Training through Tasks: Voices of Medical Professionals on English Learning at RS Haji Medan

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study explores the implementation of a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) English training program for medical staff at RS Haji Medan, a government-owned hospital in North Sumatra, Indonesia, aiming for Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation. Despite having strong infrastructure, the hospital faces challenges in English communication among staff, which is critical for serving international patients. The training program involved 15 doctors, nurses, and administrative staff, focusing on practical communication in clinical settings through simulations, problem-solving, and medical dialogues. At the end of the program, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was administered to obtain students' views on the task-based instruction. The survey data revealed positive responses regarding material relevance, teaching methods, instructor performance, and the usefulness of learning resources. Most participants reported improved English skills and greater confidence in medical communication. The findings highlight TBLT's effectiveness in meeting specific workplace needs and support its broader use in healthcare language training. This study contributes to the growing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) field in Indonesian medical contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and international medical standards, English proficiency has become essential for healthcare professionals, especially those working in institutions that aim to serve international patients and pursue global accreditation. RS Haji Medan, a public hospital in North Sumatra, Indonesia, is striving to enhance its service quality by meeting the requirements of the Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, which emphasizes the importance of effective English communication among medical staff as part of its quality assurance criteria (Chetsadanuwat, 2018 ; Lum et al., 2015). Despite having well-developed infrastructure and a strategic location, RS Haji Medan faces a significant challenge: the limited English communication skills of its doctors, nurses, and administrative personnel. This issue hinders their ability to deliver high-quality, patient-centered services to non-Indonesian speakers and risks impeding the hospital's ability to meet international standards.

Conventional English training programs previously offered to medical personnel have been generic and insufficiently tailored to the healthcare profession's specific linguistic and contextual demands. These programs often fail to address the practical communication needs in clinical settings, such as explaining procedures, taking patient histories, or documenting medical records in English (Wanci & Sujariati, 2021; Yang & Doss, 2023). Furthermore, the lack of simulation-based activities in prior training limits participants' engagement and the real-life applicability of their learning (Widanta et al., 2024).

To overcome these limitations, this study implemented a specialized English language training program grounded in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) principles. TBLT has gained international recognition for its emphasis on authentic language use through meaningful tasks that mirror real-world situations. In healthcare, TBLT enables learners to acquire language skills through simulations of medical consultations, cross-cultural interactions, and clinical documentation practices (Kailani & Murtiningsih, 2019; Mulyadi & Prasetyanti, 2016). By centering instruction on tasks that reflect everyday challenges faced by healthcare professionals, TBLT offers a practical, engaging, and context-sensitive solution to language instruction (Mudinillah et al., 2024)

The innovation of this program lies in its contextualized application of TBLT specifically for medical professionals within a hospital setting actively pursuing international accreditation. As Wanci (2023) pointed out, TBLT in the medical field remains underutilized in Indonesia, especially in formal

institutional settings like hospitals. This initiative fills a critical gap by integrating specialized task modules that cover medical terminology, patient-doctor dialogues, and culturally competent communication—all tailored to the working environment of RS Haji Medan.

A satisfaction survey was distributed to medical staff who participated in the training to evaluate the program's impact. This study aims to capture the voices of these medical professionals regarding their experiences, perceived benefits, challenges, and overall impressions of the TBLT-based training. Understanding their perspectives is crucial for validating the approach's effectiveness and guiding future English for Specific Purposes (ESP) interventions in similar medical contexts.

In sum, this research explores how task-based language training supports the development of practical English skills among healthcare providers in Indonesia. It also contributes to a growing body of literature on workplace-oriented language instruction and provides a model for other healthcare institutions aiming to meet international service and communication standards.

METHOD

This study sought to explore how medical staff at RS Haji Medan perceived an English training program based on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) through a survey study. Survey research is appropriate for obtaining rich, detailed descriptions of participants' experiences and perceptions in natural settings (Creswell, 2013). The aim was to understand the participants' satisfaction and learning experiences during the program. The participants were 15 medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, and administrative staff. They joined a 10-session English training program conducted three times a week. Each session lasted 90 minutes and was designed to reflect real-life situations in the hospital. The training focused on practical communication skills such as patient consultations, explaining medical procedures, understanding and using medical vocabulary, and cross-cultural communication.

