Observing the Effectiveness of Task Based Approach in Teaching Narrative Essay at a Private University

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Abstract
Writing is one of the most challenging skills of English language. Learners in Pakistan seem unable to master this skill even after years of using English as an official/second language. The focus of this research was to prove that within task-based learning (TBL) framework, language learners engage in purposeful, problem-oriented, and outcome-driven tasks that yield much better results as compared to traditional teaching methods which often fail to generate the desired output. The aim of this research was to prove that Task Based Approach is quite effective and successful in teaching narrative essay writing with an only disadvantage of time consumption. This study resorted to semi-structured interviews and post-test for data collection targeting the undergraduate students in Pakistan. This action research used purposive sampling and employed qualitative research design since the data comprised of both; final drafts of narrative essays and open-ended interviews. The data collected in the post-task phase i.e. the narrative essays were assessed via writing assessment rubrics presented in the IELTS guide for the teachers (2015). The bands were awarded on the basis of four parameters: task achievement, cohesion and coherence, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy. The results delineated that majority of students achieved 5 bands and an overall improvement was observed in the narrative writing skills of students. In the same stead, the students in interview presented the view that Task Based Approach was much more successful in teaching them narrative essay writing.

Keywords: task-based approach, narrative essay writing, task-based learning, task

1. Introduction
The treatment of English language within the Pakistani context evidently demonstrates its dominance and control (Rahman & Sagar, 2015). A sound English learner must possess an equal ability in all skills of language; however, the skill of writing is one of immense importance, and demands a lot of endeavors on the part of the learner if one wishes to improve it. Also, teaching writing requires the employment of several distinct methodologies.

When compared with other fundamental skills such as listening, speaking and reading, writing is the most difficult skill because it requires writers to have a great deal of lexical and syntactic knowledge as well as principles of organization in L2 to produce a good writing (Tangpermpoon, 2008).

The absence of Task Based Approach from the canvas of English Language Teaching has led to a huge gap in transforming the classrooms into learner-centered. Within Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL), learning is cultivated through asking the learner to do a series of activities which finally leads to the accomplishment of the task. TBLL helps language learners get rid of learning language with a lack of context; instead it utilizes language as an instrument to perform real-world i.e. authentic tasks. While completing the task, the learner is forced to use language in the actual context, which grants authenticity to learning. By proving the effectiveness of Task Based Approach, this study will serve as a guideline for teachers to employ task-based approach in teaching narrative essay writing. Furthermore, it will also benefit students as the activities utilized in Task Based Approach are very interesting and helpful in developing creativity within learners. This study will also serve as a guideline for any researcher who wishes to pursue research on this topic along with curriculum designers since they can identify the advantages of Task Based Approach in teaching writing skills.

Kareem (2013) also highlighted writing as a complicated skill which has to operate in unison with numerous
other language skills, like planning, organizing, etc. along with developing cognitive abilities in the learners. The design of a task-based lesson involves consideration of the stages or components of a lesson that has task as its principal component. These phases reflect the chronology of a task-based lesson i.e. the pre-task, the during-task and the post-task phase. However, only the during-task phase is obligatory in the task-based teaching. The rest of the two phases are only supportive in comparison, thus enabling the course instructor to judge the outcome of the task-based lesson. Thus, minimally a task-based lesson consists of the students just performing a task.

The last decennial of the 20th century led to the recognition of Task-Based Approach (TBA) within the domain of ELT. It became the focal point of research and grasped the attention of several eminent intellectuals leading to a large number of investigative studies (Sanchez, 2004). However, there is a noticeable gap of action research in this domain. There might be several reasons for this such as: the hardships in the using this approach within a classroom, the predicament in expanding the materials required for the implementation of this approach and a dearth of guides related to it. All of these factors collectively lead to the fact that TBA appears to be missing from the scene of English language learning and teaching.

In his other works, (Sanchez, 1992, 1997) has illustrated the fact that language teaching was previously based on two approaches i.e., grammatical approach and conversational approach. Both of them appeared to be in a state of constant tension with one another. On the other hand, TBA is not a secluded methodology in itself. Therefore, it can only be fully comprehended if viewed in comparison with the previous methods of communication. Thus, a little historical information is required to comprehend this approach.

