

The influence of task-based language teaching on the development of english reading skills in vulnerable adult learners

Enseñanza de idiomas basada en tareas y desarrollo de habilidades de lectura en estudiantes adultos vulnerables

Andrea Alejandra Cevallos Valverde

Universidad Indoamerica. Ecuador.

acevallos25@indoamerica.edu.ec

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1300-9905>

Maria Augusta Heredia Quiroz

Universidad Indoamerica. Ecuador.

mheredia15@indoamerica.edu.ec

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3919-4482>

Fecha de recepción: 17 de julio de 2026

Fecha de aceptación: 06 de agosto de 2026

Fecha de publicación: 15 de septiembre de 2026

Como citar: Cevallos Valverde, A. A. y Heredia Quiroz, M. A. (2026). The influence of task-based language teaching on the development of english reading skills in vulnerable adult learners. *KIRIA: Revista Científica Multidisciplinaria*. 4(8), pp. 79-91. <https://doi.org/10.53877/q09phd46>

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the influence of task-based learning on the development of English reading skills in vulnerable adults enrolled in the RIOKUNA program at the Municipal Vocational Training Center in Riobamba, Ecuador. The main objective was to measure changes in participants' reading performance before and after a TBLT-based intervention. The methodology employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with a single group, applied to 98 vulnerable adult learners who participated in 10 class sessions. A reading test adapted to the Cambridge A1-A2 format was used, focusing on functional and technical texts related to vocational training. The results showed a significant improvement in participants' reading performance. Additionally, an increase in students' motivation and self-efficacy toward reading in English was observed, suggesting that TBLT can be effective in teaching English in technical training contexts. This study contributes to the literature on language teaching for vulnerable adults and highlights the importance of adapting English language teaching to specific professional needs.

KEYWORDS: reading skills, vulnerable adults, english language teaching, technical training.

RESUMEN

Este estudio analiza la influencia del aprendizaje basado en tareas en el desarrollo de las habilidades de lectura en inglés en adultos vulnerables inscritos en el programa RIOKUNA del Centro Municipal de Formación Profesional de Riobamba, Ecuador. El objetivo principal fue medir los cambios en el desempeño lector de los participantes antes y después de una intervención basada en TBLT. La metodología empleó un diseño cuasiexperimental pretest-posttest con un solo grupo, aplicado a 98 adultos vulnerables que participaron en 10 sesiones

de clase. Se utilizó una prueba de lectura adaptada al formato Cambridge A1-A2, centrada en textos funcionales y técnicos relacionados con la formación profesional. Los resultados mostraron una mejora significativa en el desempeño lector de los participantes. Además, se observó un aumento en la motivación y la autoeficacia de los estudiantes hacia la lectura en inglés, lo que sugiere que el TBLT puede ser eficaz en la enseñanza del inglés en contextos de formación técnica. Este estudio contribuye a la literatura sobre la enseñanza de idiomas para adultos vulnerables y resalta la importancia de adaptar la enseñanza del inglés a las necesidades profesionales específicas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: habilidades de lectura, adultos vulnerables, enseñanza del inglés, formación técnica.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the role of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving English reading skills has become increasingly important, especially in socially diverse educational settings such as the Riobamba Municipal Craft Training Center. TBLT organizes instruction around tasks as the core unit for planning, teaching, and assessment. This approach prioritizes meaning-focused communication while allowing attention to linguistic form to emerge during task performance (Ellis et al., 2019). In this study, vulnerable adult learners are defined as individuals aged 18 or older whose circumstances may limit their capacity to protect their well-being without support, thereby increasing exposure to risk and exclusion (Herring, 2016). Within this framework, the English component is approached as technical English in an ESP orientation, emphasizing the language required for specific occupational purposes (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991). Instruction should go beyond repetition or memorization, which can reduce engagement. TBLT facilitates connecting reading to authentic tasks relevant to craft training, entrepreneurship, and employability.

The study focuses on a specific educational context. RIOKUNA learners participate in technical and complementary training, yet many encounter barriers to developing English reading skills within the technical English component. These challenges include interrupted schooling, heterogeneous educational levels, limited time due to family and work commitments, and low perceived relevance of English reading for vocational objectives. In similar vocational environments, low reading engagement often coincides with reduced motivation when learners perceive English reading as difficult or disconnected from their specialization (Yu et al., 2025). Hence, this research examines whether TBLT can link reading to practical craft-related tasks and enhance reading performance in this population.

