-level English language set of textbooks for this senior high school. The aim of this set is to develop students' communicative competence in the four language skills, which is expected that after finishing this level, students can target their English language proficiency Level 3 (B1) of the Vietnamese Foreign Language Competence Framework. The profile of a task-based lesson tracking is detailed in Appendix B. The four-section lesson plan includes pre-task (two activities), task cycle (two activities), language focus (three activities), and homework. In the pre-task, students were asked to work in pairs, discuss questions and then present their ideas to the class. For the second activity, students were then grouped and did matching exercise for words related to electronic devices. In the task-cycle section, students first worked individually by skimming the text and reporting to the class what the best title could be for this reading text. In task cycle two, students had to read the text and complete the chart by filling in some blanks the electronic device related words. With regard to the third section, language focus, students were required to analyze two things. First, they had to work in groups and discuss the meanings of the words by telling the functions or benefits of the devices used as learning tools in the text provided. Second, students looked at the chart mentioned earlier and wrote sentences to describe how to learn new vocabulary generated from the text. Finally, students worked in groups, read the text, and compare how electronic devices were used among children in the United States and in Vietnam to answer five suggested aspects.

Students were first assigned randomly into two groups, 35 students in each. Then, students were provided with a list of potential vocabulary items which were screened to eliminate the known ones and the unknown ones to design vocabulary pre-test, vocabulary lessons and vocabulary post-test. Vocabulary pre-test and questionnaire were designed and then piloted to check the reliability of the two instruments, and then delivered to both groups. Vocabulary lessons were later planned. In this present study, the tasks designed for the purpose of the treatment were selected and organized depending on the content of the new textbook. Totally, six sessions of the treatment were offered during six weeks. In the experimental group, each session strictly follows the three stages in task-based vocabulary instruction (TBVI), namely,

pre-task, task cycle and post-task. In the control group, Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach, the traditional method or approach was used to present new vocabulary items to the participants. The participants were supposed to work on the material through the instructions provided to them.

4. Findings

The findings from the study reveal that after using the new textbook, tenth grade students found task-based vocabulary instruction was useful as the students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control one. Additionally, students perceived the need for the inclusion of this type of instruction in their learning process. These findings are presented with respect to the research question.

4.1 Vocabulary acquisition before and after the study

The descriptive data visualize differences between the two groups both before and after the instructional treatment. As indicated in Table 1, before the experiment, the mean scores of both control and experimental groups were relatively equal ($M=.26$; $M=.25$ respectively). After the experiment, both groups had an increase in mean scores ($M=.43$; $M=.61$ respectively). These results indicated that students who were taught vocabulary through tasks achieved more than those who received traditional vocabulary instruction.

Table 1: Students' vocabulary achievement

Tests	Conditions	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Pre	Control	35	.06	.51	.26	.12
	Experimental	35	.06	.46	.25	.11
Post	Control	35	.20	.63	.43	.12
	Experimental	35	.49	.77	.61	.07

4.2 Students' perceptions of task-based vocabulary instruction

As can be seen in Table 2, the overall mean score for students' perceptions of task-based vocabulary instruction is at high level ($M = 3.48$, $SD = .38$), suggesting that the participating students perceived the importance of TBVI in their learning process.

Table 2: Students' perceptions towards TBVI (the experimental group)

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Min	Max	M	SD	
MEAN	35	2.69	4.20	3.48	.38	
Valid N (listwise)	35					

4.3 Reasons for students' choice or avoidance of task-based vocabulary instruction

The *Multiple Response Frequencies Test* was run to find out the least and the most influential reasons for students' choice or avoidance of vocabulary teaching through tasks, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Frequency of reasons for students' choice or avoidance of TBVI

Reasons to choose TBVI (n=35)	Frequency
Task-based vocabulary instruction helps students gain higher scores in English tests.	28
Task-based vocabulary instruction helps students with interaction skills.	18
Task-based vocabulary instruction motivates students to learn English.	27
Task-based vocabulary instruction provides a collaborative learning environment.	18
Task-based vocabulary instruction is suitable for high school class.	19
Reasons to avoid TBVI (n=35)	Frequency
High school students are not used to task-based learning.	3
Textbook exercises are not used as task-based vocabulary learning.	2
Task-based vocabulary instruction is sometimes difficult to be implemented in a large class.	2
Task-based vocabulary instruction is not used to assess student performance.	3

Eighty percent of surveyed students ($n=28$) said that they would learn vocabulary through tasks in the future. In particular, three-fourths of the participants ($n=27$) reported that interaction skills were the most influential reason for them to choose this type of instruction and half of the participants ($n=18$) considered getting higher scores and motivation were the two least influencing factors.

