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***Suggesting a Task Based Approach to Teaching ESP***

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Requirements of the ‘Magister’ Degree in English for Specific Purposes

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## ***Dedication***

*To my father,*

*To my mother for suffering through the realisation of this work, for her understanding and the care she showed during the difficult moments I went through as I forged the lines of this dissertation, without you mother, the accomplishment of this work and what I am now would have been impossible.*

*To all my brothers and my sister Houda for their support and encouragement.*

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*To my EDOLAS Ouargla colleagues , Asma ,Cheikh, and M.Kentaoui.*

*To all those who prayed for me and besought God to help me.*

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## **Abstract**

The present research aims at determining the effects of the Task Based Approach on Business students' writing skills so as to suggest and recommend it or discourage its use at English for Business Purposes classrooms. The effect of the Task Based Approach has been measured in different English teaching and learning environments. However, only few studies have been carried out to test the effect of the approach in ESP settings. This research goes further than just implementing the Task Based Approach in ESP classes but it attempts to examine the effect of this teaching pedagogy on students writing skills. It is known that professionals in different business fields communicate mostly via writing, for this reason, writing skill was chosen among other language skills because of its importance to the students 3<sup>rd</sup> year LMD Banking and Insurance the sample that represents the whole population, that is, the Faculty of Business and Economics at Laghouat University and professional business areas. The current study aims at empirically examining the effect of the Task based Approach. However, random assignment of the participants in this educational experiment was impossible for the researcher, so a quasi-experimental design was utilised to provide as accurate and valid results as possible. The participants in the control and experimental groups were tested before and after the implementation of the Task Based Approach to statistically measure the effects of this teaching approach. The findings showed that the Task Based Approach improved the writing skills of the experimental group in comparison to the control group which was taught using the regular teaching methodology. Pedagogically, the Task Based Approach can be utilised to bring closer the ESP classes to the professional world as the approach is built on real-world tasks to enable the students of business to live up to the expectations and requirements of a globalised and demanding business world.

## **List of Acronyms**

**ESP:** English for Specific Purposes

**TBA:** Task Based Approach

**EBP:** English for Business Purposes

**BE:** Business English

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

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# INTRODUCTION

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## **1. Introduction**

English has become the most important language in the world. It is described as the world's language and the language of science and technology. In business, professionals cannot do without English which is a tool of paramount importance to conduct business communication especially on the international scale. This has led to fast research development in the domain of English Language Teaching to improve the teaching and learning of English for Specific Purposes so as to fulfil the demands of the professional world. Consequently, several teaching approaches and methods have come to the ground, each suggesting its own vision of the learning process and solutions for the teaching and learning problems. Research in this field is carried out in order to improve the instruction of ESP in specialised colleges and faculties and to prepare competent professionals equipped with high target language proficiency to successfully operate in the target work fields.

Writing plays a crucial role in the business field as millions of employees in this domain write and receive billions of business e-mails and letters every day to establish internal and /or external business communication. Furthermore, many of us buy products we have read about in printed and online newspapers. This has led to consider written communication as the most important and lucrative type of business means of communication.

As written communication is essential to successful professionals, recent studies and researches have concluded that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) offers better and adequate solutions to overcome the teaching and learning difficulties and improve the students' communicative skills along with their writing skills.

The Task Based Approach (hensforth TBA) represents a new direction in Communicative Language Teaching; it is thought to be highly effective and fruitful in the domain of languages for specific purposes for different reasons. For instance, it presents the learner with real-world tasks which improve their proficiency in the target language. Furthermore, TBA is a learner-centred approach that focuses on meaning rather than form, these reasons might make it suitable for ESP classes.

In the Algerian universities, the teaching and learning of ESP do not yield good results as this is reflected in the students' lack of mastery and proficiency of the target

language. This weakness is due to different reasons. For example, the absence of ESP courses and the inadequacy of the teaching materials which led to vagueness of educational objectives as content is chosen randomly and does not serve to improve students' language proficiency and target communicative skills as some teachers focus on developing General English in specialised classes instead of English for Specific Purposes. Moreover, ESP is taught by subject specialists and not by ESP practitioners which is another impediment to a sound specialised instruction of the subject.

The Task Based Approach might be a solution for the current teaching and learning situation of ESP in Algeria in general and particularly at the University of Laghouat. This hypothesis leads us to the main questions that the present research attempts to answer. Namely, will the implementation of the TBA improve students' writing skills?? will the implementation of the TBA improve students' communicative proficiency?

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Students in different ESP contexts especially at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat find writing as a challenging activity due to some problems and lacks at the mentioned educational institution. Specialists agree that writing is a complex skill which needs ample efforts from the part of teachers and learners. In this context, special attention from the teachers and an adequate teaching methodology are required. The current teaching practices that focus on language form (grammar) rather than communication, and the irrelevance of the content being taught to the target situations do not help to yield good results as learners cannot produce correct texts. This fact, would result in poor professional performance in workplaces that require good writing skills for employees who must write a large number of business-related texts such as business e-mails, different genres of business letters, etc; this may lead to communication breakdown in the globalized business and trade especially that Algeria has been an active member for so many years in several commercial unions and organizations. Hence, poor learners' writing skills might generate serious problems and negatively affect the economic sector that utilises the English language to establish business communication especially with the international partners such as China, European Union..etc.

Furthermore, the absence of business courses and qualified practitioners inhibits adequate teaching and learning of English for Business Purposes as it is taught by subject specialists who lack adequate training in the domain of teaching languages for specific purposes in spite of their competence in their specialties. Moreover, most of the teachers in charge of ESP admit that language structure is the most stressed in ESP classes which may justify the poor results achieved at the faculty in question. This fact proves the inadequacy of the teaching materials which should be meaning-based and subject -specific rather than form-based which is redundant in this specialised context. Specialists have proven in many studies that authentic materials inspired from the real-world or target situations increase student's interest and motivation to learn the language. The focus on theory and form in the Algerian ESP classes lowered the proficiency level of the students. To improve the current teaching and learning situation at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat, some reforms have to be made. For instance, designing curricula and syllabi as well as conducting research to discover profitable and adequate teaching methodologies. In this concern, the TBA might be the right solution for the absence of real ESP practitioners as the approach is designed to allow subject specialists and even EFL teachers to successfully and effectively teach ESP. The TBA gives more importance to meaning than to form. This leads to the improvement of the students' writing skills and their mastery of the target language. Moreover, the TBA provides learners with authentic tasks brought from the target situation. These real-world activities make students ready to perform in their future workplace.

Finally, the assumed positive qualities of the TBA remain theoretical as the only way to prove the efficiency and adequacy of any approach or method is putting them under test via an empirical study. The present work aims at discovering the effects of the TBA on the writing and communicative skills of the learners of English for Business Purposes (henceforth EBP) at the University of Laghouat to come to a decision about the adequacy of this approach in the teaching and learning situation in question. In case the TBA proves its success, a large number of impediments and problems concerning the teaching and learning of EBP at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat would be solved. The potential findings lure the researcher and increase the importance of this study.

### **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to enhance the writing skills and improve the communicative skills of the students enrolled at the Department of Banking, Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Laghouat. To do so, a set of objectives needs to be pointed out:

- 1- This study attempts to explore the effects of implementing the Task Based Approach on the students' writing skills and mastery of the English language needed in the target situations.
- 2- The present study aims to equip the teachers of ESP at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat with an effective teaching method and practical techniques which will enable them to improve learners' writing and communicative skills.

### **4. Research Questions**

In order to spell out the need of conducting the present research, the following set of questions is formulated:

- 1- Does the implementation of the Task Based Approach teaching methodology improve the students' writing skills?
- 2- Does the implementation of the Task Based Approach improve the learners' communicative proficiency?

### **5. Hypotheses**

This work aims at testing the following hypotheses:

- 1-Implementing the Task Based Approach improves the learning of writing in the target ESP classes at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat.
- 2-The Task Based Approach promotes the participants' communicative skills.

## **6. Scope of the Study**

This study limits itself to one language skill , that is, the writing skill. Particularly, the teaching of writing in the English for Business Purposes classes through Task Based Approach. In plain English, the current study is limited to determine the effect of the TBA on students' writing and communicative proficiency.

## **7. Research Tools**

To answer and test the already mentioned research questions and hypotheses, certain methodological procedures need to be conducted. The study attempts at testing and proving that the TBA actually enhances the learners' writing skills and communicative proficiency as well as the teaching and learning situation at the of Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat .The empirical method seems to be the most adequate method to fulfil the mentioned objectives. However, the academic pre-designed grouping resulted in the absence of randomization aspect which is an important element for a successful empirical investigation has led us to the choice of quasi-experimental designs. The first step is an attempt to determine the current students' level of the English language through a pre-test. The treatment will be done through the implementation of a program based on the TBA principles and procedures. The last step would be assessing the level of the students after the implementation of the TBA via a post-test to determine the effects of the teaching approach in question.

In the case of this study, the control and experimental groups will be compared before and after the implementation of the TBA to answer the research questions. The dependent variable of the study is the learners' writing skills and communicative competence. On the other hand, the independent variable which is the Task Based Approach, will be used to instruct one group; that is, the experimental group and absent in the other group defined as the control group.

## **8. Structure of the Dissertation**

The present dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first two chapters, represent the topic-related literature review .The first chapter provides the reader with information about the conceptual background of the TBA and its central components. Furthermore, it exposes the TBA methodology and the roles of teachers and learners in the Task Based Approach. It also provides the reader with an account of the previous empirical studies on the approach and finally it presents the drawbacks of the Task Based Approach in an attempt to promote the validity and credibility of the present study. The second chapter explores different aspects of the writing skill, it includes a comparison between writing and other skills, notably, speaking and reading to demonstrate the complexity and difficulty of learning this language skill. It explores writing in ESP settings to show the importance of these skills in both academic and professional areas. The most important part of this chapter is an overview of the previous theories and methodologies of teaching writing with special focus on the TBA to teaching writing to explore their strengths, weaknesses, and differences ,by doing so, the readers will be sufficiently informed on this skills and the various practices that are used to teach this important skill. The third chapter accounts for the methodology that was adopted in the present research work. The fourth and last chapter is devoted to the analysis, interpretation of the research findings as well as the provision of some pedagogical implications, recommendations, and suggestions concerning the implementation of the Task Based Approach in ESP settings.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **THE TASK BASED APPROACH**

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## 1.1 Introduction

The Task Based Approach appeared in reaction to traditional teaching methodologies which focused on language-form and teachers rather than communication and learners. Long and Norris (2000) state in this vein, *"The term was coined, and the concept was developed by SLA researchers and language educators largely in reaction to empirical accounts for teacher-dominated, form-oriented second language classroom practice"*. (Cited in Van Den Branden, 2006, p.1). This approach promotes learner-centeredness and focuses on communication rather than language structure. In this regard, the TBA presents learners with functional tasks that simulate those used in the target workplaces , thus, it values the communicative competence and exchanging meaning among learners rather than linguistic competence.

This chapter attempts to provide the reader with insights about this approach. It sheds light on the underlying concepts and assumptions, notably, Communicative Language Teaching as the Task Based Approach represents a refinement of the latter, communicative competence and experiential learning. This chapter provides a detailed account of the components of the Task Based Approach. For example, "task" which is the central concept in the TBA, types of tasks, the components of tasks...etc. This chapter emphasizes the TBA methodology and explores the stages and procedures of task based lessons. It also deals with the roles of the teacher and learners in the TBA lessons.

Finally, a glimpse at similar empirical researches on different subjects and areas is provided in this chapter. In this respect, it is important to state that this research differs from previous ones in terms of the language skill in question, writing, for most of the previous studies focused on all four skills or on speaking .

## 1.2 Conceptual Background for the Task Based Approach

### 1.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching is a teaching approach as claimed by Richards and Rodgers (1986), confusingly considered as a method, the CLT is actually an approach because the content, syllabi and teaching practices are not identified. Thus, Communicative Language Teaching welcomes a wide variety of methods and techniques. Richards and Rodgers justify that as they add, *“There is neither single authority on it nor any single model that is universally accepted as authoritative”*. (p. 65). It appeared as a result of the changes and discoveries in Applied Linguistics and especially in Sociolinguistics during the late 1960s and also as a response to the Audio-lingual method. Specialists asserted that the teaching methodologies used then were incapable of fulfilling the requirements of a developing world in which the English language plays a major role as a global language. Therefore, communicative proficiency has become more important than mastering language structures the fact that led to the emergence of the Communicative Language Teaching which is termed as the Functional Approach and also the Notional Functional Approach.

The advent of this approach is linked to the efforts of a group of linguists in the 1970s notably Wilkins (1972) who suggested a functional or a communicative definition to language teaching. Wilkins based his research on the communicative meaning rather than language structures. Consequently, he proposed two types of meaning that characterise the communicative uses of language .The first type was termed the notional categories, this refers to concepts such as time, frequency, location. The second type is the categories of communicative function, for instance, requests, complaints, offers and denials. This research had a remarkable impact of the development of the CLT. Cater and Nunan (2001) state that in modern day language classroom, focus is put on communication rather than language form. In this concern Savignon (1983) offered a commentary by Montaigne , *“Without methods, without a book, without grammar or rules, without a whip and without tears I had learned a Latin as proper as that of my schoolmaster”*. ( qtd in Richards and Rodgers ,1986. p. 68) . After these changes of views about language teaching, course designers, materials writers, and teachers paid more attention to the learners and their communicative needs. The problems faced by the learners in utilising language structures which they acquire in the classroom to real life communication were another reason that led to the emergence of this communicative approach and the redirection of the attention of

applied linguists from the grammatical competence to the communicative competence which is the basic feature of the CLT.

Moreover, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) as cited in Richards and Rodgers (1986) show a number of the CLT features among which the high importance of meaning as the communicative approaches focus on language functions and communicative proficiency, thus, the primary goal is achieving communicative competence which is the ability to use the linguistic system appropriately and effectively . Further still, they picture some traits of the CLT in the classroom. For example, they insist that the teacher must help his or her learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language and that language is created by the individual through trial and experimentation. They claim that contextualisation is a basic premise which could be done through dialogues that centre on communicative functions; they added two distinctive features of the CLT as they allowed translation when students need or benefit from it, and judicious use of the first language when feasible.

Accordingly, CLT is distinguished by a number of fundamental characteristics, namely those delivered in Nunan's (1991) list of the five features of communicative language teaching:

- 1- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.*
- 2- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.*
- 3- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning management process.*
- 4- An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.*
- 5- An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.*

(Banciu , 2012 ,p.95)

In short, the CLT is a content-based approach for which meaning is more important than form. Language is thus regarded as a tool of communication. The approach is based on the use of a variety of authentic materials as newspapers' articles, brochures...etc. to meet students' needs and expectations .One very important feature of the approach is its focus on the learner, learners are granted the responsibility on their learning and are

considered as the most important participant in the learning process. On the other hand, learners' needs are paramount in communicative language teaching; activities and materials are designed to fulfil those needs and objectives. Importantly, the CLT aims to develop and influence the whole personality and ways of thinking of the learner that is the reason why it is labelled as "holistic".

Furthermore, Nunan (2004) argue that due to the changes that occurred in language teaching, the Communicative Language Teaching approach utilises and adopts different exercises and materials such as role taking in dialogues and jigsaw tasks as well as information-gap activities. In this respect, Morrow (1981) claims that there are three features common between communicative tasks which are, "*Feedback, choice, and information-gap*". (qtd in Sarozdy *et al* ,2006 , p.22); This fact creates a real cut between the CLT and the previous teaching methodologies. Furthermore, Harmer (2003) distinguishes between communicative and non-communicative activities in the following table:

<b>Communicative activities</b>	<b>Non-communicative activities</b>
A desire to communicate	No communicative desire
A communicative purpose	No communicative purpose
Content not form	Form not content
Variety of language	One language item only
No teacher intervention	Teacher intervention
No Materials control	Materials control

**Table 1.** Harmer s' division of communicative and non-communicative activities

(Harmer, 2003, qtd in Sarosdy *et al.*, 2006)

According to Littlewood (1981) communicative activities effectively contribute in ameliorating language learning because they improve learners' motivation which is sustained if the learners notice the relationship between what is delivered in the classroom and their objectives. In this context, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) assert that communicative tasks create and promote students' intrinsic motivation; the authenticity of the real-world tasks and materials offered by communicative activities draws learners' attention and increases their motivation unlike language structures that engender a feeling of irrelevance the fact that demotivates students. Moreover, communicative activities permit natural learning that is a solution to problems that are out of teachers' pedagogical

control, for instance, psychological problems. Natural processes seem to be the only solution to overcome those problems; they are put to work when the learner is involved in using language for communication. In addition to what has been written, communicative activities create a context which supports learning by providing opportunities to develop a friendly milieu and positive relationships among learners and between them and their teachers. All communicative activities are designed to reach the most important goal in the CLT which is the communicative competence that means promoting learners' communicative abilities. In this context, Hymes (1972) argues that the most important goal for this approach is developing and improving learners' communicative proficiency.

### 1.2.2.1 Communicative Competence

The term was coined by the sociolinguist Hymes (1972), who added a sociolinguistic dimension to Chomsky's views about the concept, communicative competence, which he considered as limited. He defines the communicative competence as *"The aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within a specific context"*. Further, he states that *"The communicative competence is not only an inherent grammatical competence but also the ability to use that competence in a variety of communicative situations"*. (p.47) . Widdowson (1978) an adherent of Hymes' views, believes that the communicative competence is a synthesis between the linguistic knowledge and the awareness of the sociolinguistic conventions. In this respect, further researches distinguished between linguistic and communicative competences defining the first as the knowledge and mastery "about "language forms and the second as the ability that allows us to use language to establish communication with another individual (Sarosdy .et al, 2006, p.24). Moreover, Savignon (1983) delivers a simpler definition to the concept, *"Communicative competence is defined in terms of the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning"*. Further still, she asserts that, *"Communicative competence is relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of the participants involved"*. (p.48)

Further investigations on the construct especially those made by Canale and Swain (1980) deduced that the communicative competence comprises four components; two of them are linked to the structural features of the language whereas the last ones reflect the functional aspects of communication (Cited in Richards and Rodgers, 1986 ,p.71).

### **1.2.2.2 Grammatical Competence**

It is the systematic and linguistic competence that involves, “*The Knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics and phonology.*”(Canale and Swain 1980,qtd in Sarozdy *et al* , 2006 , p.24 ). Hymes defines it as the mastery of language forms.

### **1.2.2.3 Discourse Competence**

It is concerned with the relationship between sentences. It defines the ability to establish cohesion between the different parts of a discourse to form a homogeneous whole from separate sentences and utterances. This competence completes the grammatical competence.

### **1.2.2.4 Sociolinguistic Competence**

To have this competence, the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of the language is compulsory, Savignon (1983) confirms that as she states, “*This type of competence requires an understanding of the social context in which a language is used: the roles of participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction. Only in a full context of this kind judgments can be made on the appropriateness of a particular utterance.*”(p.63). Savignon clarifies that language speakers should understand certain traits of their society such as roles in conversations and the appropriateness of the language they produce, for instance, some topics could be talked about overtly in the USA whereas it is inappropriate to tackle them in Algeria ,for instance, sexuality and a large number of other topics that are considered taboo in the Algerian society.

### **1.2.2.5 Strategic Competence**

This construct is more complex than the previous ones. It is also referred to as “compensatory strategies”. This denotes the various strategies one uses to compensate for linguistic breakdowns or to increase the effectiveness of the communication being

conducted as assumed by Swain (1984). Canale and Swain (1980) believe that these strategies are summoned to sustain communication and overcome difficulties caused by insufficient linguistic and communicative competences. Savignon (1983) states, "*Imperfect knowledge of rules or limiting extra-linguistic factors as fatigue, distraction and inattention*". (p.63) she calls for the use of the strategic competence which is for him, "*The competence underlying our ability to make repairs to cope with imperfect knowledge and to sustain communication*".(p.63). Savignon adds that the strategic competence is demonstrated through the use of the following techniques , "*Paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance, and guessing, as well as shifts in register and style*". (p. 63).

### **1.2.3 Experiential Learning**

It is one of the background concepts of the Task Based Approach (TBA). It stems from different disciplines, notably, psychology. Experiential learning values learners' personal experiences which are believed to be beneficial to language learning and makes them the starting point in the learning process; it also aims at promoting personal growth which is necessary to the success of the learning operation and the learner. Accordingly, Kohonen (1996) states , "*Experiential learning provides the basic philosophical view of learning as a part of personal growth.*" (qtd in Nunan, 2004, p.12). Thus, personal growth and promotion are the most important goals of experiential learning. Furthermore, active and intensive involvement of the learner in the learning process would be more fruitful than learners' passivity and dependence on the teacher as a source for information. In this respect, Nunan (2004) believes that, "*Intellectual growth occurs when learners engage in and reflect on sequences of tasks*". (p.12).