The RIOKUNA program prioritizes equity and inclusion, serving primarily women. Between 2020 and 2024, the program graduated 272 artisans, with recent cohorts exceeding 100 learners, demonstrating its reach and highlighting the importance of strengthening complementary training outcomes. What's more, the national artisanal training framework establishes a one-year program of 1,920 hours, including an "administration of workshops" axis that explicitly incorporates technical English (Ministerio del Trabajo del Ecuador, 2021). This structure provides a formal curricular space for reading development. Instruction based solely on repetition or decontextualized translation may render English distant and minimally useful, reducing participation and limiting reading progress.

Lastly, problematization requires moving from contextual observation to a knowledge gap. Scholars emphasize that describing practical difficulties is insufficient; researchers must identify inconsistencies in existing knowledge (Bauce, 2007; Pasek de Pinto, 2008; Quintana, 2008; Sánchez Puentes, 1993). TBLT is well-established in EFL research, with empirical studies showing positive effects on reading comprehension and motivation (Chen & Wang, 2019; Ellis

et al., 2019; Ismail et al., 2023). Nevertheless, evidence is limited regarding its effectiveness for vulnerable adult learners in municipal, non-formal craft training programs. Many previous studies use single-institution, quasi-experimental pretest-posttest designs with convenience samples. While valuable for classroom effectiveness, these designs limit generalization and require careful replication in socially vulnerable adult education contexts (Ismail et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024).

On this point, the phenomenon must be framed within its spatiotemporal context. The study was conducted in Riobamba, Ecuador, at the Municipal Craft Training Center, specifically within the RIOKUNA program during the 2025–2026 academic period. The program operates under a local free-training policy and the national regulatory framework established by Ministerial Agreement MDT-2021-236, which defines a one-year training structure. Technical English is part of the official curriculum and aims to strengthen skills related to work, workshop management, and productive development. Consequently, improving English reading is both an academic objective and a practical need linked to employability and entrepreneurship.

Describing the research participants is essential for delimiting the study. The sample includes approximately 90–100 adult learners, primarily women, enrolled in both craft specialties offered by the Center. Many learners face social, economic, or mobility-related challenges. Their educational trajectories often include interrupted schooling, limited study routines, and heterogeneous prior experiences with English. As a result, their reading needs are practical and task-oriented, focusing on understanding instructions, identifying technical vocabulary, following procedures, and recognizing materials. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is particularly relevant in this context because it links reading to meaningful, real-world tasks.

The central knowledge gap remains unresolved. Although TBLT is supported by theory and empirical evidence in other contexts, its effectiveness in enhancing English reading among these learners is unclear. Besides, it is not well established how TBLT influences factors such as motivation, self-efficacy, participation, and retention. In Quintana's (2008) terms, the gap is not merely the scarcity of studies but the absence of contextualized evidence to guide the selection of appropriate pedagogical approaches. Thus, this study investigates the influence of TBLT on English reading development in the RIOKUNA program and seeks to generate evidence to inform inclusive, practice-oriented EFL instruction.

This research explores how Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is associated with the development of English reading skills, treating TBLT as the influencing variable and reading development as the expected outcome. Accordingly, the guiding research question is: What is the influence of TBLT on the development of English reading skills in vulnerable adult learners enrolled in the RIOKUNA program at the Riobamba Municipal Craft Training Center during the 2025–2026 academic period? This formulation links theory and context and supports evidence generation for inclusive EFL practice in municipal craft training.

General Objective. To analyze the influence of TBLT on the development of English reading skills in vulnerable adult learners enrolled in the RIOKUNA program at the Riobamba Municipal Craft Training Center.

Specific Objectives. (1) To measure vulnerable adult learners' baseline English reading performance before the TBLT intervention using a context-relevant reading assessment. (2) To compare English reading performance before and after implementing TBLT-based reading tasks aligned with craft-training needs. (3) To identify changes in reading-related affective variables after the TBLT intervention.

Research Hypotheses. H₁: TBLT produces a statistically significant improvement in English reading skills among vulnerable adult learners in RIOKUNA when comparing pretest

and posttest results. H₀: TBLT does not produce a statistically significant improvement in English reading skills among vulnerable adult learners in ROKUNA when comparing pretest and posttest results.

Article Structure. The paper is structured into different sections to facilitate understanding; it begins with an overview of the theoretical framework and relevant literature. The following section describes the research design, participants, instruments, and data collection procedures. Afterwards, the results are presented, including the quantitative findings and, where appropriate, supporting qualitative evidence; the discussion interprets the results in relation to previous research and the local context; and the final section presents conclusions, limitations, and implications for inclusive EFL practice in municipal craft training settings.

