



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

Developing Students' Descriptive Writing Skills in terms of Content Knowledge at the Higher Secondary School Level: An Experiment with the Task-Based Writing Methodology

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Abstract

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been shown to improve students' language learning including writing skills. It is a methodology used worldwide with very encouraging results. However, this methodology is rarely used in Pakistan. Hence, the purpose of this study was to put TBLT to test in a Higher Secondary School in Swabi, KP, to see if indeed this is the case. The study was designed to focus on developing students' descriptive writing skills with a focus on their content knowledge. The primary objective was to examine the impact of TBLT on student's writing proficiency related to content knowledge, with the null hypothesis positing that no significant correlation exists between TBLT and improved writing skills. The study, a quasi-experimental design, involved 60 male twelfth-grade students divided into experimental and control groups. Descriptive essays were assessed using pre-test and post-test evaluations, graded via a modified rubric based on Jacobs' framework. These assessment tools demonstrated high reliability and validity through inter-rater consistency measures in descriptive writing, instilling confidence in the study's methodology. The statistical analyses, including mean, standard deviation, paired sample t-tests, 95% confidence intervals, significance, and eta squared effect sizes, revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in descriptive writing content knowledge. The research holds significance for advancing English language proficiency of students, fostering motivation for learning. The findings of the study validate the importance and significance of TBLT in language education. The study has practical implications for language education and LT methodologies. These strategies, which include integrating TBLT into educational curricula, providing specialized teacher training, leveraging technology, and addressing contextual and individual learner differences, equip the audience with practical tools to improve language education. Future research suggestions included longitudinal studies, cultural adaptations of TBLT, and refined assessment tools, highlighting the study's potential for further development and contribution to the field.

Keywords: Content knowledge; descriptive writing skills; Higher Secondary School; Jacob's framework; modified rubric, Task-based Language Teaching; TBLT; Writing Skills

Introduction

English plays a central role in Pakistan's education system, acting as a medium of



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

instruction in prestigious institutions and a gateway to social mobility and global opportunities (Channa, 2017). However, challenges such as inadequate English proficiency among teachers and students persist, particularly in non-elite private schools constrained by financial and resource limitations (Turgunova & Abdurahimovna, 2023). Despite these barriers, English remains crucial for accessing global knowledge, unifying a diverse society, and fostering economic and educational advancement (Fareed et al., 2022). However, its dominance exacerbates social divides, with those lacking proficiency facing limited opportunities for upward mobility (Haidar, 2019). The national language strategy emphasizes Urdu for unity while acknowledging English's indispensable role in education and communication (Ali, 2022).

The four core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—are critical for academic and professional success (Andrews, 2008; Klimova, 2014; Komba, 2015; O'Neill & Mallonee, 2015). Listening facilitates comprehension and interpersonal interactions (Husain, 2015), and speaking reflects linguistic competence and supports real-world communication (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2016). Reading fosters intellectual growth, critical thinking, and lifelong learning (Al Badi, 2015; Burns & Siegel, 2018), and writing serves as a powerful tool for articulating complex ideas, enhancing critical thinking, and preserving knowledge (Clement & Murugavel, 2018). Among these, writing holds particular significance for academic and professional contexts, requiring skills such as organization, clarity, and creativity (Whyte et al., 2007; Ebbers, 2008; Hasan & Akhand, 2010; Richmond et al., 2017; Sawyer et al., 2017).

Effective writing instruction includes diverse methods such as process-oriented approaches (Lane et al., 2006; & Kaplan, 2008), genre-based teaching (Nalliveetil & Mahasneh, 2017), collaborative strategies (Gadsby & Sullivan, 2020), and technology-enhanced techniques (Olan & Richmond, 2019), all tailored to learners' needs and contexts (Bagheri & Riasati, 2016; Sekhar & Chakravorty, 2017; Taylor, 2019; & Hodges, 2022). Task-based language Teaching (TBLT) emerges as a dynamic and meaningful approach to language learning (Long & Crookes, 1991; Ionita & Mihaes, 2016), emphasizing real-life tasks to develop linguistic competencies (Prabhu, 1987; Thomas & Reinders, 2015). Structured in three phases—pre-task, task cycle, and post-task (Ellis, 2003; Murphy, 2003; Somawati et al., 2018).

