

Effects of TBI on Students' Essay Writing Performance and Engagement

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Abstract

This study attempted to investigate the effects of TBI on students' essay writing performance and their writing engagement, and again to examine the mediating effects of writing engagement between the causal relationship of TBI and essay writing performance. The study was conducted on Grade-11 students of Ediget Feleg Secondary School in Gondar City, Ethiopia. The design employed in the study was quasi-experimental, taking randomly two intact groups as control and experimental, with 56 and 58 students in each, respectively. The

experimental group students were taught using the TBI approach as intervention, whereas the control group students were taught, employing the conventional (PPP) approach. Writing test was used to collect the writing performance data, whereas questionnaire was employed to collect data about students' writing engagement. Independent samples t-test, Chi square, and Structural Equation Model were used to analyze the data. And it was found that direct significant difference came true between the control and experimental group students' essay writing performance posttest scores, favoring experimental group participants, i.e., ($B = 1.581$ $CR = 5.190 (>\pm 1.96)$, $p < .05$). And, it happened that there was significant effect of TBI on engagement, favoring experimental group participants, showing results ($\beta = .543$, $CR = 4.757 (>\pm 1.96)$, $p < .05$). Still, results ($\beta = .345$, $CR = 2.103 (>\pm 1.96)$, $p < .05$) reveal that TBI had positive effect on experimental group participants' writing performance post-test score through writing engagement. The TBI, therefore, has a positive effect, directly and indirectly /through writing engagement, on students' writing performance. The implication is that writing engagement plays a partial mediation role in the causal relationship between TBI and Essay writing performance.

Keyword: Teaching Methods, Task-Based Instructions, Writing Engagement, Writing Performance.

Introduction

The concept of using Task-Based instruction (TBI) for acquiring English language skills was originally developed by Prabhu in the 1980s in India. This approach gains relevance in today's world, where English is increasingly recognized as the key to success in various aspects of life. As the lingua franca of our time, English is the most widely learned and taught language globally (Rahman, 2006, 2015). Its crucial role in international communication extends to writing, a macro skill essential for global transactions across diverse domains (Reid, 1993). Underscoring this importance, Chen (2022) highlights the

widespread practice of assessing English writing skills on various international tests and programs, aimed at measuring proficiency for diverse purposes. Examples include TOEIC, Taiwan's university entrance exam, and the General Scholastic Ability Test. By incorporating TBS methods, such programs can effectively prepare learners to communicate effectively in writing within a globalized context.

Writing skill is an essential aspect of academic literacy that is typically acquired through formal institutional instruction, rather than being something that is naturally obtained or informally learned. It is not merely a process of conveying thoughts, but rather an act of cognitive engagement and critical thinking. According to linguist Walter Ong (1982), writing has the power to unlock the full potential of the human mind. Certain writing tasks hold significant importance, as they stimulate intellectual vitality, creativity, and thinking abilities.

Writing has the capacity to enhance and develop the thinking capacity of the mind. Engaging in writing tasks requires the mind to manipulate various elements, such as reflecting on given topics, generating well-founded ideas, organizing ideas coherently and logically, and presenting them in a structured manner. These tasks may involve defining, comparing, contrasting, classifying, or analyzing cause and effect relationships. They can be approached with different tones, such as narration, description, explanation, or argumentation, with the aim of imparting knowledge, providing enjoyment, persuading others, or evoking memories, among other purposes.

The difficulty in developing writing skills compared to listening, speaking, and reading skills can be attributed to several factors. One significant reason may be the fact that writing involves a wide range of supra linguistic and cognitive abilities. Mastering the skill of writing requires students to employ strategies that involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning process (Wenden, 1999). It is important to recognize that developing writing skills necessitates the simultaneous development of cognitive skills such

as planning, formulating, revising, monitoring, and evaluating one's learning. Additionally, the challenge in learning writing skills arises from the fact that it requires learners to engage in both the comprehension and production processes of learning (Graham et al., 2013).

Engaging in both receptive and productive skills simultaneously can be overwhelming for students, as active learning requires a significant amount of mental and physical energy. Writing skills, by their very nature, require students to engage with all domains of education, including cognitive, affective, behavioral, and social domains. In other words, writing skills demand students' involvement in various aspects of education, making it a complex and multi-faceted task.

Byrnes and Manchón (2014) state the theoretical contributions of the Task-Based Approach to writing performance and engagement is significant. Task-Based Instruction (TBI) emphasizes the use of meaningful and authentic tasks as the basis for language learning. When applied to writing, this approach provides several benefits. Firstly, the Task-Based Approach promotes learner engagement. By presenting learners with real-life writing tasks, such as writing emails, reports, or essays, the approach fosters a sense of relevance and purpose. Learners are more likely to be interested to be engage in the writing process when they see the direct application of their skills to practical situations. Secondly, the Task-Based Approach promotes the development of communicative competence in writing. Rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy or isolated language features, TBI encourages learners to use writing as a means of expressing ideas, conveying information, and interacting with readers. This approach helps learners develop their ability to communicate effectively in writing, taking into account the audience, purpose, and context of the task. Furthermore, the Task-Based Approach enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Writing tasks often require learners to analyze information, evaluate different perspectives, and make

reasoned arguments. Through engaging in these cognitive processes, learners develop their ability to think critically and organize their thoughts in a coherent and logical manner.

According to Ellis (2011), the task-based approach supports the development of metacognitive skills in writing. By engaging in tasks that involve planning, revising, and reflecting on their writing, learners become more aware of their own writing processes and strategies. This metacognitive awareness allows learners to monitor and evaluate their own writing performance, leading to continuous improvement.

