

# Enhancement of Learners' Receptive Skills through Task-Based Activities to Understand the Eco-Centric Issues Using Wall-E

R Thanya<sup>1</sup>, & Suganthan C<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of English, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India

Correspondence: Suganthan C, Assistant Professor, Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India.

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## Abstract

Animation films inspired by eco-centric ideas, such as green studies, pave the way for learners to explore the problems caused by humans to nature, such as air pollution, deforestation, climate change, and trash pollution. On the other hand, animated movies also help to motivate and develop learners reading and listening skills. This study focuses on developing learners' receptive skills using the eco-centric theme-based animation movie "Wall-E" through task-based activities (TBA). TBA is a technique that helps students prepare themselves by having participants evaluate their goals for listening, understanding information, and developing their language needs. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of understanding the eco-theme in the animation movie Wall-E and to enhance learners receptive skills using TBA. A pre-experimental study was carried out with a one-group pre-test and post-test. The study samples were selected using purposive sampling. Initially, a pre-questionnaire was circulated to 103 participants with Arts backgrounds to test their language proficiency and understanding of eco-centric ideas. Based on the results obtained from the pre-questionnaire, 36 participants were subjected to a pre-test, after which activities were given using TBA during tasks or task cycles, language focus, and finally a post-test. Each activity focuses on reading and listening tasks to develop the learners' comprehension, thereby promoting and understanding ecological issues from the movie. The result of the study shows that there is a gradual improvement in the mean score between the paired-t test of pre-test and post-test, which is ( $t [36] = 6.13889, P < 0.001$ ), the P value being less than 0.005. The present study was suggestive that TBA effectively developed learners' receptive skills and also motivated learners about environmental issues in the movie Wall-E.

**Keywords:** Wall-E, Eco awareness, reading and listening Skills, Task-based activities

## 1. Introduction

The environmental issue has grown to be one of the most crucial issues that need to be solved, demonstrating that it involves how humans will live in the future. The relationship between humans and the environment can cause environmental problems, especially if humans have no responsibility (Rahmawati et al., 2020). One of the factors regarding ecological issues is society's lack of environmental awareness, so it is necessary to educate and reduce ecological problems (Suwandi et al., 2018). Animation movies like Wall-E can address environmental issues and inform learners about ecological awareness and values. Andrew Stanton, director of the movie Wall-E, depicts two values that lead to human capitalism and consumerism as the root causes of the destruction of the ecosystem. Wall-E portrays the reality of the future if humans fail to protect nature. Humans' actions are toward consumer society, resulting in increased environmental costs such as deforestation, pollution, and waste levels, which is a dangerous threat to sustainable development. Global warming is one of the most devastating impacts portrayed in Wall-E. Humanity's capitalist system is the root cause of our destructive nature toward the environment. Capitalism also contributes to air and water pollution, soil degradation, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. Wall-E teaches humans to leave their consumerist and capitalist lives and return to an Earth that lacks this ecocentric value. Wall-E vividly depicts the chasm between consumer attitudes and behaviour regarding green consumption. Many individuals, governments, and non-governmental groups around the world are concerned with "thinking green" and "acting green" today (Nkwetisama, 2011).

Environmental education is necessary for EFL/ESL instructors because, according to Babcock (1993), successful language learning involves learning micro- and macro-skills. Macro skills include reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which can be divided into two categories. The first category comprises receptive skills, such as listening and reading, while the second category includes productive skills, such as speaking and writing. The ability of students to receive language and decode meaning to understand the message is referred to as "receptive skills." Creating a learning environment for learners through animation or movies focusing on ecological themes will help develop their language skills. Animation films can help them understand ecocentric ideas, issues, and values and develop receptive skills. This engages learners in self-directed inquiry, problem-solving, critical thinking, and reflection in a real-world context (Salsijanti & Juning, 2018). Through animated movies, learners can address environmental issues and environmental values. This study aims to look at the ideas and values of green studies and how learners develop receptive skills through task-based activities using the movie Wall-E.