TBLT promotes learner autonomy, which is the ability of learners to take charge of their learning and collaboration, prioritizing communication over grammatical precision (Nunan, 2004; East, 2021). Its adaptability reassures educators and policymakers about its applicability in diverse educational contexts, supporting the development of multiple language skills and making it a modern, effective alternative to traditional models like the Presentation-Practice-Production approach (Shehadeh, 2005; Oxford, 2006; Rahimpour, 2008; Malmir et al., 2011; Kirkgoz, 2014; Long, 2014; Omar et al., 2021). Together, these elements underscore the critical role of English and innovative teaching methodologies in addressing Pakistan's educational challenges and advancing language proficiency (Motlagh et al., 2014; Ellis, 2021).

Literature Review



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

Descriptive Writing

With its transformative power, descriptive writing vividly portrays objects, situations, characters, or emotions. It engages the reader's senses and imagination through meticulous observation and detailed language (Yaacob & Suriyanti, 2016). Incorporating sensory elements, such as visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile experiences, is pivotal. It enhances the immersive quality of the writing and ensures that the reader's senses are fully engaged (Carter, 2015). For instance, a forest description might involve visualizing foliage, hearing birds, smelling earth, feeling crisp air, and touching coarse bark. Figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, and personification, is integral to creating vivid imagery. A metaphor like 'The lake acted as a mirror, faithfully reflecting the mountains above' adds creativity and depth (Coker, 2012). Through its precise vocabulary and details selection, descriptive writing elicits emotional responses that shape the reader's feelings, such as nostalgia or joy (Khusniyah, 2019).

Everyday objects can be transformed into compelling subjects through careful attention to detail (Purnomo, 2014). This writing style often depicts natural settings, like sunsets or characters, presenting their physical attributes, attire, and mannerisms for a vivid portrayal (Agibuay, 2016). Similarly, room descriptions may include furnishings, lighting, and ambiance, while emotions such as happiness are conveyed through physical and internal sensations (Siahaan, 2013). Descriptive writing is pivotal in creative forms like novels, poetry, and short stories, building immersive worlds for readers. It also enhances the impact of articles, blog posts, and advertising by crafting persuasive and memorable depictions of products or experiences (McCarthy, 1998). Through its clarity and sensory depth, descriptive writing fosters an engaging and emotive connection with its audience, inspiring them to hone their writing skills and unleash their creative potential.

Content Knowledge

Content forms the foundation of any written work, shaping its value, impact, and effectiveness across genres such as blogs, academic essays, novels, or reports (Miller et al., 2018). The significance of content choices cannot be overstated. In informative writing, including news articles and reports, content provides crucial information, delivering objective facts and contextual analysis, such as details of political events (Brown & Stephens, 1995). In persuasive or argumentative writing, content supports arguments with evidence, reasoning, and examples, aiming to influence readers' perspectives, as seen in academic discussions on climate change (Urquhart & McIver, 2005). In narrative Writing, content constitutes the plot, characters, settings, and dialogues that bring the storyline to life (Byrnes, 2011). Creative writing leverages imaginative scenarios, vivid descriptions, and metaphorical language to entertain and captivate, as exemplified by poetry that evokes emotions through figurative expressions (Klein & Kirkpatrick, 2010). Educational writing, such as manuals or how-to guides, focuses on systematically delivering instructions to enhance readers' comprehension (Kieft et al., 2006).

Personal essays and blogs use content to reflect the writer's unique voice and perspective. The power of content in shaping the reader's understanding and



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

emotional response underscores its importance, inspiring writers to make thoughtful and impactful content choices in their work. In contrast, digital marketing content, including SEO writing, is tailored to engage specific audiences and optimize search engine rankings through strategic keywords (Zhu, 2004). Business and professional writing, such as emails or proposals, emphasizes clarity and professionalism to meet organizational communication needs (Ruddell, 1997). With its remarkable adaptability, content can be tailored to diverse purposes—informing, persuading, narrating, entertaining, educating, or communicating—while ensuring the writing remains effective and engaging across varied contexts. This versatility and power of content underscore its importance in writing, inspiring writers to harness its potential in their work and feel empowered to use it effectively. Adapting content to different purposes and contexts empowers writers to reach their audience effectively and make a meaningful impact with their writing.