Overall, the Task-Based Approach provides a theoretical framework that promotes learner engagement, communicative competence, critical thinking, and metacognitive skills in writing. It recognizes the importance of meaningful and authentic writing tasks in language learning, leading to improved performance and increased learner motivation.

Teaching language skills is undeniably complex, but when it comes to complexity, teaching writing skills surpasses the others. Writing skills cannot be acquired through intuition; they require deliberate and structured instruction within educational institutions (Jago, 2014). Achieving proficiency in writing necessitates ample practice and targeted guidance, as this intricate skill does not develop naturally (Graham, 2019). According to Herder and King (2012), the key to developing strong writing skills lies in actively engaging in the act of writing itself.

To emphasize the imperative nature of explicit instruction in writing and to underscore the limited extent to which writing is acquired naturally, Jago (2014) asserts, "Writing is taught, not caught." There is no inherent intuition when it comes to learning how to write. Merely listening to the radio, watching television, or engaging in casual conversations while strolling will not suffice as an informal and unstructured means of acquiring writing skills. Writing demands various crucial elements, including silence,

meticulous planning, command of language forms and content, and the ability to effectively organize ideas.

The way English writing skills are taught in high schools is considered ineffective. Instead of actively engaging students in the process of writing, the focus tends to be on theoretical concepts, neglecting the practical aspect of actually practicing writing. Consequently, students often develop a dislike for writing tasks, as they require significant effort, despite the fact that such tasks can enhance real communication through active engagement.

Unfortunately, the prevailing experience in high schools is that both teachers and students are reluctant to invest substantial effort in fostering a "learning-by-doing" approach, which recognizes the importance of task-based learning as a catalyst for developing writing skills and promoting meaningful language use. Many students spend a minimum of thirteen years in precollege education with minimal levels of engagement (Fullarton, 2002), resulting in a learning deficit that falls below the standards expected by college or university programs. The lack of emphasis on engagement is a missed opportunity, considering that Sinatra et al. (2015) regard engagement as the "Holy grail of learning," the essential ingredient for successful learning. The primary factor contributing to students' inadequate writing skills appears to be their lack of engagement in actual writing practice.

Based on the researcher's experience, the current method of teaching essay writing in high schools is deemed ineffective. Students are primarily exposed to the theoretical concepts of essay writing without receiving sufficient support and encouragement to actively engage in the act of writing itself. Consequently, in high schools, students tend to avoid participating in writing tasks, which require effort but are crucial for developing effective communication through writing. Despite the recent Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia emphasizing a learner-centered approach, it has proven challenging for teachers in Ethiopian secondary

schools to effectively implement this engaging approach to learning (SisayAssefie, 1999; Berhanu G/Micheal, 2000).

Ahmed and Bidins' (2016) study on the effect of task based language teaching on writing skills in undergraduate programs at public sector Malaysian universities. The study found that TBI is an engaging and learner-focused method that allows learners to utilize their existing language skills. This approach helps EFL learners become fluent and confident English users in various real-life situations, both in and out of the classroom. Manzoor, Azhar, and Malik (2020) conducted a study on the effectiveness of task-based approaches in teaching narrative essays at a private university. The study's findings revealed a significant enhancement in students' narrative essay writing performance when compared to their prior experiences. Moreover, Marashi and Dadari (2012) conducted a thorough quasi-experimental study at the intermediate level to investigate the impact of a task-based approach on the writing performance and creativity of EFL learners. Through meticulous statistical analysis, their findings clearly indicated that learners experienced substantial gains in both their writing proficiency and creative expression as a direct result of engaging in task-based writing activities.

Locally, conducted a situational analysis of the practices of task-based approaches in teaching Getachew (2017) and learning grammar in three secondary schools around Holta Town, with grade 10 as the focus. The study's findings starkly illustrate that the teacher-centered approach undermined student confidence, stifled participation, and fostered passivity during task-based activities. Furthermore, in a survey conducted by Temesgen (2018), the utilization of a task-based approach in teaching speaking skills was examined in six preparatory schools located in Harar city. The study findings highlighted significant shortcomings in the implementation of the task-based approach. It was observed that teachers were not effectively incorporating task-based language teaching (TBI) methods, and students

were not engaging in task-based learning as frequently as expected. Furthermore, teachers were found to be neglecting essential components of TBI, including the various phases involved in classroom tasks. Additionally, a majority of teachers exhibited a lack of positive perception towards the task-based approach and did not adhere to or implement the prescribed TBI framework.

Based on the preliminary study that the researcher did and his teaching experience at this grade level show that the task-based approach can indeed present challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers when it comes to enhancing students' essay writing performance and engagement. Some of the reasons are:

Lack of Writing Skills: Many EFL students struggle with developing writing skills due to limited exposure to written English and insufficient practice. Essay writing requires a solid foundation in grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, which may be lacking in some students. Consequently, attempting complex writing tasks without adequate preparation can lead to frustration and disengagement.

Time Constraints: Task-based approaches often involve completing assignments within a specified time frame. While this can simulate real-life situations, it may add pressure that hampers students' ability to generate ideas, plan effectively, and produce well-structured essays. The time constraints can be particularly challenging for learners who need more time to think and organize their thoughts in a second language.

Insufficient Language Input: Task-based approaches prioritize communication and meaning-focused activities. While this is beneficial for oral communication skills, it may result in limited exposure to the kind of language needed for formal writing and essay composition. Students might struggle with sentence variety, appropriate academic vocabulary, and coherent organization, all of which are crucial for high-quality essays.

