

TRAINING ON DEVELOPING WRITING TEACHING MATERIALS BASED ON TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) PRINCIPLES FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS IN BANDAR LAMPUNG CITY

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ABSTRACT

Writing instruction in English remains challenging for teachers because the teaching materials used in classrooms tend to emphasize mastery of linguistic forms and are not always contextualized to students' communicative needs. This condition highlights the importance of strengthening teachers' competence in developing meaningful and communicative teaching materials. This community service program aimed to improve English teachers' knowledge and skills in developing writing teaching materials based on the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), particularly through the manipulation of task complexity within the framework of the Cognition Hypothesis. The program involved 30 English teachers from junior secondary, senior secondary, and vocational schools in Bandar Lampung. The training employed an andragogical approach consisting of conceptual presentations, discussions and analyses of task examples, workshops on teaching-material development, instructional simulations, and feedback sessions. The program was evaluated through a pre-test, observations during the training process, and a post-test involving the development of task-based teaching materials. The results showed that, in general, the participating teachers were able to develop better and more relevant writing teaching materials after participating in the training. The materials produced demonstrated the application of TBLT principles through more contextualized and communicative tasks oriented toward meaningful language use. These findings indicate that TBLT-based training can serve as an effective strategy for strengthening teachers' professional competence in designing writing teaching materials that are more relevant to the needs of English language learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English language instruction aims not only to impart knowledge of linguistic elements but also to

equip learners with the ability to use the language for communication within meaningful contexts. Writing is one of the key skills that needs to be developed in

English language learning. Through writing, learners are required to organize ideas, select appropriate linguistic forms, and convey messages clearly within specific communicative contexts. Consequently, writing instruction requires teaching materials that go beyond a mere focus on mastering language forms; they must also provide learners with opportunities to use the language functionally.

One approach that can be used to support language learning focused on language use is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). TBLT is a language learning approach that positions communicative tasks as a central element of the learning process. This approach emphasizes using language to complete goal-oriented activities that reflect real-life communication needs. Consequently, learning is not directed solely at mastering linguistic aspects (forms) but also at the ability to use language to convey and comprehend meaning. This perspective positions learners as active language users within the learning process (Ellis, 2003, 2005; Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden, 2006).

The application of TBLT is also closely related to how learning tasks are designed. One important aspect of task design is task complexity. In the Cognition Hypothesis, Robinson (2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2011) It explains that cognitive factors within a task can be manipulated to influence the processes and outcomes of learners' language production. The framework distinguishes between task complexity, task conditions, and task difficulty. Task complexity relates to the cognitive demands inherent in the task, whereas task conditions pertain to interactional conditions, and task difficulty relates to learner characteristics. Therefore, the development of TBLT-based instructional materials needs to consider the level of task complexity so that learning activities impose appropriate demands on the learners. Several studies cited in the proposal indicate a relationship between the implementation and manipulation of task complexity and learner language production. Research on TBLT and task complexity in Indonesia also demonstrates the approach's potential to foster learner engagement and the development of language proficiency, including writing skills (Agustina, 2017; Mahpul, 2014; Mahpul & Nurweni, 2016; Mahpul & Oliver, 2018; Nurcahyani, 2020; Astuti et al., 2025; Kamila & Mahpul, 2025). These findings reinforce the importance of task design as part of communication-based English language learning.

Nevertheless, the implementation of task-based learning at the school level still faces challenges regarding teacher competence and readiness. This proposal identifies that some English teachers lack an adequate understanding of task-based learning, resulting in a lack of confidence in its implementation. Consequently, instruction tends to remain focused on mastering linguistic forms, while opportunities for students to use the language in

meaningful activities need to be strengthened. These issues indicate that developing teacher competence requires more than just theoretical understanding; it must also be accompanied by practical experience in designing, developing, and simulating task-based teaching materials. Given these circumstances, conducting training on the development of TBLT-based writing instructional materials is relevant for English teachers in Bandar Lampung City. The training aims not only to introduce the TBLT concept but also to provide teachers with practical experience in analyzing sample tasks, designing instructional materials, considering task complexity, conducting teaching simulations, and receiving feedback on the materials they develop. The proposed activity targets approximately 30 English teachers from junior high (SMP) and senior/vocational high schools (SMA/SMK) in Bandar Lampung City.

This community service activity aims to enhance teachers' understanding and skills in developing English teaching materials—specifically for writing—based on TBLT principles and the manipulation of cognitive factors (task complexity). Furthermore, the activity seeks to foster teacher professionalism by enabling the design of instruction that is more communicative and contextual. Evaluation is conducted through pre-tests, observations during the training, and post-tests involving the development of task-based learning models. Consequently, this activity is expected to make a practical contribution to building teachers' capacity to produce superior, relevant writing materials that can be effectively implemented in school-based English instruction.

