

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

*TOPIC- BASED APPROACH VERSUS TASK-BASED
APPROACH IN TEACHING WRITING SKILLS TO
FIRST YEAR PREPARATORY (GRADE 10+1)
STUDENTS AT BETHEL MEKANE YESUS SCHOOL*

BY:
ABEBE GEMECHU

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SKILLS TO FIRST YEAR PREPARATORY
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MEKANE YESUS SCHOOL**

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Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Acknowledgements	I
Table of Contents	II
List of Tables	IV
Abstract	V
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	2
1.3 Objectives of the Study	4
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.5 Scope of the Study	5
1.6 Limitations of the Study.....	5
CHAPTER TWO.....	6
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	6
2.1 Major Language Curriculum Approaches	6
2.2 Tasks and Types of Task-based Syllabus	9
2.3 The Essence of Task-based Approach	12
2.4 What Do Tasks Satisfy	13
2.5 Sequencing Tasks	14
2.6 Approach and Techniques in Teaching Writing Skills.....	15
2.7 The Objectives of Teaching Writing	17
2.8 Task-based Teaching Writing.....	18
2.9 Content-based Teaching of Writing	22
2.10 The Topic Framework	23
2.11 Task-based Approach versus Topic-based Approach in Language Teaching.....	24

CHAPTER THREE.....	27
THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
3.1 Objectives of the Study	27
3.1.1 Selecting the Sample Population	27
3.1.2 Data Gathering Instruments	27
3.1.3 Procedures for the Presentation of the Teaching Materials	28
3.1.4 Post-test	31
3.1.5 Guidelines for Correcting the Pre-And Post-Tests.....	31
3.1.6 Method of Data Analysis	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....	33
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	33
CHAPTER FIVE	39
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	39
5.1 Summary of the Findings	39
5.2 Conclusions	41
5.3 Recommendations.....	41
5.3.1 Syllabus Designers and Materials Producers	42
5.3.2 Language Classroom Supervisors	42
5.3.3. Language Teachers	42
5.3.4 Other Researchers	42
REFERENCES	43
APPENDICES	47
APPENDIX- A- Pre-Test for Control & Experimental Groups.....	48
APPENDIX- B- Teaching Materials for Control Group	52
APPENDIX- C- Teaching Materials for the Experimental Group	64
APPENDIX- D- Post-Test for Control & Experimental Groups.....	70
APPENDIX- E- Row Scores in Pre- and Post- tests.....	74

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
Table 1 Description Data	33
Table 2 Independent Sample t-test for Post-control Vs Post-experimental Groups	34
Table 3 T-test of Pre-and Post Tests for the Experimental Group	37

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to compare topic-based approach with task-based approach and determine the more effective one to teach writing skills to first year preparatory students. Based on the purpose of the study, the following Null (H_0) hypothesis and Alternative (H_1) hypothesis were made. The null hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant difference between topic-based and task-based approaches to teaching writing skills. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis states that there is statistically significant difference between them.

In order to see the difference between the two approaches and determine the more effective one in teaching writing skills to Ethiopian students, the following steps were undertaken. Firstly, 74 students were randomly selected as the subjects of the study. Secondly, the subjects were grouped into control and experimental. Finally, they were taught for three months through the two approaches.

After the researcher taught the two groups, a post-writing test was prepared and administered to them. Then in order to test the hypotheses, the mean writing scores of the two groups were compared. The result of the finding showed that the mean writing score of the experimental group students was higher than that of the control group. The result was also statistically analysed.

Depending upon the finding, it was concluded that task-based language teaching approach is more effective than topic-based approach in teaching writing skills to Ethiopian students. Based on the finding, valid recommendations were forwarded.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

There have been numerous approaches to the teaching of writing in the history of language teaching. These have evolved with the development of teaching in general, which have in turn contributed to the changing role and status of writing within English language syllabuses and English as a Foreign Language classroom. In spite of other general methodological changes, however, writing continues to be one of the most difficult areas for the teacher and learner of English to tackle (Holmes, 2005).

Traditionally, writing was viewed mainly as a tool for the practice and reinforcement of specific grammatical and lexical patterns, a fairly one-dimensional activity, in which accuracy was more important than content and self-expression. As Tribble points out, students were purely 'writing to learn' as opposed to 'learning to write' (Tribble, 1996). Even in more recent communicative approaches to language teaching, writing can often still be seen by teachers as some taboo area, threatening to detract valuable classroom time from the development of oral communication skills (Holmes, 2005).

However, with an increase in attention to students' practical needs, born out of functional /notional approaches and further developed in the various areas of English for specific purposes, the importance of the writing of certain text-types as a skill learners might need to develop has gradually come to the fore (Holmes, 2005). Holmes claims that this gradual increase in the status of writing as a skill along with the development of a more discoursal rather than purely grammatically-based approach to language teaching, and general moves towards more learner-centered syllabuses, has altered the teacher's perspective on the needs of learners and the problems faced by language learners.

In connection with approaches to teaching writing, Raimes (1983) presents the following: (i) The Controlled to Free Approach (ii) The Free-writing Approach (iii) The Paragraph-pattern Approach (iv) The Grammar-syntax-organization Approach (iv) The Communicative Approach and (v) The Process Approach.

Raimes (1983) stresses that all of the approaches just mentioned do, of course, overlap. Hence, we will seldom find a classroom where a teacher is so devoted to one approach as to exclude all others. Nevertheless, in spite of all the arguments in favor of the use of a process approach to the teaching of writing in particular, Holmes (2005) argues that the problem still remains in many circumstances that writing is not sufficiently prioritized, by teachers, students and curriculum designers, as occupying an important place in a communicative teaching syllabus. However, White and Arndt (1991) remark that many of the activities included in their book:

... include pair and group work, not to mention discussion and collaboration, so that the writing class becomes, in a very genuine sense, a communicative experience in which much more than skill in writing is practiced and developed (White and Arndt, 1991).

In line to the above rationale, communicative language teaching approach is implemented in Ethiopian schools. Within this, topic-based approach is employed to teach writing skills. Nevertheless, its effectiveness in improving the students' writing ability in comparison to the other approach, for instance, task-based teaching needs to be investigated.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Writing is a social act. Even when writers are English as Foreign Language (EFL) students in a language classroom context, their tests always reflect their ability to solve a rhetoric problem, and their awareness of their own communicative goal, of the reader, and of the writing context (Atkinson, 2003).

Consequently, the text produced by EFL writers is always, as in any writing situation, the product of a socio-cognitive process that requires complex cognitive abilities, as well as linguistic and cultural competence (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996; Johns, 1997).

Similarly, Nunan (1989) emphasizes that learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult among the four skills of language users regardless of whether the language is a first, second or foreign. Brown (1984) also points out that writing is required to demonstrate control over a number of variables simultaneously at the sentence and beyond the sentence levels. Regarding to this, White (1981) cited in Nunan (1989:18) says:

Writing is not a natural activity. All physically and mentally normal people learn to speak a language. Yet all have to be taught how to write. This is crucial difference between the spoken and written language. There are other important differences as well, writing, unlike speech, is displaced in time. Indeed, this must be one reason why writing originally evolved since it makes possible the transmission of a message from one place to another. A written message can be received, stored and referred back at any time. It is permanent in comparison with the ephemeral 'here one minute and gone the next' character of spoken language.

Byrne (1988) further explains why writing is a difficult activity for most people both in mother tongue and in a foreign language under three headings: psychological, linguistic, and cognitive. According to the scholar, writing is a task, which is often imposed on us, perhaps by circumstances. For this reason, writing does not cause only a psychological effect; it may also cause a problem in terms of context.

Hence, there is a widespread feeling that the majority of Ethiopian students have serious problems in expressing themselves in written English.

Currently, an attempt is being made to alleviate students' problems via the introduction of communicative language teaching approach in general and topic based teaching of writing in particular.

Even though change in methodology has been made to improve students' writing skills, both in secondary and preparatory schools, students are not free from criticism in expressing themselves in written mode. As a result, it seems vital to study as to how the approach in use is suitable to our school conditions by comparing it with an alternative approach, that is, task-based teaching of writing skills.

As Ellis (2003) observes, there is a wide range of literature on task-based teaching often with adult ESL classes, but there is a lack of empirical research in schools where English is given as a foreign language.

Therefore, the following Null and Alternative hypotheses were made. The Null hypothesis (H₀) states that there is no statistically significant difference between the existing practice (topic-based) and task-based teaching of writing skills to Grade 10+1 Ethiopian students. In contrast, the Alternative hypothesis (H₁) states that there is statistically significant difference between the existing practice (topic-based) and task-based teaching of writing to Grade 10+1 Ethiopian students.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- ☞ make comparison between the existing practice (topic-based approach) and task-based teaching of writing to first year preparatory (Grade 10+1) Ethiopian students and determine the more effective approach in the Ethiopian context.
- ☞ investigate whether students show significant progress in their performance after being taught by task-based approach.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study can make the following contributions.

1. Policy wise it benefits decision-makers, curriculum developers, course writers, and supervisors on the selection of the more effective approach to be followed.
2. Theoretically it brings some important and valuable concepts about task-based teaching of writing skills into scene to course writers.
3. Methodologically it gives insight to course writers to consider the appropriate and the more effective approach to teaching writing skills.
4. Practically it suggests to language teachers to critically analyze the techniques they have been using against their implementations and go for the better ones.
5. It also invites other interested researchers to pursue further investigation on the topic.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study was limited only to one preparatory school of 10+1.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

I used only one school due to time and financial constraints. The time constraint also limited the study only to three months; three times a week which might have hindered the subjects from exercising adequately. Another limitation worth mentioning is the scarcity of resources on the topic. This challenged the researcher in preparing teaching materials for the experimental group.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Major Language Curriculum Approaches

Language curriculum design is constantly changing and expanding as pointed out by Yalden (1987) and further focused on in Olshtain (1989) cited in Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000). According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), language curriculum design has drawn upon the general field of curriculum development; from applied linguistics it has drawn upon relevant fields such as language teaching methodology, second language acquisition research, language planning and policy making assessment, and of course, language analysis, within which discourse analysis is of central importance.

The changing trends and approaches in each of these fields have had their impact on language curriculum design and as a result several major curriculum types have evolved: a content-based curriculum, a process-based curriculum, and a product-based curriculum, (ibid). Celce-Murcia and Olshtain further discuss the three major areas as: a content-based curriculum, from content perspective is what has become known in language teaching as the grammar translation method, the structural syllabus, and the notional functional syllabus can all be viewed as different approaches to the design of programs focused on language content.

The subject matter content is focal in what is known as 'a content-based instruction' (Mohan, 1986; Krahnke, 1987; Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, 1989, Corson, 1990; Snow, 1998) cited in Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000).

A content-based curriculum is by definition focused on the content perspective of the course. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) claim that the term “content” can relate to at least three different areas of content, that is, Linguistic content, thematic or situational content, and subject matter content.

The thematic and situational approach to content become central in the communicative approach since the emphasis here is on contextualization and meaningful and relevant use of the target language during the learning process. As it is stated by the two scholars, there are two main objectives in this approach: first, themes and topics included in the curriculum should provide appropriate cultural background for the language material and the activities carried out; second, themes and topics should motivate interest and be relevant and appealing to the learner.

