

The Effects of Task-Based Instruction on EFL Students' Writing Accuracy and Fluency

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to determine if task-based teaching improved EFL students' writing performance in terms of fluency and accuracy. The research included 56 non-English majors at Van Lang University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The control group learnt to write paragraphs using a product-based approach, which corresponded to existing teaching methods and the study environment, while the experimental group learned to write using task-based training. Pre- and post-test data were collected to assess pupils' writing abilities. The research shows that the experimental group achieved a substantial improvement in post-test scores as a consequence of the fourteen-week therapy with task-based training. Additionally, the present research established a new and creative teaching approach to assist local instructors in reflecting on their existing teaching methods in order to improve their effectiveness.

Keywords: writing fluency, writing accuracy, Task-based instruction, writing performance.

1. Introduction

English is taught as a second language in Vietnam and is required at all levels of school, from elementary to secondary. Writing is regarded as the most challenging of the four abilities for many students learning a foreign language due to the multitude of variables that must be addressed, including content, grammar, vocabulary, genres, and styles. Pham (2021) and Pham, Huyen, and Nguyen (2020), and Pham (2021b) reports that many Vietnamese students struggle with learning English, especially in writing skills. They was afraid of expressing their own ideas in the classroom (Kaçar & Balım, 2021). Pham and Nguyen (2014) stated that many students in Vietnam had limited chances to practice English in the real life. As the history of English teaching techniques in Vietnam demonstrates, the grammar-translation approach dominated language teaching and learning for decades. As a result of its sway, writing is often overlooked in the bulk of English language teaching (ELT). The poor levels of English language acquisition among first-year students are serious concerns that have attracted the interest of many academics and led to the conduct of numerous studies. According to Swan (2005), group work experiences assist students in acquiring a stronger feeling of ownership over their writing. Students benefit from collaborative projects because they create better-polished work. Grami (2010) asserts that writing is a dynamic mental activity that needs thought, discipline, and concentration. Students may talk about the language they are learning and cooperate to solve issues via the interactive exercise.

Writing is as critical as the other English skills. Students must have a strong vocabulary to express themselves, useful terminology to establish terms and meaning, logical frameworks to support their writing, and context for their writing. While there are many ways for teaching writing in a variety of EFL settings, the traditional method is still utilized to educate students. As a consequence, EFL students often have difficulties with writing (Pham & Nguyen, 2020). Numerous students have difficulties with composition; their work is riddled with errors, and their ideas are jumbled. According to Richards and Renandya, writing is the most challenging aspect of language acquisition for second language learners (2002). Hamadouche (2010) also highlighted the importance of many elements of writing, such as content, organization, vocabulary, language usage, pronunciation, and correctness, which all add to the complexity of the writing goal. Thus, students are required to convey ideas, organize them rationally, choose lexical sources, look for syntactic patterns, and spell words properly. Students should have a basic understanding of who they are writing to and why they are writing. This needs pupils to grasp how to express their ideas and messages to others via their writing, which makes writing difficult for learners. Pham et al. (2020) claimed that Vietnamese students are not motivated to learn writing. There should be an appropriate teaching method, such as Task-based instruction, to help the students learn better in the writing classroom. The next session provides an overview of past studies in order to provide a picture of the overall state of research in the area of this study.

2. Literature review

TBI focuses on the authentic use of language for genuine communication. When TBI is used to teach writing, students have opportunities to share information with an emphasis on meaning. Ahmed and Bidin (2016) used a quasi-experimental design to examine students' writing confidence and fluency. This research aims to determine the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in improving the writing abilities of EFL students enrolled in undergraduate programs at Malaysian institutions. TBLT is a critical component of language education in a number of nations globally. Participants were divided into two groups: those who participated in experiments and those who participated in controls. The researchers utilized a Paired Samples T-test to determine the worth of the learners' scores in comparison to their post-test scores. TBLT enables students to communicate fluently and confidently in English in real-world situations, both inside and outdoors. The effectiveness of TBLT in improving active skills is recommended for future investigation.