Within Pakistan, a lack of task-based teaching is observed in general. For the last 70 years we have been teaching all the four skills of language via the traditional approach, even though the research demonstrates the effectiveness of task-based approach. The present study will be significant because there is a dearth of research on teaching narrative writing using TBLT approach. Also, teaching essay writing serves to be a challenge for the ELTs and this approach will ease the process of teachers’ planning. Moreover, the research studies utilizing this approach were majorly focused on teaching generalized skills of writing and speaking through TBLT approach. Specifically, Narrative writing was not addressed in previous research studies at large. This generated a research gap for the researchers to conduct research in this arena.

This action research therefore, serves as a model for the educators in Pakistan that will elaborate the effects of the task-based approach on the students when they use it for learning writing. Furthermore, this research will also prove that task-based approach is extremely effective in teaching writing. Additionally, TBLT approach will also facilitate the teaching of other kinds of essays. It will also contribute as a sample for teaching narrative writing for the English language teachers (ELTs) and convince the policy makers, curriculum developers and syllabus designers to include this approach within the curriculum since it will be beneficial for both, teachers and students.

1.1 Importance of Task Based Approach in Language Learning

The ‘Bangalore Project’ (Prabhu, 1987) served as the basis of evolution of Task Based Approach. This project often utilizes the term ‘task’ which attributes to the specific type of acts performed within the classroom. Such acts were particularly fixated on the procedure of doing things (how) instead of placing the importance on content (what) as was mostly done in the techniques of teaching in that decennial. The main aim of this project was to cultivate grammatical competence along with enabling the learner to communicate effectively. Furthermore, it was also assumed that developing grammatical competence was dependent upon several ‘internal self-regulating processes’ which would later on support in delivering the meaning in ‘favorable condition’.

According to this project, the biggest duty of a language teacher was to develop such situations for the language learners which provide them with appropriate purposeful encounters. Henceforth, any binding of following a pre-prescribed formal syllabus was eliminated.

Vygotsky (1962, 1978) regards language as a happening triggered by the society. Language is in fact a social event via which an individual advances his skill while residing in the society. Thus, according to him, language is not the outcome of secluded learning; rather it is dependent on the social interactions. Furthermore, the ability to produce language is innate within the human brain for the sole purpose of communication with the exterior world. Every child distinctly builds their individual personalities via collaboration and contradiction with their surroundings and especially with other humans around them. Additionally, Vygotsky (1962) also believes that thought being completely distinct from language, only develops when interaction turns into monologue. Using monologue, children interact with themselves and develop their language skill and in the second phase they polish their communication skills via interaction with the society. Thus, in the light of Vygotskyan assumptions interaction is the basis of language learning since language is purely based on society.
There is a wide difference in the practical and theoretical framework within Task Based Approach. The review of literature available on this subject reveals that TBA is dictated by very weak doctrines along with the fact that every individual defines TBA in view of a distinct yardstick. Furthermore, the implementation of TBA is distinct and varies according to every classroom and situation. Several scholars such as Prabhu (1987), Candlin (1987), Breen (1987), Longs and Crookes (1992), etc. have defined the word task in extremely distinct ways and the major question encompassing TBA appears to be if the differences amongst the researchers’ perspectives are based on the fundamental differences within the tasks.

Tasks are truly defined in several different ways and in general they are illustrated to possess common characteristics. However, two prominent characteristics are highlighted which are closely linked with the proceedings of the project: the accomplishment of task and a thought process while carrying out the task. The activity itself granted the control of the classroom to the instructor raising a bug question on learners’ autonomy which Prabhu (1987) focused on. Long (1985) described task in view of the daily activities performed by the people in real life; however, one needs to adapt these real-world tasks into the classroom environment where they are neither beneficial nor possible to carry out. Thus, the tasks performed within a classroom need to be ‘pedagogic’ in nature and Nunan (1989) proposed such a definition of task which is much fixated on the classroom of language:

“A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interaction in the target language; while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (Nunan, 1989, p. 10).

Thus, the different definitions of task presented by different researchers show that there are many outlooks to this issue. Furthermore, this difference in opinion amongst the intellectuals may be because every individual is looking at task from their own distinct prior concepts regarding the language teaching methodology. This results in defining the object of study in a different way leading to distinct outcomes.

The real-world tasks and pedagogic tasks are not to be likened; the ones carried out in real world situations are mostly not transferable to the pedagogical scenarios due to the lack of situational settings commonly available in the real word. Therefore, in a language classroom the points of focus are the activities that help in developing linguistic communication whether oral or written.

