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CARRERA PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y
EXTRANJEROS**

**Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to Enhance
Academic Writing Skills in EFL University Students**

**Trabajo de Titulación para optar al título de Licenciatura en
Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros**

Autor:

Lema Cunduri Henry Ariruma

Tutor:

Mga. Miguel Fernando Paredes Amoroso

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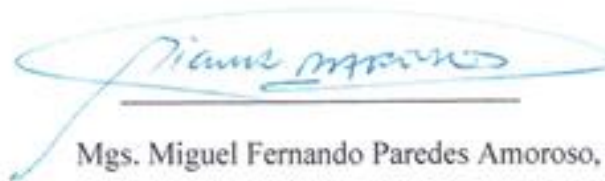
Henry Ariruma Lema Cunduri

I.C: 0605418557

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I, the undersigned, Mgs Miguel Fernando Paredes Amoroso, professor in the Faculty of Ciencias de la Educación, Humanas y Tecnologías, hereby certify that I have guided and reviewed the development of the research work entitled **“Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to Enhance Academic Writing Skills in EFL University Students”** under the authorship of **Henry Ariruma Lema Cunduri**. Therefore, it is authorized to execute the legal procedures for its presentation. It is everything to report in honor of the truth.

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C.I: 0601910219

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Who subscribes Scholars delegated Members of the Undergraduate tribunal to evaluate the research work "Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to Enhance Academic Writing Skills in EFL University Students." presented by Henry Ariruma Lema Cunduri, with Identity card number 0605418557, supervised by Mgs. Miguel Fernando Paredes Amoroso. We certify and recommend the APPROVAL for this degree's purposes. The research work has been previously evaluated, and the author has been heard, having nothing more to observe.

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PhD. Mónica Janneth Torres Cajas

COMMITTED PRESIDENT

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mónica Torres Cajas", written over a horizontal line.

PhD. César Augusto Narváez Vilema

COMMITTED MEMBER

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "César Narváez Vilema", written over a horizontal line.

Mgs. Edgar Eduardo Heredia Arboleda

COMMITTED MEMBER

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edgar Heredia Arboleda", written over a horizontal line.



CERTIFICACIÓN

Que, **LEMA CUNDURI HENRY ARIRUMA** con CC: **0605418557**, estudiante de la Carrera **PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS**, Facultad de **CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN, HUMANAS Y TECNOLOGÍAS**; ha trabajado bajo mi tutoría el trabajo de investigación titulado **"IMPLEMENTING TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS IN EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS"**, cumple con el 8%, de acuerdo al reporte del sistema Anti plagio **COMPILATIO**, porcentaje aceptado de acuerdo a la reglamentación institucional, por consiguiente autorizo continuar con el proceso.

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TUTOR

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This thesis is dedicated to my beloved family, who have been my constant source of strength, light, and inspiration throughout this academic journey. Their unwavering belief in my potential has given me the courage to pursue my goals and overcome the challenges I faced along the way. I am deeply grateful for the endless sacrifices they have made to support my education and for the unconditional love they have shown me in every season of life. Their profound encouragement has been the spark that ignited my dreams, and this achievement is as much theirs as it is mine.

Henry Lema

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Henry Lema

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RESUMEN

Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo implementar la Enseñanza de Lenguaje Basada en Tareas (TBLT) para desarrollar la destreza de escritura académica en estudiantes de octavo semestre de inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL) de la Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH). En el contexto ecuatoriano, los estudiantes de EFL tradicionalmente enfrentan dificultades para producir textos académicos cohesivos y bien estructurados debido a metodologías de enseñanza obsoletas que priorizan ejercicios gramaticales aislados sobre la comunicación significativa. Para abordar esta deficiencia, el estudio utilizó un enfoque cuantitativo con un diseño preexperimental, empleando un modelo de grupo único con pre-test y post-test. La intervención pedagógica aplicó el marco TBLT de Willis y Willis (que comprende las fases de pre-tarea, ciclo de tarea y enfoque en el lenguaje) a una muestra de treinta y ocho estudiantes. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos incluyeron tareas de ensayo argumentativo diagnóstico y final, evaluadas mediante una rúbrica analítica estandarizada, junto con una lista de cotejo observacional para garantizar la fidelidad de la intervención.

Palabras claves: Enseñanza de Lenguas Basada en Tareas (TBLT), Escritura Académica, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL), Educación Superior

ABSTRACT

In the Ecuadorian context, EFL students traditionally face difficulties producing cohesive, well-structured academic texts due to outdated teaching methodologies that prioritize isolated grammar drills over meaningful communication. To address this problem, this research aimed to implement Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to develop academic writing skills in eighth-semester English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH). A quantitative research method was employed with a pre-experimental design using a one-group pre-test and post-test format. The teaching approach employed TBLT using the theoretical approach of Willis and Willis for the sample of thirty-eight students. Data were collected using a diagnostic essay test as well as the final argumentative essays using a rating rubric together with an observational checklist. It emerged that there was a significant improvement in the writing ability of the students. The improvement was very high in the "Task Completion" criteria, with an increase of 26% (46% to 72%). Additionally, there was an increase of 24% in "Coherence & Cohesion" and "Grammar & Mechanics", as well as a 20% increase in "Organization & Structure". Conclusion The systematic use of TBLT significantly changed the academic writing process from being product-oriented to a cognitive and communicative process. Finally, it is recommended to adopt the TBLT approach as a sustained methodological framework rather than a short-term intervention.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Academic Writing, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Higher Education.

CHAPTER I

1. REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English has grown to be vital in the modern worldwide educational environment since it acts as the universal language of science, technology, and research. Learning academic writing in this language is therefore essential as it is a complex ability going beyond vocabulary and grammar to include discursive abilities like coordinating ideas and creating coherent arguments. However, in the Ecuadorian higher education system, university students often have trouble writing coherent and well-structured academic papers. Traditional teaching methods that prioritize disconnected grammar drills and rote memorization above meaningful, communicative writing assignments mostly fuel these challenges.

Within this framework, the current study centers on investigating the application of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), a pedagogically oriented approach organizing language instruction around the execution of significant, real-world tasks, in fostering academic writing competencies among eighth-semester EFL students enrolled in the Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros program at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH) throughout the academic period 2025-2s.

. TBLT presents itself as a good teaching substitute that uses action-oriented activities to encourage language acquisition by combining planning, drafting, and editing phases. This study helps to develop a complete knowledge of academic writing, improve student engagement, and promote critical thinking by relating language use with real communication and process-based learning.

This study is viable from multiple points of view. In terms of bibliography, there is a large body of scholarly material and earlier research that favors the use of TBLT for writing assignments in EFL settings. Methodologically speaking, the study assesses linguistic development using easily available tools including observation checklists and standardized writing rubrics. Regarding human resources, the study is done under academic supervision and inside the Academic Writing II classroom with an intact group of university students. The implementation depends on typical educational resources present in the institution to ensure its practical execution regarding the economy.

This research directly benefits the Eighth-semester students at UNACH enrolled in the academic writing course, who will enhance their advanced writing abilities, as well as the teachers engaged in the program. Indirect beneficiaries include the general academic community and future students who will gain from these prospective instructors' improved teaching profile. The theoretical gap examined by this study is in determining how the organized application of TBLT-based activities might especially enhance argumentative clarity and textual organization within the under-researched Ecuadorian institution environment.

To make it easier to read and organize, this study is broken down into five chapters. The reference framework given in Chapter I consists of the introduction, problem statement, justification, and objectives. The theoretical framework is covered in Chapter II, together with the theoretical underpinnings of TBLT and academic writing and the research background. Chapter III details the methodological framework, encompassing the pre-experimental strategy, study population, and data collecting tools. The outcome and discussion of the intervention are presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V finishes by outlining the conclusions and suggestions drawn from the instructional application.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nowadays, university students are increasingly required to express their ideas clearly and accurately in academic contexts, which is considered the global language of science, technology, and education. Writing academic texts in English, such as essays, reports, and summaries, is not only a requirement for success in higher education, but also a skill that opens doors to international opportunities. However, many EFL students still face difficulties when organizing ideas, structuring arguments, and using formal and coherent language in the academic writing.

One of the most common difficulties that students of English as a Foreign Language have when writing academically is in creating their ideas and structuring them logically as part of the argument they wish to make. The primary cause of this issue is due to traditional methods of teaching, such as grammar drills, memorization lists, and mechanical writers, which do not provide students with opportunities to create meaningful writing experiences that engage them and reflect more accurately what they see in the world.

This educational model of teaching writing, which is common in Ecuadorian universities, leaves students with little opportunity for the growth of positive experiences that develop an attitude of responsibility towards their work and encourage them to continue writing to the end and therefore often leads to students producing fragmented pieces of writing, that fail to connect with one another or with the overarching argument and they seldom revise and reflect on their writing before turning it in. In the province of Chimborazo, students in university struggle significantly to organize and present their Academic Ideas (on foreign language) in coherence and precision. The continued use of outdated methods of teaching language to EFL and ESL Analyzes have been established as one reason contributing to limited development of skills for accomplishing this task, such as using a direct method for immediate communication or using nontraditional approaches, such as grammar-translation methods, towards language acquisition and critical thinking skills have also contributed to poor writing results in many instances.

Moreover, there is a lack of exposure to writing tasks that simulate real academic tasks, limiting students' ability to develop the ideas coherently and respond to academic prompts effectively. As highlighted by Cabrera-Solano (2020), many EFL students in the Ecuadorian context produce texts that lack cohesion, logical progression, and

argumentative clarity, indicating a pressing need for pedagogical innovation that addresses these foundational deficiencies.

