



## **Teachers' Voice in Online Task Based Language Teaching of EFL Writing Context**

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### **Abstract**

*In light of the pandemic, online learning has become increasingly popular. Thus, students' interest and engagement are two of the primary concerns of teachers regarding online teaching. online Task-Based Language Learning (TBLT) is one of them. Based on the issue, this research conducted to explore teachers' voices in online TBLT of EFL writing contexts. The researchers employed a descriptive-qualitative approach. The interview was used to collect data from two EFL teachers at IAIN Bone and IAIN Ambon. The data obtained from interview process then analyzed descriptively. According to the findings of the study, the teachers believe that implementing online TBLT in EFL writing context has numerous advantages. However, the teachers also face several challenges in implementation. The teachers expressed the hope that online TBLT would be a good choice as one of the current strategies for teaching EFL writing. The study could have implications for online English teaching and learning in terms of pedagogy both theoretically and practically, aiding teachers and students in adopting TBLT*

**Keywords:** *EFL Writing, Online Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, Teachers' Voice*

### **1. Introduction**

The emphasis of the TBLT learning system is on the assignments that students are given. It is concerned with learner activity rather than teacher activity. In TBLT, the learner should be exposed to as many foreign languages as they can. Therefore, they can first observe it, form personal hypotheses about it, and then engage in experiments with it (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). The goal of task-based language teaching (TBLT) is to have students' complete meaningful tasks in the target language while focusing on utilizing authentic language (Ellis, 2021). Each assignment will give the student a fresh opportunity to interact personally with the foreign language, and the teacher now plays a crucial role. Therefore, the teacher is responsible for creating and providing various tasks that will allow the student the opportunity to experiment spontaneously, personally, and uniquely with the foreign language. The students must assume responsibility for the consciousness-raising procedure, which must come after the actions related to the experimenting task.

The teacher must assist students in identifying parallels and contrasts as well as "correct, clarify, and deepen" their understanding of the target language. Making travel reports, writing about noteworthy experiences, and writing professional or personal letters

are a few examples of these responsibilities. Students can then practice utilizing the target language in context with their daily routine or their activity on a daily basis. In terms of assessment, it is emphasizing more on how well real-world activities were completed than on how accurately the specified language forms were used. TBLT focuses on meaning-making rather than linguistic correctness to build conversational ability in a second/foreign language (Zhang, 2017). This makes TBLT more preferred for fostering student confidence and target language fluency. As a result, communicative language teaching (CLT) or TBLT can be considered as a subset of CLT. Students tend to be familiar with the target language when the development of practical extralinguistic abilities is frequently provided, and it will be highly enjoyable for students to be involved in practicing the target language according to real events and settings. In order to inspire kids to appreciate learning languages in the future. According to (Ellis, 2009) language-teaching activity to be considered a task. It must meet the following criteria: the first is emphasis should be placed primarily on 'meaning' (by which is meant that students should be able to comprehend the significance of what they are reading) should concentrate primarily on analyzing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances). Next, there must be a 'gap' (i.e., the need to convey information, express an opinion, or infer meaning). In addition, learners should be required to rely heavily on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) to accomplish the exercise. Then there is a clearly defined outcome apart from the use of language.

A complete and effective combination of technology and TBLT to prevent translation error and activities from face-to-face contexts onto a computer platform, the first requirement is a precise definition of technology-mediated tasks. An activity in TBLT should be real, practical, meaning-focused, and appropriate for the level and learning objectives of the pupils. Tasks in online TBLT should provide opportunities for concentration on form (a key aspect of TBLT instruction) and have additional benefits beyond language acquisition only, such as encouraging students to have digital skills for using digital appliances out of the classroom, increasing students' interest in the L2 culture, etc. The meaning should become the ultimate goals of the online assignment, and grammar should be the least priority. The tasks should be learner-centered, taking into account students' language needs and desires, technological applications, and digital literacy competence. Tasks should also be holistic and authentic, incorporating real-world language usage procedures. Lastly, tasks should incorporate reflection into the learning process; they should offer possibilities for higher-order learning in accordance with experiential learning principles.