However, some students ($n=7$) found task-based vocabulary instruction a challenge and they decided to avoid its implementation. The two biggest concerns hindering them from using tasks while learning vocabulary were that they were not used to task-based language learning ($n=3$) and that their learning performance were not assessed through tasks ($n=3$). Inappropriate textbook exercises and large class size were reported to be the other constraints.

5. Insights into students' views of task-based vocabulary instruction

A. Positive views of task implementation to vocabulary learning

Analysis from open-ended questions revealed that all participating students recognized the role of task implementation to their vocabulary learning by commenting positively on task-based vocabulary instruction. The reasons for this preference could be classified into three main categories in terms of increased confidence in communicating in English, the effectiveness of vocabulary learning and learning of new things and skills. Six out of nine surveyed students noted that their confidence in communicating in English increased after learning vocabulary through tasks. For example, Thao's comments below indicate her confidence in speaking performance:

Task-based vocabulary instruction allows us become more confident in speaking English in front of the crowd. Also, this type of instruction is really useful because when we have more vocabularies, we definitely feel secure about the knowledge to communicate or express ideas to others (Thao.Q1)

In her views, greater emphasis was placed on the need for inclusion of tasks, thereby providing students with opportunities to interact with the target language while vocabulary knowledge aids in communication process. Similarly, Nguyen added, "I know more vocabulary, which helps me speak with others or communicate more easily and naturally" (Nguyen.Q1).

With regard to the effectiveness of vocabulary learning through tasks, three participating students confirmed that task-based vocabulary instruction facilitated their vocabulary learning, helping them learn more how to use vocabulary effectively. For example, Hang wrote,

I think it is a good way to learn vocabulary through tasks. I was much impressed by this new way since I could remember these words for a longer period of time. Moreover, I know more new words through synonyms and definitions in English (Hang.Q1).

The third reason for the preference of vocabulary through tasks was commented by Thu and Hoa. These two students considered this instruction as interesting in that English is a tool not only provided them with understanding or guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words within the text itself, but also encouraged them to learn new language skills. This can be seen from the comments from Thu and Hoa:

Task-based vocabulary instruction also teaches me many new and interesting things such as the way to use lexical structures or to write good sentences (Thu. Q1)

Task-based vocabulary instruction provides me with more opportunities to speak and learn vocabulary and other skills better (Hoa.Q1)

B. Negative views of task implementation to vocabulary learning

With regard to the question as to the reasons for students to avoid using tasks in classroom practices, three main reasons such as inability to adjust to the new type of instruction, lack of teaching aids, and time constraints, were identified.

For the first reason, four out of six students perceived the inappropriateness of TBVI for fairly good students and particularly their inability to get used to the new way of instruction in a very short period of time. Cuc mentioned,

As some of us are not good at English in class, I think, we are not accustomed to the new type of instruction of learning new words through tasks. Therefore, we need to do more exercises under the teacher's control and instruction rather than trying communicative tasks (Cuc.Q2).

Tin stated that some students found it difficult to express their ideas to complete a given task without known words, *"Teacher should spend time helping students who lack vocabulary."* Likewise, Trang added, *"The teachers should use easy and simple words and teach weak students who really have problems with vocabulary in order to help them understand the lesson."*

The second reason reported by students was a lack of teaching aids. Students perceived that they needed more support, particularly from teaching aids that complement this new instruction. Truc wrote,

Learning vocabulary in the new textbooks containing just a few of pictures makes students bored. Vocabulary teaching software with images and sounds should be applied into the teaching of English vocabulary (Truc.Q2)

Time constraint was perceived as a common complaint among students to prevent them from implementing tasks while learning new vocabulary. An example of the reason for the avoidance of task is illustrated in the following comments:

I do not think students like us have time to work with tasks all the time although we could talk more, feel more confident. We have only one learning period (fifty minutes) or two to work in pairs or in groups per week, thus, the teacher had to spend time correcting our mistakes while we present or report a given task (Lan.Q2).