The UNACH, specifically within the students enrolled in the Language Teacher Training (Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros) program in their eighth semester, demonstrate concerning levels of academic writing ability when assessed for argumentation skills, coherence and conformity with formal writing conventions better than 30% of the students prior to their degree projects being completed. Although many are only months away from graduation, they continue to present with numerous examples of fossilized errors and exhibit limitations of writing the types of complex academic texts needed to demonstrate that they possess competency to fulfill profession-level expectations at time of graduation. Current research suggests that the use of task-based approaches, such as TBLT will produce positive results with students achieving higher levels of academic writing competencies through their engagement in authentic, purposeful, and goal-oriented writing activities (Ellis, 2009; Baralt, Gilabert & Robinson, 2016).

This methodology emphasizes authentic communication, process-based learning, and the integration of planning, drafting, and revising stages in writing. However, in Ecuador, the implementation of TBLT in academic writing courses is still limited, often due to lack of teacher training, institutional support, or familiarity with the approach (Ortega & Farinango, 2021).

Thus, this situation makes it necessary to explore how the implementation of TBLT-based writing tasks can improve the academic writing skill of students of English as a foreign language. Likewise, this research aims to apply this approach with Eighth semester students at UNACH to better understand its impact on writing development and provide practical knowledge to improve the teaching of academic writing.

Thus, this situation made it necessary to explore how the implementation of TBLT-based writing tasks could improve the academic writing skills of EFL students. To address this, the present research applied a quantitative, pre-experimental methodology utilizing a single-group pre-test and post-test design to a sample of thirty-eight Eighth-semester students at UNACH. The study was conducted during the academic period 2025-2s to better understand the approach's impact on writing development and to provide practical knowledge to improve the teaching of academic writing.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

What is the impact of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on the development of academic writing skills among Eighth-semester EFL students of the Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros career at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH) during the academic period 2025-2s?

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

Ultimately, this research is justified by its potential to directly empower and improve the academic writing skills of future English educators at UNACH. By

intervening at a critical moment in their academic journey, the application of TBLT strategies will strengthen their foundational skills and build their confidence. The findings will not only help students successfully navigate the rigorous demands of their thesis writing but will also significantly enhance their overall professional profile and competitiveness in the global educational landscape.

Importance of this study can be found on the grounds that mastering the skills of academic writing is crucial in higher education due to the fact that English has become a worldwide language in science, technology, and education. Indeed, acquiring the ability to use such academic discourse is vital not only for achieving current academic success but also for increasing general professionalism in the world arena.

Pertinence of this investigation can be stated in terms of its timeliness for the students of Eighth Semester in the *Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros* career in UNACH. Being close to completing the program of studies and facing the task of elaborating the thesis, students required urgent enhancement of advanced academic writing skills in order to cope with the challenge.

The relevance of this work is clearly illustrated through its inevitable deviation from classical methods of teaching, which involve product-centered grammar practice. Through the application of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach, the research created a good pedagogic approach, centered around task-oriented exercises that reflected genuine needs and contributed to understanding the entire process of writing.

The research was highly feasible in all aspects. First, it employed easily available and trustworthy tools of investigation, including writing rubrics and observations. Second, this research was conducted without difficulties in the existing classroom of the "Academic Writing II" course using the existing pool of students and standard means of education available to the institution.

The immediate benefits of the study were observed among Eighth-semester students, who managed to increase their writing skill. Indirectly, the broader academic community and the future students of these soon-to-be English educators will benefit from their enhanced pedagogical profile and communicative competence.

In terms of academic contribution, this study bridged a significant practical and theoretical gap by providing empirical evidence on how the structured implementation of TBLT-based tasks can specifically improve argumentative clarity, textual organization, and task completion within the Ecuadorian university context.

However, in spite of the promising outcomes achieved, this research involves various constraints that should be taken into consideration. Firstly, the implementation of the pre-experimental design and the lack of a control group make it difficult to confirm a strong cause-and-effect relationship between the intervention applied and the achieved positive changes. Secondly, the fairly small number of participants (only 38 students) makes it challenging to generalize the results to other contexts. Finally, the intervention was conducted for only a brief period of time, which might not be enough for long-term development, especially in terms of mastering grammar. Lastly, although a structured rubric was used, the evaluation process may still involve a degree of subjectivity, especially in the absence of extensive inter-rater validation.

This limitation indicated that overcoming persistent difficulties with grammar requires continuous reinforcement and explicit feedback over longer academic periods than the one utilized for this intervention.

1.5 OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To determine the effect of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on academic writing skills in Eighth semester students at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH) Period 2025-2s.

Specific Objectives

- To diagnose the initial academic writing skill level of students of Eighth Semester.
- To apply a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) strategy in English classes to improve academic writing.
- To measure the effectiveness of the TBLT strategy on students' academic writing performance through a post-test assessment.

CHAPTER II

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Over the last few years, the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been widely explored in English as a foreign language (EFL) context, especially about improving academic writing. These studies have shown that the TBLT approach not only promotes meaningful writing production but also improves student engagement, motivation, and textual organization.

Illustrating this effect, Sundari et al. (2021) performed an experiment in Indonesia where the participants were university students learning English as a foreign language through TBLT materials. Significant advancements in the structure, contents, and coherence of their academic writings were registered. However, the mechanical aspects of writing such as spelling and punctuation did not advance much. In another similar study by Ahmed, Khan, and Rehman (2023), a comparison was made between the two groups of learners; one learned using the conventional way, while the other used TBLT exercises. The learners who used TBLT advanced significantly in writing argumentative essays, and they had a positive attitude towards it.

Qualitative findings on the impact of TBLT on motivation revealed that according to Eka Sari et al. (2023), students attached more value to writing assignments associated with authentic experiences. Students noted that the TBLT-based approach helped them increase motivation, self-confidence, and writing skills. This finding is reinforced by the studies by Thirakunkovit and Boonyaparakob (2022), who applied collaborative tasks such as writing research proposals and literature reviews, observing that students improved in cohesion, argumentation, and textual clarity.

Also, as stated by Nurwahyuni (2021), the implementation of the TBLT approach in writing classes promoted greater student engagement and generated a more active learning experience. However, she also warned of common challenges such as limited teacher feedback and the time required to complete tasks. These limitations have been reported similarly in diverse contexts, suggesting the need to adapt the approach to actual classroom conditions.

Furthermore, studies such as Wardana (2024) compared TBLT with the content-based approach (CBLT) in teaching descriptive writing. Although the CBLT approach favored grammatical accuracy, TBLT was perceived as more motivating and enriching from a creative point of view. Similarly, Teguh Mahmud et al. (2024) applied an intervention to secondary school students, highlighting significant improvements in grammar, vocabulary, and textual organization after the application of communicative tasks, as well as greater student participation.

Similarly, Aurelya et al. (2024) explored the experience of university students when performing different writing tasks using the TBLT approach. The results showed that students perceived improvements in fluency, vocabulary, and organization of ideas. However, many reported persistent difficulties with grammar, highlighting the importance of supplementing tasks with more effective feedback. This aspect coincides

with the findings of a systematic review conducted by Zhang et al. (2022), which concluded that the most effective interventions in academic writing instruction include explicit feedback, collaborative work, and authentic tasks with communicative purpose.

To sum up, the studies reviewed highlight that the TBLT approach improves textual coherence, and the perception of usefulness of academic tasks in EFL students. However, recurring limitations related to available time, teaching load, and feedback are identified. Furthermore, very few studies have directly compared different types of TBLT tasks from the student's perspective. In this regard, the present study makes a valuable contribution by applying varied tasks and analyzing their perceived impact on the development of academic writing within an Ecuadorian university context.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

2.2.1 Sociocultural Theory and Social Constructivism

This research is strongly grounded in the principles of Social Constructivism and Sociocultural Theory, which argue that knowledge is not passively received but actively constructed through social interaction and cultural mediation. Foundational contributions from Lev Vygotsky (1978) establish that cognitive development is intrinsically linked to social processes, emphasizing that learning precedes development and occurs through interaction with more knowledgeable others.

Through these collaborative interactions, students gradually internalize academic discourse conventions, transforming socially mediated activity into individual cognitive competence a process that Vygotsky describes as internalization. Thus, this study positions writing development as a socially negotiated and culturally embedded process rather than an isolated individual skill.

2.2.2 Interactionist Framework and the Output Hypothesis

According to the Interaction Hypothesis, language learning is greatly facilitated through interaction. More specifically, interaction becomes particularly beneficial for language learning when learners participate in negotiating meaning within communication breakdown situations. During these situations, learners can be provided with modified input as well as feedback to help them better understand what is being communicated and facilitate their language development process. Teresa Pica (1994).

Within this framework, learners' cognitive engagement plays a crucial role. As noted by Richard Schmidt (1990), the process of noticing linguistic features in input is essential for acquisition. During task-based language teaching (TBLT) activities, students are required to actively identify the gap between their current interlanguage and the target academic discourse, which enhances their awareness of linguistic forms and functions.

To bridge this gap, Swain's Output Hypothesis becomes central. Swain (2005) argues that producing language particularly extended written output pushes learners to process language more deeply. While comprehension might depend mainly on semantic processes, production is characterized by syntactic accuracy and grammar. This "forced output" will motivate students to formulate hypotheses, evaluate their limitations, and redesign their interlanguages.

In the context of academic writing activities like argumentative essays or analytical papers, this tendency is even more obvious. In an effort to express their thoughts, students have no choice but to improve their grammar and discourse skills. Rod Ellis (2003) supports this view by highlighting that task-based instruction promotes both fluency and accuracy through meaningful language use.

Moreover, the integration of interaction and output aligns with the pedagogical principles of Task-Based Language Teaching, as outlined by Jane Willis (1996) and Dave Willis (2007), where learners engage in purposeful tasks that require authentic communication and result in tangible outcomes.

In this study, task-based writing activities serve as a platform for both interaction and production, allowing learners to negotiate meaning collaboratively while also engaging in individual output. This dual process not only enhances linguistic competence but also fosters the development of academic literacy, positioning writing as both a cognitive and social endeavor.