The TBLT Approach

The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach to writing instruction emphasizes authentic, goal-oriented tasks that mirror real-life language applications. By engaging students in purposeful activities, such as composing emails, reports, narratives, or articles, TBLT fosters the development of writing skills within meaningful and contextualized scenarios (Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2006; Skehan, 1996; East, 2021). This methodology prioritizes task completion as the primary objective, with language acquisition emerging as a secondary outcome (Ellis, 2003, 2017). TBLT integrates listening, speaking, and reading with writing, promoting learner autonomy. Learner autonomy refers to the ability of students to take control of their learning, make decisions about what and how they learn, and take responsibility for their learning outcomes. By shifting the teacher's role to that of a facilitator, TBLT encourages learner autonomy. By situating writing tasks within real-world contexts, this approach enhances students' engagement, motivation, and the pragmatic use of language. It also cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving skills, offering benefits beyond language acquisition (Dobler & Burea, 2023).

To implement TBLT effectively in writing instruction, teachers can design challenging and relevant tasks relevant to students' interests and linguistic goals. Activities may involve discussions, preparatory reading, or terminology reviews, followed by task execution individually or collaboratively. Reflection, discussion, and revision enhance the learning experience (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). From Prabhu's Bangalore Project (1979–1984), TBLT is rooted in learner-centered and experiential learning principles. The project demonstrated the effectiveness of interactive, task-based activities in fostering English proficiency, even allowing limited use of students' native language for communication tasks. This pioneering work highlighted the practicality and adaptability of TBLT for diverse educational contexts, such as language learning in a multicultural classroom or professional writing training in a corporate setting.

Framework for TBLT

Jane Willis's framework for Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers a systematic and structured approach to teaching writing skills, emphasizing



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

practical applicability, effective communication, and the integration of fluency and accuracy. This well-regarded methodology is organized into distinct stages, each designed to guide learners through acquiring and refining writing abilities. The **pre-task stage** equips students with the foundational knowledge and skills to undertake the main task. This phase involves introducing the topic, clarifying essential terminology, and providing contextual information through discussions, reading, listening, or analyzing genre exemplars. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding and setting the stage for the task (Willis, 1996). In the **task phase**, students engage in the core activity, such as composing a letter, essay, or report in a specific genre. The focus is on fluidity and effective communication rather than precision, encouraging creative and intentional language use. The teacher observes and supports students without interfering with their writing process (Willis & Willis, 2013).

The **planning phase** allows students to evaluate and organize their work critically. They may summarize their writing, present it, or engage in discussions, receiving linguistic support from the teacher as needed. This stage enhances critical thinking and helps students refine their output (Willis, 2007). During the **reporting stage**, students present their written work to the class through presentations, readings, or discussions. This phase integrates spoken communication with written ideas, allowing students to practice verbalizing their thoughts. Teachers facilitate feedback and provide constructive corrections (Willis, 2021). The **analysis stage** focuses on the form and structure of language, involving activities such as examining grammar, vocabulary, and writing styles. Students actively analyze linguistic and structural elements, with teachers highlighting beneficial patterns and addressing common errors (Willis & Willis, 2013). Finally, the **practice stage** reinforces language elements identified during analysis. Students participate in targeted exercises to solidify their understanding while the teacher provides structured practice opportunities (Willis, 1996).

Empirical Studies on Task-Based Writing Methodology

Extensive research highlights the efficacy of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing students' writing proficiency across diverse contexts and educational levels. Studies have consistently shown improvements in lexical range, grammatical accuracy, syntactic structures, and writing styles (Sholihah, 2011; Gonzalez & Pinzon, 2019; Raut, 2019). TBLT also fosters students' motivation, confidence, and engagement in writing tasks, offering a student-centered approach that aligns well with active learning paradigms. Empirical investigations reveal the adaptability of TBLT to various writing genres, including essays, narratives, argumentative paragraphs, and descriptive texts. For instance, Gonzalez and Pinzon (2019) and Raut (2019) demonstrated notable advancements in high school students' writing skills through task-oriented workshops, while Milarisa (2019) emphasized significant improvements in narrative text composition. Similarly, Irawan (2019) highlighted the integration of a genre-based approach with TBLT, leading to superior outcomes in EFL learners' writing abilities. Further, TBLT's application extends to higher education, with Liu and Yao (2019) documenting enhanced critical thinking and cooperative writing skills among college students.



