

ENHANCING COGNITIVE LITERACY THROUGH LOCAL WISDOM-BASED WRITING TASK

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamic landscape of English as a foreign language education, there is a growing imperative to develop pedagogical approaches that are not only linguistically effective but also culturally inclusive. Addressing this critical need, this study investigated the effectiveness of a local wisdom-based writing task approach in cultivating cognitive literacy among English Department students. The study employed a mixed-methods design, utilizing open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires after intervention. Findings revealed that the integration of local wisdom significantly enhanced student engagement and motivation. Furthermore, the approach effectively fostered the development of cognitive literacy skills, including critical thinking, creativity, and metacognition. Students demonstrated improved planning, organization, and self-reflection in their writing processes. These findings suggest that incorporating local wisdom into task-based writing can be an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing both writing proficiency and cognitive literacy among university students.

Keywords: *Cognitive Literacy, Task-Based Writing, Local Wisdom.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing well in English is one of the most important skills in today's world. Effective communication in this language is essential in both professional and academic contexts. However, a lot of students struggle with writing because they have trouble coming up with ideas, staying organized, using good syntax, and using the right language (Fareed et al., 2016; Ginting, 2019; Bulqiyah et al., 2021). These make it more difficult for them to reach their full potential and successfully express themselves.

To become effective writers, learners need to develop not only linguistic competence but also cognitive skills. Linguistic competence refers to the writer's underlying knowledge of the language system, including its grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. It is the foundation upon which effective writing is built. While cognitive skills are the mental processes involved in acquiring knowledge and understanding, which are essential for learning and performing complex tasks like writing (Kim & Park, 2019). For example, abilities related to planning, translating, reviewing, and organizing knowledge to produce written communication

effectively (Hayes, J., 2017). Writing demands metacognitive ability from EFL learners. It involves awareness of one's thinking processes and includes metacognitive knowledge, experiences, and strategies (Huang & Rawian, 2025). These include aspects such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating their writing, and how aware they are of the benefits (Alamri, 2018). They play a crucial role in the writing process.

Traditional writing instruction often prioritizes rote memorization of grammar rules and isolated skills practice, neglecting the development of higher-order thinking skills crucial for effective communication. This approach can lead to disengagement among students who may struggle to see the relevance of these skills to real-world contexts. Furthermore, traditional methods may not adequately address the challenges students face in the writing process, such as unclear task descriptions, limited access to resources, and the pressure of tight deadlines. These limitations can hinder the development of cognitive literacy skills, which are essential for critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication (Subandowo & Sárdi, 2023). Therefore, Teachers must address their students' writing difficulties with the proper strategy (Ganesha & Mandiri, 2020). They must use motivating and inspiring instructional strategies in order to effectively improve their students' writing abilities.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) in writing or task-based writing is one of the instructional strategies that may be utilized to enhance writing abilities (Yen, 2016; Joy, 2020). TBLT is a pedagogical approach that focuses on using authentic tasks to promote language learning. The use of specific language and communication tasks at each class level is a beneficial teaching method. Due to its ease of use and specific content, it is a highly popular teaching strategy in today's educational circles (Li, 2023). TBLT fosters cognitive literacy by engaging learners in meaningful tasks that require critical thinking and strategic planning, ultimately enhancing their language skills and cognitive abilities (Yao et al., 2024). Contextual tasks are the majority, and creating a learning environment that considers the surroundings for Asian students (Husain et al., 2021). Incorporating local knowledge into a TBLT framework not only improves students' writing abilities, particularly in terms of accuracy, but it also greatly increases their engagement and

builds their self-confidence in the task-based learning environment (Husain et al., 2021; Language & Journal, 2021).

While previous research has extensively explored the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing general language skills, a significant body of literature supports its efficacy across various contexts. Studies consistently show that TBLT, by focusing on authentic tasks and meaningful communication, helps students develop real-world language skills and fosters critical thinking (O'Donoghue, 2021). For instance, research by (Mudinillah et al., 2024; Yao et al., 2024) demonstrates TBLT's successful application in diverse educational systems, even with lower-proficiency learners, by adapting tasks to maintain interest and promote deeper language understanding. Furthermore, TBLT's emphasis on scaffolding, active student involvement, and iterative task completion has been shown to enhance engagement and comprehension (O'Donoghue, 2021), and it has been found to significantly improve writing skills by boosting confidence, accuracy, and engagement (Husain et al., 2021; Joy, 2020)

Despite these established benefits in general language skill enhancement, a significant gap in the existing literature pertains to its specific impact on cultivating cognitive literacy skills namely critical thinking, creativity, and metacognition within writing instruction. Many studies have primarily focused on language proficiency as an outcome, overlooking the deeper cognitive processes integral to effective writing. This study makes a novel contribution by explicitly investigating how the integration of local wisdom into a task-based writing approach can foster these higher-order thinking skills. Unlike prior research that might have touched upon cultural relevance broadly, this study delves into the specific pedagogical mechanism through which local wisdom acts as a catalyst for cognitive development in writing. It uniquely combines the structured engagement of TBLT with the rich, authentic context provided by local wisdom, aiming to bridge the divide between linguistic competence and cognitive sophistication.

