The Attitudes of Algerian University Students toward the Task-Based Teaching of EFL Writing: The Case of Second Year Licence Students at Oum El Bouaghi University

مواقف طلاب الجامعة الجزائرية تجاه التدريس القائم على المهام للتعبير الكتابي باللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية : حالة طلبة السنة الثانية ليسانس بجامعة أم البواقي

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Abstract :

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a recent learner-centered teaching approach which facilitates the learning of a foreign language (FL) through performing a number of outcome driven tasks, focusing on the meaningful rather than the formal use of language. This paper is an attempt to investigate the attitudes of Algerian university learners towards the implementation of TBLT in the English writing classroom. In this case, the study focuses on 1) their understanding of TBLT and 2)their views on whether or not it is effective to develop their English writing.To carry out the study, a questionnaire was used with second year licence students of the English Department at Larbi Ben M'hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi. The questionnaire was administered after implementing TBLT in thewriting classroom for 90 minutes three times a week for ten sessions.

The results of the students' questionnaire indicate that second year learners had positive attitudes towards TBLT in writing classrooms. They reportedtheir understanding of TBLT and specifically how TBLT helped them to be more active learners in the English writing class. Furthermore, the students approved that TBLT was effective in improving their overall English writing ability and enhancing someaspects of writing.
Key words: Task-based language teaching, tasks, English writing, writing ability

ملخص :

تركز على المتعلم, وتسهل تعلم لغة أجنبية من خلال أداء عدد من المهام القائمة على النتائج, مع التركيز على المعنى عند استعمال اللغة بدلاً من الاستخدام الرسمي لها. يحاول هذا البحث التحقيق في مواقف طلبة الجامعة الجزائرية تجاه التعليم القائم على المهام في حصة التعبير الكتابي باللغة الإنجليزية. في هذه الحالة،تركز الدراسة على(1) فهمهم لطريقة التدريس القائم على المهام و(2) وجهات نظرهم حول ما اذا كانت هذه الطريقة فعالة في تطوير التعبير الكتابي لديهمباللغة الإنجليزية.ولتنفيذ هذه الدراسة، تم استخدام استبيان مع طلاب السنة الثانية ليسانس من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة العربي بن مهيدي، أم البواقي، بعد تطبيق طريقة تعلم اللغة و تعليمها بالمهام في حصة التعبير الكتابي لمدة 90 دقيقة، ثلاث مرات في الأسبوع على مدى عشر حصص.

تشير نتائج استبيان الطلاب إلى أن متعلمي السنة الثانية لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه تعليم اللغة القائم على المهام في حصص التعبير الكتابي . كما عبروا عن فهمهم لطريقة تعليم اللغة القائم على المهام وعلى وجه التحديد كيف ساعدتهم هذه الطريقة على أن يكونوا أكثر نشاطاً في صف الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. وعلاوة على ذلك، وافق الطلاب على أن طريقة تعليم اللغة القائم على المهام فعالة في تحسين قدرتهم على الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية بشكل عام وتعزيز بعض جوانب التعبير الكتابي بشكل خاص.

الكلمات المفتاحية : تدريس اللغة على اساس المهام ، المهام، التعبير الكتابي بالإنجليزية، القدرة على الكتابة.

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1. Introduction:

The Algerian government has implemented the licence/bachelor, master, doctorate (LMD) system or reform at the university level since 2004. Actually, this reform has a number of objectives among which the improvement of higher education quality (Megnounif, 2009). To fulfill this goal, the Algerian university has adopted a new teaching philosophy calling for the active involvement of learners in the teaching /learning process. Unfortunately, this remains mere ink on paper in the Englishas a foreign language (EFL) context since the teaching methodologies of the old classical system are still being applied in classrooms. In other words, the English teachers' ways of teaching have not changed significantly under the umbrella of the LMD system; they are still teacher-centered. One example is the writing classroom where the teacher still uses the traditional, product approach to teach learners how to write.