Experiential learning requires learners' autonomy and urges learners to assume the responsibility on their learning, this is referred to as active learning or learner-centeredness. Similarly, it calls for the reduction of teachers' authority in language classes. These would encourage learners' contributions and utilisation of their personal experiences which would increase the learning outcomes and enhance students' cognitive and linguistic performance. In relation to that, Kohonen states, "*The goal is to enable the learner to become increasingly self-directed and responsible for his or her own learning. This process means a gradual shift of the initiative to the learner, encouraging him or her to*

*bring in personal contributions and experiences. Instead of the teacher setting the tasks and standards of acceptable performance, the learner is increasingly in charge of his or her own learning.”(Kohonen ,1996,qtd in Nunan, 2004, p.13)*

Kohonen claims that teachers should respect the following instruction to put experiential learning to work :

- *Encourage the transformation of knowledge within the learner rather than the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learner.*
- *Encourage learners to participate actively in small, collaborative groups (I see group and pair work as important, although I recognise that there are many contexts where class size makes pair and group work difficult).*
- *Embrace a holistic attitude towards subject matter rather than a static, atomistic and hierarchical attitude.*
- *Emphasize process rather than product, learning how to learn, self inquiry, social and communication skills.*
- *Encourage self-directed rather than teacher-directed learning.*
- *Promote intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation.*

(Kohonen, 1996, qtd in Nunan, 2004, p.12)

## **1.2The Task Based Approach**

The Task Based Approach regards language as a tool of communication and makes the latter a top priority in language teaching and learning, in this concern, Ellis (2003) believes that language is a means of communication rather than a subject for study or manipulation. The TBA proponents agree that learners learn best in classes where English is presented through real contexts and content that do not just endow them with the linguistic competence they need in the target situations but make learning more interesting for them .The TBA as thought by Branden (2006) is supported because it provides learners with functional tasks that invite them to use language for real-world purposes. It is an approach that advocates the primacy of meaning and communication over form and linguistic purposes. Consequently, the Task-based Approach has become increasingly important to ELT according to Ellis (2005) who argued that the Task Based Approach has

become a viable and important teaching methodology and a prominent area of research in the recent years.

The TBA gained its importance in the domain because it promotes the acquisition of the target language, fosters communication and focuses on meaning instead of form through the use of authentic tasks. The TBA allows students to express their own ideas about the topic of the lesson without the interference of the teacher, and to perform tasks without any input or guidance from the latter, so this learner-centeredness makes the TBA very attractive to course designers and ESP practitioners from all over the world who strongly believe that TBA is adequate for ESP situations. Malmkjaer believes in his book *The Linguistic Encyclopedia* (2005), “*Task-based approaches have also been very appropriate for ESP work*”.(p.539) because the Task Based Approach allows the student to use the language in the classroom as it is used in the target situation.

The TBA aims at attaining its objectives through “tasks” which are the essential component of this approach and the most adequate means of organising teaching to build learners’ proficiency. Willis (1996) justifies that ,”*Within the TBA framework, tasks give students a rich exposure to language and also opportunities to use it themselves*”. (p .101)

Moreover, the proponents of the TBA differ in their views and beliefs about the TBA and its principles, Swan (2005) believes that there is an agreement between the TBA proponents over the following principles:

- *Instructed language learning should primarily involve natural or naturalistic language use, and the activities are concerned with meaning rather than language.*
- *Instruction should favour 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 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.*

(Cited in Kagan Buyukkarci, 2009; p.315)

Different views advocate the implementation of the TBA in the teaching of languages.

Skehan (1996) supports the shift from the structure-based approaches to the task-based teaching. Apart from highly gifted and motivated students, most learners working within a structure-based approach fail to attain a useable level of fluency and proficiency in the second language even after years of instruction. Prabhu (1987) shared the same belief, *“Structure-based courses require a good deal of remedial re-teaching, in turn led to similarly unsatisfactory results”*. (p. 11).

Many studies that were conducted to explore the effect of the TBA concluded that with task based instruction and authentic materials, learners made more progress and were able to use their new foreign language in real-world circumstances with a reasonable level of proficiency after a very short period of time. They were able to operate, this means, to express what they want to say, though their grammar and lexicon were far from being perfect.

There exists a number of reasons for the implementation of tasks in language classes. Lynch and Maclean (2000) believe that the first source of justification for the task-based learning and teaching, is the belief that the best way to promote effective learning is by utilising real-world tasks. Task performance is regarded as a rehearsal for the interactions that will be carried out in the professional settings.

The TBA has also a psycholinguistic perspective. In this regard, Ellis (2003) assumes that the task is a classroom activity that enhances the students' thinking and experimentation with the language which helps to foster the acquisition of the target language. On the other hand, those mental processes the tasks might generate help directly in the improvement of the fluency and proficiency of the learners.

Lapes (2004) found out that learners who are taught using the TBA learn English more effectively because they used the language to perform tasks, access information, solve problems, and talk about personal experiences. He explains ,*“These tasks are believed to be the heart of the target language learning”*. (qtd in Richards and Rodgers 2001, p.228).

To achieve communicative competence which is the most important goal for the approach in question, learner-centeredness which is stressed by the TBA is demanded. In this regard, Canale and Swain (1980) add, *“It requires the active involvement of the learner in the production of the target language”*. (p. 5).

### **1.3.1 The Definition of Task**

Various and different definitions have been offered by specialists for the term “task” which is the central idea in the Task Based Approach.. Willis (1996) defines a task as ,*“An activity where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome”*. In this statement which probably contains the most accurate definition of “task” Willis points out that communication is the goal behind using tasks which utilise authentic language and materials students need to achieve linguistic success and survival in their future professional environment.

For Long (1985) ,*“A task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus, examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, borrowing a library book, making an airline reservation...by ‘task’ is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between”*. (Cited in Nunan,1989, p.5) The writers explain that the learner is expected to think about real-life domain-related problems which are the content of some tasks, and to communicate meaning specific to their domains.

Nunan (2004) believes that the task results in an effective output in the target language and the learners would unconsciously focus on the meaning rather than the form. He also uses the word task rather than “activity”. He defines it as, *“A piece of classroom work which involves the learners in comprehending, manipulating producing, or interacting in the target language”*. (p.10) while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. Bygate (1996) paid a special attention to meaning as he defined

the term; he argued that the focus on meaning leads the learners to achieve the objectives of the task that they perform. Those objectives are the reason behind using tasks, to attain those aims, an authentic use of language is required.

Skehan (1996) asserts the importance of tasks in the language learning process. Long (1985) and Prabhu (1987) have also supported this approach to language education. Nunan (2004) confirms that ,”*The concept of “task” has become an important element in syllabus design, classroom teaching and learner assessment*”. (p. 1).

### **1.3.2 Types of Tasks**

Ellis (2003) classified tasks into the following types.

- 1- Unfocused tasks is one that encourages learners to use English freely without concentration on just one or two specific forms that is to say replication activity.
- 2- Pedagogical (rehearsal, activation) tasks: they are tasks that have a psycholinguistic basis, but do not necessarily reflect real-world tasks. In this regard, pedagogical tasks are defined by Richards and Rodgers (1986) as :

*“An activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake”.*(p.289)

- 3- Real-world tasks: they are tasks that are derived from real-world problems. They equip the learners with the target language they would need in their future workplaces.
- 4- Focus tasks: Ellis (2003): a Focus task is a consciousness-raising activity that focuses on examining samples of language to explore particular features. These are sometimes called metacognitive activities.

Another typology is that set by Willis (1996) the writer listed the following types of tasks of the TBA approach:

- 1- *Listing: including brainstorming and fact-finding activities. The outcome is a completed list or draft mind map. This type of tasks can help to improve students' comprehension and induction ability.*
- 2- *Ordering: including sequencing, ranking, and classifying .The outcome is a set of information ordered and sorted according to specific criteria. These types might foster comprehension, logic and reasoning abilities.*
- 3- *Comparing: this type of tasks includes matching, finding similarities or differences. This type of task enhances students' ability of differentiation.*
- 4- *Problem-solving: this type of tasks includes analyzing real situations, reasoning, and decision making activities.*
- 5- *Sharing experience: These tasks include narrating, describing, exploring, and explaining attitudes, opinions, and reactions. The outcome is essentially social. These tasks help students to share and exchange their knowledge and experiences.*
- 6- *Creative tasks: These include brainstorming, fact-finding, and sorting, comparing and many other activities. These kinds of tasks help improving the students' problem-solving abilities as well as their reasoning, and analyzing abilities.*

(p.149)

Willis argues that all the tasks in the TBA should be applicable to real life to help students to accomplish the activities, and show their communicative competence in the classroom and in real life situations.

According to Skehan (1998) all task types should have the following characteristics:

- 1- *Meaning is primary.*
- 2- *There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities.*
- 3- *Task completion has some priority.*
- 4- *The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.*

(Cited in Nunan, 2004, p.3)

### 1.3.3 Task Components

The definition of task leads to the presentation of its components. A number of studies have been carried out in this concern. Nunan (1989) believes that tasks are composed of four elements which are, “*goals, the input, and activities derived from this input, and finally the roles implied for teacher and learners.*”(p.47). A decade later, Nunan (2004) refined his list of task components, “*task goals , input data, and learner procedures, and they are supported by teacher and learner roles and the settings in which tasks are undertaken.*” (p. 40).

Accordingly, Candlin (1987) provides the following list of the elements that compose tasks: input, roles, settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes, and feedback. Candlin’s list encompasses more details about task components. The list shows the writer’s consideration for the environment in which tasks are carried out and the objectives of the tasks.

Moreover, Shavelson and Stern (1981) believe that task designers should pay ample attention to the following task components:

- *Content: the subject matter to be taught.*
- *Materials: the things that learners can observe/manipulate.*
- *Activities: the things that learners and teachers will be doing during a lesson.*
- *Goals: the teachers’ general aims for the task (these are much more general and vague than objectives).*
- *Students: their abilities, needs and interests are important.*
- *Social community: the class as a whole and its sense of “groupness”.*

(Cited in Nunan , 2004, p. 40)

“Task” should contain these elements to reach the learning objectives and to achieve and generate outcome. However, Wright (1987) claims that tasks should contain at least the two components that he believes are the spine of tasks. They are input data which Nunan defines as *the data presented for learners to work on.*” (p. 47). These could be provided by the teacher in the form of instructions, or the learners’ interpretations and feedback. The second element is the outcome, the tasks should be designed to control and achieve precise results. The outcome of the task should be similar to that anticipated by the teacher.

What follows is a presentation of task components.

### **1.3.3.1 Goals**

Goals are the outcomes meant to be achieved from learning tasks. They are simply what a teacher aims to develop or promote in his /her students, for instance, developing learners’ speaking or writing skills, their self-confidence, or motivation. In its broader sense, Nunan (2004) claims that goals may be “*Communicative, affective, or cognitive*”. (p.42). However, teachers should not focus on one type of goals, for example, emphasising affective goals more than communicative or cognitive goals. The focus on one type of goals will be reflected on the nature of the perception of teaching and learning as well as the purposes, quality, and functions of education.

Different curricula have appeared, each of them has its own vision to teaching and learning, and its own educational purposes. However, a lot of them have embraced Halliday’s macro-skills (interpersonal, transactional, and aesthetic) (Nunan, 2004, p.41). Goals are considered as the starting point of these curricula.

Moreover, researches carried out on educational goals assert that goals differ greatly in nature according to disciplines and learning communities. For instance, non-academic goals may be set for English for tourism or social purposes classes, whereas, academic goals fit specific-subject classes as science, technology, medicine classes.

Nunan (2004) asserts that the best task goals are those related to learners’ performance which has been a conceptual basis of the communicative language teaching

for many years. Consequently, many performance-based curricula have come to the ground setting developing learner's performance as the most important educational goal.

### 1.3.3.2 Input

Input is visual, or written data provided by different sources, for example, the teacher, the textbook, books, or the internet. For the modern teaching methods, input could be made by the learners themselves.

Hover (1986) provides a rich list of sources that could serve as an input:

*“Letters (formal and informal), newspaper extracts, picture stories, telecom account, driver's licence , missing person's declaration form, social security form, business cards, memo note, photographs, family tree, drawings, shopping lists, invoices, postcards, hotel brochures, passport photos, swap shop cards, street map, menu, magazine quiz, calorie counter, recipe, extract from a play, weather forecast, diary, bus timetable, notice board items, housing request form, star signs, hotel entertainment programme , tennis court booking sheet, extracts from film script ,high school year book, note to a friend, seminar programme, newspaper reporter's notes, UK travel regulations, curriculum vitae, economic graphs.”*

(Cited in Nunan, 2004, p.48)

The sources mentioned in Hover's list could be the basis of the learning tasks. The use of these materials as tasks' input raises the authenticity of the latter, and would help to achieve the communicative goals of those tasks, however, some specialists prefer to combine authentic materials with materials written and designed by them to improve learning.

Eventually, much consideration should be given to input because it directly affects and influences tasks' quality, performance of the learners during the task completion, and most importantly the learning outcomes.

### **1.3.3.3 Procedures**

They refer to learners activities during the completion of tasks, as well as learners' manipulation of the input. Nunan (2004) defines procedures as, "*Procedures*" specifies what learners will actually do with the input that forms the point of departure for the learning task".(p.52) .Procedures could be classified in terms of their focus ,some focus on language fluency while some others focus on language accuracy, and goals.

The previously mentioned components are the basis of sound tasks; every teacher should take them into consideration during the production of tasks. For the TBA proponents, only the careful inclusion and production of tasks components lead to successfully achieve learning and educational outcomes. Task components play a pivotal role in the general success or failure of the TBA as tasks form the centre of this approach.

## **1.4 The Task Based Approach Methodology**

Various designs have been proposed for the task based lessons; however, all of them consist of three principal phases: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. They reflect the chronological assumptions of the TBA. That is, progressing from holistic to specific.

The pre-task is an the introductory phase in the TBA framework in which learners discover the topic and the tasks; this phase incites the learners to recall and practice topic-related words and phrases, some specialists refer to it as the warm-up phase. The second phase is the task cycle, in this phase the basic assumptions of the TBA about language learning are put to work. TBA proponents believe that effective learning takes place only in the light of these three vital conditions which are: exposure, use, and motivation. The task cycle is designed in this respect. The last phase is the language focus; this phase includes the practice and analysis of what has been done in the task cycle.

### **1.4.1 The Pre-task Phase**

It is usually the shortest phase for it takes from two to twenty minutes (Willis, 1996).The first phase's purpose is preparing learners to perform and acquire the language and creating the adequate atmosphere for successful learning, it is the most important

phase because its success entails the success of the following phases. Jane Willis (1996) believes that the pre-task phase enables the learners to gain acquaintance with components of the tasks as she argued, " *The pre-task phase introduces the class to the topic and the task, activating topic-related words and phrases*". (p.40). This is known for some specialists as the warm up phase which targets bringing up topic-related vocabulary through making use of the learners' pre-acquired knowledge and experiences, the investment of learners' previous experiences is one of the basic principles of the TBA which is referred to as experiential learning.

Moreover, the pre-task phase was utilised in Prahbu's Communicational Teaching Project (1987). It was used as an activity that involved learners in the completion of the tasks that are the basis of the principal tasks in the task cycle phase. the pre-task is a preparatory phase for the task performance in the following phase.

The first procedure in the pre-task phase requires teachers to help learners to define and recognise the topic area, for instance, sports, transport, and science. In the second step, the teacher must help students to discover and remember words or phrases in relation to the task, these linguistic components of the task might be useful for the learners not only to perform the classroom task but in real life situations as well. Many teachers were surprised by the number of topic-related words and phrases already mastered by the learners, this can be discovered only through carrying out well-designed and adequate tasks that might achieve certain goals which are necessary for language learning as assumed by the TBA proponents, for instance, providing exposure to the target language, motivating the learners and creating interest in the topic.

Accordingly, Willis in her book *a Framework for Task Based Learning* (1996) provided the following list of pre-tasks that teachers can make use of to create a relevant input that would engender the previously mentioned goals:

- 1- *Classifying words and phrases: on the board write jumbled up words and phrases connected with the topic and task. Talk about them as you write. ( This will provide exposure)*
- 2- *Add one out: write sets of related words and phrases on the board inserting one item in each set that does not fit, for instance, a blue shirt, black trousers, a long dress, a smart tie. Say the phrases to your partner, and discuss which is the odd one out and why then make up some more sets for another pair to do.*

- 3- *Matching phrases to pictures: you need a set of pictures related to your topic, some can be quite detailed and two or three phrases or captions for each picture (including ,if you like one that doesn't fit mix all the phrases or captions up and write them on the board in a jumbled list). Ask questions like: which phrasal captions go with each picture, (there may be some left over that do not fit). Write your own captions for any two pictures. Can your partner tell which pictures are there?*
- 4 -*Memory challenge: This is the same as the matching activity. Only you take the pictures down after one or two minutes and students must match the phrases or captions to the pictures from the memory .It is better not to number the pictures, then students will have to specify verbally which picture they mean by describing it which of course stimulates more language use.*
- 5- *Brainstorming and mind maps : write the main topic word(s) in the centre of the board .If you have a picture related to your topic show it to the class ,encourage students to call out other words and phrases ,and ask whereabouts on the board, you should write them. Some ideas for classification will develop.*

*Example: What do you think when you hear these words and/or see the pictures?*

- 6- *Thinking of questions to ask: Write four questions, you might ask if you were doing a survey on TV interviewing someone to teach in your college; etc. Exchange questions with another classmate and then classify them all.*
- 7- *Teacher recounting a similar experience: I am going to tell you about a silly accident I once had; etc. Listen and see whether anything like it has ever happened to you.*

(p.44)

Furthermore, learning may be hindered in this phase because of certain factors, for instance, the intensity of the pre-task activities may engender a cognitive load that would scatter learners' attention leading to low performance and thus poor learning. In this regard, teachers bear the responsibility of learning which is the ultimate goal for any

language teacher. The following list represents a number of instructions for the teachers to overcome problems caused by the cognitive load:

- 1- Providing a model: the teacher asks the students to observe a model of how the task might be performed. Willis and Skehan (1996) believe that students observing their mates performing a task might help them to improve their performance.
- 2- Engaging learners in non-task activities, for example, teacher-guided brainstorming that aims at providing learners with background information. The non-task activities are believed to reduce the cognitive load that has negative effects on learning.
- 3- Strategic planning: learners should be given a sufficient amount of time to plan how they are going to perform the task. Planning can be conducted individually, in pairs, in groups, or with the teacher.

After the task, the teacher has to comment on the way the task was carried out, teacher's feedback allow a smooth transition to the next phases of the TBA framework.

### **1.4.2 The task Cycle Phase**

The task cycle is the most important phase in the TBA framework because most of the learning takes place during this stage. This phase contains three components beginning with the first stage which Willis (1996) terms task to the second one, that is, the planning stage, the final stage in the task cycle is referred to as the report. At all the mentioned stages, communication in the target language is emphasised and the learners' errors are tolerated whereas the teacher's correction is not allowed.

### 1.4.3 The Task Stage

In this stage the teacher has to play two roles, the first role is monitoring and guiding the learners during the accomplishment of the tasks; he/she should minimize his/her intervention to prompt learners' autonomy, the second role requires the teacher to observe and encourage the learners to communicate in the target language but from what Willis calls slight distance, in case learners resort to the mother tongue, the teacher has to suggest substitutions in English.

The tasks can be done in groups or in pairs and the input should be introduced to the learners through recordings or written texts to read then the learners must discuss the content with their group mates, this stage provides real opportunities of practice for the learners.

### 1.4.4 The Planning Stage

This section follows the task stage and comes before the report, thus, it forms the central part of this phase, Willis believes that the aim of this stage is to "*Help learners plan their reports effectively and maximize their learning opportunities* " (p.56). A sufficient amount of time is allotted in this stage to enable the learners to rehearse what they are going to say or write in the report; practicing and experimenting with the language in the planning stage is deemed to result in well elaborated reports.

The teacher is an advisor which is the role he/she has to play in the planning stage, Willis asserts that, "*The teacher must help students shape their meanings and express exactly what they intend to say*". (p.56). This role implies going through the rows in an attempt to make them aware of what they are expected to do in this stage, besides this, the teacher has to perform the following functions to accomplish his mission as an advisor :

- Helping learners to improve their texts by intelligent and positive comments.
- The teacher has to make learners correct themselves because error correction is not allowed. The objective is to enhance experimentation and avoid penalisation that could be done through intrusive error correction.
- Encouraging learners to help and listen to each other when rehearsing.

- Encouraging the learners to use dictionaries and making sure they know how to use them properly.

After allotting enough time to accomplish this stage, the teacher must stop the planning stage once he notices that most of the groups and pairs have finished or nearly finished. Finally, he has to prepare the learners to carry out their presentation in the next stage, that is, the report.

