



VNU Journal of Foreign Studies

Journal homepage: <https://jfs.ulis.vnu.edu.vn/>

IMPROVING STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN WRITING LESSONS FOR NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS USING TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

Vo Thi Hong Le^{1,*}, Tran Xuan Trang², Raqib Chowdhury³

¹University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City, 59C Nguyen Dinh Chieu, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

²Ho Chi Minh City Open University, 35-37 Ho Hao Hon, Co Giang Ward, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

³Monash University, Australia

Received 12 July 2024

Revised 27 October 2024; Accepted 04 February 2025

Abstract: Writing skills have always been perceived as difficult for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in higher education. Studies (Vo, 2021; Huang, 2018; Zhang, 2016) have found that EFL students often commence tertiary education with an elementary level of English, which contributes to these challenges. In addition, a lack of confidence in writing results in demotivation in learning English. In line with recent empirical scholarship on EFL, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) is proposed as an effective approach that facilitates both the teaching of communicative skills and engagement through the use of the target language and tasks in an authentic and context-sensitive manner for EFL. Specifically, this study critically explores how adapting such a teaching method can help teachers and students nurture and improve their writing skills in English. Drawing on a quasi-experimental design involving 60 learners, it examines the extent to which TBLT can help improve writing skills for non-English major students at a Vietnamese university. The findings indicate that the implementation of TBLT tasks in writing lessons resulted in significant improvements in students' writing performance. The study discusses participants' statements in the experiment to better understand the perceptions of the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach.

Keywords: task-based language teaching, writing skills, tasks, written communicative competence

* Corresponding author.

Email address: levth@ueh.edu.vn

<https://doi.org/10.63023/2525-2445/jfs.ulis.5343>

CẢI THIỆN VIỆC HỌC KỸ NĂNG VIẾT CHO SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH THÔNG QUA PHƯƠNG PHÁP DẠY - HỌC NGÔN NGỮ THEO NHIỆM VỤ

Võ Thị Hồng Lê¹, Trần Xuân Trang², Raqib Chowdhury³

¹Đại học Kinh tế Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh,

59C Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, Quận 3, Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, Việt Nam

²Trường Đại học Mở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh,

35-37 Hồ Hảo Hớn, Phường Cô Giang, Quận 1, Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, Việt Nam

³Đại học Monash, Úc

Nhận bài ngày 12 tháng 7 năm 2024

Chỉnh sửa ngày 27 tháng 10 năm 2024; Chấp nhận đăng ngày 04 tháng 02 năm 2025

Tóm tắt: Kỹ năng viết luôn là kỹ năng khó cho sinh viên học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ ở bậc đại học. Nghiên cứu cho thấy phần lớn sinh viên nhập học hàng năm có trình độ tiếng Anh bậc sơ cấp, kỹ năng viết kém càng làm sinh viên thiếu tự tin trong việc học tiếng Anh. Theo các nghiên cứu về giảng dạy ngoại ngữ, phương pháp dạy - học theo nhiệm vụ (Task-based language teaching-TBLT) là một phương pháp hiệu quả cho việc dạy các kỹ năng giao tiếp và có được sự tham gia của người học dựa vào bài tập mô phỏng thực tế theo cách ngôn ngữ thực sự được dùng. Cụ thể, nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu chi tiết về cách giảng viên sử dụng TBLT để hỗ trợ sinh viên cải thiện việc học kỹ năng viết. Với thiết kế nghiên cứu gần thử nghiệm cho 60 sinh viên, nghiên cứu tìm hiểu ở những phương diện nào, TBLT giúp cải thiện việc học kỹ năng viết cho sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh tại một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Kết quả cho thấy việc sử dụng TBLT với các bài tập nhiệm vụ giúp sinh viên nhiệt tình hơn khi học kỹ năng viết. Các ý kiến của người tham gia cũng được thảo luận để hiểu sâu hơn về nhận định tính hiệu quả của phương pháp này.

Từ khóa: phương pháp dạy - học theo nhiệm vụ, kỹ năng viết, bài tập nhiệm vụ, kỹ năng giao tiếp bằng văn bản

1. Introduction

Despite its wide adoption globally, as a foreign language, mastery in English still confronts significant obstacles in terms of both language skills and language construction (Harmer, 2011). Among the language macro skills, writing is considered as the most challenging and the hardest to master (Zhaochun, 2015), especially for those learning it as a foreign language. Research has shown that curricular policies and traditional pedagogical approaches with a structural or explicit grammar-teaching focus in EFL contexts have had a limited overall impact on English language education (Adams & Newton, 2009; Hu, 2005). In response, the Vietnamese government has modified national language policies and curricula to promote various types of communicative language teaching approaches, including task-based language teaching (TBLT) to increase the quality of EFL teaching and learning in the Vietnamese context. Learners learning writing with this approach can role-play different scenarios to practice styles based on meaningful context (Cao, 2018; Yen, 2016).

^o This paper is a product of a university-level research project code CS-2023-20 funded by the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City.

As a teaching method, TBLT creates opportunities for learners to obtain language skills by engaging in real-world tasks (Long, 2014). This supports assigning tasks that simulate real-life writing situations (e.g. writing emails, C.V.) and meaningful dialogue (Bygate et al., 2013) Furthermore, TBLT supports to achieve learners' engagement through communicative and interactive exercises (Nunan, 2004). Teachers can take this advantage to have students work in groups doing writing tasks, encouraging collaboration and peer feedback. In comparison to conventional language teaching approaches based on the more pervasive Presentation-Practice-Production paradigm (PPP), Harmer (2011) found that TBLT was generally more effective in fostering language learners' writing skills. PPP, which is still the most prevalent model of language learning in Vietnam (Hiep, 2007; Vo, 2021) typically includes listening to the teacher, then repeating, and finally reproducing linguistic models offered by the teacher, which provides only limited opportunities of using English in the Vietnamese setting. It results in difficulties that many students have reported relating to learning English, particularly writing skills (Vo, 2020; Pham & Do, 2022).