Significantly, the writing teacher in the product approach does the major role in the classroom as he/ she makes huge efforts in the explanation of the lesson and provision of feedback. The student participation, on the other hand, is insufficient. Accordingly, the passivity of learners would negatively affect their achievement in tests and exams. Indeed, the writing ability of learners will not be improved in classrooms dominated by teacher centeredness, since the students are passive and are not given adequate opportunities to successfully take part in class. For that reason, to motivate learners to do better efforts and achieve better outcomes in writing classrooms, EFL teachers have to adopt alternative and feasible teaching methodologies which would realize learner-centeredness, a basic principle of the LMD higher education system.

This study basically attempts to investigate the attitudes of Algerian university students towards the application of TBLT in the EFL writing classroom. Generally speaking, it aims at checking the students' understanding of TBLT as a new approach to teach English composition. More specifically, the study aims to explore the evaluation of students as to whether or not TBLT develops their English writing ability.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT): Task-based language teaching, also referred to as Task-based language learning (TBLL), or task-based instruction (TBI) is an important, if not a dominant approach to language teaching that helps learners learn the target language through the use of the language itself while accomplishing a task. That is, TBLT is based on the belief that language use is the driving force for language learning. As Ellis (2013) puts it, "Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an approach to teaching a second/foreign language that seeks to facilitate language learning by engaging learners in the interactionally authentic language use that results from performing a series of tasks" (p.1).Thus, the term 'task' is the fundamental unit of teaching in TBLT.

2.2 Definition of task: Second language acquisition (SLA)theorists have differently defined the notion of 'task'. For Nunan (1989), it is "A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (p.10).

Willis (1996) defines tasks as "[A]ctivities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome" (p. 23). On that account, language is a means to an end.

Skehan (1998) offers an inclusive definition that summarizes five outstanding task characteristics. He asserts that:

> [A] task is an activity in which:
> - meaning is primary;
> - there is some communication problem to solve;
> - there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities;
> - task completion has some priority;
> - the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome. (Skehan, 1998, p. 95)

Later, Ellis (2003) considers a task as:

> [a] workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Likeother language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes. (p. 16)

Obviously, in Ellis' (2003) view, learners have to plan their work and specifically use their own language structures to reach a communicative outcome.

It is worthy to note that the above definitions differ in formulation.Yet, they are similar in that they all support the idea that learners need to focus their attention on meaning rather than form when using language communicatively.

## 2.3Characteristics of Task-Based Instruction:

Swan (2005) summarizes some principles that characterize TBI:

> • Instructed language learning should primarily involve natural or naturalistic language use, and the activities are concerned with meaning rather than language.
> • Instruction should favor learner-centeredness rather than teacher control.
> • Since purely naturalistic learning does not normally lead to target-like accuracy, involvement is necessary in order to foster the acquisition of formal linguistic elements while keeping the perceived advantages of a natural approach.
> • This can be done best by providing opportunities for focus on the form, which will draw students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose prime focus is on meaning or communication.
> • Communicative tasks are a particularly appropriate tool for such an approach.
> • More formal pre- or post-task language study may be useful. This may contribute to acquisition by leading or increasing noticing of formal features during communication.
> • Traditional approaches are ineffective and undesirable, especially where they involve passive formal instruction and practice separated from communicative work. (p. 377)

2.4Task components:

Nunan (2004) formulated a simple and detailed model of task components(**Figure 1**). For him, a task consists of six key elements: goals, input, and procedures, and that these will be supported by roles (of both teacher and learner) and settings.

Fig.1. Components of tasks

Goals	→		← Teacher role
Input	→	Task	← Learner role
Procedures → ← Settings			
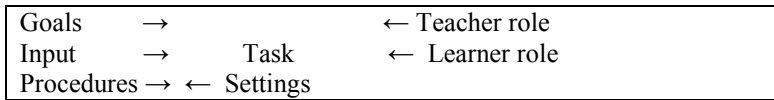
Source: Nunan, 2004, p.41

2.5 Three stages for task-based instruction:

As shown in **Table 1**, scholars of TBI suggest that task-based lessons are organized in terms of three stages: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus (Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996). Authors like Skehan (1996) and Ellis (2003) sometimes utilize synonymous terms of the above three main phases namely, pre-task, during task, and post-task phases (**Table 2**). The words referring to the stages for TBI can be used interchangeably as they denote the same thing.

