The Effects of Task-Based Method on Paragraph Writing Performance among EFL University Learners

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ABSTRACT

This research sought to investigate the effects of task-based methods on enhancing EFL learners' paragraph-writing skills. A quasi-experimental research design was employed for this investigation. Specifically, a variant of the pretest-posttest design; that is, the interrupted time-series design type was used in which the measurements were taken at intervals of time. Thus, the treatment group participants were measured for their performances of writing on their paragraphs each week for three months at controlled conditions and treatment time that the interruption was the treatment. The design includes measurements of the dependent variable both before and after the treatment. It includes multiple pretest and posttest measurements. Hence, there were parallel measurements on pretests and post-tests which is four times on pretests and four times on post-tests. It brought effective results to the study. The sample comprised forty-three (43) students majoring in management, selected through a comprehensive sampling technique. All participants were placed in a single treatment group. Data collection involved administering pre-and post-tests, conducted at two intervals: before and after the intervention. To analyze the data, the researcher employed various tests, opting for a non-parametric approach due to the data not conforming to a normal distribution. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was therefore employed as a suitable alternative in situations where the normal distribution of differences between paired subjects cannot be assumed. It posits a less stringent hypothesis, suggesting that the distribution of this difference is symmetric around a central value, and seeks to determine whether this central value significantly deviates from zero. Thus, it was applied to assess the statistical differences in paragraph writing skills between the pre- and post-intervention phases. The findings indicated that the treatment group through task-based methods demonstrated superior performance in the post-intervention compared to their pre-intervention results. Additionally, the Friedman test was employed to compare the observed significance within the post-tests. The mean rank for task achievement was recorded at 3.91, signifying a more substantial improvement relative to other components. In contrast, the mean ranks for cohesion and coherence, grammatical range, and lexical resource were 2.36, 1.88, and 1.85, respectively which indicated higher improvement to lower major rubrics. Notably, students exhibited the most significant progress in task achievement, while cohesion and coherence, grammatical range and accuracy, and lexical resource showed comparatively lesser advancements. Furthermore, improvements were also noted in content, communicative achievement, organization, and vocabulary usage when compared with pre-test scores. Thus, this study advocates for the integration of task-based methodologies that incorporate authentic, meaningful, and focused linguistic elements as well as communicative writing components into teaching materials for basic writing courses within the EFL context.

Keywords: *Basic writing skills, instruction, paragraph writing, performances, task-based method*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Task-based language instruction (TBLI), is a teaching method that focuses on providing learners with tasks in a communicative context (Ellis, 2009). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has evolved into a prominent methodology in language education. It emphasizes developing communicative skills through collaborative tasks that engage learners in meaningful language use (Van den Branden, 2006). By participating in these tasks, learners gain a sense of autonomy and control over their learning process, which fosters a positive attitude toward language acquisition (Moore, 2008). Central to TBLT are problem-solving activities requiring learners to use the target language to achieve specific outcomes, enhancing their practical language skills (Skehan, 2003).

Therefore, TBLI is argued to be effective in enhancing comprehension of the language acquisition process. It considers tasks as a unit of analysis and emphasizes the meaning learners use to perform and achieve the tasks' goals (Seyyedi &Ismail, 2012). The strategies are procedures in which they must use the target language to achieve a specific outcome.

Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) fosters meaningful communication through real-life activities using authentic materials and cognitive processes (Ellis, 2003). It supports a learner-centered approach (Nunan, 2004; Rodgers, 2001) and achieves outcomes through well-designed communicative tasks (Richards, 2006). The recent use of task-based instruction engages learners effectively (Cook, 2009), offering multifaceted benefits for skill development in language learning. TBLI emphasizes teaching tasks in three phases: pre-task, main task, and post-task (Leaver & Willis, 2004), helping learners interact and improve writing with coherence, cohesion, lexical resource, grammar accuracy, and task achievement.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) promotes natural language acquisition by involving learners in purposeful tasks. This methodology encourages students to choose suitable vocabulary, understand grammatical structures, and formulate contextually appropriate sentences during writing exercises. In Ethiopia's revised curriculum, TBLT is incorporated to offer structured tasks that improve educational outcomes (MOE, 2020). Specifically, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education aimed to create a new general education curriculum as a framework. The objective was to

modernize instructional methods in classrooms while fostering and valuing indigenous knowledge. This curriculum was intended to be uniquely Ethiopian, developed by and for the Ethiopian people. Additionally, while teachers were familiar with the task-based approach, the implementation and perceptions of this method were not sufficiently reflected in students' writing performance.

The Ethiopian English learning environment has not reached an advanced stage, resulting in learners struggling to grasp the context of the method. There was inadequate implementation aimed at addressing the students' lack of awareness and engagement. Furthermore, students tend to generalize their learning experiences without recognizing the task-based method's potential for enhancing their paragraph development across all disciplines, including the Department of English Language and Literature. Although the Ministry of Education provided ample tasks related to their texts, students lacked the awareness necessary to practice and apply these tasks effectively. To address this issue, it is essential to implement focused, authentic, communicative, and meaningful task-based activities, which would enable learners to engage more effectively and improve their paragraph writing skills, as outlined by the researcher.