### **1.4.5 The Report Stage**

This stage is the last one in the task cycle phase and the, “*Natural conclusion of the task cycle.*”(Willis, 1996, p.58) .All the stages that preceded have a common aim which is preparing the learners for this phase. Thus, it is the most important in the framework; however, most of the learning occurs in the planning stage, that is, in the report stage learners have less chance to produce the language. On the other hand, vital activities that engender successful completion of the tasks and the success of the learning process in general such as planning, drafting, and rehearsing are practiced in this stage.

In the report stage, each pair of the learners is given enough time to prepare the report. Learners should be encouraged to produce the language , consequently, linguistic and grammatical errors should be tolerated. In this respect, Willis (1996) thinks that teachers must not devalue learners’ achievements or even show their negative impression towards learners’ performance; instead, they should positively encourage learners and focus on the areas in which they show improvement. The success of the learners should be invested to help them overcome some difficulties which hinder learning, and the imperfections should not create a psychological fence that slows down or even impedes learning.

### 1.4.6 The Language Focus Phase

This last phase comprises two stages, the first one is the analysis. Learners are subjected to analysis activities which are usually referred to, according to Willis (1996), as consciousness raising activities, language awareness activities, or meta-communicative tasks. Hence, they listen recordings done by more fluent speakers practicing the same task or read written products of other learners and then examine and discuss some prominent features of the text. Finally, the teacher reviews learners' products and provides feedback. Analysis activities are a contextualized practice of topic-related forms, therefore, language forms should not be practiced in isolation but hand in hand with meaning that has been studied during the previous phases, notably, in the task cycle. The familiarity with meaning eases the task to learn and practice pertinent forms. If there is a lack of examples of language forms in the related text produced in the task cycle, the teacher may invent some examples which have to be contextualized, that is, topic-related examples.

Willis (1996) believes that analysis activities have the following goals, *"They aim to promote observation through identification, and critical investigation of linguistic features."* (p.103). From Willis's statement, it is understood that learners analyse texts aiming to identify forms they need or want to master; this activity develops precision in selecting and studying language structures. This kind of activities enable learners to benefit from language structures they already know, it also allows learners to experiment with those forms and test them, and to enrich their repertoire with target items, that is, useful words that would facilitate learners' communicative activities. Learners doing the analysis activities will discover and notice linguistic features they need and use them afterwards without difficulties and without the help of the teacher. In this regard, Willis states, *"With constant exposure and opportunities to use language they will be more likely to notice further example and to know how and when to use them for themselves."* (p.103)

The second phase of this stage is, the practice. It is carried out by the teacher who urges the learners to practice new words and phrases that occurred during or after the analysis, this could be done if the teacher utilises some language focused-tasks based on the texts students have read or the recordings they have listened to during the precedent phase of this stage. In this phase the teacher monitors learners. He/she goes around trying to see if the learners are doing well. If not, they should help them out without doing the tasks themselves; learners should be given the opportunity to think by themselves to make

their personal hypotheses which certainly lead them to make their own discoveries. The teacher will notice that after one or two minutes learners find out what he/she was about to tell them. However, the teacher has to focus on weaker learners and give them more attention.

The teacher's roles in this phase require him/her to write relevant lexical items and language forms on the board then learners conduct practice activities based on what is written on the board. The Practice activity may be one of these:

- Choral repetition of the phrases identified or classified.
- Memory challenging activities based on partially erased examples.
- Using lists already on blackboard for progressive deletion.
- Sentence completion, matching the past tense verbs with the subject or objects in the text.

### **1.4.7 Teachers' Roles in the Task Based Approach**

In the past, the focus was put on the teacher that had a total control on the learners and the learning process in what was referred to as teacher-centred classrooms. However, some years ago with the advent of TBA that focuses on the processes of communication and learning rather than language structures mastery, more responsibilities and roles were assumed for the teacher. In this concern, Breen and Candlin (1980) believe that the teacher has three roles to play in the communicative classroom. The first is to act as a facilitator of the communicative process, the second is to act as a participant, and third is to act as an observer and learner.

Moreover, in the TBA the teacher plays many unconventional roles, for instance, he/she accompanies learners through the learning process. Many specialists believe that the teacher can be regarded in many ways as the learner's most privileged interlocutor. The role of the teacher in the TBA is considered as different from the role of instructors in form-oriented approaches, he/she plays different roles in each of the three phases of the TBA framework. TBA proponents believe that educational issues, challenges, and more importantly the needs of the learners are the factors that determine the teacher's role. Accordingly, Richards and Rodgers (1986) assume that teacher's roles are affected by

some problems, for instance ,the interactional patterns that develop between the teacher and the learner, the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place, the degree to which the teacher is responsible for the content, and finally the types of functions he/she is expected to fulfil ,for example, he is expected to practice the director role, councillor ,or a model.

Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers (2001) enriched the list of roles a teacher has to play which are specific to the TBA. The first role is a selector and sequencer of tasks, the teacher is the only responsible for creating, selecting, and modifying tasks according to learners' interests, needs, and linguistic proficiency.

#### **1.4.8 Learners' Roles in the Task Based Approach**

The TBA utilises a learner-centred approach in language teaching, the role of the learners is not limited to attending lessons especially in ESP settings; Ken Hyland (2006) asserts that," *Learners have to take on new roles and to engage with knowledge in new ways when they enter high education.*" (p.8) Learners must actively participate in the learning process, they must play critical roles as they do not just receive but contribute in making meaning (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). In the TBA, learners should assume the responsibility and take control of the learning process, minimize their dependence on the teacher, as well as, creating content.

Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (1986) found that the learner should play a number of roles. First , a group participant. As group and pair work are favoured in the TBA, learners have to learn to share information and to contribute in making meaning with their classmates. Second, risk taker, many tasks require the learner's creation and interpretation of some information about which he/she lacks linguistic background, in this respect, they have to learn to live with uncertainty and errors .Third, the learner should be an innovator. He/she should be encouraged to experiment with using language in different ways that involve using new words and structures in different contexts.

Furthermore, learners are assigned to conduct more sensitive roles as they actively participate in curriculum design which has become a collaborative activity and other

complex activities. Nunan (1998) states that , *"Learners are involved in decisions on content selection, methodology, and evaluation"*. (p.146)

## **1.5 Empirical Research on the Task Based Approach**

Positive views about the TBA began with Prahbu's (1987) project named the Bangalore project .This research's results suggested that the TBA may be a good replacement to the existing methods for it provides the learner with real opportunities to learn. Yule (1989) in his report about this project asserted that problem-solving activities used in the TBA can improve learners' language proficiency and the investment of this kind of activities by traditional and form-based syllabi may improve their performances and achievements.

Skehan (1996) found that strategic planning which involves both meaning and form that was suggested by the TBA proponents promoted higher language fluency than traditional planning presented by previous teaching methods.

Bygate (1996) after his research that took a female judge as a sample, asserted that the repetition of certain tasks had a positive effect on the learner's communicative abilities ;the learner showed control that was manifested in the accurate selection of lexical items and grammatical structures, her communicative strategies have improved as she was able to use self-correction techniques. Bygate goes on claiming that the repetition of the tasks supplies a structured context that promotes the mastery of meaning and form more than the traditional sequencing of tasks.

Carless (2002) investigated the effects of the implementation of the TBA on teachers; the study took place in a primary school in Hong-Kong. He found out that teachers' positive attitudes towards the TBA has increased their interest in teaching and the time they allotted to lesson preparation, teachers attitudinal change effected the quality of teaching which naturally impacts on students learning .In this respect, Willis (1996) claims that the TBA makes teachers feel more comfortable in their classrooms and provides learners with more favourable conditions for learning ,for example, exposure ,meaningful use of language that is a result of contextualisation highly utilised in the TBA ,and motivation which is a key to the success of the learning process.

Lopez (2004) in his comparison between the commonly used PPP approach and the TBA approach, discovered that learners who have been taught under the Task Based Approach learned English more effectively, the TBA changed their views about the language that regarded the latter as a study subject because they began to use English to express themselves and to solve problems. Learners who were exposed to a real input with the opportunity to negotiate meaning used English more effectively outside the classroom in real life situations. In another research conducted by Birjandi and Ahagari (2008) positive effects of the TBA were clearly noticed on learners' linguistic abilities, notably, in terms of fluency, accuracy, and the complexity of the vocabulary and grammatical structures they used.

Pica et al. (1996) argued that tasks provided by the Task Based Approach precisely the jigsaw tasks allow negotiation of meaning and foster learner's opinion exchange, establishing and maintaining information become an easy task for the learners after repeating this kind of tasks. As many other proponents of the Task Based Approach, they claimed that the negotiation of meaning encouraged by the TBA is an important factor that promotes language acquisition. Many researches that were a result of these findings sought to create and develop tasks that boost the negotiation of meaning. In here, it becomes clear that tasks should be designed according to students' level and background knowledge in order to involve all the students in the learning process, this would generate more classroom interaction and negotiation of meaning.

Begler and Hunt (2002) conducted a project to explore how tasks can be used as a central unit in teaching, it was a twelve-week long task-based project that was entitled "The Students Generated Action Research". This project was conducted in a Japanese college; the sample was composed of 340 students enrolled in a twelve-week semester speaking class. The learners were arranged in pairs or groups of four students and were required to choose a topic in which they were interested in. Then pairs and groups should design a questionnaire to investigate other learners' opinions about the topic they have chosen. The results show that the experience was appreciated by the learners themselves; it had a positive effect on learners' motivation, and speaking proficiency. Accordingly, a number of researches investigating the effect of the TBA on learners' productive skills, that is, speaking and writing, have concluded that the implementation of the TBA has improved the target skills better than the existing teaching methods.

Galina Kavaliauskienė (2005) has conducted a research in an attempt to explore the effects and outcomes of the Task Based Approach In ESP settings ,the study examined the effects of a number of tasks on 56 learners who attended the ESP class twice a week. The learners were given the freedom to choose the tasks they prefer. The research findings showed that problem solving tasks came in the first place, then sharing personal experiences tasks, and listing tasks come last in the third position. The learners asserted that the experience was beneficial for them and that they have achieved three learning outcomes which are,” *Building professional vocabulary, development of speaking skills, refinement of listening skills.*” (p.6). The results of this research were stunning because the learners were subjected to tasks that promote learner-centeredness and negotiation of meaning.

Similarly, Patricia Cordoba Cubilo and César Navas Bernes (2009) taught using the Task Based Approach; the old ESP course in the computer centre at the University of Costa Rica was kept during this study. The research findings have indicated that the implementation of the TBA has improved both teachers’ and learners’ performance .For the researchers the participants benefited from the TBA ,“*Because it is more motivating ,more challenging, more innovative ,more appealing and more meaningful to students than traditional grammar-based approaches*”.(p.8)

Jipada Promrunang (2012) has carried out a research to improve learners speaking and listening proficiency, the dissertation was entitled:” The Use of the Task Based Learning to Improve Listening and Speaking Abilities of Mattayomsuka 1 Students at Piboonprochasan School.Bangkok”. The results were very promising; the researcher has noticed improvement in learners’ speaking and listening abilities, similarly, students’ motivation has significantly increased, the results prove once again the positive change the TBA could make.

In Iran, Majid Hayati and Alireza Jalilifar (2010) investigated the reading comprehension of English language learners in an EAP situation via the Task Based Approach .Forty two students were the sample of this research, they were divided into two groups ,experimental and control groups, The first group was taught using Willis’ (1996) TBA framework while the other group was taught using the traditional method, both groups were taught for a similar amount of time. The results revealed that the learners who received TBA instruction performed better in the post-test than those who have been taught

via the traditional method; according to the researchers, the first group's reading comprehension was more effective.

Finally, the conclusions made by the previously mentioned researches, show that TBA offers adequate conditions for learning such as providing the learners with authentic materials and content ,these factors allow the improvement of students' intrinsic motivation ; consequently, both teachers' and learners' expectations are fulfilled .The approach lowers the anxiety levels this improves learners' confidence and leads learners to take a good share in classroom interaction and results in more practice of the language. The TBA also develops cooperative learning among learners. In the Task Based Approach, learner-centeredness is fostered and teachers' control touches its lowest levels, on the other hand, it allows teachers to monitor, direct, provide input and feedback. Moreover, teachers showed satisfaction during and after implementing the TBA, the approach has promoted their performance and language proficiency, it also bettered their interest in teaching as it provides scientifically proven instructions that eliminate the problems that hinder learning which are usually faced in form-based methods. Teachers indicated that the target situation related topics or real-world tasks along with the careful grading and sequencing of the tasks created a motivating and exciting learning environment that eases both parties' tasks. Furthermore, the TBA welcomes everyone's criticism and evaluation of the class work; this will not just optimize students' participation but also improves their critical thinking, thus, more competent learners.

To conclude, TBA enhances learners' communicative fluency and emphasises accuracy. In addition, some researches proved that TBA could be used with traditional teaching practices and courses; this increases the practicality of this method.

## **1.6 Drawbacks of the Task Based Approach**

Skehan (1996) asserts that the TBA should be carefully implemented otherwise it may seriously endanger the learning process and outcomes. In this case, the TBA creates pressures on the speakers, consequently, lowers their instant communication skills, hence, the learners will resort to speaking strategies such as word coinage, and paraphrasing which indicate the failure of promoting learners fluency. Brown (2002) argues that the Task Based Approach does not permit learners to make interpretations beyond the tasks' context. Thus, factors that create language use are reduced if not eliminated.

Swan (2005) criticizes the TBA's basic assumptions and claims that language is acquired through noticing during the communicative activity which is neither supported by strong theoretical argument nor by experimental evidence, and is proven wrong by actual teaching and learning research.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) believe that the Task Based Approach assumptions are theoretical and lack empirical evidence, thus, its findings are ideological rather than factual. Accordingly, many researchers assert that many aspects of the TBA have not been justified, for instance, the proposed task types, the sequencing and grading of those tasks as well as the evaluation of task performance. In addition, they believe that the lack of task based syllabi weakens the TBA and puts it in the crossroads of other approaches. The Task Based Approach is also criticized for its emphasis on meaning more than language structures as communication is the primary goal for the approach.

Finally, Researches indicate that the TBA is surrounded by a number of drawbacks; it is criticized for its focus on meaning more than form, and for not having syllabi which subjects the TBA to the effects of other approaches. In addition to what has been said, more empirical research is needed to validate some TBA assumptions and to refine its findings in order to raise its effectiveness and confirm its adequacy for different English language teaching situations.

## 1.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is proven that the TBA has improved students proficiency and language skills in different English language teaching settings. In addition, the approach focuses on the learners' needs and believes that the success of the whole learning process is in the hands of the learner, therein, all the procedures and techniques are designed to foster what is termed as learner-centeredness. Similarly, it improves speciality-related language skills thanks to the use of authentic materials which makes it highly adequate to ESP classes; moreover, the utilisation of real-world tasks increases students' interest and motivation which are necessary to the success of any teacher, learner, and approach. However, the teachers should understand their roles which differ from one stage to another in the TBA methodology to ensure the full exploitation of the approach to achieve the required results and especially to improve the current situation at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Writing Skill and Approaches to Teaching Writing**

## **C H A P T E R   T W O**

### **Writing Skill and Approaches to Teaching Writing**

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## **2.1 Introduction**

Writing is regarded as the most important skill in all languages for it is the means by which learners express and share their thoughts with their teachers and classmates. Besides, learners' achievements are assessed via writing, thus, writing is essential for both learning and academic success. Moreover, writing is a vital activity in many careers in different professional domains, it is indispensable for professionals in business fields as they start writing job application letters before they get hired; in their offices, they daily write a good number of e-mails to purchase and sell goods, to establish internal communication, that is, with their colleagues and external communication with other organizations and companies. Writing complaint letters, transmittal letters and response letters is part of the employees' job in business companies, and banks. Therefore, the importance of writing to language learners and professionals in different business fields led the researcher to focus on this language skill.

This chapter will proceed from the definition of writing, to writing in ESP settings and the components of this skill; it also contains a comparison between writing and speaking, writing and reading. Similarly, it presents the stages of development of writing. In addition, it comprises an overview of the previous writing teaching methodologies to provide the readers with ideas and insights about traditional theories and practices in the domain of teaching writing, it starts from the Process approach to writing to the most modern approaches such as communicative approaches and the Task Based Approach which is the subject of this dissertation.

The review of the traditional methods to teaching writing is conducted to explore their weaknesses, strengths, and differences between them and the Task Based Approach to teaching writing. The latter, might be promising when it is applied in ESP classes for it provides learners with real-world materials and tasks, and focuses on communication without neglecting form.

## 2.2 Defining Writing

Every language learner should master the four language skills to achieve communicative competence; the macro skills of the language are classified into two categories. First, the receptive skills, listening and reading, characterized by the passivity of the learners; that is to say, they receive information and do not produce it. The productive skills also called active skills, speaking and writing, they are referred to as productive because learners produce language.

Writing as defined by Collins dictionary (2003) is a group of letters or symbols written or marked on a surface to communicate ideas and meaning. A similar definition was made by Widdowson (1990) who believes that writing is the act of producing correct sentences and substantiating them on paper through the use of letters. Another definition of writing is delineated by Byrne (1979) who states that writing is the transformation of sounds into letters. Further still, he claims that writing is making words from letters and sentences from words to make a one comprehensible message. Freeman and Richards (1996) believe that writing is the act of making utterances visible and it is the art of making meaning through forming characters and letters on paper. Similarly, Bachani (2003) regards writing as the encoding of a message of some kind that is, translating thoughts and ideas into written words.

Bell and Barnaby (1984) define writing as a complex cognitive activity that integrates physical and mental activities, thus, it is not a natural activity. The writer has to master a number of key-elements while writing from the level of structures that require the control of many constituents as punctuation, spelling, and format which are important to achieve cohesion. Besides the attention paid to the structures used in a given piece of writing, the writer must be able to organise his ideas and information in homogeneous paragraphs and to realise the aspect of coherence. All this makes writing more difficult and complex than the other macro-skills of the language. Hence, the complexity of writing engenders a number of problems learners encounter in the writing process.

## 2.3 Writing in ESP Setting

Writing is an important element in language learning. However, it is not only a tool of learning but also an important means of communication. It is probably the most practised language skill in the tertiary level in general and in professional institutions and workplaces. Writing is considered to be the means through which learners consolidate and prove their understanding and academic retention. Furthermore, students' are assessed and evaluated upon their writing performance in tests , further still, good writing skills are an important measure for hiring employees in many organizations and companies in the business world.

The importance of writing in English in professional contexts has contributed to create a new view of the teaching and learning of writing that is different from the traditional views of teaching that regarded writing as a generic skill which could be taught depending on teachers' experiences and practices .ESP practitioners' perception is influenced by the new discoveries and theories in the domain of English Language Teaching (ELT), and new concepts guide the teaching methodologies, course design ,materials writing, and the teaching practices in ESP environments. The advent of the concept "Communicative Competence" and the resulting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) led to alter the focus of the specialists in the field from the focus on language structures and form to the focus on meaning and communicative writing. Currently, teaching writing practices and content in ESP contexts is based on the needs of the target workplaces to construct authentic courses and materials essential to prepare proficient learners ready to the linguistic challenges and requirements of their future jobs. Evans and St. John (1998) assert in this vein, "*Learning is a social act in which writers have to be aware of the contexts*". (p.117).

This commitment to contextual relevance has driven specialists to develop a genre approach to teaching writing in ESP contexts to make students develop discipline and target writing skills. Evans and St. John (1998) believe that successful writing requires the awareness of the target situations' conventions and expectations of texts and also how texts should be written and the norms to be respected while writing those texts. Consequently, specialists do not teach general writing skills in ESP classes, they utilise target genres to develop particular writing skills expected to be needed in the related professional contexts.

However, ESP practitioners are faced by a challenge that is far more complicated than controlling linguistic competence, and errors or improving and polishing students' linguistic style because adopting a genre approach to teaching ESP obliges them to deal with the complexity, diversity, and differences between the target genres.

## **2.4 Writing and the Other Skills**

Specialists agree that all language skills are different not only in nature but in the way they are learned, the elements that affect the acquisition and learning of each, and importantly their level of difficulty as learners often report that one language skill is more difficult to learn than another. In the following paragraphs, the difference between writing as it is the language skill in question in the present study and the rest of language skills will be clarified.