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

Mahdi (2020) and Su (2020) displayed TBLT's potential to foster advanced writing proficiency in argumentative and descriptive genres through hybrid teaching models, combining traditional methods with digital tools like SPOCs. These studies underline TBLT's role in cultivating higher-order thinking and linguistic competencies in adult learners. Comparative studies provide valuable insights into TBLT's effectiveness relative to other methodologies. Marashi and Mirghafari (2019) and Puspitasari (2020) found TBLT more impactful than traditional approaches, particularly when integrated with content-based or inquiry-based instruction. Ratnawati (2019) emphasized teachers' pivotal role in designing and implementing TBLT tasks, significantly enhancing students' writing outcomes in secondary schools. Technological integration within TBLT has also been explored, as shown by Masalmh and Farrah (2019), who reported improved writing skills and attitudes in online settings. Additionally, combining TBLT with digital platforms and hybrid methods fosters collaboration, creativity, and engagement, further reinforcing its applicability in modern pedagogical contexts.

Pourmandnia et al. (2021) demonstrated that TBLT significantly improves EFL learners' referential and expressive writing skills, utilizing IELTS-based assessments. Pham et al. (2021) corroborated these findings, emphasizing enhanced fluency and accuracy in writing following a 14-week TBLT intervention. Similarly, Hussain et al. (2022) observed notable improvements in narrative writing among 8th graders, advocating for TBLT's broader application in educational settings. Further evidence from Farhatunnisa (2021) confirmed TBLT's efficacy in classroom action research, while Urrahmi (2022) highlighted its adaptability in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) contexts, notably for business students. Complementary studies by Ruenphol (2021) and Darrashiri and Mazdayasna (2021) reported improved summarization skills and enhanced oral and written proficiency, suggesting TBLT's multidimensional benefits.

The integration of technology with TBLT, as examined by Ahmad et al. (2021) and Robillos and Bustos (2023), demonstrated its effectiveness in fostering engagement, collaboration, and proficiency, even in blended or online learning environments. Wu (2021) highlighted TBLT's utility in technical communication courses, emphasizing its role in fostering analytical writing skills. Additionally, studies by Riska (2021) and Hastuti (2021) emphasized TBLT's success in recounting and descriptive writing, though challenges such as task complexity and time management were noted. Research by Amjad (2021) and Djoudi (2021) underscored the need for innovative instructional strategies and task customization to maximize TBLT's potential. Gender-specific and motivation-linked impacts were explored by Rasouli and Nouri (2021) and Afini et al. (2021), revealing nuanced influences on writing fluency and engagement. Recent studies expanded TBLT's scope, examining its application in Chinese language education (Ranathunga, 2021), scientific Writing (Hasbi et al., 2022), and argumentative essay composition (Bagheridoust & Al-Sultani, 2023). These studies underscored TBLT's adaptability across languages and genres. Jahan and Shakir (2022) and Shehata (2023) highlighted TBLT's comprehensive impact on multiple language skills, fostering a holistic learning environment. Challenges such as cultural and educational variances (Nowroozadeh et al., 2022) and pandemic-related constraints (Urrahmi, 2022) have prompted calls for contextual adaptation and



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

enhanced teacher training. Nevertheless, studies consistently affirm TBLT's capacity to enhance writing proficiency, engagement, and learner autonomy.

