

## Effectiveness of the Task-Based Approach in Teaching French Composition Writing in Secondary School in Nairobi City County

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### Abstract

Composition writing is important in acquisition of any language. According to the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) reports, performance in composition writing is poor maybe because teachers of French use conventional methods. Moreover, there is little research in Kenya on Task Based Approach (TBA) in composition writing. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of TBA in teaching of French composition writing. The objective was to investigate the effect of TBA on learners' performance in composition writing. The study was carried out in Nairobi City County where eight (8) secondary school teachers of French in Form three and one hundred and twenty-four (124) Form three students formed the study sample. A quasi-experimental research design was used. The data collection instrument was a student test. A composition writing test was administered to the students and after 6 weeks, the same test was administered to compare performance before and after TBA. A question prepared by the Kenya National examination council (KNEC) to test the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) French composition writing was used. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using descriptive statistics (means, ranks, frequencies, percentages, standard deviation). It was presented in frequency tables and bar charts. The findings were that students' mean score improved slightly in composition writing ( $M = 3.43$  before and  $M = 4.65$  after). There was a significant correlation in both pre and posttest on the four evaluation indicators at  $P > 0.00$ . The ANOVA on gender (Boys' Girls' and Mixed schools) showed no significance difference on all the four evaluation indicators ( $F 3.670$ , sig. 0.28). The study recommended use of TBA alongside other approaches.

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**Keywords:** Effectiveness, Task-Based Approach, Learner Performance, Composition Writing

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### INTRODUCTION

Mobile devices connected to the internet such as smartphones and tablets have become the platform of choice for the millennial generation engaged in various internet activities. Today's students are tech-savvy and they get more engaged and really thrive when they are using mobile devices. Children as young as primary school going age interact readily with digital devices such as tablets, laptops and smartphones. This is because young people conduct their social lives through their phones, and instinctively turn to them first for news, information-sharing and entertainment. By capitalising on familiarity with mobile phone technology, education can motivate today's digital natives through new and innovative ways of teaching and learning (Lawson-West, 2017). Of late, information communication technology is dominated by social media. Students primarily conceive social media as a platform for social interaction and communication. Furthermore, students use social networking sites as types of social media, particularly Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and mobile phones are the most common devices they use to access social media. Writing, among all the language skills is the skill that teachers and learners

seem more reluctant to focus on because it requires them to make special efforts. As a result, it sometimes tends to be neglected (Hamer, 2015). According to Muluma (2008) French teaching methods have evolved from the Traditional method or Grammar – translation where translation of passages from the native language into the target language was the main activity in the classroom. This was done through the presentation of rules in a grammar book and a list of vocabulary to be memorized in learning. From the traditional method, learning and teaching was by Direct Method, where all conversations were in the target language and maximum contact was created with the learner. In the Global structure and audio visual method, notions of grammar and linguistic competences are taught by hearing and comprehension. In the recent communicative approach, an artificial situation is created and the main activity is communication in the French class where learning is done successfully through communicating real meaning.

The Task Based Approach (TBA) was an outcome of Communicative language teaching which creates a free instructional environment in which learners and

teachers work together and collaborate in a relaxed atmosphere favorable for composition writing. Van den Branden (2006) defines TBA as an approach to language education in which learners are given functional tasks that invite them to focus primarily on meaning, exchange and use of language for real-life, non-linguistic purposes. According to Larson (2001), in Task Based approach, teachers ask students to perform meaningful tasks that resemble authentic real-life situations using the target language rather than completing simple language questions or vocabulary. It is a student-centered approach which allows meaningful communication and provides practical extra-linguistic skill building. This approach encourages authenticity, teamwork and gives provision for feedback and evaluation. Additionally, Task-Based Approach advocates that all language skills be integrated in the process which makes learning more interesting (Zhaachun, 2015).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Task-based approach is important in the teaching and learning of French composition writing in Kenya. According to the Kenya National Examination Council reports (KNEC, 2015), learners still lack the appropriate vocabulary to write a quality composition in French. It is not clear on how the lessons are distributed and therefore, it is left to the individual teacher to decide. This may make some teachers to focus more on other skills and in the process they may use little time for teaching composition writing. The low learner achievement on French composition writing in secondary schools in Kenya is an issue of concern to many stakeholders in the education system. This has attracted the attention of school administrators, parents, teachers and learners. Teachers have complained of learners writing very little or nothing at all on foolscaps meant for composition writing tests.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the task-based approach on learner's quality writing of French composition in secondary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