## 2. Review of Literature

Tang (2009) suggests incorporating environmental education into the EFL/ESL classroom to raise students' awareness of global ecological crises. Furthermore, he suggests teaching EFL/ESL learners language skills can emphasize environmental issues to raise awareness about global environmental degradation. Many animated movies, such as *Moana*, *Happy Feet*, *Ferngully: The Last Rainforest*, and *Wall-E*, have portrayed ecological themes. Animation movies like *Wall-E* draw attention to educating learners about environmental issues such as deforestation, pollution, climate change, and the harmful use of plastics (Starosielski, 2011). The animated movie *Wall-E* portrays the toxic and habitable planet Earth, abandoned after an ecological disaster. Teaching reading and listening skills through animation movies can facilitate critical thinking, interpretation, analysis, and inference skills to understand the ecocritical context in animation movies. Yukiko et al. (2007) argues that developing critical thinking in ESL classrooms helps develop analytical thinking for understanding global environmental issues. Lustyantje (2015) discussed language learners' curriculum in Indonesia to improve the learner's ability to communicate, which may include environmental education both in oral and written modes in elementary education.

Su & Liang (2015) conducted a study to find out whether elementary school students prefer to study English by watching subtitled animated cartoons or by listening to CDs from the textbook. The study results showed that students liked watching animated cartoons with subtitles to understand concepts better. Pham's (2021) article describes using audio-visual media to improve students' listening skills. He conducts a qualitative study. They were using sound learning to enhance their listening skills. Using audio-visual media helps learners understand the context and improves their listening skills. Hayati & Mohmedi's (2011) study was the first attempt to empirically investigate the effectiveness of subtitled movies on intermediate English as a Foreign Language students' listening comprehension. The study includes 90 of 200 intermediate students to test their proficiency toward this goal. Schmitt (2013) stated that an essential part of mastering a second language is understanding reading comprehension in a given context. Thus, teaching language skills in ESL classrooms using animation movies like *Wall-E* can efficiently develop reading and listening skills to understand global issues like climate change, deforestation, and pollution.

## 3. Research Design

This study used a pre-experimental design. The design used was a one-group pre-test and post-test design. This design involves a pre-test in a single group, implementing a treatment, and administering a post-test (Cresswell, 2014). The study's participants are literature students from Auxilium College Autonomous, Vellore district. The purposive sampling method used for this current research involves using a pre-questionnaire to select the sample. A pre-questionnaire was conducted on one hundred and three participants to identify students' reading and listening proficiency and understanding of environmental awareness. Based on the pre-questionnaire requirements, 36 students were given a pre-test, a post-test, TBA activities, and the post-questionnaire. This study adapts the task-based activities framework of Willis (1996) into three stages: the pre-stage, task cycle, and language focus, using the movie *Wall-E*. Each activity stage aims to develop learners' reading and listening skills and promote an understanding of eco-centric concepts and ideas in the movie *Wall-E*. The activity includes specific tasks for developing reading and listening skills. Activities such as brainstorming background knowledge, identifying the main and supporting ideas in a movie, exercising critical thinking and interpretation skills, and analyzing the film's content *Wall-E* develops critical thinking and interpretation skills. Finally, a post-feedback questionnaire was circulated to identify the development of learners' reading and listening skills and understanding of eco-centric ideas in green studies. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The pre-test and post-test scores were used to calculate the frequency and the mean. SPSS software was used to analyze the difference between the means, frequency, standard deviation, and mean standard error.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The present study aims at identifying the effect of understanding eco-centric ideas through reading and listening skills using TBA while watching the movie *Wall-E*. The pre-and post-questionnaires analyzed the data through statistical procedures represented in Tables 1.1 and 1.5. Figure 1.1 shows the results in each activity of TBA for the significant development of each learner's critical listening, interpretation, analytical, extensive, and intensive skills in reading and listening. Table 1.1 shows the results of the pre-questionnaire, the mean, standard deviation, standard error mean, and frequency of SPSS statistics employed. The data shows that most learners lack language proficiency and are unaware of the ecological problems of green studies. A pre-questionnaire was given to one hundred and thirty-six ESL literature students, and thirty-six students were selected for the experimental study. Students with less language proficiency in reading and listening skills have difficulty understanding eco-centric ideas and awareness. Willis' (1996) three stages of activities are represented in Table 1.2 using the movie *Wall-E*. The study examined the students' reading and listening skills before and after the treatment through pre-and post-tests. The paired t-test analyzed the pre-test and post-test data in terms of descriptive and SPSS statistics. There is a statistically significant improvement between the paired t-test results of the pre-test and post-test presented in Tables 1.3 and 1.4. Finally, Table 1.5 presents the data from the post-questionnaire, which shows the mean value, standard deviation, standard error mean, and frequency of the student's learning outcomes for language skills and understanding of the eco-centric ideas of green studies.

