INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TESOL & EDUCATION

ISSN 2768-4563

ICTE Press
International Association of TESOL & Education
5243 Birch Falls LN, Sugar Land, Texas, USA, 77479
https://i-jte.org | https://i-cte.org/press

International Journal of TESOL & Education (ijte)

ISSN: 2768-4563
Volume 5, Issue 4, 2025

Doi: https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.2554
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3233-457X

Indexed
Crossref
Google Scholar
LOCKSS
CLOCKSS
PKP PN
Library of Congress, U.S. ISSN Center
ROAD
J-Gate
EuroPub

Publication frequency
International Journal of TESOL & Education will publish 4 issues per year in February, May, August, and November. The IJTE will publish manuscripts as soon as they are accepted.

Publisher: ICTE Press
Address: International Association of TESOL & Education, 5243 Birch Falls Ln, Sugar Land, Texas, USA, 77479

Principal Contact
Associate Professor Dr. Pham Vu Phi Ho
Faculty of Foreign Languages, Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Email: phamvuphiho@iuh.edu.vn; ijte.editorial@gmail.com

International Journal of TESOL & Education

Vol. 5, No. 4 (2025): TESOL & Education

Editorial Board

International Journal of TESOL & Education

Volume 5, Issue 4, 2025

Table of Content

Vol. 5 No. 4 (2025): TESOL & Education
Doi: https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.2554
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3233-457X

A Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear beloved TESOLers & Educators,

We are happy to let you know that Volume 5, Number 4, 2025 of the International Journal of TESOL & Education (IJTE) has been successfully finished and published. This issue adds to the growing body of research on English language education in Vietnam and the region. The studies in this issue help us learn more about classroom interaction, task-based pedagogy, disciplinary literacy, and research-oriented curriculum design.

The articles in this issue examine how teacher immediacy shapes students' perceptions, how Task-Based Language Teaching can help students speak fluently, how conceptual metaphors shape financial discourse, and how the order of courses affects how students learn to write research papers. These works not only offer deeper theoretical insights but also highlight practical implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to improve the quality of language education across contexts.

In this issue, Pham Hoang Dan (2025) examines differences in how teachers and students perceive nonverbal teacher immediacy in Vietnamese EFL speaking classes. Four educators and 138 first-year English majors filled out NIS questionnaires, and interviews were conducted with the teachers. Quantitative data were examined using SPSS t-tests and inter-rater reliability; interviews were analyzed thematically. Students rated teachers as moderately to highly immediate, whereas teachers' self-assessments showed variability, with modest agreement and significant discrepancies in touch, proximity, gesture, and vocal expressiveness.

Pham Thanh Su (2025) examined the impact of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) on speaking fluency among 28 A2-level, first-year non-English majors enrolled in a 10-week Foundation English course at a Vietnamese university. Classroom-based action research employed two structured observations utilizing a teacher fluency checklist and informal group discussions; the data were subjected to descriptive analysis. The results indicated increased speech rate, reduced pauses and repetitions, and students appreciating pre-task planning, collaborative activities, and meaning-centered communication, leading to reported improvements.

Nguyen Luu Diep Anh (2025) examines the manifestation of the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English financial news. A dataset comprising 200 metaphorical expressions (100 for each language) is examined through Conceptual Metaphor Theory and MIP, integrating qualitative coding with frequency analysis. The findings indicate two prevailing models: "financial situation is the state of liquidity" and "supplying finance is supplying liquidity." These models exhibit shared cognitive mappings while demonstrating culture-specific lexical selections and TESOL implications.

To investigate the influence of course sequencing on students' perceptions of their research writing performance, Nguyen Hoang Quynh Anh and Dao Nguyen Anh Duc (2025) conducted a survey of 119 English Linguistics undergraduates at IU-VNU and interviewed four participants. A CIPP-based questionnaire was analyzed using Mann–Whitney U tests, while interviews were analyzed thematically. Students who took Research Writing after Research Methodology rated the goals, lectures, and assignments more favorably. This supports the idea that RM should precede RW to improve curriculum design and learning.