Examine the differential results of the PPP approach and a task-based approach to writing success and self-regulation of Vietnamese students. Phuong et al. (2015) performed experimental research with 1,38 English Language Students producing explanations and arguments at a University in Vietnam. The findings indicated that both PPP conditions had better scores of linguistic correctness than TBLT condition students in the immediate post-test. The experimental group students fared better in the post-test than the control group students.

Kafipour, Mahmoudi, and Khojasteh (2018) experimented to determine if utilizing task-based language instruction in writing had an effect on the writing abilities of Iranian EFL students. 69 Iranian students at the intermediate level of English participated in the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups: a control group that received conventional writing training and an experimental group that received task-based writing instruction. Iranian EFL students who were taught utilizing task-based language teaching methods

significantly increased their writing ability. Additionally, students' writing abilities may be enhanced via task-based language teaching methods that emphasize sentence mechanics, language usage, vocabulary, topic, and structure.

Derakhshan (2018) performed experimental research on writing precision at Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran. In this research, Summary Writing, Picture Writing, and Topic Writing were investigated to determine their impact when using task-based language teaching instruction and tasks on the accuracy and complexity of learners' writing performance; analysis was conducted with Iranian intermediate EFL learners—selected sixty-one students. Participants were then randomly split into three groups: Summary Writing, Picture Writing, and Topic Writing, getting six 60-minute training sessions covering five improvements to IELTS Writing Skills. Regarding the correctness of writing performance, the findings show excellent intervention and degree of meaning. Post-test findings revealed the greatest summary writing performance above image writing and subject writing, but there was no difference between picture writing and topic writing. The researcher recommended additional studies to examine the effect of different writing assignments on the writing performance of other EFL learners.

Sari and Pangaribuan (2018) performed research to enhance students' academic writing abilities via a task-based language approach; they also evaluate students' attitudes after the experimental phase with a task-based language approach. Results from qualitative data analysis indicated that using the TBL approach may enhance interest, encouragement, and involvement of students in academic writing courses. English instructors or lecturers should attempt utilizing TBL to improve their students' academic writing abilities. Researchers suggested that other authors conduct more research to improve students' academic writing abilities using the TBL method.

Nguyen and Luu (2018) studied quasi-experimental at Tien Giang University. The study includes 40 randomly selected control groups and an experimental group. The authors use pre-test and post-test, pre-questionnaires, and post-questionnaires to demonstrate that TBLT has affected learners' writing production. Research also shows a positive connection between learners' desire to write and effective writing. They suggest research with a larger sample size, various genres or examine the impact of each kind of work and perform the study for a long time to assist gather more evidence for assessment.

Naudhani (2017) stated that most students assessed TBI as beneficial, and TBI favourably affected learners' writing abilities. In the same way, Akil, Jafar, and Halim's (2018) said students had a wonderful experience while learning to write using task-based teaching and helped students enhance their writing skills. TBI also helped inspire kids to engage in school activities.

3.Objectives Of The Study

The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of task-based teaching on the fluidity and correctness of student writing. The researcher asked the following two questions regarding the effect of task-based learning on student writing outcomes.

- To what extent does task-based learning influence the written performance of EFL non-English-majored students in terms of fluency?
- To what extent does task-based learning impact the accuracy of EFL non-English-majored students' written work?.

4. Population And Sample

The research used quasi-experiment methodology to examine the impact of task-based teaching on writing accuracy and fluency of EFL non-English students. Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, hosted the present research. This university's first-year student enrollment in the academic year 2020-2021 was approximately ten thousand students. Two complete classes were chosen as a suitable sample technique; one contained 34 pupils and the other 35. At the beginning of the course, the lecturer told the students about the study purpose, and anyone may withdraw from the study if they wanted. Eight pupils from both courses wished not to be involved. At the conclusion of the course, five additional students couldn't finish all the course tasks. Thus their data wasn't included for analysis.