Individual Differences: In an EFL context, students vary greatly in terms of their language proficiency, prior knowledge, and learning styles. Designing tasks that cater to the diverse needs of learners can be

challenging. Some students may find the tasks too difficult or beyond their current level, leading to frustration and disengagement. Conversely, others may find them too easy, resulting in boredom and limited growth. Assessment and Feedback: Task-based approaches often focus on the process rather than the final product. While this encourages experimentation and risk-taking, it can sometimes neglect the importance of accurate assessment and targeted feedback on students' writing. Effective assessment and constructive feedback are essential for students to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for enhancing their essay writing skills. Classroom management: open-ended tasks can lead to unexpected directions or challenges in classroom dynamics and time management. Encouraging participation and ensuring all students contribute effectively can be demanding. Lack of confidence: EFL learners may initially feel hesitant to write freely, fearing mistakes or not meeting expectations. Group work can expose individual weaknesses, leading to anxiety and demotivation for some students.

However, by addressing these challenges and implementing appropriate strategies, EFL teachers can enhance students' essay writing performance and engagement within a task-based approach. Moreover, as far as the researcher's reading experience is concerned, no study has been conducted to see the effects of task based approach on students' essay writing performance and engagement at any grade level locally. Therefore, the researcher's experience in teaching English, the conducted preliminary study, and the research gap at this grade convinced the researcher to undertake this study.

Based on the problem stated above the following research questions are posed.

1. Does TBA have significant effect on the development of essay writing?
2. Does TBAT have significant effect on students' engagement towards essay writing?
3. Does TBA have a significant impact on the development of essay writing through

learning engagement?

The objective of the study was to examine the effects of Task-Based Language Teaching Approach on the development of students' essay writing skills and engagement, and again to see if TBI has a remarkable impact on students' essay writing skills occurred through learning engagement and the following specific objectives have been set, specifically to:

1. investigate if TBA has significant effect on students' essay writing;
2. find out whether TBA has significant impact students' engagement about essay writing, and
3. investigate if TBA has significant impact on students' essay writing through engagement.

Research Methods

Design of the Study

This study utilized a quasi-experimental research design due to the inherent limitations of the school's natural setting, which made the random assignment of students into intact groups unfeasible (Creswell, 2012; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Similarly, a quantitative research approach was chosen, as the data collection involved quantitative sources such as questionnaires and essay writing tests. Consequently, the researchers collected quantitative data both before and after the treatment to investigate the impact of TBA on learners' writing performance and engagement. Moreover, this combination allowed researchers to not only assess the effectiveness of TBA on writing but also explore the potential mediating role of writing engagement in this relationship.

Research Site, Participants, and Sampling Technique

In the Gondar city administration, a total of nine public secondary schools exist. Among them, Ediget Feleg Secondary School was chosen using a simple random sampling

technique, ensuring that each school had an equal opportunity for selection. The participants in this study consisted of eleventh-grade students, with a total of 10 sections at this grade level. Consequently, two intact groups (sections 6 and 8) were randomly selected from the 11 sections. Through the group randomization sampling technique, one section was designated as the experimental group ($n = 58$), while the other served as the control group ($n = 56$). This method allowed for a fair and unbiased assignment of students to their respective groups.

Data Collection Tools

The study utilized an essay-writing test and a questionnaire as its research instruments. To ensure unbiased results, the researcher carefully selected different topics for the pretest and posttest essays, eliminating potential influences from factors like memory or practice effects. Despite the varying topics, both essays were designed to measure the same skills, knowledge, and content. Consequently, the number of paragraphs and allotted time remained consistent for both the pre- and post-tests.

In accordance with Heaton's (1990) recommendations, the evaluation of the essays focused on five crucial elements of writing: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Before conducting the main study, a pilot study was conducted at a different school to establish a test rater. Three EFL teachers who volunteered to assess the tests were selected by the researcher. To ensure reliable scoring based on the five criteria, these teachers underwent rigorous training for a total of 16 hours. Once the consistency of scores among the raters was confirmed, one rater was randomly chosen to evaluate the essays, which were assigned a maximum score of 30.

In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire adapted from Bowden et al. (2019) to assess students' engagement in their writing lessons across the four dimensions of engagement: behavioral, affective, social, and cognitive. The behavioral dimension examines visible actions that indicate participation and investment in the writing lessons, including the

level of effort, dedication, and involvement demonstrated. The cognitive dimension delves into the mental effort and active investment individuals put into the specific activity or learning process, encompassing their depth of thinking and understanding. The social dimension highlights the significance of collaboration, interaction, and establishing positive relationships with peers and teachers to foster engagement. Lastly, the affective dimension focuses on the emotional and subjective aspects of individuals' involvement in the activity or learning process, capturing their feelings, attitudes, and emotional responses.

The questionnaire consists of 43 items presented in an objective format, with a scale ranging from (6) = definitely true of me to (1) = definitely not true of me. The questionnaire was then translated into the students' first language, Amharic, and its equivalence with the English version was verified by colleagues with expertise in TEFL. Additionally, the validity and reliability of the instruments were assessed. To ensure the validity of the instruments, expert feedback was incorporated, and revisions were made accordingly. Regarding reliability, the internal consistency of the writing performance test was examined using Pearson correlation, resulting in a high internal consistency score of _____. The internal consistency of the Amharic version of the writing engagement questionnaire was also assessed, yielding a highly reliable coefficient weight of _____. Furthermore, the KMO test and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted. The KMO test assessed the suitability of the data for confirmatory factor analysis, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated a significant sample size. Prior to factor analysis, the KMO test was computed again, yielding a meritorious and significant result of _____. The writing engagement questionnaire was then analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis, and the loading coefficients were found to be acceptable, with most items exceeding _____. The composite reliability of the questionnaire items was calculated a _____, indicating their reliability. In addition, the AVE and discriminant

validity were assessed, resulting in values of ___ and ___, respectively, confirming the validity of the questionnaire.