A synthesis of existing research underscores the wide-ranging application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing writing proficiency across diverse age groups, educational levels, and cultural contexts. However, a significant research gap exists in its application to improve the descriptive writing skills of higher secondary school students, particularly concerning content knowledge. This gap is not just a void in the literature but a crucial area that needs immediate attention. The present study aimed to fill this gap by focusing on the Swabi district of Pakistan, a region with unique cultural, linguistic, and educational characteristics that may influence the effectiveness of TBLT. These unique characteristics include a rich linguistic diversity, a strong cultural heritage, and a specific educational system. Despite numerous studies on TBLT's impact on narrative and argumentative writing, limited research has explored its efficacy in fostering descriptive writing skills at the higher secondary school level. This study emphasized integrating content knowledge into TBLT, an often-overlooked component in prior investigations, by focusing on the distinct educational setting of Swabi. The research aimed to provide context-specific insights that contribute to developing tailored instructional strategies. Employing an experimental methodology, this study compared the outcomes of TBLT with traditional teaching methods to evaluate its effectiveness in improving descriptive writing. The findings of this research hold significance for educators and policymakers, offering evidence-based recommendations for implementing TBLT in settings with comparable linguistic and cultural dynamics. This study can contribute to the broader discourse on TBLT's potential to transform writing instruction in underexplored geographical and educational environments by addressing the research gap in descriptive writing and content knowledge.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a robust quasi-experimental design utilizing a pre-test and post-test methodology to evaluate the impact of task-based writing instruction on enhancing descriptive writing skills in terms of content knowledge among higher secondary school students in the Swabi district. The independent variable in this study was the task-based writing methodology applied to the experimental group. In contrast, the dependent variables were the pre-test and post-test scores, which measure students' progress in descriptive writing. Participants were assigned to either the experimental group, which received the task-based intervention, or the control group, which followed traditional teaching methods. Both groups underwent pre-tests to assess their initial writing proficiency, followed by the implementation of the intervention. Post-tests were subsequently administered to measure improvements in descriptive writing skills. This quasi-experimental approach allowed for a comparative analysis between the two groups, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of task-based writing instruction in a real-world educational setting (Creswell, 2018). The thoroughness of the research design, including the careful selection of participants based on their rank in the school admission merit list, their English grades, and performance on a preliminary essay test, and the use of a robust



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

assessment tool, a modified rubric based on Jacobs' (1981) framework, instills confidence in the study's methodology and the reliability of its findings.

The Population of the Study

The study population comprised male twelfth-grade students from twenty-eight government higher secondary schools in the Swabi district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The research was conducted for one year.

Research Participants

The study involved a sample of 60 male twelfth-grade students from a school in Swabi district, aged between 17 and 18. The participants were divided into an experimental group of 30 students and a control group of 30 students, selected through a rigorous purposive or convenient sampling process to ensure alignment with the study's objective. To ensure representativeness and reliability, the students were initially chosen based on their rank in the school admission merit list, then further grouped by their English grades and performance on a preliminary essay test. The study aimed to enhance external validity by selecting students who reflect the demographic features of the Swabi district, ensuring that the findings applied to a broader population of higher secondary school students. By carefully balancing the experimental and control groups, the study enhanced internal and external validity, making its results more credible and relevant to educational practices in similar contexts.

Research Instrumentation

This study utilized a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design to assess the development of descriptive writing skills among higher secondary school students. The assessment tools for both tests consisted of descriptive essays evaluated using a modified rubric based on Jacobs' (1981) framework. The rubric covered a primary writing domain: Content knowledge, which evaluated the topic's scope, relevance, and depth of understanding. The rubric was pilot-tested on non-participating students to ensure its reliability, and inter-rater reliability was measured to ensure consistency in scoring. Its focus on descriptive writing and comprehensive evaluation framework supported the validity and reliability of the assessment process. The rubric's specific criteria included the extent and importance of the topic, relevance to the topic, and subject knowledge of the topic, providing a transparent and systematic approach to evaluating the students' writing skills.

Research Procedure

This study employed a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design to assess the development of descriptive writing skills among 60 male students aged 17-18 from Swabi. Participants were divided into an experimental group (30 students) and a control group (30 students). The study spanned one year and used a modified rubric based on Jacobs (1981) to assess pre- and post-test descriptive essays. The experimental group received a task-based writing intervention, while the control group underwent traditional instruction. The study's integrity was upheld through control measures meticulously designed to be fair and unbiased, such as selecting participants with comparable initial writing proficiency and



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

using a standardized protocol for essay assessment. These measures ensure that the observed differences in writing skills could be attributed to the intervention rather than pre-existing factors. A purposeful three-fold assignment procedure further minimized potential biases. The study's design, which provided a robust framework for evaluating the effectiveness of task-based writing methodology, instills confidence in the study's methodology. This robust framework enhances the study's credibility and potential impact on writing instruction and assessment.