In Pakistan, writing pedagogy is sharply and noticeably endangered because of many advocates. This danger is caused majorly due to the lack of available resources for teachers and students, scarcity of proficient teachers, overburdened classrooms along with the utilization of conventional methodology for teaching writing of English Language (Zaki, Rashidi, & Kazmi, 2013). Therefore, there is a dire need of alternative strategies which might serve to be beneficial for the learners as well as teachers. One of such models is Task Based Approach also referred to as Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) when practiced within a language classroom. In the same stead, Ahmed and Bidin (2016) justified the use of TBLT showing that its utilization in an English language classroom enhances the writing skills of ESL learners to a great degree. This research study deems to answer the following research questions:

Q1. What are the perceptions of intermediate learners towards TBLT approach?

Q2. Does task-based language teaching approach serve to be more effective or appropriate for teaching narrative writing in English language?

1.2 Literature Review

No practical implementation of Task based approach appears within the Pakistani educational context. The traditional notions of syllabus are utilized for delivering content and the pedagogical approaches are still in the traditional phase. Therefore, task-based syllabus can play an important role in developing students’ Knowledge about Language (KAL).

1.2.1 Task

Wills (1996) said, “Tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome” (p. 23).

Ellis (2003) expounded “A task requires personal information to be exchanged, or a problem to be solved, or a collective judgment to be made and bears a relationship to things that happen outside the classroom” (p. 38).

In a nutshell, task is an activity designed for a specific purpose or construct in teaching. Its aim is to achieve the objectives effectively within a small span of time. It enables the student to get better understanding of the taught content via organized stages.

1.2.2 Framework of the Task-based Approach

A task-based approach is a learner centered approach in which the teacher works as a facilitator rather than an authoritarian and creates a conducive learning environment for the students. Nunan (2006) mentioned five characteristics of the task-based approach in his study:

1) Meaning is primary.
2) Learners are not provided with restated activities.
3) There is some relevant relationship to real-world activities in it.
4) The completion of task has major considerations.
5) The achievement of the outcomes is assessed through given tasks.

While implementation of a task-based approach, the topics are designed by the instructors and are based on needs and expectations of learners. They also incorporate the learning goals. Willis (1996) emphasized on the selection of such types of tasks as an activity for teaching i.e., listing, matching, ordering/sorting, comparing/contrasting, problem solving, sharing personal experiences and other creative tasks/projects.

The topic selected for teaching students was constructed under 3 phases. Following table provides a brief picture of the plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-task</td>
<td>Introduce the topic and prepare students to</td>
<td>Observe model of the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perform the task</td>
<td>Activate topic schema</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Task planning opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During</td>
<td>Undertake and execute the actual task</td>
<td>Provide students data needed to complete the task</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor monitoring of student performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-task</td>
<td>Opportunity to repeat or expand task</td>
<td>Student presentation and other public performances of task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allow reflection of task</td>
<td>Report summarizing task outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the recent years’ research has sparked interest towards task-based language learning and teaching (Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1996, 1998; Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2000; Ellis, 2000, 2006). All the aforementioned studies have been carried out in different Asian and Western contexts. Wills (1996) presented a three-step sequence of Task- based approach for addressing underlying TBT principles. Additionally, Skehen (1996, 1998) explored pedagogical structure and future dimensions of TBA and Ellis (2006) elaborated the utilization of tasks in TBA within actual lesson plans. This study also explained how this pedagogical competency can be utilized by language teachers.

Likewise, Sofia (2013) incorporated TBL approach in teaching technical writing to engineering students, which resulted in enhanced writing skills of students. Similarly, Narjeed and Sayyed (2013) identified the pre-task step of this approach as an effective strategy for developing writing ability while accomplishing personal or decision-making tasks among EFL learners. On the contrary, Linglay (2006) found that the same approach has limited practice within the Canadian context.

1.2.3 Modes of Writing

Writing among other skills of language is considered as the most challenging in terms of adoption or adaptation. Kim and Kim (2005) researched that EFL learners mostly face “time constraints in learning writing” (p. 68). In
Pakistan, the students are facing the same problem. The curricula of schools and colleges have a long history of practicing traditional language teaching methods. Many genres are being practiced at different levels of education for a long time (Blicblau, Mc Manus, & Prince, 2009) but no positive outcome is observed. Devitt (2008) defined genres as the ways of communication, meeting expectations and saving time. Genres refer to different modes of writings and are broadly classified into four types; descriptive, narrative, expository and argumentative (Connor, 1996; Richards & Schmidt, 2002). This paper inculcates and discusses the application of TBLT approach in teaching narrative writing.