The importance of this research is multifaceted. First, it addresses a critical need in EFL pedagogy to move beyond mere linguistic accuracy towards developing students as holistic, critical thinkers and creative communicators. Second, by demonstrating how local wisdom can be effectively leveraged, it

provides practical, culturally relevant insights for educators in diverse contexts, particularly in non-Western settings like Indonesia, where traditional pedagogical models may not fully resonate with students' lived experiences. Ultimately, this study contributes empirical evidence to the growing field of culturally responsive education, advocating for approaches that not only enhance language skills but also affirm students' identities and cultivate essential cognitive abilities for navigating a complex world.

Three research questions are going to be addressed, (1) to what extent does a task-based writing approach that integrates local wisdom enhance students' writing proficiency? (2) how does the integration of local wisdom within a task-based writing framework influence students' use of cognitive strategies in the writing process?, (3) what are the students' perceptions and experiences of integrating local wisdom into task-based writing activities, and how do these perceptions influence their engagement and motivation in writing? By investigating these questions, this paper aims to contribute to the field of language education by providing insights into the effective integration of local wisdom into task-based writing to enhance cognitive literacy.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

In order to provide a thorough exploration, this study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach with close-ended and open-ended questions. Data collection occurred on an offline course for task-based writing and a secure online platform for questionnaires. Close-ended questions used for quantitative purposes to determine students' perceptions of the task, use of cognitive strategies in writing, and impact of writing skills after the course or intervention. Open-ended questions used for qualitative aspects capturing students' experiences, drawing on data of their cognitive skills through task-based writing.

A weak intervention aimed at improving the participants' cognitive literacy was given to thirty students of the fifth semester at the English department in one of Universities in Madura, east Java as the participants. This course employed a three-phase task-based writing approach that integrated local wisdom. The pre-task phase involved eliciting prior knowledge, introducing relevant vocabulary, and providing clear instructions. The task-cycle phase emphasized student-centered

learning, with students engaging in authentic writing tasks, receiving constructive feedback, and revising their work iteratively. The post-task phase included presentation of work, reflection on the learning process, and evaluation of student performance. The researcher observed participant involvement, led discussions, and offered comments on writing instructions during the learning process.

Table 1. The demographics characteristics of the study's participants.

Characteristics	Frequency
Gender	
* Female	60%
* Male	40%
Age	
* 20 years old	63,3%
* 19 years old	20%
* 21 years old	16,7%
Types of Writing Tasks	
Essays	70%
Reports	6,7%
Stories	10%
Writing diaries	10%
Poems	3,3%

The demographic data revealed a slightly female-dominated sample with 60% female and 40% male participants. The majority of participants were 20 years old (63.3%), with a smaller proportion aged 19 (20%) and 21 (16.7%). Regarding prior writing experience, essays were the most frequently reported type of writing task (70%), followed by reports (6.7%), stories (10%), writing diaries (10%), and poems (3.3%). This information provides valuable context for understanding the participant pool, particularly regarding their prior writing experiences, which may have influenced their engagement with the task-based writing intervention and their subsequent performance.

RESULT

This section presents the results of a study investigating the impact of task-based writing on students' cognitive literacy. The study explores how task-based writing influences the development of cognitive literacy among students. This study employed a three-phase task-based writing approach integrated with local wisdom. The pre-task phase involved eliciting prior knowledge, introducing relevant vocabulary, and providing clear instructions. The task-cycle phase emphasized

student-centered learning, with students engaging in authentic writing tasks, receiving constructive feedback, and revising their work iteratively. Concurrent with task performance, the teacher focused on specific language features relevant to the task. The post-task phase involved presenting completed work, reflecting on the learning process, and evaluating student performance. This approach aimed to cultivate cognitive literacy by engaging students in meaningful tasks that connected with their cultural backgrounds and encouraged critical thinking, creativity, and metacognition.

The following table is the result of participants' perception of the course or intervention.