Gonzales et al. offer three conditions to consider that will create the technological integration for language learning activity (Gonzalez-lloret et al., 2016). It aims to gain fully responsive to make TBLT becomes an approach to language education as digital transformation also emerges technologies. First, it would be essential to work with a TBLT-informed definition of tasks, so that new technologies may be selected and paired with actual 'tasks,' as opposed to being selected as mere translations or extensions of exercises and activities of various types into computer platforms. A second necessity is awareness of the fundamental consequences of incorporating new technologies into educational design has for the development of knowledge and for all types of learning, including language learning. The third prerequisite repositions the curriculum at the forefront of task-and-technology integrations, or programmatic thinking about tasks and technologies as they are integrated in curricular contexts.

The implementation of online TBLT has been studied by several researchers. According to the research results, Online TBLT improves writing performance for EFL

learners. (Faridi et al., 2020) Other studies using the same approach found that participants perceived integrated language skills gains, such as vocabulary and writing skills.. (Lee, 2022) Similarly, other studies showed that CALL-mediated TBLT improved L2 reading motivation in the experimental group by only a small amount. (Tavakoli et al., 2019) The results showed a significant effect for CALL-mediated TBLT, indicating that CALL-mediated TBLT had a positive effect on L2 reading motivation of the students in the experimental group.

The online TBLT strategy can be both a technological and a conventional tool in the learning process, both inside and outside the classroom. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is the optimal approach for the integration of technology in language teaching (González-Lloret, 2017). By implementing online learning in EFL writing, students can gain knowledge not only from teachers but also from other sources and reference on the internet. Online TBLT is an interactive learning strategy that can help students communicate remotely. Students can practice their writing skills by exchanging information through social media with people around the world.

It has been reported that several researchers have examined the implementation of TBLT in EFL activities, which are conducted online through the integration of several applications (Matthews & Burke, 2019; Mulyadi et al., 2021) Most previous studies on online TBLT, however, focused primarily on the effects felt by students and their implementation in the classroom. In spite of the fact that there is research that examines EFL writing from the standpoint of a teacher, it emphasizes other skills rather than EFL writing skills. Based on the explanation above, the purpose of this research is to explore the teachers' voice in online task-based language teaching in an EFL writing context.

## **2. Method**

Qualitative descriptive method as research design of this study. This study included lecturers of English writing from two Islamic institutions, IAIN Ambon and IAIN Bone. The chosen participants were those with experience in teaching writing by implementing task-based language teaching virtually. Criterion based strategy LeCompte & Preissle in Johnson & Christensen (2014) is the consideration of selecting research participants. The purpose of the strategy is to develop inclusion criteria for selecting people or other units. In selecting the participants, writing lecturers from two Islamic institution were chosen based on the following indicators: teaching experience (sub-indicators time and teaching time allotment), and teaching Approach (sub-indicators teacher understanding of TBLT). Then two subjects (one from IAIN Ambon and one from IAIN Bone) were determined to be the subject under the criteria for this study.

Semi-structured interviews were adapted from Liu & Ren (2021) that were employed to investigate the complexities of the participants' in-depth thoughts and experiences related to the implementation of online TBLT. In total, 20 questions were developed as guided questions for the interview, which was carried out on a one-to-one basis interview. The indicators of interview consist of teaching experience, understanding task-based language teaching, and implementation of online TBLT All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The data were analyzed descriptively where the researcher described and summarized events or phenomena from data obtained through the interview process from two respondent.

### **3. Results**

This section provides an overview of teacher voice in implementing online TBLT in an EFL writing context. In this section, the researchers describe in detail the data collected from the selected subjects. Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on their experience implementing online TBLT in the classroom to teach EFL writing.