1.2.3.1 Narrative Writing

It is accepted as the most famous and simplest among the writing modes. Richards and Schmidt (2002) defined “narrative writing reports an event or tells the story of something that happened” (p. 337). This writing type entertains, excites and at times becomes informative for the readers. In addition, “Narrative text depicts events, actions, emotions, or situations the people in a culture experience” (Graesser, Golding, & Long, 1991, mentioned in Dickson et al., 2007). Thus, the events are organized and presented to the readers in such a way that they seem real and take the reader into the world of imagination. Moreover, Jewell (2004) presented the most extensive definition for narrative writing:

“Narration” or a “narrative” is a detailed description of events. It represents the list of events in sequence written in the form of a paragraph. The purpose of narrative writing is not to demonstrate any cause and effect; it only exhibits what happened and in which order” (p. 4).

1.2.4 Recent Research Studies Related to Narrative Writing and TBLT

The use of TBLT for teaching language skills such as writing and speaking is common in the research arena. Narrative writing teaching has been focused by several researchers throughout the world both within the international and Pakistani context. A few of these studies have been illustrated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Topic/Purpose of Study</th>
<th>Method and Tools</th>
<th>Population/ Sample</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karim, Husain and</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>To find whether or not the implementation of TBLT improves the students’ ability in writing narrative text (p. 63)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental research design; writing test; questionnaire (p. 66)</td>
<td>66 first year students (class X) of SMAN 2 Bantaeng (p. 66)</td>
<td>The students’ ability in writing narrative text improved within the experimental group who were treated using TBLT approach (p. 63)</td>
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<td>Weda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kafipour, Mahmoudi</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>To examine the impacts of utilizing task-based writing instruction on Iranian EFL learners’ writing competence (p. 1)</td>
<td>Quantitative experimental method; Oxford Quick Placement Test; Two TOEFL based comparable writing tests (p. 6)</td>
<td>80 Iranian learners (male and female) studying English as a foreign language at the intermediate level (p. 6)</td>
<td>Significant improvements were observed in the writing ability of the Iranian EFL learners who practiced writing skills using task-based language teaching techniques (p. 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>and Khojasteh</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Birjandi and Malmir</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>To discover the impact of task-based approach Vs. traditional approach on the narrative and expository writing of the Iranian EFL learners (p. 1)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental research design; TOEFL test-A writing pre-test; A narrative writing post-test (p. 1-2)</td>
<td>120 students from Iranian junior and senior EFL learners studying English Language Translation at Islamic Azad University of Hamedan (p. 7)</td>
<td>Teaching narrative and expository writing through TBA is more efficacious than teaching them via the traditional approach (p. 1-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akil, Jafar and Halim</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>To establish the learners’ response to the implementation of TBA in improving students writing performance (p. 27)</td>
<td>Case Study; Observation; questionnaire; documentation (p. 27)</td>
<td>29 students of tourism management in Polytechnic of Makassar registered in 2015/2016 (p. 29)</td>
<td>The students’ response towards the implementation of task-based teaching in enhancing students’ writing performance were extremely good (p. 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Topic/Purpose of Study</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>To evaluate the impact of TBLT in enhancing writing and speaking skills of Pakistani undergraduates (p. iii)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental research design; Tests (pre-test and post-test); Reflective Journals (p. iii)</td>
<td>50 Pakistani ESL learners at undergraduate level enrolled in Environmental Sciences and Business Administration (p. 142)</td>
<td>The performance of experimental group was better than the control group in L2 writing and speaking and it was deduced that TBLT improved L2 writing and speaking skills (p. iii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashid</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>To evaluate the efficacy TBLT in enhancing master level students’ narrative writing skill along with their beliefs regarding TBLT (p. 20)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental research design; Tests (pre-test and post-test); Perception Questionnaires (p. 23)</td>
<td>122 students in seven different Government and Private Institutes in tehsil Rahim Yar Khan (p. 22)</td>
<td>Highly significant difference was seen among the two groups. The treatment groups’ general perception towards TBLT was positive (p. 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prasetyawati</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>The implementation of teaching narrative text by using task-based instruction and the students’ difficulties in writing narrative text (p. xii)</td>
<td>Descriptive qualitative research method; Observation; questionnaire; Interview</td>
<td>VIII Grade Students Of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gatak in the year 2015/2016</td>
<td>The implementation of teaching writing narrative text using TBI was well conducted and the written works of students were well organized. However, the students faced difficulties in finding the meaning of a text and were unfamiliar with past tense (p. xii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragasam, Singh, Singh, Mostafa, Ja’afar, Abdullah, Zulkepli and Khaja</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Inspecting whether Task-based learning (TBL) can enhance narrative writing composition among form four students. (p. 49)</td>
<td>Action research; Observation; Reflective journal; Semi-structured interview; Documents (p. 49)</td>
<td>10 Form Four students from a school situated in the rural area (p. 52)</td>
<td>The students performed well in TBL Lesson as compared to other lessons and perceived it helpful in teaching narrative writing skill and reflected positive responses. Also, task-based learning improved students’ performance in narrative writing (p. 49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadel</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>To discover the effectiveness of TBLT in developing writing skills of secondary level learners in Nepal (p. iv)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental research design; textbook analysis, Tests (pre-test and post-test), and intervention tasks for writing skills (p. 177)</td>
<td>50 students (male and female) of Grade 9 from two schools (p. 176)</td>
<td>The use of TBLT in developing writing skills in English has been proved successful since experimental group showed significant improvement in the post test (p. 269)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed, and Bidin</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>to ascertain the efficacy of TBLT in improving writing skills of the university undergraduates learning English language at the language centers in the public sector institutions of tertiary level in Malaysia (p. 208)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental research design; Tests (pre-test and post-test) (p. 212)</td>
<td>30 International students from different nations all part of the expanding circle in the Kachru’s (1990) three concentric circles (p. 211)</td>
<td>The experimental group performed expansively better than the control group in their L2 writing skill since there were no significant differences to mark any improvement in the scores of control group during pretest and posttest in their writing skills (p. 214)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