2.2.3 The Role of Authentic Resources

The use of authentic academic resources is supported by the need to expose learners to real disciplinary discourse. Stephen Krashen (1985), through the Input Hypothesis, emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input slightly above the learner's current level ($i+1$).

Authentic materials such as academic articles, graphs, and organizational frameworks provide this type of input while maintaining relevance to real-world contexts. Brian Tomlinson (2013) further argues that materials should be meaningful, engaging, and representative of actual language use.

Additionally, these resources help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, allowing students to internalize academic conventions and discourse structures in a contextualized manner.

2.2.4 Assessment and Evaluation Mechanisms

Evaluation within this framework is conceptualized as both formative and summative. Formative assessment is supported by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (1998), who highlight the importance of continuous feedback in improving learning outcomes.

Formative peer review can be found to be effective for encouraging reflection, cooperation, and critical thinking skills, as well, according to Keith Topping (1998).

However, summative assessment should follow standardized criteria, including Cambridge English and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The importance of communicative and performance-oriented assessment of language skills has been highlighted by Lyle Bachman (1990). Thus, evaluation is not merely a measurement tool but an integral part of the learning process.

2.2.5 The Teacher as Facilitator and Guide

Within Task-Based Language Teaching, the teacher's role shifts significantly. According to David Nunan (2004), teachers act as facilitators who create conditions for meaningful interaction rather than simply transmitting knowledge.

During the task cycle, the teacher monitors and supports learners' fluency without interrupting communication, aligning with Michael Long (1996). Error correction is delayed to maintain communicative flow.

In the Language Focus phase, the teacher adopts a more directive role, providing explicit feedback and addressing linguistic gaps. This dual role reflects a balance between communicative teaching and form-focused instruction, as discussed by Jack Richards (2006).

2.2.6 The Student as an Autonomous Meaning-Maker

Under this framework, students are viewed as active participants in the learning process. Autonomy has been defined by Henri Holec (1981) as taking responsibility for one's own learning process, a crucial concept of this research. Learners act as problem-solvers, who work collaboratively towards achieving a common goal. This is consistent with Leo van Lier (2004)'s theory, which focuses on agency and ecological approach to language acquisition.

Moreover, by participating in authentic writing tasks, learners develop not only linguistic competence but also critical awareness and academic identity. They are not passive recipients of rules but active constructors of meaning within a sociocultural and academic context.

2.2.7 English as a Global Academic Lingua Franca

In the contemporary globalized academic landscape, English has consolidated its role as the dominant lingua franca of scientific production, technological development, and higher education dissemination. The majority of indexed journals, international conferences, and research networks operate primarily in English, positioning academic writing in this language as a gatekeeping mechanism for scholarly participation and knowledge production.

Consequently, EFL university students face a dual challenge: mastering the linguistic system of English while simultaneously developing advanced discursive competencies such as argumentation, coherence, synthesis, and critical positioning. This complexity makes academic writing one of the most cognitively demanding skills in second language acquisition.

2.2.8 Evolution of Language Teaching Methodologies and the Emergence of TBLT

Language teaching methodologies have evolved in response to shifting theoretical paradigms in linguistics and psychology. The classical methods, for example, the Grammar-Translation Approach, stressed the importance of rule learning and translation, paying attention to accuracy rather than meaningful communication. The Audiolingual Approach incorporated behavioristic theory by emphasizing practice and habituation.

Task-Based Language Teaching was created as an elaboration of the communicative approach. Based on the interactionist theory and the Input-Interaction-Output framework, TBLT holds that language acquisition will happen most efficiently if learners are performing tasks where they need to use the language meaningfully (Ellis, 2003). While the traditional method is structured according to a series of grammar topics, TBLT arranges learning in terms of the tasks themselves.

Task as defined by Nunan (2004) is described as any kind of activity where students make use of the target language for comprehension or production of ideas, with emphasis on meaning and not on form. It can be noted that there is an epistemological shift here from a form-based focus to meaning-based production.

2.2.9 Theoretical Foundations of Task-Based Language Teaching

TBLT is theoretically grounded in several complementary frameworks:

a) Interaction Hypothesis

The Interaction Hypothesis suggests that language acquisition is facilitated through meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning. Tasks create opportunities for learners to process input deeply and produce output under communicative pressure.

b) Output Hypothesis

Swain's Output Hypothesis emphasizes that producing language pushes learners to notice linguistic gaps and restructure their interlanguage. Writing tasks, particularly argumentative essays or reports, require sustained output, making TBLT especially relevant for academic writing development.

c) Sociocultural Theory

From a sociocultural perspective, learning occurs through mediated interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development. Task cycles encourage collaborative drafting, peer review, and scaffolded feedback, aligning with Vygotskian principles of mediated learning.

2.2.10 TBLT Implementation Models

To structure the implementation of TBLT, it is highly practical to adopt the widely recognized framework proposed by Willis & Willis (2007). This model consists of three distinct phases that can be applied to academic tasks:

- **The Pre-Task Phase:** In this initial stage, the instructor introduces the topic and the task. This step should ensure that the prior knowledge of the learners is stimulated, and that they get a model in case they need one, as well as comprehend the task instructions.
- **The Task Cycle Phase:** This is where the heart of the model lies because the learners will be doing the activity, either in pairs or groups of more than two. Here, the main aim is for the learners to successfully transmit their messages in accomplishing the task.
- **The Language Focus Phase (Post-Task):** After the task is completed, the focus shifts to linguistic form. The instructor provides feedback on the language used, highlighting common errors or introducing more effective ways to express the students' intended meaning. This stage allows for explicit instruction on grammar, vocabulary, or discourse that is directly relevant to the students' communicative needs.

2.2.11 Academic Writing in EFL Contexts

Academic writing extends beyond grammatical accuracy to include rhetorical organization, disciplinary conventions, and critical reasoning. According to Hyland (2016), academic discourse requires writers to position themselves epistemically while demonstrating control over textual coherence and cohesion.

In EFL contexts, students frequently struggle with:

- Paragraph unity and logical progression
- Cohesive devices
- Argument development
- Academic vocabulary range
- Genre conventions

These difficulties often stem from traditional instruction emphasizing decontextualized grammar drills rather than process-oriented writing development.

Research by Zhang, Luo, and Song (2022) demonstrates that interventions integrating explicit feedback, collaborative writing, and authentic communicative tasks significantly enhance writing performance in EFL learners. Such findings reinforce the theoretical compatibility between TBLT and academic writing instruction.

2.2.12 The Nexus Between TBLT and Academic Writing Development

The theoretical intersection between TBLT and academic writing lies in their shared emphasis on process, authenticity, and meaning construction. Academic genres such as essays, summaries, and reports naturally lend themselves to task design.

Empirical studies support this connection. Sundari et al. (2021) found improvements in coherence and textual organization following TBLT implementation. Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2023) reported significant gains in argumentative writing among EFL learners exposed to task-based instruction.

TBLT enhances academic writing by:

- Encouraging planning before drafting
- Promoting peer collaboration
- Allowing iterative revision
- Integrating meaning-first production followed by form-focused refinement

Thus, TBLT offers not merely a methodological alternative but a theoretically coherent model for fostering higher-order writing skills.

2.2.13 Academic Writing Challenges in Ecuador

In Ecuador, English is a graduation requirement in many universities, yet advanced productive skills often remain underdeveloped. Cabrera-Solano (2020) identified recurrent issues among Ecuadorian EFL learners, including lack of cohesion, insufficient argumentative clarity, and fragmented text organization.

These findings suggest systemic instructional gaps, particularly in the integration of communicative and academic writing practices. Additionally, large class sizes and limited individualized feedback complicate writing development. As a result, fossilized errors and structural weaknesses persist into advanced semesters.

2.2.14 The Need for Pedagogical Innovation in Ecuadorian Higher Education

While communicative language teaching approaches are frequently championed in educational policy discourse and national curricula, their actual implementation within the classroom often remains superficial. In many educational contexts, there exists a persistent gap between top-down pedagogical mandates and everyday teaching realities, leading practitioners to fall back on traditional, form-focused methods. Consequently, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) a highly effective framework within the communicative paradigm has not been widely institutionalized. As noted by Ortega and Farinango (2021), this lack of systemic adoption is largely due to significant barriers, including insufficient teacher training programs and a general lack of familiarity with the complexities of authentic task design and assessment.

The resolution of these difficulties calls for a fundamental paradigm change with regard to the ways of teaching specific skills. Introducing TBLT to academic writing lessons is not merely the introduction of a new approach to learning. Academically-oriented writing has always been taught in an authoritarian manner. With the adoption of TBLT, however, writing will be transformed into a meaningful communicative act. As

such, this process can be viewed as a significant structural step that attempts to bridge SLA theory with classroom practice.

2.2.15 Independent Variable: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a pedagogical approach grounded in communicative and interactionist theories of second language acquisition, in which instructional sequencing is organized around the completion of meaningful tasks rather than pre-selected grammatical structures (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004).

Ellis (2003) defines a task as an activity that:

1. Focuses primarily on meaning,
2. Contains some type of communicative gap,
3. Requires learners to rely on their own linguistic resources, and
4. Results in a clearly defined outcome.

Unlike structural approaches, TBLT positions language as a tool for achieving communicative goals. This conceptualization aligns with Long's (2015) argument that tasks should replicate real-world target language use to maximize acquisition relevance.

Within this study, TBLT is operationalized according to the pedagogical framework proposed by Willis and Willis (2007), which consists of three recursive phases:

- **Pre-task phase**
- **Task cycle**
- **Language focus phase**

1. Task Authenticity

Task authenticity refers to the extent to which pedagogical tasks mirror real-world communicative purposes (Long, 2015). In academic writing instruction, authenticity is achieved by aligning tasks with genuine academic genres such as summaries, analytical reports, and argumentative essays.

