



Task-Based Language Learning in Action: Improving Writing Skill among Eighth-Grade Students at an Indonesian Islamic School

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study investigates the efficacy of task-based learning in enhancing the English writing skills of second-grade students at Indonesian Islamic School. A total of 70 students were divided into experimental and control classes, with the experimental class receiving task-based learning instruction and the control class receiving traditional teaching methods. Pre-test and post-test assessments were administered to both classes, and student skills were evaluated using a meta-cognitive skills rubric, multiple-choice questions, and essay writing. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, including normality and homogeneity tests via SPSS and Excel. The results indicate a significant improvement in English writing skills among students in the experimental class ($M = 62.43$) compared to the control class ($M = 60.00$). The findings suggest that task-based learning is an effective instructional approach for enhancing students' English writing skills and creativity. The study's results have implications for teaching practices, highlighting the importance of incorporating task-based learning in English language instruction. The findings also suggest that task-based learning can be adapted to various educational settings, providing a valuable tool for educators seeking to improve student outcomes. Furthermore, the study's results contribute to the growing body of research on task-based learning, providing insights into its effectiveness in enhancing language skills. Overall, this study provides evidence for the benefits of task-based learning in English language instruction, and its findings have the potential to inform teaching practices and improve student outcomes.

Introduction

Teaching English is all about motivating students, helping them learn better, and getting them to improve their English language skills (Pranawengtias, 2022). The acquisition of English as a second language (L2) and the pedagogical methodologies employed in its instruction have assumed a significance that eclipses the mere act of learning a language (Emsawas et al., 2025). Shortt et al., (2023) stated to the research, the most frequently used were task-based language learning and communicative language training. Task-based learning can be used to teach any target, second, or foreign language (Nunan, 2004). Tasks facilitate learners in the acquisition of communicative abilities and participation in social activities relevant to their present or future goals (Jackson, 2022). Task-based learning can

be used to teach any target, second, or foreign language (Nunan, 2004). According to Ellis (2021b), the task-based language teaching approach is a method designed to facilitate the acquisition of a second or foreign language (L2) by engaging students in practical tasks. Task-based language teaching, as the name suggests, relies entirely on communication, tasks and has its roots in the Communicative Language Teaching method and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies (Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Subrahmanyam Vellanki & Bandu, 2021). TBL, along with content-based language teaching (CBLT), has been found to be effective in improving language instruction and learning processes in second language acquisition (Amat et al., 2022; Jedi-Sari-Biglar & Liman-Kaban, 2023). Explored learning potentials while students transitioned from task instructions to performance of the task (Hellermann and Pekarek Doehler 2010; Sert & Amri, 2021).

The activity in the task is defined as an activity related to daily work, or, more specifically, an activity focused on real-life situations (Wen et al., 2021). Williams (2022) stated suggests that task-based language teaching could serve as a viable classroom solution. The TBL model comprises three distinct stages that teachers must navigate during classroom instruction: pre-task, while-task, and post-task (Musengimana et al., 2022). Furthermore, questionnaires, evaluations, and interviews were the most often used procedures for data collection (Shortt et al., 2023).

According to Ellis (2021a), there are three guiding principles that map onto the steps of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching, and the design of the method itself includes a learning component made up of structured tasks. The instructional process is initiated with the pre-task stage, during which both instructors and learners engage in preparatory activities. During this phase, instructors provide a concise introduction to the subject matter, often supplemented by visual aids, written materials, and interactive discussions. The next stage of the lesson is characterised by a more instructive approach, where students work collaboratively in small groups to complete assignments under the guidance of the teacher. The teacher's role involves the monitoring of progress and the provision of targeted instructions to facilitate task completion. The post-task stage is the final stage of the assessment process. It combines elements from the pre-task stage to post-task fulfilment and student performance. The teaching of English as a foreign language is regarded as a process of developing communicative competence, which is achieved through the mastery of language elements and vocabulary, facilitating the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Viktorivna et al., 2022). The author conducted research on Indonesian Islamic School. This study was conducted due of the student's low writing abilities at Indonesian Islamic School. The provision of feedback in the writing process is widely believed that it is important (Wahyuni, 2021). The research study attempted to improve writing skills through task-based learning strategies. According to Hamad Alqasham & Ahmed Mohammed Hassan Al-Ahdal (2021), the ability to write is considered an important skill for the students since it makes it possible to express themselves and preserve their ideas and memories. Writing is an active and productive activity that requires a methodical way of thinking, which is expressed in written language (Sinaga et al., 2021).