### **Objective**

The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of TBA on learners' performance in French composition writing in secondary schools in Nairobi City County.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research will enhance the teacher-learner interaction in the classroom. This will consequently lead to improved grades at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Students studying French will become autonomous in learning French and improve on their composition writing skills.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The study was delimited to the following factors: The sampled population was Form 3 students taking French in 8 Nairobi city county secondary schools. Secondly, French like any other language is taught using different approaches but the study focused on only one, which is TBA.

### **Limitations and Scope of the Study**

Firstly, the study was carried out in schools within Nairobi city county. Secondly, it restricted itself to the objectives that included; methods used in teaching French compositions, teachers and learners' perceptions, nature and extent of use of TBA and its effect on learners' achievement in composition writing and finally the challenges experienced by teachers and learners in using TBA. The data generated from the study should be interpreted with caution to especially schools in other counties that have a rural setting.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In a research in France on "Implementing a TBA plurilingual program in a University", Starkey (2017) used Foreign languages and International Business post-graduate students. A mixed-methods approach was employed where a questionnaire, interview and observation schedule were used to test the degree to which the students accepted the program. The results showed that majority of the students accepted the program. The weaknesses in TBA were identified as lack of necessity for collaborative language techniques. The threats were socio-cultural and contextual in nature where French students did not generally appreciate teamwork and preferred to work individually. Although the above study used questionnaires, interview and observation schedule with university students, in the present study, secondary school learners and teachers formed the sample of the study and a quasi-experimental method was used with questionnaires, lesson observation form and student test as data collection instruments.

### **Evaluation Indicators in TBA**

Lavabre (2002) on Adherence to instructions as an evaluation indicator argues that instructions should be written in such a way that learners will be autonomous outside the lesson in their practical work. An instruction has to be clear, brief and precise without using complicated words. In his study, he found out that 60% of the students did not have a problem with following instructions during a composition writing test. Although the above study used Adherence to instructions as an evaluation indicator, it did not look at French composition writing which is the focus of the present study.

On communicative competence, Raluca (2014) argues that the assessment of intercultural

communicative competence is challenging because culture is perceived in a subjective manner. Teaching of foreign language should prepare learners to use a language with fluency and accuracy and also to speak with people who have different cultural identities, social values and behaviors.

According to Weyers (1999), exposure to video programming increases students’ communicative competence. Results of his (Raluca, 2014) study showed that students who were exposed to Spanish *telenovela* demonstrated a significant increase in communicative competence over their counterparts who were not exposed to the Spanish videos not only in listening but also the number of words they used in discourse. Although the above study looked at communicative competence as an evaluation indicator, it the researcher looked at Spanish language. The present study looked at communicative competence as an evaluation indicator in French as a foreign language.

Linguistic competence has to do with grammatical properties associated with verbal inflection that is agreement, tenses, prepositions, adverbs et pronouns. Ammon (1980) argues that there are variations in sentence difficulty as a function of the syntactic character of the verb. In the study on assessing linguistic competence he found out that at the age of 5 years, considerable knowledge of the target structure was evident. Unlike the above study which analyzed linguistic competence in children, the present study on effectiveness of TBA in French composition writing looked at linguistic competence among secondary school learners.

Textual competence has been neglected in the Ukraine context (Kavytska&Kvasova, 2018). In a research on Assessing Textual competence into a second language, Kvasova, 2018 posits that the tools for this assessment are; language proficiency test and a pre- and post-training tests. Contrary to the above research which looked at textual competence on translation into second language in a Ukraine context, the present study on Effectiveness of TBA looked at

textual competence as an evaluation indicator in French composition writing in a Kenyan context.

**Effects of TBA on performance**

Writing on the effects of a task-based approach on authentic audience in English as a Second Language (ESL), Julian & Kimberly (2016) wanted to find out the impact that targeting an authentic audience within a task-based, computer mediated environment may have on L2 learner motivation towards ESL writing. The qualitative results showed that the participants awareness of audience and sense of ownership were raised through engagement in the task-based activities. Contrary to the above study which focused on a computer mediated environment in ESL, the present research laid emphasis on performance in French composition writing using TBA.