Hyland (2016) emphasizes that genre awareness is central to academic literacy. Therefore, designing tasks that simulate authentic academic discourse enhances rhetorical competence.

2. Meaning-Focused Production

TBLT prioritizes meaning construction before explicit correction (Ellis, 2003). During the task cycle, learners focus on conveying ideas rather than avoiding errors.

This meaning-first orientation is crucial for writing development because it encourages fluency and idea generation. According to Swain (2005), sustained output promotes noticing of linguistic limitations.

Meaning-focused production reduces cognitive overload by separating idea construction from immediate grammatical monitoring.

3. Collaborative Interaction

Collaborative interaction involves peer discussion, joint drafting, and feedback exchange. Sociocultural theory posits that higher cognitive functions develop through social mediation.

When students negotiate paragraph structure or thesis clarity, they co-construct knowledge. Willis and Willis (2007) argue that collaborative tasks stimulate deeper engagement and increase task investment.

Research also shows that peer review enhances coherence and argument quality (Zhang et al., 2022).

4. Form-Focused Feedback

Although TBLT emphasizes meaning, it does not neglect accuracy. The Language Focus phase provides explicit attention to linguistic form emerging from task performance.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 APPROACH

This research uses a quantitative approach to collect data, analyze, and test the impact of a pedagogical intervention. According to Hernández, Fernández, and Baptista (2014), quantitative research uses data collection, based on numerical measurement and statistical analysis to establish patterns of behavior.

- **Pre-test:** To determine the initial academic writing skill level of the students, a diagnostic writing task was administered before the intervention.
- **Intervention and Monitoring:** The implementation of the TBLT approach was done during the academic period. The strict implementation of the pre-task, task, and post-task processes was done to guarantee the accuracy of the process followed.
- **Post-test and Evaluation:** Finally, a test for evaluating writing skills was done to determine the efficacy of the TBLT technique. The scores obtained before and after the implementation of the technique were then analyzed for comparison.

3.2 RESEARCH MODALITY

Research was carried out on the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to develop academic writing skills in Eighth-semester students at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH). To achieve this, a pre-experimental field study approach was utilized. According to (Fraenkel et al, 2012), a single-group pre-experimental design involves observing a single group through a pre-test, implementing an intervention, and subsequently applying a post-test to evaluate the effects of the educational treatment.

This type of modality enables the researcher to collect true data firsthand from the natural setting of study, which is in this scenario the "Academic Writing II" class. In addition to this, Mackey & Gass (2015) highlight that conducting the research in a natural environment where the second language students interact with the target strategy contributes to its ecological validity. Through adopting the TBLT technique for the specified duration of time in a particular semester, this modality can help assess its effectiveness through data.

3.3 TYPE OF RESEARCH

The applied research methodology was used in this study to provide practical solutions to address the problems of writing skills possessed by EFL university students in their eighth semester. The applied research is a study that seeks to solve a pre-existing problem using the results of such research in a given educational institution. In this form

of research, there is a study of a specific set of circumstances to ensure the connection of results with the situation under analysis (Heath, 2023).

The research design involved the following key phases: pretest and base line measurement, intervention and observation, and posttest and assessment. The first phase entailed administering a diagnostic writing test (pretest) to establish the students' baseline knowledge of academic writing skills, especially organization, coherence, and argumentation.

During the whole academic period, TBLT techniques were utilized to promote the development of academic writing skills. Students' communicative and linguistic skills were positively impacted due to the application of the mentioned authentic and goal-oriented tasks. Lastly, a post-test was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the pedagogical intervention and compare its outcomes with the initial data obtained during the pre-test phase. The present research is significant and practice-oriented because it offers evidence about the efficiency of the mentioned task-based learning approach, thus positively impacting the development of students' ability to produce coherent academic writings.

3.4 LEVEL OF RESEARCH

This study is classified as explanatory research, as it aims to determine the cause-effect relationship between the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the development of academic writing skills. As Creswell (2012) points out, explanatory research aims at testing a hypothesis and developing causal relationships between two variables. In our case, the independent variable is TBLT, while the dependent one is academic writing skills.

In order to meet this objective, a pre-experimental research design is used, and it is particularly a one-group pretest-posttest design. This design entails measuring the dependent variable both prior to and after applying the treatment, without a control group.

The first step is to conduct a pre-test, which will provide information regarding the baseline competence of the students in writing. Second, the TBLT treatment will be applied during the specified academic term. Third, the post-test will be conducted to assess whether any substantial changes took place due to the application of the treatment. It should be noted that this study design does not involve randomization or use of control group since it is suitable for educational studies involving intact groups.

3.5 STUDY POPULATION

The target population consisted of Eighth-semester students from the Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros program at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH), specifically those enrolled in the subject "Academic Writing II." This level has been selected because it represents a critical stage in which students are expected to consolidate their academic writing skills before completing their degree requirements.

This phase is especially significant from a teaching standpoint since students must write academic essays, and hence, it is the ideal time to apply a strategy that will help enhance their writing skills.

Methodologically speaking, the choice of such a sample is valid based on feasibility considerations. Firstly, the researcher had immediate access to this population, making it easier to conduct and control the TBLT intervention program in a real class environment. Secondly, the sample consisted of thirty-eight individuals, representing an ideal number for conducting collaboration tasks and peer review procedures and evaluating results via pre-test and post-test techniques.

Furthermore, this study implemented the procedure during the standard academic schedule for the “Academic Writing II” course, allowing adequate time for the pre-task, task cycle, and post-task stages to be performed according to the TBLT method. The availability of appropriate facilities and instructional materials within the institution made the implementation process easier for the students.

Lastly, using an intact group reflects the features of pre-experimental design studies, where random sampling is not necessary. In turn, it enabled the researcher to implement the treatment in a natural manner without affecting the academic environment within the class setting.

3. 6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

To achieve the research objectives, the study employed structured writing assessments and an observation checklist as primary data collection instruments. These tools enabled the systematic collection of quantifiable data to measure students' academic writing performance and monitor the fidelity of the pedagogical intervention.

Pre- and Post-Test Writing Tasks:

The pre- and post-test consisted of argumentative essay writing tasks designed to measure students' academic writing skills before and after the implementation of the task-based language teaching (TBLT) intervention.

These instruments were not taken from a single international standardized test; However, they were designed based on well-established academic writing assessment frameworks, in particular the criteria used in the Cambridge English exams and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). The structure of the tasks also reflects standardized writing formats commonly found in international exams such as IELTS and TOEFL, ensuring an appropriate level of academic rigor.

Every essay test involved writing a persuasive essay of about 300 words within 60 minutes. All the prompts had equal difficulty levels; however, each dealt with a different topic to prevent practice effect and ensure consistency in measurement.

Analytic rubrics were used to score essays. Analytic rubrics, which were modified versions of the CEFR and Cambridge testing criteria, measured five dimensions of performance: organization and structure, coherence and cohesion, lexical richness, grammatical competence, and task achievement.

Regarding validity, the instrument is based on content validity, since it is based on internationally recognized frameworks for the evaluation of academic writing and for better evaluation performance, the tests were validated by an expert in the area. Additionally, its reliability is enhanced by the use of consistent evaluation criteria in both the pretest and posttest, allowing for objective comparison of results.

Academic Writing Rubric: To guarantee a standardized and objective measurement of student performance, an analytical rubric was utilized. Weigle (2002) states that analytical scoring rubrics are highly reliable in second-language writing assessment because they provide detailed diagnostic information across different components of writing, rather than just a single holistic score.

The rubric was adapted from the standardized evaluation criteria of Cambridge English and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). It quantitatively evaluated five distinct criteria:

The analytical rubric used to assess students' academic writing performance was based on a five-criteria scale: Organization & Structure, Coherence & Cohesion, Vocabulary, Grammar & Mechanics, and Task Completion. Each criterion was evaluated using a five-point scale (1–5), where:

- **5 (Excellent):** Demonstrates a high level of control, accuracy, and coherence with minimal errors.
- **4 (Good):** Shows clear organization and appropriate use of language with minor errors that do not affect comprehension.
- **3 (Satisfactory):** The work demonstrates adequate performance, though there are noticeable inconsistencies in structure or language use.
- **2 (Limited):** It reveals significant shortcomings in terms of structure, coherence, or command of the language.
- **1 (Poor):** Demonstrates a basic ability to write a coherent academic text.

The maximum total score per writing task was 25 points, obtained by summing the five criteria. This scoring system allowed for a detailed and objective evaluation of students' writing performance across multiple dimensions.

Observation checklist:

Observational Checklist:

An observational checklist was used to monitor the correct implementation of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) methodology throughout the intervention. This instrument was based on the framework proposed by Willis and Willis (2007), which includes three main phases: Pre-task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus.

The checklist included nine specific criteria distributed across these phases:

Pre-task phase:

- (1) Introduction of the topic and task objectives,
- (2) Activation of prior knowledge or presentation of a model,

(3) Clarification of instructions.

Task cycle phase:

(4) Student engagement in the task (individual, pair, or group work),

(5) Emphasis on meaning and communication rather than grammatical accuracy,

(6) Teacher monitoring without direct error correction.

Language focus phase:

(7) Student reporting or sharing of task outcomes,

(8) Teacher feedback on language use,

(9) Explicit focus on grammar or vocabulary based on observed needs.

Each criterion was recorded using a dichotomous scale (Yes/No), indicating whether the action was observed during the class session.

The checklist was applied by the researcher during each intervention session to ensure that all stages of the TBLT methodology were consistently implemented. The collected data allowed for systematic monitoring of the instructional process and ensured that the pedagogical intervention adhered to its theoretical principles.

This procedure strengthened the internal validity of the study by confirming that the observed improvements in students' academic writing skills were directly associated with the correct application of the TBLT approach.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION TECHNIQUES

This study adopted a quantitative approach; therefore, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel and SPSS to organize, process, and interpret the numerical data obtained from the pre-test and post-test assessments.