On the other hand, a process-based syllabus is concerned with the process of language learning and language teaching, (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). These scholars pointed out that a process-based curriculum may be focused on one or all of the following: a task-based curriculum, a need-based curriculum, and a learner-based curriculum. Furthermore, it is pointed out by these writers that the task-based syllabus design evolved from the gradual shift that took place in the early 1980s from emphasis on product in language learning to emphasis on process. They stressed that this shift started with notions such as “language learning may be seen as a process which grows out of the interaction between learners, texts and activities”. Towards the end of the 1980s the process-based syllabus (Breen, 1987) became a working reality in many language learning contexts, with special focus being placed on the language learning tasks and activities that learners were expected to carry out as part of their learning process.

In relation to this, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) explain that the basic characteristic of a task-based program is that it uses activities that the

learners have to do for “non instructional” purposes outside of the classroom. Tasks, in this sense, are viewed as a way of bringing the real world into the classroom.

Long (1985) and Long and Crookes (1989) view tasks as a potentially unifying unit of analysis in course design, and they distinguish between pedagogic tasks and target tasks. Pedagogic tasks, according to them, are designed in the form of problem-solving activities for classroom work constituting approximation of the target tasks and gradually leading learners towards the target tasks. Target tasks are activity types in which the learners will eventually engage long after the course of study, matching real-life situation (*ibid*). Long and Crookes maintain that the choice of target tasks in the curriculum should be made according to task-based need analysis of the learners.

Celce- Murcia and Olshtain (2000) put a product- based curriculum as, a curriculum that places emphasis on the outcomes of the course of study or in other words on “What the learners should know and be able to produce in the L2” upon course completion. In discussing the different types of syllabuses, (Nunan, 1988) classifies product-oriented syllabuses are those in which the focus is on the knowledge and skills which learners should gain as a result of instruction. Moreover, (Rabbinic, 2002) stresses that product-oriented syllabuses emphasize the product of language learning and are prone to intervention from an authority. According to this scholar, the focus here is different from process-oriented syllabuses where the focus is not on what the student will have accomplished on the completion of the program, but on the specification of learning tasks and activities that she/he will undertake during the course.

The product-based curriculum also takes another important perspective into account: What level of fluency and accuracy are students expected to reach at the end of the course of study? (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000).

2.2 Tasks and Types of Task-based Syllabus

According to Prabhu (1987) a task is defined as an activity which require learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allow teachers to control and regulate that process.

Tasks in procedural syllabus, therefore, should be intellectually challenging enough to maintain students' interest for that is what will sustain learners' efforts at task completion, focus them on meaning and, as part of that process, engage them in confronting the task's linguistic demands (Prabhu, 1987).

A second task-based approach to course design is the process syllabus (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Breen, 1984, 1987 a, b; Candlin, 1984, 1987; Candlin and Murphy, 1987) cited in Crookes and Gass (1993). The process syllabus is a plan for incorporating the negotiation process, and thereby learning process, in to syllabus design. As described by Breen (1984) cited in Crookes and Gass (1993), the process syllabus embodies a hierarchical model, specifying sets of options at four levels, final selection among which at each level is left for users to decide on. Course design consists of providing the resources and materials needed for (1) making general decisions about classroom language learning (who needs to learn what, how they prefer to learn it, when, with whom, and so on), (2) alternative procedures for making such decisions (the basis for an eventual 'working contract' between teacher and learners, (3) alternative activities, such as teacher-led instruction, group work and laboratory use and (4) alternative tasks, i.e. a bank of pedagogic tasks students may select from to realize the 'activities'.

[I]t is at the level of tasks that the actual working process of the classroom group is realized in terms of what is overtly done from moment to moment within the classroom. (Examples at task level would include such things as agreeing on a definition of a problem, organizing data, deducing a particular rule of pattern, discussing reactions, etc.). (Breen, 1984) cited in Crookes and Gass (1993).

In their Editions' Tasks in a pedagogical context, 1993, Crookes and S.M. Gass viewed that there are similar weaknesses that they claimed to limit the effectiveness of the procedural syllabus and process syllabus.

A third approach to course design which takes task as the unit of analysis is task-based language teaching (Long, 1985, 1989; Crookes, 1986; Crookes and Long, 1987; Long and Crookes, 1987, 1992) cited in Crookes and Gass (1993).

Although a number of definitions of task exist (e.g. Nunan (1989), Skehan (1996) defines a task as an activity in which meaning is primary; there is some sort of relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome. Most activities combine a number of priorities, and it is a fine judgment to claim that the communication of meaning is a primary goal for any particular task, or assert that a task has a real-world relationship. Long and Crookes (1991) discuss a further quality of tasks: that they have a clear pedagogic relationship to out-of-class language use, in that needs analysis should ensure that classroom tasks bear a developmental relationship to such non-classroom activity.

Even though in recent years a number of researchers, syllabus designers, and educational innovators have called for a move in language teaching towards task-based approaches to instruction, (Nunan, 1989; Long and Crookes, 1991, Gass and Crookes 1993, a, b). Skehan (1996) identifies strong and weak forms of the task-based approach. A strong, he argues that, tasks should be the unit of language teaching, and that everything else should be subsidiary. A weak form of task-based, on the other hand, is that tasks are a vital part of language instruction, but that they are embedded in a more complex pedagogic context. He stresses that they are necessary, but may be preceded by focused instruction, and after use, may be followed by focused instruction which is contingent on task performance. This version of task-based instruction is clearly very close to general communicative language teaching. It could also be

compatible with a traditional presentation, practice, production sequence, only with production based on tasks, rather than more stilted and guided production activities (Murphy, 1981).

If we turn to research studies into task- based learning, ranges of approaches are evident. Candlin (1987) discusses criteria by which tasks may be analyzed, based the categories used on essentially data-free account of task properties, and approach development by Nunan (1989) and Skehan (1992). Pica, Kanagy, and Falodum (1993) cited in Long and Crookes (1993) take a slightly different perspective, relying on research studies more directly. They analyze task in terms of international patterns and requirements (i.e. how involved each participant needs to be), as well as the sorts of one-way Vs two-way).

Skehan (1996) puts that a number of studies have been more specific in their analyses of tasks, positing particular contrasts or dimensions as the basis for characterizing tasks. Prabhu (1987) argues in support of reasoning-gap tasks; Duff (1986) contrasts divergent and convergent tasks, arguing that the latter engage acquisitional processes more effectively; and Berwick (1993), cited in Atkinson (2003), contrasts two dimensional- experiential- expository, and deductive- collaborative. There have also been studies of the participants with in tasks such as Yule, Powers, and Macdonald (1992) on 'hearer' effects and Plough and Gass (1993), cited in Atkinson (2003), on participants (and task) familiarity. Brown, Alderson, Shylock and Yule (1984), cited in Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), have also investigated various task design features, in an attempt to establish task difficulty on an empirical basis. They propose that static tasks (e.g. description) are easier than dynamic tasks (e. g narration), which in turn are easier than abstract tasks (e.g. opinion giving), and that a number of elements, participants, and relationships in a task make it more difficult. There have also been studies of processing influences on tasks. Tarone (1989) has shown that attention to form has a clear effect on accuracy of performance. Ellis (2003) reported an interaction between the engagement of

planned discourse and different forms of the past tense under different task conditions. Crook (1998) reported greater complexity and lexical variety for tasks done under a planning time condition. Foster and Skehan (1996) reported an interaction between opportunity to plan and task type. These research studies are individually revealing, but do not currently provide the basis for more general perspectives on task-based instruction.

2.3 The Essence of Task-based Approach

In a predominantly method-driven pedagogy, such as task-based pedagogy, teachers and learners have a remarkable degree of flexibility, for they are presented with a set of general learning objectives and problem-solving tasks, and not a list of specific linguistic items (Kumaravadivelu, 1993) cited in Crookes and Gass (1993). Hence, he argues that the essence of a task-based approach lies in the negotiated interactional opportunity given to learners to navigate their own paths and routes to learning, using their own learning styles and learning strategies. Learning outcome then is the result of a fairly unpredictable interaction between the learner, the task and the task situation (Breen, 1987) cited in Crookes and Gass (1993). Furthermore, as Foley (1991) cited in Crookes and Gass (1993) argues from Vygotskian psycholinguistic perspective, task-based L2 learning is an internal, self-regulating process which will vary according to the individual and cannot specifically be controlled by the syllabus designer or the classroom teacher. It is, however, the teacher's responsibility to promote and maximize learning opportunities through adequate and appropriate classroom methodological procedures. Thus, methodology becomes the central tenet of task-based approach (ibid).

Although Kumaravadivelu (1993), cited in Crookes and Gass (1993) treats tasks in relation to methodology and content from the points of view mentioned above, Nunan (1989) gives an alternative view of the concept in the context of task-based pedagogy. He argues:

If we maintain the traditional distinction between syllabus design and methodology, seeing syllabus design as being primarily concerned with the specification of what learners will learn, and methodology as being mainly concerned with specifying how learners will learn, then the design of learning tasks is part of methodology. However, if we see curriculum planning as an integrated set of processes involving, among other things, the argument over whether the design and development of tasks belongs to syllabus design or to methodology becomes unimportant (Nunan, 1989:1).

Nunan (1989:10) defines a communicative task as “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form.” As his definition shows, his task-based pedagogy puts a lot of premium on classroom methodological teacher/learner activities such as comprehension, manipulation, production, interaction and attention to meaning rather than form.

2.4 What Do Tasks Satisfy

According to Skehan (1998) a task is an activity that satisfies the following criteria: meaning is primary, there is a goal that needs to be worked out, the activity is outcome-evaluated and there is a real-world relationship. This scholar further asserts that the syllabus designer, the teacher, or the students can choose tasks for the language classroom. Who ever it is, the decision maker needs to have information about the nature of the task, the requirements made by the task, and the potential outcomes of the task.

Yule (1997) cited in Skehan (1998) argues that communicative effectiveness is the key element in tasks since tasks provide the need to focus on discourse-embedded meaning to be communicated and much less on sentence-based syntax.

2.5 Sequencing Tasks

The ordering of different tasks has prime importance in task-based instruction. As authors working within this framework argue, language learning should be sequenced by means of tasks. Therefore, tasks form the basis of the curriculum (Albert and Kormos, 2004). Several criteria have been suggested for the sequencing of tasks. It is often argued that tasks should be arranged in order of complexity (Long, 1985) or difficulty (Brown, Anderson, Shillock, Yule, 1984; Candlin, 1987; Skehan, 1996, 1998) cited in (Albert and Kormos, 2004). Although the precise meaning of this term varies from one author to the next, in a recent article Robinson (2001) attempted to establish " theoretically motivated, empirically substantial, and pedagogically feasible sequencing criteria. He distinguished three independent facets of tasks: task complexity, task difficulty, and task conditions. Task complexity, in his interpretation, is the result of various information-processing demands that the structure of the task imposes on the learners; task difficulty covers learner factors, that is, differences between learners in their cognitive and affective resources that the structure of the task imposes on the learners; task difficulty covers learner factors, that is, differences between learners in their cognitive and affective resources that make certain tasks personally difficult for them and task conditions include participation and participant factors and the context of task performance. Robinson (2001) argues that sequencing decisions should be solely based on task complexity, as this is a fixed and invariant feature of the task. Consequently, a simple task will be less demanding than a more complex one for any given learner. Task difficulty, on the other hand, explains individual differences among learners, showing why one particular task should be more or less difficult for different learners. In affective variables, and temporal, they should form the basis of on-line methodological decisions, according to Robinson.

