

The Impact of Task-Based Method on Learning EFL Writing: Composition of Second-Year Intermediate School Students

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the influence of Task -based method on learning EFL writing composition of second-year intermediate school students at AL-Sediek Intermediate School For Boys, Diyala Governorate, Iraqi Public school. Students who were participated in this study composed of (88) male students distributed equally into two groups, the empirical group and control one, each one has (No.= 44students). The second course of the academic year(2024-2025) was concerned in this research .The empirical group was exposed with the treatment“ Task-Based method” while the control group was taught by regular teaching method. Pre-posttest design was employed. Tools comprised an EFL test-writing ,writing composition and a rubric for evaluating students’ works. The study was continued for eight weeks ,T-test for one and two samples was utilized, the results have shown that the scores of students in the empirical group overpassed the control group on the developing writing skills as a consequence of the teaching Task-based in writing composition. The findings also showed that students of the empirical group in the pre-test of writing skills outperformed those in other group .

Key words: Task-Based method, Teaching Task-Based ,Writing composition

Introduction

Language is a means of communication, based on four skills. Writing is a productive skill .It a hard skill for the users of language , they have to master. This difficulty occurs in ordering and organizing ideas and put them in a right way to make any text readable. Bell and Burnaby (1984:12), assured “that writing is a complex cognitive action, the writer should control a number of variables such as :structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation, as well as cohesive and coherent information should be preceded adequately in constructing paragraphs and essays”. Generally,

learning any foreign language, required communicating with others: i.e., orally and in written form with them. (Raimes, 1983:17).

Conversely, the communicative competence in a written skill is an essential goal of EFL settings. Therefore, scripting of any text is the most influential ability to organizing feelings and views are interconnected further than any period and place . It is a difficult process and need a stable care from educationalists and teachers (Mehwish and Sehrish, 2017;17). From the researcher's experience as an English teacher for at least thirty years in the intermediate stage at Iraqi public school , and from the discussions and interviews with the researchers' colleagues in the same field of specialist. The researcher discovered that students have many difficulties in their writings. They were not replying keenly in writing drills. Even though, that in classrooms while teaching English language had employed some guidelines in teaching writing, they have poor writings samples. As the researcher , realized that this problem needs to be studied and solved in this paper. Therefore, researcher suggested using a method centered on the tasks as the core unit in teaching English language termed as Task-Based method to improve the writing abilities for EFL students.

Aim

This study aims at determining the effectiveness of task-based method on learning EFL writing composition of second-year intermediate school students.

Research Questions

The present study highlighted the following questions:

- 1-What is the influence of task-based method on enhancing EFL writing composition of 2nd year intermediate school students?
- 2- What are the skills required for improving written capabilities for EFL students at 2nd-year intermediate stage?

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study occurs in the following:

- 1-The outcomes of this study may give teachers opportunity to be practiced and skillful for improving students' EFL writing composition abilities principally by Task-based method.
- 2- Educationalists who are on the charge for scheduling and formulating EFL syllabuses should contemplate the result of the present study, incorporating Task-based method in their programs as an active method that has extensive capacities for advancing skills of language specially writing.

3- The findings of the present study may open the gate for further investigations and studies on the effect of Task-based method on a larger sample and for a longer period ,or the effect of Task-based method on students' attitudes towards language learning, or even thought, extra investigations such as contrastive studies among Task-based method and any other approaches or methods.

Limitation

The current study is limited to:

- 1- Iraqi EFL Second-Year students at AL-Sediek Intermediate School for Boys, Diyala Governorate.
- 2- The second course of the academic year (2024-2025).
- 3- Task-Based Method.

Literature Review

Task-based learning method

Task –based “ is a method to encourage student's language development because the students can get the language learning experience through the classroom in different situations. It offers the students an opportunity to be involved in the language use. The crucial goal of a classroom activity is the task considered an instrument to get the students involved in the language practice naturally. The task is a given activity to the students which are the chances to use language to achieve a definite result. It helps the students to think of the real life situations and they focus on meanings of the words they use” (Huang, 2010: 32).

In the early 1950s tasks were worked for serving the purposes of industrial practicing. Then, tasks are considered, modified for teaching determinations. They were designed in detail as instructional tools and sequenced for classroom training. Additionally, tasks started to be applied for academic purposes in the early 1970s. This method of learning was mainly suggested: “by Prabhu (1987:20) in Bangalore, southern India. The method based on the belief was that learning can be enhanced more proficiently when the learners have engaged in task-based learning, their minds are involved in the tasks rather than in the language they are using ”.