### **2.4.1 Writing and Speaking**

Writing and speaking are productive skills. However, writing has always been regarded as different from speaking. Researchers believe that writing is the most correct form or produced language while speaking is considered as an imperfect form of language. Some believe that the only difference between the two skills is in the means and channels both are transmitted through, Raimes (1983) rejects these views as he states "*Writing is not simply speech written down on paper*".(p.4). Furthermore, the writer distinguishes between the two skills in terms of nature and setting because writing is a learnt activity which is acquired in formal settings, that is, school whereas speaking is a natural activity that is learnt naturally at home without any formal instruction. Raimes (1983) offers an insightful distinction between writing and speaking in the following list :

- 1- *Speech is universal; everyone acquires a native language in the first few years of life. Not everyone learns to read and write.*
- 2- *The spoken language has dialect variations; the written language generally demands standard forms of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary.*

- 3- *Speakers use their voices (pitch, stress, and rhythm.) and bodies (gestures and facial expressions.) to help convey their ideas. Writers have to rely on the words on the page to express their meaning.*
- 4- *Speakers use pauses and intonation .Writers use punctuation.*
- 5- *Speakers pronounce. Writers spell.*
- 6- *Speaking is usually spontaneous and unplanned .Most writing takes time .It is planned, writers have the possibility to go back and change what they have written.*
- 7- *A speaker speaks to a listener who is right there nodding or frowning, interrupting or questioning. For the writer, the reader's response is either delayed or non-existent. The writer has only that one chance to convey information and be interesting and accurate enough to hold the reader's attention.*
- 8- *Speech is usually informal and repetitive we say things like "what I mean is...or let me start again. Writing on the other hand is more formal and compact .It progresses logically with fewer digressions and explanations.*
- 9- *Speakers use simple sentences connected by a lot of **and's** and **but's** .Writers use more complex sentences with connecting words like however, who, and, in addition. While we could easily say, " His father runs ten miles every day and is very healthy." We might well write "His father who runs ten miles every day is very healthy."*

(Raimes, 1983, p.5)

Moreover, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) assert that writing abilities are not acquired in a natural manner but a learning environment is needed to assist the learning of this language skill. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) once again point out the ways both skills are acquired and learnt. For them , speaking is acquired in a natural way without a teacher or going to school ; whereas , learners need teachers' assistance which is provided in formal settings such as schools, and universities to learn writing.

Similarly, Brown (1994) believes that there are many differences between the two productive skills, writing and speaking. He points out five differences .First, permanence and occurrence which refers to the nature of these skills in terms of the time they both last as the act of speaking ends just after speakers leave and stop the conversation ;whereas, writing is permanent, it could be read at different points of time. The second difference lies in the production time. Speaking can be processed in few moments while longer time is needed by writers to finalise their pieces of writing as they go through the time-consuming

activities such as: planning, drafting, revising, and finally editing. For Brown the third difference is distance. Speaking joins interlocutors in one time and space, on the other hand, writers are distant from their readers, the fact that eliminates many aspects present in speaking such as immediacy of feedback. The fourth difference is characterized by the limitations caused by orthography, the latter limits the amount of information that could be delivered compared to a large number of devices available for speakers which entail richer outcome in terms of information provided through speaking, for instance, intonation, stress, and paralinguistic devices like gestures and facial expressions.

Brown believes that complexity represents the fifth difference between the two skills. Moreover, writing involves the use of long clauses and subordinators whereas speaking is characterized by the use of shorter clauses which are connected by coordinators. Moreover, the degree of formality constitutes another difference between speaking and writing because the latter tends to be more formal than the first one.

## **2.4.2 Writing and Reading**

The two skills are different by nature because writing is a productive skill while reading is a receptive skill which is characterized by the passivity of the reader. Nevertheless, each one of these skills influences the other. In this respect, reading is often considered as the input for the acquisition of the writing skills. The latter is an activity that provides learners with new words and makes them familiar with the syntax of the language. Concerning the relationship between writing and reading, specialists claim that there is a close relationship between reading achievement and writing proficiency. They assert that better readers are better writers.

In language instruction, the two skills are better learnt and mastered when they are taught simultaneously. In this concern, activities that involve both reading and writing or vice versa are highly recommended. In addition to that, Leki (1991) contends, "*Writing is the natural outlet for students reflection on their speaking, listening, and reading experiences*".(p.87). Here, Leki (1991) points out that reading is an important input for writers. Hence, writers cannot do without it.

To sum up, both writing and reading are complementary and interrelated, thus, good learning standards cannot be reached unless the two skills are mastered. Mackay

(1965) believes that learners should be able to read before attempting to write because reading is very important for writers.

## **2.5 Components of Writing**

Writing is not as simple as it seems. Several components constitute this communicative activity. All the constituents of this complex skill are presented below.

### **2.5.1 Notation**

It means the transformation of sounds into letters on paper, in other words, it is the substantiation of abstract thoughts into concrete graphs. This activity requires learners' proper organization of thoughts as well as the mastery of language structures in order to write comprehensively.

### **2.5.2 Spelling**

Learners should be equipped with the ability to distinguish sounds and forming words through the proper combination of letters. The mastery of spelling enables the learners to communicate clearly and effectively in the next stages of their learning to write.

### **2.5.3 Writing practice**

It is the simplest component of writing; it requires the learner to master the conversion of sounds into letters then from letters to words. In this respect, Rivers and Temperly (1978) go on claiming:

*"Practice is needed in actual sequential writing.  
Having learned about the various part of the machine,  
and parts of the parts, and how these synchronize in*

*action, the students need to set the machine in motion with different parts active in weaving the intricate pattern of meaning. Here guidance is helpful in learning which parts will operate together to form new patterns. Students' aptitudes vary widely in writing. Some need considerable help in developing a smooth and effective operation, others seem intuitively to take off and create interesting patterns of their own".(p.297)*

Writing practice can also be defined as the knowledge of combining words to get a coherent, cohesive, and meaningful text. Accordingly, Rivers (1968) insists that teachers must help learners growing awareness and mastery of conventional combinations of sounds and letters so that they become able to proceed smoothly to the following stages of writing. Moreover, learners must be endowed with certain abilities and skills, for instance, the ability to manipulate the grammatical and syntactic systems to produce correct words and sentences; the mastery of stylistics is another must for the learners for more effective use of the language. Importantly, learners should acquire the ability to choose the language level according to the purpose they endeavour to reach and the audience to which they write.

#### **2.5.4 Composition**

Writing properly requires the mastery of a number of variables, for instance, syntax, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and all the aspects that constitute writing as well as extra or beyond sentence aspects of writing such as cohesion. The learner is required to master a number of skills to get a meaningful piece of writing that succeeds to achieve his or her communicative goals.

## 2.6 Stages of Development of Writing Skills

Learning to write is a developmental process; students achieve high proficiency levels after going through the following five stages of development of writing skills.

### 2.6.1 Copying

It is the first stage in learning writing. Copying refers to the reproduction of graphic forms that learners are already familiar with on a paper. It is an activity in which the writer represents his own picture of the sounds he or she has heard and the graphs he has seen before he begins copying. The aim of this activity is strengthening learners' mastery of writing components, letters in this case. This activity is necessary to learning in general at the early stages of students' learning process. Brookes and Grundy (1998) state, "*it is much about using writing to support language learning than about teaching writing itself.*" (p. 22).

A number of principles and procedures underlie copying, thus, both teachers and learners must respect them. In this concern, Rivers (1968) states, "*The work set for copying should consist of sections of work already learned orally and read with the teacher. As the student is copying, he should repeat to himself what he is writing. In this way, he deepens the impressions in his mind of the sound and the symbols.*" (p. 246). Rivers argues that learners should copy only what has been read or dictated by the teacher; familiarity with what students copy is very important at this stage of learning. Moreover, the writer urges the teachers not to tolerate students' mistakes while copying, and insists that they should immediately correct students' mistakes to eliminate habits of inaccuracy that may affect learners' writing performance in the next stages.

The purpose of copying is gaining acquaintance with letters and sounds. This stage is indispensable for building learners' basic writing skills.

### **2.6.2 Reproduction**

It is the stage that follows copying, learners move from copying letters and words to copying texts with a slight margin of creativity. Learners attempt to reproduce a text they already have been exposed to. Consequently, the originality of the product is not a quest. Rivers (1968) claims that during the second stage, that is, reproduction, learners try to write without originality, they just reproduce what they have listened to or read in the textbook. Furthermore, Rivers asserts that learners would succeed in this stage if they have been trained on accuracy during the previous stage.

To achieve the purpose of reproduction, dictation is used as the main activity, it allows learners to develop two macro skills which are writing and listening as the learners acquire the ability to distinguish between the sounds and then the ability to convert them into written symbols.

### **2.6.3 Reproduction and Adaptation**

In this third stage, the teacher presents the learners with a model text and asks them to reproduce it. The possibility of slight adaptation which is done through the substitution of words, phrases, and adding new information to the original text as well as omitting some information figured in the text.

To help learners develop their reproduction and adaptation skills, teachers may utilise some drills and activities, for example, substitution, transformation, and expansion activities. The intensive practice of these activities improves learners' writing and prepares them for the next stages.

### **2.6.4 Guided Writing**

At this stage, learners are free to choose the lexical and grammatical components of their end-products but within a framework under the guidance of the teacher, Rivers (1968) explains that teacher's intervention "*Will prevent the learners from writing at a level that exceeds their current level and abilities*". (p. 250). At this stage, learners must follow

teacher's instructions before moving to the next stage in which they would have the complete command on what and how they write.

### **2.6.5 Composition**

At this fifth and last stage and after acquiring different writing skills, learners are granted more freedom in selecting words, phrases, and structures according to their communicative needs, the purpose they want to achieve, and their audience. This freedom of choice of lexical, syntactic, and grammatical items allows the learners to express their opinions and explain their views about a topic more clearly than in the previous stage in which they were limited by teachers' instructions and guidance. Furthermore, the learner must receive sound instruction in the early stages because the success in this final stage requires the mastery of language structure which is essential for constructing meaning.

## **2.7 The Previous Approaches to Teaching Writing**

### **2.7.1 The Process Approach to Writing**

The new philosophy in the English language teaching (ELT) has resulted in a new perception of writing and a move from the emphasis on the final product as a purpose to the focus on the processes learners go through to come to the final product, this is clarified by Applebee (1982) *"Recent studies have shifted the focus from the artefact produced by a writer to the process in which the writer is involved when writing."* (cited in Freeman and Richards, 1996, p.97). This shift gave value to writers, what they do, and the thinking processes they undergo before reaching the end-product the thing learners could not do in the previous approaches. Li states :

*"Our students are all too often deprived of the joy of watching how their thinking goes onto the paper ,how their ideas get shaped into words and expressions ,and above all, to see how their buildings and castles could have always been rebuilt with blocks combined in new and different arrangements."*

(Li.,1991, p.1. cited in Freeman and Richards, 1996, p.97)

According to Raimes (1983) ,*"Learners are required to ask themselves the following questions : How do I write this? How do I get started?"*(p.10). Freeman and Richards (1996) assert that in the process approach to writing, *"The learner has to view writing as a process of creating, discovering and expending meaning rather than putting down preconceived and well-formed meaning."* (p.97). Raimes (1983) and Freeman & Richards (1996) believe that writing should be a conscious activity, that is, learners should be aware of the different stages of the process of writing, how to begin and how to finish as well as the points that have to be tackled in their texts .Similarly, they should realise that writing is a tool that promotes their learning skills. In other words, learners should experience the complex process of writing which is *"The making of meaning out of chaos."*(Zamel, 1983, qtd in Freeman and Richards,1996, p.97).The process approach to writing stresses creativity by giving the learners the opportunity of thinking and experimenting with both meaning and language. By doing so Raimes (1983) claims that the writing process,*" Becomes a process of discovery for the students; discovery of new ideas and new language forms to express those ideas."*(p.11). Raimes believes that the process approach helps learners to unleash their creativity , it also appeals them to enrich the content with new ideas, and helps to discover new words, phrases, structures, and utilise them.

The writing process according to Brown (1994) involves the following activities, *" pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing"*.(p.322).The nature of these processes allows the learner to think as an attempt to solve a problem which is an important activity to the process approach proponents . Accordingly, Nunan (1989) states, *"The process approach has emphasized the idea of writing as problem solving with focus on process and thinking."*(p.116).Writing should involve complex thinking carried out to solve problems rather than copying a model or writing to have grades. The writing process comprises two stages. In the first stage, termed the thinking stage, learners think about the topic via a number of activities such as brainstorming, planning, drafting. In the second stage, the process stage, learners transform the plan and drafts into more organized paragraphs. This new vision to writing would promote learners' writing skills and improve the quality of the product.

## 2.7.2 The Product Approach to Teaching Writing

In this approach, the emphasis is put on the outcome or the end-product rather than the writing processes or writers. Evans and St. John (1998) argue *"The term has generally been used to refer to concentration on the features of the actual text, the end-product that writers have to produce"*.(p.116).

The learners are presented with a model text which is the basic exercise and the most important technique and then they are required to compose a similar text which is referred to as the product which is the central interest of this approach. In this respect, Brown (1994) believes that the product is the ultimate and most important goal of this approach. For the proponents of this approach, writing is nothing but an imitation of texts provided by the instructor, accordingly, Evans and St. John (1998) argue, *"The use of the product approach has led to a rather simplistic copying of the model text by merely changing certain words from the original text to produce a new text"*.(p.116). Copying leaves no space for learners' creativity and offers fewer chances to learn new vocabulary and practice of grammatical structures. Furthermore, copying as a mechanical act did not prevent specialists to assert the importance of the mastery of language structures in the product that has to be error-free, thus, learners have to be accurate. Consequently, writing is all about the writers' mastery of the grammatical and lexical systems of the language. Accordingly, the end product has to contain no grammatical errors, the language has to be correct, punctuation has to be thoroughly mastered, the content has to be cohesive, that is to say, ideas must be organized clearly to effectively reach the purpose of the end-product.

The adherents of this approach recognise some positive aspects of the approach as it provides linguistic input and knowledge to novice writers. Conversely, Raimes (1983) criticizes the approach for it favours certain aspects of the end-product, for instance, grammatical and syntactic but ignores the communicative aspects of the final product. In addition to that, criticism is addressed to this approach, because use of imitation as the only technique leads to the negligence of the communicative purposes and audience of the text. Moreover, learner's personality and thoughts about the topic are made absent by this approach's practices.

### **2.7.3 The Genre Approach to Teaching Writing**

This approach focuses on teaching particular genres related and needed in the learners' future workplace. Swales (1990) regards genre as a text that has specific characteristics in terms of form and style. Genre is also defined as a purposeful socially recognised language activity. Thus, this approach focuses on the linguistic features of the text and the situation in which it was and will be produced. Particular genres are taught to achieve workplace and genre-related communicative purposes. Thus, the notions of purpose and target social content are central to the Genre Based Approach to teaching writing. Genres are used pragmatically to develop target skills and language, the teacher presents the learners with a given text of a specific genre to read and analyse, then learners carry out activities to detect the repeatedly used structures. Finally, learners are appealed to produce a text that stimulates the model text previously provided.

This approach is often considered as an extension of the Product Approach for it neglects the thinking and writing processes and focuses on the copying and reproduction of model texts. These practices limit learners creativity as form, language, and content are imposed on the learners, and indulge them in the mechanical act of copying.

### **2.7.4 The Controlled to Free Writing Approach to Teaching Writing**

In the 1950s and early 1960s, the area of English Language Teaching was dominated by the audio-lingual approach. Writing was not important as speech, thus, writing was used as a tool to promote speaking. The Controlled to free writing approach created a cut with the existing conventions at that time; it valued writing and appealed for the mastery of grammar and syntax. Raimes (1983) argues *"This approach stresses three features: grammar, syntax, and mechanics. It emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality"*.(p.7). Writers do not write in this approach but they perform grammar exercises. It is a sequential approach as claimed by Raimes, students learn to write gradually as they go through the following stages to learn writing :

1-They perform sentences exercises.

2-They copy paragraphs and practice relevant grammar.

3-Controlled compositions, in this stage, learners are granted some freedom in writing. This is allowed in this stage only because learners would have reached a high level of proficiency.

This approach takes learners from easy to difficult which is a way to achieve high standards of accuracy; the latter is the most valued of language features for this approach.

### **2.7.5 Free Writing Approach to Teaching Writing**

This approach focuses on fluency rather than language forms as it encourages learners to write a great number of texts on a specific topic. This approach limits error correction, the goal is encouraging learners to write without worrying about grammar and syntax. Raimes (1983) endorsed these views as he justifies, "Once ideas are down on the page, grammatical accuracy, organization and the rest will gradually follow". (p. 7)

This approach attempts to eradicate the psychological impediments as worrying about grammar and spelling and some extra-textual concerns that involve thinking about the purpose and audience of the text. This will promote and improve learners' writing skills as they discover that writing is not as difficult as they thought it is and then they begin to write more frequently and effectively. On the other hand, the role of the teacher is limited to reading the text produced by the learners and providing feedback. Thus, the texts produced by the learners cannot be corrected but read aloud then the teacher and the learners comment on it with special attention to content.

### **2.7.6 Paragraph-Pattern Approach to Teaching Writing**

Paragraph is the central concept in this approach, on this basis organization within paragraphs is more important than fluency or accuracy of the language.

In the first phase of this approach, students work on paragraphs by analysing the language and forms. Then they imitate the original texts. During the process of imitation, the approach allows the learners to delete some words and sentences in the model texts and add new ones. This approach is dominated by the belief that languages and cultures are different; students are used to organise their thoughts according to the models and patterns

of their first language, thus ,they have to imitate English paragraph patterns to be familiar with the conventions of this language to finally achieve communicative goals through clear, and understandable paragraphs which are free of the ambiguities that may be caused by linguistic and cultural differences.

### **2.7.7 The Grammar-Syntax Organization Approach to Teaching Writing**

As indicated in the title, this approach focuses on form, that is to say, grammar and syntax. The mastery of language forms is vital to successfully conduct writing tasks. This approach devotes ample efforts to improve learners' grammatical competence because for it , grammar is essential to convey messages properly, for instance, when learners are asked to write instructions about how to operate a computer, they are required to:

1-Use adequate and relative vocabulary

2-Master and correctly use verb tenses.

3-Order thoughts in a chronological order, this requires the mastery of words such as First, eventually...etc.

### **2.7.8 The Communicative Approach to Teaching Writing**

This approach regards writing as a communicative act, in this respect; it focuses on the communicative aspects of the texts such as purposes, and the audience of the text. Raimes (1983) argues that learners should ask themselves the following questions before they start writing, "*Why am I writing this? Who will read it?*" (p. 8).

In this approach, the audience of the text is not exclusively the teacher; the students in the class should be involved and taken into consideration. They are supposed to read the texts produced by their mates, provide feedback, and eventually rewrite theirs.

The teacher's roles in this approach are: helping and directing learners to specify the audience of the text, the degree of formality, providing learners with insights about content and context of the text. This approach considers writing as a communicative act.

Hence, real life tasks are utilised to teach learners communicative writing such as writing letters, asking target situation-related questions, and making comments.

Finally, the proponents of this approach believe that writing must represent an attempt to communicate with the reader which is more important than focusing on aesthetic or artistic features of the text.

### **2.7.9 The Task Based Approach to Teaching Writing**

In this approach, the focus is put on writing processes as well as the end-product, in this regard, Nunan (1989) states , "*Focusing as much on the means whereby the complete text was created as the end product itself.*", further still he adds:" *both processes and outcomes are taken care of.*"(p.36) .The following definitions of 'task' which is the central unit in the Task Based Approach show the compatibility between 'task' and the nature of 'writing' as writers write for a specific audience and to achieve a goal or an outcome. Skehan (2003) defines a task as, "*An activity in which meaning is primary: there is a goal and an outcome.*"(p.3). Feez (1998) goes on claiming that a task is,"*A goal-oriented activity which reflects a social purpose.*"(p.11).

The TBA stresses notions such as purpose, audience, context, and identity of writers' texts to finally ensure that the end-product achieves its communicative purposes and is socially adequate. Writing is thus used by the learner as a tool to achieve a communicative outcome. Moreover, context is of a paramount importance in the TBA approach to writing, in this concern, Samuda and Bygate (2008) state:"*It is the context that provides the primary grounds for the participants' interpretations of what they are doing and why*".(p.258).Context is what guides students to write a text that they could benefit from as the contextualization applied in this approach ensures exposure to the vocabulary and structures related to learners' specialism, besides; it provides learners with insights about the process they should undergo, the purposes their texts should have, and the audience they write for.

TBA writing lessons are divided into three stages as stated by Willis (1996) , "*This end-product will first be introduced orally or through reading in the pre-task phase then discussed as an integral part in the task stage ,drafted collaboratively at the planning stage and finalized for the report stage*".(p.62).Willis supports the use of a model text in

the first stage which serves to set the context whereby audience and purpose of the students' end-product are established. Later in this stage, the teacher presents the learners with a set of preparatory activities that aim at activating topic-related words and phrases and background knowledge necessary to understand tasks and tasks instructions. In the planning phase of the task cycle stage, the learners working in groups or in pairs discuss about the task in an attempt to detect problems, then suggest solutions. In relation to what has been previously written, group and pair work is considered as highly helpful and beneficial to the learners Willis (1996) asserts , *"It engages learners in using language purposefully and collaboratively ,concentrating on building meaning ,not just using language for display purposes"*. (p.35).