Table 1. Willis' Three Stage Framework for Task-Based Instruction

Pre-task
Introduction to topic and task
Task cycle
Task
Planning
Report
Language focus
Analysis
Practice

Source: Willis, 1996, p.52

In the pre-task stage, the teacher provides the learners with the task instruction and activates their background knowledge. Lee (as cited in Ellis, 2006) emphasizes the importance of "framing" the task to be completed. He further proposes that one possibility to do this is by providing learners with an advance organizer that would help them know what to do to reach a particular communicative goal. During the task stage, the learners accomplish the task in pairs, or in groups. Here the students' focus is on understanding and expressing meaning to achieve the task outcome. In the post-task stage, students are oriented to focus on forms and do some practice that would help them reinforce what they have learned from the task completion.

Table 2. A Framework for Designing Task-Based Lessons

Phase	Examples of options
A Pre-task	framing the activity, e. g. establishing the outcome of the task planning time doing a similar task
B During task	time pressure number of participants
C Post-task	learner report consciousness-raising repeat task

Source: Ellis, 2003, p.244+

2.6 Learner and teacher roles in TBLT: According to Richards and Rodgers (2001, pp. 235-236), specific roles are assumed for both the learners and the teachers in TBLT.

2.6.1 Learner roles:

2.6.1.1 Group participant: Students accomplish many tasks in pairs or small groups. This may necessitate some adaptation for the students who are acquainted with whole class and/or individual work.

2.6.1.2 Monitor: In TBLT, tasks have a facilitative role in language learning. Therefore, classroom activities must be planned in a way that helps learners notice the use of language in communication. Importantly, learners themselves have to "attend" to both the message in task work, and the form in which such a message typically comes packed.

2.6.1.3 Risk-taker and innovator: Learners will be required to create and interpret messages for which they lack full linguistic resources and prior experience when completing many tasks. This is actually said to be the aim of such tasks. Accordingly, learners will often need topractise restating, paraphrasing, using paralinguistic signals (where appropriate), etc... Moreover, they may develop the skills of guessing from linguistic, contextual clues,asking for clarification, and consulting with other learners.

2.6.2 Teacher roles:

2.6.2.1 Selector and sequencer of tasks: An important role assumed for the teacher in TBI is that of selecting, adapting, and creating the tasks. The teacherthen arranges those tasks into a sequence of instruction in line with the needs, interests, and language skill levels of learners.

2.6.2.2 Preparing learners for tasks: For most TBLT exponents, some sort of warm up for pre-task is crucial for learners. Warm up activities may involve introducing the topic, clarifying task instructions, and helping learners learn or remember useful words and phrases to ease the completion of the task, thus providing part of display in the task proceeding.

2.6.2.3 Consciousness-raising: Contemporary TBLT views argue the necessity to "focus on form" in a task-based lesson. That is, if learners are going to acquire language trough taking part in tasks, they have to notice crucial aspects of the language used or heard. This implies that the teacher needs to use a range of form-focusing techniques, as attention-focusing pre-task activities, text exploration, guidedexposure to parallel tasks, and highlighted material.

2.7 What is writing?

According to Byrne (1983),writing is an activity that involves the use of "graphic symbols: that is, letters or combinations of letters which relate to the sounds we make when we speak" (p.1). However,as Brown (2001) asserts, "no one holds this view today" (p.335).

In other words, and as Byrne (1983) adds, writing implies more than the use of graphic symbols.The symbols must be organized in certain ways to form words, and words in turn must be organized to form sentences. The sentences produced are put in a specific order and linked through cohesive devices to form a coherent text. Interestingly, the writer expresses a number of ideas in the text with the aim of conveying messages to the reader.

Significantly, writing is a means to an end; it is a communication tool. This is what Weigle (2002) thinks of when pointing out that "whether used in reporting analyses of current event for newspapers or web pages, composing academic essays, business reports, letters, or e-mail passages, the ability to write effectively allows individuals from different cultures and backgrounds to communicate"(p. x).

Some scholars (eg. Kroll, 1990; Tribble, 1997) consider writing among the most demanding human activities. In this regard, Richards (1990) notes that learning

how to write in the first (L1) or second language(L2/SL) is one of the most challenging tasks for learners. The complexity of this skill is due to the fact that it necessitates the writer to make both types of effort, namely physical and mental.