The statistical treatment of the data included the calculation of central tendency measures, specifically the mean (average), to determine the overall performance of students in each of the evaluated criteria: Organization & Structure, Coherence & Cohesion, Vocabulary, Grammar & Mechanics, and Task Completion. The arithmetic mean will be calculated using the following formula:

MEDIA (MEDIAN)

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n x_i}{n}$$

MEDIANA CUANDO N ES PAR (MEDIAN WHEN N IS EVEN)

$$Me = \frac{\frac{x_n}{2} + \frac{x_{n+1}}{2}}{2}$$

MODA (MODUS)

Mo = The most frequently occurring value

DESVIACIÓN ESTANDAR (STANDARD DEVIATION)

$$s = \sqrt{s^2} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{n - 1}}$$

VARIANZA (VARIANCE)

$$s^2 = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{n - 1}$$

Additionally, percentage analysis was used to compare the results obtained in the pre-test and post-test, allowing for a clear visualization of improvement in each writing criterion. The percentage increase was calculated by comparing initial and final scores. The results were presented through tables and bar graphs to facilitate interpretation and comparison between both measurements.

CHAPTER IV

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTERVENTION SECTION

In this section, the action plan to improve the academic writing skills of eighth-semester students at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo is described. The intervention consisted of an initial diagnostic test, a medium-term application of the Task-Based Language Teaching strategy following the Willis and Willis framework, and a final post-test evaluation. This strategy ensured that students continuously practiced and applied new academic writing skill, resulting in a comprehensive learning experience. The intervention focused on an argumentative essay guiding the participants through the pre-task, task cycle, and language focus phases to effectively transition from meaning-focused communication to formal grammatical accuracy.

Table 1*Intervention plan*

| Sections | Weeks | Time | Objective | Description |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pre-Test | 1 | Time: 60 minutes Initial Diagnosis | To diagnose the initial academic writing skill level of students, focusing on cohesion and argumentation. | Academic Writing Pre-Test: Students completed an initial argumentative essay. The results were analyzed using a standardized rubric to evaluate their baseline proficiency in organization, coherence, vocabulary, and grammar. |
| TBLT Intervention: Task 1 (The Summary) | 2 | Time: Week 2 classes Synthesis & Cohesion | To apply the TBLT cycle to help students synthesize information and connect ideas logically using basic connectors. | Summary Writing: The students went through an academic text and noted down the key points in it. They used the Pre-task, Task, and Post-task stages for practicing coherent writing through summary essays. |
| TBLT Intervention: Task 2 (The Report) | 3 | Time: Week 3 classes Describing Data & Objectivity | To analyze data and practice using formal academic vocabulary with an objective tone. | Analysis of Data Report: Students worked with either a graph or a small data set. This procedure comprised a vocabulary-oriented Pre-task, a meaning-oriented drafting Task, and a Post-task centered on form correction. |
| TBLT Intervention: Task 3 (Argumentative Essay - Part I) | 4 | Time: Week 4 classes Planning & Drafting (Meaning) | To focus on meaning and content generation by planning and drafting an argumentative structure. | Brainstorming and Outlining: Brainstorming was conducted by students to organize their ideas into an outline (Pre-task). After that, they drafted the essay while paying attention |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TBLT Intervention: Task 3 (Argumentative Essay - Part II) | 5 | Time: Week 5 classes | To refine the writing process through peer review, editing, and explicit language focus instruction. | only to the message without considering the correctness of the grammar (Task Cycle). |
| | | Review & Editing | | Peer-review and Final Draft: Peer review sessions were conducted, followed by teacher evaluation. Students received explicit instruction about grammar rules and citations (Post-task) before producing the final draft. |
| Post-Test | 6 | Time: 60 minutes | To measure the impact of the TBLT strategy on students' academic writing performance. | Academic Writing Post-Test: Students took an argumentative essay post-test under the same testing conditions as the pre-test. Their results were analyzed for assessment. |
| | | Evaluation & Analysis | | |

4.2 RESULTS

4.2.1 Pre-Test and Post-Test

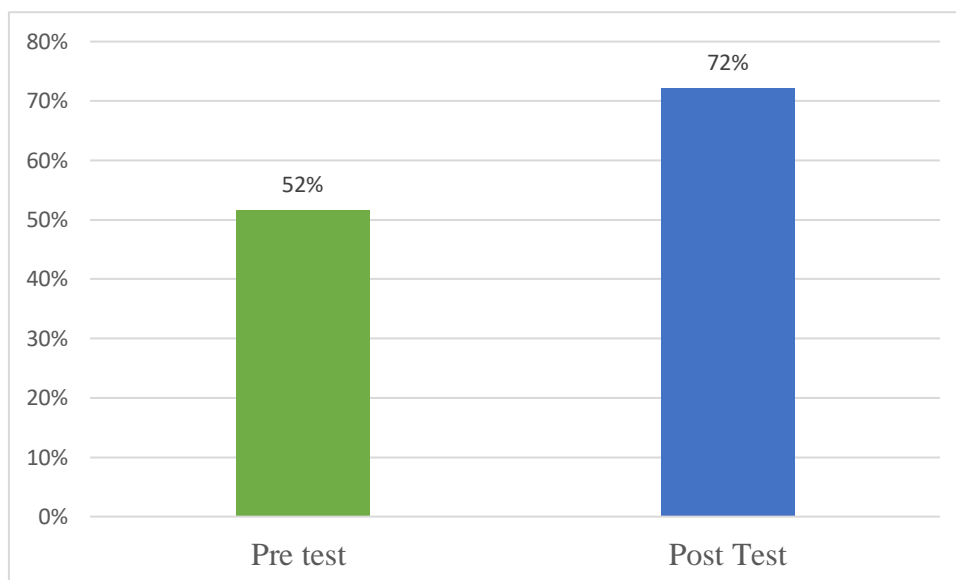
This research sought to evaluate how an experimental learning strategy influences the development of academic writing skills among English language learners. Conducted on a sample of thirty-eight eighth-semester students from the Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros program at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH), specifically those enrolled in the course “Academic Writing II.”, a quantitative approach was rigorously employed to analyze and interpret the collected data.

There were two main evaluations conducted for estimating the development level of the students’ writing skills, namely, the pre-test and the post-test. The data obtained from each evaluation were quite substantial, giving insight into the effectiveness and efficiency of the method used, which was analyzed through Excel files for patterns and connections mathematically. To conclude this review, an in-depth assessment of each of the criteria evaluated in the rubrics was provided to clearly understand the overall effectiveness of the strategy.

4.2.2 Analysis and interpretation

Figure 1

Comparison of the Results of the Pre-test and Post-test on Organization and Structure

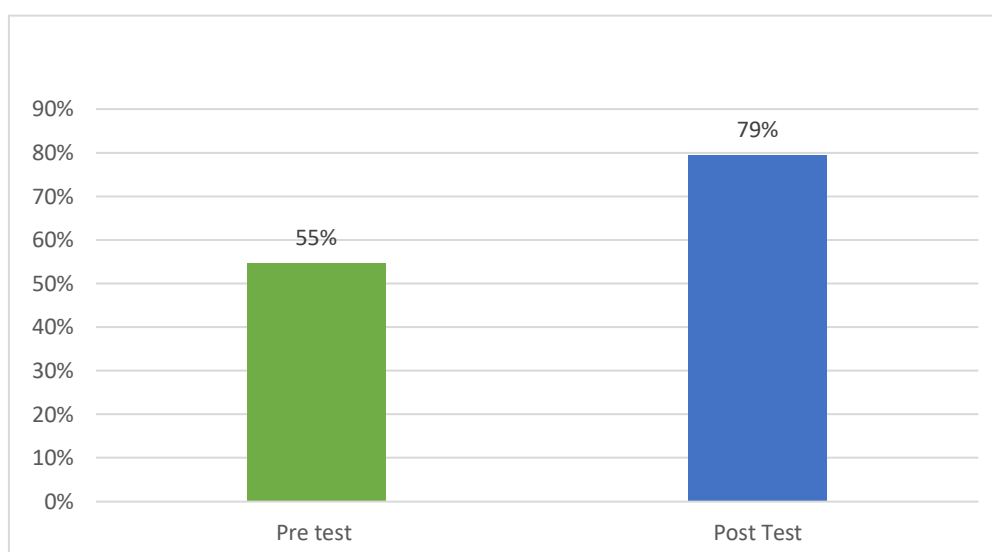


Analysis: The results showed a 20% improvement in the "Organization & Structure" criterion, increasing from 52% in the pre-test to 72% in the post-test. This indicates that students significantly enhanced their ability to organize ideas logically, construct clear thesis statements, and structure their essays effectively.

This is mainly due to the pre-task stage of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), where the focus is on planning, brainstorming, and outlining before the actual writing process begins. As stated by Ellis (2003), task-based learning stimulates mental activity in that learners have to first arrange meaning before language expression. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with Sundari et al. (2021), who found that TBLT significantly improves the organization and structure of academic texts. Therefore, it can be inferred that the use of structured tasks and guided planning positively influenced students' ability to construct well-organized essays.

