The increase of writing proficiency within task-based language extended writing integrating self-regulated learning and technological facilitation

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Abstract.
This research dives into the complex world of improving writing skills using Task-Based Language Teaching approach (TBLT). It looks at the details of writing skills for intermediate-level students, focusing on the combination of self-learning strategies and the use of technology. Using modern teaching ideas, the study points out the difficulties students face when trying to improve their writing skills. It outlines the important features of good writing, which include clearness, logical order, good grammar, and the ability to engage readers. In addition, the study points out specific skills that are important for good writing, such as understanding grammar, organizing ideas, creating content, and understanding the writing process. The research also highlights the important role of TBLT in improving writing skills. TBLT's focus on real-world tasks and communication-based learning environments is seen as key in improving language skills, including writing. The study looks at how TBLT aligns with self-learning principles, showing its potential to help students control their own learning process, increasing their motivation, engagement, and ownership. The study also emphasizes the significant impact of technology on teaching writing within TBLT. The combination of the digital tools within TBLT creates an environment that encourages self-learning and proficient English creative writers.

Keywords:
writing skills
creative writing skills
task-based learning techniques
collaboration
self-learning
**Introduction.** Improving students’ writing skills when learning English as a foreign language can be achieved through extended tasks that allow them to take control of their own learning. This approach helps increase students’ motivation and involvement, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own education. The teacher's role is crucial in this process, as they continuously monitor learners’ progress and provide guidance within a structured setting.

Integrating TBLT (task-based learning teaching) approach into the writing process is key in helping students improve their writing skills. Extended writing activities within task-based learning techniques will effectively develop students’ writing skills. By using a comprehensive approach that combines task-based techniques with a positive relationship between teachers and students, better results can be expected. This strategy lines up with the increasing understanding that self-regulated learning is a fundamental aspect of teaching a foreign language. The goal is to develop self-regulated learners who are independent, proficient, and equipped with strategies for lifelong learning.

In addition, the rise of new technologies and collaborative platforms provides a useful way for students to work together and with their teachers within this task-based approach. This teaching method shifts the focus of the curriculum towards tasks, rather than just focusing on individual language elements. By creating a communicative and task-oriented environment, TBLT not only improves language skills but also helps develop effective writing skills. This integrated approach combines the comprehensive task-based approach with collaborative technologies, creating an environment that helps develop proficient and self-regulated writers in English.

**The importance of writing.** Writing has been studied from various perspectives, each offering unique insights into its nature, purpose, and impact. It is defined as a productive skill to write effectively and concisely that is exercised and developed through experience, involving the processes of thinking, composing, and editing. Some researchers mention that writing is a complex and multi-dimensional activity that involves more cognitive or linguistic processes.
Understanding the importance of improving writing skills in students who are learning English as a second language can lead to many interesting discoveries. Writing is a basic skill that is crucial for communication. It's like an art form that gets better with practice, helping students to develop their ability to come up with ideas, put them into words, and polish their work. Experts point out that writing involves both thinking and language skills. This includes coming up with and organizing ideas, carefully choosing words and grammar, and going through important steps of revising and editing. All of these are key to creating clear and powerful written work.

Writing is about more than just learning a language; it also helps to improve thinking skills. It's like a brain teaser or a problem that needs to be solved. Students have to analyze, evaluate, and choose the best ideas and words. This requires creative thinking, as they have to come up with ideas, figure out how to express them, and then shape them into clear sentences and paragraphs that readers can understand.

In conclusion, writing is more than just a language skill. It's also a thinking process that helps to develop analytical thinking, creativity, and effective communication. As students work on coming up with ideas, putting them into words, and polishing their work, they are doing more than just learning a language. They are also developing their intellect and their ability to express themselves clearly.

**Literature review.** Writing is often seen as a way to express learners’ thoughts, feelings, and opinions [10]. It's also a problem-solving process [6] that students get better at through real-world practice and effective strategies. Writing is closely tied to writers thinking processes [1,2] and requires them to manage many different elements at once [13]. It's a process that involves planning and revising before we get to the final product [1,2]. Nunan emphasizes how complex writing is, as it involves handling many tasks at the same time [6].

Writing is powerful because it allows learners of English language to share ideas across distances and time. But it's not just about communication; writing is also a powerful tool.
for expressing themselves, sharing information, telling stories, reflecting, and dealing with different feelings [16,13].

Writing involves many different aspects, like content, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, organization, word choice, and considering who will be reading it [17]. Many researchers define and outline the process of writing in different ways that are very similar, what is clear is the fact that it is a process made up from more stages. Hyland for example, describes a four-step writing process: planning, drafting, revising, and editing. This shows the complex journey a student who writes goes through when creating a piece of text [11].

Jane Willis, in line with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) principles, introduces the Task Cycle. This emphasizes the combination of using and learning language through meaningful tasks. The cycle includes Pre-task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus stages, promoting a well-rounded approach to learning language [18]. This method is supported by scholars like Ellis, Prabhu, Long, and Nunan, who highlight the effectiveness of task-based approaches in learning language and developing writing skills.