Table 1.1. Pre-Questionnaire (10 Items), N=103

Pre-Questionnaire	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	Frequency				
				1	2	3	4	5
1. I am interested to know about ecology and environmental issues.	4.1165	.54774	.05397	0	4	2	77	20
2. I am interested to watch animation movies.	4.4951	1.08237	.07414	0	3	7	29	64
3. I prefer to watch animation movies with subtitles because it gives me a better understanding of the context of the movie.	3.8155	1.08237	.10665	3	11	30	22	37
4. Movies like animation, fantasy, or adventure address ecology and environmental issues like pollution, plastic waste, and climate change.	3.9126	.97122	.09570	2	8	36	11	46
5. Ecocritical awareness from animation movies can play a great role in educating people.	3.8738	.90402	.08908	1	6	25	44	27
6. Developing countries like India should be more responsible for making students read frequently about green management.	3.7767	1.03783	.10226	3	10	21	42	27
7. Reading and listening activities based on environmental theme-based animation movies can help learners to understand environmental values and issues such as air, water, and soil pollution, climate change, and plastic waste.	4.0000	.75407	.07430	1	4	11	65	22
8. The Indian government honestly wants students to practice social activities regarding environmental issues to reduce climate change, plastic waste, and environmental pollution.	4.0097	.88001	.08671	3	2	15	54	29
9. Literature studies among students help to address issues on ecology and environmental catastrophe.	4.1359	.78025	.07688	1	2	13	53	34
10. Sustainable development should focus on development that takes into consideration the economic and environmental needs of the future generation.	4.0485	.66242	.06527	1	4	2	78	18

Table 1 is a pre-questionnaire used to analyze the participants’ language skills and identify the learner’s interest in learning about ecologies such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, and plastic waste. N represents the 103 participants. The data indicates that 97 students have an interest in learning about ecological problems. 93 of the participants were interested in watching animated movies, and based on their interest, the animated movie Wall-E was selected for the study. Only 36 of the participants were less interested in learning about ecology and environmental issues like pollution, plastic waste, and climate change. Those 36 participants were taken through a pre-test, intervention, post-test, and post-questionnaire in the pre-experimental group.

4.1 Data Analysis of Task-based Activities using Animated Movie Wall - E

Below, Table 1.2 represents a task-based learning framework by Willis (1996) that was prepared and implemented for the study. Tasks in task-based learning (TBL) aim to motivate and improve the sub-skills of reading and listening in learners.