The lessons were designed using a task generator model (Willis & Willis, 2007), incorporating varied tasks such as matching, listing, sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, and completing simple projects. These task types were chosen to engage the learners actively and help them apply the language in meaningful and relevant medical contexts. To gather data, the researchers used a satisfaction questionnaire. The questionnaire was given at the end of the training and included a 5-point Likert scale questions. With 13 questions framed in five major areas, the questionnaire aimed to capture participants' views on the training's usefulness, relevance, and overall quality.

The responses from the questionnaire were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics such as mean and frequency. All participants provided informed consent before the study, and ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research. The results of this study are expected to provide insights into how task-based English training can

support medical professionals in improving their communication skills, especially in preparation for international hospital accreditation such as the Joint Commission International (JCI).

FINDINGS

Suitability of the Training Materials

To assess how well the training materials aligned with the participants' needs and professional context, a survey was conducted based on three key statements related to the suitability of the training content. The participants' responses to these statements are presented in the following chart:
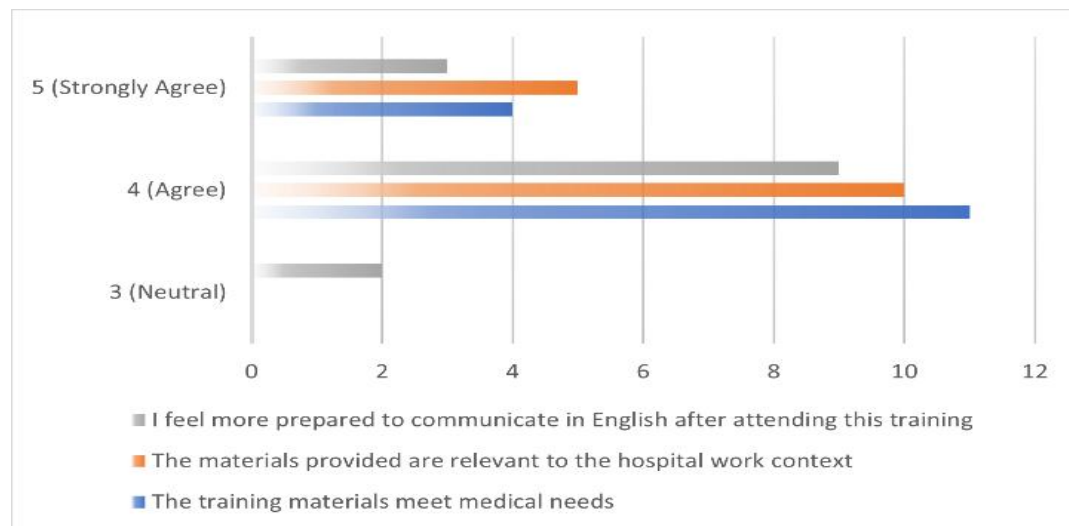

Figure 1. The Suitability of the Training Materials

The survey results regarding training material suitability indicate a generally positive response from the 15 participants. The majority agreed with the statement "The training materials meet medical needs" (11 respondents). In comparison, 4 respondents strongly agreed, showing a strong consensus that the materials were aligned with their professional medical requirements. Similarly, in response to "The materials provided are relevant to the hospital work context," 10 participants agreed and 5 strongly agreed, reinforcing the perceived relevance of the content to their daily responsibilities in the hospital. For the statement "I feel more prepared to communicate in English after attending this training," 9 participants agreed, 3 strongly agreed, while 2 remained neutral. These findings suggest that the training effectively delivered contextually appropriate and medically relevant English content and positively impacted participants' confidence in using English in their professional environment.