This reflects the current reality in Vietnam as generally observed by lecturers - most university students have trouble writing in English (Vo, 2020). Specifically, students' writing is often considered to be incoherent and unpersuasive when it comes to presenting their views (Vo, 2020), a problem further compounded by a lack of adequate vocabulary and grammar. Furthermore, and perhaps more crucially, a lack of confidence in communicative skills results in difficulties in successful communication in real-life situations.

Based on these problems specifically in the higher education context, in this paper, we intend to propose the design of an effective approach to facilitate better writing skills for EFL students in Vietnam. In response to the above-mentioned weaknesses of PPP, TBLT is proposed as a more effective and efficient approach to the teaching of communicative skills and through an engagement with communicative tasks in the target language in the same way it is used *outside* of the classroom (Bygate et al., 2013; Ellis, 2003; Gonzalez & Pinzon, 2019; Nunan, 2004). Specifically, this study adds to existing research by showcasing the practicalities of implementing TBLT to enhance writing skills for tertiary students who are studying a non-English major discipline in the Vietnamese context.

2. Literature Review

Nunan (1999) argued that writing is regarded as one of the most difficult abilities to master, regardless of whether the language is one's first, second, or third. Writing in a foreign language involves the knowledge and ability to use mechanics, such as capitalisation, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, lexical objects, genre knowledge, and their conventional representation (Hegarty, 2000). It also requires highly complicated tasks such as the ability to conceive concepts, and formulate them in sentences that go beyond simply producing text (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Hayes, 1996). In this section, we discuss the implementational challenges of TBLT in EFL contexts for teaching and learning writing skills and findings from empirical studies.

2.1. TBLT in Relationship With Teaching and Learning EFL Writing Skills

Both the teaching and learning of writing are difficult tasks because several aspects need to be considered, such as those mentioned above. Gonzalez and Pinzon (2019) explain that the process of organizing writing must also follow certain steps, such as planning, drafting, editing and producing the final version. Thus researchers (Humphrey, 2017;

Humphrey & Feez, 2016) have proposed the genre-based teaching and learning cycle where learners move through four scaffolded stages from working together with peers and finally producing a text independently. This teaching and learning cycle shares the focus on meaningful and real-world language use with TBLT.

These authors have argued that such steps allow students to explore new ideas, organize them, think critically, and develop their communication skills. Through those stages, students are aware of the thought process involved. Teachers, therefore, can and should engage students with various class assignments when they recognize their interests and needs (Gonzalez & Pinzon, 2019). It is for these reasons that TBLT is suggested, as it aims to develop learners' linguistic competence by engaging them in meaning-focused communication through the performance of tasks (Ellis & Shintani, 2013), rather than mechanical activities.

2.2. TBLT vs. PPP in Teaching and Learning Writing Skills

PPP emerged when behaviorist accounts of language learning became popular in the 1920s and 1930s (Harmer, 2011) and in response to the disadvantages of the grammar-translation method. However, PPP relied heavily on drills and substitutions, not providing the best possible opportunities for learning. In teaching and learning writing, PPP relates to controlled activities (e.g. sentence completion, gap fills) to reinforce specific grammar points or structures. Language form and accuracy are emphasized. In this method, the teacher is centered on the primary source of knowledge, guiding students through each stage and providing feedback on accuracy.

In the 1990s with the critical turn in ELT, teachers shifted towards a more communicative orientation that favoured meaning over form (Harmer, 2011; Richards & Rogers, 2011) with the emergence of communicative-based English instruction, namely Communicative Language teaching (CLT).

TBLT follows the strong version of CLT (Willis, 1996) to learn the language. In the EFL context, in this model, English is adopted in various contexts and functions of the speech community. Different from PPP, TBLT aims to meet the needs of real-world tasks among learners to reach intended communicative purposes in writing and speaking. TBLT aims to enhance learners' linguistic competence and interactional competence through real-life tasks, 'tool' for achieving a communicative outcome rather than as an 'object' to be studied, analyzed and displayed (Ellis & Shintani, 2013, p. 138). Studies have shown several positive effects of the integration of TBLT in academic writing. For example, Ellis' (2006) TBLT framework emphasizes the use of meaningful tasks as central to language learning. It promotes the idea that language acquisition occurs naturally when learners engage in real-life tasks that require communication, problem-solving, and interaction. Long's (2014) study shows that learners' motivation level is enhanced when they can participate in real-world tasks as traditional classrooms for test preparation courses are often perceived as contrived. In TBLT class, writing can be *integrated* with speaking or reading in task completion to mitigate boredom in the class. As studies have shown, students then tend to invest more time and pay greater attention to the lessons in the EFL classroom (Nunan, 2006; Willis & Willis, 2013).

In addition, learners' writing performance can be developed in terms of fluency, and discourse management, rather than on accuracy alone (Sundari, 2018). This means TBLT can shape purposeful content for learners to create the flow of the writing involving a high level of critical thinking and greater metacognitive awareness (Abrams, 2019; Gebril, 2018).

Successfully incorporating material from a source text necessitates a thorough understanding of lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, and sociocultural contexts. Aside from improving these skills and promoting lexical sophistication, integrated writing enhances both metacognition and critical thinking (Gebriel, 2018; Grabe & Zhang, 2013).

In light of the above discussion, it can be seen that the two approaches functionally differ regarding the teacher's role and the student's role in an English language classroom. Different from the student's role as a learner, receiver, follower, and listener in a traditional classroom, the learner in a TBLT class plays the role of a negotiator or interactor since the focus is on the processes of communication rather than the mastery of language forms. Accordingly, the role of the teacher in TBLT class is that of a facilitator of the communication process that places the learner at the center of the learning process.

2.3. Empirical Studies on TBLT and English Writing Teaching

The empirical research studies investigating the impacts of TBLT on enhancing students' writing performance in various EFL contexts generally have pointed out the importance and effectiveness of TBLT in language education taking into account the contextual configurations of its practice.