Obi & Ene (2019) writing on the Effect of Task-Based Approach on Achievement of Senior Secondary School students in English Reading Comprehension in Nigeria used a Quasi-Experimental research design and purposive sampling technique. Data analyzed showed that students taught with TBA achieved better than those taught with expository approach and that the approach was gender balanced. Contrary to the above study which tested reading comprehension, the present study on TBA in quality writing tested writingskills among form 3 students in secondary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

**Research Design**

The study employed a quasi-experimental design and 8 schools were used. This design was appropriate for the present study because it was conducted in a classroom setting and so assigning subjects randomly was not possible. The independent variables were manipulated without random assignment of participants. Both qualitative and quantitative data was obtained and analyzed. Creswel (2009) posits that more insight is gained when both qualitative and quantitative data is analyzed in order to address complex problems.

Table 1: Sampling grid for schools, teachers and students.

School type	Target	%	Control	%	Experimental	%	Sample
<b>Boys’</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6.8965%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6.8965%</b>	<b>8</b>
Girls’	20		1	1.7241%	1	1.7241%	2
Mixed	33		2	3.4482%	2	3.4482%	4
<b>Teachers</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5.7152%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5.7152%</b>	<b>8</b>
Male	20		2	2.8571%	1	1.4286%	3
Female	50		2	2.8571%	3	4.2857%	5
<b>Students</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>51.612%</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>48.387%</b>	<b>124</b>
Boys	80		34	42.5%	26	32.5%	60
Girls	100		36	36.0%	28	28.0%	64

**Instrument for Data Collection**  
**Student’s Test**

The student test (Appendix C) was a KCSE composition question of 2013 set by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). This test was used for Form 3 students because they had already covered the content and therefore were expected to have the requisite proficiency. In addition, the test content was drawn from the secondary school Form 2 syllabus. The French experts who are lecturers of French language read and supervisors in the department gave their views which were used to refine the test. The test sought to answer objective (iv) to investigate the effect of TBA on learners’ performance in quality French composition writing in secondary schools in Nairobi city County.

The task in the composition writing test was; “*Vous êtes dans un pays francophone. Vous allez à la gare pour acheter un billet. Ecrivez un dialogue entre vous et le/la vendeur/vendeuse*” The learners were supposed to write a dialogue of between 80 – 120 words between a ticket seller and buyer (him) at the railway station in a francophone country. The marking scheme prepared by KNEC was used to mark the composition. These four items tested were; Adherence to instructions, Communicative competence, Textual competence and Linguistic competence.

Under the test item of adherence to the instructions, the learner was expected to write a dialogue and not a letter or other forms of compositions and respect the limit given in the number of words. Secondly, under communicative competence the learner’s composition was supposed to pass a clear message in order for the seller to understand that he desired to purchase of a ticket. In this case, it was expected that the learner had the appropriate vocabulary relevant to buying and selling.

Under the textual competence item, the learner was expected to greet, ask if the ticket was available and the cost, state the date, time and destination of travel, pay and bid farewell to the seller. The seller on the other hand was expected to respond to the questions of the buyer appropriately and ask any other questions that were relevant. Finally, the test item on linguistic competence tested proper use of verbs, tenses and sentence structures. The duration of the test being one hour, a double lesson of 80 minutes was sufficient to complete writing it. This was the same time allocated to composition writing by the Kenya National Examination Council during the national examination (KCSE). The test was invigilated by both the teacher and researcher in order to curb discussions and exchanging of work on the part of the learner.

The researcher marked the compositions out of ten (10) marks using the marking scheme from Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). The items on the marking scheme included;

- Adherence to instructions – 2 marks,
- Textual competence (greetings introducing the subject and bidding farewell) – 3 marks,
- Communicative competence (relevant vocabulary to suit the scenario, express ideas, opinions, feelings and experiences) – 3 marks.
- Linguistic competence (good use of verbs and sentence structures) – 2 marks.

The student test sought to collect quantitative data where a comparison was drawn using the results of the pre-test and post-test for the control and experimental groups. In addition, a comparison of scores for pre and post-test was made to find out if students improved in composition writing after TBA instruction. Finally, performance scores in the four evaluation indicators were compared to find out which performance indicator registered the best performance.

