

**THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**TRUONG THI YEN**

**USING TASK-BASED READING ACTIVITIES TO  
ENHANCE VOCABULARY FOR FRESHMEN AT THE  
COLLEGE OF MECHANICS AND METALLURGY**

**Sử dụng các hoạt động đọc dựa trên nhiệm vụ để  
nâng cao vốn từ vựng cho tân sinh viên trường  
Cao đẳng Cơ khí – Luyện kim**

**M.A. THESIS  
(APPLICATION ORIENTATION)**

**Field: English Linguistics**

**Code: 8220201**

**Supervisor: Nguyễn Thị Việt Nga, Ph.D**

**THAI NGUYEN – 2019**

## **DECLARATION**

I confirm that this is my own research, and that it has not been published or submitted for any other degrees.

Student's signature

Trương Thị Yến

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I am much thankful to all lecturers of Post Graduate Faculty at Thai Nguyen University for giving us useful and precious lectures.

I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Nguyen Thi Viet Nga, my respected supervisor for her precious guidance, critical comments and constructive supervision throughout my research.

I am also indebted to the field workers who were kind enough to tolerate the painstaking task of collecting the data. Then my thanks also sent to my classmates at the Master Course Class who have taken time and trouble to alert me to errors in my thesis and provided me with useful data on which this thesis is based.

I also wish to send my sincere thanks to the teachers and students at the College of Mechanics and Metallurgy, where I taught in order to gather information for my survey questionnaires. Without their help, this study could not have been successful.

Finally, I would like to express special thanks to my husband and family for their support and encouragement while the study was being carried out. For my little experience and knowledge, I would like to receive more useful comments from lectures and others.

## ABSTRACT

Increasing learners' motivation and interest has always been the primary concern of many language teachers. The present study is devoted to examining the comparative effectiveness of task-based reading activities to enhance vocabulary for freshmen at the College of Mechanics and Metallurgy. In order to achieve this objective, theoretical and practical research is carried out. In the theoretical background, the background of vocabulary and relevance to applying task-based reading activities to enhance vocabulary is summarized. An overview of the task-based approach that has been employing in foreign language teaching; especially in improving vocabulary is also introduced in this part. For the purpose of getting teachers' and students' attitude on task-based reading activities to enhance vocabularies as well as frequency using techniques in presenting vocabulary at the College of Mechanics and Metallurgy, the author conducted three research methods namely survey, interview and classroom observation. Accordingly, the study was delivered questionnaires with 40 freshmen, interviewed 01 Head of English division and 03 English teachers and observed 10 English lessons taught by 05 teachers for freshmen at the College of Mechanics and Metallurgy.

After collecting data and analyzing, the study revealed that (1) using task-based reading activities to enhance vocabulary for freshmen at the College of Mechanics and Metallurgy are effective and inspired in motivating students to learn vocabularies; (2) applying this technique can decrease the anxiety of learners and enhance their self-confidence and communication; (3) associated materials were not accessible for applying this technique to promote the implementation of this instruction for teachers and (4) not every teacher utilizes task-based reading operations to improve vocabulary in courses, or the frequency is irregular if it is used.

Based on the outcomes of the study, the thesis strongly recommended that task-based method should be applied in reading activities to enhance vocabulary and there should be cooperation amongst teachers, students and administrators find it comfortable to fulfil their tasks.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	i
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
<b>PART I: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1. Rationale .....	1
2. Aims of the study .....	2
3. Research question.....	2
4. Scope of the study .....	2
5. Structure of the research.....	3
<b>PART 2: DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	4
<b>CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	4
1.1. Theoretical background.....	4
1.1.1. Task-based learning approach.....	4
1.1.2. Types of tasks.....	5
1.1.3. The application of task-based teaching in reading class .....	6
1.1.4. Vocabulary .....	10
1.1.5. Vocabulary acquisition.....	10
1.1.6. Stages in teaching vocabulary .....	11
1.1.7. Techniques in teaching vocabulary .....	12
1.1.8. Freshmen .....	15
1.2. Review of Previous studies .....	15
<b>CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY</b> .....	18
2.2. Research instruments .....	19
2.2.1. The questionnaire .....	19
2.2.2. The interview .....	20
2.2.3. The classroom observation.....	20
2.3. Procedure.....	21
2.3.1. Piloting the questionnaire.....	21