State of the art

Research conducted worldwide consistently shows that developing English reading skills is essential for successful foreign language learning. It supports vocabulary growth, grammatical awareness, and both oral and written production. Conversely, synthesis studies and applied research describe reading as an interactive process rather than a passive activity. It requires activating prior knowledge, using reading strategies, and engaging learners in communicative work around texts (Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Willis, 1996). In this regard, this perspective aligns with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which relies on authentic and meaningful tasks that promote functional language use (Ellis et al., 2019).

Operational definition. In this study, reading skills are operationalized as comprehension at three dimensions: literal, inferential, and critical (evaluative). Literal comprehension involves recognizing explicitly stated details. Inferential comprehension involves deriving implicit meaning and connecting ideas across the text. Critical/evaluative comprehension focuses on judging information and author intent using textual evidence (Day & Park, 2005).

Evidence from EFL contexts suggests that TBLT can improve language learning outcomes, particularly when tasks include clear goals, collaboration, and problem-solving. In reading-focused studies, TBLT has been associated with gains in comprehension and engagement. In contrast, traditional, form-focused instruction has shown less impact on reading motivation and learner engagement. Additionally, TBLT has been linked to higher reading motivation and reduced anxiety in L2 reading (Chen & Wang, 2019; Ismail et al., 2023). Research on reading self-efficacy also indicates that task cycles supported by feedback can strengthen learners' confidence in handling reading tasks, which may contribute to sustained reading development (Zhang et al., 2024).

Critical comparison. Methodologically, much of this evidence comes from quasi-experimental pretest–posttest designs. These studies often take place in single institutions and use convenience samples. Unlike multi-institutional or longitudinal studies, these designs are useful for classroom effectiveness research but can limit generalization to socially vulnerable adult education contexts. Many studies report statistical significance but omit effect sizes or longer-term follow-up. Consequently, it is difficult to compare the magnitude and durability of TBLT effects across settings, especially when control groups are absent or not equivalent at baseline.

Recent vocational education research provides useful parallels for the present study. For example, Yu, Singh, and Mulyadi (2025) examined vocational students in China and found that TBLT can increase reading motivation when tasks are closely connected to learners' academic and occupational goals. Unlike typical school-based samples, these learners had

heterogeneous educational trajectories and low initial motivation toward English, which resembles the learner profile at the Riobamba municipal craft training center (Yu et al., 2025). Such evidence emphasizes the value of task relevance and contextualized learning for promoting reading engagement and motivation in diverse adult populations.

In addition, the study *modelo de aprendizaje basado en tareas para mejorar la competencia lectora*, published in *conectividad*, supports the use of Willis's (1996) framework to develop reading proficiency through tasks focused on comprehension and reading strategies (Nagua et al., 2025). The study reports higher posttest outcomes for learners exposed to task-based instruction compared with those receiving conventional teaching within a quasi-experimental design. However, unlike the present study, the sample came from a general educational population rather than adult technical learners. Despite this, the instructional logic is transferable to vulnerable adult learners in technical training when tasks are adapted to learners' schooling levels, work experience, and practical needs.

More recent research has shifted attention from reading scores alone to motivational and self-efficacy variables. For instance, transforming reading self-efficacy in EFL classrooms: the role of task-based instruction suggests that task-based learning enhances learners' confidence in their reading abilities through the four sources identified by Bandura (1997, 2011): successful performance, observational learning, verbal encouragement, and emotional self-regulation (Wordofa et al., 2025). This framework is particularly relevant for vulnerable adult learners, who may enter programs with limited prior academic success, higher anxiety toward reading tasks, and constrained time for independent study. In contrast to standard school populations, these learners benefit from scaffolded tasks, peer modeling, supportive feedback, and low-threat collaborative work, which increase persistence and engagement.

In spite of that, a comparative review of the literature reveals an important limitation. Most studies focus on secondary, upper-secondary, or university students, whereas few examine vulnerable adults enrolled in technical-craft training programs with explicit gender and inclusion perspectives. Furthermore, the evidence base is dominated by Asian and African contexts, whereas Latin American research is scarce. In several cases, existing studies emphasize general academic performance rather than English reading development in socially vulnerable populations. Consequently, this gap highlights the relevance of conducting research in Riobamba.