Table 2. Perception of the course

Survey Statements	Frequency				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
I found the writing activities in this course to be engaging and motivating.	66.7%	20%	6,7%	3,3%	3,3%
The integration of local wisdom into the writing tasks made the learning process more meaningful.	73,3%	10%	6.7%	10%	0%
I believe that the task-based approach effectively helped me improve my writing skills	67,7%	12,9%	6,5%	9,7%	3,2%

The data in table 2 reveals the respondents' perceptions of the course "Local wisdom-based writing task". The majority of students found the writing activities engaging and motivating, with 66.7% strongly agreeing and 20% agreeing with the statement. This suggests that the task-based writing approach was successful in creating an engaging learning environment. One respondent, for example, stressed, "I enjoyed working on collaborative projects with my peers." (Respondent 3)

Regarding the integration of local wisdom, a significant majority of students (73.3%) strongly agreed that it made the learning process more meaningful. This indicates that incorporating local wisdom into writing tasks can enhance the relevance and significance of learning experiences for students. According to one respondent,

"Incorporating local wisdom into our writing assignments was a unique and valuable experience. Using local traditions and their values as inspiration for our essay helped me to connect with my own culture and express myself more authentically in my writing." (Respondent 8)

Furthermore, 67.7% of students strongly agreed and 12.9% agreed that the task-based approach helped them improve their writing skills. This suggests that TBLT can be an effective method for developing writing proficiency. Here is the statement of one of respondents:

"The feedback I received on my writing tasks helped me to identify areas for improvement and refine my writing skills." (Respondent 21)

Overall, it indicates positive student perceptions of the course, with the majority of students finding the activities engaging, the integration of local wisdom meaningful, and the task-based approach beneficial for improving their writing skills.

Table 3. Use of Cognitive Strategies in Writing

Survey Statements	Frequency				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
This course has increased my awareness of the cognitive strategies I use when writing.	70%	13,3%	10%	6,7%	0%
I now more frequently plan and organize my writing before I begin	83.3%	10%	6,7%	0%	0%
I now engage in more self-reflection and revision of my writing.	60%	16,7%	13,3%	3,3%	6,7%
I now find myself using a wider range of cognitive strategies, such as brainstorming and mind-mapping, to generate ideas.	80%	6,7%	6,7%	6,7%	0%
I am now more confident in my ability to critically evaluate my own writing	60%	10%	16,7%	6,7%	6,7%

Table 3 presents the students' perceptions regarding the impact of the course on their use of cognitive strategies in writing. A significant majority of students (70%) strongly agreed that the course increased their awareness of the cognitive strategies they employ while writing, indicating a positive shift in their metacognitive awareness. For instance, as one respondent remarked,

"I've become more aware of how I use outlining to organize my thoughts before I start writing. I also realize that I often use freewriting to generate ideas and then go back and refine them." (Respondent 12)

Furthermore, a large proportion of students reported increased engagement in planning and organizing their writing before beginning (83.3% strongly agreed). This suggests that the course effectively encouraged students to adopt more strategic approaches to their writing process.

"I use mind-mapping to brainstorm and organize my ideas before I start writing. This helps me to see the connections between different ideas more clearly." (Respondent 14)

While a majority (60%) strongly agreed and 16.7% agreed that they now engage in more self-reflection and revision, a smaller proportion (13.3%) reported no change. This indicates that while the course had a positive impact on some students' self-reflection habits, others may require further support in this area.

"I now spend more time revising and editing my writing, paying close attention to grammar, mechanics, and overall coherence." (Respondent 30)

A substantial majority of students (80%) strongly agreed that they now use a wider range of cognitive strategies, such as brainstorming and mind-mapping, to generate ideas. This suggests that the course effectively introduced students to new cognitive strategies and encouraged their application in the writing process.

"In addition to brainstorming, I now use free writing and concept mapping to generate ideas, which helps me to explore different perspectives and approaches to my writing." (Respondent 25)

Finally, while 60% of students strongly agreed and 10% agreed that they are now more confident in their ability to critically evaluate their own writing, a significant proportion (16.7%) reported no change. This suggests that while the course may have improved critical evaluation skills for some, further efforts may be needed to enhance this skill for all students.

"I am now more comfortable asking for feedback from my peers and instructors and using that feedback to revise and improve my writing." (Respondent 15)

Overall, the data in Table 3 suggests that the course had a positive impact on students' use of various cognitive strategies in writing, particularly in terms of planning, organization, and the use of a wider range of idea generation techniques. However, further efforts may be needed to enhance students' self-reflection and critical evaluation skills.

Table 4. Impact on Writing Skills

Survey Statements	Frequency				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
I believe this course has improved my ability to express my ideas clearly and effectively in writing.	66,7%	20%	6,7%	6,7%	0%
I am now more confident in my ability to write different types of texts, such as essays and reports.	50%	16,7%	13,3%	16,7%	3,3%
I believe this course has helped me develop a deeper understanding of the writing process.	86,7%	10%	3,3%	0%	0%

Table 4 presents the students' perceptions regarding the impact of the course on their writing skills. A significant majority of students (66.7%) strongly agreed and 20% agreed that the course improved their ability to express their ideas clearly and effectively in writing. This suggests that the TBLT approach, integrated with local wisdom, has been successful in enhancing students' communicative competence in writing.