Bogdan and Biklen (2006) describe qualitative research as one which “seeks to grasp processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are” (p. 43). Under this approach, the current research study follows action research design which was presented in 1940s by Kurt Lewin. Action research is an
investigation in the direction of an instructor’s job and their learners’ learning within the classroom setting (Feldman & Mintsrel, 2000). Also, “Action research implies no specific methods of inquiry. Methods are context-bound and will be operationally shaped in the light of the problems that are presented in the context. Action research has no distinctive methodological characteristics…” (Elliott, 2005, p. 370). A lot of researches in this domain have adopted experimental research design however, the present study employed action research as one of the researchers was the course instructor and additionally had to teach narrative essay (as part of the syllabus). The students also demonstrated poor performance in descriptive writing lessons taught earlier. Therefore, the researcher decided to implement a different strategy for teaching narrative writing in the classroom. The following research study was carried out via TBA in a cycle of a) Planning) Action and c) Fact finding. Students were taught Narrative essays by using task-based approach and at the last stage their writing was assessed on the basis of IELTS writing assessment criteria.

2.2 Population

The population of this study comprised of undergraduate female students from a private university in Karachi. The students were registered in a 4-year degree program i.e., Bachelors of Science in Bio-Chemistry from the Faculty of Science in a public university.

2.3 Sample

Purposive sampling technique was used for the collection of data for this research and a specific classroom under the guidance of the researcher (as the course teacher) was selected for this purpose. Purposive sampling is a useful technique through which essential data is collected for specific setting, persons and events that cannot be accomplished by any other source (Maxwell, 1996).

The sample of this study consisted of 38 undergraduate second year female students of Bachelors of Science registered in course English C–IV during fall 2017. The learners’ age group varied from 18 to 21 years with diverse cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Also, the learners had experienced distinct mediums of instruction during their previous education i.e. English and Urdu. They had also studied three compulsory courses of English language at the university prior to this research study.

2.4 Instruments

Data was collected in the form of narrative essays after conducting a series of tasks from the undergraduate students in the researcher’s classroom. It was analyzed and evaluated through IELTS writing rubrics and the scores were assigned as per the given scoring criteria of IELTS. Triangulation was done through open ended interviews from five students to validate the collected data.

2.5 The Application of Task-Based Approach in the Classroom

2.5.1 Pre-Task Stage

The lesson was planned and the basic Narrative essay writing elements were taught through power point presentation. In the first stage, task number 1 (Appendix A) was administered. It was based on a two-picture handout and the students had to determine and establish characters, plot, problem, climax, resolution and construct a thesis statement based on the problem they had assumed. The time allotted for this activity was 50 minutes since this was the duration of a period at the institution.