2.8 Writing, a skill learned at school: The ability to write is often compared with the ability to speak. In this vein, Harmer (2004) asserts that writing is more difficult than speaking in that the latter is acquired naturally via exposure to it, but the former has to be taught and learned at school. Under that account, SL/ FL writing needs to be taught carefully and attentively, particularly that it is challenging and can not be developed without systematic instruction.

2.9 Why teach writing: Raimes (1983b) argues that writing should be taught to EFL learners because it helps them learn. Thisis chiefly done in a number of ways:

1. Writing reinforces the linguistic features (grammar, idioms, vocabulary) the students have learnt. That is, the learner's permanent use of eye, hand, and brain is very helpful in consolidating language learning.

2. The writing process may help learners be risk takers with the language to go beyond what they have been taught.

3. Writing helps learners explore their thinking. Actually, when attempting to write a text properly, the leaner makes some mental efforts as examining, reconsidering, adding to, rearranging, and even changing ideas. Therefore, writing and thinking are closely interrelated, as Irmscher (as cited in El koumy, 2002) puts it, "Writing stimulates thinking, chiefly because it forces us to concentrate and organize" (p. 68). Importantly, Raimes (1983a) went a further step when emphasizing the fact that "composing means expressing ideas, conveying meaning. Composing means thinking" (p.261).

2.10 Approaches to teaching composition:

2.10.1 The product approach: The product approach was applied to teach university level rhetoric and writing prior to 1980. In English as a second language (ESL)/EFL contexts, the approach was rooted in the behaviourist psychology under the notion that learning is habit formation. As Silva (1990) states: "Learning to write in a second language is seen as an exercise in habit formation" (p.13). The product approach is mainly concerned with the analysis of the student's writing in terms of the accuracy of grammar, precision of lexis, structure of rhetoric (eg. thesis, rhetorical support cohesion, and coherence), and adequacy of style. That is, and as its name suggests, the product approach exclusively focuses on the student's ability to write an accurate written text or product (Richards, 1990).

The standard model for teaching writing in the product approach is made up of four steps. These are:

> (1)Instruct the students in principles of rhetoric and organization, presented as "rules" for writing; (2) provide a text for classroom discussion, analysis, and interpretation…; (3) require a writing assignment (accompanied by an outline) based on the text; and (4) read, comment on, and criticize student papers prior to beginning the next assignment in this cycle. (Kroll,2001, pp.219-220)

A typical methodology for a writing classroom in the product approach involves certain activities. First, the teacher introduces a specific writing type and analyzes its rhetorical structure. After that, the learners are provided with a sample text that illustrates the pattern of organization the teacher has already explained. The students are asked to pay careful attention to the sentence structure and cohesive devices used in the model text. An important next step is that of asking students to mimic the model

composition to write a similar product. Students write individually either in or after class. When the students turn their written products in to the teacher, he/she scores and marks them with feedback that mainly focuses on form rather than content.

2.10.1.1 Limitations of the product approach: According to Hyland (2003), the product approach has a number of drawbacks which are summarized as follows:

- Learners receive formal instruction in the form of short fragments based on the intuitive, personal understanding of course writers, not the analysis of the original text. This has a negative impact on the learners' writing ability which would be restricted in only composing some sentences. Furthermore, the students will be lost when being asked to write in different contexts.

- Syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy are neither considered the only aspects of writing development nor the best criteria for good writing assessment. For example, the student who writes accurate sentences does not necessarily compose a proper text.

- The aim of teaching writing can not be that of training students to use language structures accurately, for students are always supposed to respond communicatively to a specific setting when they are asked to write. Unfortunately, accuracy outweighs meaning (the communicative content) in the product approach. Meaning is postponed to be dealt with later.

Moreover, the product approach neglects the fact that learners need to write for an audience and purpose. This is what Silva (1990) notes: "the writing context is the ESL classroom; there is negligible concern for audience or purpose" (p.13).