Research Hypothesis

Based on the existing literature, which suggests that task-based writing approaches can be practical in developing students' writing skills, and the nature of the task-based writing approach, which involves assigning students specific writing tasks that require them to apply their content knowledge descriptively, the current study hypothesized that there is no significant correlation between the task-based writing approach and the development of descriptive writing skills in presenting content knowledge.

Data Analysis

This study utilized statistical methods, including descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests, to analyze the pre-test and post-test results of students' descriptive writing skills. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were employed to summarize the average performance and variability in scores within the experimental and control groups. The paired sample t-test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the average scores between the pre-test and post-test for each group, assessing the impact of the task-based writing intervention. The test was appropriate for paired data, where the same participants were assessed at both stages. The normal distribution of score differences supports the validity of the t-test, which is in line with the central limit theorem. To further enhance the interpretation of results, effect sizes were presented alongside statistical significance, providing a clearer understanding of the practical implications of the intervention. This information equips educators and researchers with valuable insights into the real-world benefits of task-based writing methodology, enhancing their ability to improve students' writing skills and making them feel informed about the study's practical implications.

Results and Discussion

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The mean scores and the standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test of experimental and control groups were computed to evaluate the dispersion of scores within each group, as shown in Table 1.1:

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for the pre-test and post-test for the experimental and control group (Content knowledge)

| Paired Statistics | Experimental Group | Control Group |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Pre-test Mean score (X) | 16.10 | 16.20 |
| Post-test Mean score (X) | 24.50 | 20.40 |
| Difference of Mean scores (D) | 08.40 | 04.20 |
| Pre-test SD (S) | 01.49 | 01.64 |
| Post-test SD (S) | 01.69 | 01.71 |
| Difference of SD (S) | 0.20 | 0.07 |

Table 1.1 presents the results for both the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group, the pre-test mean score is 16.10 (SD = 1.49), indicating that the scores are relatively concentrated around the mean. In contrast, the post-test mean score rises to 24.50 (SD = 1.69), showing a slightly broader range of scores. The mean score difference is 8.40, with a marginal increase in standard deviation (0.20).

For the control group, the pre-test mean score is 16.20 (SD = 1.64), reflecting similar variability to the experimental group's pre-test scores. The post-test mean score increases to 20.40 (SD = 1.71), exhibiting a slightly higher spread than the experimental group's post-test. The mean score difference is 4.20, with a minimal increase in standard deviation (0.07). Overall, both groups demonstrated notable variability in their scores. However, it is crucial to emphasize that the experimental group's more substantial improvement in descriptive writing skills, as evidenced by the mean score difference of 8.40, is a significant and noteworthy finding of this study.

Inferential Statistics

The study employed t-tests to assess whether the differences between pre-test and post-test mean scores for each group were statistically significant or merely due to random variation. The experimental group demonstrated a mean post-test score higher than the pre-test, with a mean difference of 8.40. The t-test was used to evaluate the likelihood of such a difference occurring by chance, assuming no effect from the intervention (task-based writing methodology). The p-value obtained from the t-test was below the significance level (typically 0.05), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This robustly suggests that the observed difference is unlikely due to random factors, thus providing compelling evidence for the effectiveness of the intervention.

Table 2: T-tests, degree of freedom, 5% Confidence Interval, Significance, and Eta Squared for the pre-test and post-test for the experimental and control group (Content knowledge)

| Paired Sample | Paired Statistics | | Paired Differences | t | df | Sig. | Eta Squared |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|---|----|------|-------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | | | | | |
| | | | 5% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |



| | | | Upp er | Low er | | | | | |
|---|------|-------|-----------|-----------|------|------|----|-----|-------|
| Experime ntal Pre- test | 16.1 | 01.49 | 08.4 | 09.2 | 07.5 | 27.2 | 29 | 0.8 | 0.874 |
| Experime ntal Post- test | 24.5 | 01.69 | | | | | | | |
| Control Pre-test | 16.2 | 01.64 | 04.2 | 05.0 | 03.3 | 13.4 | 29 | 0.8 | 0.612 |
| Control Post-test | 20.4 | 01.71 | | | | | | | |

Paired sample t-tests were conducted for both the experimental and control groups to assess the statistical significance of the differences in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test. The computed t-values for the experimental and control groups were 27.27 and 13.41, respectively. These values were compared to the critical t-value of ± 2.045 ($\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 29$), revealing statistically significant differences for both groups. A 95% confidence interval was calculated for each group's mean score difference. For the experimental group, the interval was (7.56 and 9.24), and for the control group, it was (3.32 and 5.08), indicating that both groups showed significant improvements.