As the researcher views, there have been a variety of active methods in teaching and learning. One of these active learning methods is a task-based method that could be adapted to the context of the learners. Hence, the researcher decided on the employment of an effective task-based method in the management major of university class who has taken basic writing skills. It is of great importance to learners' learning outcomes. Thus, this study focused on examining the effects of task-based methods on paragraph writing performance among EFL university learners.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Studying English is difficult for native speakers similar to foreign or second language learners (Esmeralda, 2013). There were writing lessons in the teaching materials, but tasks were not presented in context. Particularly, basic writing has sufficient lessons of writing, which are presented using the task-based method with still room for contextualization, particularly for university learners on paragraph writing levels. Using this method, learners were expected to prepare and submit written assignments, homework, classwork, reports, and presentations in the form of paragraphs as part of their learning process. However, the current practices of English teaching do not reflect these efforts; they fall short of expectations. Despite the implementation of

a task-based method in the course Basic Writing Skills, which aimed to enhance the writing skills of second-year management major learners, the writing lessons have been inadequately designed. Consequently, the learners' current ability reveals their struggle in developing paragraphs (Sarnjai, 2023).

The challenge of teaching writing in English classrooms has persisted as a significant issue for both educators and students (Al Fadda, 2012). It is widely regarded as one of the most challenging components of language acquisition for those learning English as a second language (Richards et al., 2002). Learners require a robust vocabulary, a solid grasp of grammar, and effective discourse strategies to structure their writing appropriately (Ridha, 2012). Furthermore, instructors have often relied on traditional methods or one-dimensional communicative approaches, which students have shown little enthusiasm for following. In a similar vein, research by Kafipour (2018) revealed notable advancements, attributed to the shortcomings in methodologies, design, tools, unclear guidance, and insufficient comprehension of procedures, prompting the researcher to explore the impact of the method.

Numerous studies, including those by Mengistu (2018), have examined process approaches and the relative significance of existing methods compared to task-based methods. The findings indicate that traditional methods are less effective than various writing types that enhance learner engagement. Furthermore, the practical application of Task-Based Language Instruction (TBLI) in writing paragraph exercises within language learning environments has been noted. Research conducted by Teshoma (2012) revealed that while instructors held positive views regarding the benefits of task-based writing, they often felt hesitant to implement it due to students' inadequate writing skills. Additionally, Meseret (2014) concentrated on the obstacles to adopting a task-based approach in writing instruction. The study identified several significant challenges, including insufficient training, time limitations, diverse learner backgrounds, large class sizes, and a scarcity of teaching materials. Nevertheless, the university studies conducted thus far have not thoroughly addressed these assumptions, and there remains a lack of further research on the application of this method in writing performance.

The researchers observed that paragraph writing among students is generally ineffective, prompting an investigation into the effectiveness of a specific instructional method. As a result, a quasi-experimental study titled *"The Effects of Task-Based Writing Instruction (TBWI) on Paragraph Writing Performance of Second-Year Management Students at Ambo University"* was designed to explore whether this method could significantly improve students' writing abilities. Hence, this study seeks to determine if TBWI can effectively enhance learners' paragraph writing performance. The study is guided by the following research questions or hypotheses.

1.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

1.3.1. Research Questions

- To what extent would task-based writing instruction (TBWI) improve second-year management major learners' overall writing performances post-intervention compared to pre-intervention?

- If so, which component(s) of writing performance is/are significantly improved?

1.3.2. Hypotheses

- **H0**1: Learners who receive task-based writing instruction (TBWI) do not show any significant improvement in their overall writing performance on posttests significantly better than pretests

- **Ha1**: Learners who receive task-based writing instruction (TBWI) show significant improvement in their overall writing performance on posttests significantly better than pretests

- **H02**: Learners who receive task-based writing instruction (TBWI) do not demonstrate significantly greater improvement in individual writing skills on posttests compared to pretests

- **Ha2**: Learners who receive task-based writing instruction (TBWI) demonstrate significant improvement in individual writing skills on posttests compared to pretests

1.4. Theoretical Framework

1.4.1. Theoretical Challenges for task-based method

Task-based methods may not work well with learners at a lower proficiency level. The linguistic forms used in the method tend to relate more to task-solving, neglecting a lot of important linguistic forms for learners' inter-language development. There are concerns about whether learners develop a repertoire when in fact they tend to draw on the repertoire they already have. There is a lack of concrete evidence for its effectiveness. The method has a lot more work to do before it can provide a convincing alternative pedagogical model, and still more before it can claim

superiority over other approaches in improving receptive and productive skills. In task-based methods, learners are exposed to large amounts of non-native language input which will merely serve to confirm their current interlanguage representations. Therefore, wrong answers and conclusions may be formulated and believed.