2.10.2 The task-based approach: Though she does not go intodetails, Willis (1996) suggests how to teach writing through the task-based approach. She asserts that:

> In some cases the end product of the task cycle must be a polished written document. It could take the form of a letter, a story ending, or a list of recommendations, depending on the agreed outcome of the task. This end product will first be introduced orally or through reading in the pre-task phase, then discussed as an integral part of the task stage, drafted collaboratively at the planning stage and finalized for the report stage. (Willis, 1996, p. 62)

In other words, the pre-task stage prepares learners for the topic and writing task. It covers some activities through which the teacher introduces the topic, namely those activating useful vocabulary and background knowledge related to the task topic. The teacher then sets the written task. Next, the learners are provided with a reading text, a model of how to perform the task.

Importantly, Willis (1996) divides the task cycle stage into three phases: task, planning (1-2), and report (**Figure 2**). During the task phase, the teacher asks students to break into pairsor groupsto take part in an oral discussion on how to go on with the task. Ellis (2006) suggests that the model text can be followed by certain activities that would attract the attention of the students towards important aspects for completing the task. In the case of the writing task, learners can be asked to find out the key elements for organizing a given text. Such an activity requires the learners to recognize and analyze the elements in the sample paper; furthermore, it trains the students in the use of a number of strategies as those suggested by Nunan (1989) "Learning to live with uncertainty" and "Learning to make intelligent guesses". Interestingly, these learning strategies help learners be "adaptable, creative, and above all independent" (Nunan, 1989, p. 81). Consequently, and as Ellis (2006) asserts, the learners are supposed to be "more effective performers of the task" (p. 82).

At the planning1 phase, each pair or group of students has to discuss the outline of the draft to be written and take down some notes. Immediately after that, the learners are engaged in writing the first draft in pairs or groups, without worrying about handwriting, grammar, or spelling. Once written, the drafts are exchanged with another pair or group to get some feedback. During the planning2 phase, each pair or group needs to consider the obtained feedback in order to write a better final draft to be reported to the audience. Significantly, and at the report phase, the teacher randomly chooses pairs or groups to report what they wrote as final outcomes to the rest of the class. At the end of the report phase, the teacher reacts to the content of the written tasks and discusses with the whole class the organizational patterns of the text students attempted to write.

In the language focus stage, the students are provided with the teacher's language feedback. That is, the teacher highlights some good expressions used in the students' written drafts. Moreover, students are asked to suggest corrections to certain erroneous structures or expressions. As proposed by Ellis (2003), one methodological option in this stage is asking students to redo the task under the same conditions (in pairs or in groups) or under different conditions (individually). Accordingly, the teacher may ask students to write another text or composition on a different topic.

Fig.2. Willis' framework for doing awritten task
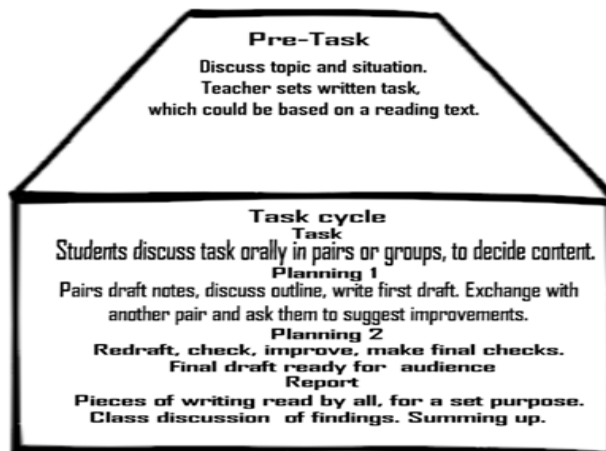
Source: Willis, 1996, p.62

3. Methodology:

3.1 Research design: The design to conduct the current study is a survey design in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was mainly designed to elicit students' opinions about implementing the task-based approach in the EFL writing class.