2. METHODS

This community service activity represents an implementation of the Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi (Three Pillars of Higher Education)—specifically the pillar of community service—carried out by lecturers and students from the English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Lampung. The activity took place in Bandar Lampung City, targeting English teachers from Junior High Schools (SMP), Senior High Schools (SMA), and Vocational High Schools (SMK). Thirty English teachers participated in the program. Selection focused on teachers seeking to enhance their competence in developing English teaching materials and learning models based on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

The activity was conducted as a training workshop on developing TBLT-based writing materials. It employed an andragogical approach, treating participants as adult learners actively engaged in conceptual understanding, product development, practical application, and reflection. The program was structured in stages, progressing from strengthening conceptual understanding to the

practical development and simulation of teaching materials.

The activity is carried out in several stages, as follows:

1. Material Presentation and Discussion Phase

At this stage, participants are introduced to the principles of TBLT, the characteristics of task-based learning, and the concept of task complexity in relation to the Cognition Hypothesis. The presentation of material is followed by a Q&A session and a discussion aimed at gauging participants' understanding and experience regarding the implementation of task-based learning. This stage aligns with the activity plan outlined in the proposal, which establishes the presentation of TBLT concepts and the manipulation of cognitive factors as a foundation before participants proceed to develop teaching materials.

2. Sample Analysis and Teaching Material Development Stage

At this stage, participants are provided with examples of learning models and TBLT-based tasks to analyze in terms of learning objectives, language use contexts, and task complexity. Subsequently, participants develop writing instructional materials based on TBLT principles, receiving guidance from the community service team. During this phase, participants are guided to transform learning activities—previously focused on language form—into tasks that offer students opportunities to use language meaningfully.

3. Practice and Simulation Phase

The teaching materials developed by the participants were put into practice through teaching simulations. These simulations were conducted to assess the applicability of the designed tasks and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the materials. The service team provided input and feedback on both the design and the execution of the simulations. The simulation exercise was a crucial component of the activity plan, as participants were required not only to produce materials but also to gain practical experience in implementing a task-based learning model.

4. Product Improvement and Refinement Stage

Based on simulation results and feedback from the community service team, participants revised the teaching materials they had developed. Improvements focused on the alignment of learning objectives, the relevance of task contexts, learner engagement, and the application of TBLT principles and task complexity. This stage resulted in teaching materials that were more relevant and ready for use in English language instruction.

5. Evaluation Phase

The evaluation of the activity was conducted through a pre-test, observation, and a post-test. The pre-test served to identify the participants' initial understanding of TBLT. Observations were carried out during the training to identify participant

engagement and the challenges faced in developing teaching materials. Subsequently, the post-test—administered via a questionnaire and a TBLT-based material development task—assessed the participants' understanding and capabilities following the training. The evaluation data were analyzed descriptively by comparing pre- and post-training results and assessing the quality of the materials produced by participants based on the application of TBLT principles and their relevance to English language learning needs.



Figure 1. Activity implementation diagram

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The training demonstrated an improvement in participants' ability to develop writing instructional materials based on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Overall, the participating teachers were able to produce superior and more relevant instructional materials after completing the training series. This shift was particularly evident in the teachers' ability to design learning activities that went beyond a mere focus on mastering linguistic forms, instead providing students with opportunities to use language within meaningful contexts. Initially, participants were introduced to TBLT principles and the concept of task complexity. This conceptual understanding was subsequently applied through activities such as analyzing sample tasks, developing instructional materials, conducting simulations, and receiving feedback. This process enabled teachers to bridge theoretical concepts with practical classroom needs. The sequence of activities aligned with the training design, which prioritized content delivery, material development practice, and simulations as key stages.

The improvement in the quality of instructional materials was most apparent in the contextual relevance of the tasks. Teachers began developing activities that closely mirrored communication situations students might actually encounter. Consequently, the materials did not simply require students to complete language structure exercises but instead guided them to use language as a tool to accomplish specific tasks. This approach aligns with the core characteristics of TBLT, which positions language use for communicative purposes as a central element of the learning process (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004).

The results of the teaching material development indicate that participants have begun applying TBLT principles by assigning tasks that serve communicative purposes and enable students to actively engage in language use. This shift is significant because task-based learning prioritizes meaning as a crucial aspect of the learning process, while linguistic elements continue to be addressed as part of the language-use process (Ellis, 2005; Van den Branden, 2006). In addition to the task context, teachers are also guided to consider the level of task complexity. Within the framework of the Cognition Hypothesis, task complexity can be manipulated through cognitive factors, thereby enabling tasks to impose varying demands on learners (Robinson, 2001, 2003, 2005). The activity proposal also emphasizes that task complexity is a key factor that can be manipulated in the development of task-based learning.

Applying this principle helps teachers understand that learning tasks need not all share the same level of difficulty. Teachers can develop tasks incrementally by considering factors such as the number of elements to be processed, reasoning demands, planning requirements, and the learners' prior knowledge. This approach allows instructional materials to be tailored to students' abilities and needs. Instructional simulations serve as a crucial component of the participants' competency development process. Through simulations, teachers can test the applicability of the materials they have developed before using them in actual classroom settings. This process also enables participants to receive feedback regarding the clarity of instructions, the alignment of tasks with learning objectives, and the relevance of the chosen contexts. This approach demonstrates that enhancing teacher competence is achieved not only through theoretical instruction but also through hands-on experience in designing and implementing instructional materials. During the activities, instructors provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the learning models simulated by the participants. Consequently, the training process is highly practical, offering teachers the opportunity to engage in a cycle of development, practice, evaluation, and refinement.