Pechenik (2024) stated that the ability to write effectively is a crucial skill for achieving academic success, as it enables individuals to articulate their ideas and convey their thoughts with clarity and precision. According to Biglari et al., (2021) writing is an intricate activity that demands the synthesis of numerous skills. It involves the process of conceptualizing ideas and articulating them onto a written medium in a lucid and coherent manner for the intended reader (Supervised by & Farrah, 2021). Furthermore, the practice of reflective journal writing has been demonstrated to confer a number of benefits to students. Chief among these is the ability to learn and master new English words through the use of a dictionary. For instance, when students write words and definitions from a dictionary, the meaning is documented for future reference. This process enables students to write clear and accurate messages that are easily comprehensible (Rhodes & Brook, 2021; Fathia Baresh, 2022). According to Khulel (2022), Process writing is an instructional strategy that enables students to comprehend their writing process, allocates sufficient time for composition and revision, and facilitates communication of their thought process during the writing process. The degree to which students are able to articulate their ideas, thoughts, and feelings in written form constitutes their writing achievement, this ability is evaluated through a formal writing assessment (Seyoum et al., 2022).

In the context of the aforementioned cases, English teachers have adopted a task-based learning approach in their teaching and learning process, with the objective of facilitating students' mastery of the material and comprehension of the foreign language writing model. In Indonesian Islamic School, the English teacher taught English using the lecture method with a book guide, monotonous teaching and learning activities where students only listen without any stimulus for them to really think or understand the material that has been conveyed by the teacher. After reading it, the teacher instructs the students to repeat reading the material that has been conveyed simultaneously without any practice, whether the writing of their pronunciation is correct. Then the students are given an assignment that will be collected at the next meeting. The teacher rarely asks the students if they really understand the usage of the expressions. In the end, the teacher has to review the lesson over and over again.

This study aims to improve students' writing skills in English, especially in overcoming their difficulties in writing vocabulary with correct spelling. Given the difference between writing and pronunciation in English, this research is crucial to improve students' understanding not only in the oral aspect but also in writing. Thus, students can develop more comprehensive English skills.

Research Methods

This study is a quasi-experimental investigation conducted from January to February 2024. The study's independent variable is the learning approaches, whereas the dependent variable is English writing skills. The study population consisted of eighth grade students at Indonesian Islamic School. Therefore, task-based language learning techniques were employed in the sampling process with the objective of obtaining a sample that is genuinely appropriate and representative, accurately reflecting the characteristics of the population

under study. There were four classes in grade 8, with a total of 35 students in each class. However, only two classes were selected for the research, namely class 8B and class 8D. Class 8B and Class 8D were selected as suitable sample data sources based on the teacher's recommendation.

The study consisted of two classes: Class 8B, which functioned as the control group, and Class 8D, which acted as the experimental group. Class 8B was instructed using the discussion technique, which is the typical approach to learning in the school where the study took place. On the other hand, Class 8D utilised the task-based learning approach, which involves the use of pretest and post-test assessments. Despite the differing instructional methods used in the two classes, the research in both classes was completed across an equal number of sessions, specifically two hours of instruction. The learning material in both groups was also the same, namely simple present tense material. The use of question instruments and pictures in student skill tests enables students to describe their learning processes and abilities. Pretest and post-test were conducted on the first and last meetings in both classes. The dependent variable of this study was students' analytical thinking ability, which was measured using a test instrument consisting of 30 items divided into 25 multiple-choice questions and 5 essay questions. The formulation of the questions was based on simple present tense material. Research methods must provide clear information about how to solve research problems.

This study also quantitative methods to gather data on the characteristics of students' English writing abilities. The study involved 70 grade students who were positioned as research subjects. The skills were collected using a meta-cognitive skills rubric, writing skills through multiple choice questions and essays. The gathered data were examined using descriptive statistics, specifically normality tests and homogeneity tests.