The experimental group (28 students) was taught utilizing task-based writing courses instruction, whereas the control group (28 students) was taught using the product approach, the typical instructional technique in the present study setting. The research took ten weeks with 60 hours.

5. Data collection

To address the study's research questions, the researcher utilized writing exams, pre- vs. post-test, to gather data. Students were asked to write paragraphs between 120 and 150 words within the 45-minute pre-test and post-test allotment. The pre-test and post-test were graded based on content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics-based analytic scoring rubrics. Weigle (2002) modified it to evaluate the student's performance in organization, substance, style, language usage, vocabulary, mechanics. In the present research, inter-raters were used to assess students' writing performance. They were English professors at Van Lang University, with 5-15 years of teaching writing experiences. Students' paper scores were marked individually. Students' names were removed before being marked. The two scores ultimately averaged. Reliability inter-rater checked.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this research, one hundred and twelve writing papers were gathered, comprising 56 pre-test papers and 56 post-test papers from both groups. To evaluate students' writing fluency before therapy, we counted and compared the number of words written in each student's article. An independent sample t-test was performed to assess the disparity between the two student groups prior to the introduction of task-based writing instruction—the reliability of the control group and experimental group pre-test inter-rater was .81 and .84. The following table highlights the pre-test success of the two groups.

Table 1. Comparison of students' writing fluency of the pre-tests between two groups

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Pre-tests of students' writing fluency	Control	28	125.36	18.786	3.250	54	.560
	Experimental	28	122.11	22.562			

* Independent sample t-test

The average amount of words written by each student in both groups is given in Table 1. Each paragraph in the control group averaged 125 words (M=125.36; SD=18.79), whereas the experimental group writing averaged 122 words (M=122.11; SD=22.56). The Independent sample t-test, however, showed no statistically significant difference in writing fluency between the two groups ($t(54)=.59$; $p=.56$; ($p>.05$). Writing fluency was similar in both situations.

To assess the amount of writing output of students in the two groups, an independent sample t-test was utilized to compare the written scores of students in the two groups prior to the task-based teaching of writing treatments. The following table highlights the pre-test success of the two groups.

Table 2. Independent sample T-test of the two groups in term of writing accuracy before the experiment

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Pre-tests of Writing abilities	Control group	28	5.268	0.8765	0.0357	0.146	54	.885
	Experimental group	28	5.232	0.9573				

* Independent sample t-test

As indicated in Table 2, on average, each paper submitted by students in the control group was scored 5.27 (M=5.27; SD=.88), whereas those submitted by students in the experimental group were scored 5.23 (M=5.23; SD=.96). The mean score of the experimental group was marginally comparable to the control group's (M=5.27 vs. 5.23). The Independent Samples t-test showed no statistically significant difference in the writing skills of the two groups ($t(54)=.15$; $p=.88$; $p>.05$). This indicated the two groups' writing skills were similar before the surgery. Thus, if there was a difference in writing abilities between the two groups after the experiment, the effect of task-based learning on student writing skills might be predicted.

Thus, based on the comparisons of writing accuracy and fluency in Tables 1 & 2, the research could establish that the students in the study had no significant difference in both pre-intervention writing accuracy and fluency. After experimenting with task-based teaching, it could be expected that the treatment of task-based education had an effect on the writing performance of students.

Research question 1: To what extent does task-based learning influence the written performance of EFL non-English-majored students in terms of fluency?

To answer this question, the researcher had to conduct some of the following procedures. The researcher first examined the number of written words between control pre- and post-tests and experimental groups; then, the researcher analyzed the number of written words in post-tests of the two groups to see whether there were any gaps between the two conditions. Table 3 contrasts students in the control group with students in the experimental group.