A study by Gonzalez and Pinzon (2019) in Columbia revealed that through TBLT students were able to improve their written performance. Specifically, they increased their vocabulary, reduced grammar errors, and became more autonomous and responsible in the classroom. In addition, students' confidence in the writing process also improved. In her study on 101 students in accounting at a university in Indonesia, Milarisa (2019) found that students provided positive responses and interest in the usage of TBLT in teaching writing. The study results showed that TBLT motivates and encourages students to understand better when they write, which helps students increase the quality of their writing. Similarly, Kafipour et al. (2018) confirm the usefulness of TBLT in improving the writing skills of EFL learners in their study involving 80 Iranian EFL students. Results show that in comparison with the writing skills of the Iranian EFL learners who used the traditional writing practice, writing competence such as language use, and sentence mechanics improved significantly among those who practiced writing skills using TBLT.

However, so far there are only a small handful of studies on TBLT in Vietnam, especially in the higher education context and in the teaching and learning of writing in English, although it has drawn some attention. In Yen (2016)'s research, which was conducted in the higher education context, the findings revealed that Vietnamese students significantly improved their overall scores of self-regulatory writing strategies, as evidenced by their personal self-regulation scores. In another study, Pham and Do (2022) share encouraging findings about the implementation of TBLT in Vietnamese universities. The results of their study show that the TBLT model significantly impacted students' grammatical performance in speaking and writing skills, although it did not outperform PPP instruction.

As evident, the belief that TBLT maximises learners' language competency has been extensively researched and applied across many educational settings. Although this is not a new concept in language education, as Na (2017) argues, there are some conceptual and practical misconceptions about TBLT, which lead to further contemporary misapplications of the pedagogy in Vietnam. For instance, there is a misconception that TBLT ignores grammatical accuracy in favor of fluency. However, TBLT in reality can incorporate form-focused instruction to fill the gaps in learners' language use. Some teachers believe that tasks

in TBLT can be any classroom activity. In reality, such activities should be meaningful activities with a clear goal and support students to achieve the goal. In practice, some teachers may assume that TBLT requires high technology or extensive resources. However, many tasks can be designed with everyday teaching materials. In the other practical aspect, some teachers may believe that they do not need proper training to implement TBLT. In reality, understanding the principles of task design allows teachers to facilitate tasks successfully in the classroom (Vo, 2020).

Although some research has been done on TBLT in Vietnam (Hoang, 2013; Le, 2014), there is little experimental research about TBLT's impacts on university students' writing skills, hence the need for this study.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a quasi-experimental design combining questionnaires, observations, a pre-test, and a post-test. Quasi-experimental research was employed in this study to measure the effectiveness of teaching interventions on student performance (Angrist and Lang, 2004). This aims to answer the two research questions (1) the extent to which students engage in writing lessons with TBLT and (2) factors that influence the use of TBLT to improve learners' writing skills.

3.1. Research Setting

This study was carried out throughout the first semester of the school year (over 5 weeks of two writing lessons each week) for two classes, consisting of 60 non-English major students (32 in the experimental group and 28 in the control group). One class was the control group with the traditional PPP method for teaching and learning writing while the other was the experimental group with the TBLT method. The textbook consisted of five units. After every unit, there was a revision for the students' recall of knowledge and practice of skills. In the writing skill lessons, students learned how to write paragraphs, letters, and emails on specific topics and included instructions on the requirements of writing including formal and informal styles, punctuation, connection, and coherence.

3.2. Participants

The participants, aged between 18 and 20, were all non-English major students from various faculties such as Economics, Technology, Banking, Accounting, and Law at a university in Ho Chi Minh City. Both groups learn the same materials and take mid-term tests and final tests over a fixed time as required by the English language department at the university.

Participants in the study were from the same level of English language (A2 CEFR) based on the selection of the university with the placement test to arrange classes for freshmen. This was a convenience sample for the study because the groups of participants were already formed based on the classes they were in. The total number of participants was 60 students, who all voluntarily participated in the study after they were explained about the purposes of the research. The maximum number of learners in a class is up to 40 learners; therefore, the intention to use about 60 samples for two classes (about 30 for each class) was considered reasonable to collect the parametric and reliable data for further analysis (Cohen et al., 2002).

The two classes were taught by the same instructor, who had more than four years of

experience teaching undergraduate writing classes. In this study, the researcher serves both as a teacher and a researcher, which enhances the reliability of the study. The instructor was trained in teaching English writing utilizing the Present-Product-Production (PPP) approach. However, she had utilized TBLT in her classroom in the previous two years, based on what she had learned about it from her studies, attending TBLT training workshops, and speaking with teachers with hands-on experience with task-based teaching. The researcher's experience in the classroom provides contextual knowledge, allowing a better understanding of learners' needs, behaviors, and students' learning processes (Mills, 2014). To address the issue of biases in this teacher-researcher's role, various strategies (e.g. triangulation of questionnaires, classroom observation, and test scores) are employed to ensure the validity and balance of the data.

3.3. Research Instruments

3.3.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaires were employed as an instrument in this study to explore students' attitudes toward writing activities and their motivations to complete learning activities for both groups. The questions were designed based on a learner-centred approach and the roles of tasks in second language acquisitions to promote engagement by providing authentic contexts for language use (Ellis, 2006; Tomlinson, 2011). Likert-scale questions aim to measure students' attitudes toward the designed writing tasks and their motivation levels in the TBLT class compared to the form-focused activities in the PPP class. Open-ended questions were to explore further attitudes and feelings of the participants towards students' experiences with task-based writing activities.

3.3.2. Observations

To gain additional information about student's performance and interactions in the writing tasks, the observations were carried out by the teacher - researcher during the writing hours for both the experimental group and the control group. There were 5 observations for each group, which made the total around 5 hours for each group.

Based on the author's previous research (Vo, 2020), an observation checklist was designed to explore the utilization of PPP and TBLT in writing classes. The content of the observation, therefore, follows the phases of using tasks for teaching and learning English writing skills. At the beginning, the students' responses to the warm-up activities were observed. While teaching and during the tasks, the observation checklist included the use of writing tasks, which aimed to promote interaction (i.e. student-student interaction, teacher-student interaction), as well as shared teamwork responsibility (i.e. pair work, group work and feedback). At the end of the tasks, the instructor observed the students while they were exchanging their ideas for peer feedback. These observations were intended to generate data to evaluate students on what they *integrate* and *produce* rather than on what they can do to merely *recall* and *reproduce* (Coombe et al., 2012).