Intervention procedure

The task-based approach is a teaching method that employs dynamic and engaging techniques to effectively teach writing skills, empowering students to become confident and proficient communicators. In the context of this study, the participants were informed that the study's objectives and their writing lessons were developed based on the principles of the task-based approach. Consequently, the EFL teacher implemented the principles of the task-based approach when delivering the writing lesson in the classroom. As a result, the role of the EFL teacher in teaching students through task-based language teaching (TBL) encompassed various responsibilities.

For instance, at the pre-writing stage, the EFL teacher plays a pivotal role in guiding and empowering students to prepare effectively for the writing activities. By clearly elucidating the task objectives, providing unambiguous instructions and ensuring students comprehend the writing requirements and expectations, the teacher establishes a solid foundation for success. Moreover, the teacher actively assists students in brainstorming ideas, organizing their thoughts, and formulating a comprehensive plan or outline for their essays. Additionally, the teacher enriches students' understanding of effective essay writing by furnishing language input and exemplifying models that showcase the desired structure and style.

During the while-writing stage, the EFL teacher acts as a facilitator and monitor. They can offer ongoing support and assistance as students work on their essays. This may involve providing feedback on students' drafts, answering questions, and addressing any difficulties or challenges they may encounter. The teacher can also encourage students to use the task-

based strategies they have learned, such as using specific vocabulary or sentence structures, incorporating relevant information, or applying appropriate writing techniques. The teacher's role is to create a supportive and motivating environment that encourages students to apply their knowledge and skills effectively.

At the post-writing stage, the EFL teacher plays a critical role in providing comprehensive feedback and conducting assessments. The teacher evaluates students' essays based on predetermined criteria and offers constructive feedback targeting areas that require improvement, such as organization, coherence, language use, or argument development. This feedback encompasses written and oral components, emphasizing both strengths and areas for growth, while providing valuable suggestions for revision. Furthermore, the teacher facilitates peer review activities, enabling students to exchange feedback on each other's essays. This collaborative approach fosters the development of critical thinking skills and enables students to learn from diverse perspectives. Ultimately, the teacher guides students in reflecting on their writing process, identifying their strengths and areas for improvement, and establishing goals for future writing activities.

According to Ellis (2017) and Sanchez (2004), in the context of task-based language teaching (TBI), students are encouraged to move beyond passive learning and become active participants in their own learning process. Hence, in this study, the student plays a role during their writing experiments. They begin by brainstorming ideas, identifying the intended issue and purpose of their essays, and collaborating with peers to generate compelling content. Additionally, they take on the role of independent learners, proactively gathering information for the issues given by their teacher. Armed with task-based strategies; students skillfully structure their essays by incorporating specific vocabulary, sentence structures, and writing techniques. Their aim is to craft coherent and well-developed arguments or narratives that reflect a deep understanding of the task objectives. At the post-writing stage, students

critically evaluate their own work, utilizing the task-based strategies as a guide. They reflect on the effectiveness of their essays in meeting the task objectives and readily embrace revisions and improvements as necessary. Engaging in peer review activities, students exchange feedback, embracing suggestions to enhance their essay writing prowess. By actively participating in this stage, students refine their writing skills and internalize the task-based strategies, ensuring their continued growth and success in future writing activities.

Concerning the control group, the teacher instructed the writing lesson relying on their prior experience teaching essay writing in a preparatory school. To verify whether or not the experimental teacher properly addressed the treatment for the experimental group, and to verify information dissemination for the control group, the researcher observed two lessons for each group, and intervention sessions took place over eight weeks, with two lessons per week, each lasting 45 minutes.

Data Collection Procedures

The study followed the following data collection procedures: The researcher obtained a consent letter from the Department of English Language and Literature and visited a selected school. Meetings were conducted with school administrators and the English teacher of the chosen grade, where the study's aim was explained and their willingness to participate was confirmed. After obtaining their consent, a discussion took place to determine the implementation details and schedule the pre-test. The pre-test results showed no significant difference between the two sections, leading to the random assignment of groups as experimental and control. The experimenter received training on the theory, benefits, and application of a task-based approach, including essay writing samples, for about two weeks. The EFL teacher provided task-based strategies to the experimental group, while the control group received conventional writing instruction. Both groups were taught by the same teacher

to eliminate individual differences. Post-tests were administered immediately after the treatments for both the experimental and control groups.

Data Analysis Methods

The study involved a comprehensive analysis of data to examine the differences in essay writing performance and engagement between control and experimental groups of students. Inferential statistics (independent sample t-tests) were used to compare mean differences between the control and experimental groups. The researcher employed SPSS version 27 to compute the data and conducted SEM analysis using AMOS version 26 to investigate the direct effect of a task-based approach on essay writing performance and the mediating role of engagement. Bootstrapping with a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval and 5,000 sample substitutions was utilized to determine the significance of the task-based approach on essay writing performance through engagement. However, various assumptions such as normality, homogeneity, Levene's test, and linearity were assessed and satisfied. Consequently, a thorough evaluation of the general assumptions of parametric tests was conducted before performing data analysis. Furthermore, the collected data from the instruments aligns with the proposed model of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The study carefully addressed ethical considerations at various stages, including before, during, and after the research. The researcher obtained an approval letter from the department of English language and literature and engaged with the selected school, providing a clear explanation of the study's objectives to the school director and the EFL teachers responsible for 11th-grade subjects. The researcher sought the voluntary participation of the EFL teachers in the study. During the intervention program, the students were not explicitly informed that they were part of a research study. Instead, they were

informed about the goals, significance, and nature of the activities as part of their regular coursework. This approach aimed to prevent any unnatural behavior or performance that could have been influenced by the awareness of being studied and to minimize the spread of information among different participant groups. In place of obtaining prior informed consent, the researcher followed a debriefing approach, providing information about the research to the students after the study was completed. Upon analyzing the results, the researcher observed a significant positive change in the combined variables of the experimental group, which received instruction using a task-based approach, compared to the control group. Consequently, the researcher decided to provide task-based instruction to the control group as well, selecting a few tasks and instructing them for two weeks. The objective was to raise awareness of the task-based approach and ensure that all students benefitted from its implementation. However, due to time constraints, the researcher was unable to extend tutoring to other Grade 11 students who were not part of the study. This limitation arose from practical considerations and resource availability.