In contrast, behaviorism focuses on observable behavior, with learners imitating the teaching methods or responding to rewards from teachers. In this perspective, learning does not involve learners independently discovering structured knowledge. However, constructivism suggests that learners actively construct knowledge based on their preexisting cognitive structures. Learning is viewed as an active process of assimilating and accommodating new information into existing cognitive frameworks. Learners set their own goals within a task-based approach and are intrinsically motivated to learn. Teachers facilitate this learning process by creating an environment that encourages discovery and assimilation/accommodation. Additionally, humanism learning theory emphasizes the importance of learners' needs and interests in language acquisition. In line with this theory, teachers prioritize materials and activities that promote the self-actualization of learners, rather than solely relying on existing materials.

Learners bring their knowledge and experiences, which aids in their construction and understanding of reality about what they are learning. These in turn indicated that learning is not focused on what learners learn in the classroom but includes what they know, what is there as a reality in the society, and what is going to be with the need and interest of the learners. Thus, the humanism-learning theory will boost students learning that put their learning at maximum levels.

The theories mentioned earlier regarding English language teaching through task-based methods lack a clear discussion on the learning theory that underpins the development and organization of these tasks. As a result, certain assumptions are drawn from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) pedagogical practices, with the communication principle being the first assumption that emphasizes learning. Learners facilitate by involving themselves in real-life situations. Secondly, the meaningfulness principle that states language that is meaningful to the learner facilitates teaching (Rodgers, 2001). Consequently, task-based methods in communicative language teaching have

evolved from diverse language function assumptions, communication processes, and theoretical perspectives.

As a result, the researcher will examine the effects of the task-based method on the performance of writing paragraphs. This method is supported by various theoretical frameworks, allowing for the compensation of shortcomings in one theory through the application of others. Among them, constructivism views learning as an interactive process in which learners enhance their existing knowledge by connecting it to their prior experiences. This approach enables learners to develop their own understanding based on their past encounters. By integrating new information with their previous knowledge, learners construct a personalized reality. This theory of learning highlights the active and individualized nature of the learning process for each learner. Richards argues that constructivism underscores learners' independence, introspection, personal engagement, and active participation in the learning process, mirroring the principles of the task-based method.

According to Ellis (2003), there is a concurrence both in task-based methods and in the learning principles of constructivism. Teachers can utilize constructivism to help understand that each student will bring their own past to the classroom every day. They act as more to facilitate learners to create their own learning and understanding (Ellis, 2009).

Additionally, they help them create their own process and reality based on their own past. This is crucial for many learners to use and include their own experiences.

1.5. Conceptual Framework

The study was initially motivated by the unsatisfactory task assignment structure and the inadequate use of the method in implementing these tasks. As a result, the researcher noticed that the learners' performances in writing paragraphs for language learning were ineffective. Hence, the researcher expects to see more suitable outcomes in terms of the learners' performances. This is a response to the prevailing issue of ineffective learning in the classroom and the need for more effective outcomes. Thus, the study focuses on the relationship between the ineffectiveness and effectiveness of the TBLI method on learners' performance. While the implementation of task-based language instructions (TBLI) has introduced a novel teaching approach in language classrooms, this method has proven beneficial selection and creation of effective classroom tasks.

The task-based approach is of considerable importance in the teaching of the English language, as it incorporates all four language skills. This method transcends the limitations of focusing on a single skill, advocating for a holistic approach to language acquisition. For example, constructivism is a learning theory that emphasizes the role of learners in building new knowledge based on their prior experiences. Nevertheless, in English classrooms, students often exhibit passivity, indicating a lack of enthusiasm for engaging in content-related activities. Conversely, learners can achieve a more profound understanding by actively participating in real-world problem-solving scenarios. The accompanying diagram delineates the key variables of the study, illustrating their interconnections, flow, and the steps involved in conducting this research.

Initially, the researcher emphasized the importance of task-based writing instruction methods to achieve meaningful, authentic, focused, and communicative tasks. The interconnectedness of these variables demonstrated the significant differences that the method had on students' performances. Furthermore, the study also explored the potential interrelationships between these variables. Therefore, the provided diagram represents the conceptual model of this study.
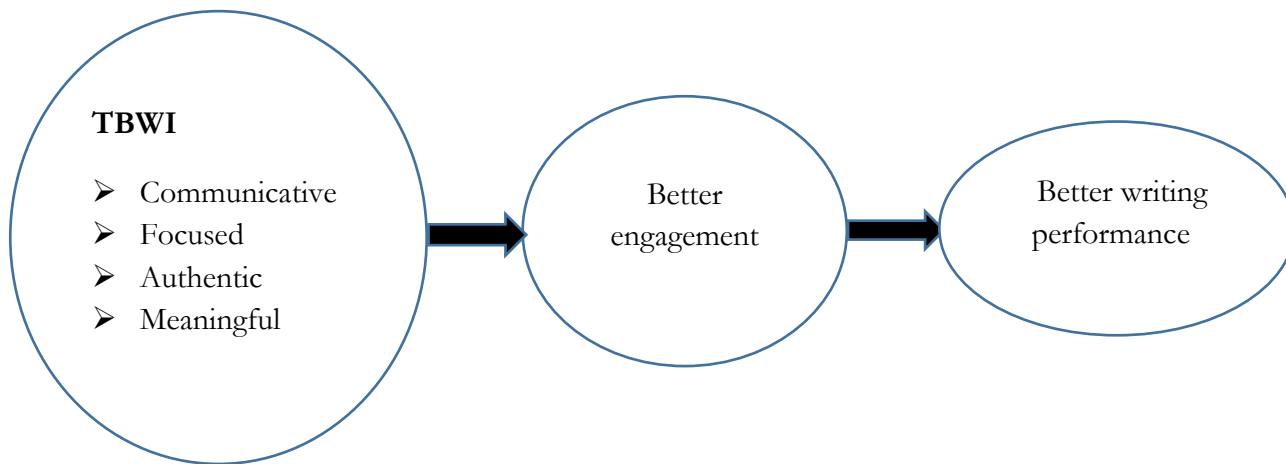
Conceptual Model