It emphasizes on telling students to do meaningful tasks using the target language. These tasks help them to face real life situations.

David Nunan(1989:23) defined task, as “an activity where students are asked to accomplish something or solve some problem using their language. If at all

possible, this activity is open-ended; there is no set way to accomplish their goal” .

Those tasks must have the following features, proposed by Willis and Skehan (1996:11). These are:

- (a) It is an action that involved students' care.
- (b) The emphasizing is on the meaning.
- (c) The task belongs to real life situations.
- (d) the priority is to the completion of task .
- (e) The judgment of the task success builds upon its result.

Task-Based method composed of three parts:

1- Before the Task:

In this part, the topic is presented by the teacher. He discusses the task to create interest in doing it. Here the lecturer plays as a helper . He /She provides appropriate directions to the students on how to do throughout the task. Some pictures, drawings, or videos can take part for explaining the task to the participants . The instructor should be sure that the students apprehend the directions.

2- Throughout the Task:

Here the participants have opportunity to practice the target language unless they were performing mistakes. Instructor acts as an observer. He/she observes the learners on how to do task in couples or clusters and assistances them to advance the language use by rousing them and altering their errors.

3- After the Task:

To have a chance for repeating performance of the task. Reflection on how the task was done took place in this stage. Here the attention is paid to the problematic areas are made by learners when they did the task.

Task-based method has an effective role to enhance learning on FFL settings. Therefore, the investigator assumed that discovering active procedures for teaching these written composition abilities and examining their effect may aid to give teachers with some advices to simplify this challenging talent and might be of assistance to EFL students, instructors and scientists.

kinds of Written Tasks

Dave and Jane Willis (2007:53), in their book *Doing Task-based Teaching*, listed seven kinds of tasks that can be used in an EFL class to enhance students' writing skills:

1-**Listing:** Brainstorming and/or fact finding (qualities, priorities, things, features,

things to do, reasons)

2- **Gathering and Organization:** Sequencing, ranking, classifying (sequencing story pictures, ranking items according to cost, popularity, negative or positive)

3- **Corresponding:** Listening and writing, listening and doing, matching phrases/description to pictures, matching directions to maps

4- **Paralleling:** Finding similarities or differences (comparing ways of greetings or local customs, contrasting two countries)

5- **Problem-Solving:** Real-life situations, case studies, incomplete texts (logic problems, giving advice, proposing and evaluating solutions, predicting a story ending)

6- **Projects and Creative Tasks:** Doing and reporting a survey, producing a class newspaper, planning a radio show, designing a brochure, etc.

7- **Partaking Private Experiences:** Storytelling, anecdotes, memories, opinions, reactions (early schooldays, unforgettable moments, terrible journeys, etc.)

Advantages of Task-based

Many studies assured major benefits that teachers gain from practicing Task-based method in EFL language teaching are the following “(East, 2012; Edwards & Willis, 2005; McDonough, 2015; Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Dittfurth, 2011; Shehadeh & Coombe, 2012; Van den Branden, 2006, 2009a)”:

1-Task-basedworks on Students’ organization grouping such as clusters or/ and couples work, and these are a core of the method, provide students many opportunities to rehearsal and improve their talkative abilities.

2- Task-based assistances learners to build self-assurance to practice the target language in / outside the class.

3- Tasks have enjoyment for participants and can improve their language learning enthusiasm in class.

4- Tasks can be worthwhile for participants because they have to work for a perfect goal.

5-Tasks give students chances to progress self-regulation skills, problem-solving skills, intercultural competence, and social skills.

Writing skill

Simply , writing is the production of symbols which are known as letters, then writing became a more complex skill when it involved producing expressive and precise meaning in any language. Writers must have the mastery on such system, choice of appropriate words and the grammatical

structure of the language. Whereas, Crystal (1999: 257) states, “Writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expression”. Furthermore, Hege (1991: 235) assured, that “Writing as a communicative activity needs to be encouraged and nurtured during the language learner’s course of study”. Richards and Schmidt (2002:32) assert, that “Writing is viewed as a result of complex processes of planning, drafting, reviewing and revising”.

This means that writing occurs through various steps and eventually it becomes the final draft. Thus, these clear symbols must be organized according to some harmonies in order to form accurate vocabulary, then to form sentences, these sentences form a piece of writing or a composition. Consequently. The final attainment of writing should be interconnected in a unit of words or sentences that are prepared in a reasonable direction and combined together to give appropriate sense. In this regard, Firres& Hedgcock (2004: 1) states, “Learners at schools (and universities) must master the academic writing which was needed in writing essays , paragraphs, compositions or other tasks for exams.