3.3.3. Pre-Test and Post-Test

The tests were designed in alignment with the course's learning outcomes. The 30-minute individual writing test's topics in the pre-tests were taken from the textbook; for instance, a writing test of a thank you message was given, while the topics chosen for the post-tests were similar to those delivered during the course. The degree of difficulty was identical between the two tests from the two classes, and the marking criteria included

content, language, and organisation. Both groups took pre-tests before starting the courses and post-tests after they completed the last writing lesson of the course. The test papers were assessed anonymously to avoid identification of the students from the results.

3.4. Research Procedure

The writing tasks in the control group were all from the textbook, Life Elementary (2015) published by Cengage Learning. Though it includes some writing tasks, the textbook has been noted by teachers for having a more traditional approach to language learning with limited opportunities for students to engage in more exploratory writing practices. Meanwhile, the experimental group's writing tasks were required to match task criteria and were adapted from the textbook's writing activities in order to improve opportunities for spontaneous writing learning, for example, writing a thank you email to your teacher for supporting you with writing techniques or a travel blog of personal travel experience. As a result, the task-based class involved a *series* of interconnected tasks (pre-task, while-task, and post-task) rather than a single activity. The study employs Ellis' (2006) TBLT framework which includes pre-task, and task cycles. During the pre-task phase, students were helped to prepare tasks with useful words or phrases by the teacher. In the task cycle, students firstly worked in pairs or small groups while the teacher played the role of a monitor; then, students prepared to report their work to the class orally or in writing (planning); finally, some groups presented their work to the class and exchange their reports for result comparison.

Teaching and learning of writing skills for the two groups then were carried out. While both groups were taught to meet the requirements of the program, the experiment group received the new (TBLT) treatment. The model of teaching and learning writing skills for the two groups in the study is designed as shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Tasks and the Model of Teaching and Learning Writing Skills for the Two Groups Adopted From Ellis's TBLT Framework (2006)

PPP		TBLT	
Teacher's role	Learner's role	Teacher's role	Learner's role
<i>Presentation</i>		<i>Pre-task: to engage learners by tasks connected to learners' experience.</i>	
Impart and shape knowledge.	Respond and perform a limited range of language functions	A leader and an organizer of discussion.	Initiate and respond roles and performing a wide range of language functions
<i>Practice</i>		<i>While-task: to have learners produce their output</i>	
Scaffold for enabling learners to produce correct sentences	Do little negotiate meaning.	Scaffold for enabling students to say what they want to say	Do more negotiate meaning.
<i>Production</i>		<i>Post-task: to have learners look in details at and use the forms that have been learnt</i>	
Form-focused feedback	Individual revision	Content-focused feedback and peer feedback	Individual and collaborative revision

3.5. Data Collection

Data was collected through the questionnaire, which was distributed to participants via Google form at the end of the course, which was carried out as described in section 3.4, with

clear instructions and an emphasis on confidentiality to encourage honest responses. During the course, classroom observations were carried out to provide qualitative insights into the actual implementation of TBLT vs. PPP. These observations complemented the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires, allowing for a deeper understanding of how TBLT was experienced in teaching and learning English writing skills in comparison with PPP. Finally, T-tests were conducted to statistically analyze the differences in writing proficiency scores between the TBLT group and PPP group, offering concrete evidence to answer the research questions of the study.

3.6. Data Analysis

To describe the participants' writing ability, the minimum and maximum score, the mean, and the standard deviation of the items were tabulated using the SPSS v.26 program. Scores following the rubric and mean scores were taken into account to define the similarity before the experiment and the difference between the two groups after the experiment. Secondly, means of the control and experimental groups' overall writing performance were compared with Cronbach's Alpha statistic and Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Tests. On the other hand, qualitative data from open-ended questions of the questionnaire and observations were analyzed using the content analysis approach through which specific themes of the study emerged. Observational data and analysis of questionnaire data complemented each other to provide sufficient detail for the analysis of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2014).

4. Findings and Analysis

4.1. Questionnaire Data

4.1.1. Warm-Up Activities

In the PPP class, more participants (71.43%) answered in the highest category in terms of their preferences towards doing brainstorming and vocabulary exercises compared to other options that the teacher introduced about learning objectives and new grammar structures (53.5-57.1%). In the TBLT class, a large majority of respondents (87.5%) showed a strong interest in the warm-up activities such as watching pictures or videos that relate to the lesson or talking about their own experiences. This indicates that learners preferred activities that they could learn through visual content or connect to their own experience. It shows that these activities encouraged students to initiate their writing on the assigned topics.

4.1.2. Student's Attitude Towards Activities or Tasks Used in the Class

As for the control group, with the idea of doing exercises in the textbook, the students agreed that activities related to the writing exercises in the textbook were useful with a mean range from 3.00 to 3.18. However, some lack of interest was also shown.

Table 2*PPP vs TBLT Class's Opinion Toward Writing Exercises in the Textbook and the Tasks*

PPP class				TBLT class			
Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Dev.	Mean	N	Items
I feel interested in practising grammar structures.	28	3.11	.916	.792	4.22	32	I feel interested in the lesson by connecting to my experience.
I feel it is not difficult to remember vocabulary.	28	3.00	1.054	.745	4.34	32	I explore the ways to use essential words and grammar.
The exercises generate my ideas to write.	28	3.18	1.124	.818	4.09	32	The exercises generate my ideas to write.

In contrast with the PPP group, when questioned how they felt about exercises/tasks, students showed their interest in the writing tasks at a high level. A large majority of respondents (87.5%) preferred watching pictures or videos that relate to the lesson. The pictures or videos that connect with the content of the writing lessons were presented before the writing sessions began. Moreover, with a mean range from 4.09 to 4.22, participants preferred when the teacher asked for their prior experience to guide them in the lessons (Table 2).

4.1.3. Pairwork and Groupwork

The majority of participants in the control group (82.2%) suggested that they perceived group work as a way to cooperate and complete their assignments with a mean of 4.14 (Table 3).