Fig 1: Conceptual Model Adapted from Willis (1996) and Ellis (2003)

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Study Design

The main focus of the study was to examine the cause-and-effect relationship among variables. Consequently, the researcher opted for a quasi-experimental design due to the educational context, which limits the ability to control all extraneous factors influencing the results. Among the various quasi-experimental designs; an interrupted time series design was employed, allowing the researcher to monitor participants over an extended period, both before and after the intervention. Hence, a quasi-experimental design, specifically a single-factor multilevel design was employed. That is, there are two forms of within-subjects design. From these two designs, the multilevel design was appropriate to the study because the study focused on interrupted time series that took only one group of students and compared prior and later achievements. The study was conducted to examine the effects of the task-based method on students' performance in writing paragraphs which is mainly quasi-experimental.

Prior to the initiation of the experimental treatment, data pertaining to the dependent variables was gathered through pre-intervention assessments. The outcomes of these pretests were meticulously documented and preserved. Specifically, the pretest results were evaluated according to the rubrics developed by the researcher, which were based on the writing descriptors from the British Council's IELTS writing assessment. The criteria included grammar range and accuracy, cohesion and coherence, lexical resource, and task achievement.

Each of them scored out of five (5) and in total, the rubric marks were added together. Then, the average test scores were divided by five and the total average pretests were retained and later compared with the post-test data after the intervention. Then, the experimental treatment (task-based writing instruction) was given only to this treatment group for twelve weeks. This is to test whether or not the intervention had effects on the group; a posttest was given for this group thinking that in the ideal situation, outcomes attributed to the treatment. A variant of the pretest-posttest design was the interrupted time-series design. A time series was taken at intervals over time. Here, for the treatment group, four pretests (1-4) and four post-test (5-8) parallel to each other's.

The time series used repeated tests both before and after the treatment which in effect, enabled the participants to become their controls which reduced the effects of reactivity. Time series allowed

for trends to be observed and avoided reliance on only one single pretesting and post-testing data collection point. To describe the design diagrammatically, it was shown as follows adopted from (Cohen, 2007):

G1	O1	O2	O3	O4	X	O5	O6	O7	O8

2.2. Study Area

Regarding the research setting, it was carried out in a natural setting where absolute manipulation of independent variables is difficult but hypothesized that the targeted variables would depict the causal relationships. The researcher deliberately selected Ambo University as the location for the study. The university's main campus is situated approximately 114 kilometers west of Finfine, the capital city of the country. It has many departments, and management is one of the departments in the College of Business and Economics. Right at the moment, there were no departments that took the course, and the only department that offered basic writing skills from the Department of English Language and Literature. The participants consisted of second-year management major students who had completed a course on basic writing skills.

The entire group used as representative was forty-three in number. Since they have experience of learning English, they think of writing as the course is about writing tasks. The researcher anticipated positive results from the study, as writing is a fundamental aspect of language learning and students often encounter difficulties in this area. Additionally, conducting the research at the university minimized financial and time limitations that could have impeded the study, given the researcher's familiarity with the institution.

2.3. Paradigm and Approach

In this process of quasi-experimental, a fuller understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships of variables is gained through hypothesis testing, explanations, and predictions (Nguyen, 2019). Researchers who do such kind of inquiry are supposed to explain in quantitative terms how variables interact, shape events, and cause outcomes, and they often develop and test these explanations in the studies (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This framework maintained that reliable

knowledge is based on direct observation or manipulation of natural phenomena through empirical means (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013). The perspective that the researcher upholds in this study is post-positivism which is also referred to as Scientific Method and Empirical Science (Lincoln et al., 2011; Racher & Robinson, 2003). Quasi-experimental research design has been chosen considering the setting of the study, called for a quantitative approach due to the nature of the data and the data analysis techniques. To depict the hypothesized causal relationships among the target variables, post-positivism was the most preferred epistemology that favors scientific endeavor

2.4. Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of second-year management major students from Ambo University, as they were considered a suitable group, aged 18-25. All participants had completed over 13 years of English education and were enrolled in Communicative English Skills courses, ensuring similar proficiency levels. They were selected due to the impracticality of random assignment and their relevance to the research objectives. A comprehensive sampling method was employed to ensure the inclusion of all eligible participants, providing a representative sample for the study (Creswell, 2014; Taherdoost, 2016). The treatment group was drawn from the Department of Management because these students had taken the basic writing skills course, which aligned with the study's focus on the independent variable writing proficiency (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

At that time, the population consisted solely of college students enrolled in basic writing skills courses. This group comprised forty-three (43) individuals and was organized into a single cohort, designated as the treatment group. Initially, 45 students took pretests one and two. However, the researcher excluded two students from the analysis due to their absence from class during the third and fourth tests at normal conditions. Therefore, the final number of respondents whose responses were analyzed was 43. Additionally, the students included in the comprehensive sampling shared similarities in terms of their age, experience in learning English, and living and life background. Their background facilitated the investigation of task-based methods on writing performance.