Microsoft Excel and SPSS software were used to analyze data. Subsequently, information source profiles were counted and presented in tables and Radar charts. Furthermore, descriptive analysis showcased information acquisition time and knowledge level. In addition to this, descriptive statistics allow for the identification of weak relationships between variables through correlation, thereby enabling comparisons to be made by comparing the average to the population (Sinaga et al., 2021). Moreover, the normality test plays a crucial role in determining whether, in the regression model, the residual or confounding variables have a normal distribution. To achieve this, a normality test is used to find out whether the data is normally distributed. A normal distribution is desired for regression models, as it indicates that the data does not exhibit significant deviations. Specifically, the test can be performed using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, where a significance value above 0.05 suggests a normal distribution. Conversely, a significance value below 0.05 indicates that the distribution is not normal. Ultimately, the normality test evaluates the normal distribution of residuals, where a significance value above 0.05 indicates normal residuals (Sinaga et al., 2021).

Findings

This study has analyzed the learning outcomes by using a task-based learning model to improve the writing skills of grade 8 students of Indonesian Islamic School. The calculation results in table 1 show that the experimental group is superior compared to the control group. The pre-test score obtained by the experimental group had an average of 62.43 and the post-test score after using the task-based learning model had an average of 74.86. Meanwhile, the control class was not given a learning model using task-based learning. The pre-test score obtained by the control class had an average of 66.71 and the post-test score had an average of 38.86.

Table 1 Result of pre-test and post-test

Variable	Experimental			Control			
Writing Skill		Max	Min	Mean	Max	Min	Mean
	Pre-test	85	35	62,43	95	35	66,71
	Post-test	85	65	74.86	75	15	38.86

A normality test was applied on both the experimental and control groups' pre- and post-test data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were employed in this study to examine when the data was regularly distributed. Assuming the data has a significance value greater than 0.05, the normality test is used to evaluate whether it follows a normal distribution. The following table shows the results of the normality test for both the experimental and control group:

Based in table 2 provided, the experimental group and control group data, as well as the pretest post-test, all have Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk sig values of more than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data distribution is normal.

Table 2 Normality test

Tests of Normality							
	CLASS	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
STUDENT OUTCOMES	PRETEST EKSPERIMENT	.167	35	.015	.934	35	.036
	POSTTEST EXPERIENTIAL	.176	35	.008	.920	35	.014
	PRETEST CONTROL	.164	35	.018	.907	35	.006
	POST-TEST CONTROL	.107	35	.200*	.951	35	.120

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

A paired sample T test was applied to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the pretest and post-test performance of the experimental and control groups, correspondingly. Based in table 3 shows the results of the pretest and post-test hypothesis test. The results indicate significant improvements in learning outcomes for both the experimental group using task-based learning and the control group using discovery learning. Specifically, the experimental class showed statistically significant improvements

in average learning outcomes between pre- and post-tests (p -value = 0.000, 2-tailed, < 0.05), while the control class demonstrated significant differences in average learning outcomes before and after the intervention (sig value = 0.000, 2-tailed, < 0.05).

Table 3 Paired sample test

Paired Sample Test									
		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest experimental - post experimental	12.429	11.464	1.938	-16.367	-8.490	-6.414	34	.000
Pair 2	Pretest control - post control	27.857	20.411	3.450	20.846	34.868	8.074	34	.000

The table 4 clearly compares the average learning outcomes before and after applying the task-based language learning approach:

Table 4 Paired sample statistic

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest experimental	62.43	35	13.686	2.313
	Post experimental	74.86	35	5.877	.993
Pair 2	Pretest control	66.71	35	22.457	3.796
	Post control	38.86	35	16.409	2.774

Prior to conducting an independent sample T test on both research groups, a prerequisite condition will be achieved, which includes determining homogeneity levels. The Homogeneity of Variance test can be used to calculate the homogeneity value in this study. The following table displays the homogeneity test results for the two sets of research samples:

Table 5 Homogeneity test

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
LEARNING OUTCOMES	Based on Mean	28.302	1	68	.000
	Based on Median	23.422	1	68	.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	23.422	1	43.318	.000
	Based on trimmed on Mean	27.962	1	68	.000

To find out if the experimental and control classes had substantially different post-test results, a t-test was performed. The results of the hypothesis test computation are presented in the following table 6. The value of sig is determined based on the table provided. With a p-value of 0.000 (2-tailed) being less than 0.05, it can be inferred that there is a significant disparity in the mean student learning outcomes between the task-based language learning and the discovery learning method.