Table 3. Comparison of writing fluency between the pre- and post-test of the control group

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	
The control group	Pre-test	28	125.36	18.786	-1.511	27	.143
	Post-test	28	125.79	18.646			

* Paired sample t-test

Table 3 contrasts the writing fluency of students' control group between pre- and post-tests. This document describes the number of words produced by pupils during 45 minutes. Students were required to compose a paragraph of between 120 and 150 words within a 45-minute time restriction. As shown, each student in the control group averaged around 125 words (M=125.36; SD=18.79). However, their post-test writing length seems similar. Each paragraph in the post-test group contained 126 words (M=125,79; SD=18,65). The paired sample t-test findings ($t(27)=-1.51$; $p\text{-value}=.14$; $p>.05$) indicate that there was no statistically significant change in the length of writing between pre- and post-tests for students in the control group. Otherwise, the length of writing fluency of pupils was consistent in the control group. Table 4 compares the experimental group's writing to the control group.

Table 4. Comparison of writing fluency of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	
The experimental group	Pre-test	28	122.11	22.562	-8.841	27	.000
	Post-test	28	157.36	11.936			

* Paired-sample t-test

As indicated in Table 4, each experimental group student wrote an average of 122 words (M=122.11; SD=22.56) before treatment. After completing task-based writing courses, each student averaged 157 words per paragraph (M=157.36; SD=11.94). Post-test writing fluency of the experimental group seemed larger than the pre-test. The paired-sample t-test showed a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test ($t(27)=-8.84$; $p\text{-value}=.00$; $p<.05$). In other words, after getting task-based instruction, the writing abilities of students were considerably more fluent while producing a paragraph in 45 minutes. Table 5 would evaluate the writing fluency of both groups in post-tests to see whether there were any differences.

Table 5. Comparison of writing fluency of the post-tests of two groups

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
The writing fluency of the two groups in the post-tests	Control group	28	125.79	18.646	-31.571	-7.546	54	.000
	Experimental group	28	157.36	11.936				

* Independent sample t-test

Table 5 shows the comparison of writing durations between control and experimental groups. As can be observed, on average, each student in the control group wrote 126 words (M=125.79; SD=18.65) on post-test writing after product approach training, consistent with typical research teaching methods. However, after receiving task-based writing class instruction, each student in the experimental group produced a paragraph averaging 157 words (M=157.36; SD=11.94). The mean difference between the two classes was 31. Independent sample t-test results ($t(54)=-7.55$; $p\text{-value}=.00$; $p<.05$) show a statistically significant difference in the writing fluency of the post-tests of the two groups. That is, the writing skills of the experimental group were considerably higher than the control group. In other words, students may produce larger paragraphs within the 45-minute time restriction after task-based teaching in the writing classroom. The research shows that after 14 weeks of studying using task-based teaching, students in the experimental group substantially improved their text volume.

Research question 2: To what extent does task-based instruction impact the accuracy of EFL non-English-majored students' written work?

In this part, the writing accuracy of the students was assessed by (1) the inter-raters' total scores given to the students' paragraphs, (2) and the decrease in the number of writing mistakes in the students' drafts compared to the pre- vs. post-test. First, to address this study question, the written scores of the students evaluated by two inter-raters were examined and compared between the two groups' pre- vs. post-test. Then, a number of writing mistakes were computed to detect any variations between them. The Cronbach's Alpha of the control group's post-test inter-raters was .84, while the experimental group's was .81. Table 6 shows comparisons of writing abilities based on scores between the two groups.