Results

This section presents the findings, analysis, and discussions of the study, which were based on the research hypotheses. To assess the students' writing performance and engagement, both pretests and posttests were administered. The pretests were used to ensure that the control and experimental groups had similar backgrounds in terms of their writing performance and engagement scores. Independent samples t-tests were utilized for this purpose. Furthermore, the posttests were employed to investigate whether there was a significant difference in scores between the control and experimental groups.

Based on the significant difference observed in the posttest scores for writing performance and engagement, which supported the experimental group, a structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis was carried out using AMOS. The objective was to determine the

direct effects (X on Y), indirect effects (X on Y through M), and both direct-indirect effects of TBA instruction on students' writing performance. The analysis utilized a mediation model, as illustrated in Figure 1. In the subsequent sections, analysis of the study is discussed, with a focus on the research hypotheses and the proposed mediation model provided below.

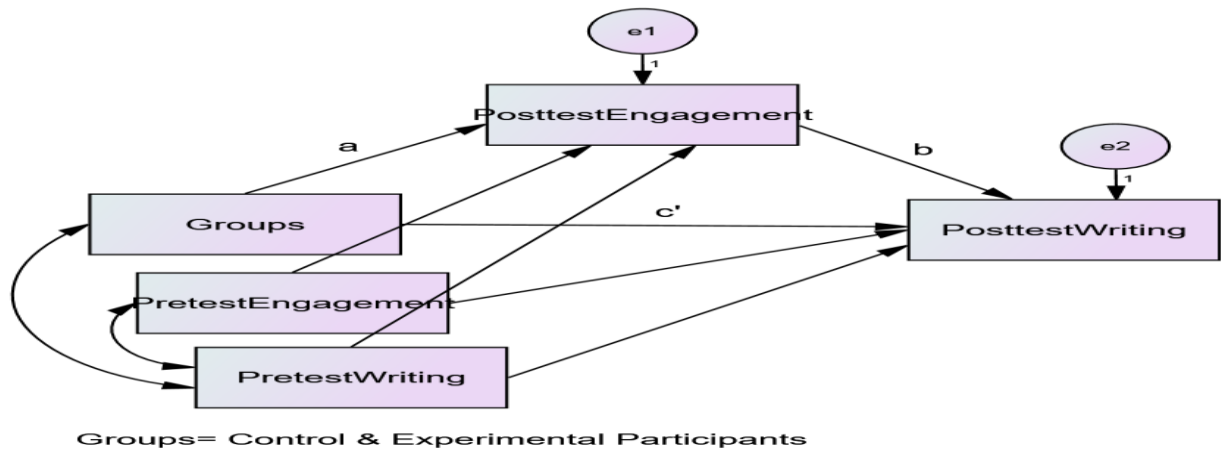


Fig. 1: Statistical Model of the Study

Table 1: Independent Samples Test: t-test Statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups on Writing Performance Pretest Score

Group	n	Mean	SD	t	df	95% Confidence Interval		p
						Lower	Upper	
Control	56	12.500	1.839	0.952	112	-1.168	0.409	0.343
Experimental	58	12.879	2.369					

According to the information provided in Table 1, the results of the writing performance pretest demonstrate that there were no significant differences in the scores achieved by the control and experimental groups. The mean score for the control group was 12.500, while the experimental group had a slightly higher mean score of 12.879. The statistical analysis, specifically the t-test, was conducted to determine the significance of the difference between the two groups. The results of the t-test ($t = 0.952$, $df = 112$, $p = 0.343$ ($>.05$)) indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in writing performance between the control and experimental groups prior to the treatment.

To further support these findings, confidence intervals were calculated to estimate the range of possible mean differences between the groups. The confidence interval, represented by the lower bound of -1.168 and the upper bound of 0.409, suggests that the true difference in writing performance scores between the control and experimental groups could fall within this range. Importantly, since the confidence interval includes zero, it indicates that the observed difference is not statistically significant. This reinforces the notion that there were no meaningful distinctions between the control and experimental groups in terms of their writing performance levels before the treatment.

Based on these results, it can be inferred that the control and experimental groups had comparable levels of writing performance prior to the treatment. This finding supports the idea that any subsequent differences observed in their posttest scores are likely attributed to the treatment itself rather than preexisting disparities in writing performance.

Table 2: Independent Samples Test: t-test statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups on Writing Engagement Questionnaire Pretest

Group	n	Mean	SD	t	df	95% Confidence Interval		p
						Lower	Upper	

Control	56	4.253	.759					
				0.944	112	-0.148	0.418	0.347
Experimental	58	4.118	.767					

As to the information provided in Table 2, the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on writing engagement were 4.253 and 4.118, respectively. These scores indicate that the two groups had similar levels of writing engagement before the intervention.

The statistical analysis, specifically the t-test results ($t = 0.944$, $df = 112$, $p = 0.347$ ($>.05$)), further support these findings by indicating that there was no significant difference in engagement towards writing between the control and experimental groups prior to the treatment.