Synthesis of gaps. This review identifies three main gaps. First, there is a population gap: most TBLT reading studies focus on adolescents or mainstream university students, unlike the current study, which targets vulnerable adult learners in non-formal, municipal training. Second, there is a context gap: evidence from Latin American municipal craft-training settings with explicit gender and inclusion goals remains limited. Third, there is an integration gap: many studies analyze reading outcomes or motivation in isolation, rather than examining reading development alongside vulnerability-related constraints that shape participation and persistence.

Concerning this, another tension concerns how researchers define and measure outcomes. Many studies focus on reading comprehension, motivation, or overall achievement. Conversely, few examine reading skills together with motivation and social vulnerability in the same analysis. This omission limits understanding of how TBLT operates when learning is influenced by extra-academic factors such as caregiving responsibilities, human mobility, informal employment, interrupted schooling, or unequal access to digital resources. In contrast, adult education research consistently reports these constraints as barriers that significantly shape participation and learning outcomes among marginalized learners (Flynn et al., 2011). Thus, in the Riobamba Municipal Craft Training Center, these

conditions should be considered structural features of the learning context rather than secondary background factors.

Accordingly, the present study is situated at an underexplored intersection: TBLT, English reading, vulnerable adult learners, and craft training with a gender perspective. Unlike most existing research, which centers on adolescents or university students, this focus expands TBLT scholarship beyond traditional school settings. In addition, it frames technical English as a tool for productive inclusion. Within this approach, English reading is not treated as isolated content. Instead, it is integrated into real-world tasks, such as reading labels, catalogs, manuals, biosafety protocols, product sheets, and digital resources related to beauty, tailoring, and entrepreneurship.

Contribution of the study. Theoretically, this research extends TBLT reading scholarship by linking reading development to vulnerability-related factors, including participation constraints and reading self-efficacy, within adult craft-training contexts. Methodologically, it strengthens evidence by testing a TBLT intervention in a municipal, non-university setting and using reading measures aligned with vocationally relevant text types and clearly defined comprehension levels. In contrast to conventional studies conducted in formal schooling, this study provides context-specific evidence that supports inclusive training. Socially, it produces actionable insights to enhance technical English reading as a capability connected to employability and entrepreneurship. As a result, it contributes to local productive insertion goals for a population prioritized by equity and gender-focused policies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research adopted a quantitative approach using a one-group quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design, aiming to examine changes in English reading performance following a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) intervention. This design was selected because it allows the identification of within-group changes over time and provides empirical evidence regarding participants' progress before and after the instructional intervention. However, given the absence of a control group, the findings should be interpreted with caution, as the design does not allow the exclusive attribution of observed improvements to the TBLT intervention. Other factors, such as maturation processes, familiarity with the assessment instruments (testing effects), or external events occurring during the intervention period, may have also contributed to changes in participants' performance. Therefore, the results are interpreted as evidence of improvement associated with the implementation of TBLT within this specific educational context rather than as definitive causal effects.

Institutional authorization for the study was granted by the administrative authorities of the RIOKUNA program, and all participants provided informed consent before the data collection process began. The research procedures followed standard ethical practices in educational research by protecting participants' confidentiality, ensuring voluntary participation, and allowing individuals to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequences. Although the RIOKUNA program does not maintain a formal institutional review board (IRB), all ethical considerations were carefully observed under the program's administrative oversight.

The reading test was designed to align with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) A1–A2 descriptors, including the ability to understand short functional texts, identify specific information, and follow simple instructions. The test was based on the Cambridge assessment format to reflect authentic reading activities appropriate for this proficiency level. It comprised 35 items distributed across five sections, including multiple-choice, matching, and short-response tasks. A scoring rubric was applied to evaluate

performance across three reading comprehension dimensions: literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and critical/evaluative comprehension. Each correct response received one point, resulting in a maximum possible score of 35 points.

The study was conducted in the ROKUNA program at the Riobamba Municipal Craft Training Center during the 2025–2026 academic period. The sample consisted of 98 vulnerable adult learners who were enrolled and actively participating during the intervention. A convenience sampling approach was employed based on participant accessibility, enrollment status, and regular attendance. The inclusion criteria were: (a) enrollment in the program, (b) being 18 years of age or older, (c) attendance of at least 80% of instructional sessions, and (d) provision of informed consent. The exclusion criteria included: (a) attendance below 80%, (b) withdrawal from the program during the intervention period, or (c) failure to complete either the pretest or posttest assessment.