Table.1.2. Three Stages of TBA Activities

Pre-Tasks	Skills	Green studies theme	Learning outcome
Listening to Podcast	Listening (Extensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution.	Interpretation, critical listening, and analytical skills.
Watching the Prezi	Reading (Extensive)	Technological hazards are resource storage, dangerous construction air collisions, and industries that produce toxic, nuclear, and explosive materials.	Interpretation, analytical, and critical thinking
<b>Task-Cycle Stage</b>			
Watch the video and answer it	Listening and Reading (Intensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution	Critical thinking, motivating, engaging, and closed-captioning, subtitles, and visuals in the movies.
Measuring the impact	Listening (Extensive)	Global warming, depletion of natural resources, and catastrophic Earth	Interpretation, critical thinking, and analytical skills.
Picture this	Reading (Intensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution.	Interpretation, analytical, and critical thinking
Wait! What just happened	Listening (Intensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution.	Interpretation, analytical, and critical thinking
What happened next	Listening (Intensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution.	Interpretation, critical thinking, and analytical skills.
<b>Language focus Stage</b>			
Listening to comprehend	Listening (Extensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution.	Develops critical thinking, motivating, engaging, and intensive listening skills.
listening to notice	Reading and Listening (Intensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution.	Listening skills, motivation and analytical skills.
Analyze–	Reading	Technological hazards are resource storage, dangerous	Interpretation, critical

Understanding the grammar point	(Extensive)	construction air collisions, and industries that produce toxic, nuclear, and explosive materials	thinking, and analytical skills.
Listen closely: Answer the questions	Reading (Intensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution.	Analytical, interpretation, critical thinking.
Trying out	Reading (Extensive)	Climate change, deforestation, Natural disasters and Pollution.	Interpretation, critical thinking, and analytical skills.

The TBA framework was divided into three stages: pre-tasks, during-tasks, or task cycles, and language focus (Willis, 1996). The first stage is called pre-task. The Activities in the pre-task begin with an initial discussion of the plot of Wall-E. Themes and concepts related to green studies and visual and verbal clues in Wall-E are discussed with the students through brainstorming activities. Activities such as “listening to the podcast” and “watching the Prezi”. Both activities give learners ideas about the green studies theme and concepts. The second stage is the task cycle stage. At this stage, students do several tasks based on developing language skills such as reading and listening. Activities such as “watching the video and answering it”, “measuring the impact”, “picture this”, “wait! what just happened”, and finally, “what happened next” in receptive skills. These activities test students’ proficiency in critical thinking, interpretation skills, analytical skills, critical reading, and creative skills individually. The final stage of activity is called the language focus stage. During this stage, students are encouraged to focus on the various aspects of language skills, such as critical thinking and critical listening. The activities focus on intensive and extensive listening. Activities such as “listening to comprehend”, “listening to notice”, “analyzing and understanding the grammar point”, “listening closely: answering the questions”, and “trying out” were given to the students. Each activity focuses on students’ critical thinking, interpretation skills, analytical skills, and critical reading and listening skills. Eventually, through task-based activities, students will become more aware of the ideas behind green studies and improve their reading and listening skills.