Moreover, the confidence intervals, with a lower bound of -0.148 and an upper bound of 0.418, demonstrate that the observed difference in writing engagement between the groups was not statistically significant. These confidence intervals include zero, indicating that the difference in writing engagement scores between the control and experimental groups could plausibly fall within this range. This strengthens the conclusion that there were no meaningful distinctions in writing engagement levels between the two groups before the treatment.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the control and experimental groups had similar levels of engagement towards writing prior to the treatment. This finding supports the idea that any subsequent differences observed in their engagement can be attributed to the treatment itself rather than preexisting disparities in their writing engagement.

Table 3: Independent Samples Test: t-test statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups on Writing Performance Posttest Score

								95% Confidence Interval
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Group	n	Mean	SD	t	df	Lower	Upper	P
Control	56	12.857	1.813					
				4.554	112	-2.755	-1.082	.001
Experimental	58	14.776	2.609					

The data presented in Table 3 reveals that the control group achieved an average score of 12.857 on the writing performance posttest, whereas the experimental group exhibited a higher average score of 14.776. These results clearly indicate a noticeable discrepancy between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in terms of their writing performance after the intervention.

The statistical analysis conducted supports these findings, as evidenced by the t-test results ($t = 4.554$, $df = 112$, $p = .001 (< .05)$), which indicate a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups' posttest scores for writing performance. The experimental group's scores were significantly higher, providing compelling evidence for the effectiveness of the TBA intervention implemented with these participants.

Furthermore, the confidence intervals, represented by the lower bound of -2.775 and the upper bound of -1.082, lend further support to the significant disparity between the groups, favoring the experimental group. Importantly, these confidence intervals do not encompass zero, reinforcing the notion that the observed difference in writing performance between the control and experimental groups after the intervention is statistically significant.

Based on these compelling results, it can be confidently concluded that the TBA intervention implemented with the experimental group participants resulted in a significant improvement in their writing performance scores compared to those in the control group. The findings highlight the efficacy of the intervention in enhancing the writing skills and performance of the experimental group.

Table 4: Independent Samples Test: t-test statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups on Writing Engagement Posttest Score

Group	n	Mean	SD	t	df	95% Confidence Interval		p
						Lower	Upper	
Control	56	4.116	.768	3.915	112	-.757	-.248	.001
Experimental	58	4.619	.592					

As depicted in Table 4, the control group obtained a mean score of 4.116 for engagement towards writing, while the experimental group had a higher mean score of 4.619. This indicates a significant difference between the control and experimental groups in terms of their posttest writing engagement, with the experimental group participants demonstrating higher levels of engagement.

The statistical analysis further supports these findings, as indicated by the t-test results ($t = 3.914$, $df = 112$, $p = .001$ ($< .05$)), which reveal a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups' posttest scores for writing engagement, favoring the experimental group. This result provides evidence that the TBA intervention carried out with the experimental group participants had a positive impact on their engagement in writing.

Additionally, the confidence intervals, with a lower bound of $-.757$ and an upper bound of $-.248$, highlight a significant difference between the groups, favoring the experimental group, as these intervals do not include zero.

Overall, these results suggest that the implementation of the TBA intervention with the experimental group participants had a significant effect on their engagement towards writing, resulting in higher engagement compared to the control group.

Furthermore, after establishing a significant difference between the groups in terms of their writing posttest scores, structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis was conducted using AMOS to determine the nature of the effect. The analysis aimed to determine if the effect was direct (the impact of TBA on writing performance), indirect (the effect of TBA on writing performance through writing engagement), or both direct and indirect. The analysis was structured as a single mediation model, as depicted in Figure 2, to address the research hypotheses.

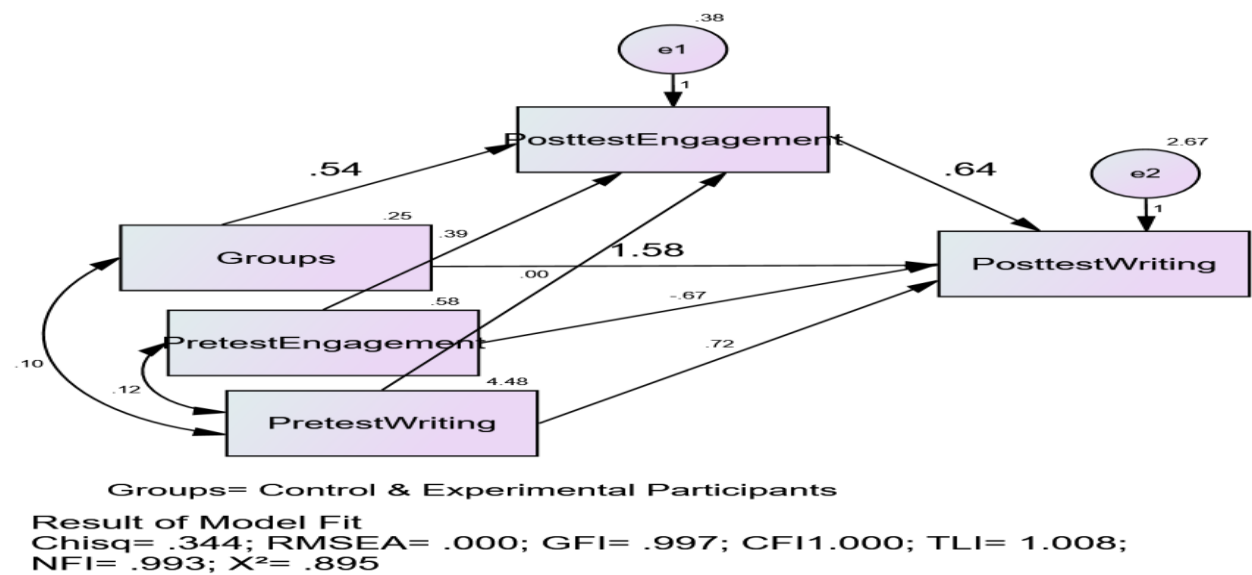


Fig. 2: Unstandardized Adjusted Outputs of AMOS for Writing Performance and Engagement Posttest