These four IJTE papers together provide a clear picture of what is most important right now in Vietnamese English-language education: communicative competence, disciplinary literacy, and research-oriented curriculum design. Pham Hoang Dan's research indicates that although students typically perceive their teachers as nonverbally immediate, teachers' self-perceptions do not consistently correspond, particularly regarding touch, proximity, gesture, and vocal variety. This highlights the necessity for reflective training in classroom interaction. Pham Thanh Su's action research further substantiates that TBLT can significantly enhance speaking fluency for A2 non-English majors, with students appreciating pre-task planning, meaningful tasks, and collaboration.

Nguyen Luu Diep Anh's contrastive analysis of the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" extends these concerns into ESP and disciplinary literacy, revealing shared cognitive mappings but language-specific realizations that have clear implications for teaching financial discourse. Lastly, Nguyen Hoang Quynh Anh and Dao Nguyen Anh Duc demonstrate that students who complete Research Methodology prior to Research Writing assess the latter more favorably, underscoring the significance of deliberate course sequencing for research readiness.

The papers collectively promote a learner-centered framework in which teacher conduct, task formulation, conceptual metaphor recognition, and curriculum organization synergistically enhance speaking confidence, deepen disciplinary comprehension, and strengthen research writing in Vietnamese higher education.

We are grateful to all of the authors for choosing IJTE as the place to publish their academic work and for their careful, thoughtful contributions. We also want to thank the universities and institutions they represent for their academic environments and support, which have enabled these research projects.
We appreciate the Editorial Board from the bottom of our hearts for their constant support, strategic vision, and hard work in maintaining the journal's high academic standards. We also owe a lot to our reviewers, whose careful, helpful, and often unseen work has been very important in ensuring that every article in this issue is high-quality, clear, and honest.

We are excited to receive more submissions in the future and to keep working together to improve research in TESOL and education worldwide.

Thanks be to God for everything!

Warm regards,

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TESOL & EDUCATION
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TESOL & EDCUATION
ICTE PRESS

Associate Professor Dr. Pham Vu Phi Ho
Editor-in-chief
International Journal of TESOL & Education

Self-Report and Student-Report Nonverbal Teacher Immediacy (NTI) in College EFL Speaking Classes

Pham Hoang Dan[1*]

[1] Hanoi University of Industry, Vietnam
[*]Corresponding author's email: danph@haui.edu.vn
[*] https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0259-7619
https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25541

Received: 17/03/2025 Revision: 22/08/2025 Accepted: 06/09/2025 Online: 20/10/2025

ABSTRACT

Teacher immediacy, or affinity-seeking tactics (both verbal and non-verbal) that teachers use to create a supportive and friendly learning environment for learners, is particularly relevant to EFL speaking classes with a focus on communication. This research looks into whether there is a discrepancy between how teachers and their students perceive nonverbal teacher immediacy behaviors in a Vietnamese higher-education context. Four teachers and 138 first-year EFL students from eight English-speaking skills classes at a Vietnamese college were recruited. Data analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaires and narrative analysis of teachers' interviews highlight that although the two perspectives share some similarity regarding posture, eye contact, and smiling, more prominent disparities are present in other nonverbal behaviors. The research contributes to existing literature, as well as informs teachers, teacher educators, and other stakeholders about the importance of nonverbal teacher immediacy in EFL and broader contexts.

Keywords: nonverbal teacher immediacy, self-report nonverbal immediacy, observer-report nonverbal immediacy, instructional communication

Introduction

The idea of "immediacy" was put forward by Albert Mehrabian (1968) and defined as communication behaviors that enhance closeness, both physical and psychological, among people. Those behaviors vary from verbal to nonverbal (Frymier, 1993) and are thought to increase effectiveness in communication due to the approach-avoidance mentality (Mehrabian, 1981). Later on, the term "teacher immediacy" emerges when teachers of various contexts are observed to have applied those tactics in the classroom to create a supportive learning environment. Positioned as a "positive influence" on students (Frymier, 1993, p.454), teacher immediacy is particularly relevant to EFL speaking classes with a focus on communicative capabilities. Teacher immediacy is also categorized into two groups: verbal and nonverbal. While verbal immediacy (e.g., humor, inclusive personal pronoun, first-name basis) is often sensibly incorporated into teachers' speeches, nonverbal behaviors (e.g., eye contact, facial expression, body language) are much more subtle. This raises the question whether there is a

CITATION | Pham, H. D. (2025). Self-Report and Student-Report Nonverbal Teacher Immediacy (NTI) in College EFL Speaking Classes. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, *5*(4), 1-15. DOI: https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25541

disparity; ,nd if there is, then to what extent; ,etween how a teacher and their students perceive nonverbal immediacy behaviors.