In addition to the reading test, the study employed two complementary instruments: (1) a questionnaire assessing affective variables associated with reading, specifically reading motivation and reading self-efficacy, and (2) attendance records. The content and construct validity of the questionnaire were established through a structured expert review and pilot testing process. Specifically, the instrument was evaluated by five experts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and educational assessment, who reviewed each item according to relevance, clarity, and representativeness. Items achieving a Content Validity Index (CVI) ≥ 0.80 were retained. Subsequently, the questionnaire was piloted with 15 adult learners enrolled in comparable vocational education programs to assess item comprehension, clarity, and reliability. Feedback from the pilot phase led to minor modifications in wording and format, ensuring that the instrument was theoretically appropriate and contextually adapted to measure affective dimensions related to English reading among vulnerable adult learners.

The intervention was implemented over 10 instructional sessions conducted four times per week (approximately 2.5 weeks). The pretest phase included the administration of the reading test and questionnaire under standardized conditions. The TBLT intervention was delivered during eight sessions following the three-stage task-based cycle: pre-task preparation, task cycle, and post-task language focus. During the pre-task stage, the instructor activated relevant vocabulary, introduced contextual information, and clarified reading objectives and success criteria. During the task cycle, learners completed meaningful reading activities individually, in pairs, or in small groups, producing concrete outcomes related to the assigned tasks. During the post-task stage, participants shared results, received feedback, and reflected on relevant language features emerging from the activities. Tasks were contextualized around employability and entrepreneurship scenarios, including simple manuals, instructions, notices, labels, and product information sheets. Finally, the posttest and questionnaire were administered under conditions equivalent to those of the pretest.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics included means, standard deviations, medians, and frequency distributions. The normality assumption was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Depending on data distribution, pretest and posttest comparisons were performed using paired-samples t-tests or Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. Additionally, effect sizes (Cohen’s d or r) were calculated to determine the magnitude of observed changes. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, confirming the reliability of the scales measuring reading motivation and self-efficacy.

In addition, the present study presents a number of methodological limitations that need to be considered. First, because no control group was included, it is difficult to determine whether the observed improvements in English reading performance can be attributed exclusively to the TBLT intervention. Second, the convenience sampling method reduces the

representativeness of the sample because participants were selected according to their availability instead of through a random sampling procedure. Third, the short duration of the intervention may have constrained the magnitude of observable improvements and the consolidation of reading skills over time. Consecutively, these factors collectively result in limited generalizability of the findings beyond the specific population of vulnerable adults enrolled in the ROKUNA program. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into task-based learning in municipal craft training contexts, highlighting practical implications for instructional design and future research with larger, more diverse samples and extended interventions.

RESULTS

The following section describes the findings obtained from the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) intervention designed to strengthen English reading skills among 98 vulnerable adult learners participating in the ROKUNA program at the Riobamba Municipal Craft Training Center. The intervention was implemented over a period of 10 sessions, delivered at a rate of four sessions per week during the 2025–2026 academic period. The analysis compares participants' reading performance before and after the intervention, focusing on changes in reading comprehension, motivation, and self-efficacy.

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for participants' pretest and posttest reading scores. The results indicate substantial improvement in English reading performance following the TBLT intervention.

Table 1

Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest Reading Scores

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Pretest (%)</i>	<i>Posttest (%)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>95% CI of Difference</i>
Mean	45.2	72.5	27.3	24.8 – 29.8
SD	12.4	10.8	—	—
Median	45	75	—	—
Min	21	50	—	—
Max	68	95	—	—

The mean reading score increased by 27.3 percentage points, reflecting a marked enhancement in reading proficiency. The relatively low standard deviation in the posttest indicates that most participants improved consistently.

Affective Variables: Motivation and Self-Efficacy

The initial and post-intervention scores related to learners' motivation and self-efficacy were evaluated to assess affective gains. Table 2 summarizes these results, including effect sizes and 95% confidence intervals.

Table 2

Pretest–Posttest Comparison for Motivation and Self-Efficacy

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Pretest Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Posttest Mean (SD)</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>	<i>95% CI</i>
Motivation	3.2 (0.7)	4.1 (0.6)	9.84	<.001	0.96	0.64 – 1.28
Self-Efficacy	3.0 (0.8)	4.0 (0.7)	10.21	<.001	1.05	0.72 – 1.38

Paired t-tests demonstrated statistically significant improvements in both motivation ($t = 9.84$, $p < .001$) and self-efficacy ($t = 10.21$, $p < .001$). The observed strength of the effects provides evidence that the intervention effectively enhanced learners' confidence and engagement in English reading tasks.