2.6 Approach and Techniques in Teaching Writing Skills

While discussing 'Approaches to Teaching writing in ESL class', Raimes (1983) ascertains that there is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in ESL classes. It is stressed in her book 'Techniques in Teaching writing' (1983) that we will seldom find a classroom where a teacher is so devoted to one approach as to exclude all others. A teacher using a communicative or a process approach will still use techniques drawn from other approaches as the students need them; model paragraphs, controlled compositions, free writing, sentence exercises, and paragraph analysis are all useful in all approaches.

Moreover, Raimes (1983) claims that there is no better way for students to grasp the essential value of writing as a form of communication than for them to produce the every-day life. This practical writing, according to her, has both a clear purpose and a specific audience. Much of this every day writing is "writing to get things done" (Raimes, 1989). Accordingly, messages, forms, invitations, letters, and instructions are types of writing that any one might have to do at some time or other. And Raimes claims that if our students experiment with these practical writing tasks in the classroom they will be not only practicing writing in the new language but also learning about the convention of the new culture.

On the other hand, Lee and Lee (1997) put practical ideas and suggestions that in order to renew the traditional approach to teaching writing- that take mechanical drill like exercises that are removed from the lives of students, we must, at least, do two things:

- Be aware of the purpose of teaching students to write;
- Have a good understanding of the interests and expectations of students. They stressed that in order to make learning effective; we should select tasks that appeal to the students.

Having given lists of language learning objectives against writing objectives Lee and Lee (1997) proposed that if the teaching objectives with regard to the purpose of writing are accepted, and if we also agree with the need to respond to the students' interests and expectations, our next question would be "What strategies should teachers employ?" One possibility is to use the writing process as a framework so that teachers can see more systematically, the specific objectives and the corresponding strategies.

Raimes (1991), on the other hand, argues that if any traditions are emerging, they have more to do with recognition of where we are now rather than delineation of exactly where we are going. She discusses five emerging traditions of recognition: recognition of the complexity of composing, of student diversity, of learner's processes, of the politics of pedagogy, and of the value of practice as well as theory.

Raimes (1991) strongly claims that despite all the false trails and some theorists' desire to offer one approach as the answer to our problems, what seems to be emerging is a recognition that the complexity of the writing process and the writing context means that when we teach writing we have to balance the four elements of form, the writer, content, and the reader.

Writers are readers as they read their own texts. Readers are writers as they make responses on a written text. Content and subject matter do not exist without language. The form of a text is determined by the interaction of writer, reader, and content. Language inevitably reflects subject matter, the writer, and the writer's view of the reader's background knowledge and expectations (Raimes, 1991).

In connection with this, while there is controversy about what a process approach to teaching writing actually comprises and to what extent it can take academic demands into account, there is wide spread acceptance of the notion that language teachers need to know about and to take into account the

process of how learners learn a language and how writers produce a written product. Such a notion of process underlies a great deal of current communicative, task-based, and collaborative instruction and curriculum development (Nunan, 1989).

In recent years, two different views on the nature of writing have emerged: the product approach and the process approach (Nunan, 1989). He discusses that the writing teachers who subscribe to the product approach will be concerned to see that the end product is readable, grammatically correct and obeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details and so on. Nunan stresses that the focus in class will be on copying and imitation; carrying out sentence expositions from cue words and developing sentences and paragraphs from models of various sorts.

Those who advocate a process approach to writing see the act of composition from a very different perspective, focusing as much on the end product itself (Nunan, 1989).

2.7 The Objectives of Teaching Writing

The objective of teaching writing in a foreign language is to get learners to acquire the abilities and skills they need to produce a range of different kinds of written texts similar to those an educated person would be expected to be able to produce in their own language (Ur, 1996); Pincas (1982) cited in (Willis (1996). They claim that the teaching of writing should fulfill three main aims:

- Its scope must be widened to go beyond the artificial, unrealistic school type compositions of traditional teaching to more genuine practice and relevant kinds of writing
- The writing should be as communicative, or functional, as possible. That is, it should be seen to fulfill the sort of normal communicative purposes, or functions, that writing is used for in everyday life.

- It should go beyond merely reinforcing grammar and vocabulary lessons and deal quite especially with those skills that are required for effective writing.

They also stress that although written English should certainly support and be integrated with grammar and vocabulary learning, the teaching of writing should be recognized as a special part of language teaching, with its own aims and techniques.

The changes in approach to writing in an English language classroom can be seen to stem from different ways of answering two questions (Raimes, 1987), both of them important for every language teacher: why do language teachers ask their students to write? And why do students of a second language need to write? Since these two questions inevitably raise issues of students' needs, teaching objectives, and curriculum design, any changing perceptions of purpose will bring about changes in writing instruction.

Raimes (1987) claims that the answers given to the first question, "Why do language teachers ask their students to write?" can be categorized into six pedagogical purposes. Hence, teachers ask their students to write for the purposes of reinforcement, training, imitation, communication, fluency and learning.

2.8 Task-based Teaching Writing

Writing has been a neglected area of English language teaching for some years. One has to look at the large number of books available to the ESL profession on reading, and the scarcity of books on writing to see the imbalance. To take the comparison further, teachers have for some time been offered models of reading, principles for designing reading tasks, and practical suggestions for classroom methodology (Hedge, 1988).

Hedge ascertains that it is only recently that research into writing has offered through provoking ideas about what good writers do with ideas, which hold implications for teachers who wish to help their students to become good writers. Furthermore, Hedge (1988) claims that in the absence of a well established or widely recognized model of writing, teachers tend to have very varying ideas about the role of writing in the classroom, what writing involves, and the possible roles of teachers and students in developing writing activities.

Nunan (1991) mentions that before the development of communicative approaches to language teaching, tasks and exercises were selected as a second order activity, after the specification of the morphosyntactic, phonological, and lexical elements to be taught. Selection of classroom activities, according to the author, was driven by curriculum goals specified in phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical terms.

In a task-based curriculum, the decision -making process is quite different (Nunan, 1991). Language that is meaningful to the learners supports the learning process.

He identifies two different routes that the curriculum developer/materials writer can take in initiating the design process. The first of these is based on what he has called the rehearsal rationale. Here the question initiating the design process is, what is it that learners potentially or actually need to do with target language, for instance, writing skills in this case? The second is what he has called the psycholinguistic rationale. Here the initiating question is what are the psycholinguistic mechanisms underlying second language acquisition, and how can these be activated in the classroom? Consequently, task selection occurs with reference both to target task rational and psycholinguistic principles (ibid).

Common in many writing textbooks are tasks that train students to become familiar without what are seen as unified and linear expository patterns of English, which might differ considerably from the expository rhetorical patterns of other language and culture (Kaplan, 1983). Many textbooks, according to the author, offer training in recognizing and using rhetorical patterns. Students are given the sentences of a paragraph and have to find the sentence that does not belong. Or they are given sentences in random order and have to put them into the best order for an English paragraph. Occasionally, teachers ask students to work in groups and give them sentences typed on separate slips of paper so that they can physically as well as mentally manipulate the sentences. The students gain a little more freedom to create their own sentences with an exercise that supplies a topic sentence of a paragraph and asks the students to add three sentences of their own (Slager, 1975).

Controlled-composition exercises also use connected discourse to train students to recognize and assimilate paragraph form and to manipulate linguistic forms within a paragraph format. So students may be given a paragraph about, for example, a farmer and his daily routine. The task is to copy the paragraph, following the indentation, sentence boundaries, and other given signals, but to change the topic from *a farmer* to *farmers*, thus changing verb forms and pronouns throughout. Slanger (1975) argued that such tasks that use connected discourse do not necessarily guarantee, though, that the students in turn view them as authentic discourse. He further stressed that if the focus is on a grammatical transformation and if the teacher concentrates on finding errors, students will concentrate on that transformation and as Widdowson points out, they “need pay no attention whatever to what the sentences mean or the manner in which they relate to each other” (1978), cited in (Raimes, 1987).

Another danger of controlled-composition tasks is that they may overemphasize the new forms to be taught at the expense of real texts and of the strategies

that writers use to produce them, and certainly at the expense of what most of us would consider good writing (Gallingane and Bryrd, 1979). The authors stress that what students write as a result of the task should, if it represents connected discourse in English, at least be an example of acceptable prose, something that we would hope our students would some day write, something we might even write ourselves.

With the influence of communicative competence as a goal in language learning, however, writing teachers began to shift from an emphasis on accuracy and patterns to a greater awareness of the importance of the writer's purpose and audience for writing (Widdwson, 1978) cited in (Raimes, 1987).

Sometimes teachers attempt to make a context for writing vivid by providing guidelines as to content and purpose. They establish not only an "information gap" but also "task dependency" in the classroom, a situation in which one student has information that another does not, and has to convey that information so that the receiver can use it (Johnson, 1981).

The following is such an example of such a task:

Work in pairs. Student A looks at the diagram of an Egyptian invention on page 88. Student B looks at the diagram of a Greek machine on page 58 each write a description. Then show your description to your partner who must try to draw a diagram of it. If his diagram is wrong, make your description clear so that the diagram is correct (Johnson, 1981)

Communicative tasks like these may form the basis of a whole course. The communicative nature of the writing, though, is limited to student/ student rather than student/teacher, for presumably it is the teacher who collects and marks the finished products.

However, Frank Smith (1982) has noted the dangers of a curriculum built around communicative tasks. He regrets the tendency to “regard language primarily as communication, as a vehicle for transmitting information from one person to another” (1982). Slinger (1987) argued that too rigid an adherence to communicative purpose might neglect conceptual functions, the language we use for “thinking, for forming concepts, fashioning propositions”. He stressed that if students always write with a reader in mind, rather than using writing as a way to explore and develop their own ideas, they might be inhibited by the demands for coherence and accuracy they assume all readers, particularly teachers, always make.

2.9 Content-based Teaching Writing

According to Nunan (1989), the use of experiential content as the basic building block in lesson or unit design is not a new one. As it has been around for a long time, it has many variants. Many of the courses and textbooks for English for specific purposes take as their point of departure content or topics from other subject areas. Nunan (1989) gave another example of content-based courses—the foreign language ‘immersion’ programmes in which school students learn maths, science, history, etc through the target language. (In a sense, as language is used as a vehicle to talk about other things, all language classes have content dimension.)

A topic approach to ESL in a school setting has been developed by Evans (1986), Cited in (Nunan, 1989). Accordingly, topics are broken into four sequential stages.

STAGE 1: VISUAL PRESENTATION

In the first stage, central concepts are presented through pictures, maps, models etc. Appropriate structures and vocabulary are introduced, and

students are given the opportunity of describing what they have seen orally and in writing.

STAGE 2: BUILDING A READING PASSAGE

Students answer true /false questions about the visuals and use these as the basis for building a written passage.