While extensively studied in foreign literature, nonverbal teacher immediacy has not been discussed much in Vietnam. Therefore, the paper hopes to explore this gap so that EFL teachers, particularly those teaching speaking, know more about students' perspectives regarding immediacy tactics when comparing them to their own. From there, teachers can make necessary adjustments to their interaction and help to enhance the effectiveness of classroom communication, leading to a more effective learning environment. The findings of this study can also be used by other stakeholders, such as decision-makers and curriculum developers, to understand their students' psychological issues better and to provide teacher training focusing on nonverbal immediacy.

Literature Review

Teacher immediacy refers to communication tactics applied by teachers in classrooms to create a sense of closeness with their learners (Mehrabian, 1968). Teacher immediacy is divided into verbal immediacy and nonverbal immediacy. Nonverbal teacher immediacy (NTI) is expressed through nonverbal behaviors that induce physical and emotional closeness, leading to higher students' affect towards the teacher and the lesson (Richmond & McCroskey, 2004). In a classroom setting, nonverbal strategies are applied in various ways, from teachers moving closer, leaning forward while talking with students, to changing the pitch and tempo of their voices. Ozmen (2011) has compiled various nonverbal tactics commonly seen employed by teachers in the classroom into Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Nonverbal teacher immediacy behaviors from Ozmen (2011)

Behaviors	A teacher displaying nonverbal immediacy in classrooms:
Physical proximity	Moves closer when talking to another Stands closer to a person when talking to them Sits closer to a person when talking to them
Body orientation	Leans forward when talking with another
Touch	Touch on the hand, forearm, or shoulder when talking to another Patting the shoulder of another when talking to them
Eye contact	Eye contact with the group as a whole when talking to them Eye contact with individuals when talking to them Looking in the general direction of another when talking to them
Facial expression	The face is animated when talking to another person Smiles when talking to another
Body movement & Gestures	Nods head when talking with another Use hands and arms to gesture when talking to another person Calmly moves the body around when talking with another
Body posture	Body posture is relaxed when talking with another person
Vocal expressiveness	Changes in pitch and tempo of voice when talking to another person Short pauses when talking to another person Relaxed tones when talking to another

NTI has various positive impacts on students in general. Many researchers have highlighted an increased student motivation from nonverbal immediacy (Comadena et al., 2007; Hsu, 2010; Frymier et al., 2019). Richmond et al. (2012) observe that students exhibit less opposition to behavioral adjustments suggested by teachers who demonstrate high immediacy. This heightened immediacy improves communication and interaction between the two, subsequently facilitating the students' ability to acquire necessary information. Furthermore, NTI has positive impacts on cognitive learning (Witt & Wheeless, 2001; Comadena et al., 2007) and academic engagement (Wang & Hu, 2023; Yuan, 2024). Richmond et al. (2012) also ascertain that the status difference between students and teachers is lessened, although they do not become equal. Consequently, students could ask questions about the subject without fear, which reinforces the pedagogical environment and leaves a positive impact on the learning process. Furthermore, Bıçkı (2008) posits that immediacy fosters a positive attitude that students have towards teachers and school. Similar results have been shown in some Vietnamese studies, where teacher immediacy is found to positively correlate with student motivation, affective learning, and learning outcomes (Tran & Luu, 2018), attitudes toward learning English (Le & Le, 2022) or student engagement (Dinh & Ha, 2024), reemphasizing the significance of immediacy as a whole, and nonverbal immediacy in particular, in educational contexts.