#### **3.1. Findings**

The data obtained in interview sessions with two EFL writing teachers who have implemented online TBLT in the learning process is explained in the findings section. There are three aspects discussed in the interview process. The first is to identify the Teachers' EFL teaching experience; the second is to explore the Teachers' understanding of task and TBLT; and the third is to describe the Teachers' perception of the implementation of online TBLT in EFL writing. The data can be seen as follows.

##### **3.1.1. Teacher Experience**

The results of interviews conducted with EFL writing teachers. Interviews with both participants provided information regarding their teaching experiences, the learning conditions in terms of class size, the challenges they faced in terms of the number of students, their hopes for the students to accomplish, and the efforts they made to achieve this. Both teachers have taught English writing for between 10 and 17 years. In general, they teach 25 students per class. In order to carry out the learning process, this amount is deemed appropriate. In most cases, teachers group their students into four or five groups for each class in order to facilitate learning. During the learning process, teachers act as instructors, facilitators, and motivators. For the purpose of achieving the learning goals in the learning process, students can achieve the learning goal for each meeting, which is already specified in the syllabus, and they can actively participate in the learning process, they can comprehend the material presented well, and they can apply what they have learned to assist them in fulfilling their future career objectives. A teacher prepares the class for teaching in a variety of ways to accomplish this goal, including preparing a lesson plan that outlines learning objectives, teaching strategies, and learning materials, and providing a scenario of English language learning containing pre-activities, main activities, and post-activities.

##### **3.1.2. Teacher Understanding on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**

The second table describes the results of interviews about teacher understanding of task-based language teaching. There are three items asked for in this section. The first is about the sources of information regarding the TBLT strategy obtained by teachers; the next is their understanding of what tasks are; and the last is their knowledge of task-based language teaching. The two teachers who were interviewed regarding their knowledge of TBLT stated that they obtained information through both self-reading articles and participation in workshops and training on English Language Teaching (ELT). According to them, the tasks in learning are all activities carried out by students in the course of learning English as a target language, which aim to develop students' communicative skills, and classes that emphasize comprehension, manipulation, production, or interaction in the target language. An effective task must have a sense of completion, and it can either be written or spoken. In addition, they elaborated on their views on task-based language teaching, which they described as a teaching technique that focuses on students' learning of English in accordance with their real lives. In addition, TBLT is a set of strategies that

begins pre-activity with identifying the objective of instruction and describing tasks for classroom activities. While activities involve the explanation of the task in detail, students' role in completing the task, and classroom observation. An evaluation of the activity and feedback from the lecturer should be included in the post-activity. The results show that the two participants already know what and how to implement TBLT in the EFL class. In addition, they obtained information about TBLT through self-reading and workshops.

### **3.1.3. Implementation of online TBLT**

The third section provides an overview of the TBLT online implementation. There are several issues related to this section.

It was reported that both teachers had implemented TBLT in their EFL classroom. Several online teaching platforms were used, including Ed-link, Google Classroom, Zoom Meeting, and Quizlet. During the semester, TBLT is applied via the online platform when teaching EFL writing subjects and combined with face-to-face interaction. There have been ten online meetings and six face-to-face meetings in total. Online TBLT is not only used by teachers for teaching writing subjects, but also for teaching other subjects. The TBLT method was chosen because it is a student-centered method. This method also allows pupils to acquire the language in practical situations through practice or exercises. Although they sometimes have difficulty implementing it due to objections to the process of receiving written feedback.

The series of activities in the implementation of Online TBLT by the two participants are described as follows:

#### ***The implementation of online TBLT in the classroom***

##### Preparation activity

1. Providing the material and task (presented in power point)
2. Connected to delink or Google Classroom
3. Providing zoom meeting
4. Sharing link zoom to the students

##### Main activity

1. Explaining about the learning objective of the meeting
2. Explaining about process relate to the content of language
3. Providing the task
4. Explaining about the procedures to complete the task

##### Post activity

1. Giving chance for students to ask question or confirm about the task.

#### ***Feedback Session***

##### Preparation activity

1. Explaining the learning objectives of the meeting.

##### Main activity

1. Giving feedback to students work
2. Giving chance for participant to comment their friends' work

##### Post activity



## 1. Giving clarification

The participants also stated that in implementing TBLT online, there are several things related to the selection of teaching materials used:

1. All instructional materials are attached to the ed-link platform, allowing students to download and study them outside of class.
2. The material that used still incorporates material from books and the internet.
3. Learning materials for learning EFL writing are widely available online today.