STAGE 3: ANALYSING AND EXTENDING THE READING PASSAGE

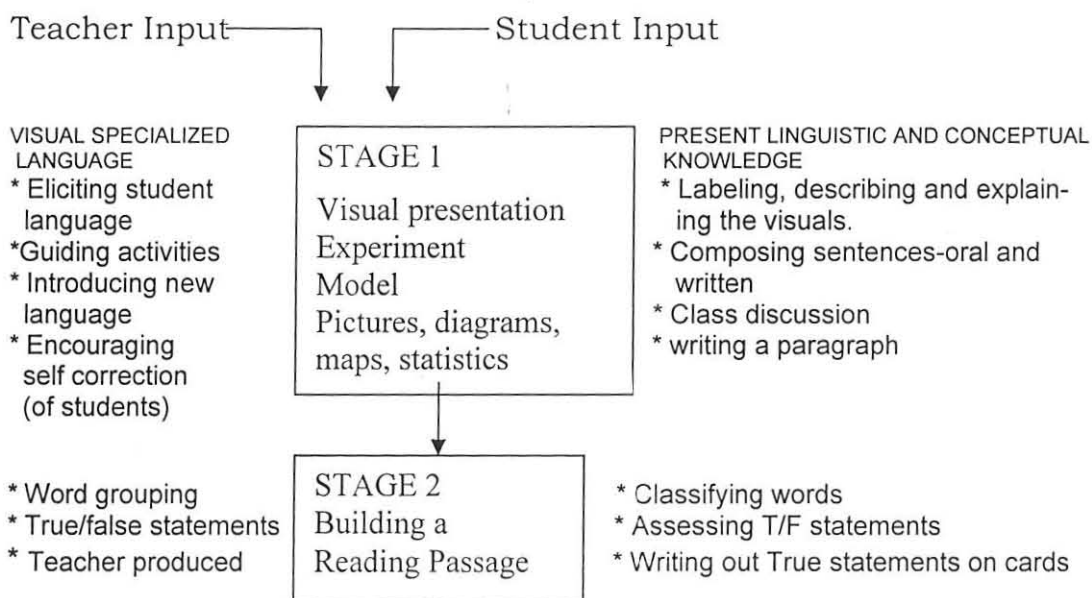
At this stage, students focus on some of the linguistic elements in the passage.

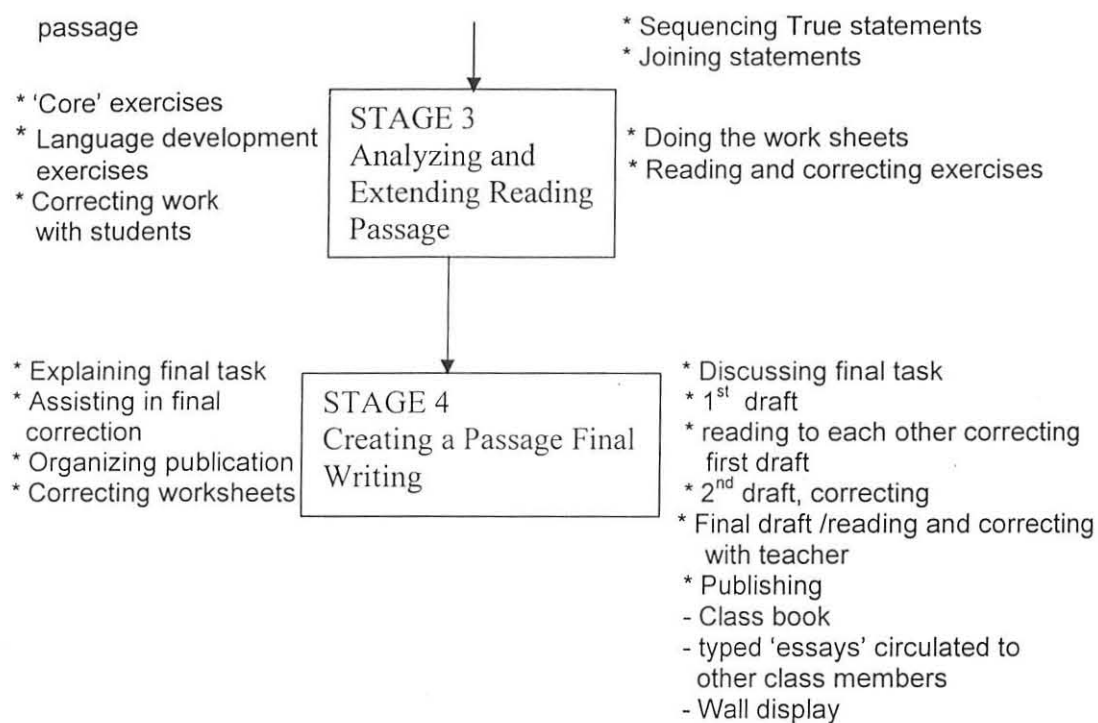
STAGE 4: CREATING A PASSAGE

In the final stage, students produce their own written passage based on the language and content they have acquired in stages 1-3. The point of departure may be another visual that might be described or compared with the original visual.

2.10 The Topic Framework

Evans (1986) summarized and created the topic framework of teaching writing based on topic-based approach.





Evans: Learning English through content areas, P. 7. (Taken from Nunan, 1989)

2.11 Task-based Approach versus Topic-based Approach in Language Teaching

Task-based syllabus, which came in three forms: Procedural, Process and task-based, bears promising views on successful language learning (Ellis, 2003). Ellis claims that TBS considers a series of complex and purposeful tasks as teaching content. He further discusses that task-based syllabus endorses the concept of organizing a syllabus around communicative tasks that learners need to engage in outside the classroom. In short, he views task-based syllabus curricula as learner-centered rather than language centered. In this syllabus, according to him, tasks are specified before students and teachers meet. This syllabus incorporates tasks that are analytic and that are specified in behavioral than linguistic forms. In other words, it shifts from form to meaning.

Seedhouse (1999) mentions the following as organizing principles of TBS.

- Activities that involve real communication are essential for language learning.

- Activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning.
- Language that is meaningful to the learners supports the learning process.

Long and Crookes (1993) discuss less well known and less widely used than structural or notional functional variants, two further synthetic syllabus types: situation and topic. Topic-based courses, which are organized around topics/contents deal with structures as they arise (Mohan, 1997).

Although this kind of syllabus seems to be less popular now, there are one or two other ESL texts, which are primarily topical (Long and Crookes, 1993). These writers claim that true topic-based syllabuses and accompanying materials have been produced. Moreover, topic-based syllabuses have the potential advantage of trapping students' knowledge of the world as an aid to learning, and also of providing realistic, and hence motivating potential, especially if selection is based on needs identification performed in terms of topics or on the findings of research on frequency of topics in the conversations of people of the same age as learners (Long and Crookes, 1993).

On the contrary, Long and Crookes (1993) point out two difficulties when designing such syllabuses. One difficulty lies in defining and distinguishing topics, and the other in the broadness of the concepts, with resulting lack of precision for materials design.

A further problem with this syllabus, is grading. Long and Crookes (1993) argue that there is in principle no way to grade topics in terms of difficulty or as to which ones need to be 'learned' before others.

Another drawback is that topic is of limited use for predicting grammatical form, although it does slightly well with vocabulary. A discussion of a particular

TESOL Convention could well involve a variety of genres such as explanations, opinions, narratives, reports and so on, which in turn require a vast range of lexis and linguistic constructions to be encoded (Long and Crookes, 1993). In short, they concluded that there is also no obvious way to grade or sequence topics, given the impossibility of distinguishing their boundaries or predicting what they involve.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subjects of the Study

The subjects of the study are first year preparatory /Grade 10+1/ students at Bethel Mekane Yesus School.

3.1.1 Selecting the Sample Population

Bethel Mekane Yesus School is a girls' school in Addis Ababa. Like other community schools, the school follows whole day program. In the school there are 115 first year preparatory students out of which 74 students were selected as the subjects of the study. The researcher administered pre-test to select this figure. In order to do this the following tasks were undertaken. Firstly, the scores of 115 students were ordered from the highest to the least. Then one-sixth (20 students) of the total number from the top and one-sixth (21) students of that number from the bottom, totally 41, students were excluded from the study. These students were excluded, as they were two extremes. Therefore, two-third (74 students) was taken as the subjects of the study. Secondly, these subjects were rearranged alphabetically to form control and experimental groups. Then even numbers were taken on one group and odds on the other. Using random sampling lottery method, the evens became control group and the odds experimental. Finally, 37 subjects were treated as control group and the remaining 37 subjects were taken as treatment group.

3.1.2 Data Gathering Instruments

In order to gather information from the subjects, the researcher prepared writing test and administered to them. The test was given as follows.

Pre-test

A 15-item pre-test was prepared and administered to the 115 students to assess their writing proficiency before the commencement of the study and to group them into control and experimental groups. The questions were of the following types. [1] Punctuation and capitalization [2] letter writing [3] identifying techniques or styles of composition [4] rearranging scrambled (jumbled) sentences to develop logically patterned paragraph and [5] writing short personal description.

Validity of the test items was ensured by preparing questions based on the contents in students' textbook. To ensure the reliability, on the other hand, the following steps were undertaken: (i) the test was administered to all grade 10+1 students in a similar setting (ii) the answers were corrected by other English language teachers. The scores obtained in the pre-test were used to select the subjects of the study through randomization as well as to compare the pre-test results against the post-test scores of the experimental group. The latter, enabled the researcher to see if there was significant difference in the subjects' performance after the implementation of task-based approach.

3.1.3 Procedures for the Presentation of the Teaching Materials

Based upon the nature of the study and its objectives, the researcher prepared two sets of teaching materials of similar content. The total number of lessons taught to both the control and experimental groups was 9. Even though similar contents were presented to both groups, there were big differences in the methods of presentation.

In teaching the control group, the researcher tried to integrate the writing lesson with the other language skills such as speaking, listening, and reading. The researcher based upon the Ethiopian students' needs for learning the

English language selected the topics. Thus their needs of English for academic purpose was given due emphasis in the selection of topics.

Moreover, the researcher attempted to put the topics according to their level of complexity. Topics related to their immediate environment or even about oneself were taught at the beginning of the experiment and topics, which were more or less detached, from the learners' daily activities were taught around the end of the study.

After the topics were selected and prioritized upon the above considerations, the researcher conducted the classes for three months. Within this interval the lesson was given three times a week for 45 minutes of which two sessions were the regular class hours and one session was arranged on Saturdays based upon the agreement reached among the school administration, the students and their parents.

In the learning-teaching process, the students were exposed to different activities after being paired up or grouped (See appendix B). Moreover, they were also given different model paragraphs and asked to write their own after they have comprehended the topics. Of course, they were being helped by the researcher to make necessary changes when they were producing their own paragraphs. In addition to this, the researcher prepared conversations on imaginary situations and guided the students to act out the role of one of the characters given in the conversation. This enabled the researcher to integrate the language skills, which are the characteristics of topic-based approach. Another point worth mentioning in the presentation of the lessons to the control group was that the introduction of language learning points, that is, grammar practices before the students started to write on the given topic. In line with this, for instance, lists of questions were presented and the students were asked to use the correct form of the verbs in brackets. This enabled the

students to use similar tense in their paragraphs coming next to the language points.