For speaking classes, a very beneficial effect would be the way immediacy greatly enhances learners' willingness to communicate. Studies have shown that learners with high willingness to talk tend to have better speaking skills, including fluency, coherence, and vocabulary usage, which is evident in both traditional and innovative learning environments (Fernández-García & Fonseca-Mora, 2019; Lee, 2020; Rahimi & Fathi, 2022; Wang & Hu, 2023; Jin, 2023). Meanwhile, researchers have pointed out the strong positive correlation between immediacy and willingness to communicate (Hsu et al., 2007; Gol et al., 2014; Sheybani, 2019) or its positive predictive role of willingness to communicate in Chinese language students (Cai, 2021). Unfortunately, similar studies pertaining to the Vietnamese context have not been found.

In terms of assessing immediacy level, various instruments were designed, like RNIM (McCroskey et al., 1995), QTI (Chiew-Goh & Fraser, 1996), NIS (Richmond et al., 2003), NICCI (Smythe & Hess, 2005), or CTIS (Zhang & Oetzel, 2006). Some encompass both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, some focus on just one aspect. When measuring teacher immediacy, Gorham and Zakahi (1990) find that teachers are highly aware of immediacy behavior usage in the class. This means self-reports of teachers on their own nonverbal behaviors can be rather reliable. Gorham and Zakahi (1990) also specify that individual student reports reliably mirrored actual teacher actions and learning results. Most recently, Lopez-Ozieblo (2025) reemphasizes such a conclusion while finding positive significant correlations between students' views of teacher immediacy in class with a third-person observation. Consequently, instruments designed to measure nonverbal immediacy using student-reported perceptions of teacher immediacy can be considered dependable tools for assessing effective teaching behaviors.

However, upon comparing different perceptions of NTI, no consensus has been reached. Folwell (2000) videotaped and surveyed 17 professors and 392 students and found no significant correlation between the two views. In contrast, Estepp et al. (2014) found both congruence and disparity across various perceived immediacy behaviors.

To sum up, research on NTI and its impacts has been extensive. However, there are two significant gaps in existing literature. First, it is evident that research in Vietnam is particularly sparse, despite the topic having received worldwide attention for many years. Another gap is the comparison between self-report and student-report teacher nonverbal immediacy. A limited few studies are found comparing two perceptions (Gorham & Zakahi, 1990; Folwell, 2000; Estepp et al., 2014), but without resolute agreement. This suggests a need for more immediacy research in the Vietnamese context, as well as research to inform teachers how their view of in-class immediacy may or may not align with that of their students.

Research Questions

Within the context of EFL classes for English-major first-year students in a Vietnamese public college, the paper aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the perception of first-year EFL students regarding their teacher's nonverbal immediacy in speaking classes?

RQ2: What is the perception of EFL teachers regarding their own nonverbal immediacy behaviors in speaking classes?

RQ3: Are there any discrepancies between the two perceptions?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The research focuses on four EFL teachers and 138 English-major first-year students studying English-speaking skills classes in a Northern Vietnamese university. Students and teachers have had 10 weeks (90 minutes/week) learning face-to-face on campus, so they interact in close quarters. These classes are in the first semester at the college, so students don't have any prior impression of their teacher's immediacy level. The four teachers teaching the English Speaking Skills course are all included in the study. These teachers are of the same age range with similar educational and working backgrounds, and their speaking classes also share similar class sizes, facilities, and materials. Surveys were carried out during the final week of class to ensure students had ample time to observe teachers' behaviors.

Design of the Study

To conduct the research, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed through surveys for both teachers and students, and interviews for teachers. The revised nonverbal teacher immediacy scales (NIS) developed by Richmond et al. (2003) were used to assess how students and teachers perceive immediacy behaviors. As aforementioned, other instruments measure teacher immediacy (McCroskey et al., 1995; Chiew-Goh & Fraser, 1996; Smythe & Hess, 2005; Zhang & Oetzel, 2006). Regardless, NIS specifically looks into nonverbal communication and has been applied and tested widely around the world, which proves to be highly credible and suitable for this research. Despite also covering nonverbal strategies, NICCI was later reviewed with a nonsignificant association between student reports and observer-coded observations (Smythe & Hess, 2005), ruling out its potential application.