2.5. Instruments

Paragraph Writing Test

The data was mainly gathered through paragraph writing tests as pretest and posttest. That is, to answer the first research question which was stated "To what extent would task-based writing

instruction (TBWI) improve second-year management major students' overall writing performances on post-intervention compared to pre-intervention?" and to test the respective alternative hypothesis, the researcher used paragraph writing tests both as series of pretests and posttests. During each stage, the students were taught basic writing skills in the classroom, based on tasks designed by the researcher. The contents were full of instructions that the students used to do by themselves; using their own linguistic and non-linguistics resources to perform tasks. That is, they must make do with whatever language they have already and other ways such as gestures to convey meaning. There must be some kind of gap. The gap motivates the exchange of information or opinions. Besides, the student's primary focus must be on meaning. That is, students must be trying to use language rather than to learn it. On top of this, there is the communicative outcome. The task is completed when the outcome is achieved. Completion does not depend on using the language correctly.

The students wrote paragraphs to provide information about the topic and situation on paragraphs writing. Moreover, they instructed or defined the topics they came across. Besides, they were important levels of writing for this level of learners for their mastery. Additionally, since the students were at the university level, they dealt with the basic paragraphs writing course. Hence, paragraphs were selected based on the course contents because students hardly use their linguistic resources to create their paragraphs.

In addition, there were tasks apart from exercises for the students; thus, these tasks helped them to organize their thoughts, follow a plan, spell, and correct grammar. At the pretest stage, pretests were administered by the course instructor before the intervention within two weeks. The first two consecutive pretests were given within the first week and the third and the fourth were given on the second week. That is, the credit hours for one week are three and four two weeks six months; which is four-six hours in total.

Students in the group wrote paragraphs within a series of time intervals repeatedly on their own selected titles because they used their linguistics and non-linguistics and filled the gaps with their opinions than led by their teachers. Thus, at each stage, the instruction considered descriptors or elements of paragraph writing as criteria of observation to see students' performances. The writing considered four stages of writing one after the other as levels of writing. These helped the

researcher for the status of the students in the group in writing proficiency. Then, the intervention was given for this treatment group for eight weeks. That is, for twenty-four hours for the treatment given. The students were asked to write paragraphs on their own selected topics as post-tests for the rest of the time on a series of time intervals and the improvements due to treatment variables were seen.

The time given for the posttests was six hours; that is, three hours within one week and six hours for two weeks similar to the pretest time intervals. Thus, the instructions were given within the tasks they were completed in the classroom. The students had followed the instructions to do the tasks relay on the tests' administration. These tests were administered by the class instructor on the schedule given to him/her within a week. The time assigned for the students to complete each test was forty minutes to 1hour. It depends on the performances of the students.

The instructions were not similar because they seemed routine work rather than tasks that help students with their outcomes. Paragraph writing is commonly used by researchers to investigate students' academic writing improvement due to pedagogical interventions. Paragraph writing is preferred as a data-collecting instrument for paragraph writing because of two main reasons. For one thing, since the students are university students and their writing experience is not that advanced, expecting them to assess their peers' paragraphs is fair. Next, the writing practice and its assessment continuously take place in the classroom, and this makes the choice of paragraph practical.

Because of these reasons, the choice of the paragraph as a test will be appropriate, and the students continuously will write it on different topics. The researcher intended to use the analytic scoring method for the reason that it has the following advantages over the holistic method; 1). It provides valuable diagnostic information (strengths and weaknesses) about a student's writing ability, for it focuses on several dimensions of writing performance.

2) It assumes that students have uneven development of skills in different aspects of writing (i.e. organization, crafting sentences & developing ideas, etc.), and thus it seems more appropriate to be used for second language writers, whose relevant writing skills develop at different rates. 3) It is more reliable because of its several evaluation items that may yield data to make reasonable inferences about the writing ability of students. 4) The analytic scoring scheme is easier for raters to understand and apply the criteria for assessing written work and 5) The analytic scoring rubric is

more appropriate than the holistic scoring rubric to delineate different aspects of writing performance.

Therefore, the student's academic paragraphs' writing tests marked based on the British Council English Language Testing System (IELTS) writing task descriptors (Derseh, 2020) which include Task Achievement, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy. These scales are preferred because of their inclusiveness of different issues: such as content, meaning, organization, and linguistics of the students in academic writing texts. The scale is believed to yield aggregate scores on each component of writing performance: task achievement, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource and vocabulary, and grammar accuracy.