While the above details deal with the methods employed in the presentation of the lessons to the control group, the following points deal with that of the experimental group.

First of all the presentation of the lessons were alike only in the duration of time, that is, the experimental group students were also taught for three months, three times a week for 45 minutes. Moreover, similar arrangement was made with students on the consensus among the listed bodies mentioned above. Unlike in the presentation of lessons to the control group, the researcher thoroughly followed necessary steps discussed in (Nunan, 1989). This was preferred as it gives due consideration to some characteristics of tasks. Accordingly, tasks were selected, graded and sequenced in line with the contents presented to the control group. As it has already been mentioned above the contents taught to both control and experimental groups were similar. But the ways in which the lessons were presented to these groups were quite different.

As a result, the experimental group students were given different tasks to accomplish first and then asked to write paragraphs based upon what they have done at the beginning of each lesson. In order to help the students to take part in the task, the researcher orally introduced, briefed and acted out some roles as a model. Then the students, being in pair or group, had discussions on what they were supposed to do. The tasks involved two or more students one asking and the other answering different questions, which led them to the writing task that followed. In here they were taking turns to ask and answer those questions. For instance, while student 'A' speaks, student 'B' takes notes and vice versa. They were also guided to exchange their notes and check if some points were missed while taking the notes. Having accomplished these

tasks, the students started to write their own paragraphs that included the points raised in the preceding tasks. One very important thing the students (both the control and experimental) did was that they were reading through one another's written texts. After they read their friends' papers, they were told to comment on any problem.

Finally, after the two groups were taught differently for three months time a post-test was prepared and administered to them.

3.1.4 Post-test

Like the pre-test, a 15-item post-test was prepared for both control and experimental groups. The post-test had also its distinct purposes. That is, the results of the two groups in the post-test were compared across the groups to investigate if there was significant difference between the groups after the implementation of two different language teaching approaches for three months.

Moreover, the post-test result of the subjects in the experimental group was compared with their scores in the pre-test to see if there was visible difference probably as a result of the implementation of task-based approach.

The various steps undertaken to ensure the reliability of the pre-test were repeated again in the post-test. Similarly, to ensure the validity, the tests were conducted in such a way that they reflect the contents covered and methods used in the presentation of the writing lessons in the study.

3.1.5 Guidelines for Correcting the Pre-and Post-tests

As the items were both subjective and objective, the students were expected to make mistakes and commit errors in grammar, mechanics, spelling

organization, content, fluency and vocabulary. Therefore, mark allotment was given for each question type and the correction was made accordingly.

3.1.6 Method of Data Analysis

The gathered data through pre- and post- tests were analyzed using 2-tailed t-test value. The technique was chosen depending upon the nature of the hypotheses. The hypotheses made were non-directional so that the selected statistical analysis technique was worth using to analyze the data. In addition to the above fact, the investigation consisted of two variables: 'task-based' language teaching approaches and students' performances in writing skills. The former is independent whereas the latter is dependent for this reason; using t-test seemed appropriate and reasonable.

Having chosen t-test , the researcher computed the mean scores of the pre-and post-test results for the experimental group and the post-test results of the two groups. Hence, the results of the finding using this statistical analysis method are presented and discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As it has been stated in chapter 1, the purposes of the study were to test the following hypotheses.

Null (H_0) hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant difference between topic-based and task-based teaching of writing skills to Grade 10+1 Bethel Mekane Yesus School students. On the other hand, the alternative (H_1) hypothesis states the opposite.

In addition to the above hypotheses, the researcher investigated if there was significant progress in experimental group students' performances in writing skills.

In order to test the hypotheses, a two-tailed t-test statistics was used based on the nature of the question being investigated.

To gather data from the two groups, pre-and post-writing tests were administered and corrected out of 40 points. In connection with this, the post-test scores of subjects in the two groups and the pre-and post-test scores of the treatment group were compared. As a result, the following results were obtained.

Table 1 Description Data

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest control	37	19.00	33.00	27.54	3.20
Post-test control	37	17.00	35.00	27.00	3.66
Pres-test experimental	37	22.00	35.00	27.92	2.73
Post-test experimental	37	28.00	36.00	33.30	2.09

As it can be seen in table 1, the post-test mean score of the experimental group is higher than the control group, that is, 33.30 and 27.00 respectively. Similarly, the post-test mean score of the experimental group is higher than their score in the pre-test, that is, 33.30 and 27.92 respectively.

Nevertheless, these differences in their mean scores needed further statistical analysis using t-test to check whether the differences were statistically significant or not. Thus the following data were obtained for post-test control and experimental groups.

Table 2 Independent sample t-tests for post-control Vs post-experimental group

Group	N	df	Mean Difference	t-value
Experimental	37	72	5.7027	*8.236
Control	37			

* Significant at 0.05 level ($P < 0.05$)

The data given in table 2 tell us that there is statistically significant difference in their mean scores between the experimental and the control groups, that is, students who were taught by task-based approach performed significantly better than those by topic-based approach.

This clear difference in performance has resulted from the implementation of task-based approach. In connection with this, Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1997) point out that during the past 2 decades foreign language teaching has become more and more characterized by the communicative approach to language teaching, whose main objective is “to develop learner’s ability to take part in meaningful communication in different contexts, on different topics, for different purposes through different tasks.

Others also stress that a relatively new approach within this framework is task-based instruction, which calls for language teaching to be organized around different tasks (Long and Crookes, 1993; Pica, 1986; Skehan, 1988; and Willis, 1996). For this reason, tasks more specifically their components, characteristics, different types, sequencing, and implementation conditions have been the focus of much recent research.

Unfortunately, writing is an area characterized by considerable divergence between research and practice. Skehan (1996) notes that “much is known about which practices in teaching writing process are more effective, but several of these findings are in conflict with widespread practices in the schools.

Different scholars favor task-based learning. For instance, Samuda and Maddan (1985) cited in Kumaravadivelu (1993) strongly argue that by doing can learn language, when attention is focused on meaning. According to these scholars, TBL organizes the learning process by tasks to be performed in the target language, not by function, notions, topics and situations. This actually agrees with the belief held by language experts like O’Donnell (1969) that human beings learn language, not by talking about it but by using it. It is with this view that task-based approach to teaching writing emphasizes the learner’s use of the target language with any language repertoire they have at their disposal so as to convey the message triggered by the tasks they are doing.

Tarone and Yule (1989) also tell us that in the task-based approach to language teaching the learners’ main focus is not the language itself but the information obtained or conveyed using the language in spoken or written mode. Here the assumption is that learners pick up the target language accidentally or in a natural way while struggling to obtain or convey the message. This kind of language learning is believed to be more memorable, and Rivers (1987) confirms its importance as follows:

Students achieve facility in using a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages, that is, messages that contain information of interest to speaker and listener, writer and reader in a situation of importance to both (p.198).

Accordingly, task-based activities are believed to be more advantageous than topic-based because the former involve the learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on the meaning rather than form. According to Tony Wright (1987) tasks are different from topic-based or situational activities since tasks involve the imagination, beliefs, attitudes and interests of the learners. They usually involve the participation of two or more learners in accomplishing them.

Nonetheless, task-based language teaching approach in general is not free from criticism. The critics of the more learner-centered approach to language teaching express their fear that this approach neglects the accuracy of language use by the learners. But Krashen and Terrell (1987) argue that we do not necessarily sacrifice accuracy for fluency in the communicative language teaching. These two language experts and others who favor the communicative language teaching argue that the rationale behind the use of task-based teaching activities in learning a Second/Foreign language is that they will help to develop both communicative and linguistic competence of the learners. That is, task-based activities are important for both fluency and accuracy.

Nunan (1989) tells us that in real life communication different language skills are not used in isolation, they are found interwoven. In task-based approach to language teaching it is believed that the approach is closer to real life situation than the non-interactive approaches. This researcher, for instance, has come across some irrelevant topics which students were instructed to write on in student's textbook in the attempt made to follow topic-based approach.

One of the problems of topic-based language teaching approach is grading and specifying topics (Long and Crookes, 1993). They claim that topics have an unfortunate tendency to merge into one another and subsume other topics.

In general, almost all language professionals agree that the main and central goal of second/foreign language learning is communication. Even scholars who favor topic-based language teaching do not deny this fact. The difference between topic-based and task-based language teaching approaches in general and writing skills in particular lies in the ways they assume to bring about the ability for communication through spoken and written modes. Topic-based approach to teaching writing depends on the presentation of writing tasks or activities at the end of the units. This is perhaps because they assume that the activities are the outcomes of the preceding sections: reading, speaking, and listening. In the writing sections of the student's textbook for grade 10+1, for instance, students are asked to apply the information (knowledge) they have already obtained from other sections to a certain issue that is seldom relevant to the topic developed by the other section.

Even though much effort was put to make the writing topics familiar to the subjects in this study, the students failed to perform better when compared to those who were taught by task-based approach (see appendix D). This low performance clearly indicates that the latter approach is more effective than the former in teaching writing skills to Ethiopian preparatory students.

Table 3. T-test of pre-and post- tests for the experimental group

Test	N	Mean	St.	Mean Difference	t-value
Pre-	37	27.92	2.73	-5.38	*-9.505
Post-	37	33.30	2.09		

* Significant at 0.05 level ($P < 0.05$)

The above table shows that there is significant difference between pre-and post performances of the experimental group students. This finding seems to show that task-based approach would bring about some sort of improvement in the students' writing competence. Although the result showed this fact, the researcher claims that there might have been other factors that came into play along with the implementation of the approach. Some of the assumed factors are : students' outside classroom discussion and preparation for the test.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Findings

While language experts still claim that there is no one 'best' approach to language teaching/ learning, an attempt to make investigation so as to prefer one to the other seems a paradox, particularly at first glance. In this study, however, an investigation on topic-based versus task-based language teaching approaches was made to see if there is significant difference in students' written English performances.

In this experimental study two hypotheses were formulated. The Null hypothesis (H_0) states that there is no significant difference between topic-based and task-based approaches in teaching writing skills where as the Alternative hypothesis (H_1) states that there is significant difference between the two in teaching writing skills to first year preparatory (Grade 10+1) students.

In addition, an attempt was made to see if there was significant difference (progress) in the experimental group students' performance in the skill mentioned.

In line with these hypotheses pre-writing test was administered and two groups: control and experimental, were randomly formed. The two groups were taught differently, that is, the control group through topic-based and the experimental group through task-based approaches for three months, three days a week of which a day's lesson conducted for 45 minutes.

During the lesson times, the researcher had performed the following activities with the treatment groups to facilitate collaborative knowledge construction and to promote their involvement in the tasks presented.

Negotiation of the task-the occurrence of negotiation between the researcher and the students was perceived as one of the characteristics of collaborative language learning process in a task-based classroom. It provided the opportunity for the researcher to interact with his students and the students with their peers.

Assigning Roles – Atkinson (2003) points out that a clear understanding of the role students are expected to perform in the classroom facilitates their own engagement with the activities they are required to do. In this case, the experimental group students were asked to work in pairs, while they performed different roles representing different group of people.

Exposing students to similar texts-the development of the ability to write a particular text requires the learners to be given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with texts that are examples of that same genre (Long and Crookes, 1993). For this reason, the researcher exposed the control group students to model passages to help them notice the specific configurations of that genre. They were also encouraged to activate their memory of previous reading and/or writing exercises similar to the one they were being challenged to produce.