Previous Studies

Some related studies are in the line with present study, are the following:

1-Mehwish and Sehrish(2017), the results of this study may be in the line with present study. It indicated that utilizing Task-based as the method of teaching language reveal towards accuracy, enhance self-learning and keep the learner interested in writing composition .

2-Another views comes from, Dorathy (2018) who pointed out that Task-based method provides students many chances to practice target language in the classroom to enhance their self-trust, and to be fluent in language use.

3- Mustafa and Mufit (2017) ,the study demonstrating that the atmosphere of the class where Task-Based method is applied by instructor is more motivating than any other t methods ,because It makes students feel safety and enjoy in real –life situations ,and become eager to be active learners.

4- The outcome of the present study was also supported by the views of Willis (1996) indicating that participation in a discussion task, that Task-based method entails varies communication roles for participants, such as initiating questions and observing on others’ views. These tasks touch leaners inspiration certainly.

Research Methodology

Participants

The participants of the research were 88 students from second-year Intermediate at AL-Sediek school. They were studied English at least for seven years. They were aged between 13 and 14 years old, and divided equally into two groups, (No.=44 students) for the empirical group and (No.=44 students) for the control one

Research Design

The empirical design is followed in this research. The pretest, posttest were utilized for the two groups. The groups exposed to a dissimilar teaching procedures. The experimental was exposed to Task-Based method whereas, the control group was exposed to regular teaching. They were pre tested for the sake of homogeneity, then they post tested at the end of the study. Posttest marks of the two groups were compared to decide the influence of the utilized procedure.

Instrumentation

Certain points that required for scoring students' writing samples, they are the following: "capitalization, punctuation, spelling, organization and paragraphing". In the pretest students were asked to describe pictures or drawings in 5 sentences. While in posttest, students were asked to write a composition (Healthy lifestyle), also to ensure the validity about the tests are revised by two language experts and their notes are utilized in the main version of the study. Rubric to correct students' writings was proposed.

For no errors, the students got 10 marks, for 1-2 two mistakes, the students got 7 marks, and for 3-4 errors, students got 5 marks. If there were 5-6 errors in the category, students got 2 marks in that specific category, and no marks if there were 7 or more errors. The students were able to receive up to 10 marks for each category, giving them a total of 50 marks.

Procedures

The empirical study comprised eight weeks which consisted of describing writing and other writing drills were applied on students' papers. The lessons were mainly chosen from units of their textbook (English for Iraq-Second Intermediate schools). A pre-test was applied to the two groups. Two sessions a week for a period of six weeks, students in the empirical group learned according to the Task-based method whereas, students in other group learned through the traditional method. After that, the posttest was conducted to the participants in each group. Data were collected to decide any development in writing skills. To find out the difference between

experimental and control group students' tests, also to find out the differences between the pre and the post scores of the experimental group in writing skills T-test was used. It is worth to be mentioned that the inter-rater reliability value-0.91 . It was a higher value which means that the tests were really reliable (Selman& Murad,2012:23).

Data analysis & Discussion

To examine and confer the findings of this study. In table(1)shows, t- test for one sample formula to compare the scores of both pre and post –tests in control group students is used.

Table(1)T-test value for one sample, between pre-test and post-test in the controlgroup

Level of significance	d.f	M.		Computed t- value	S.D.D	M.D	S,D	Tabulate d t- value	N	Test
No significance	43	23.55		0.795	3.60	0.43	5.86	2.00	44	Pre-test
-	-	23.98	-	-	-	-	5.99	-	-	post-test

The results are shown that the computed t-value(0.795) is less than t-tabulated value (2.00) under (43)the degree of freedom at (0.05)level of significance in the above table, a comparison between the average of pre-test and the post- test in the control group students. This refers there is no a significance difference between the students' control group performances in both pre and post- tests . Since the control group did not receive the treatment in writing skill. see table (1).

Table(2)T-test value for one sample, between the pre-test and the post-test in the experimental group.

Level of significance	d.f	Tabulate d t- value	Computed t- value	S.D.D	M.D	S,D	M.	N	Test
Significance at level 0.05	43	2.00	12.497	3.86	7.27	5.26	31.91	44	Pre-test
-	-	-	-	-	-	2.97	24.64	44	Post-test

Due to the fact ,that computed t-value(12.497)is higher than tabulated t-value(2.00)under the degree of freedom (43) at(0.05) the level of significance ,the results reveal that there are significance differences in the students' writings who studied in Task-based method, from the comparison between the average of , the pre and the post-test in the above table ,which means that students have better writing ,when they received treatment. see table(2).