Table 5: Unstandardized Adjusted Regression Weights of Variables in the Structural Model

Causal Relationship	B	SE	C.R.	95% Confidence Interval		P	ES	Conclusion
				LL	UL			
Groups → WP Posttest	1.581	.305	5.190	.989	2.200	.001	.33	Partial Mediation
Groups → WE Posttest	.543	.116	4.757	.320	.786	.001	.38	
Groups → WE Posttest → WP Posttest	.345	.164	2.103	.050	.768	.014	.22	

Groups → WP($R^2=56.1\%$, $p=.001$), Groups → WE($R^2=30.3\%$, $p=.002$), Groups → WE → WP($R^2=49\%$, $p=.001$)

Effect of TBA on Writing Performance

The results presented in Table 5 demonstrate a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the control and experimental groups on the writing performance posttest. The regression coefficient value of 1.581 and the critical ratio value of 5.190 (>1.96) indicate a significant difference. The p-value of .001 is lower than the significance threshold of .05, providing strong evidence to support the experimental group's higher mean score on the writing performance posttest compared to the control group.

The confidence interval analysis further confirms the significant difference between the groups. The absence of zero between the lower level [.989] and the upper level [2.200] of the confidence interval reinforces the significant difference, favoring the experimental group. In simple terms, the TBA instruction had a direct effect on the writing performance posttest scores of the experimental group students, with a 95% confidence interval. The significant difference observed can be attributed to the implementation of the intervention with the experimental group, indicating that the strategy significantly enhanced their writing performance.

The effect size ($ES = 0.33$) suggests a large difference in writing performance posttest scores between the control and experimental groups, providing further support for the effectiveness and practical significance of the TBA instruction with the experimental group.

Furthermore, the result in Table 5 indicates that the TBA instruction accounted for 56.1% ($R^2 = .561$) of the variation in the writing performance posttest scores of the experimental group participants compared to the control group. This implies a significant ($p < .05$) role of the strategy in enhancing students' writing performance skills.

This result is in line with the belief of CHEN Li(2008) that TBI offers the learners the opportunities to experience and acquire the target language through the tasks, designed to engage them in practical, functional and authentic use of language for meaningful purposes. This finding is also in line with the conviction of John & Kothari (2019) that Task-Based Instruction came in reaction, mainly, to the failure of the “traditional” method, which is present, practice, and produce (PPP), a method which focuses much on language structure or form. It ,still, agrees with the finding of Ellis (2003) that TBI, gaining its base from constructivist theory of learning and communicative language teaching methodology, has emerged in response to limitations of the traditional methods, for both the TBI and the constructivism theory are with the beliefs that learning means constructing, doing, and demonstrating. This finding again supports Min’s (2014) finding-based assertion that TBI can cultivate learners’ self study awareness and it improve learners’ writing competence and language proficiency significantly, emphasizing its effectiveness for writing classes.

This finding, which is line with the findings of the aforementioned authors, came true although some researchers criticize TBI, stating that the work with TBI demands ample time (Chaudron, 1985), small class size (Liu &Xiong, 2016), and language proficiency of students (Carless ,2009), whether the task is completed individually or collaboratively

(Oxford, 1997), whether the task is reciprocal or nonreciprocal (Ellis, 1991). Having his criticism as a stand against students' poor language proficiency, Carless (2009) categorizes the problem to the teachers' ill preparation in introducing linguistic items demanded in the task. Carless argues again that the teacher could align the level of task complexity with students' level of language proficiency.

These identified factors which are taken for criticizing TBI are issues against which role players in the implementation of TBI need to carry out their respected roles in minimizing the negative effects thereof. Marashi and Dadari (2012) suggested that because task-based approach in learning writing is significantly beneficial, the difficulty in implementing it must be eased by exerting rigorous efforts.

The debate of these researchers has not to do with doubts on the effects of TBI or tasks; this debate should be for TBI facilitated conditions. The said writing task features, availability of time, the individual or collaborative learning option, and the reciprocal or nonreciprocal demand of task are ones which have to have accordance reactions from the teacher, students, syllabus designers, and other role players.

Effects of TBA on Writing Engagement

The findings presented in Table 5 demonstrate a significant difference in the mean scores of engagement in writing between the control and experimental groups on the posttest. The critical ratio of 4.757(> 1.96) and the regression weight of .543, along with a significant p-value of .001 ($p < .05$), provide strong evidence for the existence of a significant difference. This difference indicates that the experimental group showed higher levels of engagement in writing compared to the control group.

The confidence interval analysis further supports this significant difference, as there is no overlap between the lower level [.786] and upper level [.786] of the confidence interval.

This provides additional evidence in favor of the significant difference between the groups, favoring the experimental group.

These results clearly demonstrate that the TBI had a significant impact on the engagement in writing of the experimental group participants, compared to the control group. The intervention implemented with the experimental group contributed to the observed significant difference in their writing engagement.

Moreover, the effect size ($ES = .38$) indicates a large magnitude of difference in writing engagement posttest scores between the control and experimental groups, favoring the experimental participants. This suggests that the significant difference observed can be attributed to the intervention conducted with the experimental group.