It is noticed that learners practice other skills during the planning stage such as speaking and listening; this integration of other skills is supported by Willis (1996) and is thought to contribute in the improvement of learners' general language proficiency. Moreover, discussions carried out during the planning stage allow students to learn and notice how others make meaning and equip them with the knowledge needed to utilise what they have learnt from their mates to create meaning of their own for their texts. Willis (1996) agrees on these points as he claims:

*"With constant exposure and opportunities to use language, they will be more likely to notice further examples, and discover how and when to use them for themselves"*. (Willis, 1996, p.103)

Giving learners the opportunity to negotiate meaning together enables them to develop their communicative skills and especially the target-language's vocabulary because the discussions they carry out are goal oriented. Then, learners draft what they have discussed earlier before exchanging drafts to get peer feedback, recommendations and suggested improvements. At the end of this stage, students are asked to redraft what they have written taking into consideration the feedback of their mates to prepare the final drafts which they will present to their audience. In the

last stage, learners are asked to write reports about what they have learnt from the collaborative work in relation to specific features of the written texts. In this stage, learners will be granted the opportunity to discuss about language form after focusing on meaning and communication in the pre-task and task cycle stages.

Previous studies attempting to explore the effects of the implementation of the Task Based Approach to writing on EFL and ESP writing determined that the TBA could influence and improve learners' writing. In this respect, Linying Cao, a Chinese researcher who carried out a research attempting to measure the effects of the TBA on learners' writing skills asserts the positive change this approach brought as he states :'

*"The application of Willis' framework for TBL to college EFL writing classrooms positively brings forth significant improvement of learners' English writing competence, which involves the increase of average sentence length, the increase of average number of big words or academic words, and the increase of salience of lexical diversity (or the decrease of average lexical recurrence rate). (Linying Cao, 2012, p.89)*

Molinari *et al.* (2012) conducted a research on the benefits TBA might yield and arrived at the following results:

*"TBL provides dialogic opportunities for the writing process to be fully explored (...) TBL encourages learners to notice language rather than copy it which further encourages reflection on the appropriateness of a particular language form for a given purpose." (p.8)*

To sum up, the TBA exploits the model text or an end-product to establish purpose and audience of learners' final texts, creates a motivating learning environment which enables the learners to reflect upon what they write, communicate with their mates and negotiate and create meaning, orient their writings according to the purpose and audience to finally achieve adequate and correct texts in terms of topic-related words and phrases ; texts that would satisfy the audience's needs and expectations .Hence achieve a

considerable communicative outcome around which all the TBA practices and researches revolve.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter attempted to shed light on the nature of the writing skills in general and in ESP settings in particular, it pointed out the importance of this skill to both learners of the English language and to professionals in different fields specifically in business companies and fields where billions of texts of different genres such as e-mails, reports, and business letters are used as the major means of communication. In this respect, this chapter tried to take the readers in a journey across the traditional teaching methods, traditional assumptions about how this basic language skill is taught and learned with special focus on the Task Based Approach to teaching writing. Moreover, it attempted to provide learners and teachers with knowledge and information that would make learning and teaching writing easier and more effective. The present chapter attempted to inform its readers about the ways writing is taught .Finally, writing should be given more attention because of the undeniable importance of this skill for learners and professionals.

Importantly, the chapter deals with the TBA approach to teaching writing which is a recent teaching approach that proved its effectiveness in improving different language skills, notably, writing and speaking, and helping learners and teachers of the English language at different levels and specialities to overcome the difficulties of writing. This approach changed learners' perception to writing which was regarded as a means to answer exam questions and achieve grades that enable them to pass to the next levels rather than an important tool of communication, the TBA focuses on the learners, hence, it limits teachers' roles and supplies them with techniques that are thought to promote learner-centeredness in language classes. In the next chapter, an experiment is carried out in English for Business classes at the University of Laghouat to explore the effect of this approach on the learners' writing skills, and communicative proficiency.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **Research Methodology**

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### **Research Methodology**

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### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methods and procedures adopted by the researcher to examine the effect of the Task Based Approach on learners' writing and communicative skills. The chapter begins with a description of the teaching environment in which the research work took place then proceeds to deliver some information about the status of the English language at the Department of Economic Sciences at the University of Laghouat. The research questions and hypotheses are recalled and the variables of the research are also defined to provide more insights into this experimental study. As it was impossible to carry out a true experiment due to the inability to execute random assignment led the researcher to opt for the quasi-experimental method which is explained in details in this chapter. Later in the chapter, a full account of the sample of the study is provided.

As an attempt at answering and testing the research question and hypothesis, a range of experimental procedures are conducted. The fact that the study aims at determining the effect of the TBA on students' language places it in the cause-effect testing continuum which required the design of an empirical investigation. The experiment is carefully designed and logically ordered to reduce the effects of the extraneous variables which might be critical to the validity and reliability of the research. A pre-test is the first phase in the experiment at hand, it is administered to determine the students' level of proficiency at English and it is also used as an element of control that aids the researcher to confirm that the control and experimental groups belong to the same population and have the same level to prove that the potential improvement or regression of the level of the participants in the experimental group are the result of the treatment. This chapter presents in details the experimental intervention and supplies the readers with Willis'(1996) Task Based Approach's Framework which is a set of methodological procedure proper to the teaching approach in question .Moreover, a sample lesson is provided for more clarifications about the treatment. Finally the current chapter exposes the post-test which is the last experimental procedure in this study, it is very important to measure the effects of the Task Based Approach on students' writing skills. Finally, the chapter contains discussions and solutions for the ethical issues encountered during the realization of this modest research work.

### 3.2 Setting of the Research Study

The work was carried out at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Laghouat .The mentioned Faculty comprises three departments:

- 1- Department of Economic Sciences
- 2- Department of Commercial Sciences
- 3- Department of Management Sciences

The division of undergraduate instruction and specialities is shown in the following table:

Domain	Branches	Specialities
Economics Management Sciences Commercial sciences	Commercial Sciences	Marketing
		Accountancy
	Management Sciences	Management IS
		Business Management
	Economic Sciences	Banking and Insurance

**Table2.**The distribution of branches and specialities at The Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat

### 3.3 The Status of the English Language at Economic Sciences Department

English is taught to the students of the department as a foreign language subject and not as an ESP module due to the lack of ESP curricula and syllabi. The general objectives of teaching English are reading, comprehending, and analyzing English texts. Additionally, learning specialised vocabulary is another purpose of teaching this international language to the students of the faculty.

This module is taught by either part-time EFL teachers who hold a BA degree in English, or subject specialists. Nevertheless, all of the instructors teaching English at the mentioned faculty have not received any ESP training and know little about specialised languages' teaching methodology and the requirements of ESP environments. Teachers aim at achieving linguistic and grammatical competences as they base their English sessions on reading texts and practicing grammatical structures with little if not any emphasis on communication which should be the most important goal in ESP classes. Teachers play the most important role in the business classes the fact that makes them teacher-centred which opposes the doctrines and principles of ESP.

One hour and a half is the time allotted to the teaching and learning of the English language per week which is believed to be insufficient by the teaching staff .In addition, the lack of published books written in English at the faculty's library is another impediment for both teachers and learners. Further details about the current English teaching and learning situation could not be provided by the present research because they are beyond its limits, hence, a further study is suggested to provide more insights and explore the status of ESP at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat.

### **3.4 Methodology and Research Procedures**

To answer and test the research questions and hypotheses mentioned previously, certain methodological procedures need to be conducted. As the study attempts to test and prove that the TBA could actually enhance the learners' writing skills as well as their communicative proficiency, the experimental method seems to be the most adequate method to fulfil the mentioned objectives as it is deemed to be appropriate to analyse the functional relationship, that is to say, cause and effect relationship between variables. However, the academic pre-designed grouping resulted the absence of randomization, a kind of protection against extraneous variables, which is enumerated among the fundamental principles of the experimental method has led us to the choice of quasi-experimental designs. What follows is a reminder of the research questions and hypotheses of the current study.

## **3.5 Recalling Research Questions and Hypotheses**

### **3.5.1 The Research Questions**

In order to spell out the need of conducting the present research, a set of questions are being formulated:

- 1- Does the implementation of the Task Based Approach teaching methodology improve the students' writing skills?
- 2-Does the implementation of the Task Based Approach improve the learners' communicative proficiency?

### **3.5.2 The Hypotheses**

This work aims at testing the following hypotheses:

- 1-Implementing the Task Based Approach improves the learning of writing in the target ESP classes at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat.
- 2-The Task Based Approach improves and promotes the participants' communicative skills.

## **3.6 Definition of the Variables of Research**

### **3.6.1 Independent Variable**

As stated in the title, the independent variable is the Task Based Approach. The latter is present in the experimental group and absent in the control group. In this research work, the utility of the TBA is measured through the experimental group's scores of the post-test compared to those of the second group of the study.

### **3.6.2 Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable is the business students' writing skills. This variable is measured in both experimental and control groups before the introduction of the treatment through a pre-test and after it via a post-test which is used to measure and prove the cause and effect relationship between the mentioned variables.

### **3.7 Choice of the Method of Research**

This study investigates the effect of the Task Based Approach on learners' writing skills and communicative proficiency. The cause-effect relationship between the mentioned variables of the research could not be tested using other methods than the experimental method which is deemed to be one of the most agreeable tools to examine causality which is addressed by this research study.

The Ex Post Facto method which is very often used to test cause-effect relationship between variables is ruled out because it is utilised to investigate cases where the independent variable has already occurred or used, which is not the case of the population under study because neither the control nor the experimental groups have been subjected to the task-based instruction before this study took place which led the researcher to opt for the experimental method. Singh (2006) asserts that the experimental method is applied in educational research for different reasons, among them is to, "*find out the efficiency of different methods teaching in one subject in class-room*".(p.145).This statement proves that the choice of the experimental method is adequate for the present research which aims at determining the efficiency of the Task Based Approach to teaching ESP.

However, the impossibility to execute the random assignment of the participants equally to the control and experimental groups reoriented our choice of the method of research, hence; the quasi-experimental design appeared to fit this study.

### 3.7.1 The Quasi-experimental Method

The quasi-experimental method is used when randomization which is ,*“The best way to establish internal validity of a research study”*. (Marczyk ,*et al.*, 2005, p. 137) is absent .Moreover, the authors state that the method in which randomization is present is referred to as a true-experiment whereas the method which lacks this element is a quasi-experiment which means in English “sort of experiment”. As previously mentioned, the pre-designed academic formation of students who have been subjected to the study made the equal assignment of the participants to the experimental or control groups impossible, thus, it is impossible for the researcher to control some external factors such as learners educational background, level of the English language, gender, and age which are considered to be extraneous variables.

The quasi-experimental method may be implemented through two different designs which are interrupted time-series designs and the non-equivalent comparison-group designs. The latter is more appropriate to this study. Marczyk, *et al.* argue , *”Structurally, these designs are quite similar to the experimental designs, but an important distinction is that they do not employ random assignment”*. (p. 138).

Moreover, the researcher has the possibility to choose one of the two non-equivalent comparison-designs which will be presented and described in brief in the succeeding paragraphs.

#### 3.7.1.1 Non-equivalent Groups Post-test-only Design

In this design, the sample is divided into two groups, control and experimental groups. The experimental group receives the treatment. This quasi-experimental design does not allow the researcher to carry out a pre-test to determine that the participants of both groups have similar characteristics and level. In this respect, Marczyk ,*et al.* (2005) state, *” However, it is equally possible that students who were likely to achieve high grades were selected for a specific teaching method”*. Finally, the writers conclude that the researcher ,*”Cannot rule the serious threats to internal validity that plague this design.”* Hence, this design cannot be chosen for this research study because it lacks some elements of control which may threaten its validity.

### 3.7.1.2 Non-equivalent Groups Pre-test-Post-test Design

NR—O1—X—O2

NR—O1—X—O2

**Diagram.1** Non-equivalent Groups Pre-test-Post-test Design.

Note:

NR stands for not randomized which is a fundamental characteristic of this research, O1 stands for the pre-test which *allows the researcher to measure between-group differences before exposure to the intervention*, X refers to the treatment of the intervention and O2 is the post-test.

(Marczyk , *et al.* 2005, p. 139)

In this design, the dependent variable will be tested before and after the introduction of the treatment through a pre-test and post-test. This design consists in two groups, control and experimental group. The latter will receive the treatment which represents the independent variable of the study. This design has two advantages:

*“The temporal precedence of the independent variable to the dependent variable can be established. This may give the researcher more confidence when inferring that the independent variable was responsible for changes in the dependent variable. Second, the use of a pre-test allows the researcher to measure between-group differences before exposure to the intervention”.*

(Marczyk, et al, 2005, p. 139)

The researcher has chosen this design because it would solve the stated problems of control the fact that increases the validity of the research findings. In addition, the changes in the outcome of the participants would be presumed to be the result of the treatment.

The current experimental design is essentially cross-sectional because this type of studies permits gathering data promptly, thus, it is time and energy efficient. The Cross-sectional approach is chosen because it is less likely to suffer from extraneous effects, and is more likely to ensure the cooperation of the participants.

### 3.8 Sampling

Before tackling the sample which is the subject of the current educational experiment, it should be noted that sampling is an extremely difficult and serious operation. In this respect, Morrison contends that " *The quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted*". (Morrison,1993, qtd in Cohen , *et al.* , 2000 , p.92). Morrison means that sampling is governed by a set of scientific laws that must be respected to avoid the elements of bias and limit the effect of extraneous variables and reduce the sampling error which would directly affect the quality and objectivity of this research.

The participants of the present empirical study are the Students of the third-year LMD enrolled in the economic sciences' classes at the University of Laghouat during the academic year 2013-2014. It is important to mention that the population is composed of (118) learners; the sample that is the subject of this study consists of (56) students divided into two groups, control and experimental. The two groups could not be chosen and equated by randomization. In this concern, Kerlinger (1970) states," *The researcher is advised to use samples from the same population or samples that are alike as possible*". (Cited in Cohen, *et al* ,2000 , p. 215).The researcher attempted to choose identical samples. Accordingly, the participants come from different regions. Their ages range between twenty-one and thirty-two. However, the groups contain full-time workers aged between twenty-nine and thirty-five. Importantly, all of the participants have been studying English as a foreign language for at least five years before entering the university. As previously mentioned, the randomization aspect will be absent due to the administrative grouping of the students. However, the sampling in the current study was based on particular criteria. The control over some extraneous examples such as sex was respected due to the nature of

the mentioned groups which are composed mostly of female-students. Coincidentally, the number of boys and girls in both groups was similar which is in favour of the research's validity. This is explained in the following table.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample</b>		<b>Group1</b>		<b>Group2</b>	
Category	N.	P. %	N.	P. %	N.	P. %
Male	<b>18</b>	<b>32,14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32,14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32,14</b>
Female	<b>38</b>	<b>67,85</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>67,85</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>67,85</b>
Total	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.**Gender Proportions in the quasi-experimental study

Moreover, the age factor was controlled as participants have almost the same age, so there are no old students whose relatively higher experience might bias the findings of this research study.

The need of the English language proficiency is of paramount importance for this population that is about to be graduated and will be directed to different sectors of the economic and public administrations. Besides, the levels of the participants who make up this population reflect those of the actual employees in different workplaces; this was the first reason for choosing this particular sample. The relatively advanced level of this population ,and the assumption that motivation should be higher amongst students of the sample than other classes made the second reason for this choice because motivation is a very important factor in the success of the learning . The mentioned reasons make the sample of this study truly representative of the population, thus, the results can be generalised.

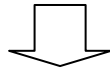
### **3.9 Teacher's Profile**

The teachers of business taking part in this study are both double-majors, that is to say, they are BA in English and an MA in Business Studies holders. The teacher who was assigned to implement the Task Based Approach was chosen because he has shown decent skills and abilities, for he has been teaching ESP at the faculty of business at Laghouat University for 10 years. Furthermore, being a subject specialist makes him adequate to participate in the current educational experiment which takes place in a setting that demands a solid background in the English language teaching in general and in Business English in particular.

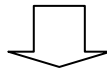
### **3.10 The Experimental Procedure**

In order to test the mentioned hypotheses, the researcher adopted an experimental design that consists of pre-testing both control and experimental groups to evaluate their writing skills before the introduction of the treatment to eliminate bias elements and to attribute the potential changes to the implementation of the TBA. The second procedure in this research work is the introduction of the treatment, that is to say, the implementation of the Task Based Approach. The researcher has relied on business tasks extracted from Neil Wood's (2003) *"Business and Commerce"*. It is important to clarify that syllabus design and materials writing are not the subjects of this study which limits itself to the task-based teaching methods and practices. The last procedure was the post-test which both groups have undertaken. This instrument was the tool by which the effect of the Task Based Approach is determined. It is important to mention that the tests administered, that is, the pre-test and post-test are statistically analysed which allows the researcher to correctly and precisely interpret the findings of the educational experiment.

**Pre-test Measurement**



**Treatment**



**Post-test Measurement**

**Diagram.1** An Overview of the Experimental Procedures

### **3.10.1 Description of the Pre-test**

Before the introduction of the experiment (treatment) a pre-test of writing was conducted in the two classes which represent control and experimental groups. The participants were informed that they were taking part of the study and their performances' evaluation would not affect their course grade. The researcher had that chance to choose one of the tasks suggested by Willis (1996) to comply with the Task Based Approach in terms of assessment, the task types are:

- 7- *Listing: including brainstorming and fact-finding activities. The outcome is a completed list or draft mind map. This type of tasks can help to improve students' comprehension and induction ability.*
- 8- *Ordering: including sequencing, ranking, and classifying .The outcome is a set of information ordered and sorted according to specific criteria. These types might foster comprehension, logic and reasoning abilities.*
- 9- *Comparing: this type of tasks includes matching, finding similarities or differences. This type of task enhances students' ability of differentiation.*
- 10- *Problem-solving: this type of tasks includes analyzing real situations, reasoning, and decision making activities.*

*11- Sharing experience: These tasks include narrating, describing, exploring, and explaining attitudes, opinions, and reactions. The outcome is essentially social. These tasks help students to share and exchange their knowledge and experiences.*

*12- Creative tasks: These include brainstorming, fact-finding, and sorting, comparing and many other activities. These kinds of tasks help improving the students' problem-solving abilities as well as their reasoning, and analyzing abilities.*

(Willis, 1996, p.149)

The researcher has chosen the fourth type of tasks, that is, a problem solving task suggested by Willis. The students were asked to write an e-mail (not more than two paragraphs) to their supervisor to inform him about a problem that occurred in their company and recommend solutions to solve that problem. The aim of this target-situation production task is to test students' ability to communicate their ideas appropriately using English as well as the mastery of language form and vocabulary. The time allocated for the test is forty-five minutes. It should be noted that the researcher has evaluated the answers. Finally, it should be pointed out that the researcher made ample efforts to balance the level of difficulty of the pre-test and the post-test to increase the validity and reliability of the results.

Scores obtained in the pre-test were to determine learners' ability to communicate meaning properly in a target-like- situation as well as their ability to produce a coherent and cohesive composition before the introduction of the treatment. This pre-test aims also to make sure that the participants of the control and experimental groups have the same level of language proficiency. It was an effective tool to establish control which is vital for the internal validity of the results as well as to eliminate the effect of the extraneous variables such as the difference of the participants' level. Any changes would be attributed to the effect of the treatment, therefore, the pre-test provides the researcher with data to either confirm or refute the working hypotheses. Finally, it should be noted that the scoring of the pre-test and post-test was purely impressionistic. That is, the principal measures of the correction of the test were the learners' ability to respect the characteristics of the written genre (Business e-mail) and their ability to produce a correct text as much as possible in terms of form, eloquence and creativity in making meaning, that is, the quality of ideas and the way they are organised

### 3.10.2 The Treatment Procedure

The treatment sessions are carried out within the regular business and economics session. This quasi-experiment took six weeks. The lessons chosen for the study were planned and structured according to the standards of the Task Based Approach to teaching writing. The ESP teacher and the researcher have made ample efforts to turn regular grammar-based classes into communicative task-based ones; the latter, were validated by experienced EFL teacher. Moreover, the tasks were designed under the time allocated to the subject. It should be noted that materials writing is beyond the limits of this study which focuses on the TBA's teaching methodology. To accomplish the treatment procedure, a training session was held with the teacher who has been assigned to carry out the experiment. The teacher was trained on the principles and procedures of the task based methodology to teaching and was provided with Willis' (1996) Task-based Framework which he should exploit and adopt with the experimental group because the regular teaching methodology was used with the control group:

TBA phase	Teacher role
<b>Pre-task Stage</b>	<b>Introduction to topic and task:</b>  During this phase, the teacher introduces the topic and asks students questions that help them recall and use topic-related vocabulary then he presents them with the task instructions and finally makes sure they have understood the theme.