"I feel more confident in using precise language and avoiding jargon, which makes my writing easier to understand." (Respondent 6)

Regarding their confidence in writing different types of texts, 50% of the students strongly agreed and 16.7% agreed that their confidence has improved. This indicates a positive impact on students' self-efficacy in writing, although a notable proportion (16.7%) reported no change in their confidence.

"This course has helped me develop a more flexible approach to writing, allowing me to adapt my writing style to different genres and audiences." (Respondent 11)

A very high proportion of students (86.7%) strongly agreed and 10% agreed that the course helped them develop a deeper understanding of the writing process. This suggests that the task-based writing approach effectively engaged students with the metacognitive aspects of writing, such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

"I have a better understanding of how to generate ideas, organize my thoughts, and refine my writing to make it more impactful." (Respondent 24)

Overall, Table 4 demonstrates that the course had a positive impact on students' perceived writing skills, with a majority of students reporting improvements in their ability to express ideas effectively, their confidence in writing different types of texts, and their understanding of the writing process.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that integrating local wisdom into a task-based writing framework can effectively enhance writing skills. This aligns with the findings of (Yao et al., 2024), who emphasized that a framework for language instruction, incorporating stages such as preparation, task implementation, and evaluation, is crucial for effective teaching.

Questionnaire data revealed that students found the course engaging and motivating, with a significant majority (86.7%) strongly agreeing that the course helped them develop a deeper understanding of the writing process. According to (Joy, 2020), task-based writing can be used as an effective method for teaching writing skill, as it provides opportunities for learners to share their experiences, improves existing knowledge, and helps students to review their performance.

The integration of local wisdom proved to be a particularly impactful aspect of the intervention. This finding highlights the importance of connecting learning experiences to students' cultural backgrounds and personal experiences to enhance engagement and motivation. It is in line with a study (Liu & Ren, 2021), educators can effectively incorporate local expertise into TBLT and boost its applicability and effectiveness in their unique learning environments. Moreover, According to the review's findings, some research showed that including local knowledge in the EFL curriculum enhanced students' language skills while also promoting community involvement and active participation (Giyatmi, 2020; Susanto et al., 2020; Mokoginta, 2024).

Furthermore, the task-based writing approach effectively fostered the development of cognitive literacy skills. The report research discusses different cognitive models that outline the processes writers engage in, such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing. A significant majority of students reported increased awareness of their cognitive strategies (70%), increased engagement in planning and organizing their writing (83.3%), and the use of a wider range of cognitive

strategies, such as brainstorming and mind-mapping (80%). This indicates that the task-based writing activities effectively encouraged students to become more metacognitive and strategic in their approach to writing. A study of (Huang & Rawian, 2025), writing demands metacognitive ability from EFL learners. It involves awareness of one's thinking processes and includes metacognitive knowledge, experiences, and strategies. When learners gain insight into how they learn, they are better equipped to tackle challenges and make progress in their education. Furthermore, combining situated learning with TBLT helps students apply their language knowledge in real-life contexts, enhancing their cognitive and communicative abilities (Yao et al., 2024).

The course also had a positive impact on students' writing skills. A majority of students reported improvements in their ability to express their ideas clearly and effectively (66.7% strongly agreed) and increased confidence in writing different types of texts (50% strongly agreed). This suggests that the task-based writing approach, combined with the integration of local wisdom, effectively equipped students with the skills and confidence to engage in a variety of writing tasks. It is in line with a study (Husain et al., 2021) stating that TBLT significantly enhances students' writing skills by improving their confidence, accuracy, and engagement in the writing process (Husain et al., 2021).

However, the study also identified areas for further improvement. While the course effectively enhanced students' awareness and use of some cognitive strategies, a smaller proportion of students reported significant improvements in self-reflection and critical evaluation skills. This suggests that further interventions may be needed to strengthen these specific areas.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of a Local Wisdom-Based Task-Based Writing approach in cultivating cognitive literacy among English Department students. The findings revealed that the integration of local wisdom significantly enhanced student engagement and motivation. Furthermore, the approach effectively fostered the development of cognitive literacy skills, including critical thinking, creativity, and metacognition. Students demonstrated improved planning, organization, and self-reflection in their writing processes. These findings

suggest that incorporating local wisdom into task-based writing can be an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing both writing proficiency and cognitive literacy among university students.

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