2.5.2 While-Task Stage

In the while task stage, task 2 (Appendix B) was carried out. For this purpose, a prompt was provided and the students were asked to write a story based on the problem. The aim of this second attempt was to polish the students’ skills and transform them into independent narrative writers. The time given for this activity was also similar to the previous task i.e. 50 minutes.

2.5.3 Post-Task stage

Task No. 3 (Appendix C) was based on a test of writing a narrative essay in the class. At this stage, the learners were asked to complete the task independently without any support from the teacher. The duration of 50 minutes was again given to them for the completion of the assigned task.
3. Results

The data collected in the post-task phase i.e., the narrative essays written by the students were assessed using the criteria of writing assessment rubrics presented in the guide for the teachers published by IELTS in the year 2015. The 9 bands mentioned in the writing assessment rubrics were awarded on the basis of four parameters: task achievement, cohesion and coherence, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy.

Only one student scored 9 bands in the post test and she was an effective user of English language. Very few (unsystematic) errors were observed in her essay and she utilized appropriate and necessary vocabulary. Additionally, her writing also had the ability to deal with complex situations.

Likewise, two students scored 7 bands in the post test and appeared to be good users of English language. However, they were affected by occasional inaccuracy, misinterpretation and unsuitable vocabulary. Furthermore, they demonstrated the ability of using the complex language structures fairly well and possessed a sense of detailed argumentation.

In the same stead, eight students secured a score of 6 bands in the writing task and were regarded as average users of English language. Their writing showed an effective skill along with a few mistakes, unsuitable words and misinterpretations in certain contexts. The use of complex structures of English language was seen in the essay but was limited to common situations.

Moreover, fifteen students scored 5 bands in the post-task and were regarded as modest users of English language. Their writings showed a limited command of English, since they were majorly unable to deal with complex language structures. However, the use of English in ordinary situations was a lot better.

In addition, eight students secured a score of 4 bands in narrative essay writing task and appeared to be limited users of English language. Their basic competence appeared to be restricted to common situations and certain issues were seen in comprehension and verbalization. Also, the use of complex language was completely missing from the writing.

Apart from this, four students scored 3 bands in the post task and were regarded as extremely limited users of English language. Their writing depicted the ability to communicate and understand only common meanings, strictly limited to commonplace situations. Recurring breakdowns were also evident in their communication.

For triangulating the result, an interview was conducted from five participants who were selected randomly from the class. Each participant answered a set of 4 questions and their responses were utilized for generating the following themes.

3.1 Perception Regarding Teaching Approach

The first question was about the difference between experiencing the traditional style of teaching essay writing and teaching essay writing through Task Based Approach. Majority of the students presented the view that Task Based Approach was much more successful in teaching them essay writing since it was based on step by step
skill development unlike the traditional essay writing, which cultivates the entire skill at once.

3.2 Effectiveness of TBA

The second question was focused on the effectiveness of Task based Approach within the classroom. All the participants agreed with the fact that their amount of learning drastically increased as a result of implementing TBA in class. The participants also asserted that they were previously unaware of the fact that English language writing expertise could be attained so smoothly.

3.3 Notion Towards the Utilization of Innovative Activities

The third question was about the activities used for TBA in class. Most of the students found the tasks interesting and beneficial for learning narrative essay writing. Furthermore, the participants illustrated that step-by-step progression towards the actual goal made the ordeal of acquiring language much easier for them.

3.4 Issues encountered while implementation of TBA

The fourth question was related to the issues learners faced while using Task Based Approach. In response to this, the participants highlighted the fact that this approach took more time and they were initially unable to deal with the topic provided to them in the post-task phase. This was because they were unable to start writing the essay only with a topic.

4. Discussion

This study aspired to check the effectiveness of TBLT approach in teaching narrative writing within English language. The results depicted that an overall improvement was observed in the writing skills of the students in the light of the writing rubric adopted for the study. Learners’ narrative writing skills were evaluated through IELTS writing assessing criteria task 1 (see appendix D). Four major criteria of IELTS writing were task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resources and grammatical range and accuracy. The errors in written responses were marked by following codes (see Appendix E)

Table 3. Error codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spellings</td>
<td>Sp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Gr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Coh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Resource</td>
<td>Lr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample size for the study was 38 students and the procedure was based on three tasks in total. Majority of the students (n=15) secured 5 bands which highlights that overall learners were average in terms of narrative writing. A considerable number of students (n=8) scored 6 bands whereas a few students (n=8) gained 4 bands. Similarly, a small number of students (n=3) acquired a very low score i.e. 3 bands. On the contrary, two students attained 7 bands and only one student was able to obtain 9 bands which was an extraordinary performance.