<p><b>Task Cycle Stage</b></p>	<p><b>Task:</b></p> <p>The students of business and economics should accomplish the task in pairs or in groups depending on the language resources they have been provided with while the teacher walks between the rows monitoring and encouraging students to complete the task. However, the teacher is not allowed to correct students' mistakes in this phase.</p> <p><b>Planning stage:</b></p> <p>In this phase the learners are required to prepare a short written report about what they have learnt and discovered while performing the task .The teacher can answer students' questions and can supply them with advice to properly write and organise the report.</p> <p><b>Report:</b></p> <p>Students of business and economics present or circulate their written reports..The teacher in this phase assigns roles, and gives feedback on the reports.</p>
<p><b>Language Focus Stage</b></p>	<p><b>Analysis:</b></p> <p>In this stage, students try to examine and analyze the task text's grammar and words. The teacher reviews and corrects each analysis activity with the students; he/she is allowed to suggest alternative useful words, phrases and structures.</p> <p><b>Practice:</b></p> <p>The teacher selects structures, words, and phrases students did not master when they produced their reports. The students of business and economics are required to practice the language features suggested by</p>

	the teacher and write down important language items in their copybooks.
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**Table 4.** Task Based Approach Framework

The participants were informed that they were taking part in a research study. They were provided with a clear explanation of the purpose of the research before carrying out the study. Finally, the participants were notified that the tests administered by the researcher are neither graded nor make part of their regular assessment.

In each of the treatment sessions, participants in the experimental group were presented with texts that represent different genres commonly used in the business world to make them notice how other writers create and communicate meaning in professional settings. the use of such texts integrate other language skills as reading, speaking and listening that served as an input for learners. In the first session of the treatment, the teacher provided the learners with a business e-mail written by a student to a company's human resources manager asking for information about training sessions organized by the company. The text was extracted from *Neil Wood. (2003). Business and Commerce* .The researcher and the teacher utilised this text which contains a communicative process in the real world because "context" is very important in the Task Based pedagogies. In this regard, Samuda and Bygate (2008) show the importance of context as they state "*It is the context that provides the primary grounds for the participant's interpretation of what they are doing and why...This is bound to affect the kinds and qualities of action they engage in*". (p.258).The researcher's choice of this text is justified because Business e-mails have a communicative and social purpose, they are goal-oriented; this fact makes them fit the TBA philosophy which stresses that task with a meaningful content and a social purpose lead to action.

### 3.10.3 Sample Lesson

#### Lesson 1

In the first stage, that is, the pre-task, the teacher distributed the model text and asked the students to observe it because it represents the way the learners should perform their own tasks and aids to establish the purpose and audience of the piece of writing students had to produce; it also helped the students to acquire new topic-related words they did not know before. Then the teacher used brainstorming which is one of Willis' (1996) pre-task activities. He wrote the words "business e-mail" and then asked them to tell him what they thought when they saw it written on the white-board. The students interacted positively with this activity and tried to explain to the teacher the meaning of a business e-mail. Then the teacher asked them to write and then read a list of reasons about why people write e-mails in business. This stage aimed at introducing the topic to the class, and activating topic-related vocabulary.

The next phase of the lesson was the task phase which is a sequential phase that contains three different stages. The task phase is the most important in the TBA's methodology. The teacher began this phase by distributing the second handout which contained the following task prompt:

You are interested in taking part in a work experience programme for business students. Write an e-mail to a company or a bank that offers such training sessions. Organise your e-mail like this:

- 1- Start the e-mail in an appropriate way.
- 2- Introduce yourself.
- 3- Explain why you are writing to them.
- 4- Request some information about the programme.
- 5- End the e-mail in an appropriate way.

(Neil Wood, 2003, p.10)

In the task stage which is the first stage in the task phase, the students of banking had to accomplish the task in pairs depending on the model text provided by the teacher earlier. The students' task was to unify their efforts to write one good business e-mail. Then the teacher asked the students to form larger groups that had to reach an agreement

on the best possible business e-mail. As a result, students intensely communicated, argued and collaborated with each other. The purpose of this stage was to enable the learners to rehearse and argue using the English language. The teacher monitored the students from a distance. He also encouraged them to communicate in English and use as little Arabic as they could which was not possible due to their weak level in English, to solve this problem the researcher has provided the class with two bilingual dictionaries. However, the teacher was not allowed to correct during this stage. The stage's communicative nature provided the students with real opportunities to practice and communicate in the target language.

After the students finished preparing the task, the teacher asked them to plan and write a report about how they performed the task; this stage is referred to as the planning stage. The students were encouraged to share and discuss what they have learnt and discovered during the process of the task accomplishment. The report should supply information such as the students' understanding of the model text, the difficulties they have faced during the accomplishment of the task. Further still, learners could express their opinions about the theme of the lesson and they could state whether they have enjoyed working in pairs or not...etc. The teacher went around the rows and answered all the questions the students posed as an attempt to improve their texts, he advised them about the language forms and vocabulary of their reports. Finally, he encouraged them to rehearse their reports which they had to present in the report stage.

In the report stage which is the final phase in the task cycle, students from each pair are given one minute to present their written report. During this stage, the teacher assigned roles and helped the students to overcome the linguistic difficulties they faced while reading their reports. The teacher made sure that all the participants in the experimental group have presented their reports. Ultimately, the students were required to exchange reports and compare them to theirs. It was noticed that the lesson then took more time than was scheduled and there were fifteen minutes only before the session reached its end.

The lesson reached its final phase, the language focus. In the analysis stage, the students still had their mates' reports, they were asked to try to analyze and write down what their mates have missed writing such as forgetting to start or end the e-mail properly or missing the writer's name, etc. Finally, they are encouraged to correct their classmates' mistakes. The teacher used their reports to draw their attention to errors and mistakes they have made. In terms of error correction, the teacher used self-correction which yielded

satisfactory results with some students. However, the majority of the students were not able to self-correct themselves, the teacher used peer-correction which seemed to work but the use of the mother tongue among the students was prevalent, therefore, the teacher resorted to teacher correction. This method of error correction helped the students to broaden their understanding of the language they have experienced in the task cycle.

The final stage in this TBA lesson was the practice stage. The teacher tried to correct students' final reports quickly; he selected a set of words, phrases, and language structures students did not master when they produced their texts.

The following table represents a lesson plan of this sample lesson. It supplies more details about the treatment in terms of time, teacher/learner role/activity, and the objectives of the lesson.

Phase	Teacher Activity	Learning Activity	Objectives
<b>Pre-task stage</b>	Teacher begins by writing “ business e-mail “ on the board. Then he asks: What does the word on the board mean? Then Why do people use” e-mail “ in business ? Then the teacher uses brainstorming by asking :make a list of reasons.	Students give various definitions about business e-mails then write a list of reasons why people write e-mails in business.	To help students recall topic related words, making them ready for the following stage.

<b>Task stage</b>	<p>The task phase:</p> <p>Teacher asks the students to form pairs and/or groups then distributes the Text model and a list entitled “How to write an effective e-mail”. After students finish reading they are asked to start doing the task which requires writing a similar e-mail. This is explained clearly in the task prompt entitled : Get real in the distributed handout.</p> <p>Planning stage:</p> <p>After the students finish the task, the teacher asks them to write a report telling how they performed the task ,the students are encouraged to discuss the problems they faced during the accomplishment of the task and what they have learnt( new words, corrected errors..etc.).</p> <p>The report stage:</p> <p>Teacher asks the students to choose one from each pair to read the report. Teacher makes sure all students have read their reports. Teacher may now give feedback on the reports</p>	<p>Students read the model text and the list “how to write an effective e-mail. Then start performing the task guided by the instructions provided in the task prompt entitled in the handout:”Get Real”.</p> <p>Students write reports and discuss what they learn as they performe the task.</p> <p>The report stage: students read their reports out loud. Students read the reports of other mates and compare them to theirs.</p>	<p>Students discuss and argue in English, write and rehearse the task.</p> <p>Students practise and experiment with the language.</p>
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the task based instructions handed by the researcher do not allow him to be more than a monitor or a guide in the ESP classroom.

It is important to mention, that the analysis phase allowed the teacher to effectively detect students' weaknesses and lacks in terms of language structures, this practice permits the teacher to acquire a clearer idea about students' lacks necessary in planning future action such as planning lessons dealing with areas of difficulty diagnosed in the task-based lesson, and designing relevant materials to overcome the weaknesses and lacks students suffer from. The flexibility of the Task Based Approach made concrete by the lesson plan provided previously makes it suitable for the Algerian students who still lack the mastery of the English language despite receiving English courses for at least five years which is a handicap that slows down and hinders their improvement in ESP. The Task Based Approach aids to diagnose and detect what students lack which other teaching pedagogies do not allow because their rigid structures and curricula require the teacher to adhere to the prescribed lesson plans and objectives that in most cases surpass students' level especially in the institutions where student's level at English is very weak.

### **3.10.6 Description of the Post-Test**

The post-test is conducted after the treatment period reached its end. It aims at measuring the effects and changes in learners' level of proficiency which occurred as a result of the utilisation of the Task Based Approach. The researcher prepared a post-test similar in nature and difficulty with the pre-test. The latter was validated by the teaching staff that collaborated in the realisation of this educational experiment before conducting it. During the process of designing the post-test the researcher took the level of the Algerian students into consideration, for that reason the post-test as the pre-test was composed of one question requiring the learners to write a business e-mail to a supplier ordering new appliances (Printers, cartridges, computers, etc and asking some questions about them. The students had forty-five minutes to accomplish the task.

### 3.11 Ethical Issues

To tackle ethical issues that make part of any research work and implicitly contribute to the validity and reliability of the project's results, careful consideration should be given to the participants, materials, and the methods of data collections.

To point out the importance of being aware of ethical issues present in research works, Cohen, et al. (2000) assert *“Ethical concerns encountered in educational research in particular can be extremely complex and subtle and can frequently place researchers in moral predicaments which may appear quite irresolvable”*. (p.49).The researcher adopted a set of guidelines to make their ethical decisions .The first one is what is referred to as informed consent. Cohen, et al. explained:

*“Much social research necessitates obtaining the consent and co-operation of the subjects who are to assist in investigations.. The principle of informed consent arises from the subject’s right to freedom and self-determination... Another aspect of the right to self-determination is that the subject has the right to refuse to take part, or to withdraw once the research has begun.”*

(Cohen et al., 2000 , pp. 50-51)

Secondly, every researcher should consider the rule of access and acceptance .Cohen explains it as:

*“The relevance of the principle of informed consent becomes apparent at the initial stage of the research project—that of access to the institution or organization where the research is to be conducted and acceptance by those whose permission one needs before embarking on the task.*

(Cohen , et al ., 2000 , pp . 53)

This principle requires the researcher to ask for permission before the execution of an experiment at a given institution or company, that is to say, the researcher should formally request access to the facilities of members of a certain organization. In this regard, research

work carried out without the consent of those in charge of the department that hosted the project would flagrantly violate research ethics and puts the findings and results of the work into question.

The last principle taken into consideration in this study is the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. In this regard, Cohen.*et al*, (2000) explain the concept” *The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity*”.(p.61).The researcher should by all means keep the identity of the participants confidential:

*“The obligation to protect the anonymity of research participants and to keep research data confidential is all inclusive. It should be fulfilled at all costs unless arrangements to the contrary are made with the participants in advance.”*

(Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias , 1992 , qtd in Cohen. *et al* , 2000, p.61).

In response to ethical issues raised previously, the researcher has implemented the following actions:

- 1- Informed consent was obtained from the participants. The subjects in both groups were informed two weeks before the intervention about their contribution to the present study. The participants were permitted to withdraw from the study and it was explained to them that the tests they are going to be subjected to are not part of their regular assessment. All of the students accepted to take part of this study.
- 2- A formal meeting with the teachers who took part in the present research was held to ask for permission to implement the current study, they were presented with an outline of this study. Finally, the subject specialists agreed to host the research.
- 3- To comply with the principle of anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher used the letter (A) followed by numbers to identify the participants of the experimental group, the letter (C) has been used as an identification code to refer to the participants of the control group.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

In the present chapter, the researcher provided the readers with details about the research method and the reasons behind the choice of a particular design of the quasi-experimental method which was used to answer the research questions. Also, valuable information about the sampling and the experimental procedure that has been adopted in the current research study enriched this chapter. In addition, the teaching-learning situation at the department of business was presented. The lessons that constituted the treatment procedure were designed according to the norms and standards of the Task Based Approach.

However, the learners' level of proficiency obliged the researcher and the teachers who participated in this study to modify some tasks. In this concern, the Task Based Approach framework was provided as well as a sample lesson (lesson 1) to illustrate the treatment procedure .Finally, the results of the study will further determine the utility of the experimental procedures administered to answer the research questions and prove or disprove the mentioned hypotheses. In the fourth chapter, the obtained results will be analysed and discussed then it will conclude by presenting recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

## **C H A P T E R F O U R**

### **Analyses, Discussion, Recommendations and Suggestions**

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Analyses, Discussion, Recommendations and Suggestions**

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## **4.1 Introduction**

The present chapter aims at examining, analysing, and interpreting the effects of the Task Based Approach on students' writing and communicative proficiency to further suggest or discourage the implementation of this teaching approach in ESP settings.

In order to answer the research questions and prove or disprove the research hypotheses, and due to the quantitative nature of the research, statistical analysis was utilised to analyse the findings of the study. The results were obtained through two main instruments, a pre-test and a post-test; they allowed us to have an idea about the students' level of proficiency before and after the introduction of the treatment. These were the means that enabled the researcher to attribute the changes, improvement, or regression in the English language level of the participants in the experimental group to the effects of the Task Based Approach to teaching writing to ESP classes. In the paragraphs that follow, presentation of the findings, pedagogical implications, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies will be provided to extend and effectively invest the benefits of the current research work.

## **4.2 Presentation of the Findings**

### **4.2.1 The Pre-test**

The pre-test served as a valuable information resource and control element that provided the researcher with details about the participants' level and proficiency in the English language. The test was validated by a panel of ESP teachers at the faculty that held this study. The pre-test was primarily designed to determine the difference between the two groups, experimental and control groups, to control bias in the results so as to increase the validity and reliability of the whole study. Moreover, the test focused on examining students' linguistic competence, writing skills and communicative abilities to fit the principles of ESP. In this respect, grammatical constructions were not tackled in this test but this important element in language learning was not neglected during the implementation of the treatment.

The quantitative data resulting from both tests were numerically analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science. The results of the pre-test taken by both groups are sketched in the following tables.

Table number six presents us with the average score of the control group.

Group	Number	Mean
Control Group	28	8,3571

**Table6.** The Pre-test mean score of the control group

The next table includes the mean realized by the experimental group:

Group	Number	Mean
Experimental Group	28	8,2232

**Table7.** The Pre-test mean score of the experimental group

The difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups is provided below:

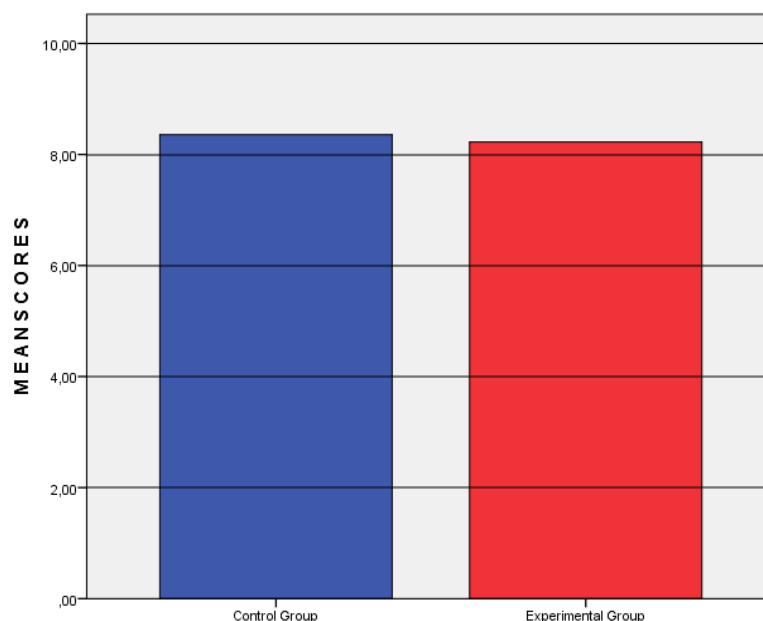
$$(X1) = 8,3571$$

$$(X2) = 8,2232$$

$$(X1) - (X2) = 8,3571 - 8,2232 = 0,1339$$

The calculation provided above reveals that there is no noteworthy difference between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group. The difference between the means is only 0,1339. This confirms that the participants in the control and experimental group are from the same sample and they have almost the same level of writing and communicative competences before the introduction of the experiment. The findings allow the researcher to measure the progress or regression in the experimental group's level of proficiency and attribute any positive or negative changes to the Task Based Approach which is the teaching approach adopted to instruct this group.

The mean scores and the slight difference between the means obtained by the groups is sketched in the figure below:



**Graph.1:** Pre-test experimental and control groups' mean scores

#### 4.2.2 Post-test

After the end of the treatment, the post-test was carried out as it was clarified in the previous chapter. Importantly, the researcher and teachers involved in the current educational experiment have done their best to maintain the same level of difficulty of the pre-test; this establishes validity of the tools of measurement employed in the study.

The results of the post-test are presented in the following tables:

Group	Number	Mean
Control Group	28	7,5357

**Table 8.**The post-test mean score of the control group

The table (8) demonstrates the mean score obtained by the control group. It is noticed that students' mean in the post-test has regressed compared to their performance in the pre-test. The next table shows the mean score of the participants of the experimental group that received the treatment:

Group	Number	Mean
Experimental Group	28	8,9286

**Table 9.** The Post-test mean score of the experimental group

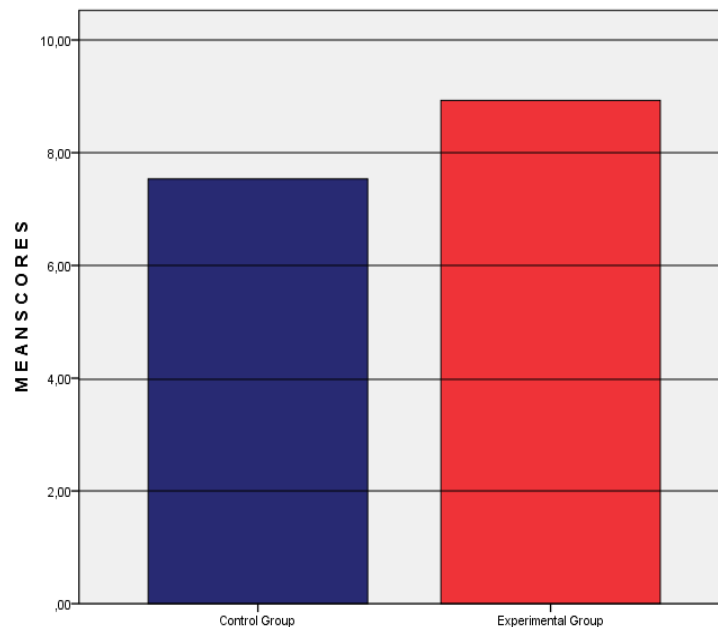
To figure out the difference between the means the following mathematical operation has been conducted:

$$(X1) = 7,5357$$

$$(X2) = 8,9286$$

$$(X2) - (X1) = 8,9286 - 7,5357 = 1,3929$$

This calculation shows that the difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups has become more important compared with the difference between the means of the same groups in the pre-test .Further analysis and discussion of the findings at hand will be provided in the next paragraphs of this chapter below the graph that illustrates the difference between the means of the participants.



**Graph.2:** Post-test experimental and control groups' mean scores

### **4.3 General Interpretation of the Findings**

In the following paragraphs, the findings will be interpreted according to each of the research questions.

This empirical study was carried out to prove or disprove the most important hypothesis that the TBA improves learners' writing skills and communicative proficiency to cater for the needs of their future workplaces. The pre-test showed that the control and experimental groups had almost the same level of language and communicative proficiency before the introduction of the independent variable with the difference of only 0.1339 between their means (average scores of the two groups). The findings yielded by the post-test that was administered after the introduction of the intervention reveal that the students' writing and communicative level could really be improved after implementing the Task Based Approach. Precisely, in the post-test the experimental group's mean is 8,9286 whereas the control group's mean score is 7,5357. The difference between the means is 1,3929. Moreover, the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test is  $(8,9286 - 8,2232) = 0,7054$  which reveals a significant improvement in the students level after being subjected to the Task Based Approach.

It is worth noting that the marking of the pre-test and post-test which are the research tools utilised to gather and interpret data was purely impressionistic. That is, the principal measures of the correction of the test were the learners' ability to respect the characteristics of the written genre (Business e-mail) and their ability to produce a correct text as much as possible in terms of form, and creativity in making meaning, that is, the relevance of ideas and the way they are organised.

#### **4.3.1 Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to the First Research Question**

The participants of the experimental group had performed in the post-test better than they did in the pre-test and far better than their colleagues in the control group who were taught via the current teaching method.