Furthermore, effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d, yielding values of 5.27 for the experimental group and 2.51 for the control group. Eta squared (η^2) values were derived from these results, showing an effect size of 0.874 for the experimental group and 0.612 for the control group. These findings demonstrated that the task-based writing methodology had a large and statistically significant impact on the experimental group's descriptive writing skills, with the control group also showing notable improvements.

Discussion

Interpretation of Results

This study investigated the effectiveness of a task-based writing approach in developing descriptive writing skills in terms of content knowledge. The main findings revealed significant improvements in mean scores for the experimental and control groups. The experimental group showed a substantial increase in their mean score from 16.10 (pre-test) to 24.50 (post-test), with a difference of 8.40 points, indicating a strong positive impact of the task-based methodology. In contrast, under the traditional PPP-based (Presentation, Practice, Production) methodology, the control group showed a more modest improvement of 4.20 points, from 16.20 to 20.40. Statistical analysis, including paired sample t-tests, confirmed that the differences in mean scores were statistically significant.

The experimental group's improvements were more pronounced, with a 95% confidence interval for the mean score difference ranging from 7.56 to 9.24, compared to the control group's interval of 3.32 to 5.08. The non-overlapping confidence intervals further reinforced the significant differences between the groups. Effect size measurements, including eta squared (η^2), indicated that 87.4% of the variability in the experimental group's improvement could be attributed to the task-based writing methodology, while 61.2% of the



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

improvement in the control group was due to the PPP-based approach. These findings underscore the substantial effect of the task-based approach on enhancing descriptive writing skills, particularly in presenting content knowledge, and demonstrate the methodology's superior efficacy compared to traditional instructional strategies.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The current study's findings align seamlessly with the broader body of research on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), confirming its substantial impact on enhancing students' writing skills across diverse educational contexts. Consistent with previous studies, the research highlights improvements in various writing aspects, including vocabulary, grammar, syntax, coherence, and organization. TBLT is emphasized for fostering student engagement, motivation, collaboration, and active participation throughout the writing process. While the study reaffirms the benefits of TBLT, it also acknowledges that contextual factors, participant characteristics, and the specific implementation of TBLT can influence its effectiveness. This alignment with existing literature reassures the audience of the robustness of the study's findings and the reliability of the task-based approach. The research adds valuable insights to the existing literature, drawing comparisons with studies that illustrate similarities and discrepancies in results.

Notably, the findings align with those of Jahan and Shakir (2022), Hasbi et al. (2022), Thirakunkovit and Boonyaparakob (2022), and Shomi (2022), all of which support the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing various writing skills, student engagement, and academic performance, including in online and collaborative learning settings. The study also concurs with recent research by Robillos and Bustos (2023), Zaghlool et al. (2023), Chaouchi and Bahloul (2023), and others, indicating TBLT's positive impact on writing proficiency, particularly in the context of technology-enhanced and online learning environments. However, it contrasts with studies such as those by Nowroozzadeh et al. (2022) and Urrahmi (2022), which did not find significant improvements in specific writing skills during certain conditions, like news article writing or the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implications

The results of this study have significant implications for both the hypothesis and its relevance to the research objective, as well as their alignment with existing literature and theoretical frameworks. The rejection of the null hypothesis—stating that there is no significant relationship between the task-based writing approach and the improvement of descriptive writing skills in content knowledge—is a significant finding that underscores the practical applications of the task-based writing methodology in enhancing the descriptive writing abilities of higher secondary school students. The observed improvement in descriptive writing skills from the pre-test to the post-test suggests that task-based writing tasks successfully facilitate students' ability to express content knowledge through written descriptions. This study provides empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of task-based writing methodologies in improving descriptive writing skills, directly achieving the research objective. The findings align with



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

prior research highlighting task-based approaches' positive impact on language acquisition and competency development. These approaches offer students authentic, real-world opportunities to apply language skills in meaningful contexts, fostering linguistic and cognitive growth. Furthermore, the study draws on key theoretical frameworks, such as task-based learning theory and writing process theory, to explain the mechanisms through which task-based writing methods enhance descriptive writing. The results of this study provide empirical validation of these frameworks, particularly in the context of teaching descriptive writing, and underscore the potential impact of the task-based approach on language education and writing instruction.