After implementing Online TBLT in the writing class, their participants experienced several benefits including:

1. The time allocation is more effective,
2. students more interest/motivated to learn.
3. Students can access learning recordings at any moment in order to re-learn the subject that has been taught.
4. The students' work is stored properly.
5. Enables students to attend lessons from any desired location.
6. Everyone learns differently.

As a result of implementing online TBLT, participants also encounter several challenges, including:

1. Online TBLT, on the other hand, can be run well when teachers understand how to implement TBLT as well as possible.
2. The use of technology is very important, students should be introduced to technology more often. Most of my students come from rural areas so online learning using the ed-link platform is new to them.
3. Their learning motivation increase since use the platform. If the students motivated to learn, they will achieve good result as well

Apart from the challenges they face, several obstacles also stand in their way:

1. The students are lack of capability in using online platform. Some student unable to attach their task document at the platform based on the schedule.
2. The problem that usually arises is the unstable network factor.
3. It's hard to conduct assessment of feedback at online class

From the interviews conducted, teachers' efforts in encouraging students to conduct online TBLT (Internet connection and technology tools) were as follows:

1. For issues related to technology tools, the teachers choose the applicable and the easy platform to operate.
2. The second problem is related to internet connection. To solve this, the teachers sometimes use asynchronous learning or suggest the students to find out the location with stable internet connection, or they can join in one frame with their friend.

In the last question of the interview, the applicant was asked about reflections regarding any aspects of the implementation of TBLT online in English as a foreign language writing classis:

1. The TBLT learning strategy is doable. Students are more involved in the learning process.

2. This helps students understand the use of the target language because they directly practice it in their assignments.
3. Applying online TBLT for writing instruction in higher education is an excellent idea. Students are better acquainted with technology and more time-efficient.
4. The platform utilized as a learning technology is also very user-friendly. Students can access learning materials anytime, including work and video files.
5. This platform also facilitates the management of students' attendance for each meeting.
6. They can also access integrated materials or tasks.
7. The collection of each assignment manages their discipline, lecturers might set a deadline for assignment collection.
8. The teachers are extremely helpful with this platform, hopefully all lectures especially at Islamic higher education will utilize it to support their learning instruction.

The results of the interviews show that the respondents already know about online TBLT. They have often implemented it and are still implementing it today. They tend to choose this strategy because it has several advantages. However, TBLT online still has disadvantages in several aspects. There are several factors that can support the successful implementation of online TBLT: student factors, the availability of teaching materials, and the ability to use online learning technology. The respondents thought that the implementation of online TBLT could be an option for learning EFL writing in class, especially in higher education.

## **3.2. Discussion**

### **3.2.1 Teacher Experience**

Based on interviews conducted with EFL teachers, both of them have been teaching English for more than 10 years; some have even taught for 17 years. This can be interpreted that they have a lot of experience in teaching English and are also experienced in using various strategies in EFL writing teaching process. Twenty-five students in each class are considered ideal when teaching EFL writing. However, the challenges that the teacher faced challenged in term of student's quantity as it is hard to accompany and assess students on by one. Teachers need more time to accompany students when conducting writing activity. This is because the teacher provides individual assistance during the process. During the practice of writing in groups, the teacher did not find any significant obstacles. The class is divided into four to five small groups. And each group will work together to complete the task. During the learning process, the teacher acts as a facilitator who is responsible for preparing material based on the students' needs. The teacher also helps the students understand the material and the tasks. In the last session of learning, the teachers give some feedback or an assessment. Meanwhile there are several barriers the students faced during the learning session including time management, the nature of the classroom, and unsupportive facilities are barriers to implementing evaluations in writing teaching by online. Therefore, sometime teacher gives feedback by face to face. Apart from that, the teacher also acts as an instructor to give the students instructions on how to complete their tasks and provide them with information related to specific skills in context (Belda-Medina, 2021). In addition, the teacher also acts as a motivator for the students so that they can be more excited to learn and find a passion for learning that suits their characteristics. As teacher, we are usually able to tell who is motivated and who is not, and we frequently find ourselves wondering how or even if it is possible to take the motivation of several students and distribute it among others. Getting in touch with one's motivation is important for teachers of