The subjects in the experimental group were successful to a certain extent in producing a relevant and effective business e-mail as they were taught using authentic

materials and real-world tasks the fact that allowed them to not just write in a correct, coherent, and cohesive manner but to respect the moves of business genres as the TBA is a combination of the product and process approaches to teaching writing. The analysis and practice phases allowed the students to revise and practice grammar and that helped them to produce grammatically sound pieces of writing which was not the case for the control group whose teacher ignored the revision of tenses and other grammatical features as the teaching method he utilised was not flexible and did not allow the revision of grammar which is thought to be done in the previous years. The findings prove the first hypothesis of this research that the implementation of the Task Based Approach improves ESP learners' writing skills.

#### **4.3.2 Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to the Second Research Question**

The participants in the experimental group respected the business genres' conventions as a result of being exposed to real-world models which is important for a successful communicative act. In addition, the task based method of teaching allowed them to improve their ability to produce and communicate which characterised their performance in the post-test. To sum up, the results of the post-test reveal that the Task Based Approach does help to improve students' communicative proficiency.

The conclusion that may be drawn from the presentation and discussion of the findings, is that the improvement of the level of the experimental group compared to their performance in the pre-test and that of the control group in the post-test is proven to be the result of the implementation of the Task Based Approach created a real ESP environment for the students of the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Laghouat. Therefore, the research questions were positively answered and the hypothesis that the Task Based Approach can bring forth improvement at an ESP setting has been proved right by the current empirical research work.

## **4.4 Pedagogical Implications**

### **4.4.1 The Effectiveness of the Task Based Approach in Teaching English in an ESP context**

The findings of the study show that the TBA could be a good alternative for teachers in ESP contexts to live up to the expectations of the professional world that demands linguistically competent employees. The introduction of the Task Based Approach altered the focus of the ESP classes in the Department of Economics at the University of Laghouat from form to communication which should be the ultimate concern in all ESP classes.

The first implication of the present study is that teachers may well adopt the TBA to improve their students' communicative and writing skills in the light of the absence of an ESP curriculum and the lack of specialised training in ESP for the teachers in the mentioned department have never been trained on the principles and pedagogies that should be implemented in ESP contexts. Hence, the TBA seems to be a viable solution for the ESP teachers for it is accessible in terms of time and effort and because it relies on real-world tasks that equip the learners with the language required in the target situations. Moreover, the content is created as a response to students needs not decided by the teacher or the course book. The teachers should therefore realize that authentic materials should be utilised to satisfy the needs of both the learners and their potential workplaces.

Teachers need to apply and practice the Task Based Approach in ESP classes because it proved in this study as well as in previous studies that it is an effective tool to enhance students' communicative proficiency and writing skills. Urging the teachers to make use of the Task Based Approach is supported by the following reasons:

- 1- The language practiced and explored by the learners arises from their needs which make the TBA lesson enjoyable and motivating, thus, it is adequate and relevant to their future professional context's requirements.
- 2- The TBA offers more chances to write than any other teaching approach for Students intensely practice writing because they write to perform the task and write the report .
- 3- Teachers need to implement the Task Based Approach because it creates a real environment for students to communicate in English as the researcher noticed during the experiment carried out in the present study that subjects in the

experimental group spent more time communicating in English than those in the control group.

- 4- The Task Based Approach offers the learners more exposure to target language. They are exposed to a wide range of lexical items, phrases, and collocations in addition to language forms which directly contribute to building professional vocabulary.
- 5- The TBA should be used in the Algerian specialised classes because it promotes learner-centeredness and increases students' motivation which are proven by pedagogues that they are the right ingredients for educational success.

#### **4.4.2 The Need for Communicative Classes**

ESP specialists believe that language is a tool of communication rather than forms and structure one should master, thus, communication according to them must be the top priority of any ESP class. Teachers in the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences of Laghouat should adopt the Task Based Approach for which meaning and communication are central because it aims at making the language classroom truly communicative through the utilisation of real-world or target situation tasks which are proven by many researchers notably Prahbu (1987) to enhance the learning of second languages and improve students' motivation .

Teacher need to realize that the target language is a vehicle for classroom communication not just the object of the study. In this respect, the use of real-world tasks helped motivating disengaged learners .Thus, the TBA aids to democratize language learning and includes disinterested students which focus on the subjects' modules at the expense of the specialised foreign languages in general and English in particular which is the case in all of the specialised institutions in Algeria .Accordingly, for a truly communicative class ,the teacher has to grant the students the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions and need to tolerate language errors considered to be a natural outcome of the learning process.

Moreover, the current used methodologies that focus on language forms and on teaching business theories as practiced actually in the faculty in question have been proven to be a failure as the great majority of the students are not excited before entering language classrooms, and most of them are unable to produce neither written nor spoken business

language in a world that increasingly depends on English as Algeria is economically bound to English speaking partners such as the British company British Petroleum as well as a great number of Chinese ,Japanese, and Portuguese construction companies, the fact that obliges the teachers to focus on communication in response to the demands of the Algerian economy which is a fertile business ground for native and non-native English speaking partners.

Accordingly, the target situations such as companies and banks do not need linguistically competent employees only, they need sociable individuals to fit the modern business doctrines which depend on marketing the company's reputation and products using the socio-communicative skills of their employees, hence, the Task Based Approach becomes necessary as the tasks used in the TBA classroom improve problem solving and interaction among the learners using English. Opinion-gap and reasoning-gap activities are two of three important activity categories of the TBA tasks .This shows the consideration the TBA pays to the skills needed in the professional setting which leaves no doubt that the TBA might be a solution to the current learning and teaching in the Faculty of Business of Laghouat.

#### **4.4.3 The Need for Experiential Learning in ESP Classes**

One of the most important implications of this study is that teachers in ESP settings need to implement the Task Based Approach in their classes because it fosters what is termed experiential learning which refers to learning through doing what students are supposed to do in their future workplaces. Personal experiences resulting from performing real-world tasks endow the learners with linguistic and social skills required to successfully operate in the various potential professional settings.

In accordance, teachers need to focus on the process of learning rather than the product. They also need to promote learners' autonomy and, *"Improve intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation."*(Kohonen , 1996, cited in Nunan,2004, p.12).Teachers who use the TBA should, *"Encourage self-directed learning rather than teacher-directed learning."*(ibid.12).In other words, teachers of ESP need to limit their roles and time of intervention and must encourage learners to play active roles in small groups or pairs to foster experiential learning.

#### **4.4.5 The Need for Learner-centred Language Classrooms**

Most of the teachers in different fields and domains assert that the dependence of the learners on them is flagrant. This over-reliance of the learners on their teachers does not hinder the instructors' creativity and productivity only but impedes sound learning and results in superficial learning for most of the learners. Modern researches have revealed that learner-centeredness or active learning which is essential to ESP teaching is the solution for most of the classroom problems. Student-centeredness draws on the involvement of the learners in the learning process and encourages the students to assume the responsibility on their own learning and incites them to rely less on their teachers, thus, develop their autonomy or self-reliance which may be a very promising solution to improve their learning and language skills.

However, it is noticed that Business English classes in the Faculty of Business of Laghouat University are still teacher-centred classes with complete dependence on the ESP teachers who provide the learning materials, present lessons, ask and answer questions, and draw conclusions. The Task Based Approach might be the adequate solution for this situation, for the TBA lesson plans clearly define teachers' roles, and its carefully designed TBA lesson phases and activities eradicate teachers' dominance that prevails in the current ESP classes and provide the learners with more opportunities to improve their autonomy in the language classroom besides improving their language skills and mastery.

#### **4.4.6 The Importance of Relevant and Real-World Materials for ESP Learners**

Teachers need to utilise real-world materials that constitute a fundamental component of the Task Based Approach. They are of paramount importance for ESP trainees in the Faculty of Business of Laghouat University and in all ESP settings because they immerse the learners in the target situation's language and endow the language tasks with a realistic context relevant to the learners' needs. Authentic materials are very important for communicative purposes which are the objectives of ESP. These materials can help while performing real-world problem solving they also help learners and teachers as asserted by House (2008) to *“Link the formal, and to some extent artificial, environment of the classroom with the real world in which we hope our students will*

*eventually be using the language they are learning*” (as cited in Benavent, 2012, p. 89). The accomplishment of tasks that are made from authentic materials acquaints learners with the language they will be using in their potential workplace which facilitates their task, and helps them to rapidly adapt to their job’s requirements and ensures high linguistic performance in the target situation which plays a decisive role in their professional success.

Finally, the didactic implications of using the Task Based Approach to teaching writing in ESP classes are summarised in the following point:

- a- Focus on meaning and communication must replace the current emphasis on form. They should be the central interest of ESP teachers at the mentioned faculty.
- b- The needs of the target situations and the learners must define the content and the materials.
- c- During the task-based lessons, teachers should respect the roles assigned for them in a way that fosters learner-centeredness to promote the quality of the English language learning.
- d- Real-world tasks should be the means of teaching and teachers should permanently fetch for up to date authentic materials to respond to learners’ needs and aspirations.

Moreover, ESP teachers must encourage students to bring business English dictionaries as well as English to Arabic dictionaries as a way to adapt with the level and the needs of the Algerian students.

## **4.5 Recommendations**

After the presentation and discussion of the results, the following recommendations are proposed to teachers and researchers in the field of ESP. First, ESP teachers need to use the Task Based Approach which has proven to be highly effective in improving students writing skills and communicative proficiency. Second, as teachers play a crucial

role in the success of the TBA classes and for better results and effective learning, it is recommended that ESP teachers organise meetings to brainstorm about the Task Based Approach for a better mastery and understanding of the approach's procedures. These meetings could also serve to accurately select real-world tasks. It is also recommended that researchers carry out future studies to explore the effects of the TBA in various ESP classes such as English for Engineering, Legal English, and in other English for Academic and Occupational Purposes setting. Moreover, EFL classes in the English departments across the country may be the subject of studies that aim at examining the effect of the TBA on teaching language skills other than writing as well as grammar which poses problems for teachers who are striving to find an effective pedagogy to teach grammar to overcome the difficulties faced by the students in understanding this fundamental component of the language that effects their general mastery of English.

Furthermore, the researcher recommends that course and syllabus designers need to design a task-based curriculum, syllabus and well-designed audio-visual activities and tasks that bring the workplace to the ESP classroom to improve students' language and communication skills. The task based curriculum should be relevant to the needs and backgrounds of the learners and relevant to the target situations in which the ESP learners will be hired. Moreover, the TBA curriculum should be designed according to the international norms and learners' level of proficiency. In the meanwhile and during the absence of these important tasks-based pedagogical tools, ESP teachers are asked to transform the content and textbook they actually use to fit the principles and procedures of the Task Based Approach that has been proven beneficial in ESP contexts.

If put to work, the recommendations may aid to improve the teaching and learning of writing in ESP classes and the retention of specialised vocabulary and mastery of the target-situation-related genres, they will also help to improve students' interest and motivation in English for Specific Purposes classes.

#### **4.6 Limitations of the Study**

It is known that any research has weaknesses and limitations; the current research is no exception. Several limitations present in this study should be noted. First, the readers of the present report must be reminded that sampling has not been done randomly. In this

concern, some of the participants in the experimental group might have higher levels than the subjects that formed the control group, the fact that might have affected the results achieved by the subjects who received the study. In addition, other factors such as age could not be fully controlled due to the nature of quasi-experimental designs. Therefore, the positive change and results of the experimental group might be attributed to students' level and background rather than the Task Based Approach; the fact that might seriously endanger the validity of the research findings.

The pre-test and the post-test that were designed to measure the level of proficiency of the learners before the introduction of the treatment and after it ,represent the second limitation of this study because each of them was composed of one activity. This was done to preserve students' effort and encourage them to co-operate and participate in this study, and also to make it accessible for all members in both groups. The tests despite having been validated by teachers of the ESP module at the faculty in question might be very easy; the level of difficulty may threaten the credibility of the data collection tools.

Moreover, the teaching methodology adopted in the control group might share some aspects with the Task Based Approach implemented in the experimental group as no control was applied on the second group. Another limitation of this study is the attitudes of the teacher and the experimental group's participants towards the Task Based Approach have not been recorded nor measured and the findings of this study draw uniquely on the scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test; this obliges the researcher to recommend a more comprehensive research to precisely measure the effects of the TBA on student' writing skills and communicative proficiency.

Furthermore, lacking attitudinal questionnaires and classroom observation necessary to measure teacher's and learners' reaction to the TBA are among the limitations of the current research. Finally, the dependence on written texts and the absence of audio-visual materials that could have increased the positive effect of the TBA in the target ESP classes may be added to the limitations of this study.

## **4.7 Conclusion**

The scores and results of this experimental research reveal that the Task Based Approach had positive effects. The approach brought forth important improvement of learners' writing and communicative skills and created a real ESP environment because it led to more focus on function and meaning than on structure. The quantitative results are a strong and valid proof that the TBA can really enhance and improve learners' writing and communicative competence in ESP classes.

Finally, despite the valuable insights provided by this cross-sectional study, a longitudinal research is highly needed to prove or disprove the acquired results as well as to overcome the difficulties encountered by the researcher as he conducted the present work which might have limited the positive effects of the TBA. For instance, the lack of time devoted to training the teachers on the principles and practices of the approach. Besides, the lack of a task-based curriculum and syllabi toughened the task of the researcher and obliged him to design tasks that were used during this educational experiment, therefore, exceeded the limitations of this research that was limited to exploring the effects of the TBA.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

## **General Conclusion**

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is an important subject to the students of the Faculty of Business and Economics at Laghouat University; its importance exceeds achieving high grades in particular and academic success in general for it is crucial to enable them to fulfil the aspirations of their future employers.

However, it is clearly noticed that the current teaching methodologies at the mentioned faculty and other specialised faculties and institutions across the country have to be reviewed as they do not take learners' needs into consideration because of their flagrant focus on language form and business theory which do not fit ESP environments. Importantly, the actual teaching practices are not able to fulfil the requirements of the business sector which is more open on English speaking business poles such as China, USA, Germany and the European Union. Therefore, the purpose behind this study was to explore the effects of the Task Based Approach on students' writing skills and communicative proficiency because any new teaching methodology could not be implemented before testing its efficiency and suitability for a particular group of learners and for a specific educational environment.

The present study was built around four chapters which were carefully designed to answer the research questions and to prove or disprove the working hypotheses. The first chapter endeavoured to provide the readers with precise information and details of the Task Based Approach. A considerable part of the first chapter was devoted to the presentation of the theoretical background of this teaching approach. The second chapter dealt with writing for it was chosen as the language skill to be targeted in the present research project. First, writing skill was defined. Furthermore, writing in ESP settings was highlighted. Finally, various approaches to teaching writing were presented in this part before tackling the TBA approach to teaching writing which was to be implemented by the researcher.

In the practical part of the work, the third chapter attempted to shed light on the setting in which the study was carried out. Details about the status of the English language at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Laghouat were provided. Moreover, the sampling, scientific method, procedures adopted by the researcher were dealt with in this chapter. The quasi-experimental method was the means by which the researcher attempted to explore the effects of the Task Based Approach on learners' writing skills;

accordingly, the pre-test that was used to examine students' level of proficiency and to prove that the samples belong to the same population was presented. Then, the treatment procedure was illustrated through a sample plan which explained how the Task Based Approach was implemented in this study. Finally, the chapter presented the last tool of measurement, that is, the post-test which was administered to determine the effects of the Task Based Approach on learners' writing and communicative abilities.

In the last chapter of the study, the researcher analysed the results of the pre-test and post-test which were administered to measure students' writing and communicative proficiency before and after the implementation of the TBA. The findings gathered in this study support the hypotheses we departed from. They have also revealed that the Task Based Approach is an effective pedagogy to improve business students' English writing and communicative skills. The average mean scores of the groups show that the students of the experimental group, who were subjected to the teaching approach in question, achieved better results and were more motivated than their counterparts in the control group. The difference between scores of the two groups is attributed to the effects of the independent, that is, Task Based Approach.

This research study gives the Algerian university, teachers and learners tools and ways to improve the writing and communicative skills in the ESP classes to cater for the requirements of the professional sector. However, a longitudinal study needs to be carried out to overcome the limitations encountered in the current research. More importantly, future investigations are necessary to design a task based curriculum for the students of business and economics.

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# **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1 : Identity of the Participants**

**Ammar Thelidji University**

**Department of Banking and Assurance**

**ID of the Participants**

**Degree:**

**Module:**

**You are:**                      **Male** ☐

**Female** ☐

**Your age is:**

**You:**                      **Work and Study** ☐

**Study only** ☐

## **Appendix 2 : Pre-test and Post-test**

### **Educational Experiment**

#### **Pre-test**

**Ammar Thelidji University**

**Degree: 3<sup>rd</sup> year**

**Module: English for Specific Purposes**

#### **Task:**

Write an email to your supervisor to inform him about a problem that occurred (happened) in your company and recommend solutions to solve that problem.

#### **Answer:**

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**Thank you for your participation**

**Appendix 2 : Pre-test and Post-test**

**Educational Experiment**

**Post-test**

**Ammar Thelidji University**

**Degree: 3<sup>rd</sup> year**

**Module: English for Specific Purposes**

**Task:**

Write **an e-mail to** a supplier ordering a new appliances (Printers, cartridges, computers, etc and asking some questions about them.

**Answer:**

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**Thank you for your participation**

### Appendix 3 : Teacher's Guide : A Task Based Approach Framework

Time	TBA phase	Teacher role
	<b>Pre-task</b>	<b>Introduction to topic and task:</b>  During this phase, the teacher introduces the topic and asks students' questions that help them recall and use topic-related vocabulary then he presents them with the task instructions and finally makes sure they have understood the task.

### Appendix 3 : Teacher's Guide : A Task Based Approach Framework

	<b>Task cycle</b>	<p><b>Task:</b></p> <p>The students of business and economics should accomplish the task in pairs or in groups depending on the language resources they have been provided with while the teacher walks between the rows monitoring and encouraging students to complete the task. However, the teacher is not allowed to correct students' mistakes in this phase.</p> <p><b>Planning stage:</b></p> <p>In this phase the learners are required to prepare and rehearse what they are going to write in the written report .They may also discuss and share what they have learnt and discovered while performing the task .The teacher can answer students' questions and can supply them with advice to properly write and organize the report.</p> <p><b>Report:</b></p> <p>Students of business and economics present or circulate their written reports. The teacher in this phase assigns roles, and gives feedback on the reports.</p>
	<b>Language Focus</b>	<p><b>Analysis:</b></p> <p>In this stage, students try to examine and analyze the task text's grammar and words. The teacher reviews and corrects each analysis activity with the students; he/she is allowed to suggest alternative useful words, phrases and structures.</p> <p><b>Practice:</b></p> <p>The teacher selects structures, words, and phrases students did not master when they produced their reports. The students of business and economics are required to practice the language features suggested by the teacher and write down important language items in their copybooks.</p>

The Teacher's guide: The TBA framework

### **Appendix 3 : Teacher's Guide : A Task Based Approach Framework**

#### **Objectives (Instructions) of the TBA approach to teaching Writing:**

-Summarizing the important points of the presentation or the text dealt with in the speaking phase.(or by the teacher)

Re-writing the Text given by the teacher using personal style.

Writing a Business report on one of the themes talked in the English course.(text)

#### Appendix 4 :Sample Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan (Lesson 1)

Lesson title: Business E-mail

Time : 90 :30 to 11.

Year/Class :3<sup>rd</sup> year Banking

University Ammar Thelidji

Time	Teacher Activity	Learning Activity	Objectives
Pre-task stage	Teacher begins by writing « business e-mail » on the board. Then he asks :What does the word on the board mean ?then Why do people use « e-mail » in business ?then the teacher uses brainstorming by asking :make a list of reasons.	Students give various definitions about business e-mails then write a list of reasons why people write e-mails in business.	To help students recall topic related words, making them ready for the following stage.
Task stage	1 :Task phase  Teacher ask the students to form pairs and/or groups then distributes the Text model and a list entitled “How to write an effective e-mail”. After students finish reading they are asked to start doing the task which requires writing a similar e-mail. This is explained clearly in the task prompt entitled :Get real in the distributed handout.  Planning stage:  After the students finish the task, the teacher asks	Students read the model text and the list “how to write an effective e-mail”. Then start performing the task guided by the instructions provided in the task prompt entitled in the handout:”Get Real”.  Students write the report and discuss about what they have	Students discuss and argue in English, write and rehearse the task.  Students practise and experiment with the

#### Appendix 4 :Sample Lesson Plan

	<p>them to write a report telling how they performed the task ,the students are encouraged to discuss the problems they faced during the accomplishment of the task and what they have learnt( new words, corrected errors..etc.).</p> <p>The report stage:</p> <p>Teacher asks the students to choose one from each pair to read the report. Teacher makes sure all students have read their reports. Teacher may now give feedback on the reports after asking the students to exchange reports in order to compare them to theirs.</p>	<p>learnt as the performed the task.</p> <p>The report stage: students read their reports out loud. Students read the reports of other mates and compare them to theirs.</p>	<p>language.</p>
Language Focus Stage	<p>Analysis stage:</p> <p>Teacher examines and analyses students' text looking for grammatical and vocabulary errors.</p> <p>Practice stage:</p> <p>Teacher corrects the most flagrant errors through exercises and similar sentences. Writes correct</p>	<p>Students take notes.</p> <p>Students take notes, practise , and ask questions.</p>	<p>To determine the language errors committed by the learners.</p> <p>To help learners overcome and correct language errors they still make.</p>

#### Appendix 4 :Sample Lesson Plan

	sentences and asks learners to produce likewise.		
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## 9

## Writing a business e-mail

## Before you start

- 1 Why do people use e-mail in business? Make a list of reasons.