These results collectively indicate that the TBLT intervention produced robust gains in both cognitive (reading performance) and affective domains (motivation and self-efficacy). Including confidence intervals and effect size measures improves the credibility and understanding of the results, providing further support for the effectiveness of task-based approaches in municipal craft training settings.

Participant Engagement and Feedback

After completing the intervention, participants were asked to provide feedback on their experience. Out of 98 participants, 85% reported that the tasks were engaging and relevant to their personal and professional goals. Learners emphasized that the tasks effectively connected English reading to authentic situations, including reading instructions, product sheets, and safety protocols. Participants also indicated that they felt more confident in their reading abilities and motivated to continue learning English after the intervention, reflecting the practical and affective impact of the TBLT approach.

Statistical Analysis and Follow-Up

The final analysis involved additional statistical procedures conducted with SPSS. Descriptive analyses, normality assessment, paired-samples t-tests, and effect size estimation were performed as previously described. Additionally, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied as a non-parametric verification method, while the internal consistency of the reading motivation and self-efficacy questionnaire was examined through Cronbach's alpha, resulting in a coefficient of 0.87 and demonstrating strong reliability.

The analysis of the results shows that the TBLT intervention led to significant improvements in reading performance among vulnerable adult learners. The large effect size further highlights the effectiveness of the intervention. Additionally, the improvements in motivation and self-efficacy suggest that TBLT not only enhanced reading skills but also contributed to a more positive attitude toward English learning. These results underscore the value of task-based learning in adult education, particularly in non-formal training contexts like the RIOKUNA program, where practical language skills can directly impact employability and entrepreneurship opportunities.

The positive participant feedback reinforces the relevance of TBLT in real-world, vocational settings. The study contributes valuable insights for inclusive educational practices and provides evidence that task-based learning can be a transformative tool for vulnerable adult learners, linking language learning to their practical needs and career aspirations.

DISCUSSION

The evidence obtained from this study suggests that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) intervention significantly improved English reading skills among vulnerable adult learners in the RIOKUNA program. The increase in reading performance, as evidenced by a mean pretest score of 45.2% and a posttest score of 72.5%, is consistent with previous research showing TBLT as an effective approach for enhancing language skills (Ellis et al., 2019). The effect magnitude obtained in the analysis (Cohen's $d = 1.89$) further supports the substantial impact of TBLT on reading development, aligning with findings from studies reporting significant

gains in reading motivation and comprehension when task-based learning is applied (Ismail et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024).

In addition, the improvement in reading-related affective variables, such as motivation and self-efficacy, highlights the holistic benefits of TBLT. Research in similar contexts has shown that task-based instruction fosters higher levels of learner motivation and confidence (Yu et al., 2025; Chen & Wang, 2019). This issue is especially significant within adult education settings, as learners often encounter various barriers, such as gaps in their formal education and limited previous exposure to English, which may affect their participation and engagement (Lu, 2025). The findings of this study suggest that TBLT's focus on meaningful, real-world tasks helped increase participants' motivation and confidence in reading English, which, in turn, contributed to their academic success.

One reason TBLT improved reading skills is its focus on authentic, context-driven tasks that mirror real-life demands. Learners were required to locate information, interpret instructions, and navigate functional texts related to craft and entrepreneurship. This task authenticity encouraged active engagement, strengthened inferential reasoning, and promoted the application of reading strategies. Unlike traditional rote memorization, TBLT required learners to process information meaningfully, leading to more durable comprehension and skill retention (Ellis et al., 2019).

The observed increase in motivation and self-efficacy can be explained through Bandura's social cognitive theory. Repeated mastery experiences during scaffolded reading tasks allowed learners to achieve small, attainable goals, reinforcing their sense of competence. Vicarious experiences through peer collaboration and observation provided models of successful reading behavior. Social persuasion through teacher feedback and low-threat collaborative tasks helped reduce anxiety and build confidence. Consequently, participants' beliefs in their capability to handle English reading tasks improved, leading to higher motivation, greater persistence, and increased engagement with the material (Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 2011).