**Reliability of Research Instruments**

Reliability is the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). A reliable instrument is one that has a small error or standard deviation. To ensure reliability of the research instruments in the study, the instruments were subjected to test-retest and Cronbach’s Alpha formula was used to establish the reliability index. The test-retest generated a reliability co-efficient of 0.8 which was used to measure the test reliability. The formula for Cronbach’s alpha is:

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

Where:

- (a) N = the number of items.
- (b)  $\bar{c}$  = average covariance between item-pairs.
- (c)  $\bar{v}$  = average variance.

**FINDINGS**

**Objective: To investigate the effect of TBA on learners’ performance in composition writing.**

The research was interested in finding out how evaluation is done using the evaluation indicators in marking of compositions. The marking scheme considered all indicators of adherence to instructions, linguistic, textual and communicative competences to be important in coming up with a comprehensive evaluation. In this section, teachers were required to tick among the four indicators that they used when marking learners’ compositions. These were: adherence to instructions, communicative competence, linguistic competence and textual competence. All the teachers (100%) were found to adhere to the evaluation indicators when marking the

students' composition. This might be because the teachers used KNEC marking scheme which uses these indicators when evaluating students in class as they prepared them for the KCSE examination.

**Types of Errors Committed by Students**

The type of errors committed by students were identified in order to determine if they can be used to teach writing in TBA. Teachers were required to state the type of errors learners committed in composition writing. The errors were; wrong spelling, lack of vocabulary, wrong interpretation, less words, poor grammar, wrong register, use of English, wrong conjugation of verbs and presentation of the composition. After marking the compositions, the number of errors committed by students were classified according to the four evaluation indicators. These were; Adherence to Instructions (AI), Textual Competence (TC), Communicative Competence (CC) and Linguistic Competence (LC). The results of both the experimental and control group for pre and post tests are presented in table 2 in frequencies.

Table 2: Type of errors made by students in composition control and experimental in pre-test and post-test. (N = 124)

Type of Error	Frequency		Control	
	Experimental Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Spelling (LC)	18	2	7	13
Vocabulary(LC)	3	0	3	1
Wrong interpretation(AI)	1	0	1	0
Less words(AI)	2	1	2	3
Grammar(LC)	7	2	5	6
Register(CC)	9	1	2	8
Use of English(CC)	1	0	1	3
Conjugation(LC)	2	0	2	3
Presentation(TC)	3	2	2	5

Findings showed that all the eight teachers used the four evaluation indicators when marking learners' compositions. This might be attributed to the fact that this was a KNEC marking scheme and teachers made use of it in order to get a true picture of how learners would perform in case it was KCSE. Table 2 shows that most of the spelling errors (18) which were categorized under Linguistic competence were made by the experimental group in the pre-test. However, after TBA instruction, the errors reduced to only 2.

This implied that TBA helped the students to perfect their spellings leading to improved performance. In the control group, 13 errors were made in the pre-test and in the post-test they reduced to 7. This may have been attributed to the fact that most of the French words are written with accents. E.g. *intéresse/intéressé*. In this case, the first word was in the present tense while the accent on the last 'e' in the second word changed it to past tense. It was

therefore evident that students became more keen with accents after TBA.

In the control group, 9 errors out of 124 were committed under register which falls under the communicative competence in the pre-test. In the post-test, the errors reduced to only 1 for the experimental group. Before TBA, students were unable to use words like; *Bonjour* (Hello), *Excusez-moi* (excuse me), *Je voudrais* (I would like), *S'ilvousplait* (please), *Merci* (thank you) and *Au revoir* (bye bye) which play an important part in the French culture and composition writing: (*Formule de politesse* – polite form).

There was also confusion in *tutoiement* (*tu*) and *vouvoiement* (*vous*) e.g. *Quelle est ta nationalité? Instead of 'Quelle est votre nationalité?* The first question was directed to a person they were familiar with while the second one, which was the correct form was directed to a stranger or someone you are meeting for the first time because the buyer of tickets was a stranger to the seller. This was a cultural error which may have come up because most Kenyans are not socialized to use these words. Ten (8.0645%) errors were committed because the students lacked the relevant vocabulary when it came to asking for the price (*le billet coûte combien? - How much is a ticket*) and asking what kind of help they needed at the railway station (*Puis-je vous aider? - Can I help you?*) This error was categorized under Linguistic competence.