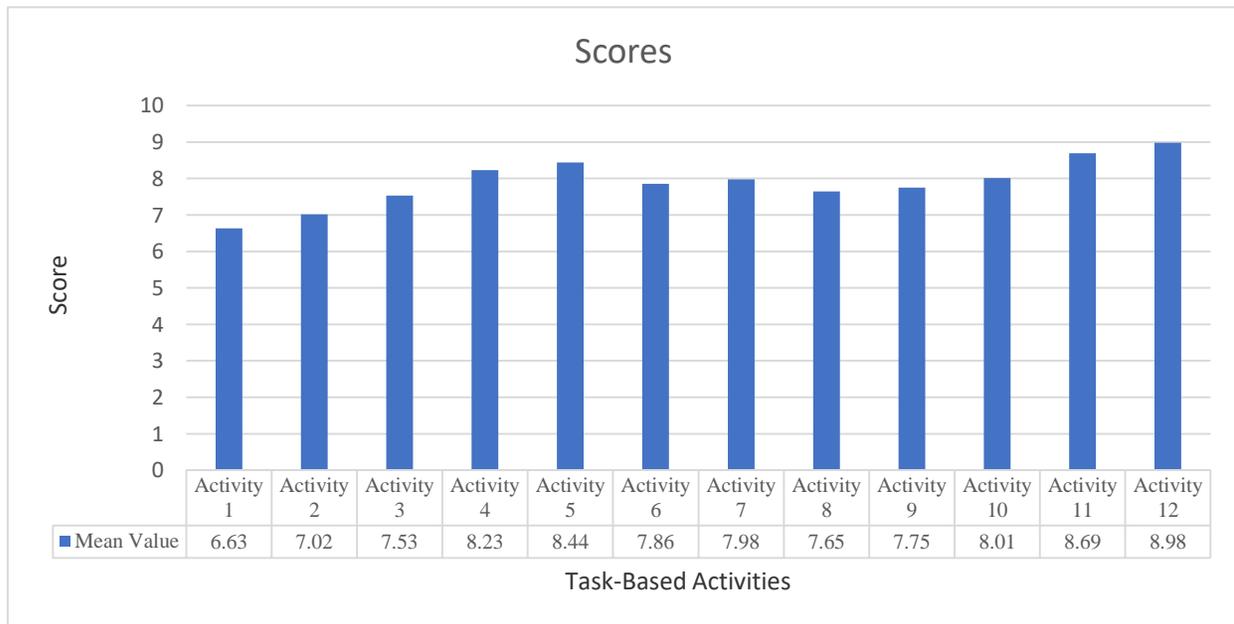


Figure.1.1. Scores of Task-Based Activities Using Wall-E

Above, figure 1.1 represents the task-based activity scores of learners’ language proficiency and understanding of eco-centric ideas in the movie Wall-E. The three stages of TBA activities were given to the students. The first stage, called pre-task, is to brainstorm activities such as “listening to podcasts” (6.63) and “watching the Prezi” (7.02). The second stage is called the task cycle, which consists of five activities such as “watch the video and answer it” (7.53), “measuring the impact” (8.23), “picture this” (8.44); “wait! what just happened” (7.86), and finally, “what happened next” (7.98). The third stage is language focus, which consists of five activities such as “listening to comprehend” (7.65), “listening to notice” (7.75), “understanding the grammar point” (8.01), “listening closely: answer the questions” (8.69), and “trying out” (8.98). The chart represents that for each activity, learners’ activity scores have gradually developed their reading and listening skills as well as their understanding of the concepts and ideas in the movie Wall-E.

4.2 Analysis of Pre-Experimental Study of One Group Pre-Test and Post-Test

The mean value of the pre-test is 2.8889, and the post-test score is 9.0278. The mean difference is 6.1388. Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the mean value of the post-test compared to the pre-test.

Table.1.3. Pre-Test and Post-Test Paired Sample T-Test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	2.8889	36	1.32617	.22103
	Post-test	9.0278	36	.84468	.14078

Table 1.3 presents the results of the statistics of a paired sample t-test. The pre-test means a 2.8 value, and the post-test is 9.02. The statistics show that there are significant differences between the pre-test and post-test, showing that participants outperformed meaningfully before and after TBA activities.

Table.1.4. Paired Sample T-Test of Pre-Test and Post-Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	6.13889	1.70968	.28495	-6.71736	-5.56042	-21.544	35	.0001

In the paired samples test, the p-value is 0.001 (P <0.05). It indicates that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the participants' pre-test and post-test scores. Hence, it is concluded that there was a significant difference in the scores of the post-tests among the one-group pre-test, and the post-test showed significant improvement in TBA using the animation movie Wall-E.