2.3.2. Data collection process .....	21
2.3.3. Procedure of data analysis.....	22
2.4. Data analytical method.....	23
<b>CHAPTER 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	24
3.2. Findings from questionnaires and interviews .....	24
3.2.1. Students' attitude towards vocabulary learning in reading lessons .....	24
3.2.2. Students' assessment on effectiveness of task-based method in enhancing vocabulary .....	35
3.2.3. Teacher's self-assessment about using task-based reading activities to enhance vocabularies.....	37
3.3. Findings from observation .....	38
<b>PART 3: CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>46</b>
1. Main findings .....	46
2. Suggestions .....	46
2.1. For the teachers .....	47
2.2. For the students .....	50
2.3. For the administrators .....	51
3. Limitations and suggestions for further research.....	53
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>59</b>
APPENDIX 1. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES FOR 40 FRESHMEN AT THE COLLEGE OF MECHANICS AND METALLURGY.....	59
APPENDIX 2. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH 03 ENGLISH TEACHERS AT THE COLLEGE OF MECHANICS AND METALLURGY.....	64
APPENDIX 3. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH HEAD OF ENGLISH TEACHER DIVISION AT THE COLLEGE OF MECHANICS AND METALLURGY.....	65
PHỤ LỤC 4. PHIẾU TRƯNG CẦU Ý KIẾN 40 SINH VIÊN NĂM NHẤT TRƯỜNG CAO ĐẲNG CƠ KHÍ – LUYỆN KIM.....	66

APPENDIX 5. PHIẾU PHÒNG VẤN SÂU 03 GIÁO VIÊN TIẾNG ANH CỦA TRƯỜNG CAO ĐẲNG CƠ KHÍ – LUYỆN KIM.....	71
PHỤ LỤC 6. PHIẾU PHÒNG VẤN SÂU TRƯỞNG NHÓM TIẾNG ANH TẠI TRƯỜNG CAO ĐẲNG CƠ KHÍ VÀ LUYỆN KIM.....	72

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Willis's framework of TBL .....	6
Table 3.1: Students' attitude towards the vocabulary teaching method .....	25
Table 3.2: Students' assessments on teachers' teaching vocabularies in reading lessons .....	26
Table 3.3: Students' assessments on teachers' frequencies of using activities in reading classroom to enhance vocabularies .....	27
Table 3.4: Students' assessments on teachers' activities at pre-reading stage .....	28
Table 3.5: Students' assessments on teachers' activities at while-reading stage.....	29
Table 3.6: Students' assessments on teachers' activities at post-reading stage .....	30



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Student's assessment on importance of vocabularies.....	24
Figure 3.2: Students' attitudes to task-based reading activities to enhance vocabularies.....	32
Figure 3.3: Students' attitudes towards teachers' frequent using techniques in presenting vocabulary .....	32
Figure 3.4: Students' attitudes towards teachers' frequent using techniques in practicing vocabulary .....	34
Figure 3.5: Students' attitudes towards teachers' frequent using techniques in revising vocabulary .....	35
Figure 3.6: Benefits of using TBL in reading class to enhance vocabulary .....	36

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale**

In this context, in order to compete in a free-flowing labour market, fluency in English is one of the most significant advantages for people of all ages to communicate and create opportunities for integration. Therefore, in addition to professional knowledge, each person needs to equip themselves with good communication skills in English to access employment opportunities in the global environment. Similar to other non-native English speaking countries in the world, Vietnam increasingly puts importance on English as it is introduced into the school environment as a compulsory subject. Of which, vocabulary is one of the factors that play a very important role. It can be said that if we consider learning English as building a house, the vocabulary is to build the foundation for that house. Vocabulary is an element that combines the four abilities to speak, listen, read and write. Vocabulary knowledge is often considered an important factor in understanding the language and the number of words collected is closely related to the use of competent language. The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) identified vocabulary as one of five major components of reading. Its importance to overall school success and more specifically to reading comprehension is widely documented (Baker, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 1998; Anderson & Nagy, 1991).

The research object in this study is freshmen at the College of Mechanics and Metallurgy who are not specialized in English. For them, English is a compulsory subject at school. Freshmen in the non-English major schools such as the College of Mechanics and Metallurgy are facing difficulties in learning vocabulary due to lack of experience and fluency on communicating and using vocabulary in English speaking and writing. They tend to use simple words instead of what they have learned. In addition, the use of vocabulary is also an essential issue for evaluating the quality of an article. In writing skills, students often find it difficult to choose words that are both accurate and logical. Many of them shared that they are afraid of speaking English and face a lot of difficulties in writing examinations because of lacking vocabulary. Also, they have not found out an effective way to learn vocabulary.