Table(3)T- test formula for two samples, experimental and control groups between the average of the post-tests .

Level of significance	d.f	Tabulated t-value	Computed t-value	S,D	M.	N	Groups
Significance at level 0.05	86	1.99	7.50	5.26	31.91	44	Experimental group's post-test
-	-	-	-	5.86	23.55	44	Control group's post-test

The results were shown a statically significant difference in students' writings after they work in a task ,since the computed t-value (7.50) is higher than the tabulated t-value (1.99), under the degree of freedom(86) at 0.05 level of significance ,and this difference is in a favor to experimental

groups students' performance who have taught in task-based method in the post-test. This mean that students' scores of the experimental group is higher than the scores of the other group due to the type of method used. see table (3).

Table(4)T- test formula for two samples, experimental and control groups between the average of the pre-tests .

Level of significance	d.f	Tabulated t-value	Computed t-value	S,D	M.	N	Groups
No Significance at level 0.05	86	1.99	0.65	2.97	24.64	44	Experimental group's pre-test
-	-	-	-	5.99	23.98	44	Control group's pre-test

T-test formula for two samples is used for the purpose of equal of variance . The fact ,that computed t-value(0.65)is less than tabulated t-value(1.99)under the degree of freedom (86) at(0.05) the level of significance. It means there is no significance differences in students' writing tests in pre-tests for both groups. which means that students have the same background knowledge and this refers to a homogeneity between both groups . see table(4).

Due the fact that the outcome of performance of the experimental group over the control group in EFL written composition can be inferred that students who were utilized Task-based as a method for teaching writing obtain trust, accuracy ,self-learning ,since they feel a free , comfortable when they learn all aspects of writing in the advanced level.

Conclusions

From the above findings it can be concluded the following points:

1-Task-based is an effective method in advancing EFL written composition. EFL learners should be normally practiced on the use of this method in English language classrooms.

2- As the most important condition for the success of this method is the students' interest ,students work in a couple or in a cluster, in a low level of anxiety because there is a free stress educational circumstances. .

3- The experimental group received lessons consisted of tasks. These tasks form the basic principle of teaching style and textbook ,so it was estimated

that students did not need to focus on how to use the language but to did the task. Students work in confidence to accomplish the task using their ability in English. The important thing is that while they were trying to complete the task ,students have fun and confidence in themselves in an pleasurable classroom environment compared to the traditional methods make the learning process more effective than any other teaching methods.

4- This method typically offers varied range of intellectual processes that are required for occupational life, as well as, presents many chances to use language in/outside the class which make students confident and fluent in speaking English. Thus, fosters processes of communicating and interacting which are the core of EFL learning.

5- Finally, the outcomes of this study has shown that students of the empirical group feel relaxed , learn better in a task and their written composition skill improved. It is a helpful method to build up confidence in students and this leads their writing at the advanced level.

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أثر طريقة التدريس المبنية على المهام في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كتابة الانشاء لطلاب الصف الثاني المتوسط

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مستخلص البحث:

تبحث هذه الورقة البحثية في تأثير الطريقة المبنية على المهام في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كتابه الانشاء لطلاب السنة الثانية المتوسطة في مدرسة الصديق المتوسطة للبنين/محافظة ديالى في المدارس الحكومية العراقية. الطلاب الذين شاركوا في هذه الدراسة (88) طالباً تم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين، المجموعة التجريبية والضابطة، كل مجموعة لديها (عدد = 44) طالباً. وقد تم هذا البحث في الكورس الثاني للعام الدراسي (2024-2025). تم تدريس المجموعة التجريبية باستخدام الطريقة المبنية على المهام بينما تم تدريس المجموعة الضابطة باستخدام التدريس التقليدي. وتم استخدام تصميم الاختبار القبلي والاختبار البعدي. تتألف الأدوات من اختبار الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وكتابة انشاء ونموذج لتقييم كتابات الطلاب. واستمرت الدراسة لمدة ثمانية أسابيع، قد تم استخدام الاختبار التائي لعينة واحدة وعينتين ،وأظهرت نتائج الاختبار تفوق طلاب المجموعة التجريبية على المجموعة الضابطة في تنمية مهارات الكتابة نتيجة استخدام أسلوب المهام في تدريس كتابة الانشاء. كما أظهرت النتائج تفوق طلاب المجموعة التجريبية في الاختبار البعدي لمهارات الكتابة على طلاب المجموعة الضابطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطريقة المبنية على المهام، التدريس المبني على المهام، كتابة الانشاء