Training Method and Process

To evaluate the effectiveness and practicality of the training methods, participants were asked to respond to three statements regarding the training approach, engagement in activities, and schedule flexibility. Their responses are illustrated in the following chart:
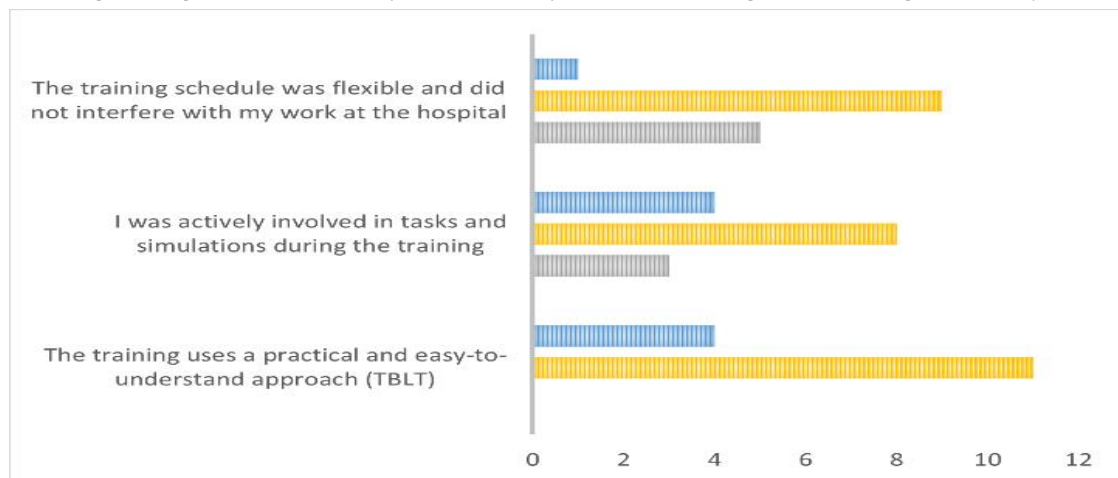
Figure 2. Training Method and Process

The data show that most participants responded positively to the training method. A significant majority (11 participants) agreed and 4 strongly agreed that the training used a practical and easy-to-understand approach (Task-Based Language Teaching/TBLT). Regarding engagement, 8 participants agreed, 4 strongly agreed that they were actively involved in tasks and simulations, and 3 remained neutral. When asked about schedule flexibility, 9 participants agreed that the training schedule was flexible and did not interfere with their work at the hospital. At the same time, 5 remained neutral, and only 1 participant strongly agreed. The feedback indicates that the training was delivered effectively, encouraged active participation, and was scheduled considerately around the participants' professional responsibilities.

Media and Learning Materials

The next chart outlines participants' perceptions of the media and learning materials used during the training. This part evaluates the clarity of the training module and the usefulness of the practice materials and sample conversations in enhancing their English language skills.
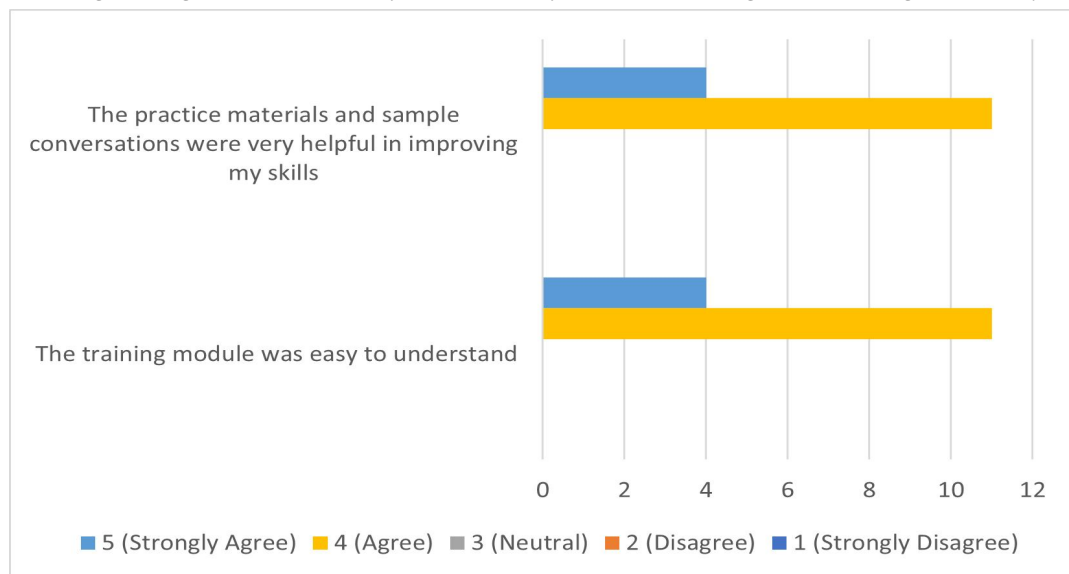
Figure 3. Media and Learning Materials

The responses to the statements in this section reflect highly positive feedback from participants. For both items—"The training module was easy to understand" and "The practice materials and sample conversations were very helpful in improving my skills"—11 participants agreed, and 4 strongly agreed. No respondents selected neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree options. This indicates a unanimous agreement that the media and learning materials were both accessible and effective in supporting their skill development.