Likewise, the study also aimed to identify the perceptions of intermediate learners towards TBLT approach. The interviews highlighted the students’ perception that TBLT technique served to be more successful than the traditional method of teaching essay writing. This was because the TBLT taught narrative essay writing in three steps i.e. via three tasks, unlike the traditional approach which develops the writing skill in a stead. The participants also illuminated that the implementation of Task Based Approach within the classroom led to an immense maximization in the degree of learning narrative writing. The inclusion of innovative and captivating tasks within TBA was also highly appreciated by the respondents since the gradual development of writing skills made language learning simpler. Contrarily, the last question of the interview enlightened the issues encountered by the students during the practice of TBA. In their view, this approach was more time-consuming and was unable to cultivate autonomy in terms of narrative writing.

In a nutshell, an overall improvement in narrative writing was observed by the researcher. Secondly, consistent use of tasks led the learners to become better writers. Regardless of the time constrains and less awareness of TBLT, learners showed great interest while practicing narrative writing via a variety of tasks. Their perception towards TBLT was highly positive and in the course of time they discovered it to be a more effective, systematic and organized approach. Therefore, this teaching strategy could and should be practiced with other topics or themes. Skehan (1996), Carless, (2009), Ellis (2009) and Akil, Jafar, and Halim (2018) also underpinned the
effectiveness of TBLT in their research studies, which support the outcomes of this research. Likewise, Ahmed (2018) conducted an experimental research on TBLT in Pakistan and revealed that the experimental group performed better than control group. In the same stead, Tabari (2019) investigated task-based approach on two groups and found that structured tasks in classrooms effectively influenced the syntactic complexity, lexical complexity, and accuracy of L2 writing. Ratnawati (2019) in his mixed method research aimed to find the effectiveness of TBL approach in teaching writing skill at State Vocational School in Bone and found major improvement in students’ writing via the calculation of mean scores which increased from 34.83 in pre-test to 56.17 in post-test.

The responses of students during interview also favored the effectiveness of TBLT approach in teaching narrative writing since it evoked more interest as compared to conventional methods. However, it is to be made a characteristic part of the narrative writing lesson plans. This in turn, will aid in dealing with the time constraints presented by TBA (as highlighted in the study). Rubaiat (2018) researched to find out the impact of TBLT in enhancement of students’ reading and writing skills through survey questionnaire and classroom observation checklist. In this study the students and teachers showed positive attitude towards TBLT and shared that TBLT played an effective role in developing their writing skills which was similar to the study findings.

Even though this study focused on the application of TBLT in teaching narrative writing, however, this strategy might and should be implemented in teaching other disciplines or domains as well to cope up with the new practices. TBLT is time consuming and poses difficulty while practice, hence, professional development trainings should be conducted for the teachers for dealing with the current and future pedagogical challenges. Curriculum developers should also re-design the course content to create harmony among TBLT and language learning syllabi.

Similar studies should be carried out on students of other schools, colleges or universities to determine whether any similarities exist within the findings or to ascertain the perceptions of other students towards this approach. Additionally, more research studies following different research designs and methodologies could also be useful in exploring the difference between findings. This in turn, will also increase the reliability and validity of the TBLT approach.

References


Rehman, K. A., & Sagar, M. Z. (2015). The effectiveness of English language learning in multilingual schools in


Appendix A

Narrative Essay Writing Worksheets

Task No. 1: Identify the Elements of Narrative Essay in the Following Pictures.

Figure 2

Figure 3
Appendix B

Task No. 2: Write a Narrative based on the following prompt.

Prompt:
Imagine that your friend has a great tree house. There is only one problem. The key is missing!

Writing Task:
Write a story about how you and your friend solve the problem. Make sure to fill in missing information. It’s a good idea to include details, interesting words, and dialogue. You have 50 minutes.

Appendix C

Task No. 3: Write a narrative essay on “My First Day at the University.”

Appendix D

Figure 4. IELTS writing band descriptor (2015)
Appendix E

Figure 5. Writing sample 1.1
The environment of the university was very impressive. Every teacher and student talks each other very politely. That day, I received more things of what I had expected.