3.2 Data collection instruments:

The researcher opted for the questionnaire as an instrument to obtain qualitative data. The questionnaire is made up of eleven open ended questions (**Appendix**). In the first question, students are asked about the importance of the writing skill. Questions 2 to 5 deal with the learners' motivation to write. Questions 6 to 11 relate to the application of the task-based approach in the EFL writing classroom. Question 6 focuses on the similarity or difference between TBLT and the traditional approach to teaching writing. In case they think that the approaches are different, learners are required to indicate the differentiating features between both approaches in the next question. Question 8 explores the doer of the major role in the TBL writing class. Then, students are asked to identify the role of the teacher in that classroom (Q9). Interestingly, question 10 investigates the efficacy of the task-based approachin developingstudents' English writing. Finally, the writing aspects which TBLT helped to improve are considered in question 11.

3.3 Participants:

The subjects who took part in this study were 28 second yearlicence students learning English at Larbi Ben M'hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi for the academic year 2016/2017. It is worthnoting,as Cohen and Manion (1980) noted, that there is no accurate sample size for conducting a particular research. That is, the size depends on "the purpose of the study,and the nature of the population under scrutiny" (Cohen&Manion, 1980, p.77).Actually, all the subjects were Algerian. Their native language was Arabic, and they had a similar English background as they had been learning English for eight years, from the middle school.The participants responded to a TBLT questionnaireafter they hadreceived a 90 minute task-based writing instruction throughout ten sessions.

3.4Procedure:

A total of 28 participants in the present questionnaire study formed a second yearlicence class in the English department at Oum El BouaghiUniversity. The participants had been taught TBL writing instruction by the researcher, who was their writing teacher. Importantly, TBLT was applied to teach learners how to write for 90 minutes three times a week over ten sessions. At the end of TBLT application, all 28 students were asked to answer an anonymous questionnaire in class. The aim of administering such a questionnaire was to investigate the students' attitudes toward TBLT as a new approach to teaching EFL writing.Moreover, the questionnaire aimed at finding out the students' understanding of TBLT and estimation of whether or not the task-based writing approach helped them to write better in English. The students were informed that the questionnaire had nothing to do with their test and exam scores, and that it merely aimed at depicting their perceptions of TBLT implementation in the writing classroom. Once answered, all questionnaires were gathered, with altogether 28 copies.

3.4 Data analysis:
3.5.1 Question 1-5:

As **Table3** shows, 89.29% of the students consider writing a very important skill to learn. This implies that the learners are aware of the critical role of the writing skill in learning a FL. Generally speaking, learners show boredom in the writing class. Yet,

the students' perception of writing as a boring skill in question 2 fell short of expectations as 82.14% of the learners believe that the writing skill is not boring. Importantly, TBLT could have positively influenced the attitudes of learners towards writing so that they no longer consider it a boring skill. Again the results of question 3 fell short of expectations as all students admit that they like to write in English. TBLT may have helped to increase the rate of English writing appreciation. 75% of the students state that the method used by the teacher affects their writing motivation (Q4). Significantly, EFL writing instructors are required to be careful in their choice and application of the methods they use in their classes since these methods directly impact the learners' writing motivation. Concerning question 5, 100% of the students who answered question 4 with 'Yes' opted for the positive effect the teaching method has on their writing motivation. Actually, this result goes with Q4 results in that teachers have to assume their responsibility in choosing and using effective teaching methods that positively affect the learners' motivation to write in the target language.

Table 3. Percentage of Students' Answers to Questions 1-5

Question	Percentage
Q1 The writing skill importance	89.29
Q2 Boredom in the writing class	82.14
Q3 English writing appreciation	100
Q4 The teaching methodology and writing motivation	75
Q5 The effect of the teaching methodology on the writing motivation	100

3.5.2 Question 6-9:

The data from question 6-9 indicate that the students have a good understanding of TBA, of the principle part they are required to do in the TBLT class, and of the teacher's role in TBLT (**Table4**). The analysis of question 6 shows that 92.86% of the students think that TBA differs from the traditional approach to writing instruction. Clearly, these students are attracted by the unusual methodology of TBA in the writing class; consequently, they could realize that it is innovative compared with the old approach. The results of question 7 indicate that 53.85% of the students who answered question 6 with 'no' claim that TBA has a number of distinguishing features, namely those related with the writing practice, the challenging nature of the writing tasks, and the opportunity to be part of independent and cooperative learning environments. Interestingly, the answers of the students reflect not only their understanding of how TBA is different but also their realization of how TBA helped them to be more effective participants in the writing classroom. 85.71% of the students believe in the learner doing the major role in the TBL writing class (Q8). The results denote the learners' acquaintance with the task-based writing classroom as being learner-centered. The analysis of question 9 goes with that of question 8 as the majority of the students (85.71%) think that the teacher is merely a guide in that classroom (the same percentage of the students opted for 'the learner' as the doer of the major role in Q8). Indeed, the students have a good understanding of the role of the teacher in the task-based compositionclass.