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings from this study present the effect of task-based vocabulary instruction on tenth graders' vocabulary achievement. In particular, it is interesting to note that this type of instruction was particularly useful to the participating students with regard to vocabulary learning. This finding is consistent with several studies ([Javanbakht & Yasuj, 2011](#); [Sarani & Sahebi, 2012](#); Le & Nguyen, 2012; [Vosoughi & Mehdipour, 2013](#)), highlighting that appropriate use of task-based instruction can improve students' vocabulary in second or foreign language classrooms. This positive impact is also confirmed by other studies (e.g., Khaneghah et al., 2016; [Sarani & Sahebi, 2012](#)) addressing that through engaging or exposing to tasks during the time of the study, students can have better vocabulary gains. Another factor that may influence students' performance is the stimulating nature of tasks. In fact, task activity is motivational and task achievement is due simply to the fact that the task taker is motivated ([Brown, 2000](#); [Richards & Rodgers, 2001](#)). It appears that students' understanding of tasks and task-based vocabulary instruction in terms of meaning-based and communicative-oriented are defined in their learning process.

The findings indicate that task-based vocabulary instruction was perceived as little importance by students in the experimental group. This may be interpreted by a study by Luyten, Lowyck and Tuerlinckx ([2001](#)) who claim that task perception is the subjective translation of objective characteristics and demands of the task. Thus, students' perceptions towards this type of instruction represent a potentially powerful tool that should be considered in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary because, to some extent, students' perceptions reflect their interpretation of task characteristics and demands, thereby influencing student learning in the long run.

The findings reveal that most of participants preferred task-based vocabulary instruction as their strategy to learn English vocabulary for its interactional features. This concurs with the work of Ellis ([2002](#)) who highlights that tasks function as devices for creating language acquisition conditions. Thus, the content of the lesson does not form the core of the acquisition process. Rather, it is the process of classroom interaction that generates learning opportunities. This is in line with the literature review that task-based language teaching approach—student-centeredness, allows for more meaningful communication and provides more practical extra-linguistic skill building ([Brown, 1989](#); [Koechlin & Zwaan, 2001](#)). Understanding the importance of students learning vocabulary gains through tasks sheds new light on how teachers think of a shift from the traditional way of teaching vocabulary to advocating the collaborative and interactive nature of tasks.

Findings from the open-ended questions also demonstrated that students had positive views on the use of task-based vocabulary instruction. It is important to note that these findings of the study extend the view that the use of vocabulary tasks in the new textbook is promising, although students had a low level of perceptions towards this new way of instruction.

The findings of the present study contribute to the task-based language teaching literature with regard to vocabulary instruction at a high school in Asian contexts, particularly in Vietnam, in several ways. This study deepens understanding of the nature of vocabulary teaching through tasks and its close connection with a process of learning and reconstruction of new vocabulary knowledge. This study provides teachers with insights into the impact of task implementation to teach vocabulary, and also raises their awareness of the roles they play as motivating or supporting students to expend their efforts and energy on tasks by implementing innovative ways to promote student vocabulary learning.

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Appendix A: Learner Questionnaire

Questionnaire Sections and Scopes

Section	Contents	Type	Focus	Note
I	Collecting learners' demographic information	Close-ended	Background	
II	Learners' understanding of tasks and VTTT (Items 1-7)	Likert-type	Concept	Adapted from Jeon & Hahn's (2006) <i>Teacher Questionnaire</i>
III	Learners' views on VTTT (Items 8-15)	Likert-type	Opinion	Adapted from Jeon & Hahn's (2006) <i>Teacher Questionnaire</i>
IV	Learners' intrinsic motivation in VTTT (Items 16-33)	Likert-type	Opinion	Adapted from Deci & Ryan's (1985) intrinsic motivation questionnaire
V	Reasons for learners' choice or avoidance of VTTT (Items 34-42)	Open-ended	Implementation	Adapted from Jeon & Hahn's (2006) <i>Teacher Questionnaire</i>