Table 3*PPP vs TBLT Class's Opinion on Pairwork and Groupwork*

PPP class				TBLT class			
Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Dev.	Mean	N	Items
It helps to discuss with my peers to complete exercises quickly.	28	4.14	1.008	.906	4.22	32	Communicate with my peers to complete tasks.
It helps to practice on grammar structures.	28	3.82	.983	.842	4.25	32	Discuss issues effectively in a group setting.
It helps to practice on vocabulary.	28	3.89	.956	.906	4.22	32	Promote leadership and cooperation amongst the students.

However, in this case, fewer participants (57.1%) stated that working in pairs/groups could assist them in practicing grammar structures and vocabulary, with a mean of 3.82 and 3.89 respectively. Similar to the PPP group, students in the TBLT group appreciated tasks that could help them to do assignments in groups. With a mean range from 4.22 to 4.25, participants said that working in groups would help them work effectively to finish the tasks and improve their leadership and cooperation skills. This means that group work can help develop essential skills for students of both groups.

4.1.4. Teacher Support and the Environment in the Class

Participants in the control group agreed more with the fact that the teacher gave explicit grammar instructions and mainly focused on grammar and vocabulary accuracy, with a mean of 4.29 and 4.04 respectively. ‘Students expect teachers to tell them what to do’ returned lower levels of agreement among the learners. Regarding the environment in the classroom, the students realised it was fine, with a mean score of 3.04. However, less than half of students (42 %) said that they had a chance for interaction or peer feedback (Table 4).

Table 4

PPP vs TBLT Class’s Opinion on Teacher’s Support and the Environment in the Classroom

PPP class				TBLT class			
Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Dev.	Mean	N	Items
Teacher gives explicit grammar features.	28	4.29	.897	.669	4.56	32	When I didn’t comprehend something, I asked questions.
Mainly focus on grammar and vocabulary accuracy.	28	4.04	.962	.865	4.34	32	Discover my own talents and then become motivated to use them.
The atmosphere in class was fine.	28	3.50	1.106	.767	4.16	32	The atmosphere in class was more collaborative and engaged.
I expect the teacher to tell me what to do.	28	3.04	1.261	.665	4.41	32	Rules and guidelines were clear in the class.
I interact with my friends and have peer feedback.	28	2.68	1.389	.615	4.41	32	I interact with my friends and have peer feedback.

In the TBLT class, the participants highly agreed with the fact that the teacher supported them when they did not comprehend something. In such cases, they could ask the teacher, who had encouraged students to utilize their own knowledge and prior learning. The mean for these answers ranges from 4.34 to 4.56. With a mean range from 4.16 to 4.41, the participants highly agreed that the atmosphere in class was collaborative and engaged, and rules and guidelines were clear in the class, which helped to develop the interaction among learners and peer feedback.

4.1.5. Post-Lesson

The agreement and disagreement are equal among students (44%-51%) in the control group on the items related to being sometimes bored of further practicing grammar structures in the textbook. In contrast, 87.5% of participants in the TBLT group confirmed that the final tasks and homework were relevant to the topics they had learned in class. Additionally, 90.6% of participants agreed that tasks gave them more opportunities to practice. The questionnaire data was supported by the observational data, as shown in the next section.

4.2. Teacher’s Observations

4.2.1. Warm-Up Activities

In the PPP class, students participated well when they were asked to do vocabulary

exercises. However, it was observed that the teacher's presentation did not always facilitate students' concentration on the teacher's introduction about learning objectives and new grammar structures. In contrast, the students in the TBLT class were engaged in the lesson right at the first part of the writing lessons when the teacher briefly introduced the learning objectives and showed pictures or videos related to the writing topics to introduce them to the lessons.

4.2.2. While-Lesson

It was observed that while doing exercises, students in the PPP class focused on finishing the exercises in the textbook rather than exchanging ideas with their classmates, even though they were assigned to work in pairs. In fact, some students did not finish and respond when the teacher invited them. Participants in the TBLT group, on the other hand, appeared to attentively focus on the content of the writing tasks. Each participant was assigned to produce a writing task and exchange it with their peers, or they worked in groups to write on the same topic. It was observed that they were involved well and also engaged in questions and answers in group work to achieve their tasks. They seemed to be more enthusiastic in discussing the issues' topics with other group members. Indeed, some even tried to convince others by presenting and explaining their ideas to their group members.

4.2.3. Post-Lesson

In the last stage of the PPP writing lessons, it was unlikely that learners would engage in doing more exercises in the textbook. However, when the teacher randomly chose two or three students to have them read out their exercises loud and provide feedback to the class, they did seem to notice the teacher's comments. It can be seen that learners preferred to have comments from the teacher rather than only checking the provided answer keys.

In the final phase of TBLT, students worked in groups of four or five to discuss and produce a piece of writing, with each participant expected to contribute one or two sentences. They appeared to be enthusiastic and attempted to contribute their ideas to groups to generate a piece of writing. The observation results also reveal that participants enjoyed receiving feedback from other groups.

4.3. Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

This analysis comprises the resemblance before the experiment, the difference after the experiment and overall writing performance. As shown in Table 5, there is a minimal difference between the mean scores in the pre-test, as the control group's pre-tests mean score is 5.70, and the experimental group's pre-tests mean score is 5.73. The experimental group's mean score ($M= 5.73$, $SD= .84$, $n= 31$) is slightly greater than the control group's mean score ($M= 5.70$, $SD= .94$, $n= 28$), which means there is an improvement in writing performance among students in the experimental group.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-Test Results

	Control Group				Experimental Group			
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre-Test score	4.00	7.00	5.70	.94	4.00	7.00	5.73	.84
Language score	1.00	3.00	1.89	.53	1.00	3.00	1.58	.52

Organization score	1.00	2.50	1.61	.42	1.00	3.00	1.98	.47
Content score	1.50	3.00	2.20	.52	1.00	3.00	2.16	.44

In order to check whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups' mean scores, Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted.

Table 6

Hypothesis Test Summary for the Writing Pre-Test Results

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Pre-Test is the same across categories of Class.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.955	Retain the null hypothesis.
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.				

Hypothesis Test Summary results indicate that the differences between the control and experimental groups' mean scores are insignificant ($p=.955 > p= .050$). Consequently, the writing performance of the control and experimental groups was equal to each other before the treatment (Table 6).