At the end of the experiment, the researcher prepared post-test and administered to both groups. Then the data collected through pre-and post-tests were computed for both groups using t-test data analysis technique. After that, mean scores analysis on post-control and post-experimental results was made. Thus the researcher was able to observe difference in the subjects' performance, which were 5.7027. But to check whether the difference was statistically significant, the difference was computed and compared at $P < 0.05$ significance level. Hence, it was found out that there was statistically significant difference between the mean score of the two groups (see table 2).

Similarly, the scores of pre-and post experimental groups were analyzed using t-test method. Thus it is likely that experimental group students' mean score in the post-test was found to be higher than their pre-test score (see table 3). This in turn, showed that the students have shown significant progress in their writing skills.

5.2 Conclusions

On the basis of the findings, it can be concluded that task-based approach of teaching writing skills is more effective than topic-based approach. For this reason, the students performed better in task-based teaching than in topic-based.

Therefore, from this research finding, it may be concluded that the approach that the country is currently using seems to contribute less in improving learners' writing ability. As a result, one can conclude that the problems our students' encounter in expressing themselves in written English might stem from the approach in use in addition to other factors.

5.3 Recommendations

In this study, topic-based approach of teaching writing skills was found to be ineffective when compared to task-based language teaching approach. From this result, it is possible to argue that the approach (topic-based) adopted in preparing teaching materials for preparatory classes needs critical revision. In addition to its defects in developing students' writing skills, the portion and time allocated for teaching writing is by far less than the other skills. Therefore, to alleviate students' writing problems and bring them to the reasonably expected standard, the researcher would like to forward the following:

5.3.1 Syllabus Designers and Materials Producers

Based on the findings in this study and Grade 10+1 teaching materials evaluation, the researcher recommends these bodies to make thorough revision on the writing sections to meet the students' needs for learning the English language in the country's context.

5.3.2 Language Classroom Supervisors

Although teachers have freedom to use their own ways in teaching the language, the majorities seem to adhere to the approach stated in teacher's guide. Therefore, closer follow-up supervision should be made so as to enhance language teachers' awareness in using the varieties of approaches available for instance, task-based approach.

5.3.3. Language Teachers

As language-teaching methodologies are swinging from one approach to the other, language teachers need to upgrade themselves in acquainting their teaching methods with current approaches to teach the skill to their students. Although the researcher does not dare say that this finding was conclusive, he contends to say that language teachers should use different tasks in their writing lessons.

5.3.4 Other Researchers

As the present study is a first attempt to see the effectiveness of task-based approach against topic-based approach of teaching writing skills, there might be some areas that have not yet adequately been investigated. As a result, further investigation is recommended.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Pre -Test for Control and Experimental Groups

Name _____

Date 13th Feb. 2006

Time allowed 1:15 minutes

Total Value: 40%

Part I

Direction: The following sentences are not in correct order. If you rearrange them, they will make a paragraph. Find the best arrangement and write the letter of your choice in the space provided (2% each).

- _____ 1. A. But modern roads must be made for trucks, cars and buses.
B. Long ago, roads were only trails for people or animals to walk on.
C. And should be wide enough for several lanes of traffic.
D. These roads should be as smooth and straight as possible.
A. bdca C. adcb
B. cdab D. dbca
- _____ 2. A. Hurricanes move more slowly than tornadoes.
B. This enables the people to prepare in advance.
C. Information thus obtained can be given in the path of the hurricane.
D. This makes it possible to track them by airplane and radio
A. bdca C. adcb
B. cdab D. dbca
- _____ 3. A. She was somewhat familiar with such senses.
B. They had often made her very unhappy.
C. On a few previous occasions, she had been completely deprived of desire to eat.
D. Sometimes she had gone into the kitchen to administer a tardy rebuke to the cook
A. abcd C. dacb
B. bcad D. dcab
- _____ 4. A. They were once common in Africa the Middle East and India.
B. Lions live in open grassland

C. Now they are to be found mostly in Africa, where their numbers have fallen by half in the last thirty years.

D. Most members of the cat family live alone but lions live in groups called 'prides'

A. bdac

C. bacd

B. cdab

D. cadb

_____ 5. A. Throughout history, many people have tried to do this.

B. They made wings and tied them to their arms.

C. Human beings can not fly like birds

D. Then they tried to fly by flapping the wings like birds

A. bcda

C. dacb

B. cabd

D. abcd

Part II

Direction: Items 6-9 are based on the following letter. Read the letter carefully and answer the questions that follow (2% each)

Addis Ababa
5/11/05
P.O. Box 1111
2

**The Principal of
BMY School
Addis Ababa**

Sir,

I have been sick for two days and last night my body temperature shot up to 40^oc. My doctor tells me that it will take me at least four days to be able to attend my classes. I, therefore, request you to grant me leave for four days from today. Thank you.

6

Rahel Tesfaye

- _____ 14. If you are writing to convince the audience to adopt your point of view or at least take it seriously, your writing could be.
- A. Expository C. Descriptive
 - B. Argumentative D. Narrative

Part IV

15. Instruction: Punctuate the following paragraph by adding capital letters, full stops, and question marks where necessary (12%)

i am an aquatic mammal found in most of the oceans of the world i love swimming really fast and jumping in and out of the ocean i'm a lucky animal because most people don't like to eat me so fishermen don't like to eat me so fishermen dont usually catch me sometimes i watch them and help them if they are in trouble i communicate with my family and friends with very high pitch frequencies of sound I also like to play games with my friends and eating small fish

what am i

APPENDIX – B

Teaching Materials for Control Group

Lesson 1

Lesson Topic: Yourself

Teaching points: Present simple tense/ verb + present participle

Oral practice: This practice is to be done in pairs or in groups. Each student should ask and answer each question.

A: How old are you?

B: I am years old

A: What height are you approximately?

Very tall

Quite tall

B: I am Not very tall

of medium light

or

I am about . . . meters tall

A: What is the colour of your hair?

B: My hair is . . . (black, brown, fair, and blonde, grey)

A: What kinds of clothes do you wear?

I	always usually often frequently sometimes never	wear	new clothes old clothes fashionable clothes unusual clothes expensive clothes (etc)
---	--	------	--

father?

A: Do your clothes please your

mother?

teacher?

father likes my clothes

B: My mother

A: What do you like doing in your spare time?

B	I	going to the cinema
		playing basketball
	like	chatting with my friends
	dislike	listening to music
	enjoy	going to church
		making my bed
		reading fictions

Written Exercise

Write a paragraph describing you. Include what you told to your friend(s). After you have finished writing, read your paragraph to your friend(s).

Lesson 2

Lesson Topic: Describing others

Sample paragraph

This passage was written by a student called Martha. She is a young university student in Addis Ababa. Read the passage and rewrite it beginning.

'Martha is eighteen years old . . . Make all the necessary changes in the verb forms and to the pronoun forms.

I am eighteen years old, not very tall and I have long black hair. I wear very unusual clothes and my father often gets angry with me He wants me to wear dress and a skirt. I am a student at Addis Ababa University and I work hard before the exams. In my spare time I like sitting in the garden and chatting with my friends. During term I share a flat with three friends. I have a lost of bright posters on the walls of my bedroom.

Lesson 3

Lesson Topic: Describing Yourself

Exercise: Now write a paragraph like the sample paragraph to describe yourself. What you look like, what you do and where you like. Use the oral practice and sample paragraph as a guide to help you write your paragraph.

- Correction:** 1. Read through your paragraph carefully and check it for spelling, correct form of verbs and pronouns.
2. Exchange your work with another student. You check her paragraph for any mistakes and the other student checks your work.

Lesson 4

Lesson Topic: The Next Public Holiday

Write a paragraph describing how you will spend the next public holiday.

Teaching points: Future tense

Prepositions

Pronouns

Revision of present simple tense

Oral practice: This practice is to be done in pairs or groups. Each student should ask and answer each question

Roman: What is the next public holiday?

Yomiyou: The next public holiday is

Roman: When will it be?

Yomiyou: It will be on

Roman: Will you go to work on that day?

Yomiyou: No, I

Or

Yes, I

Roman: Will you give any one presents on that day?

Yomiyou: Yes, I shall give my . . . a present.

- Roman:** Whata will you give him/her/them?
Yomiyou: I shall give my anunt
 sister . . .
 friend (etc)
- Roman:** Will anyone give you a present?
Yomiyou: Yes, my father
 mother
 will give me a present.
- Roman:** Will you buy new clothes for that holiday?
Yomiyou: Yes, I shall buy a new pair of trousers.
 pair of shoes
 (or say what you will buy)
- Roman:** What will you do after breakfast?
Yomiyou: After breakfast I shall go and visit my friend
Roman: What will you do later?
Yomiyou: Later I shall go on picnic
Roman: Will you have any special food on that day?
Yomiyou: Yes, we shall have

Grammatical Note: In this lesson we have used 'shall' after 'I' and 'we', and 'will' in all other cases. You should practise this. But in modern English 'will' is often used instead of 'shall'.

Lesson 5: The Next Holiday

Lesson Topic: How I Pass the Next Public Holiday

Exercise One: Write out the following passage patting the verbs given in brackets in the future tense with 'shall' or 'will'

The next public holiday (be) the Ethiopian Epiphany. It (be) on Monday the 20th January. On that day I (get up) early and I (not go) to work. I (put) on some new clothes and we (have) breakfast early. Then I (go) to church with the rest of my family. We (catch) a bus to piazza and we (go) to Asko Medehanealm. At the church we (pray) to God and sing religious song. Later we (have) a huge meal of different Ethiopian dishes together.

Exercise Two: Write out the following passage putting the current preposition in the blanks. Choose from the following:

with, on, at, in, to, for

The next public holiday will be the Id El Fatir. I shall get up early . . . the morning and go . . . the graveyard . . . my mother, we shall take some fruit and some sweets . . . us and leave them . . . the graves. Later we shall go back . . . our house and drink coffee . . . the rest of our family. My father and brother will go . . . the mosque and my mother and I will stay . . . home . . . and prepare the special lunch.

Lesson 6

Lesson Topic: planning

Direction 1: Read through the sample paragraph below. The subject matter is in the order that things happened.

I went to work yesterday as usual. I left home at eight o'clock. First I took a bus to Mercato. I reached the central station at twenty past eight. Then I caught another bus to the street corner near our school. I walked a short way and got to school compound at exactly a quarter to nine.

Note: when you are writing a narrative, arrange your subject matter in the order of the times at which the different things happened.

Example: In the above passage, the narrator put her ideas:

I left home at eight O'clock

First I took a bus

I reached the town centre at twenty post eight.

Then I caught bus . . .

Direction 2: Now read through the sample paragraph in section 2. Is the subject matter in this paragraph arranged in the same way as the subject matter in the sample paragraph?

You can see that it is not. This is because the sample paragraph in lesson 2 is a description and not a narrative. In a description there is no order of time. For a description the best way to arrange your subject matter is to put together all the sentences about the same thing. *Age, light, color of hair, the clothes you wear: description of yourself.*

Exercise one: W/ro Abebaye is a school teacher. Here is a list of some of the things she does during the day. The items in the list are not in order. Arrange these items in order.