Zhang and Oetzel (2006) have raised concerns over the scales' Western-centric nature, claiming some items might clash with Asian (specifically, Chinese) culture, particularly due to Asian inhibition toward physical contact among teachers and students. However, considering the research context where classes are mainly task-oriented, communication-focused, with moderate power distance - quite similar to a Western setting, the discrepancy would be insignificant.

The chosen instrument includes a self-report (NIS-S) and an observer-report (NIS-O) scale, each with 26 items. 13 positive and 13 negative items were created for each scale. Both scales look at eight nonverbal behaviors that fit Ozmen's adapted table (2011), showing a full range of nonverbal immediate tactics. Alpha reliability of NIS-O was retested in a pilot study of 20 respondents with a high reliability of .873. Lastly, to have a deep understanding of teachers' answers in their self-report, an unstructured interview was conducted with each teacher.

Data collection & analysis

Student surveys (NIS-O), which were translated and back-translated into Vietnamese to limit the impact of the language barrier, were delivered directly in class to a total of 180 first-year English-majored students in the faculty, of whom 148 responses came back, as they were given the choice of opting out if they wished, and some students were absent. From there, data were filtered for further validity and reliability, so responses stating mismatched teacher names or choosing the same option for all items were ruled out. Finally, 138 responses (76.67%) were eligible and coded for analysis in SPSS.

Similarly, teacher surveys (NIS-S) were conducted via Google Form, and four responses were coded into SPSS. Then, unstructured online interviews with all four teachers via Zalo Call were recorded for further analysis.

In the Findings and Discussion section, results would be presented through the four teachers, each coded by their role, order, and gender (See Table 2).

Table 2.

Respondent coding for teachers

Respondent	Coded as	Gender	Number of students
Teacher 1	T1M	Male	37
Teacher 2	T2M	Male	32
Teacher 3	T3F	Female	36
Teacher 4	T4F	Female	33

To interpret qualitative data from the interviews, narrative analysis was employed. To interpret quantitative data from the two scales, t-test, inter-rater reliability measurement, and discrepancy scoring were carried out.

One-sample t-test was computed on SPSS 20 for NIS-O results. Means were individually calculated and interpreted for NIS-S results. Cohen's Kappa inter-rater reliability measurement was carried out to determine possible agreement between two NIS scales. If disparities exist, Borich (1980)'s methodology is followed for discrepancy scoring.

Findings

RQ1: What is the perception of first-year EFL students regarding their teacher's nonverbal immediacy in speaking classes?

The NIS-O scale was used to gain insights into students' observation of their Speaking class teacher's nonverbal immediacy. For this scale, Richmond et al. provide a norm of combined mean at 94.2, which is the test value for a one-sample t-test. The discount of observers' gender is due to the insignificant disparity across male and female observers (Richmond et al., 2003). From that, the results can be seen below (See Table 3).

Tables 3.

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
T1M	37	100.81	13.059	2.147
T2M	32	93.03	14.414	2.548
T3F	36	116.39	8.983	1.497
T4F	33	103.67	10.114	1.761

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 94.2					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
T1M	3.079	36	.004	6.611	2.26	10.97
T2M	-.459	31	.650	-1.169	-6.37	4.03
T3F	14.820	35	.000	22.189	19.15	25.23
T4F	5.377	32	.000	9.467	5.88	13.05

Four teachers are considered to be showcasing nonverbal immediacy by their students. Notably, two female teachers have relatively higher means than their male counterparts, with one teacher (T3F) even falling in the high immediacy range (>109). Besides, the higher the mean, the lower the SD, showing a trend of a more unified view in classes with more immediate teachers. Further, no teacher is regarded as of low immediacy level (<79). This is a positive sign of students feeling comfortable with their instructor in the class.

Upon looking closely at students' reception of each individual nonverbal behavior, more than half the positive items (items 6, 12, 14, 17, 19, 22, 25) score highly in perceived frequency (>4.0) (See Table 4).