foreign languages since, as everyone realize, motivation is one of the most significant variables influencing successful language learning.

In carrying out their role, the teachers expect the students to achieve learning goals for every meeting that are already set in the syllabus. It is really important in order to measure their achievement after learning a specific skill or knowledge. The teachers also expect the students to participate actively in the learning process; they are able to understand the material presented well and apply the knowledge to support their future careers. To achieve that, the teacher provides several preparations. In the preparation steps, the teachers provide an English scenario that consists of a pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. In pre-activities, the teacher compiles a lesson plan that contains learning objectives, learning materials, and strategies that will be applied in the classroom. In teaching activities, the teachers integrate specific methods or approaches that fit with the material. Various materials are needed in order to keep students motivated during the learning activities. Selecting appropriate media or virtual platform also influences the learning strategy because some students tend to understand the material by practicing using media. The teacher reflects on learning and provides feedback on student learning outcomes in the post-activity reflection.

### **3.2.2 Teacher Understanding of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)**

Based on the previous finding about participants' understanding of TBLT in the EFL context, it is known that participants obtain information about TBLT by self-reading. They get information by reading articles. They learned about the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach from reading English learning concept books by (Nunan, 2004), Task-based language teaching, and several research articles on Google Scholar. Studies related to the implementation of this strategy, reported by (Beglar, D. Hunt, 2002), are titled "Implementing task-based language teaching." After reading the sources, they stated that task-based language teaching has often been implemented because classroom learning always uses task activities to evaluate students' comprehension of specific language skills.

The participants also understand the task in TBLT. They state that tasks are all activities carried out by students in the process of learning English as the target language, which aims to train students' communicative skills. The task that focuses on comprehension, manipulation, production, or interaction in the target language uses grammatical understanding to convey meaning, not only the form of the text. The task should have a sense of completion, with a beginning, middle, and end. The task could be completed in either written or spoken language. They define TBLT as a language learning method that focuses on training students to use English according to their real lives. Students are given assignments based on the material being studied as a form of learning. With this method, students are expected to be able to enjoy learning because this technique combines with students' passion or interest. So, the learning process is very engaging for both parties. teacher and students. Students are able to carry out assignment and achieve predetermined learning goals. It is a set of strategies that started with pre-activity, including identifying the objective of instruction and describing the tasks provided for classroom activities. While activities consist of task explanation in detail, students' role in completing the task, and classroom observation, post-activity items included evaluations and feedback from the lecturer.



### 3.2.3 Implementation of Online TBLT

Even though TBLT has a lot of significances impact on learning process, but it also brings some challenges to teachers especially in EFL writing class. One of many factors contributed to that is student's lack understanding on online platform utilization. Some of them have not mastered the use of digital platform. There are still many students who clueless about technology, so the teacher needs time to explain how to use the technology before implementing it in the learning process. At the beginning of the meeting, students found it difficult to adapt, but by the next meeting, they could use the technology properly. Another issue is that some students are unable to attach their task documents to the platform due to time constraints. Apart from a lack of understanding of how to use technology, The problem that usually raised from technical issues was the connection or internet connection issues during the learning process since the campus located in a rural area with trouble connection here and there. Therefore, Zoom application could not be used optimally and it somehow affect the TBLT learning process; students found it difficult to understand Teachers' explanation about the tasks they have to do.