## Reading

- 2 Read some 'rules' (on the right) for writing good business e-mails. Which rules do you follow?
- 3 Read the e-mail below from a student to a company about their work experience programme. Which rules in Exercise 2 does he break?

## Vocabulary

- 4 Look at the phrases in *italics* (1–6) in the e-mail. Match them with the formal phrases (a–f) below.

- a Could you send me more information ... ☐
- b I look forward to hearing from you. ☐
- c I am writing to ask about ... ☐
- d My name is Luigi Ferrara ... ☐
- e Dear Ms Lewis ☐
- f I am interested in applying for ... ☐

- 5 Here are some phrases to use in e-mails. Write starting (S), ending (E), saying why you are writing (W) or requesting (R) after each one and the ones in Exercise 4.

- 1 My name is ...
- 2 I'm a student at ... (school / college)
- 3 Dear Amanda (informal)
- 4 Thank you for your message.
- 5 With best wishes.
- 6 Please e-mail me if you need more information.
- 7 Yours sincerely
- 8 Thank you for your e-mail of 20th August.
- 9 Please send me details of ...

## Writing

- 6 Work in pairs. Rewrite the e-mail on the right using the rules in Exercise 2 and some of the phrases in Exercise 5.

## ► Get real

You are interested in taking part in a work experience programme for business students. Write an e-mail to a company that offers such programmes. Organize your e-mail like this:

- introduce yourself
- explain why you are writing to them
- request some information about the programme.

Don't forget to start and end the e-mail in an appropriate way.

## How to write an effective e-mail

- 1 Use a subject line that tells the other person what the e-mail is about. Don't just write *Information* or *Your e-mail*.
- 2 If you are writing to someone you don't know, start by saying who you are and why you are writing.
- 3 Use written greetings (*Dear Mr Smith*) and endings (*Yours sincerely*), just as you would in a letter.
- 4 Use short, clear sentences.
- 5 Use paragraphs for different subjects. Leave a space between paragraphs.
- 6 In business e-mails, always use a formal and polite tone. Don't be too informal or familiar.
- 7 Don't use emoticons, e.g. ☺, or acronyms, e.g. BTW (*by the way*).
- 8 Don't write in CAPITAL LETTERS – this is like shouting.
- 9 Don't repeat yourself – try not to use the same word more than once in a paragraph.
- 10 Check your spelling and punctuation – are they correct? If you are worried about your spelling, use a spell check.

FORWARD HOME REFRESH MAIL STOP

**To:** Amanda Lewis, Human Resources Manager

**From:** Luigi Ferrara

**Subject:** Information

<sup>1</sup> Hello Amanda!

<sup>2</sup> I'm Luigi from Pescara. <sup>3</sup> Can you tell me about your student programme? I know your company takes students who want some work experience in their holidays, and <sup>4</sup> I want to apply for the programme because I want to get some experience of working in a big multinational company and I also want to practise my English and make it better, because I think it is VERY BAD. Sorry about that!! I want to know more about the program, so <sup>5</sup> please give me some more information, in particular the dates, the details of the daily work, how much you pay, where I can stay, etc. I study marketing so I would like to work in the marketing department if it is possible. BTW, I'm a 20-year-old student of business living in Italy. Sorry, I forgot to tell you that ☺.

<sup>6</sup> Send me your reply soon. Thanks a lot. Bye.

Luigi

## 6 Writing a CV

### Before you start

- 1 List three things you need to include in a CV.

### Reading

- 2 Read the sections of a CV (a–h) and match them with the headings (1–8).

- |                          |                          |                                       |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Personal statement     | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 Interests                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Personal details       | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 Other information                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Work <b>experience</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 Referees                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Languages              | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 Education and <b>qualifications</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

a Czech (mother tongue), English (fluent), Spanish (good)

b Theo Johnson, Head of Postgraduate Studies, London Business School  
Sarah Lewis, Marketing Director, International Enterprises

c 1998–99 London Business School – Postgraduate Diploma in International Marketing  
1994–98 University of Economics, Prague – graduated in Business Studies

d I am a hard-working and **enthusiastic** sales and marketing **graduate**, who is looking for a challenging position with an international company.

e Travel, swimming, running, reading, cinema, classical music

f Name	Frantisek Svoboda
Address	220 Belsize Gardens, London SW2 2RT
Telephone	070 2268 2331
E-mail	fransvob@yahoo.com
Nationality	Czech
Date of birth	17th April 1976

g I spent a year travelling in the United States and Latin America between my postgraduate studies and my current job. I also worked for two summers at a summer camp for children in the US. I ran the London Marathon in 2000 and 2001.

h 2000–date Marketing executive, JB Market Consulting, London  
1999–2000 Marketing **trainee**, International Enterprises, London

### Vocabulary

- 3 Complete (1–5) with the **highlighted** words.

- Courses or exams lead to \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is what you have done in your life or work.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person who has passed a university course.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person learning a job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is interested and excited.

### Speaking

- 4 Work in pairs. Look at these 'rules' for writing a CV. Which ones do you agree with? Why?

- Make sure your CV is well-organized.
- Include a lot of detail – a good CV is long.
- List your education and work experience in reverse order – start with your most recent job.
- Include additional information that you think could help your application, e.g. travel experience or voluntary work.
- Don't send a covering letter – no one reads it.

- 5 Work in pairs. Look at the job advertisement. Discuss what **qualifications** and **experience** applicants need for this job. Do you think Frantisek Svoboda has the right **qualifications** and **experience** to apply for the job?

#### INTERNATIONAL MARKETING MANAGER

Lopez Garcia is a Spanish-owned investment company currently looking for a marketing professional to join our London office. The successful applicant will be responsible for:

- marketing our services to clients in the UK
- helping to develop the company's marketing plan
- travelling to Spain and Mexico for meetings with clients
- managing a team of ten people.

You need to have a marketing qualification and at least three years' experience. You must be enthusiastic, hard-working and flexible. Ability to speak Spanish is essential.

Apply in writing, with CV, to:

Jaime Aranda, Human Resources Manager,  
jha@st.romero.es

### Writing

- 6 Write your CV for a job of your choice (say what it is). Use your own details and add **qualifications** and **work experience** which you hope to get in the future. Decide on the best order of the sections in Exercise 2.

#### ► Get real

**Work in pairs.** Find some adverts for jobs like the one in Exercise 5. Look in newspapers or on the Internet. Choose an advert for a job you would like to do. Give your advert and CV to your partner and take theirs. Suggest ways your partner could adapt their CV to fit the job advert.

## 26 Writing applications

### Before you start

- 1 When you apply for a job, you write a letter of application. What information should you put into your letter? Make a list.

### Reading

- 2 Look at this advert. Would you like this 'job'?

#### Crew members wanted

We are planning an expedition to sail the Atlantic Ocean in a replica of the ship used by Christopher Columbus in 1492. We are looking for two young, fit and enthusiastic people to join our crew. You need to be hard-working, flexible and good at working in a team. Travel experience is **essential**. Experience of sailing would be an **advantage**. We offer a **unique** opportunity for the right people. Apply in writing, with your CV, to: [jim.smith@realitytv.co.uk](mailto:jim.smith@realitytv.co.uk).

- 3 Read this advice for writing a letter of application and the letter from Helen King. Is Helen right for the 'job'? Does she follow the advice?

- 1 Read the advertisement. Think about exactly what kind of person the organization wants.
- 2 Look at the personal qualities (e.g. hard-working, enthusiastic) and the experience they ask for. Talk about them in your letter.
- 3 Your letter should be polite and **formal**:
  - say where you saw the advertisement
  - say why you are applying
  - give a short **summary** of your experience
  - talk about personal qualities
  - include a closing statement.

Dear Mr Smith

1 \_\_\_ your advertisement for crew members in The Times. I would like to apply for the post, and enclose a copy of my CV for your attention.

2 \_\_\_ my personal qualities and experience make me an excellent candidate for this post. 3 \_\_\_, I have three years' experience of working on charity projects in developing countries. On these projects, I worked with people from different backgrounds, both independently and as part of a team. I learned to carry out my responsibilities but also to look after the needs of others in the team.

4 \_\_\_ very much sailing experience, but 5 \_\_\_ learn. I am highly motivated, hard-working and very well organized. These are all qualities which enabled me to succeed in my charity work. I am sure they will make me a key member of your crew.

I hope you will consider my application. 6 \_\_\_ contact me if you need more information.

7 \_\_\_ hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Helen King

- 4 Match the gaps (1–7) in the letter with the phrases (a–g).

- a As you can see from my CV
- b I am willing to
- c I believe that
- d I look forward to
- e I do not have
- f I am writing in response to
- g Please do not hesitate to

### Vocabulary

- 5 Complete the definitions with the **highlighted** words from the advert and the advice.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ means very unusual.
- 2 An \_\_\_\_\_ helps you do better than other people.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ means very important or necessary.
- 4 A \_\_\_\_\_ is a short description of something, with no detail.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ means serious and businesslike.

- 6 *Hard-working* and *enthusiastic* are two personal qualities. Find and **underline** some others in the advert and letter. Use the Glossary or a dictionary to find the words in your language.

### Writing

- 7 You want to apply for the job in the advert below. Make a list of your personal qualities. Invent experience that would be useful for the job, then write a letter applying for the job.

#### Holiday helpers for disabled children

We are looking for enthusiastic people aged 16–18 to work as helpers on activity holidays for disabled children. The children we work with are aged between 8 and 11, and these holidays give them the chance for new experiences, such as horse-riding, sailing and swimming. You need to have lots of energy and enjoy working in a team. Experience of working with children would be an advantage, but is not essential.

We offer a weekly allowance, free accommodation and the chance to do something really important.

Apply in writing, with your CV, to:  
[alison@summerkids.com](mailto:alison@summerkids.com).

#### ► Get real

Find a job advertisement in your own language or invent one. Translate it into English. Give it to a friend and ask them to write a letter applying for it. Write an application letter for the job advertisement they give you.

## 21

## Advertising and promotion

**Before you start**

- 1 Look at these different ways of advertising and answer the questions.
  - 1 Which do you think is best for contacting specific customers?
  - 2 Which do you think is the most expensive?
- 2 Which way (or ways) of advertising do you think is most suitable for these situations?
  - 1 a travel company selling last-minute trips
  - 2 a car company launching a new model
  - 3 a bank telling customers about a new kind of bank account
  - 4 a local politician who wants people to vote for him/her

**Reading**

- 3 Read the business advice information (right). Match the questions (1–4) with the paragraphs (a–d).

- 1 What does it say?
- 2 Why are you advertising?
- 3 Where will you advertise?
- 4 Who is it for?

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐
**Speaking**

- 4 Work in pairs. Read the TALKABOUT advertisement and discuss the questions.
  - 1 What product is the advertisement for?
  - 2 Who are the customers?
  - 3 What is the purpose of the advertisement?
  - 4 What is the message?
  - 5 What is the method?

**Writing**

- 5 Look back at the marketing report you did in Unit 20, Exercise 7. Work in groups and design an advertisement for the product. Make sure your advertisement:
  - is appropriate for the product and the customer
  - has a clear purpose
  - has a clear message
  - is in the right place.

**Get real**

Collect some advertisements from newspapers, magazines or direct mail. Choose one you think is good and present it to the class. Say why you think it is good. Make a class display of good advertising material.



**Choosing the right advertising for your product or service is really important. Here are some tips.**

- a Understand your customers. Find out who they are (their age, interests, lifestyle, income, buying habits). Find out what is the best way to reach them. Which newspapers do they read? Which TV programmes do they watch?
- b What do you want your advertising to achieve? What is its purpose? Do you want to inform people about your product or service? Do you want them to buy it, or see it in a different way? What is its USP (unique selling point)?
- c Keep your message simple and clear. Say just one thing, e.g. 'This is new,' 'This is better,' 'This makes life easier.' Make sure you have a headline that is eye-catching. Make sure the text tells the customer everything you want them to know.
- d Choose a method that will reach your target market. It's no good having a brilliant advertisement if the right people don't see it. It's useless to tell five million people about something that only 100,000 people need to know: banks don't use TV to tell existing customers about a new kind of account.

**Go the distance**

Stay totally in touch with Motorola's TALKABOUT two-way radio. Wherever your sport takes you - on the ski slopes, in the forest, on the water or in the air - you're in constant contact with your friends or your guide for up to three kilometres. It's simple to use, light and water resistant. And with hands-free and voice activation, it works wherever you choose to take it.

*Stay in touch with TALKABOUT.  
It's made for you.*

# 19 Writing a report

## Before you start

1 What is a report? Why do people write reports? Who reads them?

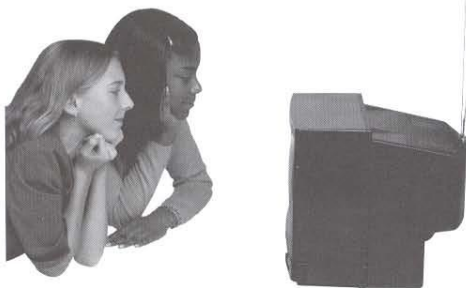
2 Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.

- 1 How many hours a day do you spend watching TV?
  - a less than 1 hour      c 2–3 hours
  - b 1–2 hours              d more than 3 hours

2 Do you watch more or less TV at weekends?

3 What kind of programmes do you watch?

cartoons ■ dramas/films ■ soaps ■ sport  
 ■ news ■ documentaries ■ music shows,  
 e.g. on MTV ■ comedies ■ chat shows  
 ■ games and quizzes



## Reading

3 Look at the extracts (1–5) from a report. Who would be particularly interested in this report?

- 1 students
- 2 advertising companies
- 3 psychiatrists

4 Match the extracts (1–5) with the headings (a–e).

- |                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| a Conclusion   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b Findings     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c Introduction | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d Procedure    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e Method       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1 **Report on research project into the TV-watching habits of school students.**

The purpose of this research was to find out how many hours of TV students watch in a typical week. It also aimed to find out what kind of programmes they watch. In addition, it looked at the kind of programmes watched by male and female students to find out if there was any difference in their preferences.

2 We carried out the research by interviewing students in the target group – school students aged 14–18, both male and female. We spoke to students from a number of different schools in five different cities. We interviewed 120 students in total, 60 boys and 60 girls.

3 We asked all the interviewees the same questions. First, we asked them if they have a TV in their bedroom as well as the main TV in the house; then if they usually watch TV alone or with their family. Next, we asked what kind of TV programmes they like and how many hours of TV they watch in a typical week. After that, we asked how many hours they spend watching TV on school days (Monday to Friday) and how many hours at the weekend. Finally, we asked how many hours they spend watching the different kinds of programmes.

4 We found that 60% of interviewees have a TV in their bedroom and most watch it alone. On school days, 40% of boys and 50% of girls watch TV for two hours or more, mostly between 6.00 and 9.00 p.m. Only 20% of boys and 15% of girls watch less than one hour. However, at weekends, 60% of boys and 70% of girls watch more than two hours a day, in the mornings and in the evenings. Boys prefer to watch sport, cartoons and music programmes, whereas girls prefer to watch soaps, dramas and music. Only 18% of boys and 16% of girls say they watch news regularly. However, more girls than boys watch documentaries.

5 Our research shows that the best time for TV advertisements aimed at young people in this age group is between 6.00 and 9.00 p.m. on weekdays, and in the mornings. In addition, advertisers whose target market is mainly girls should aim to place their ads between soaps, dramas, and music programmes. If the target market is boys, they should place ads between sport, cartoons, and music programmes.

## Vocabulary

- 5 Look at Extract 3 again. Complete this paragraph with the words in the box. Use capital letters where necessary.

after that ■ first ■ finally ■ then ■ next

<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, we asked the interviewees if they own a mobile phone; <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ what make of phone they own. <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, we asked what they use it for – emergencies, chatting to friends, etc. <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, we asked how many hours they spend on the phone each week. <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, we asked them who pays for the calls.

- 6 Look at Extracts 1 and 4.

- Find and underline:  
a a word and a phrase used to add information  
b two words used to connect two facts that are different.
- Complete this paragraph with the words and phrases you have underlined. You have to use one word twice.

The purpose of this research was to find out what students aged 14–18 use their mobile phones for. It **a** \_\_\_\_\_ aimed to find out what kind of phones they use. **b** \_\_\_\_\_, it asked how many hours they spend on the phone, and **c** \_\_\_\_\_ if there is any difference between boys and girls in how they use their phones.

We found that girls prefer to use their phones to chat with friends, **d** \_\_\_\_\_ boys prefer to send text messages. **e** \_\_\_\_\_, more girls than boys keep in touch with their parents by texting.

## Speaking

- 7 Look at Extract 3 again. Write the questions that the interviewers asked. Work in pairs and interview your partner.



- 8 Prepare a short survey about one of the following options. Think about the questions you will ask. Then interview as many people as possible in your class or school.

### a Music



Find out the following information:

- how many people have music in their bedroom, or a personal stereo
- where they listen to music
- how many hours they spend listening to music on weekdays
- how many hours they spend listening to music at weekends
- what kinds of music they listen to.

### b Exercise



Find out the following information:

- how many people exercise regularly
- what type(s) of exercise they do
- how many hours they exercise every week
- when they exercise
- where they exercise.

## Writing

- 9 Write a report based on your interviews. Use the extracts in Exercise 3 to help you. Make sure your report has an introduction and conclusion, and includes information about your method, procedure and findings.

### Get real

Look at some newspapers or business magazines to find an article which gives the findings of a report. Make notes of the subject of the report, its method, procedure and findings. Tell the class about the report.

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تقييم تأثير المقاربة بالتمارين او المهام على قدرات و مهارات الكتابة لطلبة السنة الثالثة بكلية العلوم التجارية و الاقتصادية بجامعة الاغواط وقد تم اختيار الكتابة من بين المهارات اللغوية الاخرى لأهميتها في عالم الاعمال والاقتصاد باعتبار ها الأكثر استعمالا في تلك البيئة المهنية . تم اجراء هذا البحث لتقييم مدى نجاعة هذه المقاربة و ذلك لطرحها كوسيلة للرفع من مستوى طلبة الانجليزية في حال كان تأثيرها ايجابيا او عدم النصح بها في حالة عدم ملائمتها لهذا الوسط التعليمي المتطلب . يعتبر هذا البحث من اولى التجارب في ميدان تعليم اللغة الانجليزية لأغراض خاصة . لذلك اتبع الباحث المنهج الشبه التجريبي للحصول على نتائج ذات مصداقية تمكن من الحكم بكل وضوح و موضوعية لمدى ملائمة المقاربة موضوع البحث لتعليم اللغة الانجليزية لأغراض خاصة.

## Résumé:

La présente étude vise à déterminer les effets de l'approche par tâches sur les compétences communicatives et de rédaction des étudiants d'Anglais à Objectifs Spécifiques afin de recommander ou décourager son utilisation dans les institutions algériennes. Il est bien connu que les professionnels dans le monde d'affaires et de commerce communiquent essentiellement par écrit, pour cette raison, l'écrit comme compétence a été choisi parmi d'autres compétences de langue en raison de son importance pour les étudiants 3<sup>ème</sup> année LMD bancaires et Assurances, l'échantillon qui représente l'ensemble de la population, la Faculté de Commerce et d'Economie de l'Université de Laghouat. Les résultats ont montré que l'approche par tâches a amélioré les compétences de communications et de l'écrit du groupe expérimental par rapport au groupe de contrôle qui a été enseignée en utilisant la méthodologie de l'enseignement régulier. Sur le plan pédagogique, l'approche peut être utilisée pour rapprocher les classes d'Anglais à Objectifs spécifiques au monde professionnel pour permettre aux étudiants à être à la hauteur des attentes et des exigences d'un monde d'affaires globalisé et exigeant .

## Abstract:

The present research aims at determining the effects of the Task Based Approach on Business students' writing skills so as to suggest and recommend it or discourage its use at the Algerian institutions. It is known that professionals in different business fields communicate mostly via writing, for this reason, writing skill was chosen among other language skills because of its importance to the students 3<sup>rd</sup> year LMD Banking and Insurance . A quasi-experimental design was utilised to provide as accurate and valid results as possible. The findings showed that the Task Based Approach improved the writing skills of the experimental group in comparison to the control group which was taught using the regular teaching methodology. The Task Based Approach can be utilised to bring closer the ESP classes to the professional world as the approach is built on real-world tasks to enable the students of business to live up to the expectations and requirements of a globalised and demanding business world.