Figure 2

Comparison of the Results of the Pre-test and Post-test on Coherence & Cohesion



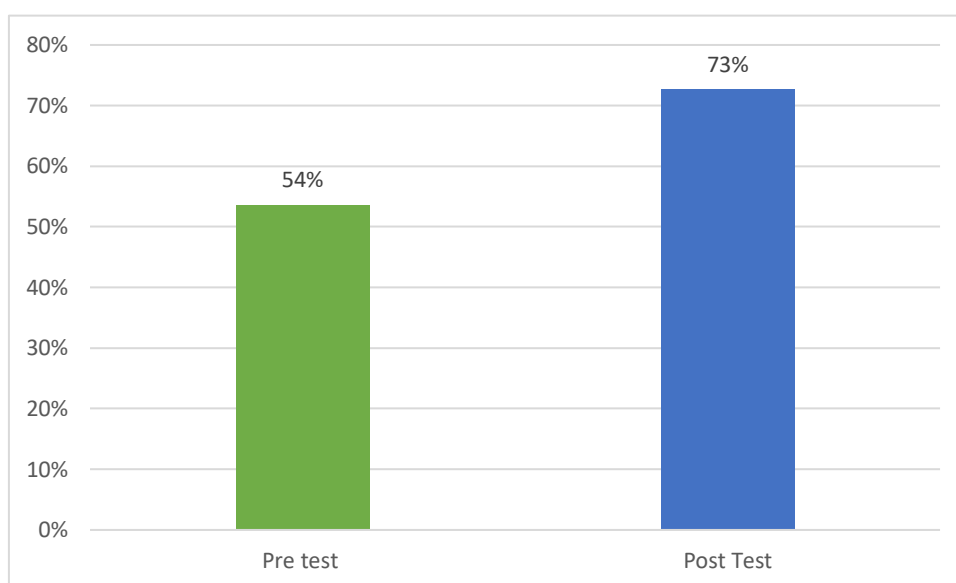
Analysis: The results revealed a 24% increase in the "Coherence & Cohesion" criterion, rising from 55% in the pre-test to 79% in the post-test. This suggests that students improved their ability to connect ideas logically and use appropriate linking devices.

The explanation for this is that the importance of meaningful interaction was highlighted in the process of the task cycle where students concentrated more on conveying meanings than on correctness in grammar. In line with the Interaction Hypothesis, language learning is achieved through meaningful interaction and negotiations in meaning.

Additionally, Thirakunkovit and Boonyaparakob (2022) reported that collaborative writing tasks enhance cohesion and clarity in students' texts. The use of peer interaction and collaborative drafting in this study likely contributed to students' improved ability to create more coherent and cohesive writing.

Figure 3

Comparison of the Results of the Pre-test and Post-test on Vocabulary



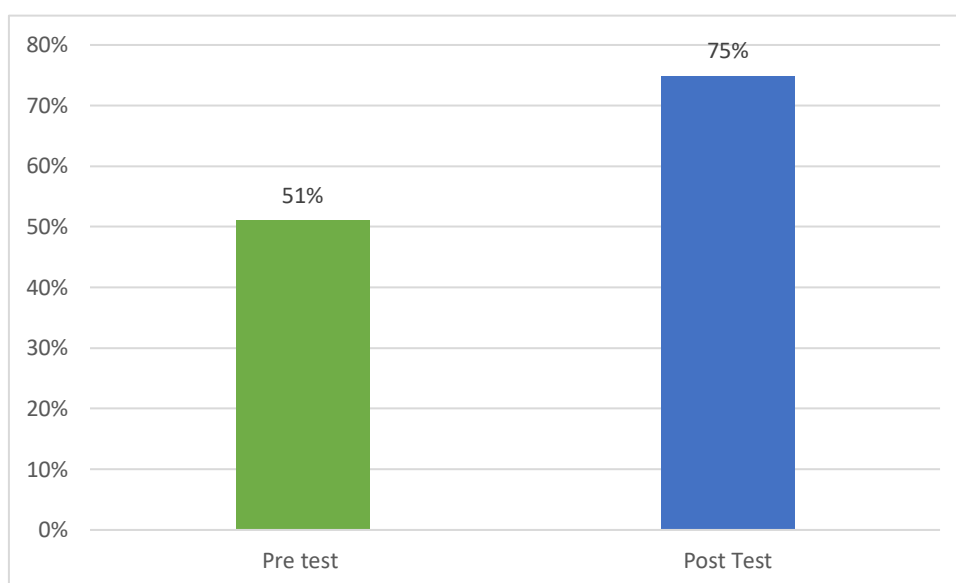
Analysis: The results showed a 19% improvement in the "Vocabulary" criterion, increasing from 54% in the pre-test to 73% in the post-test. This indicates that students expanded their use of academic vocabulary and improved their lexical accuracy.

This development can be linked to the exposure to task-based activities that required students to use language in context. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary acquisition is more effective when learners engage in meaningful use of language rather than memorization. The TBLT approach provided opportunities for students to use new vocabulary in authentic communicative situations.

Moreover, Aurelya et al. (2024) found that students perceive improvements in vocabulary when engaged in task-based writing activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that the communicative and contextualized nature of TBLT contributed to the development of students' lexical resources.

Figure 4

Comparison of the Results of the Pre-test and Post-test on Grammar & Mechanics



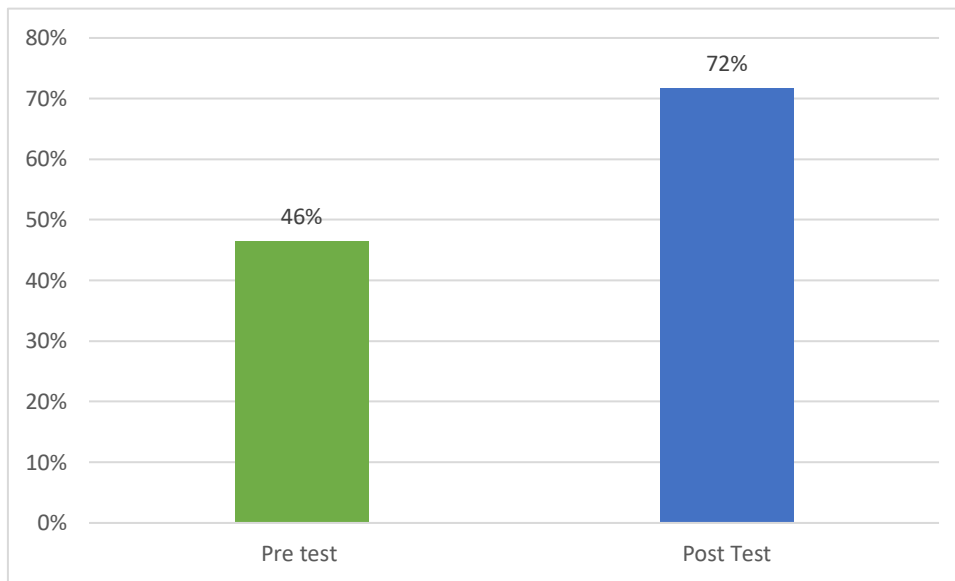
Analysis: The results demonstrated a 24% improvement in the "Grammar & Mechanics" criterion, increasing from 51% in the pre-test to 75% in the post-test. This suggests that students improved their grammatical accuracy and control of sentence structures.

This enhancement can be attributed to the Language Focus stage of the TBLT model, where there is explicit focus on the linguistic form after the task has been completed. As per Willis & Willis (2007), during this stage, the learners can learn from their mistakes and receive corrective feedback, which makes learning more accurate.

However, despite the improvement, grammatical development tends to be slower compared to other skills. This aligns with the findings of Aurelya et al. (2024), who reported that grammar often requires longer-term reinforcement. Therefore, while TBLT contributes to grammatical improvement, sustained practice and feedback are necessary for achieving higher levels of accuracy.

Figure 5

Comparison of the Results of the Pre-test and Post-test on Task Completion



Analysis: The most significant improvement was observed in the "Task Completion" criterion, which increased by 26%, from 46% in the pre-test to 72% in the post-test. This indicates that students became more capable of fully addressing the task, developing arguments, and responding appropriately to the prompts.

This result can be explained by the nature of TBLT, which focuses on completing meaningful tasks with clear communicative goals. According to Nunan (2004), tasks require learners to use language purposefully to achieve an outcome, which enhances engagement and depth of response.

Additionally, Ahmed, Khan, and Rehman (2023) found that TBLT significantly improves students' ability to develop argumentative writing. The structured progression from planning to drafting and revising likely helped students produce more complete and relevant responses.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

| Estadísticos descriptivos | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----|--------|--------|-------|----------------|----------|
| | N | Mínimo | Máximo | Media | Desv. estándar | Varianza |
| PRE TEST | 38 | 9 | 17 | 12,87 | 1,727 | 2,982 |
| POST TEST | 38 | 12 | 22 | 18,45 | 2,321 | 5,389 |
| N válido (por lista) | 38 | | | | | |

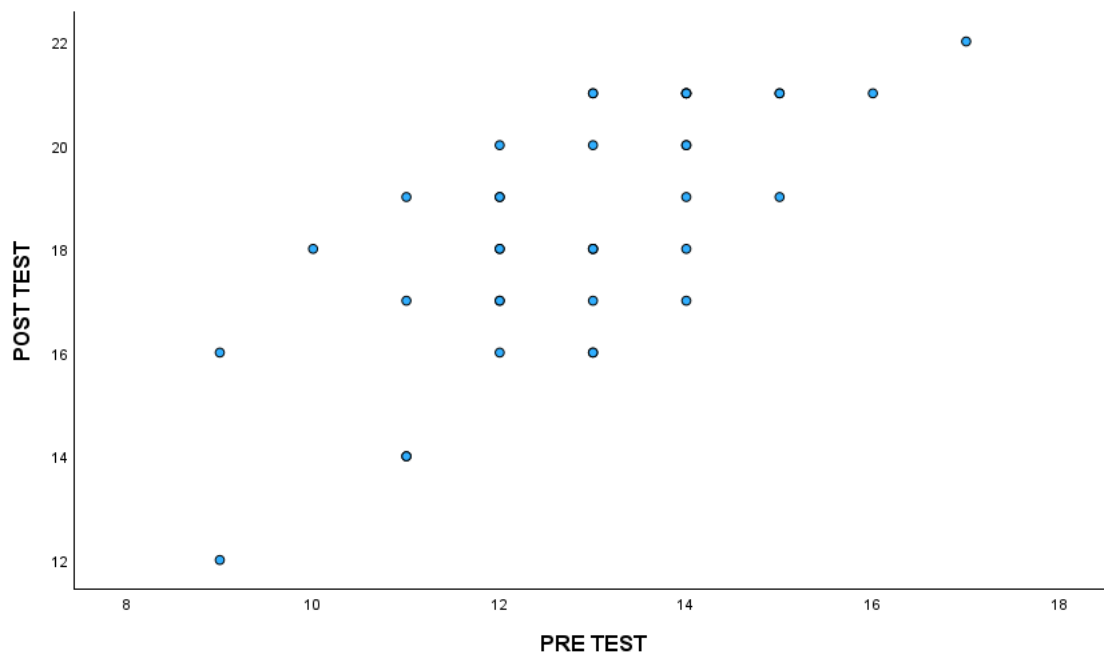
Table 2 details the descriptive statistics that measure the academic writing performance of a sample of 38 students, comparing their skills before and after the integrated application of the methodological intervention.