The two raters were selected from the teachers who have specialized in teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). These raters were selected voluntarily and they were given half-day training on how to rate and score the paragraphs using the rubrics on the checklist by the researcher. Then, the two teachers based on the academic writing skills traits (rubrics) mentioned above marked the tests out of 5. Finally, the inter-rater reliability index was calculated through Spearman's correlations (rho), and the value is expected to be not less than .80, which implies the test scores were reliable.

2.6. Data Analysis Techniques

This study employed a quantitative approach to analyze data using statistical methods. Non-parametric tests were chosen due to the non-normal distribution of the data, confirmed through transformations and tests like Shapiro-Wilk. Specifically, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied to assess median differences in pre- and post-intervention scores for paragraph writing performances. Friedman Multiple Comparison Tests were also used to identify combined and separate mean differences in writing components. Effect sizes were measured using partial eta squared.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Comparison in Average Mean/Median Scores of Pretests and Posttests

Non-parametric methods, often termed "distribution-free," are statistical techniques that do not assume specific data distributions, making them ideal for small sample sizes, ordinal data, or when

parametric test assumptions such as normality or homogeneity of variance are unmet. This study employed the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, a non-parametric alternative to the paired t-test, to evaluate differences in paired data. The test is robust against outliers and effective for non-normal distributions, focusing on median differences rather than means. It ranks absolute differences between paired observations, ensuring a reliable analysis for non-ideal datasets.

3.2. The Analyses of the First Research Question Focused on the Extent to Which TBWI Improves Students' Writing Performances

Table 1: Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (Related Samples) of the total Average Scores of Pretests and Posttests

Descriptive statistics			Ranks		Test statistics	
	N	Median	Posttotal-pretotal	N		Posttotal-pretotal
Pretotal	43	14.2500	Negative	1	Z	-5.676
posttotal	43	18.4500	Positive	42	Asymp.Sig	.000
			Ties	0		
			Total	43		

To determine whether there was a significant change in participants' writing performances, following an intervention designed to increase students' writing paragraphs, the participants' pretest scores and the posttest scores had to be compared. However, a paired sample t-test could not be applied because the data did not meet the requirement of normal distribution, so a Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was applied, instead. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant increase in writing test scores following participation in the training program. Thus, the above Table indicated that there were statistically significant improvements due to task-based writing instruction used in the treatments. Therefore, the assumption null hypothesis has been rejected and the alternative hypothesis has been retained.

In a nutshell, the above table indicates that the treatment given by the task-based method on paragraph writing in Ambo University second-year management students through the course Basic Writing Skills shows significant improvements as a whole. The table also indicated that, whatever the questions seemed similar in prior and later achievement; there was a great change after the intervention. The researcher concluded that, even if the treatment seemed manipulation of the independent variables, the cause-effects dialogues showed that there was a change in students'

scores because of the method of instruction. The time series observation gives reliability to the student's scores. Hence, task-based writing instruction gave them confidence, and good performance to write their paragraphs depending on the context. These results were made by intervention material which was adapted by the researcher for the treatment given to the group.

In short, the data analysis of tests emphasized two primary points. Firstly, the group is homogeneous at the beginning of the study because only there is one group. The second one is the significant disparity in mean scores between the groups after the treatment. In addition, the statistical results also indicate the greater improvement of the treatment group who used (TBWI) in their writing paragraphs when compared to before-treatment writing instruction. These results provide the researcher with evidence to come to the discussion on the contribution of TBWI on the student's writing performance. Thus, the average results of the two raters on students' scores from pretests and posttests were compared using the Wilcoxon signed rank test to see whether there were significant improvements in students' writing performance due to the intervention with the help of the task-based method. Finally, the components' differences were observed by using the Friedman test statistics for multiple comparisons.

3.3. The Analyses on the Second Research Question Which Focused on the Extent to Which TBWI Improves Components of Writing Performance

The comparison of prior and subsequent achievements indicates a negative impact, as the results of the post-tests surpass those of the pre-tests. Consequently, the Friedman Test for Multiple Comparisons was employed to analyze the data, and the findings were presented alongside a discussion.

Table 2: Friedman Test for Multiple Comparison of the Observed Significance within Posttests

	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
postGRAavg	1.88			
postCCavg	2.36	76.027	3	.000
postLEREavg	1.85			
postTAavg	3.91			

Further multiple comparisons were conducted to determine the factors contributing to the significant difference observed. Post hoc analysis involved running multiple Wilcoxon Rank Signed Tests, with the results presented in the table. The data indicates that task achievement holds more significance compared to other variables. Additionally, cohesion and coherence exhibit greater significance than grammar range, with the mean of the latter being lower than that of lexical resource. Moreover, the standard deviation for the grammar range is much higher than the mean of lexical resources. Moreover, the mean rank also indicated that there are great differences in task achievement, cohesion and coherence, grammar range and accuracy, and lexical resource consecutively. In summary, the difference is less pronounced when comparing grammar range and accuracy. Therefore, the Friedman multiple comparison test shows that task achievement experienced a significant change in comparison to other variables. It is indicated in the following table.