There is, however, a slight difference between the mean scores in the post-test (Table 7), as the control group's pre-tests mean score is 6.18, and the experimental group's post-test mean score is 6.61. However, the Std. Dev of the control group (Std. Dev = .77) is the same as the experimental group (Std. Dev = .77).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of the Post-Test Results

	Control Group				Experimental Group			
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Post-Test	5.00	7.50	6.18	.77	5.00	8.00	6.61	.77
Language score	1.50	3.00	2.16	.39	1.50	2.50	2.08	.29
Organization score	1.00	2.50	1.70	.48	1.00	2.50	1.84	.48
Content score	2.00	3.00	2.32	.39	2.00	3.00	2.69	.35

Table 7, in particular, displays the component scores of the experimental group and control group on the post-test. The mean language component score (2.08) for the experimental group is less than that of the control group (2.16). However, the experimental group's mean scores for the organisation and content components (Organisation: 1.84, Content: 2.69) are higher than the control group's mean scores (Organisation: 1.70, Content: 2.32).

The data from the test of normality (pre-test in the CG: $p=.016$ and the EG: $p= .001 < .05$). This indicates that pre-tests and post-tests' samples are different from the normally distributed ones. Therefore, it is suggested that the Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test was utilized to explore the two independent groups. As a non-parametric test, it analyzes the rank order of scores rather than the raw data, meaning it does not rely on the assumptions required by parametric tests (Salkind, 2010, p.747).

The Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted in the post-test. There is a significant difference in the result of the Hypothesis Test Summary ($p=.032 < p= .050$). This indicates that the writing performance of the control and experimental groups differed after implementing the intervention of TBLT (Table 8).

Table 8*Hypothesis Test Summary for the Writing Post-Test Results*

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Post-Test is the same across categories of Class.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.032	Reject the null hypothesis.
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.				

The analysis of test data shows that the control and experimental groups had a resemblance prior to the experiment. However, following the implementation of the intervention, notable differences are observed in the overall writing performance. In comparing the scores of the control group and experimental group on Post-tests, the data indicates that both groups demonstrated improved performance in the post-test; however, a greater number of learners in the TBLT group achieved scores of 7.5 or 8 compared to those in the PPP group.

5. Discussion

5.1. Comparison of TBLT and PPP: Non-English Major Students' Writing Performance

In consideration of the findings, the benefits of TBLT in learning writing are discussed below with reference to the frameworks discussed earlier as well as findings from previous studies.

5.1.1. Learner's Engagement

It is evident in the survey results that learners presented a greater level of engagement in activities within TBLT learners in TLBT class than doing exercises from the textbook alone in the PPP class. Furthermore, the results indicate that learners enjoyed the final class activities and homework. Similarly, observation results show that learners were effectively involved in the activities in TBLT and preferred presenting their personal experiences related to the writing topics. This finding is also supported by Bygate et al. (2013) and Nunan (2004).

It can also be noted that the majority of learners were more engaged in the tasks because they could employ the language that they had already been exposed to in writing models and brainstormed the writing ideas on the same writing topic in previous tasks, in line with the findings of Gonzalez and Pinzon (2019). The test results also indicate that learners who engaged more within TBLT scored higher than learners in PPP class, particularly organisation and content components (Table 7).

5.1.2. Cooperative Learning

It is clear that social interaction is crucial for the growth of cognition, as learning occurs through interactions with others rather than on its own (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). In the TBLT group observed, this manifested in the students' obligation to communicate with one another to complete assignments. Such learning opportunities for cooperative learning were provided through pair and group work activities.

The survey results clearly show that students liked working in groups to complete TBLT tasks. Similarly, the findings from the observation demonstrate that learners engaged in group work effectively and generated a lot of questions and responses. In contrast, students in

the PPP group preferred to follow teachers' presenting grammar rules or structures for writing and controlled practice. Similarly, test results show that students' writing performance improved when they engaged in peer interaction, and discussion during TBLT compared to their performance while working individually in a PPP classroom setting. This finding is consistent with that of Milarisa (2019) regarding the increase in learners' engagement when they learn writing with TBLT.

5.1.3. Positive Learning Environment

In TBLT class where the tone for collaboration and the encouragement for cooperative learning was set, as the survey findings show, students actively engaged in doing writing tasks with their peers. This positive learning environment encourages students to collaborate on assignments and develop relationships with teachers and peers (Long, 2014). Conversely, learners in the PPP class tended to prioritize individual practice, which could cause limited opportunities for peer interaction. This may provide a lower level of engagement and collaborative learning environment than that in TBLT. Furthermore, constructive comments from peers facilitate pathways to improvement. Peer scaffolding plays a pivotal role when students support one another. This is also shown in the results of the observations and the post-test scores of TBLT learners being better than those of PPP learners.

5.2. Factors That Influence the Use of Task-Based Language Teaching to Improve Writing Skills

The findings reveal that the learners in TBLT class displayed greater engagement and collaboration in terms of several aspects, including writing tasks, teachers as facilitators, and learner-centeredness.

5.2.1. The Designed Writing Tasks

The writing assignments, in the form of tasks (rather than activities or exercises), may have allowed students to learn through involvement and communication (Ellis, 2003). The survey's results and instructor observations demonstrate how optimistic and engaged the respondents were when they exchanged ideas with peers, created their writing, and allowed them to utilize prior learning to consolidate their knowledge. This finding is consistent with that of Gonzalez and Pinzon (2019) about provoking writing tasks supporting learners to achieve the proposed goals of the study. However, the participant teacher was realistic in confessing that this requires certain skills and greater investment in time, especially in designing the tasks.

5.2.2. Teachers as Facilitators

In a TBLT classroom, teachers act as facilitator or negotiator who guides students rather than just instructs them (Nunan, 2004). Findings show that the role of the teacher as facilitator in this study is similar to that of other studies (Nunan 2006; Vo, 2021), in that the teacher designs and tailors tasks according to students' needs, actively engages in interaction with students during the task and supports learners in peer or group feedback in the post-task.