In the experimental group, most errors that were made in the pre-test were eliminated in the post test. E.g, the 9 errors on register in pre-test reduced to only 1 in the post-test. On the contrary, in the control group, during the pre-test, there were fewer errors compared to the post-test where the errors increased. E.g, the 2 errors made in register in pre-test increased to 8 errors in the post-test. This implied that TBA as an approach played an important role in the correction of errors. This may be attributed to the fact that teachers may have used the errors committed by students during the pre-test to explain to them why they were wrong which meant that the errors would reduce in the post-test.

These findings are in line with Connors (1988) in a study on Frequency of Formal errors in current college writing composition and communication where results showed that the rate of error remained consistent over time. He concluded that a consistent error throughout a piece of writing requires that attention is drawn to it and the student helped to understand why what he has written is not correct.

**Students' Scores before and after TBA**

In both the pre and post-test, the learner was supposed to imagine that he was in a Francophone

country at the railway station and wanted to purchase a ticket. In 120 -150 words, he was required to write the dialogue that ensued between him and the ticket seller. The total marks awarded for the whole composition was ten (10). 104 students out of 124 (84%) agreed to the fact that they used the four evaluation indicators when marking their own or their classmates' compositions.

The frequencies, means and standard deviation in both the pre-test and post test scores for all the 124 students (Control & Experimental groups) were analysed and the results presented in table 3 in frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation.

Table 3 Students' performance on pre-test and post-test for control and experimental groups in frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. (N = 124)

Test Value (x/10)	PRE-TEST				POST TEST			
	Control		Experimental		Control		Experimental	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	1	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
1.5	1	1.7	-	-	1	1.7	-	-
2.0	7	11.7	2	3.1	1	1.7	-	-
2.5	8	13.3	11	17.2	5	8.3	2	3.125
3.0	8	13.3	9	14.1	5	8.3	3	4.688
3.5	10	16.7	20	31.3	5	8.3	2	3.125
4.0	7	11.7	7	10.9	6	10	6	9.375
4.5	6	10	9	14.1	9	15	15	23.44
5.	5	8.3	2	3.1	9	15	18	28.13
5.5	4	6.7	3	4.7	7	11.7	6	9.375
6.0	1	1.7	1	1.6	6	10	8	12.5
6.5	2	3.3	-	-	1	1.7	1	1.563
7.0	-	-	-	-	3	5	2	3.125
7.5	-	-	-	-	2	3.3	1	1.563
8.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>3.47915</b>		<b>3.43383</b>		<b>4.36243</b>		<b>4.64928</b>	
<b>STD. DEV.</b>	<b>1.14306</b>		<b>0.781965</b>		<b>1.14059</b>		<b>0.91098</b>	

The results in table 3 showed that no student scored a 0 mark in both the pre and posttest which implied that learners at form three had some level of proficiency in composition writing. The minimum mark scored by the students was 1 while the highest was 7.5 giving a wide range of 6.5. Results indicated that 2% (1 out of 124) of the students scored 1 mark in the pretest while in the post test, the least mark scored was 1.5 for the control group and 2 for the experimental group.

This implied that the minimum mark improved for both control and experimental groups after teaching for six weeks. A majority of the students (48%) in both the control and experimental groups scored 3.5 marks out of a possible 10 in the pre-test. This implied that performance in French composition writing was very poor because 3.5 was not even a half of the 10 marks. This finding agreed with Bwire (2007) on Learner competencies and proficiency in English Listening Comprehension where the study

found out that the mean scores suggested that the test was poorly done (11. 32 out of 30) suggesting that the proficiency level of the students was limited or very poor.

In the post test, the majority, 43% of students in the experimental group, got an average mark of 5 out of 10 before TBA. This showed that TBA had a positive effect on learners' composition writing. Two students (3%) got 6.5 which was the highest mark out of 10 in the pre-test, while 3 students (5%) managed 7.5, the highest mark in the post test. This implied that as much as the number of students who scored the highest mark improved from 2 to 3, there was also an improvement in the highest score from 6.5 to 7.5 after TBA instruction.