Limitations

It is important to note that while this study provides valuable insights, it also has some limitations that could affect the generalizability of the results. The sample size of 30 participants per group is relatively small, which may limit the ability to apply the findings to a larger population of higher secondary school students. Furthermore, the study only includes male students from a specific district, which could restrict the applicability of the results to more diverse student populations. The one-year duration of the study may not fully capture the long-term effects of the task-based writing methodology on students' descriptive writing abilities, leaving the sustainability of the improvements uncertain. Additionally, the study uses the paired sample t-test, which assumes that the differences between pre-test and post-test scores follow a normal distribution within each group. Any deviations from this assumption, such as non-normality or outliers, could compromise the results' validity. Similarly, the t-test also assumes homogeneity of variance between groups and the independence of paired observations, both of which, if violated, could affect the accuracy and precision of the test outcomes. Despite these limitations, the experimental group showed significant improvements in descriptive writing, suggesting that the task-based writing methodology effectively enhances students' ability to express their content knowledge through written descriptions. These findings support the efficacy of task-based writing approaches in improving descriptive writing skills among secondary school students, which aligns with the study's research objective.

Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and its impact on writing proficiency, revealing significant improvements in vocabulary, grammar, syntax, coherence, and organization. TBLT fosters language development and aligns with existing literature, confirming its effectiveness by emphasizing real-world application, collaborative learning, and flexible task design. The study highlights the importance of contextual factors, cultural sensitivity, and individualized implementation, advocating for student-centered and inclusive approaches. Practical recommendations include integrating TBLT into curricula, enhancing teacher training, leveraging technology, and addressing diverse learner needs. It also identifies future research opportunities, such as examining TBLT's long-term effects, individual learner differences, and cultural adaptations, which can further enhance the



Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

methodology. The study advances TBLT as a transformative methodology, offering actionable insights for educators, institutions, and policymakers to promote writing proficiency and refine language teaching practices.

Recommendations

This study highlights the transformative impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on writing proficiency and offers actionable recommendations for educators, institutions, and policymakers to enhance language education. It advocates for integrating TBLT into curricula, emphasizing real-world, engaging writing tasks tailored to diverse learning styles and cultural contexts. Professional development for teachers, customized assignments, and leveraging technology—such as online platforms and multimedia tools—are recommended to foster inclusivity and dynamic learning environments. The study underscores the crucial role of technology in TBLT, as it can provide interactive and engaging learning experiences, foster inclusivity, and facilitate dynamic learning environments. Continuous assessment, peer reviews, and reflective practices are emphasized to ensure ongoing improvement and student autonomy. The study underscores the need for longitudinal research, collaboration across disciplines, and funding to refine TBLT approaches and evaluate their long-term effectiveness. Disseminating findings through various media can inspire broader adoption, while resource allocation for technology and training programs ensures sustainable implementation. By addressing these elements, TBLT emerges as a student-centered, adaptable methodology that can revolutionize writing instruction and contribute to the advancement of language education.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) identifies crucial areas for further exploration, emphasizing its potential to transform language education. Future studies should investigate TBLT's long-term effects on writing proficiency, individual learner differences, and the role of teacher training in successful implementation. Examining cultural adaptation and integrating technology, such as digital tools and multimedia resources, can enhance TBLT's efficacy across diverse contexts. Research into task complexity, sequencing, and TBLT's impact on metacognitive skills, motivation, and self-regulation can deepen our understanding of its transformative potential. Additionally, exploring TBLT's influence on multiple language skills—writing, speaking, listening, and reading—can offer a holistic view of language development. Tailoring TBLT for diverse learner groups, including those with varied abilities or language backgrounds, and developing innovative, authentic assessment methods aligned with TBLT principles are critical to advancing its effectiveness. This rich array of research possibilities underscores TBLT's promise as a dynamic, student-centered approach that fosters meaningful language learning and skill development.

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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Vol. 3 No. 1 (January) (2025)

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