It is also clear from survey results that students in TBLT classes were highly motivated and pleased with the teacher's assistance. Students said that the teacher activated their experience: 'I like to talk about and then write about something I knew'. In this case, students realised that topics designed by the teacher such as 'write about your favorite food', 'write a travel blog about your trip to your hometown' were *doable*. Such interactive

opportunities contribute to foreign language production. According to teacher observation results, students were particularly interested in interacting with the teacher, such as when the teacher analyzed sample texts or provided feedback.

Perhaps the most compelling finding is related to teacher-student interaction, which has not been tested in the previous studies. The survey data indicates that students showed their appreciation when the teacher spent some time discussing more and answering questions from students, if any, after giving guidance in the stages of writing such as planning, drafting, and editing. Such interaction encourages learners to engage with the writing tasks. As students reported: 'Being able to ask the teacher questions while writing helps me feel confident to write'; 'I just ask when I have a question, which helps me a lot in dealing with grammar, and word choice when writing'.

5.2.3. Learner-Centeredness

The survey results and observation results unmistakably demonstrate that students preferred writing exercises that related to learners' contexts and inquiries regarding their personal experiences. Therefore, students in TBLT class actively participated in writing assignments, discussing, and presenting their ideas to teachers and peers than students in PPP class.

The findings reveal that the use of group work or pair work to brainstorm ideas and prepare for the writing tasks could support students in telling and sharing their ideas. Student-student interaction allowed students to get involved more in learning activities. This finding corroborates the findings of previous work (Bygate et al., 2013; Ellis, 2009) on this field. However, a number of students were not involved in the discussion. This can be explained by several reasons. The most important reason could be that the Vietnamese students, who are typically brought up under Confucian values, rarely raise their voices in groups, but wait for the group leader's ideas and adopt them as group ideas. This finding is associated with Sullivan (2000)'s finding in terms of the underlying and embedded Confucian values typical in EFL students from Asia. The teacher, therefore, has to apply an appropriate method to take advantage of TBLT for learners in such contexts.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

The study provides insights into the effectiveness of TBLT on the writing performance of non-English major students and the factors that could affect adopting the employment of TBLT to enhance their writing skills. The findings show that it is beneficial for teachers to design tasks related to learners' experiences, particularly for writing skills, rather than activities that are rooted in the structured PPP syllabus. Task-based learning approach supports students to complete writing assignments by emphasizing meaning rather than focusing on forms as it is emphasized in PPP. Such task-based learning assists learners in interacting and contributing to lessons and classroom activities (e.g. group work discussion to plan, draft, and edit their writing) to be more engaged in their learning, thus achieving better writing skills.

6.2. Recommendations

Recommendations for teachers

Teachers need evaluation criteria that can help to decide how the tasks should be

adapted and/or supplemented for authenticity to meet learners' needs (Hall, 2011). The findings suggest that the ways tasks are designed in ELT classrooms depend on certain cultural and contextual factors. These factors include authentic language regarding both the aim of learning and relevance to classroom life, the learner's social context, and the reasons for learning. We suggest that TBLT be used as a method to teaching English writing in EFL classes, especially in the contexts which are similar to the research context where writing skills are underestimated due to time limits or teachers' workload.

Furthermore, a designed-in (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005) pedagogical approach such as TBLT should be considered to perform writing tasks. Since TBLT allows students to negotiate meaning through interaction, teachers should help students to be willing to engage in discussion to develop better writing ideas. The students, as the findings indicate, value and prefer better teacher-student interaction. Teachers, therefore, should allow more time for such interaction so that students can raise questions and accomplish the tasks.

In addition, group work is an opportunity for students to create spaces to generate ideas and find efficient ways to present the task. Teachers should design group work in a way that allows students to provide different opinions and varied contributions. The students will be motivated and engaged if the writing tasks are authentic and related to their lives, varied interests, and belief systems. It is important that all students in the groups are given opportunities to express their diverse opinions. While this study was carried out in Vietnam, where Confucian values prevail, the core lessons learned are applicable to other cultural contexts.

Recommendations for school administrators

Acquiring writing skills in EFL classes needs to be considered by university administrators providing appropriate support, time allocation, and professional development opportunities to teachers. The findings indicate that learning English writing skills with TBLT requires time. With appropriate time allocation, teachers can perform a variety of tasks that could provoke students' critical thinking and reflection on their writing.

Despite its wide adoption elsewhere, currently, there are very few training opportunities for Vietnamese higher education teachers to improve their understanding and practice of TBLT (Vo, 2021). School leaders should arrange professional development workshops or seminars so that teachers can master designing TBLT teaching materials. These short courses could also help teachers have a deeper understanding of the TBLT method and more effectively implement it in their classrooms.

It is evident that the recommendations presented here could help the students, in any cultural context, to improve their English writing skills provided that the tasks are designed in such a way as to take into consideration the local and individual context of the students.

Suggestions for further research

The study was conducted with a sample size of 60 non-majoring English students. This may present challenges in generalizing the findings to the broader population of students. In addition, the investigation was conducted over a single semester. Future research in the future could consider extending the duration beyond one semester, as it is likely that students engaged in learning English writing skills with TBLT might require additional time to adapt to this innovative learning approach.

To address the identified limitations, future research is suggested to expand the sample size and include a more diverse population of students across various disciplines. This would

enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of implementing TBLT in acquiring English writing skills. In addition, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal qualitative interviews and case study investigations. Such research effort should provide more insight into the long-term effect of adopting TBLT on students' acquisition of English writing skills.