The results were also analyzed according to the schools to find out how the experimental and control groups performed. Figure1 shows schools'

performance on total test for Control and Experimental groups in means.

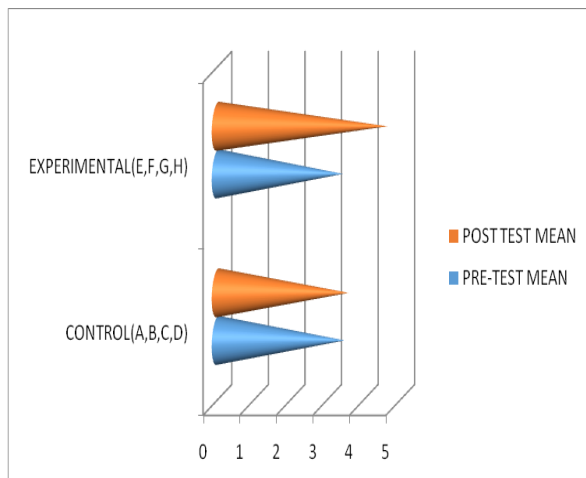


Figure 1 Performance in composition for Control and Experimental schools

According to Figure 1, the students performed better in the post test with a mean of 4.362 (out of 10) for the control and 4.649 for the experimental group compared to 3.479 for the control and 3.434 for the experimental in the pre-test. This implied that the students' performance was very poor with a low proficiency level in composition writing before being taught using TBA. This finding corroborates with findings of Murad (2009) on the effect of TBA on learners' oral interaction which investigated the statistical significance differences between the mean scores of both pre-test and post-test. The results showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the two adjusted means of the students' scores on the post-test attributed to the teaching procedure in favor of the members of the experimental group. This was attributed to the fact that the students in the experimental group performed much better after being taught using TBA. From these figures, it was evident that the control group was a little bit stronger than the experimental group before intervention, thus, 3.47925 mean (control) and 3.43383 mean (experimental). This slight difference of 0.04532 meant that both groups had almost the same proficiency levels at the beginning before the treatment. In the post test, the experimental group registered a higher mean of 4.64928 compared to 4.36243 registered by the control group. There was a significant difference of 0.02769 meaning that the scores improved slightly after Task Based Teaching. This implied that TBA was effective in teaching and

learning French in Kenya Secondary schools in Nairobi City County.

### Comparison Students' Scores on the Four Evaluation Indicators

The questionnaire was used to find out in which evaluation indicators students performed best. The four evaluation indicators were: Adherence to instructions (AI), Communicative competence (CC), Linguistic competence (LC) and textual competence (TC). 115 students out of 124 (93%) of the students said that they performed best in communicative competence. This answer corroborates well with all the teachers' (100%) answer which showed that learners performed best in communicative competence.

Adherence to instructions (AI) was marked out of 2 marks. Under this indicator, the learner was supposed to produce in written a dialogue of between 120-150 words following the set out rules and regulations. It was noted that some of the students were writing in prose instead of a conversation where we had two characters; a buyer and seller of tickets.

For textual competence (TC), three (3) marks were awarded. Under this section the student was expected to introduce the dialogue by greetings, followed by a good body where he/she asked for and gave the prices, times of arrival and departure, duration of the journey and write a conclusion. Although some students had the introduction, body and conclusion, most of the students failed to introduce and conclude their dialogues.

Three (3) marks were allocated for communicative competence (CC) where learners were expected to have appropriate vocabulary to greet, ask and give the prize of a ticket, ask and give the times of departure and arrival, ask and give the duration of a journey, express gratitude, describe experiences, feelings and opinions with ease. According to Dewey (2009), TBA takes into account the need for authentic communication.

The last evaluation indicator used in the awarding of marks was linguistic competence (LC) which was marked out of two (2) marks. The student was expected to use correct grammar, appropriate tenses, adjectives, pronouns, vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. The scores in each category for both the pre-test and posttest were analyzed to find out which evaluation indicator was best performed. The findings are presented in table 4.