Table 3: Friedman Multiple Comparison Tests for the Observed Significance Differences on Mean

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
postTAavg	43	4.7709	.28790
postLEREavg	43	4.4430	.28318
postCCavg	43	4.5105	.30011
postGRAavg	43	4.4221	.33261

Table 4. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results on Average posttests Scores with mean rank

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Asymp. Sig.
postGRAavg - postTAavg	Negative Ranks	41	21.10	865.00		
	Positive Ranks	1	38.00	38.00	-5.175[b]	.000
	Ties	1				
	Total	43				
postLEREavg - postTAavg	Negative Ranks	41	21.95	900.00		
	Positive Ranks	1	3.00	3.00	-5.625[b]	.000
	Ties	1				
	Total	43				
postCCavg - postTAavg	Negative Ranks	41	21.00	861.00		
	Positive Ranks	0	.00	.00	-5.590[b]	.000
	Ties	2				
	Total	43				
postCCavg - postLEREavg	Negative Ranks	9	18.56	167.00		
	Positive Ranks	27	18.48	499.00	-2.625[c]	.009
	Ties	7				
	Total	43				
postCCavg -	Negative Ranks	12	13.13	157.50		

postGRAavg	Positive Ranks	23	20.54	472.50	2.590	0.010
	Ties	8				
	Total	43				
postGRAavg - postLEREavg	Negative Ranks	22	22.59	497.00	.	
	Positive Ranks	20	20.30	406.00	572	.568
	Ties	1				
	Total	43				

The results presented in the table are from the Wilcoxon signed rank test, which demonstrated the effects of the task-based method on students' performance in paragraph writing skills. The mean rank for task achievement is significantly higher than that of grammar range and accuracy. However, cohesion and coherence, as well as lexical resources, show negative ranks when compared to task achievement, which has positive ranks. This suggests that lexical resources are significantly related to cohesion and coherence. Furthermore, the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test demonstrate a significant improvement in students' performances due to the intervention provided through task-based instruction. This underscores the importance of these factors in enhancing students' outcomes and addressing the implications of the study findings.

 In summary, the table above shows that the alpha value is below .05, and the mean rank indicates significant differences. Additionally, the strength and relationship between the variables highlight the importance of training for improvement and addressing areas where the mean and median are not significant. Therefore, the mean rank, total mean, and significance between each variable suggest that task-based instruction is beneficial for learners. Consequently, students become more task-oriented rather than relying solely on their teachers. Ultimately, the effectiveness of students' work depends on proper implementation and active student engagement to achieve success in their performance development.

In general, from the mean differences of the weight before treatment and weight after treatment for the scores of the students, the researcher understood that the effect size indicated in grammar range and accuracy (GA=r=.86, CC=r=.849, LeRe=r=.780, and TA=r=.857) better than others dependent variables because it indicated that the effectiveness of the treatment over the test scores. Besides, students' paragraphs' writing coherence and cohesion include organization, spelling, punctuation marks, and ways of using signals in their paragraphs' writing indicated better next to

that task achievement where the students' active engagement was enhanced due to proper implementation of the tasks' instruction method. And lexical resources were the results observed less than others in effective size where it is not uncommon, difficult or fancy words were used.

Moreover, the others like task achievement/response to their questions in proper or well-developed ways and grammar range and accuracy always restricted themselves to grammar and usage and they thought as it was easy and clear. However, the study indicated that the students used a variety of sentences, structures, tenses, and other items to develop their paragraphs even if their engagement was similar to that of other dependent variables.

4. DISCUSSION

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) provides a robust framework for facilitating intentional language learning through meaningful task performance, such as writing. As highlighted by Ellis (2009) and Willis (1996), TBLT shifts the focus from direct instruction of language rules to creating opportunities for learners to acquire language naturally by performing authentic, goal-oriented tasks. This approach positions teachers as facilitators who design and guide learners through task cycles, fostering deeper engagement with the language (Richards, 2006).

The findings of this study strongly support the efficacy of Task-Based Writing Instruction (TBWI) in enhancing students' paragraph writing performance. Throughout the intervention, diverse tasks, cooperative learning activities, and targeted feedback mechanisms created a rich learning environment that motivated participants in the treatment group to engage actively with their writing tasks (Van den Branden, 2006). This structured and dynamic approach allowed learners to develop their skills incrementally, aligning with the theoretical principles of TBLT.

The statistical analysis of pre-test and post-test scores further validates these observations. The pre-test results revealed a general similarity in writing performance between groups, with minor differences in mean scores. However, the post-test results demonstrated a significant improvement in the treatment group's writing performance. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test confirmed statistically significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores, indicating that the treatment group's initial variability had converged, with clear progress attributable to the TBWI intervention (Kafipour et al., 2018; Nguyen, 2019).

This improvement is particularly evident in the increase in median post-test scores for the treatment group. The results underscore the effectiveness of TBWI in enhancing paragraph writing skills by promoting active learning and collaboration. These findings are consistent with prior research emphasizing the positive impact of task-based methodologies in language instruction (Moore, 2018; Dewi et al., 2020).

Moreover, the results address the research objectives by confirming that TBWI significantly impacts writing performance. By integrating task cycles and feedback strategies, TBWI not only improved linguistic accuracy and coherence in students' writing but also encouraged greater motivation and self-efficacy in the writing process. These outcomes reinforce TBLT's role as an innovative and impactful approach to language instruction.