Table 6. Comparison of writing skills between the pre- vs. post-test of the two groups

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
The control group	Pre-test	28	5.268	0.8765	0.108	27	0.915
	Post-test	28	5.250	0.8333			
The experimental group	Pre-test	28	5.232	0.9573	-8.874	27	0.000

Post-test 28 6.786 0.8545

* Paired-sample t-test

Table 6 compared the mean scores of 28 paragraphs written by control group students with 28 paragraphs produced by experimental group students. The paragraphs were evaluated using the rubric analytic scoring system (see Appendix). As indicated in Table 6, each of the control group's written paragraphs got 5.27 points (M=5.268; SD=.876), whereas each of the control group's submissions obtained a comparable score of 5.25 points (M=5.25; SD=.83). Paired-sample t-test results indicate that there was no statistically significant difference between pre- and post-testing skills in the control group ($t(27)=.108$; $p\text{-value}=.92$; $p >.05$). The pupils' post-test results have not improved.

Additionally, as shown in Table 6, each of the 28 paragraphs in the experimental group averaged 5.23 points on the pre-test (M=5.23; SD=.96). However, in post-test 28, these pupils received an average of 6.78 points (M=6.786; SD=.85). Paired-sample t-test results ($t(27)=-8.87$; $p\text{-value}=.00$; $p<.05$) indicate a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-tests for students of the experimental group. That is, writing abilities of the experimental group increased significantly after getting task-based coaching in writing class. Table 7 compares student writing skills between post-tests of the two groups.

Table 7. Comparison of students' writing skills of the two groups

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
The students' writing skills of the two groups	Control	28	5.250	0.8333	-1.5357	-6.808	54	.000
	Experimental	28	6.786	0.8545				

* Independent sample t-test

As indicated in Table 7, the mean score on the 28 writing post-test for the control group was 5.25 points (M=5.25; SD=.83), while the mean score on the post-test for the experimental group was 6.78 points (M=6.786; SD=.85). Additionally, the paired-samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference in the post-test results between the two groups ($t(54)=-6.81$, $p\text{-value}=.000$; $p<.05$). In other words, the results show that after receiving task-based care, the experimental group's writing abilities substantially improved when compared to the control group.

7. Discussion

The aim of this study was to provide answers to the two research questions about the effect of task-based learning on the writing results of students. The research findings showed that task-based teaching actually improved student fluency in writing. This research has supported the results of Rahimpour et al. (2011), Akil et al. (2018), Marashi and Dadari (2012), Pham and Do (2021), and Nguyen and Luu (2018) that task-based teaching, used in the writing classrooms to enhance student writing, has a substantial impact on students' fluency in writing. In particular, it enabled pupils to write larger paragraphs. According to Pham and Pham (2015), when a suitable technique was applied to teach students with the high consent

of learners in the classroom, collaboration amongst students in the training process was unavoidable, and the best outcomes could be achieved. In their research, Ahmed and Bidin (2016) further stated that task-based writing instruction helps EFL students become fluent and reliable English users both inside the classroom and beyond the classroom in real-world settings.

With respect to the effect of TBI on accuracy in writing, this research corroborated the findings of earlier investigations, like Kafipour et al. (2018). They found that writing class task-based learning helps students improve their writing skills in sentence patterns, language use, vocabulary, materials, and organization. Sundari, Febriyanti, and Saragih (2018) further argued that language training based on the tasks had a considerable impact on students' writing results, including structure, content, organization, and grammar. Similarly, Derakhshan (2018), Akil et al. (2018), and Phuong et al. (2015) showed that students could create significantly superior writing documents in their task-based training courses compared to the differing training circumstances. In other words, after receiving task-based teaching, students could write better paragraphs. The present research contradicted Rahimpour et al. (2011), however, since they argued that task-based training did not affect students' accuracy.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to determine if task-based instruction (TBI) might improve students' writing performances in terms of fluency and accuracy when used in the writing classroom. In terms of the effects of task-based teaching on students' writing fluency, the present study's findings indicate that task-based instruction really assisted students in composing lengthier paragraphs within a 45-minute time limit. Following TBI therapy, pupils were able to write larger paragraphs in terms of word count. In terms of the effects of task-based instruction (TBI) on students' writing accuracy, the present research discovered that TBI had a significant influence on students' writing accuracy as measured by total scores.

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