Table 4 Score of students in the Four evaluation indicators in frequencies, means and standard deviation posttest and pre-test for control and experimental groups. (n = 124)

TEST VALUE	CONTROL SCHOOLS (FREQUENCIES)								EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS (FREQUENCIES)							
	PRE-TEST Frequency				POST TEST Frequency				PRE-TEST Frequency				POST TEST Frequency			
	AI	T	CC	L	AI	TC	CC	LC	AI	T	CC	L	AI	TC	CC	LC
0	15	4	4	10	7	2	3	5	10	4	1	12	2	0	2	1
.5	16	19	15	23	16	7	6	16	24	19	15	14	12	4	3	13
1	17	20	19	16	21	19	18	17	22	22	25	23	35	16	22	24
1.5	12	17	14	11	15	20	13	17	8	14	19	12	15	30	23	25
2		4	6	2	1	10	16	5		4	3	1		12	11	1
2.5			1			2	3			1	2			1	3	
3			1								1			1	*	
MEAN	.6	.98	1.1	.77	.8	1.2	1.3	1.0	.6	.99	1.0	.84	.8	1.4	1.2	1.0
STD.DE V	.5	.52	.60	.50	.4	.42	.59	.53	.4	.46	.44	.74	.3	.50	.53	.42

According to Table 4, 20% of the students scored 0 out of the possible 2 marks in Adherence to instructions in the pretest while in the post test, only 7% of the students (9 out of 124) scored zero. There was improvement in adherence to instructions scores in the post test for both the experimental and control groups. This implied that the learners' writing skills improved with TBA instruction. The findings showed that 31% of the students scored 1 out of 2 which was the average mark in Adherence to Instructions in the pretest. Therefore, this implied that majority of the students were average in this evaluation indicator before TBA.

In the post test, 45% (56 out of 124 students) got the average mark of 1 out of 2. The improvement in number of students scoring the average mark indicated that TBA had a positive impact on composition writing. In the post test, none of the students got the maximum score of 2 marks in adherence to instructions. This showed that generally, the form three students were below average in adhering to instructions. In addition, the drop in student numbers from 1 in pre-test to 0 in post test showed that this competence may be improved using other methods and not necessarily TBA.

The best performed evaluation indicator in pre-test was Communicative competence with a mean of 1.11 for the experimental and 1.02 for the control group. This implied that learners were able to communicate effectively even before intervention. This might be attributed to the use of videos as a resource material because majority of the teachers reported that they used videos in teaching communication. Teachers are encouraged to use videos in teaching French because learners can easily imitate the characters in the videos and so they end up speaking French like them. This finding corroborates with Weyers (1999), which concluded that exposure to video programming

increases students' communicative competence. Moreover, results of Zhang (2013) of Taiyuan University on understanding and implementation of TBA revealed that TBA was strongly associated with communicative competence and that the experimental group posted better performance in oral English than the control group.

The area with the lowest mean for both pre-test and post test was adherence to instructions. This poor performance by students might be attributed to most of them writing in prose instead of writing a dialogue. Moreover, the number of words was less than the expected 120 -150 words. Therefore, it was observed that taking instructions was a challenge to the students in both pre and post tests. However, improvement was noted in the post test meaning that use of TBA led to improved performance in Adherence which might be attributed to repeated reading of instructions. Consequently, it was clear that use of TBA improved this skill tremendously in the post test for the experimental group. This pointed to the fact that use of TBA in teaching quality writing in French in Kenya Secondary schools improved the students' skills in adhering to instructions.

Additionally, in Adherence to instructions, whose mean was 0.66 for both control and experimental groups in the pre-test, showed that there was an improvement to 0.88 in post test meaning that TBA played a major role to better the performance in this indicator. This might have been as a result of students reading the instruction more than once. Repeated reading lead to better understanding of the instruction leading to improved performance. Learners are encouraged to read and re read instructions in order to understand fully what exactly they are supposed to do before they start writing the composition. Lavabre (2002) on Adherence to instructions argues that instructions should be written in such a way that learners will be autonomous outside the lesson in

their practical work. In his study, he found out that 60% of the students did not have a problem with following instructions during a composition writing test after re reading the instructions more than once.

In the post-test, the best performed evaluation indicator was textual competence with 1.41 mean for the experimental group and 1.30 for the control group. There was an improvement index 0.24 for the control group in pre and posttests in the control group and an improvement index of 0.42 between pre test and post test scores in the experimental group. This implied that TBA had a positive effect on quality writing using textual competence as an evaluation indicator.