Instructor

The following section presents participants' feedback regarding the instructor's performance during the training. The evaluation focuses on the instructor's command of the training materials and the clarity of the guidance and explanations provided throughout the sessions.
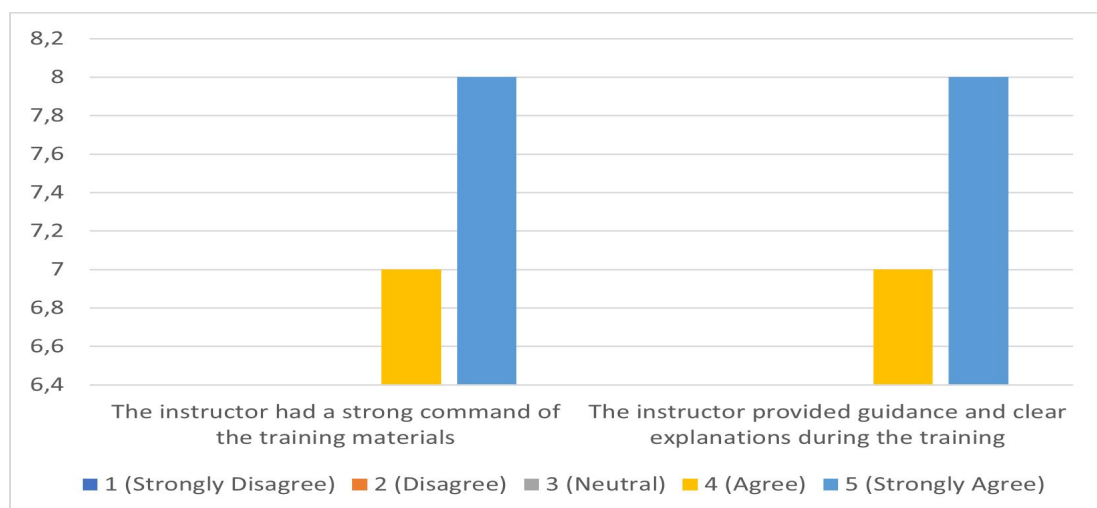

Figure 4. Instructor

The evaluation results indicate that participants responded very positively to the

instructor's performance. For the statement "The instructor had a strong command of the training materials," 7 participants agreed and 8 participants strongly agreed. Similarly, for the statement "The instructor provided guidance and clear explanations during the training," 7 participants agreed and 8 strongly agreed. There were no responses in the neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree categories, suggesting that the instructor was perceived as highly competent and effective by all participants.

Training Benefits

This section presents the participants' feedback on the benefits they gained from the training program. The questions focused on improving their English skills for workplace use, their confidence in medical English, and their interest in attending similar future programs.
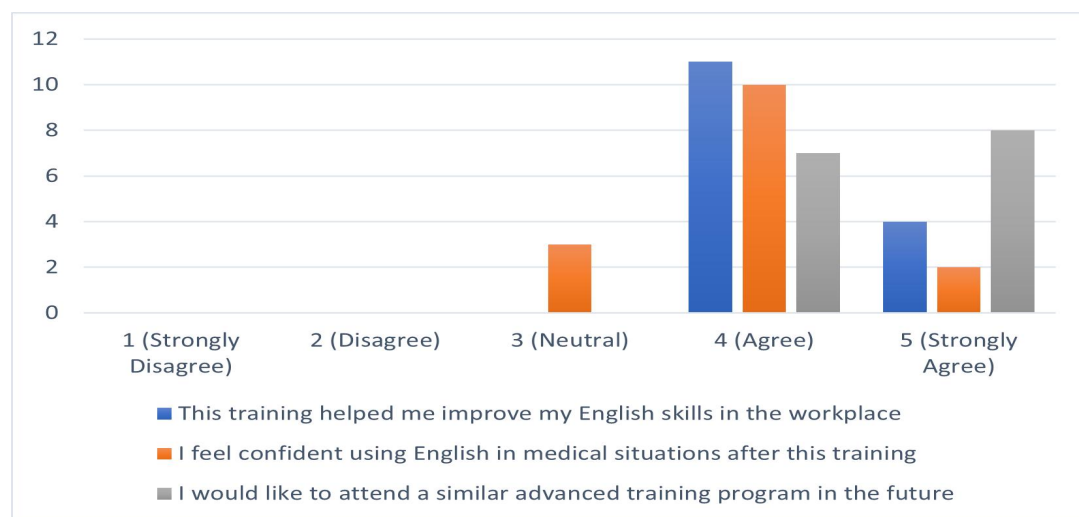