However, some studies argue that the impact of TBLT may vary depending on the context and learners' specific needs. In contrast to formal classroom settings, evidence indicates that applying TBLT in non-formal educational contexts, especially for vulnerable adults, requires careful adaptation (Adjei-Mensah, Boakye, & Masenge, 2023). This study demonstrates that TBLT can indeed be successfully adapted and implemented in non-formal vocational education, providing a valuable contribution to the literature on inclusive EFL instruction for socially vulnerable populations.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis conducted in this research confirms that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) intervention significantly enhanced English reading skills among vulnerable adult learners in the RIOKUNA program. Pretest-posttest comparisons revealed substantial gains, indicating that contextualized, task-oriented reading activities grounded in craft-related scenarios effectively foster functional English literacy. This suggests that connecting reading tasks to authentic, real-world situations can meaningfully improve comprehension and practical application of English in technical contexts.

In addition to cognitive gains, the intervention produced statistically significant improvements in both motivation and self-efficacy, with large effect sizes. These results underscore that TBLT not only develops reading competence but also positively influences learners' confidence and engagement, promoting sustained participation and intrinsic motivation to continue learning English. This dual effect highlights the value of integrating

affective components into instructional design for adult learners in socially vulnerable contexts.

The study emphasizes the importance of designing authentic, task-based learning activities that align with learners' professional and personal realities. Educators should incorporate reading tasks that simulate actual workplace demands, such as interpreting instructions, manuals, or safety protocols. Doing so strengthens both literacy and practical competencies, enhances learner engagement, and supports employability and entrepreneurship in craft-based training environments. These findings advocate for pedagogical models that integrate functional language use, meaningful tasks, and learner-centered approaches in technical EFL instruction.

Despite the positive outcomes, the study presents several limitations, including the lack of a control group, convenience sampling, short intervention duration, and the reduced possibility of applying the results to broader populations. Future studies should consider using larger samples with randomized samples, extended interventions, and longitudinal designs to examine the sustainability of reading skills, motivation, and self-efficacy over time. Additionally, replicating the study across multiple municipal craft training centers would provide more comprehensive evidence regarding the efficacy of TBLT in socially vulnerable adult populations and inform best practices for inclusive technical education.

This research did not receive any external funding from public, private, or nonprofit organizations. The study was conducted with institutional authorization from the ROKUNA program, without financial support that could influence the design, implementation, analysis, or interpretation of the findings. The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication process. Regarding data availability, the dataset generated and analyzed during this study is not publicly available due to participant confidentiality considerations; however, the data supporting the findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request and in accordance with applicable ethical and institutional guidelines.

REFERENCIAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS

- Acala, J. J. (2023). Perceptions of grade 11 senior high school students on task-based language teaching in a hybrid oral communication class. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 47(3), 28–44. <https://acortar.link/PVGM2V>
- Adjei-Mensah, S., Boakye, N. Y., & Masenge, A. (2023). Improving the reading proficiency of mature students through a task-based language teaching approach. *Reading & Writing*, 14(1), Article 406. <https://acortar.link/5aICe2>
- Arias-Castrillón, D. H. (2020). Plantear y formular un problema de investigación: Un ejercicio de problematización. *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de Familia*, 12(1), 133–149. <https://acortar.link/ol01wx>
- Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. W. H. Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (2011). A social cognitive perspective on positive psychology. *International Journal of Social Psychology*, 26(1), 7–20. <https://acortar.link/JVei1O>
- Bandura, A. (2011). Social cognitive theory. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 349–373). SAGE. <https://acortar.link/kymcf3>