References

- Abrams, Z. I. (2019). The effects of integrated writing on linguistic complexity in L2 writing and task-complexity. *System*, 81, 110-121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.01.009>
- Adams, R., & Newton, J. (2020). TBLT in Asia: Constraints and opportunities. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.12720848.v1>
- Angrist, J. D., & Lang, K. (2004). Does school integration generate peer effects? evidence from Boston's Metco program. *American Economic Review*, 94(5), 1613-1634. <https://doi.org/10.1257/0002828043052169>
- Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (2013). *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching, and testing*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315838267>
- Cao, P. T. H. (2018). Task-based language teaching : Affordances and challenges in TBLT implementation at the Vietnamese tertiary level. *The Journal of AsiaTEFL*, 15(2), 510-515. <https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2018.15.2.19.510>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge Falmer, London. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203029053>
- Chenoweth, N. A., & Hayes, J. R. (2001). Fluency in writing: Generating text in L1 and L2. *Written communication*, 18(1), 80-98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088301018001004>
- Coombe, C., Purmensity, K., & Davidson, P. J. (2012). Alternative assessment in language education. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan & S. Stoyloff (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language assessment* (pp.147-155). Cambridge University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publication.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2006). The Methodology of Task-based Teaching. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(3), 19-45.
- Ellis, R. (2009). Task-based language teaching: Sorting out the misunderstandings. *International journal of applied linguistics*, 19(3), 221-246. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2009.00231.x>
- Ellis, R., & Shintani, N. (2013). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203796580>
- Gebriel, A. (2018). Integrated-Skills Assessment. In *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* (pp. 1-7). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0544>
- Gonzalez, L. E., & Pinzon, M. M. (2019). The impact of Task-based language teaching on learners' writing skills. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 5(2), 41-48. <https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v5i2.1820>
- Grabe, W., & Zhang, C. (2013). Reading and writing together: A critical component of English for academic purposes teaching and learning. *Tesol Journal*, 4(1), 9-24. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.65>
- Hall, G. (2011). *Exploring English Language Teaching: Language in Action*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203827840>
- Hammond, J., & Gibbons, P. (2005). Putting scaffolding to work: The contribution of scaffolding in articulating ESL education. *Prospect*, 20(1), 6-25. <http://hdl.handle.net/10453/6610>
- Harmer, J. (2011). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Hayes, J. R. (1996). A new framework for understanding cognition and affect in writing. In C. M. Levy, & S. Ransdell (Eds.), *The Science of Writing: Theories, methods, individual differences and applications* (pp. 1-27). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hegarty, C. (2000). *Writing English in context*. Saddleback Educational Publishing.
- Hiep, P. H. (2007). Communicative language teaching: Unity within diversity. *ELT Journal*, 61(3), 193-201. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccm026>

- Hoang, V. V. (2013). *The current situation and issues of the teaching of English in Vietnam*. Ritsumei. http://cube.ritsumei.ac.jp/bitstream/10367/4129/1/LCS_22_1pp7-18_HOANG.pdf
- Hu, G. (2005). English language education in China: Policies, progress, and problems. *Language policy*, 4(1), 5-24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-004-6561-7>
- Huang, H. (2018). Assessing English language proficiency of EFL students in Taiwanese universities. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(1), 145-152.
- Humphrey, S. (2017). *Academic literacies in the middle years: A framework for enhancing teacher knowledge and student achievement*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315625584>
- Humphrey, S. & Feez, S. (2016). Direct instruction fit for purpose: Applying a metalinguistic toolkit to enhance creative writing in the early secondary years. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 39(3), 207-219. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03651974>
- Kafipour, R., Mahmoudi, E. & Khojasteh, L. (2018). *The effect of task-based language teaching on analytic writing in EFL classrooms*. Cogent Education. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1496627>
- Long, M. (2014). *Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Le, V. T. (2014). Factors affecting task-based language teaching from teachers' perspectives. *Study in English Language Teaching*, 2(1), 108-122. <https://doi.org/10.22158/selt.v2n1p108>
- Milarisa, S. (2019). The Effectiveness of Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) toward ESP students' writing achievement. *English Language in Focus (ELIF)*, 1(2), 121-126. <https://doi.org/10.24853/elif.1.2.121-126>
- Mills, G. E. (2014). *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED439152>
- Na, C. D. (2017). *Task-based language learning in Vietnam: Misunderstanding and Suggestions*. *Dalat University Journal of Science*, 7(4), 587-600. [https://doi.org/10.37569/dalatuniversity.7.4.303\(2017\)](https://doi.org/10.37569/dalatuniversity.7.4.303(2017))
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511667336>
- Nunan, D. (2006). Task-based language teaching in the Asia context: Defining 'task'. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(3), 12-18.
- Nunan, T. (1999). *Exploring the concept of flexibility*. Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203991817-8/exploring-concept-flexibility-ted-nunan>
- Pham, V., & Do, T. (2022). The impacts of task-based instruction on students' grammatical performances in speaking and writing skills: A quasi-experimental study. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(2), 969-986. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14255a>
- Richards, J. C., & Rogers, T. S. (2011). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Salkind, N. J. (Ed.). (2010). *Encyclopedia of research design* (Vol. 1). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412961288>
- Silverman, D. (2016). *Doing qualitative research*. Sage.
- Sullivan, P. J. (2000). Playfulness as mediation in communicative language teaching in Vietnamese classroom. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Socio-cultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 115-131). Oxford University Press.
- Sundari, W. (2018). The difficulties of learning English for the beginner English learners. *Culturalistics: Journal of Cultural, Literary, Linguistic Studies*, 2(1), 34-41. <https://doi.org/10.14710/culturalistics.v2i1.2050>
- Tomlinson, B. (2011). *Materials development in language teaching*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Yen, P. H. (2016). Challenges of shifting to task-based language teaching: A story from a Vietnamese teacher. *Can Tho University Journal of Science*, 2(1), 37-45. <https://doi.org/10.22144/ctu.jen.2016.002>
- Vo, T. H. L. (2021). Online simulated workplace tasks to enhance business English learning. *Journal of Asian Business and Economic Studies*, 29(3), 205-221. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JABES-06-2020-0058>.
- Vo, T. H. L. (2020). Task-based language teaching to meet learning outcomes. *Journal of Foreign Language Studies*, 63, 100-111.
- Vygotsky, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

- Zhang, Y. (2016). English language challenges faced by Chinese EFL students in higher education. *Asian EFL Journal*, 18(2), 20-34.
- Zhaochun, S. (2015). A tentative study on the Task-Based Teaching of writing to English majors in Chinese Settings. *English Language Teaching*, 8(3), 71-79. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1075224>
- Willis, J. (1996). *A Framework for Task-Based Learning*. Longman.
- Willis, J., & Willis, D. (2013). *Doing task-based teaching-Oxford handbooks for language teachers*. Oxford University Press. <https://tesl-ej.org/ej45/r6.html>