Table 6 Independent sample t test

Independent Sample T test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
LEARNING OUTCOMES	Equal variances assumed	28.302	.000	12.220	68	.000	36.000	2.946	30.129	41.879
	Equal variances not assumed			12.220	42.582	.000	36.000	2.946	30.057	41.943

Additional information regarding the use of the average post-test experimental group and control group may be found in the subsequent statistical table 7.

Table 7 Group statistic

Group Statistics					
	CLASS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
LEARNING OUTCOMES	POST EKSPERIMENT	35	74.86	5.877	.993
	POST KONTROL	35	38.86	16.409	2.774

Discussion

Task-based learning is approach used to enhance students' writing skills. Writing is one of the effective ways to improve skills, by writing students can remember the writing of vocabulary in English. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of Task-Based Language Learning (TBL) in the teaching of speaking has a significant impact on the enhancement of students' writing skills. Task-based learning is one of the learning models

that can improve writing skills. by learning using task-based learning students are able to be creative with thoughts and also able to understand in writing. Writing helps students develop their cognitive and imaginative skills, allowing them to capture and express their ideas effectively (Bora, 2023). The implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL) results in higher mean scores and demonstrable improvement in students' academic performance compared to traditional lecture methods (Amsori et al., 2022).

According to Wen et al., (2021) The implementation of TBLT has been demonstrated to elicit positive sentiments among language learners. This study proposes an approach to facilitate learners' writing development for academic purposes by designing task-based instructional materials (Yundayani & Ardiasih, 2021). According to Dao et al., (2024) The prospects for successfully adopting TBLT in different contexts look bright, with both teachers and learners showing promising support. By conducting research and comparison using 2 group, including experimental and control classes. We can assess whether or not the research is successful by using the task-based learning model in improving students' writing skills.

According to Pranawengtias (2022), Experiment are characterized by the manipulation of an independent variable and the use of random assignment to treatment and control groups, enabling researchers to isolate the variable's effect and minimize confounding influences. The result experimental and control groups were utilized in the pretest and posttest, respectively. The experimental group exhibited a mean score of 62.43 and a median score of 60.00 in the pretest. Following the implementation of the task-based learning method, the experimental group demonstrated a mean score of 74.86 and a median score of 75.00 in the posttest, indicating a substantial change. The control group, which did not receive the task-based learning method, exhibited a mean pretest score of 66.71 with a median of 65.00 and a mean posttest score of 38.86 with a median of 35.00. This decline indicates that the control group did not demonstrate mastery of the learning material. To find out that the results are significant, the authors processed the data using excel and SPSS. through normality test, paired sample test, paired sample statistic, homogeneity test, independent sample t test and group statistic with significant or normal results.

Through writing skills, students can build strong intellectual and practical relationships between research and independent learning (Wardani & Sari, 2017; Sutarman et al, 2019; Sari et al., 2021). This study is crucial in addressing the disparity between English writing and pronunciation, aiming to enhance students' writing skills, particularly in vocabulary spelling, and ultimately fostering more well-rounded English proficiency.

Conclusion

Task-based learning has been shown to be an effective approach in enhancing students' writing abilities, as evidenced by the significant difference in performance between the control and experimental groups. This approach has a positive impact on students' abilities, and the findings provide a valuable reference for future research in diverse contexts and with broader variables. The results of this study highlight the potential of task-based learning to positively influence student outcomes, offering a foundation for subsequent

research to build upon and expand our understanding of language development. Task-based learning enables students to engage in active and contextual learning, thereby enhancing their writing and communication skills. This study provides insight into the effective implementation of task-based learning in various educational settings. Furthermore, it offers perspectives on how task-based learning can be tailored to meet the needs and abilities of diverse students. Consequently, this research contributes to the development of more effective and innovative teaching methods. Task-based learning can be a viable approach to improving students' language skills and preparing them for future challenges. By adopting this approach, educators can create a more engaging and productive learning environment that fosters students' linguistic and cognitive development.

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