Now I am in 2nd year and I was look back and I see that it was the best choice I have ever made. These last two years have been the most remarkable and greatest years of my life.
My first day at university was a memorable day and quite good for me. When I reached, a huge gate, a crowd of parents, students in uniforms. Every where I see strangers, every one was standing like I am afraid. I feel start meditation, and I am excited to follow a quad's instruction and a student also come to guide me.

In student I reached auditorium where I found my college student, feeling happy and relaxed too. When I entered a piece of paper distribute to all the new comers. A big screen, stage many chairs in auditorium I found. I sit with my friend than vice chancellor started his speech about university change and much more.

After lunch, we were to stand up and go to our department, a big building windows everywhere stairs with clean floor. When we reached there, we saw many people about biochemistry.

After that all new comers of biochemistry 2016 badge reached a class or big hall where all teachers, chairperson of biochemistry gave their biodiversity big screen multimedia.

Then Time table distributed, by Mr. Sam.

Time table was very difficult as I saw

Figure 7. Writing sample 2.1
Figure 8. Writing sample 2.2
A big canteen, research laboratory. Before I not come to university, I feel hesitant. But after enter to university, I feel little bit comfort.
Writing a Narrative essay

First Day at University

I was so excited because it was my first day in the university. I went to the university with my father. We arrived at the university at 9:15 o'clock. I was enter in the university with fast heart beat. I was little nervous because it was my first experience in the university.

First I went to my department which is biochemistry and looked at my classes schedules. But there was crowded with girls. I saw that my first class time was 11:00 o'clock so I thought that I have to visit the university. I was little nervous to visit and go any place. Many other students present in my university. It was a memorable day.

There was many class rooms in the university and I saw the wall was decorated with different colours and ideas and those beautiful art gave many ideas about life.

Then, I arrived at canteen. It was crowded with girls. Every girl want to get first. I was also heard that the tables and chairs was not clean and the food was cooked at this place was not cooked properly.

I came back at my class room and attend my first class. The teacher was very impressed me because she was a
It was a memorable day on my first day. I met my new friends and introduced ourselves to each other and learned what subjects we are going to learn. I was looking forward to learning a lot of things with my friends.

I went to the library. I felt good because there were so many books and I like to read books. The buildings are huge. I made loads of friends. A huge garden was also present in which beautiful flowers grew. I felt so happy to look at the flowers.

I enjoyed all of the classes and my favorite class was microbiology. I also enjoyed lunch time. I felt like telling that I am grown up now and to be an adult. It was a day I got lots of experience and learned about university life.

It was a memorable day of my life. I got my friends in university and I was happy. I was nervous because it was my first day. It was the day that I got lots of fun and experience in my life.
Narrative essay: First day at university

My university is an educational institution which is widely recognized all over the world. It is located in Nisabuz, my university has been my first choice because I believe that it was the ability to provide me with quality education.

First day in a university is always very exciting because of the new environment, new people and obviously the new educational system. That is why it was a very good and happy day when I was about to leave home for my first day at my university. Excitement was on its peak and adrenaline was flooding through me intensely. I was thrilled as well as slightly nervous regarding the new environment and every little small detail of my previous friends and class fellows were no longer my class fellows now, but now is just like as old people leave so that new are being made.

It was my first day at university, so I decided to wear one of the most elegant and presentable dresses I saw in my wardrobe and I took my bike bus and left at university. All the way to my university, several things were going through my mind regarding the new university, new friends and teachers, and how I will be able to cope up with the adjustment. As soon as I reached the campus my eyes grazed as I saw the curious and extra ordinary campus of my university, I was still wondering.
Regarding the campus as I got into a student who was walking, I went to one girl. We talked introduced ourselves, and I was again surprised that she was my class fellow and later became my very close friend.

When we both reached the center of the campus on my first day in university, there were our seniors who were tagging the juniors and new courses, and they were instructed to do very silly and very nonsensical activities and tasks. We both were very annoyed with it and with the same time, we were slightly worried as well that this might also happen to us. And for that reason, we started to move away from them and tried to stay as much as away from them as possible. But our escape was not so productive as we both were being caught in the university cafe and it was the time for us to be ragged, and what I got was so embarrassing.

In a minute we took a lift and I was sothreshold of the auditorium. To make a step forward was the most difficult action because the upper classroom was full of new faces. Almost all places were occupied and I sat at the end.
Figure 14. Writing sample 4.3

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