However, in overcoming the problems faced, the teacher several made efforts to facilitate students in doing online TBLT in terms of internet connection and technology tools. The first challenge is related to technology tools. Teachers tend to have online learning applications that have been integrated with SIAKAD or with platforms that are easily accessible by students, such as Google Classroom and ed-link. Before starting the learning activity, the teacher also asks students to download the application on their smartphones. It will simplify the application process. The teacher also introduces all of the platform's supporting tools. The next step is to detect students who still have difficulty using the platform, and then the teachers provide assistance and guidance on what they need to do to master these tools. The second problem is related to internet connection, because the problem of internet connection is still a major problem in online learning. The teachers sometimes suggest to the students that they find a location with a stable internet connection. Those who are having problems with their internet connection or do not have enough money to purchase internet data can join in one frame with a friend. There is a free internet connection provided by the campus, so students can access the internet. Another approach the teacher implemented was using asynchronous learning. For example, by sending learning videos and then giving assignments via group chat or Google Classroom. Additional problem that teacher faced in terms of tools and internet connection was the method for feedbacks. Teacher still found it difficult to give feedback. Therefore, teachers facilitated students with offline feedbacks in the class instead.

After reviewing the online TBLT implementation, it can be seen that this strategy provides an opportunity to be considered for use in the future. The data also illustrates that TBLT online implementation on EFL writing have created numerous advantages. First, the online TBLT strategy is very doable. This strategy focuses on student activity. Students are more involved in the learning process. Second, during EFL writing learning process, TBLT enables students to use of the target language because they directly practice it in their assignments. When teaching EFL writing, TBLT enables students to repeatedly assess and clarify their communication on the selection of topic and task-appropriate register (Gonzalez-lloret et al., 2016). They can also learn according to their needs and in a style that matches their individual characteristics. Because access to online learning, such as learning platforms, is widely available on the internet, the implementation of online TBLT is very appropriate at this time. This is very helpful for teachers in choosing a platform that suits the

needs of their students. The current generations like millennial and Z generation no longer find any adversities and challenges on digital utilization and technical advancement with rapid changes every time. Nowadays, students are more adaptable in sophisticated technological devices. Today's students easily adapt to increasingly sophisticated technological developments. Applying online TBLT for writing instruction in higher education is an excellent idea. Students are better acquainted with technology and are more time-efficient. The online platform utilized as a learning technology is also very user-friendly. Students can access learning materials anytime, including work and video files. This platform also facilitates the management of students' attendance for each meeting. They can also access integrated materials or tasks. The collection of each assignment manages their discipline; lecturers might set a deadline for assignment collection. When students Optimize the internet usage effectively, they can also use digital dictionaries to facilitate sentence writing. The teachers are extremely helpful with this platform, and they hope that all lectures, especially at Islamic higher education institutions, will utilize it to support their learning instruction.

#### 4. Conclusion

To summarize, the adoption of TBLT online presents both opportunities and challenges for classroom instructors. The instructors think that it would be a fantastic idea to use online TBLT for writing teaching in higher education, and they have expressed their support for this concept. Students have a deeper understanding of technology and a better sense of how to manage their time effectively. It is possible for lecturers to establish a deadline for the collection of assignments while they are completing the work of collecting each assignment to control their discipline. At this point, the incorporation of TBLT into writing classes taught in EFL through the internet is highly appropriate. This is of great assistance to teachers in selecting a platform that may meet the requirements of their respective classes. It was impossible to identify which method of virtual learning or online learning was more effective because the two strategies counterbalance each other's deficiencies, making it possible to study in either setting. The offline learning environment has the advantage of offering a more personal connection between students and teachers than the online learning environment does. In a similar manner, the inability to learn at any location is a limitation of offline learning, whereas the portability offered by online learning is an advantage. As a consequence of this, it is commonly believed that the combination of these two approaches to learning produces the best results.

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