Table 1.5. Post Questionnaires (18 Items)

Post-Feedback	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	Frequency				
				1	2	3	4	5
1. I enjoyed watching the animated movie Wall-E with subtitles because I comprehended the words, sentences and context.	4.8889	.31873	.31873	0	0	0	4	32
2. I understand the concepts of ecological degradation through the Wall-E movie.	4.2222	.63746	.63746	0	0	4	20	12
3. I learned about humans causing harm to nature from the Wall-E movie.	4.2500	.80623	.80623	0	0	8	11	17
4. Wall-E movie is an eye-opener for me to understand environmental problems and human destruction against nature.	4.1667	.91026	.91026	0	0	12	6	18
5. I understand how it is important to protect nature while watching the Wall-E movie.	4.2500	.87423	.87423	0	0	10	7	19
6. I can comprehend ecocritical concepts such as green studies through the Wall-E movie.	4.4444	.80868	.91026	0	0	7	6	23
7. Wall-E movie taught me how to apply sustainable solutions to ecological problems.	4.4722	.77408	.87423	0	0	6	7	23
8. Wall-E movie depicts ecological issues such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change.	4.3889	.72812	.80868	0	0	5	12	19
9. Wall-E movie helps to understand ecological issues efficiently.	4.2500	.80623	.77408	0	0	8	11	17
10. I understand human's capitalism and consumerism are the root causes of the environmental crises depicted in Wall-E.	4.4167	.73193	.72812	0	0	5	11	20
11. I understand global warming as one of the most devastating impacts of environmental hazards from the movie Wall-E.	4.1667	.84515	.80623	0	0	10	10	16
12. Animated movies develop an interest in understanding ecocritical concepts.	4.2500	.80623	.73193	0	0	8	11	17
13. Animated movies address ecological issues more efficiently than newspapers and magazines.	4.5278	.77408	.84515	0	0	6	5	25
14. Animated movies aids understanding of ecocritical concepts.	4.4167	.84092	.80623	0	0	8	5	25
15. Wall-E movie helps to understand and set individual goals for sustainability.	4.3333	.75593	.77408	0	0	6	12	18
16. I can understand the ecocritical concepts clearly while reading the subtitles of the Wall-E movie.	4.3056	.85589	.84092	0	0	9	7	20
17. The motion picture in the movies helps me understand the conversation better.	4.3333	.82808	.75593	0	0	8	8	20
18. I understand non-verbal communication in the movie Wall-E which helps me understand the story and the theme.	4.444	.80868	.85589	0	0	7	6	23

The above table (1.4) presents the values of the mean, standard deviation, and standard error of the post-questionnaire. The post-questionnaire was circulated to understand students' feedback on task-based activities. The data was analyzed for descriptive statistics and frequency using SPSS software. A post-questionnaire presents the statistical data showing that learners gradually improved their reading and listening skills in understanding the concepts of green studies in the movie Wall-E.

**6. Conclusion**

The findings of the study indicate that implementing Willis's (1996) task-based activities (TBA) has a positive outcome on the learner's

language skills, as suggested by many studies (Kuswoyo, 2018; Albayrak, 2022; Serin, 2022). Reading and listening skills help learners understand the given concept and content effectively (Albayrak, 2022). The study finds that the animated movie Wall-E helped learners understand the environmental issues caused by humans to nature, such as deforestation, pollution, climate change, and planting trees, through reading and listening activities. The learners displayed less interest in eco-centric learning and showed less language proficiency in their initial tests. However, in the present study, learners positively responded to learning reading and listening activities through TBA using the movie Wall-E. After TBA activities, the learners showed significant improvement in their reading and listening skills and understood eco-centric concepts of green studies. The animated movie Wall-E was created to illustrate the need for a better, harmless environment for nature, as well as the significance of planting trees for sustainability and to educate students on the importance of protecting the planet for our benefit. This film concludes by encouraging mankind to build humanity and develop sustainability for the betterment of our children and future generations. Though the film begins with a toxic waste dump, it concludes with a greener earth, illustrating how the development of the human chain may resolve and interconnect human beings in a sustainable manner (Stanton, 2008). For the further scope of the study, research can be conducted through animated movies, animation series, and cartoons based on eco-centric themes such as deep ecology, anthropocentrism, ecofeminism, and non-anthropocentrism, which can be used as a tool to develop learners' sub-skills of both receptive and productive using TBA activities.

### Competing Interests:

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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