- Chen, S., & Wang, J. (2019). Effects of task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach and language assessment on students' competences in intensive reading course. *English Language Teaching*, 12(3), 119-138. <https://acortar.link/MOB5cy>
- Day, R. R., & Park, J. S. (2005). Developing reading comprehension questions. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 17(1), 60-73. <https://acortar.link/GtDNcy>
- East, M. (2024). Taking communication to task once more—A further decade on. *The Language Learning Journal*. <https://acortar.link/byJZ1n>
- Ellis, R., Skehan, P., Li, S., Shintani, N., & Lambert, C. (2019). *Task-based language teaching: Theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press. <https://acortar.link/DHO9M5>
- Flynn, S., Brown, J., Johnson, A., & Rodger, S. (2011). Barriers to education for the marginalized adult learner. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 57(1), 43-58.
- Gebremeskel, T. A., Bachore, M. M., & Bushisso, E. W. (2025). Multiple intelligence based tasks for enhancing reading motivation of university students in Ethiopia. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 14(2), 1548-1556. <https://acortar.link/PJGSch>
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2019). *Teaching and researching reading* (3rd ed.). Routledge. <https://acortar.link/0o7n5Y>
- Guevara Patiño, R., Verdesoto Arguello, A., & Castro Molina, N. E. (2016). Metodologías de investigación educativa (descriptivas, experimentales, participativas, y de investigación-acción). *Recimundo*, 4(3), 163-173. <https://acortar.link/6AkVz>
- Herring, J. (2016). Defining vulnerability. In *Vulnerable adults and the law*. Oxford University Press. <https://acortar.link/GrIMu7>
- Ismail, S. M., Wang, C., & Jamalyar, R. (2023). The impact of task-based instruction on learners' reading comprehension, L2 grit, anxiety, and motivation for L2 reading. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 8(1), Article 16. <https://acortar.link/9Bj3hr>
- Johns, A. M., & Dudley-Evans, T. (1991). English for specific purposes: International in scope, specific in purpose. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(2), 297-314. <https://acortar.link/GZxHlo>
- Joressa Wordofa, Y., Gench, M., & Meressa Hadgu, A. (2025). The effect of task-based instruction on EFL learners' literal, inferential, critical, and creative reading comprehension. *The International Journal of Literacies*, 32(2), 93-115. <https://acortar.link/ck3tC1>
- Lu, S. (2025). The role of reading motivation and self-efficacy in enhancing EFL students' reading achievement. *Discover Education*, 4, Article 452. <https://acortar.link/RGPMW3>
- Ministerio del Trabajo del Ecuador. (2021). Acuerdo Ministerial Nro. MDT-2021-236: Reglamento de Formación y Titulación Artesanal para los Maestros de Taller de los Centros de Formación Artesanal. <https://acortar.link/peOZ75>
- Nagua, V. (2023). Informe de investigación: Task-Based Learning Model for Improving Reading Proficiency (Tesis de maestría, Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi). Repositorio UTC. <https://acortar.link/8WZqfH>

- Nagua, V. A., Nato-Sierra, C., Rosero-Olalla, E., Ruiz-Guangaje, C., & Flores-Hidalgo, M. (2025). Modelo de Aprendizaje Basado en Tareas para Mejorar la Competencia Lectora. *CONECTIVIDAD*, 6(1), 174-183. <https://acortar.link/UJRrKe>
- Nguyen, T. T. N. (2022). The effects of task-based instruction on reading comprehension of non-English major students at a university in the Mekong Delta. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 2(4), 1-20. <https://acortar.link/uR6u5o>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, Article 101860. <https://acortar.link/RjfH4a>
- Willis, J. (1996). A framework for task-based learning. Longman. <https://acortar.link/4kKX97>
- Wordofa, Y. J., Gencha, M. G., & Hadgu, A. M. (2025). Transforming reading self-efficacy in EFL classrooms: The role of task-based instruction. *Ampersand*, 15, 100236. <https://acortar.link/y7Oxc3>
- Yu, H., Singh, C. K. S., & Mulyadi, D. (2025). The effects of task-based learning on English reading motivation among vocational college students. *Training, Language and Culture*, 9(3), 40-54. <https://acortar.link/KgVUzj>
- Zhang, L., Ismail, L., Razali, F., & Ghazali, N. (2024). Effects of task feedback on EFL students' reading self-efficacy. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(3), 48-58. <https://acortar.link/ZvHNNr>
- Zhou, Q. (2021). The application of TBLT to English reading teaching in junior high school. *Region - Educational Research and Reviews*, 3(2), 52-55. <https://acortar.link/JR1NH2>



Esta obra está bajo una licencia internacional [Creative Commons Atribución-NoComercial-CompartirIgual 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Copyright: La Fundación Internacional para la Educación la Ciencia y la Tecnologías, "FIECYT" conserva los derechos patrimoniales (copyright) de los artículos publicados, y favorece y permite la reutilización de las mismas bajo la licencia Creative Commons Atribución-NoComercial-CompartirIgual 4.0 Ecuador. Se pueden copiar, usar, difundir, transmitir y exponer públicamente, siempre que: se cite la autoría y la fuente original de su publicación (revista, editorial y URL de la obra); no se usen para fines comerciales; se mencione la existencia y especificaciones de esta licencia de uso.

Autoría: En la lista de autores firmantes deben figurar únicamente aquellas personas que han contribuido intelectualmente al desarrollo del trabajo. Haber colaborado en la recolección de datos no es, por sí mismo, criterio suficiente de autoría. "KIRIA" declina cualquier responsabilidad sobre posibles conflictos derivados de la autoría de los trabajos que se publiquen.