The results indicate that TBLT-based training contributes to the development of teachers' professional competence, particularly in designing writing materials. The teachers' ability to produce superior, relevant materials suggests that strengthening their understanding of TBLT must be accompanied by practical material development and ongoing guidance. These findings align with the activity's objective: to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and professionalism in developing English learning models based on the manipulation of cognitive factors. By integrating TBLT principles and task complexity, teachers gain not only an alternative teaching approach but also a framework

for designing tasks that better align with learning objectives and student needs.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the training has a positive impact on teachers' ability to develop writing materials. Teachers are able to transition from a conceptual understanding to the practical application of TBLT principles, resulting in instructional materials that are more contextual, communicative, and relevant. These findings reinforce the importance of training that integrates theoretical grounding, the practice of developing teaching materials, simulations, and feedback as a professional development strategy for English teachers. The following table illustrates the comparison of the quality of teachers' instructional materials before and after this training on creating writing materials based on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) principles:

Table. 1. Changes in the Quality of Writing Teaching Materials Before and After Training

Aspects Evaluated	Before Training	After Training	Identified Changes
Learning orientation	Tends to focus on mastering language forms	Places greater emphasis on language use to achieve communicative goals	A shift from form-focused to meaningful language use
Task context	Activities tend to be general and connected to situations	Tasks are less developed with real-life context closer to students' lives and needs	Teaching materials become more contextual and relevant
Task objective	Focused on completing exercises	More on achieving communicative function of the task through the task	The communicative function of the task becomes clearer
Student activity	Tends to receive completing exercises	Involve more and using language provided to complete tasks	Potential for active student engagement increases
Development of complexity	Does not explicitly consider cognitive demands of tasks	Yet Begins to consider the complexity when designing activities	Teachers pay greater attention to the cognitive demands of tasks
Alignment with learning objectives	The connection between activities and learning objectives is not always explicit	Activities are more purposefully aligned with learning objectives	Integration between objectives and activities is enhanced
Implementation readiness	Teaching materials have not undergone TBLT-based simulation and feedback processes	Teaching materials have been developed, simulated, and refined based on feedback	The product is more ready for implementation in instruction

Based on Table 1, there was a positive shift in the quality of writing instructional materials developed by teachers following the training. Materials that previously tended to focus on the mastery of linguistic forms evolved into activities that were more communicative, contextual, and oriented toward language use for specific purposes. Teachers also began to consider the relevance of task contexts, student engagement, and the alignment of activities with learning objectives. These changes demonstrate the participants' ability to apply the fundamental principles of Task-Based Language

Teaching (TBLT) in developing instructional materials.

Furthermore, teachers began to take task complexity into account when designing learning activities. The processes of practice, simulation, and feedback enabled participants to identify and rectify weaknesses in the materials they developed. This aligns with the Cognition Hypothesis framework, which positions task complexity as a crucial factor in task-based instructional design (Robinson, 2001, 2003, 2005). Thus, the training not only enhanced the teachers' conceptual understanding but also assisted them in producing writing instructional materials that are more relevant and applicable to English language learning.

Discussion

The results indicate that the TBLT training contributed to teachers' ability to develop writing instructional materials that are more communicative and contextual. This shift demonstrates that combining conceptual understanding with practical material development helps teachers apply TBLT principles in their instruction. These findings align with the theoretical basis of the activity, which positions TBLT as an approach emphasizing language use for communicative purposes and meaningful activities (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). The improvement in material quality is also linked to the introduction of the task complexity concept via the Cognition Hypothesis. Teachers were guided not only to select the content to be taught but also to consider the cognitive demands inherent in the tasks. According to Robinson (2001, 2003, 2005), task complexity can be manipulated through cognitive factors during task design. Thus, an understanding of task complexity provides a framework for teachers to develop tasks in a more targeted manner that aligns with learners' needs.

The training process incorporating sample analysis, practical development, simulations, and feedback played a crucial role in helping teachers implement these concepts. Teachers had the opportunity to test the materials they developed, identify weaknesses, and make improvements based on instructor input. Consequently, the results demonstrate that teacher professional development is more practical and effective when training goes beyond mere theoretical delivery to provide hands-on experience in designing and refining TBLT-based instructional materials.

4. CONCLUSION

Materials based on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) have yielded positive results regarding English teachers' ability to design instructional materials. Overall, participating teachers were able to produce materials that were superior, communicative, and relevant to learning needs after completing the training series. The application of TBLT principles and the concept of task complexity

helped teachers understand that English instructional materials must provide students with opportunities to use the language meaningfully, rather than merely practicing aspects of linguistic form. Activities such as analysis, practice, simulation, and feedback also assisted teachers in refining their material designs to make them more contextual and applicable. Consequently, TBLT-based training serves as a viable strategy for supporting the professional development of English teachers, particularly in the creation of writing materials. Similar initiatives could be developed on a sustained basis through mentoring on classroom implementation, allowing for a more in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of the resulting materials.

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