Under linguistic competence, the means were 0.77 in pretest and 1.33 in posttest for the control group. There was therefore an improvement in performance on linguistic competence after six weeks of teaching.

In the experimental group, the means were 0.84 and 1.07 for pre and posttest respectively. These results showed that there was improvement in the performance on this evaluation indicator which might have resulted from the students improving on tenses, grammar and sentence structure. Ammon (1980) in a research on Linguistic competence argues that there are variations in sentence difficulty as a function of the syntactic character of the verb. However, at the age of 5 years, considerable knowledge of the target structure by the learner was evident.

**Paired Sample t - test on evaluation indicators.**

The study was interested in finding out the correlation between the pre and posttest on the four evaluation indicators which were; adherence to instructions, communicative competence, linguistic competence and textual competence. Table 5 shows the correlation of means between the pre and post test on the 4 evaluation indicators.

Table 5 Paired Samples Correlations on pre and post test on the 4 indicators. (N = 124)

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Correlation	Sig. (2 tailed)
<b>Pair 1</b>				
Pre-test (AI)				
Post test (AI)	-.23387	.46607	.505	0.000*
<b>Pair 2</b>				
Pre-test (TC)				
Post test (TC)	-.39516	.56408	.409	0.000*
<b>Pair 3</b>				
Pre-test (CC)				
Post test (CC)	-.27016	.63885	.388	0.000*
<b>Pair 4</b>				
Pre-test (LC)				
Post test (LC)	-.20565	.66263	.088	0.001*

N = 124, df = 123, p < 0.05, \* - Significant

Table 4.9 shows that there was a significant correlation in both pre and post test on the four evaluation indicators of Adherence to Instructions, Textual Competence, Communicative competence and Linguistic competence in both the pre and post test. However, the correlation in linguistic competence was not as good as the other three indicators, that is Adherence to instructions, textual competence and communicative competence. This implied that the items in the three evaluation indicators correlated better than the items in the linguistic competence which correlated at .001. This therefore meant that task-based teaching and learning lays emphasis on performance of tasks rather than the linguistic aspect of the French language. For TBA to be effective therefore, most of the tasks have to be more of communicative or textual rather than linguistic.

**One-way ANOVA on evaluation indicators**

The ANOVA on gender (Boys' Girls' and Mixed schools) showed no significance difference on all the four evaluation indicators. This implied that Boys' and Girls' and Mixed schools performed equally on the four evaluation indicators. This meant that both boys and girls performed equally on the four indicators.

This finding corroborated well with Farahani (2009) who investigated 'the effects of Task-Based Approach, Gender and different levels of language Proficiency on speaking Development'. The research attempted to find out the speaking proficiency differences between male and Female students after a TBA course.

Results showed that the experimental group performed better on speaking skills. The study

concluded that gender was not a determining factor in speaking skills under task-based approach

## CONCLUSION

The study compared students' performance in composition writing before and after TBA for both control and experimental groups. The mean for the experimental group before TBA intervention was 3.434 while that of the control group was 3.479. After teaching for six weeks using TBA approach, the mean of the experimental group improved to 4.65 which was an improvement index of +1.22. For the control group, the mean improved 3.479 to 4.362 which was an improvement index of +1.083.

The performance scores of students were also compared on 4 evaluation indicators of adherence to instructions, textual competence, communicative competence and linguistic competence for pre and posttest on both control and experimental groups. Results showed that students performed better in the communicative competence than the other competences. These findings therefore showed that TBA was effective in teaching and learning quality writing because performance in the experimental group of schools improved after teaching using TBA.

This finding corroborated well with the findings by Xianyang, (2013) that the experimental group presented significantly better learning attainments compared to the control group.

According to the sampled teachers' responses, the advantages of TBA were that it allowed needs of individual students to be effectively catered for, the teacher was able to identify the learners' ability, made the student responsible, motivated the learner and created room for flexibility. Moreover, the study found out that TBA provided opportunity for use of new knowledge, rendered learning flexible, initiated critical thinking, enhanced creativity and improved social interaction. The sampled teachers also reported that TBA made acquisition of the language skills easier as compared to the conventional approaches.

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