Very relevant for our research is the recent research by Swain and Byrnes explores the idea of language production [19]. They highlight how writing can help deepen understanding and proficiency in language, especially when it comes to generating and organizing complex ideas in a foreign language.

Furthermore, the rise of communication technology has changed the way we learn to write in foreign languages. Studies by Warschauer and Grimes and Kessler highlight the role of digital platforms in improving writing skills, encouraging collaborative writing, and giving learners a wider audience for their work [19].

Recent findings from Cumming and Zhang further emphasize the importance of metacognitive strategies in writing. These scholars recommend teaching metacognition explicitly, encouraging learners to reflect on their writing processes, set goals, and control their writing behaviors, thereby improving the effectiveness of their written expression [19].

Many researchers, thus, have argued that instruction in
self-regulated, strategic learning can result in better academic outcomes (Harris & Graham, 2009; Oxford, 2017; Zhang & Zhang, 2019). As Gu (2010) explained, “the central thesis behind language learning strategy research is that learners, monitored by teachers can play a much more active role in managing and controlling the learning process, thereby maximizing the outcomes of learning”.

In conclusion, combining writing with task-based learning approach offers a formative way to improve writing skills in learners of foreign languages. These aspects not only help with language skills but also develop cognitive abilities, enabling learners to handle the complexities of writing while engaging in meaningful tasks and self-regulated learning process, thus promoting well-rounded language learning.

**Research Methodology.** Building a methodology based on TBLT approach to develop students’ writing skills we also focused on students’ difficulties they meet while writing. So, at intermediate levels, English learners encounter various challenges in writing. Teaching involves guiding learners to acquire knowledge and skills, with language learning emphasizing listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a progressive sequence [2,3].

In writing, scholars stress traits like clarity, conciseness, grammar, and audience consideration for impactful communication [6,7,11,19]. These traits break down into sub-skills:

1. Mechanics: Handwriting, spelling, and punctuation ensure clarity and correctness.
2. Organisation: Crafting engaging introductions, coherent paragraphs, and satisfying conclusions.
5. Content: Thoughtful vocabulary selection, relevance, originality, and logical progression.
6. Writing Process: Stages from brainstorming to revising ensure continuous improvement.

Ur emphasizes writing's core objective: effectively conveying messages to readers (Ur, 1996). Brown outlines key
micro-skills essential for effective writing:
1. Mastery of graphemes and orthographic patterns.
2. Producing text at an optimal speed aligned with the purpose.
3. Generating coherent word structures with appropriate grammar.
4. Expressing nuanced meanings and deploying cohesive devices.
5. Mastery of rhetorical forms, cultural sensitivity, and writing strategies [2,19]. These challenges highlight the intricate nature of developing writing skills for intermediate English learners.

Writing in English can be a bit tricky for many students from Moldova who are at an intermediate level. The students are learning English as a foreign language and have already mastered the basics like grammar and vocabulary. They're also eager to learn new and unusual words, showing that they're ready to dive deeper into the language. One great thing about the intermediate-level students is that they can understand and express complex ideas. Also, they can handle different types of communication situations, proving that they can interact well with others. This proficiency extends to their writing endeavours, where they venture into diverse forms such as essays, emails, and reports. One impressive thing about their writing is their use of a wide range of tenses and language structures.

The students also do a great job of organizing their thoughts. They use transition words and phrases to connect paragraphs and sentences smoothly, creating a nice flow of ideas. This helps them express their thoughts clearly. They're also good at using different language patterns, which helps them communicate their ideas effectively. Intermediate-level students aren't afraid to use the richness of the language. They use idiomatic expressions and everyday language, which makes their writing feel more real.

But, like any journey, learning at the intermediate level comes with its own set of challenges. As these students try to express their thoughts, they might run into problems like not having enough vocabulary, making grammar mistakes, and struggling with cohesion and coherence. They might also have
a hard time using idiomatic phrases correctly. Plus, they might find it difficult to understand the finer points of writing conventions and the cultural nuances that come with using the language.

Luckily, the students can use writing feedback to overcome these challenges. Constructive feedback is a great tool that can help them identify and fix their mistakes, which can improve their writing skills overall. This process doesn’t just help them with their current writing problems, but it also prepares them for future growth and development as skilled writers. Also, an extended approach to writing tasks in the era of new technology development and a self-regulated process within TBLT can obviously increase students’ involvement and their written outcomes. According to the new National Curriculum 2018 at B1 level students must develop linguistic competences that lead to development of writing outcomes. In producing written messages competence, the students apply the grammar rules specific to the English language and correctly writing the message thus they recognize and apply the correct structure of the text. The orthographic component of the linguistic competence leads to the outcome of writing short, functional texts using the owned language. Besides they according to the written interaction competence students argue their preferences through effective use of logical connectors and other linking elements in writing functional texts.

The B1 level provides the following products: online texts and messages, articles and magazines in digital or traditional format, short comments to mass-media articles, text summaries, mind maps, simply structured essays, narrations, etc. where the students have to respect the writing conventions.