Furthermore, the effect of TBA on the experimental participants' writing engagement posttest scores accounts for 30.3% ($R^2 = .303$) of the variation. This implies that the intervention played a significant role ($p < .05$) in enhancing the level of engagement among students in relation to their writing skills. The TBA instruction had a substantial impact on improving students' engagement in writing, as evidenced by the variation explained by the intervention in the experimental group compared to the control group.

This finding of the positive effect of TBI on students' writing engagement is in line with the finding of Boots' (2020) that TBI is a teaching instruction that is assumed to provide opportunity for eliciting learning engagement. Boots' belief is that engagement in TBI is taken, even, as an end. This is because, there is a belief that language use engagement resides in students' task doing engagement. This finding strongly enhances the finding of Hiver and Wu (2023) that TBI helps learners get involved behaviorally, cognitively, socially, and affectively in completing a given single task. This finding of the effect of TBI on writing engagement of students is clearly discerned in the statement asserted by Philp and Duchesne (2016) in showing the mutual causal relationship between TBI and engagement describing

the fact that the reaction engagement does to TBI is to payback its owe from TBI; TBI does a favour to engagement. This finding is, still, in line with the finding of a study conducted by Newton and Bui (2017), comparing the position of learner engagement in TBI and PPP approach, which showed that engagement was consistently high in the TBI lessons versus the PPP lessons; at a level TBI predicts engagement.

Effect of TBA on Writing Performance through Writing Engagement

The findings presented in Table 5 provide evidence of a significant difference in the mean scores between the control and experimental groups on the writing performance posttest, mediated by writing engagement. The critical ratio of 2.103(> 1.96) and the regression weight of .345, along with a significant p-value of .001 ($p < .05$), indicate a significant difference in the writing performance posttest scores. The confidence interval analysis further confirms this significant difference, with no overlap between the lower level [.050] and upper level [.768] of the confidence interval, favoring the experimental group.

Moreover, the effect size ($ES = .22$) suggests a moderate difference in writing performance posttest scores between the control and experimental groups, favoring the experimental group. This indicates that writing engagement plays a mediating role in the relationship between TBA and students' writing performance. The greater difference observed in the writing performance posttest scores of the experimental group can be attributed to the intervention conducted with the experimental group participants.

Additionally, as depicted in Table 5, the TBA instruction implemented with the experimental group had an effect on their writing performance posttest scores, with a magnitude of 49% ($R^2 = .49$), through engagement in writing. This signifies that writing engagement significantly ($p < .05$) mediated the causal relationship between TBA instruction and students' writing performance.

Overall, the results indicate a significant effect of TBA instruction on the writing performance posttest scores of the experimental group participants, mediated by writing engagement, compared to the control group participants. This suggests that the instructional strategy successfully engaged the experimental group students in writing activities, which, in turn, enhanced their writing performance. The mediating effect of writing engagement implies that the students' level of engagement played a crucial role in the relationship between TBA instruction and writing performance, partially explaining the observed results.

This finding of the mediation role of writing engagement to transfer, by strengthening, the investment of TBI to writing performance is again in line with the motto of Sinatra, et al, (2015) who recognize engagement as it is the 'Holy grail of learning'; the 'dish' of learning. This finding really is capable of answering the implied hypothesis formulated in the introduction section which argues the main determining factor that is thought about the students' incompetence of essay writing performance seems to hover on students' absence of engagement in doing the actual business of writing.

Conclusions

All the findings of this study show that TBI, to strongly enhance essay writing performance and writing engagement of Grade 11 EFL students, is found to be dependable and predictable. That is, it can be concluded that teaching students essay writing performance, employing the strategy of TBI and utilizing the belief in engagement as an anchor ends in success. Hence, using TBI has significant effects on students' essay writing performance directly, and indirectly passing through the medium of engagement of writing tasks.

The findings of this study are likely to urge students and English language teachers that they need to live with the conviction, enthusiasm, and action of using TBI directly and

indirectly (through engagement) to develop essay writing performance. The enhancement of the effects of TBI by engagement on the process of developing students' writing performance vividly shows the mediation role of writing engagement between TBI and writing performance. In a nut shell, it is deduced that writing engagement partially mediates the independent variable, TBI, and the dependent variable, essay writing performance. From this all, it can be arrived at a conclusion that writing engagement need to be considered as an attribute for the development of students' writing performance at the general sense and of essay writing performance, as a particular one.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers forward suggestions towards role players in the realm of English language education, to play their respected roles.

Curriculum developers, for example, need to provide the inevitable top down materials which are to retain the harmony at a national level, being designed in a way the TBI demands. The curriculum developers in collaboration with syllabus designers need to evaluate the appropriateness of duration of time allotment for the learning task. They need to allow the setup for the facilitated conditions for TBI and for students' writing engagement.

At the same time, the teachers need to have enthusiasm and take action of enforcing that enthusiasm of being guided by the learning-by-doing dynamics of TBI, in which the other affective variable of this study, engagement, prevails. Teachers need to be free from the slavery of the teacher-fronted classroom culture, in which case, TBI and students' engagement, which this study advocates, are deprived of their right of prevalence.

Again, students on their part need to know the efforts, the commitment, and the beliefs the TBI and writing engagement demand. Students need to know it is they who are the key role players for their learning through the TBI strategy. Students again need to know that in the TBI learning-by-doing dynamics, considering importance of engagement is inevitable. Students need to identify their roles; students' roles are risk taking, exploiting the learning opportunity, translating the learning climate into reality and utility, whereas the roles of the teacher are facilitating, directing, and setting up the learning environment.

All in all, the implication is that role players in the sphere of Grade 11 English language essay writing pedagogy should understand the advantage of using the TBI and writing engagement. Another implication pointed out from the findings of this study is that researchers may adapt the inputs and the procedures of this study to EFL contexts of their interest.

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