<u>What she does</u>	<u>The time</u>
has lunch	12:45
starts teaching again.....	2:00
has a cup of tea during break	11:00
leaves the house.....	9:00
stops teaching.....	12:15
arrives at school.....	9:20
starts teaching	9:30
has break fast	8:30

Exercise Two: a/ Ato Olana is very lazy. Here are some sentences that can be used to describe him. The items in the list are not in order. Arrange these items in order.

- has pictures of food on the walls of his room.
- has red hair
- gets up late
- lives in Addis
- Goes to bed in the afternoon
- has brown eyes
- is 1:45cms tall
- eats four or five times a day
- sleeps between meals
- watches television
- has very short hair
- lives in a large house with three servants

Exercise three a/ write a paragraph on what w/ro Ababaye does during her working day. Use the list in exercise one to help you. Do not use all the times given but use "First" "Then" etc.

b/ Write a brief description of Ato Olana. Use the list in exercise two to help you.

Correction:

1. Read your paragraphs carefully and make sure the subject is well arranged.
2. Exchange your work with other student who has written about the other subject. That is, if you have written about Ato Olana, exchange your paragraph with a student who has written about W/ro Ababaye. Check what the other student has written.

Lesson Seven

Lesson Topic: An unhappy First Visit

Direction: Write a paragraph about your first day at school, or your first visit to hospital, or your first reset to any place or person which you disliked very much.

Language Points: Time clauses
past simple tense
past continuous tense
passive voice

Exercise one: Join the following pairs of sentences as in the examples.

Examples: I first went to the cinema. (When) I was five year old.

I first went to the cinema when I was five years old.

(when) the lights went out. I felt afraid.

When the lights went out, I felt afraid.

1. I first went to the dentist (when) I was seven years old
2. (when) I entered the waiting room. I felt afraid
3. I went into the dentist's surgery (when) the receptionist told me.
4. (when) I sat in the large chair. I shut my eyes.
5. (when) I opened my eyes. The dentist was laughing.
6. He held me firmly (when) I cried out with pain.

Grammar Note: These sentences can be divided into two parts. The part which begins with 'when' is called a time clause. The other part is called the main clause. Notice the use of comma (,) when the time clause comes first.

Exercise Two: Write out the following sentences and put the verb given in brackets in the past simple tense.

School

1. I first (go) to school when I (be) five years old.
2. When I (enter) the play ground, I (feel) very afraid
3. I (look) for another way out.
4. I (run) home as fast as possible

The dentist

5. Dawit first (visit) the dentist when he (be) eight years old.
6. He (become) afraid when he (see) the man in the white coat.
7. When the dentist (tell) him to sit down, he (begin) to shake.
8. When the dentist (finish) his inspection, Dawit (jump) out of the chair immediately.

Exercise Three: Rewrite the following sentences in the passive voices.

Examples: The strange smell frightened me
I was frightened by the strange smell
They took him into the hospital
He was taken in to the hospital

Hospital

1. A car knocked Johannes down.
2. They took him to hospital in an ambulance
3. They put him onto a wheeled stretcher
4. They pushed him down a corridor
5. The strangeness of the place frightened Yohannes
6. They took him to the X-ray room
7. Later a nurse took him to a ward
8. They put him into bed
9. His parents visited him save hours later
10. They allowed him to go home after a few days

Sample paragraph: Read through the following passages

- A. I first went to school when I was five years old. I did not want to go, but my grandfather held my hand firmly and I was taken to the school gate. When I went into the play ground by myself, I was frightened by all the strange faces and the large, ugly buildings. I quickly found another gate on the other side of the play ground. I got out by this gate and ran home when my grandfather arrived home a little later, he was surprised to find me I was sitting by the fire quite happy.
- B. My first visit to the cinema was a very unhappy one. I was taken there by some friends when I was only seven years old. At first there were bright lights and music and I felt quite happy. When the lights went out, I felt afraid. Then the film started and I saw a train on the screen. The train was coming towards me. I shouted out in fear and got down under my seat. When my friends saw me, they started to laugh. I felt ashamed and sat back in my seat. I watched the film to the end but I still felt afraid. I was glad when the film ended.

Vocabulary /words to watch/

A. Here is a list of words which tell you how you feel when you don't like something:

Unhappy	terrified
Afraid	
Frightened	troubled
Horrified	puzzled

You can use some of these when you write your paragraph

B. Find out the words you need to use to tell about your first unhappy visit.

For example

a doctor	a receptionist	a surgery
a dentist	a waiting -room	

- in a hospital there are the worlds, an operating theatre, an x-ray room.
- in cinema there is the screen, the audience
- in a funeral there are the mourners, the body, the coffin

Exercise Four: Now write a paragraph of your own to describe your first unhappy visit. Use the Written Exercises and the Sample Paragraphs as a guide to help you write your paragraph.

Correction:

1. Read through your paragraph carefully and check:
2. Exchange your exercise with another student. You check her paragraph for any mistakes and other student checks your work.

Lesson Eight

Lesson Topic: An Interesting place to Visit

Direction: Write a description of a place you know which is worth visiting. Choose any place you like, such as a city, a museum, a historical building, a river, an airport or a factory.

Language Points: Adjectival clauses

defining and non-defining with relative pronouns as object.

defining and non-defining with 'which' as subject

Oral practice: Ask and answer the following questions

1. A: What sort of place do you like to visit?

B: The sort of place I like to visit is . . .

2. A: Where are you going to write about?

B: The place I am going to write about is

3. A: Where is Sofomer?

B: Sofomer is the name of the place . . . It is in . . .

It is about kilometers from . . .

4. A: How can you get there?

B: There is a modern . . .

5. A: What happens when you get there?

B: When you get there, you . . .

6. A: Who will show you round?

B: A guide who knows a lot about

7. A: What can you see there?
 B: The main things you . . .
8. A: Do many visitors go to there?
 B: Many . . .
9. A: How long is it worth spending at there?
 B: It is worth spending . . .
10. A: Why do people go there?
 B: Many people go to Sofomer for . . .

Sample paragraph: Read through the following passage

One of the most beautiful places I have visited is the ancient Greek city of Cyrene in Libya. Cyrene is about 300 kilometers of Benghazi. There is an excellent modern road to Cyrene. When you get there, you can stay in a hotel, which is fairly cheap and comfortable. The ruins which are found there are very beautiful and interesting. Not many tourists go to Cyrene and you can spend a whole day quietly by yourself. The main things you can look at are the temples, the statues and the caves.

Exercise One: (1) Count the sentences in the sample paragraph which contain adjectival clauses and underline them.

(2) Leptis Magnais is an ancient Roman City about 50 kilometers east of Tripoli. Most of what is written in the sample paragraph about Cyrene can be written about Leptis Magna except there is no hotel there and no caves. But there is a camp site.

Rewrite the sample paragraph so that it is about Leptis Magna making all the changes which are necessary.

Exercise Two: Now write a paragraph of your own describing a place you know which is worth visiting. Use the oral practice and the Sample Paragraph to help you write your paragraph. Try to write some sentences in your paragraph containing different types of adjectival clause.

Correction: 1. Read through your paragraph carefully checking the use of adjectival clauses and punctuation and prepositions.

2. Exchange your work with another student. You check her paragraph for any mistakes and she will check your work.

Lesson Nine

Lesson Topic: Letter Writing

Language Learning: Letter Writing

Exercise one: Read the following letter and answer the questions after it.

P.O. Box 1014
Tel. 0157811916
28th April, 2006

Dear Ahlam,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th April, which I received a few days ago. In this letter you asked me to write a short description of myself. Here is a simple description which I have written for you.

I am eighteen year old, not very tall and I have long black hair. I wear very unusual clothes and my father often gets angry with me. He wants me to wear a dress and a skirt. I am a student at Addis Ababa University and I work hard before the exams. In my spare time I like sitting in the garden and chatting with my friends. During term, I share a flat with three friends. I have a lot of bright posters on the walls of my bedroom.

I hope to hear from you soon. Please write and tell me about yourself.

Yours Sincerely,
Martha

Questions

1. Who wrote this letter?
2. To whom was it written?
3. What is the address of the writer?
4. When was it written?
5. How many paragraphs are there in this letter?

Exercise Two: In section 3 you are asked to write a description of yourself. Use this description to write a letter similar to the letter in Exercise one. You can make the first and the last paragraphs of your letter the same as in Exercise one.

Correction (1) Read your letter carefully and make sure the address, date and first and last paragraphs are correct. Check the second paragraph for any mistakes in copying from the rough draft.

(2) Exchange your work with another student. She checks your letter and you check hers.

APPENDIX - C

Teaching Materials for the Experimental Group

The Tasks Used in the Study

Task 1

Student A: Your task is to tell your partner a brief description about yourself: you may tell her: your age, your light, the color of your eyes, the clothes you wear, if your family members like or not your clothes, what you do in your spare time etc. . .

Student B: Please listen to your partner's description about herself. Take notes while she is telling. After 'A' has finished describing herself, take over the turns and tell to 'A' about yourself.

Student A: Ask 'B' to tell you about herself and take note while she is telling.

Please don't interrupt each other while telling the description.

- Now exchange your notes and each of you should write a short paragraph to describe yourself.
- Read the description to your partner and check whether what she told you were included in the paragraph. If there are missed points remind each other and include them in your paragraph.

Task 2

Student A: Ask your partner 'B' to give you the paragraph she wrote to describe herself. And give yours to her. Read through her paragraph and write everything she said about herself in your language. Then give what you wrote and the one 'B' wrote to her so that she can compare if what she said were exactly written down.

Student B: Do the same thing with 'A'. Please don't forget to make necessary changes throughout.

Task 3

Student A: Find your partner 'B' and make a short talk on what you look like, what you like; the places you like . . .

Ask 'B' to describe you the ways she feels about you including your physical appearance. Take note while 'B' is describing you on a piece of paper. Then describe yourself well including what B feels about you, Use the note you took while 'B' was speaking.

Student B: Tell about yourself to 'A' including both your external and internal qualities. And ask 'A' how she feels and describes you. Take note while 'A' is speaking. Using the note, write a descriptive paragraph about yourself. Read your paragraph to one on other.

Task 4

Student A: Tell all you know about Christmas to your group members. Ask each member to tell you what they intended to do on the next Christmas. Ask them if they will give presents to anyone on that day or if any one gives them a present. Moreover, ask them what they will buy for the holiday.

Please don't forget to write down what each member is planning to do on that day. After you have asked your friends tell your plan on that occasion. Before you start to tell, write down the main points on rough paper. Have a short look at it if you miss some of the points while you are telling your plans to your friends.

Now write how you spend the next public holiday.

Student B: Take turns and tell how you spend the next holiday to 'A', 'C', and D. Ask these partners the questions 'A' has asked you before. Remember to write some necessary things you and your family members will do on the day. Now write how you spend the next public holiday.

Students C and D: please do the same with your friends.

After you have discussed for 20 minutes, each of you for not more than 5 minutes, write your own experiences on the next holiday and read your paragraphs to each other. Then exchange your papers and give comments, feedback, and corrections to one another on the back of the paper.