	Learners' understanding of task and task-based vocabulary instruction
	A task is communicative-based.
	A task mainly focuses on meaning.
	A task's outcome is clearly defined.
	A task is any activity used by learners.
	TBVI involves communication.
	Learners play an active role in TBVI.
	TBVI consists of pre-task, task cycle, and post-task.
	Learners' views of implementing task-based vocabulary instruction
	I am interested in TBVI in the classroom.
	TBVI makes me feel relaxed and more confident whenever I speak or write English.
	TBVI meets my learning needs and makes me more interested in learning vocabulary.
	TBVI helps to develop integrated skills in the classroom.
	Teachers are more likely to become facilitators.
	It takes time for teachers to prepare and deliver tasks.
	TBVI is suitable for learning activities in the classroom.
	TBVI materials should be taken from meaningful real-world context.
	Learners' intrinsic motivation in task-based vocabulary instruction
	I enjoyed doing vocabulary tasks.
	Vocabulary tasks were fun to do.
	I felt relaxed in doing vocabulary tasks.
	Vocabulary tasks are important.
	Vocabulary tasks are helpful.
	I felt pressured while doing vocabulary tasks.
	Vocabulary tasks did not catch my attention at all.
	Vocabulary tasks were boring to do.
	I like to do more vocabulary tasks because they are useful.
	Vocabulary tasks help me learn vocabulary more effectively.
	I could do all vocabulary tasks well.
	I am satisfied with my performance in vocabulary tasks.
	I could not do vocabulary tasks very well.
	I felt close to my classmates when I work in pairs/ groups with them.
	I found doing vocabulary tasks in pairs/ groups enjoyable.

	I would like to work with my classmates more often.
	I could express my ideas when working with my friends.
	I work hard to complete vocabulary tasks.
	Learners' reasons for choosing task-based vocabulary instruction
	TBVI helps me get higher scores in English tests.
	TBVI helps me with interaction skills.
	TBVI motivates me to learn English.
	TBVI provides a collaborative learning environment.
	TBVI is suitable for high school class.
	Learners' reasons for avoiding task-based vocabulary instruction
	High school students are not used to task-based learning.
	Textbook exercises are not used as TBVI.
	TBVI is somewhat difficult to be implemented in a large class.
	I am not trained to assess my own performance.

Appendix B: Task-Based Lesson Plan (Sample Lesson One)**Topic 1: New ways to learn****Level:** Elementary**Time:** 45'**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- learn new words related to electronic devices
- understand defining and non-defining relative clauses (*who, that, ...*)

Preparation: pictures of smart phones, laptops and tablets; handouts

Stages	Aims	Procedure	Interaction	Time
Pre-task	-Introduce the topic -Identify topic language	- Teacher (T) shows students (Ss) pictures of smart phones, laptops and tablets. - Ss discuss 2 questions, report to class (Activity 1). Ss match the words with their meanings (Activity 2). - T models the pronunciation of new words. Ss repeat.		1 m
			pairs	3m
			groups	3m
			whole class	3m
Task cycle 1	- Ss expose to language and use.	- Ss scan the text and match picture A – C with their uses as learning tools 1 – 6 (activity 3)	groups	4m
Task 1	-Ss scan the text and complete activity 3.	- Ss prepare their answers orally and rehearse saying their matching in sentences. T may help them to express their answers.	groups	2m
Planning 1	-Ss write down their answers	- T invites some pairs to report their answer. T elicits corrective feedback from the whole class. T gives feedback.	whole class	4m
Report 1	-Ss report their answers to class.			
Task cycle 2	- Ss expose to language and use it.	- Ss read the text again to decide whether the statements are True, False or Not given (activity 4).	individually	6m
Task 2	-Ss read the text and complete activity 4.	-T invites some pairs to report their answer. T elicits corrective feedback from the whole class. T gives feedback.	whole class	4m
Report 2	-Ss read out the answers to class.			
Language focus	-Ss analyze and practice language.	- Ss read the conversation again, find sentences containing relative pronouns (activity 5). Teacher may correct their pronunciation.	groups	3m
Analysis	-Ss find relative pronouns, determine their meanings, and decide if the clauses are defining or non-defining clauses. - Ss fill in the gap by using relative pronouns	- Ss discuss the meaning of the relative pronouns in each sentence. - Ss decide if the clauses are defining or non-defining. - Teacher gives feedback. - Ss read each sentence, choose appropriate relative pronoun to fill in (activity 7). - Ss decide to use comma(s) if	groups	2m
			groups	2m
			whole class	1m
Practice 1			individually	3m
			groups	2m

		necessary. - Ss exchange the answers with their friends. Teacher gives feedback.	whole class	3m
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