**Table 4.** Percentage of Students' Answers to Question 6-9

Question	Percentage
Q6 The similarity/difference between TBA and the traditional approach	92.86
Q7 The differentiating features of TBA	53.84

Q8	The doer of the major role in the task-based writing class	85.71
Q9	The role of the teacher in the task-based writing class	85.71

3.5.3 Question 10:

Figure 3 shows the percentage of students as to their perceptions of whether TBLT is effective in improving their English writing ability. 96.43% of the students believe that TBLT improves their writing ability; only one student (3.57%) believes that it does not. This result implies that the majority of the learners believe in the effectiveness of TBLT in developing English writing.

Fig.3. Percentage of students' answers to question 10
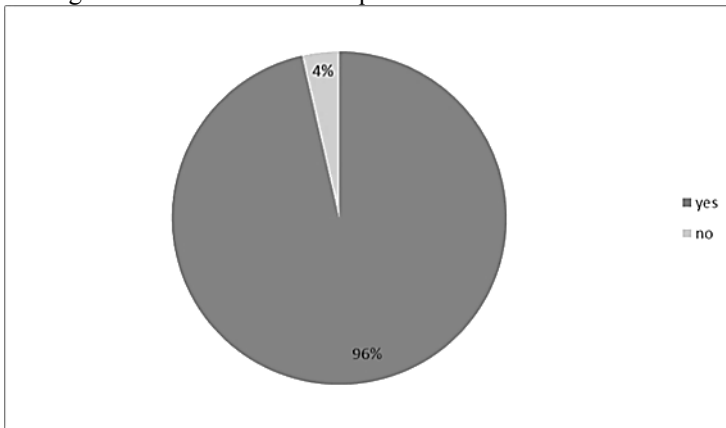
3.5.4 Question 11:

Figure 4 demonstrates the percentage of students' perceptions of the aspects which TBLT has developed in their writing. 33.33% of the students admit that TBA helped them to be confident when writing in English. 11.11% of the students chose 'a+c'. 7.41% of the students equally opted for 'c', 'a+c+e', 'a+d+e', and 'a+b+c+d+e'. Students representing the percentage of 3.70% have equally chosen 'e', 'a+d', 'd+e', 'a+b+c', 'a+c+d', 'a+b+c+e', and 'a+b+d+e'. The results reflect the fact that each student could notice what TBLT specifically enhanced in his/ her writing. Significantly, students are not only aware that TBLT has improved their writing but they are also conscious of the specific writing aspects they have made progress in.

Fig.4. Percentage of aspects improved in students' writing
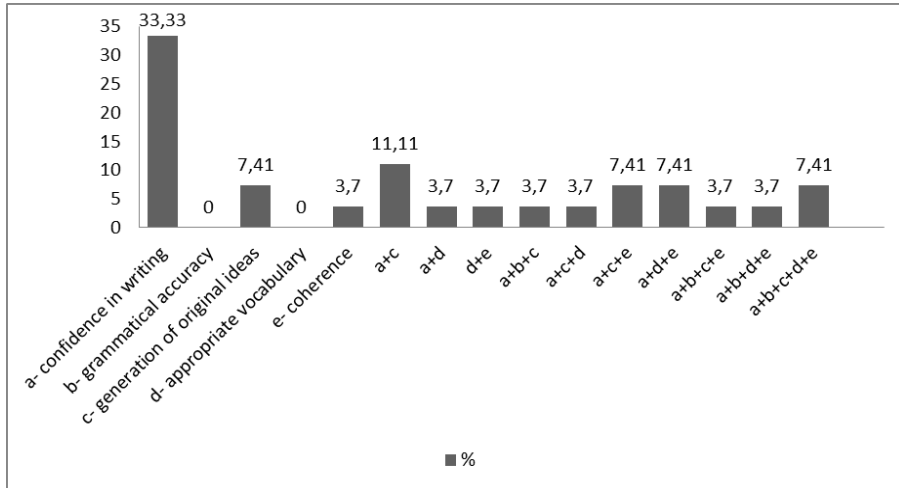
3.5 Discussion:

The results of the current study indicate that the learners are theoretically conscious of the importance of the writing skill in their English academic career. Practically, the students are aware of the innovativeness of the task-based writing approach in the EFL class. Indeed, TBLT is a learner-centered approach that brought many benefits to the learners.