Task 5

Student A: Your task is to write what you need to do on the coming Easter in your school. Discuss with 'B' and try to convince her to spend the day together. If you are successful in your attempt to pass the time together, write your favorable things you will do together on that special day.

Student B: Show your agreement or disagreement to 'A's request. If you accept her question, ask how you will pass the occasion together. After you have made good discussion, write down the points you have agreed up on in paragraph form. Imagine that the holiday may be the last for you to enjoy together as you will be going abroad.

You need to keep the original script of your paragraph in dairy form to refer back when ever you feel homesick afterwards.

Task 6 A

Student A: Your task is to list down your daily activities. Put your ideas just as they happen to your mind. List all your daily activities as many as you can.

When you have exhaustively listed the things you do, think of the orders in which you do them. If you like, you can indicate what you do in relation to time. Then give to your friend to have a short look at your list.

Student B: Please have a look at your partner's list and try to check whether they are logically arranged when you compare with yours. Now your task is to list your daily activities and go to student 'A' and discuss if you do similar things a day. In pair identify those things you both do a day. List similar daily activities on separate sheets of paper and go back to your sit.

Both of you write paragraphs on the list you have taken on your sheets. When you finish writing the paragraphs, read them to one another. Do you find any problems in your partner's paragraph? Can you help her to improve the problems?

Now write the correct versions of your paragraph on different paper and keep it for other day to check whether what you wrote relates to what you actually do.

Don't forget to put your thoughts in their proper order of happenings

Task 6 B:

Student A: Your task is to go to student 'B' and ask what she does on weekends from morning to the evening. After you have listed your friend's activities look at their order of happenings Do you feel that the activities are well arranged according to their time of happening? After that write a brief account of your friend's weekends and give it to her to read through. Ask her if what you wrote about her weekends represented the reality you from her.

Student B: Please tell to your friend, 'A' what you do on your weekends from morning to the evening. Take time to remember your main duties and organize them chronologically. Then tell her one by one.

After you have told yours, ask about 'A's' duties on weekends. Take note while she is telling you. Now both of you write about each other's duties on your weekends based on the information you gathered. Read the paragraphs to one another and ask each other if what you wrote actually reflects your friend's duties on weekends. Do you think that what your partner wrote about you is put in coherent fashion? if not help her to put them in the order you fed proper to your duties from morning to the evening.

Task 7

Below are things to write about. Put a tick (✓) mark on the topics you have memories of and that you might like to write about. You can add other topics

<i>My bad memories</i>	<i>Tick here</i>
- My father's death	
- When I lost my mobile	
- When I left my village	
- The death of my pet	
- When I was first fired from class	
- When I saw a dead person in the street	
- My first visit to hospital, My first day at school.	

- A: (i) Be in pairs and compare your points for two minutes.
(ii) Now form a group of four which consist of a student who has different members and exchange your personal experience
(iii) Using the story you told above, write about your bad experience.
- B: Write the story you heard above, write what happened to one of your group member. Give the paragraph to which the text belongs and make her read through it to comment on the content, organization tense, and punctuations and capitalizations. Discuss on the comments given by your partner. If you cannot come to an agreement move about the class or ask your teacher for clarity.
- C: Think about some unhappy situation (incident) happened to one of your family member and write the person's experience in paragraph form. When you finish writing, check any mistakes you might have made. Use the corrections and comments you were given earlier.
Now read your paragraph and rewrite it again if you feel to make some changes of any kind.
Read your paragraph to the class students. Ask them if they are happy with what you did.

Task 8

Student A and Student B

Imagine that you have just met your friends 'C' and 'D' in the street after your journey to Sofomer. You got into a cafeteria and started chatting on your tour to Bale Mountains and Sofomer cave. Unfortunately, students 'C' and 'D' asked you to write about the sites and read it to the class students. Your reaction was so positive that you decided to write about your interesting visit to the area.

First close your eyes and try to remember of the scenes of the sites. Then jot down things you saw and took photographs. Then share what you have jotted down with each other. First, write independent paragraphs individually and read to one another. Second, write one paragraph based on the concepts you have agreed on.

Now take your friend's paragraph and read it to them. Ask for any comment and how they liked it.

Finally, write the final draft and read it to the whole class students.

After class discuss whether your paragraph fully describes what you saw at the sites.

Students C and D Please give your valuable comments to students 'A' and 'B' so that they can write the paragraph to the whole class.

Task 9

Student A: Your task here is to write a reply to a letter written to you from your pen pal in the States.

She explained herself and described her qualities: both external and internal interests to you in the letter. And she is much eager to know more about you. Therefore, write a reply letter to her describing yourself, where you live, your educational background, what your room looks like, with whom you share bedroom, etc . . .

Then give it to student 'B' to read the letter before you post it.

Student B: Read the letter written by student B. Ask why she wrote some facts that way. Ask her if she can describe herself better.

Please do the same thing, i.e, write a reply letter to your eldest sister who asked you to describe your appearance, interests, visions, etc using student 'B's' letter as a model. Then give it to student 'A' for proof reading and making necessary corrections before you send it.

APPENDIX- D

Post -test

Group Code: Control and Experimental

Name and Group Code _____

Part I

Directions: The following questions relate to different aspects of writing. Each question is followed by four alternatives A- D. Chose the best alternative and write the letter of your choice against each number (2% each).

_____ 1. Which of the following direct speech statement is correctly punctuated?

- A. "Don't forget your exercise books," said the teacher.
- B. "The teacher said don't forget your exercise books."
- C. The teacher said, "don't forget your exercise books."
- D. "Don't forget your exercise books," the teacher said.

_____ 2. Choose the sentence with the correct punctuation.

- A. The girl, whom you met at the school, is a friend of mine.
- B. The girl you met at the school is a friend of mine.
- C. The girl you met at the school is a friend of mine.
- D. The girl that you met, at the school is a friend of mine.

_____ 3 which of the following sentences is correctly punctuated?

- A. Ethiopia, which is in the East of Africa, is a poor nation.
- B. Ethiopia which is in the East of Africa is a poor nation.
- C. Ethiopia in the East of Africa is a poor nation.
- D. Ethiopia that is in the East of Africa, is a poor nation

- _____ 4. Which of the following statements require a semicolon?
- A. I don't understand him he is a difficult person.
 - B. We bought walking shoes lunch boxes and a tent for our educational field trip.
 - C. The manager briefed the workers about their pension plan.
 - D. It has happened once and it can happen again.
5. If you write a letter to a close friend who is a manager of a company and want to tell him about your last weekend at Sodere, which of the following salutation (beginning) do you use?
- A. Regards
 - B. Bye for now
 - C. Yours sincerely
 - D. Till next time
6. Which of the following is an appropriate closing for a very formal letter?
- A. Regards
 - B. Bye for now
 - C. Yours sincerely
 - D. Till next time
7. If a piece of writing finishes with, "We can therefore conclude, and the evidence shows that very clearly, that capitalism is the preferred system over socialism, " it is very likely that the writing is _____
- A. Narration
 - B. Description
 - C. Exposition
 - D. Argumentation
8. If a piece of writing begins with, "The people are marching to the square with their banners held high. They are also chanting songs, and the children are showing some acrobatics," it is very likely that the writing is:
- A. Exposition
 - B. Description
 - C. Personal opinion
 - D. Argumentation
9. Which of the following direct speech statement is correctly punctuated?
- A. "Is he interested in it," his father asked?
 - B. "His father asked," Is he interested in it?
 - C. "Is he interested in it"? His father asked
 - D. His father asked, Is he interested in it?

10. Which of the following is correctly punctuated?

- A. I am a student; but she is a teacher.
- B. She is an attractive woman I can not, resist her charm.
- C. He is a professional Football player
- D. This is a big, new, modern building.

Part II

Directions: the sentences a-e in each of the questions from 11-13 make up one paragraph. But the sentences are not in the correct order. There are four alternatives given in each case. Choose the letter of the correct order and write on the space provided. (2% each)

_____ 11. a. I have two sisters

- b. The younger one is a very generous girl.
- c. She often gives money to friends who have less than she has
- d. In fact, she is a very expensive daughter for our parents
- e. Because she hardly keeps everything they give her.

A. a c b d e

C. d a c e

B. a b c d e

D. e b c d a

_____ 12 a. A fully realized adult woman doesn't depend on others for her self- esteem.

- b. In fact, she expects others to perceive her value, not to create it.
- c. She doesn't desire approval indiscriminately or for its own sake but only if it is expressed because of attributes she respects in herself.
- d. Unlike a child struck with parents, family, or teachers, she picks her own intimates according to standards she creates.
- e. She is not much concerned with what someone thinks of her as with what she thinks of him or her.

A. a b c d e a

C. a b c e d

B. c b d a e

D. a b d c e

13. a . Their teacher often praises them.
b. However, they must not stop working.
c. And is sure that they will pass their exams.
d. The girls in the class speak English very well.
e. They often use English in the class and out side the class.
- A. d e a c b C. a e d c b
B. d a b c e D. a b d c e

Part III

Directions: You have just received this letter from some students in a Grade 11 class in England. Read carefully and write a reply to this letter in chiding the information that has been requested (Values would be given for accuracy, organization, and clarity. (10%)

Dear student,

I am writing to you in the hope that you will be willing to send me some useful information.

As part of my Agricultural science course at school I am doing a project on farming in different parts of the world. I am particularly interested learning about farming in your area of Ethiopia. I would be very grateful if you would send me information about the following points:

1. What types of farming are there in your area?
2. What crops are grown and what animals are kept?
3. Which are the most important crops and animals?
4. How do farmers sell their produce?
5. Is any produce exported? If so, to which courtiers?
6. What are the main problems faced by farmers?
7. Please describe the farming year in your area.

The information you send me will be very useful.

Thank you very much for your help.

*Yours sincerely,
A Grade 11 student
Happy Valley secondary school*

Part IV. In about 60 words, describe one of your parents: your mother or your father (4%).

APPENDIX E

Row Scores in Pre- and Post- tests


№	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	<i>Pre-test</i> 40%	<i>Post-test</i> 40%	<i>Pre-test</i> 40%	<i>Post-test</i> 40%
1	28	26	32	33
2	30	31	26	36
3	26	30	28	34
4	30	17	30	33
5	29	26	31	35
6	26	28	28	33
7	30	29	31	31
8	29	33	29	33
9	30	28	26	35
10	26	24	25	36
11	22	24	27	32
12	23	35	24	30
13	31	26	33	35
14	32	30	29	36
15	24	23	27	31
16	27	30	28	33
17	25	26	29	34
18	23	19	25	31
19	27	30	28	33
20	27	24	29	35
21	33	28	24	34
22	30	26	22	35
23	24	28	25	33
24	27	27	29	28
25	30	29	31	28
26	30	27	35	32
27	28	30	28	36
28	27	28	29	36
29	26	20	26	34
30	25	28	25	33
31	24	24	30	35
32	19	23	25	34
33	30	26	26	34
34	33	30	27	35
35	27	27	29	33
36	30	32	27	30
37	31	27	30	30

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my original work done under the guidance of Dr. Geremew Lemu. All relevant sources used in this thesis are dully acknowledged.

Name: Abebe Gemechu

Department: Department of Foreign
Languages and Literature

Signature: 

Date: 26/07/06