The identified difficulties, including limited vocabulary, grammar errors, inadequate cohesion and coherence, and a lack of idiomatic expressions, underscore the need for an instructional approach that addresses these specific issues. TBL offers a dynamic framework that aligns with the real-world demands of writing by integrating meaningful tasks into the learning process. This intervention will involve tasks designed to expand vocabulary, correct
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3. Revise, then, learners change or fix their first draft. They might decide to move ideas around, add information, or take out words or sentences that don’t belong.

4. Step, students usually write a new copy so their writing is neat. Then, they look again to make sure everything is correct. They look for mistakes in their sentences.

5. Step-Publish. Finally, students make a final copy that has no mistakes. They might choose to add pictures and create a book. Then, they are ready to publish their writing on google sites [18, 20].

A six-week intervention on Task-Based Learning (TBL) program at intermediate-level writing for twelve participants is proposed. The program intends to improve the technical writing skills, motivation, autonomy, collaboration, the development of soft skills and to enhance task and time management. The program is structured into four phases based on the Willis Framework: preparation, practice, performance, and evaluation. The program's holistic approach to language acquisition aims to produce competent writers. During the pre-task phase, students get to know the fundamentals of both the Task-Based Learning (TBL) and the creative writing process. A task-based technique will be implemented to prepare ways for the upcoming creative writing assignment, setting the stage for an interesting and fruitful learning experience.

During the first two weeks of the Preparation phase, students will study the structure of a story plot and become acquainted with the major stages of the writing process. This in-depth examination will cover topics like brainstorming, outlining, drafting, rewriting, and editing, explaining how each phase ties to the art of creative writing.
**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task-based framework in creative writing (Dobler L.)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Task / Preparation</strong></td>
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<td>Teacher introduces the main stages of the writing process, the story plot; presents the problem to be solved, provides a list of topic for choice, encourages students to discussion and feedback.</td>
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<td><strong>On-Task / Performance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Task</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brainstorming: Students brainstorm ideas for their creative writing assignments, develop a plan of action. Teacher encourages students to use the writing check-lists</td>
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<td>Planning: Moving into the task cycle, the actual storytelling task takes place in this stage. Students start the planning phase, where they structure their narratives. After they have chosen the topics out of the list of prompts, they start their individual creative work at home. In the following three weeks students write their stories according to the learned structure during the pre-task phase. Additional to the topics they are provided with a series of guidelines as follows: the structure of the writing process, the list of prompts, the structure of a story, and the checklist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-task</td>
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<td>Performance</td>
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<td>Students post their stories and their reflections on their writing experience on classroom blog and present their final stories to the class. Students write short reviews on each other’s stories.</td>
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Outlining. The following stage of the writing process involves students transferring their ideas onto paper and developing a first draft. In the next stage, the report stage, students share their stories, offer diverse perspectives, collaborate with peers, and participate in a reflective review. This cyclical process not only enhances their story writing skills but also fosters a collaborative and communicative learning environment.

During the third step, revision, students are responsible for rewriting their initial draft and having a final polished story. Students examine their original draft during the editing process. This requires making deliberate changes, like rearranging ideas for better flow, introducing more information to enrich the story plot, or deleting words and sentences that inhibit the story's overall coherence. They improve the clarity and impact of their written work, ensuring that their stories connect well with the intended audience.

Editing. Students transcribe a new, neater copy of their writing during this stage making sure that the result is presented with clarity and precision, accuracy, language, grammar, and structure.

Publishing. After editing, students are ready to post their stories on Google Sites and make them known to the public. This collaborative space serves as a hub for students to present their stories and undergo a collective review and reflection process.

During the reflection phase, students record their own thoughts and assessments about the complex process of writing. Students write their opinions on the problems they faced, the breakthroughs they made, and the general progression of their writing proficiency. They examine the tactics that worked, the areas that were particularly difficult, and the personal growth they experienced during the writing process. This introspective approach not only increases their self-awareness but also gives them the ability to define specific goals for continuing progress.

For their reflexion students will have to answer the following prompts: What I loved: (What I enjoyed best was...My favourite thing was... I was delightfully pleased by... I would like to appeal to.... If you have the opportunity to....).
What I didn't like: (What I didn't like the most was...I was disappointed by/with...).

These guidelines are intended to generate meaningful responses, enabling students to delve deeper into their emotional and cognitive experiences as they write. Responding to these prompts allows students to communicate their personal discoveries, the subtleties of their creative journey, and their shifting ideas on writing. This cyclical reflection process, driven by thoughtfully written questions, not only expands their self-awareness but also generates a dynamic and insightful discourse among the learning community.

In summary, the TBLT-based methodology develops in a systematic manner, beginning with a comprehensive introduction to the creative writing process. The subsequent lessons continue with story naming, guided activities, and the formulation of a collaborative checklist. The task cycle guides students into the heart of story writing, emphasizing planning, reporting, and reflective review. Finally, the language focus phase offers the power of digital platforms for students to share, collaborate, and collectively reflect on their creative writing journey.

References:
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https://www.jowr.org/index.php/jowr/issue/archive