Figure 5. Training Benefits

The data shows that most participants found the training beneficial. For the statement "This training helped me improve my English skills in the workplace," 11 participants agreed and 4 strongly agreed, indicating a positive outcome. Regarding the statement "I feel confident using English in medical situations after this training," the responses were more varied: 3 participants were neutral, 10 agreed, and 2 strongly agreed. This suggests that while the majority felt increased confidence, a few may still need further support or practice. Finally, in response to "I would like to attend a similar advanced training program in the future," all responses were positive, with 7 agreeing and 8 strongly agreeing, showing a strong interest in continued professional development.

DISCUSSION

The training evaluation indicates that the English course substantially benefits participants, particularly in improving workplace communication and boosting confidence in medical English contexts. In the first item, "This training helped me improve my English skills in the workplace," 11 participants (68.8%)

agreed, and 4 participants (25%) strongly agreed. This means that 93.8% of the participants believed the training improved their workplace English. This outcome aligns with Chetsadanuwat (2018), who emphasized that Thai nurses in JCI-accredited hospitals require English skills for clinical interaction and professional communication in international environments.

When asked whether they felt confident using English in medical situations, 10 participants (62.5%) agreed, 2 participants (12.5%) strongly agreed, and 3 participants (18.8%) were neutral. This indicates that 75% of the respondents felt more confident in medical communication following the training. Although most reported positive outcomes, the neutral responses may suggest the need for further practice, especially in more complex clinical scenarios. Lum et al. (2015) found that many internationally educated nurses face significant challenges with oral communication, often due to unfamiliar terminology and high-pressure situations. This training likely alleviated some of those barriers but highlighted areas where additional reinforcement could benefit.

Regarding future engagement, 7 participants (43.8%) agreed and 8 (50%) strongly agreed that they would like to attend a similar advanced program, resulting in 93.8% expressing interest in continued learning. This high enthusiasm suggests that participants found the training relevant and motivating. According to Muller (2015), sustained and context-specific English instruction is crucial for developing long-term communication competence in healthcare settings.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which underpinned the training design, contributes to these positive results. TBLT emphasizes real-life tasks and has been shown to increase language acquisition in nursing contexts (Kailani & Murtiningsih, 2019; Rusli et al., 2019). Through authentic communicative tasks, learners practice relevant vocabulary and expressions and engage in critical thinking and problem-solving, reflecting the actual demands of their work environments (Widanta et al., 2024).

Previous studies support this approach. For instance, Luo (2013) and Suphatha and Soontornwipast (2019) demonstrated that TBLT improves oral fluency and professional confidence, especially when digital tools and role-plays are incorporated. The results of the current training further support these findings, showing that carefully structured task sequences improve learner engagement and performance.

Although most participants responded positively, the small percentage (18.8%) who remained neutral about their confidence in medical English suggests room for improvement. Future programs could incorporate more simulations and interactive case-based learning, as recommended by Wanci and Sujariati (2021) and Yang and Doss (2023), to enhance real-world application and fluency.

In conclusion, the training achieved its objectives by enhancing workplace English communication and boosting participants' motivation for future learning. The high satisfaction and confidence levels support continued use of TBLT for English training in healthcare settings, indicating a need for ongoing, immersive

practice to address complex communicative demands.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the English training program using Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) effectively supported the communication needs of medical staff, with most participants agreeing that the materials were relevant, the methods practical, and the instructors competent. The training helped improve their confidence in English, particularly in workplace contexts. However, to further enhance learning outcomes, future training programs should include more interactive speaking activities, real-life simulations, and flexible scheduling. Advanced follow-up sessions are also recommended to strengthen skills and support participants who still feel less confident in real-time communication.

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