First, TBLT helps EFL learners to be more active in the writing classroom. Algerian learners usually feel bored in the traditional writing class; therefore, they rarely take part in the learning process and are often unwilling to write in English. In TBLT, however, writing has gradually become a challenging rather than a boring skill. That is, learners are constantly challenged to accomplish written tasks; to takeup this challenge,they have to depend on their own mental, linguistic capacities and share information with their classmates in the discussions and debates they engage in.

Second, TBLT stimulates the learners' writing motivation and confidence. Actually TBLT has converted the role of the teacher from a serious, authoritative instructor and knowledge provider to a facilitator, guide, and feedback provider. In a TBLT class, the focus is on learners completing tasks usually in pairs or groups. The teacher merely facilitates the learning process and guides the learners through the different stages of task accomplishment.

When providing feedback on the students' written reports, the teacher always reacts positively to their content by commenting on the features students are showing improvement in. Importantly, "positive reactions", as Willis (1996) asserts, "will increase their motivation, their self-esteem, and spur them on to greater efforts next time" (p.59). Clearly, the task-based teaching atmosphere motivates learners and makes them feel confident to write in English.

Finally, the students approve for the effectiveness of TBA in developing their writing ability. Indeed, TBLT brings certain benefits to specific features related to the writing process. This improvement is possibly attributed to the fact that learners, and in their process of task completion, actively participate in collaborative groups. In other words, they interact and negotiate meaning with their group members; in addition, they provide help to and get help from other groups. Accordingly, social interaction plays a critical role in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Significantly, TBLT develops the learners' writing ability through providing them with opportunities for constant communication and interaction with one another.

Conclusion:

The present study primarily aims at exploring the students' attitudes towards the application of the task-based approach in the English writing class. Interestingly, the findings of the study reveal that the students positively evaluate the application of TBLT in the writing classroom. The qualitative evidence proves that the shift in TBLT from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one helps the learner to be independent and responsible for his/her own learning. Equally, TBA is very effective in stimulating students' writing interest and motivation. Since the application of the task-based writing approach, learners are more willing to interact, communicate, and negotiate meaning with their classmates in order to compose better pieces of writing. In sum, the study has come to the conclusion that TBLT as to the evaluation of Algerian university students improves their overall English writing ability and ameliorates specific aspects in their writing.

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Appendices:
Appendix:Students' Questionnaire
1.How do you consider the writing skill?
a.Very important
b. Important
c. Not important
2. Do you think that writing is a boring skill?
  Yes

No
3. Do you like writing in English?
   Yes
   No
4. Does the method the teacher uses in the classroom affect your motivation to write?
   Yes
   No
5. If yes, is this effect?
a. Positive
b. Negative
6. Is the TBA to teaching writing similar to the traditional approach your teacher used to apply in the classroom?
a. Yes, it is similar to it.
b. No, it is different from it.
7. If no, how is it different?
a. It makes me practise writing more than I used to do.
b. It challenges me to perform the writing task.
c. It makes me a more independent learner.
d. It allows me to discuss and exchange ideas with my classmates.
e. All of them
8. Who does the principle part in the task-based language (TBL) writing classroom?
a. The teacher
b. The learner
9. How would you describe the role of the teacher in the TBL writing classroom?
a. Knowledge provider
b. Guide
10. Does the TBA to teaching writing improve your writing ability?
   Yes
   No
11. If yes, which aspects do you think TBLT helped to improve in your writing?
a. confidence in writing in English
b. Grammatical accuracy
c. The generation of interesting and original ideas
d. The use of appropriate vocabulary
e. Coherence