Results of the Preliminary Test (Pretest): During the diagnostic test, the participants were able to show a performance of arithmetic mean of 12.87. Scores obtained during the said test varied between 9 and 17. The computed standard deviation of 1.727 and variance of 2.982 indicate a relatively homogeneous distribution of the participants' initial ability to perform academically in writing; thus, students are basically homogeneous in terms of their initial skills in writing.

Results of the Final Assessment (Post-test): After the intervention was carried out, it becomes evident that the results indicate a great progress made by the entire group as regards their general level of performance. The mean increased significantly to 18.45. Another point which illustrates the progress made by the group in question is the fact that the results obtained both at the extreme left (minimum) and extreme right (maximum) sides of the frequency distribution have considerably changed in the sense that the minimum rose to 12 (which is better than the performance of most individuals at the initial stage) and maximum became 22.

Figure 6

Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores



The figure presents a scatter plot illustrating the bivariate relationship between the scores obtained by the sample in the pre-test (X-axis) and post-test (Y-axis).

Trend and Correlation: A clear upward linear trend is observed, with the data distributed from the lower left quadrant to the upper right. The above grouping through

visual representation proves the presence of a high and significant positive correlation (reinforcing the correlation coefficient of 0.709 obtained from the paired approach). This shows consistency within the group: those with a better understanding at the beginning of the test scored higher in the final examination.

Performance Shift (Effect): When analyzing the relative positions of the points with regards to the axes, it becomes clear that the values reflected on the Y axis (post test, with a peak value of 22) have a higher value when compared to the values of their corresponding points on the X axis (pre test, with a peak value of 17).

Distribution and Dispersion: Though the points exhibit an organized distribution, there is a minor vertical spread observed in the middle points (for instance, students who scored from 12 to 14 in the pre-test vary in their post-test results widely). This reflects the increase in the standard deviation and variance at the end of the study period.

4.2.3 Discussion

The research on the effectiveness of implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to expand the English academic writing skill of eighth-semester students at the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo evidenced significant findings that highlight both the effectiveness of the methodology and the areas where greater progress is needed.

In general, there is evidence of a notable increase in the ability to organize texts and use cohesive devices, moving the class average from a low proficiency level to a medium-high level. In particular, the improvement made by the learners was 20 percent in terms of organizing their ideas and writing down a logical thesis statement; they managed to improve from 52 percent to 72 percent.

Moreover, there was an impressive increase of 24%, regarding the utilization of cohesive devices, from 55% to 79%. This outcome clearly demonstrates how the students were able to effectively integrate the knowledge acquired by means of real-life learning tasks, like writing, critiquing peers' essays, and compiling information. These outcomes strongly coincide with the findings presented by Sundari et al. (2021) that demonstrated a substantial enhancement in text structure, contents, and coherence by means of TBLT materials among EFL university learners.

The most important transformation that happened in the process of implementing the strategy was seen in the students' capacity to answer the essay prompts completely, as their performance increased by 26%, going from 46% to 72% in the Task Completion criterion. After the implementation of the TBLT technique, arguments were significantly developed and were written to the necessary extent. This corresponds to the results of the pre-experimental research conducted by Ahmed et al. (2023), who found that there was a significant change in argumentative essay writing among students who had been taught using TBLT assignments compared to students learning through regular means. The same can be said about the vocabulary criterion, which improved by 19%.

Furthermore, it is imperative to highlight that the internal validity of this study is strengthened by the application of the Checklist for TBLT Implementation. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), checklists are structured observation instruments that allow researchers to systematically record the presence of specific instructional

behaviors. In this research, this instrument confirmed that the intervention strictly adhered to the Willis & Willis (2007) framework specifically the Pre-Task, Task Cycle, and Language Focus phases and did not revert to traditional presentation-practice-production models. By continuously monitoring that the instruction prioritized meaning and authentic communication before grammatical correction, the influence of external pedagogical factors was mitigated. Therefore, the quantifiable advancements in the academic writing of UNACH students, such as the 26% increase in Task Completion, can be confidently attributed as a direct impact of the implemented TBLT pedagogical innovation

Although the overall trends are highly encouraging, certain limitations and areas for improvement were identified. While the explicit Language Focus phase of the Willis & Willis TBLT model provided tangible benefits that allowed students to refine their grammatical accuracy from 51% to 75%, highly mechanical aspects and complex grammatical accuracy often show more moderate changes compared to structural organization.

This suggests that persistent difficulties with grammar require continuous reinforcement over longer periods. This specific limitation coincides with the findings of Aurelya et al. (2024), who reported that while students perceived improvements in fluency, vocabulary, and idea organization through TBLT, many reported persistent difficulties with grammar, highlighting the necessity for effective, ongoing feedback. Ultimately, the results of this research show a significant improvement in the mastery of academic writing, emphasizing the need to continue with adaptive and continuous learning strategies to address persistent gaps and promote sustainable development

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- It was shown by the diagnostic phase that students had a low-to-medium proficiency in academic writing, with the lowest scores in Task Completion (46%) and Grammar and Mechanics (51%). These initial results confirmed the limitations of traditional methodologies and justified the need for the TBLT intervention.
- Implementing the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) methodology improvements all evaluated areas. The use of collaborative task cycle and contextualization in language learning significantly improved Organization and Structure from 52% to 72% and Coherence and Cohesion from 55% to 79%.
- From the results of the statistical comparison, it is evident that TBLT had a powerful positive effect on overall academic writing proficiency. The students' abilities to respond to the argumentative prompts were significantly enhanced, which was proved by the increase of 26% in Task Completion.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given that the results demonstrated a significant improvement in students' academic writing skills, it is recommended that educators incorporate TBLT as a regular pedagogical approach. This methodology promotes meaningful communication, active learning, and the development of writing through structured tasks.
- Considering that students initially showed deficiencies in academic writing, it is recommended to apply diagnostic assessments at the beginning of courses. Additionally, instruction should follow a process-oriented approach, guiding students through planning, drafting, and revision stages to prevent the consolidation of writing difficulties.
- As the findings highlighted the importance of feedback and guided practice, teachers should provide continuous and focused feedback, especially during post-task activities. Furthermore, scaffolded writing workshops should be implemented to support key skills such as thesis construction, coherence, and argument development.

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ANNEXES



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGICAL SCIENCES DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

TOPIC:

Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to Enhance Academic Writing Skills in EFL University Students

INSTRUMENT 1: PRE-TEST

Introduction:

This instrument was designed based on the fundamental principles of academic writing assessment in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It focuses on the production of argumentative texts, aligning with the definition of academic writing provided in the research profile, which emphasizes not only grammar and vocabulary but also discursive skills such as organizing ideas and coherent argumentation. The structure of the prompt mimics standardized academic writing tasks (such as IELTS or TOEFL writing tasks) to ensure the elicitation of a structured essay that reveals the student's current proficiency in cohesion, logical progression, and adherence to formal style conventions.

Objective: To diagnose the initial academic writing skill level of students of Eighth Semester.

Purpose:

To diagnose the initial academic writing skill level of Eighth Semester students at Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH) prior to the pedagogical intervention, specifically focusing on their ability to structure arguments, maintain coherence, and use formal vocabulary.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT:

- **Task:** Write an **argumentative essay** of approximately **300 words** on the topic below.
- **Time allowed:** 1 hour.
- **Structure:** Your composition should contain an introductory part with a thesis statement, body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- **Evaluation:** You will be graded on Organization, Coherence, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Task Completion.

TOPIC: "Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Higher Education." On the one hand, some people say that AI (such as ChatGPT) impedes critical thinking, whereas, on the other hand, some people think that it is a vital tool nowadays. Present both sides and give your point of view.