In conclusion, this study highlights the pedagogical value of TBLT in developing students' writing abilities. By providing structured yet flexible opportunities for task engagement, collaboration, and reflective feedback, TBWI proved effective in fostering significant improvements in paragraph writing performance. These findings contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting task-based methods as a practical and learner-centered strategy for enhancing language skills. Future research could explore the long-term effects of TBWI and its applicability to other language skills and contexts.

5. CONCLUSION

The resemblance in scores at the beginning of the study and the significant disparity after the treatment underscore the effectiveness of Task-Based Writing Instruction (TBWI) in improving students' writing performance. By employing focused, meaningful, and communicative tasks, TBWI enabled students to engage deeply with the learning process and demonstrated measurable improvements in their writing skills (Ellis, 2009; Richards, 2006). The study highlights not only the pedagogical benefits of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) but also its ability to foster natural language acquisition by emphasizing task completion over direct instruction.

The use of varied tasks, structured task cycles, cooperative learning opportunities, and iterative feedback created a dynamic and student-centered learning environment. This approach not only

increased student engagement but also supported the development of critical writing competencies, as confirmed by both qualitative observations and quantitative statistical analysis. The marked improvement in the treatment group's post-test scores, compared to their pretest results, provides strong evidence for the success of TBWI in enhancing writing skills. These findings align with previous studies on the efficacy of task-based methodologies in language learning and reaffirm their relevance in addressing foundational skills such as writing.

Moreover, this research underscores the broader implications of integrating TBLT into language instruction. Task-based approaches enhance sustainable learning by helping students actively build understanding and apply their knowledge in real-world situations. The results demonstrate that TBWI is a versatile and effective method for addressing challenges in writing instruction, offering a replicable model for educators seeking to improve student engagement and performance in diverse language learning settings. Thus, the study contributes valuable insights to the field of language education, particularly in the area of basic writing skills, and paves the way for future research on the long-term impacts of task-based pedagogies.

5.1. Limitations

This study has some limitations. First, it utilized a quasi-experimental design with a single treatment group and no control group, which limits the ability to generalize the findings. Second, the sample size was relatively small, comprising 43 management students, and was limited to a single university, reducing the study's external validity. Third, the reliance on a non-parametric test, while appropriate for the data, may not fully capture the nuances of performance variability. Additionally, the study focused only on paragraph writing skills, leaving other aspects of writing proficiency unexplored. Finally, the duration of the intervention (three months) may not reflect the long-term effects of task-based methodologies on writing skills.

5.2. Implication

An important implication for further research that emerges from this study is that task-based research, to be of relevance, has to broaden the base of its scope of investigation. This study about task-based writing certainly has given us useful and usable insights, but by its very controlled nature, it can offer only a limited and limiting perspective on task performance, motivation, and

self-efficacy. At this juncture in the explanation of task-based instruction, we need more classroom-based projects that investigate what instructors and students, in various teaching/ learning contexts, actually do when they are asked to perform tasks in writing as part of their regular classroom activity. Such studies are needed to move from quasi-experiments to the implementation of task-based methods possible and meaningful.

The first implication refers to considering the context more seriously in studying students' performances. The finding of this study indicates that students' performances and actions about task-based writing are affected in a context. Therefore, the results of the finding help us to question the effects of decontextualization on the learning of writing due to task-based method; on performances embedded in their learning. The second implication refers to understanding contextual constraints. In this study, the focus was to analyze the effects of task-based methods on students' paragraph' writing performances in general. In this regard, contexts are factors that contribute to shaping performances.

Therefore, task-based methods and dependent variables (performances) do not necessarily have a cause-effect relationship. It is a relationship where understanding contextual constraints helps in understanding the method. And there could be many factors for contextual constraints that need to be studied in the future. The third implication refers to the concept of presence, which is about students' roles in the writing classes and is important to investigate further in task-based writing studies. As we search for how students' and task-based writing on performances. The concept of presence may prove useful in understanding how students use task-based writing to negotiate their roles in writing classes. The findings of this study have some implications for the performance of students' paragraphs' writing which is based on the task-based method. The results indicate, the relationship between students' performances of task-based writing due to task-based methods. In particular, there was ineffectiveness between task-based method and learners' performances of task-based writing. However, the students as well as instructors did not seem to pay attention to the ineffectiveness. Further studies could focus on how instructors as well as students reflect on the mismatch.

Ethical Issues

The participants of this study were asked permission to take part. They were also informed their information was to be kept confidential and not to be used for other purposes other than for this research study. However, they were not told about the specific paragraph types test to be answered until the intervention was completed. After all, participants gave their informed consent, the classroom paragraphs 'writing test, and the interventions took place. Therefore, the students expressed their informed consent to participate in the study and the findings of the study to be published. The study was approved by the institutional review board. In a nutshell, there is no conflict of interest upon the publication of this research findings.

Authors' contributions

Abera Tsegaye wrote the manuscript. Mulugeta Teka and Zeleke Abebe read and approved the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials

All the data and materials are free and open access. Everyone can use it easily.

Declarations

Competing interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests

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