Rubric:

| CRITERIA | 5 - EXCELLENT (Mastery) | 4 - GOOD (Above Average) | 3 - SATISFACTORY (Average) | 2 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Below Average) | 1 - INADEQUATE (Failing) | SCORE |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE | Ideas are logically arranged. Effective introduction with a clear thesis statement. Body paragraphs have clear topic sentences. Strong conclusion. | Logical progression of ideas. Thesis is present but could be sharper. Paragraphs are mostly well-structured. | Essay has a basic structure (Intro-Body-Conclusion), but logical flow is occasionally interrupted. Thesis may be vague. | Organization is loose or disjointed. Lacks a clear introduction or conclusion. Paragraphing is confusing. | No apparent organization. Ideas are scattered. No thesis statement or conclusion. | /5 |
| COHERENCE & COHESION | Skillful use of a variety of linking words and connectors. The text flows smoothly and logical relationships are clear. | Good use of connectors. Transitions are present, though some may be mechanical. Flow is generally clear. | Uses basic connectors (and, but, so). Some transitions are missing or repetitive. The flow is choppy at times. | Limited use of connectors. Frequent misuse of transition words causes confusion. Relationships between ideas are unclear. | No connectors used. Sentences are isolated. The text is very difficult to follow. | /5 |
| VOCABULARY | Uses sophisticated, precise, and formal academic vocabulary. Demonstrates a | Vocabulary is accurate and varied. Tone is appropriate for academic writing. Minor errors do not impede meaning. | Vocabulary is adequate for the task but basic. Occasional use of informal language or repetition of words. | Vocabulary is limited or repetitive. Frequent errors in word choice or usage of very informal/slang terms. | Very limited vocabulary. Severe errors in word choice make the text unintelligible. | /5 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| | wide range of lexical resources. | | | | | |
| GRAMMAR & MECHANICS | Mastery of complex sentence structures. Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are virtually error-free. | Good control of grammar. Complex sentences are attempted successfully. A few minor errors in punctuation/spelling. | Simple sentences are correct, but errors occur in complex structures. Frequent minor spelling/punctuation mistakes. | Frequent grammatical errors (tense, agreement) that sometimes impede communication. Poor punctuation. | Dominated by errors. Sentence fragments and run-ons make the text impossible to understand. | /5 |
| TASK COMPLETION | Fully addresses all parts of the prompt. Arguments are well-developed and supported. Length is appropriate. | Addresses the topic clearly. Arguments are relevant but could be more developed. Length is adequate. | Addresses the topic but lacks depth. Arguments are generic or repetitive. Slightly short in length. | Partially addresses the topic. Arguments are weak or irrelevant. Significantly under the required length. | Does not address the assigned topic. Assessing the content is impossible due to brevity or irrelevance. | /5 |
| | | | | | TOTAL | /25 |

Note: This rubric for evaluating written production was not subjected to expert review, as it is an adaptation of the standardized criteria of the CEFR and Cambridge. Since it is based on instruments that already have proven validity and reliability, the process focused solely on reviewing its contextual suitability for the target population.

SCORE INTERPRETATION GUIDE

| TOTAL SCORE | PROFICIENCY LEVEL | DESCRIPTION |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 23 – 25 | High (Excellent) | The student has achieved mastery in writing for academia. The text has a high level of sophistication and cohesiveness with few errors. |
| 18 – 22 | Medium-High (Good) | The student is an accomplished writer. The text is well-constructed but lacks some sophistication or mechanical errors. |
| 13 – 17 | Medium (Satisfactory) | The student has met all the basic criteria. The text is comprehensible but may be lacking in some aspect of flow or vocabulary. |
| 8 – 12 | Low (Needs Improvement) | The student has difficulty expressing sophisticated concepts. Grammar, vocabulary, or structure problems interfere with communication. |
| 5 – 7 | Very Low (Inadequate) | The student fails to exhibit the minimum standards for this course. The text is disjointed or incomplete. |



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGICAL SCIENCES DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

TOPIC:

Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to Enhance Academic Writing Skills in EFL University Students

INSTRUMENT 2: POST-TEST

Introduction:

This instrument is designed as an equivalent counterpart to the Pre-test to facilitate a reliable comparison of results in a pre-experimental design. While the topic differs to prevent recall bias, the difficulty level, time constraints, and prompt structure are identical to the initial diagnostic test. This instrument aims to capture changes in the dependent variable (academic writing skill) following the implementation of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) strategy, specifically looking for improvements in areas such as argumentation, coherence, and textual clarity identified as deficient in the problem statement.

Objective: To measure the impact of TBLT on students' academic writing performance through a pre-test and post-test comparison.

Purpose:

To measure the impact of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) intervention on students' academic writing performance by comparing the results with the Pre-test, verifying if there is an enhancement in textual organization and argumentative capacity.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT:

- **Task:** Write an **argumentative essay** of approximately **300 words** on the topic below.
- **Time limit:** 60 minutes.
- **Structure:** Introduction (thesis), Body Paragraphs (arguments), Conclusion.

TOPIC: "The Impact of Virtual Learning on Student Socialization." *Some argue that online classes isolate students and reduce social skills, while others believe digital interaction is the new standard for professional networking. Discuss your position with clear arguments.*

Rubric:

| CRITERIA | 5 - EXCELLENT (Mastery) | 4 - GOOD (Above Average) | 3 - SATISFACTORY (Average) | 2 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (Below Average) | 1 - INADEQUATE (Failing) | SCORE |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE | Ideas are logically arranged. Effective introduction with a clear thesis statement. Body paragraphs have clear topic sentences. Strong conclusion. | Logical progression of ideas. Thesis is present but could be sharper. Paragraphs are mostly well-structured. | Essay has a basic structure (Intro-Body-Conclusion), but logical flow is occasionally interrupted. Thesis may be vague. | Organization is loose or disjointed. Lacks a clear introduction or conclusion. Paragraphing is confusing. | No apparent organization. Ideas are scattered. No thesis statement or conclusion. | /5 |
| COHERENCE & COHESION | Skillful use of a variety of linking words and connectors. The text flows smoothly and logical relationships are clear. | Good use of connectors. Transitions are present, though some may be mechanical. Flow is generally clear. | Uses basic connectors (and, but, so). Some transitions are missing or repetitive. The flow is choppy at times. | Limited use of connectors. Frequent misuse of transition words causes confusion. Relationships between ideas are unclear. | No connectors used. Sentences are isolated. The text is very difficult to follow. | /5 |
| VOCABULARY | Uses sophisticated, precise, and formal academic vocabulary. Demonstrates a | Vocabulary is accurate and varied. Tone is appropriate for academic writing. Minor errors | Vocabulary is adequate for the task but basic. Occasional use of informal language or repetition of words. | Vocabulary is limited or repetitive. Frequent errors in word choice or usage of very informal/slang terms. | Very limited vocabulary. Severe errors in word choice make the text unintelligible. | /5 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| | wide range of lexical resources. | do not impede meaning. | | | | |
| GRAMMAR & MECHANICS | Mastery of complex sentence structures. Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are virtually error-free. | Good control of grammar. Complex sentences are attempted successfully. A few minor errors in punctuation/spelling. | Simple sentences are correct, but errors occur in complex structures. Frequent minor spelling/punctuation mistakes. | Frequent grammatical errors (tense, agreement) that sometimes impede communication. Poor punctuation. | Dominated by errors. Sentence fragments and run-ons make the text impossible to understand. | /5 |
| TASK COMPLETION | Fully addresses all parts of the prompt. Arguments are well-developed and supported. Length is appropriate. | Addresses the topic clearly. Arguments are relevant but could be more developed. Length is adequate. | Addresses the topic but lacks depth. Arguments are generic or repetitive. Slightly short in length. | Partially addresses the topic. Arguments are weak or irrelevant. Significantly under the required length. | Does not address the assigned topic. Assessing the content is impossible due to brevity or irrelevance. | /5 |
| | | | | | TOTAL | /25 |

Note: This rubric for evaluating written production was not subjected to expert review, as it is an adaptation of the standardized criteria of the CEFR and Cambridge. Since it is based on instruments that already have proven validity and reliability, the process focused solely on reviewing its contextual suitability for the target population.

SCORE INTERPRETATION GUIDE

| TOTAL SCORE | PROFICIENCY LEVEL | DESCRIPTION |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 23 – 25 | High (Excellent) | The student demonstrates mastery of academic writing. The text is sophisticated, cohesive, and clearly argued with minimal errors. |
| 18 – 22 | Medium-High (Good) | The student shows strong writing skills. The text is effective and clear, though it may lack some sophistication or contain minor mechanical errors. |
| 13 – 17 | Medium (Satisfactory) | The student meets the basic requirements. The text is understandable but may lack smooth flow, vocabulary variety, or complex sentence structures. |
| 8 – 12 | Low (Needs Improvement) | The student struggles to convey complex ideas. Issues with grammar, vocabulary, or organization significantly impede communication. |
| 5 – 7 | Very Low (Inadequate) | The student does not demonstrate the minimum skills required for this level. The text is fragmented, incomplete, or incoherent. |



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION, HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGICAL SCIENCES
DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

TOPIC:

Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to Enhance Academic Writing Skills
in EFL University Students

INSTRUMENT 3: CHECKLIST FOR TBLT IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction:

The observation tool was formulated in line with the theoretical model presented by Willis & Willis (2007). The TBLT model is composed of three stages: pre-task stage, task cycle stage, and language focus stage. Unlike the traditional P-P-P model, the current theoretical model emphasizes the significance of communication over linguistic. The items in this checklist are designed to verify that the researcher adheres to the principles of TBLT during the writing sessions (Summary, Report, and Essay tasks) outlined in the research schedule.

Objective: To apply a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) strategy in English classes to improve academic writing.

Purpose:

To guarantee the fidelity of the pedagogical intervention by monitoring the consistent and correct application of the Pre-task, Task, and Post-task phases during the English classes, ensuring that the results obtained can be validly attributed to the TBLT approach.

| TBLT PHASES | INDICATORS (Actions observed in class) | YES | NO | OBSERVATIONS |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| I. PRE-TASK PHASE | 1. The teacher introduces the topic, defines the goals, and highlights useful words or phrases. | [] | [] | |
| | 2. The teacher activates prior knowledge or provides a model (example) of the task performance. | [] | [] | |
| | 3. The teacher checks instructions to ensure all students understand what they have to do before starting. | [] | [] | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|--|
| II. TASK CYCLE PHASE | 4. Students perform the main task (planning/drafting) working in pairs or small groups. | [] | [] | |
| | 5. The focus of the activity is on meaning, fluency, and communication rather than grammatical accuracy. | [] | [] | |
| | 6. The teacher monitors the process, offering support and encouragement without correcting errors directly. | [] | [] | |
| III. LANGUAGE FOCUS PHASE | 7. Students report, present, or share the outcome of their task to the whole class (or exchange drafts). | [] | [] | |
| | 8. The teacher provides feedback on specific language forms or errors observed during the task cycle. | [] | [] | |
| | 9. The teacher conducts explicit practice or analysis of new grammar/vocabulary patterns relevant to the task. | [] | [] | |