This means that, as students see it, teachers "often" employ nonverbal tactics such as: posture (item 6), vocal expressiveness (item 12, 19), gesture (item 14), eye contact (item 17, 22), and facial expression (item 25). Within these active tactics, gesturing and being animated while talking is what students can recognize most vividly. In contrast, two behaviors that students view as "almost never" and "rarely" done by teachers (items 2 and 21) are touch and body orientation. From students' perspective, teachers seem to avoid touching their learners' shoulders or arms as well as leaning toward them when in conversation. The last type of nonverbal immediacy shown through physical proximity (items 10 and 16) is of slightly lesser frequency than "occasionally". It means teachers sometimes will reduce the distance with certain students to whom they are talking.

In short, the English-majored first-year students think that their speaking teacher is moderately to highly immediate. They recognize several displays of nonverbal immediacy in their teacher, ranging from eye contact, vocal change, to body language. However, they also identify certain immediacy tactics that are less commonly utilized by teachers, most pertaining to a high level of physical closeness.

Table 4.

Mean, Sample size, Standard Deviation of Positive items

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. He/she uses her/his hands and arms to gesture while talking to students.	4	3.4750	.55393
2. He/she touches students on the shoulder or arm while talking to them.	4	1.7550	.35940
6. He/she has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to students.	4	4.2025	.25902
10. He/she sits close or stands close to students while talking with them.	4	3.3450	.67747
12. He/she uses a variety of vocal expressions when he/she talks to students.	4	4.1050	.45317
13. He/she gestures when he/she talks to students.	4	3.7375	.60566
14. He/she is animated when he/she talks to students.	4	4.3025	.46729
16. He/she moves closer to students when he/she talks to them.	4	3.5475	.79676
17. He/she looks directly at students while talking to them.	4	4.1250	.38127
19. He/she has a lot of vocal variety when he/she talks to students.	4	4.2275	.46686
21. He/she leans toward students when he/she talks to them.	4	2.9200	.83964
22. He/she maintains eye contact with students when he/she talks to them.	4	4.1900	.38026
25. He/she smiles when he/she talks to students.	4	4.1650	.48611

RQ2: What is the perception of EFL teachers regarding their own nonverbal immediacy behaviors in speaking classes?

The NIS-S scale was employed for four EFL teachers to measure their own nonverbal immediacy in speaking classes. Their scores and norms are displayed below, divided by gender (See Table 5). For this self-report instrument, Richmond et al. (2003) recommend that gender differences be taken into account. The norm is different for each gender, with females tending to self-measure at higher immediacy (though underlying reasons are yet to be determined).

Table 5.

NIS-S Results

Respondent	NIS-S Results	Norms
T1M	94	Males Mean = 93.8; S.D. = 10.8
T2M	82	High = >104 Low <83
T3F	112	Females Mean = 102.0; S.D. = 10.9
T4F	96	High = >112 Low = <92

Comparing two datasets, it can be seen that three out of four teachers view themselves as being moderately to highly immediate nonverbally, with the exception of a male teacher (T2M). In fact, this teacher regards himself as being of low nonverbal immediacy (<83).

Looking at specific positive immediate behaviors, female teachers use almost all tactics at some of the highest frequencies of "often" to "almost always". Using arms and hands for gesturing while talking is favored by both teachers, as they very often do this.

According to a teacher (T3F), her frequent use of nonverbal behaviors stems from both personality and personal belief that students would feel more willing to talk and express themselves in class upon seeing signs of friendliness from her.

> *"First-year students struggle (to a varying degree) with adapting to the communication-focused speaking classroom. Speaking fully in English would be new for many, coming from a grammar-heavy high school learning environment... I hope my friendliness will lessen their inhibition with speaking in English." (T3F)*

When asked which nonverbal behaviors are most effective for such a purpose, this teacher chooses smiling, nodding, and leaning a little closer. Gestures (despite being her most frequent behaviors) could sometimes be distracting or "overpowering" for observers, so she is working on a more conscious use of gestures in class.

Meanwhile, two female teachers are most hesitant to touch students' shoulders/arms (Q2), with reasons including respecting Vietnamese culture and acting as a classroom management tactic.

> "(reason to avoid touch is because) *there is a Vietnamese superstition of bad luck coming from being touched on one shoulder." (T4F)*

> *"I will when I have to signal to a distracted student... By lightly tapping on their shoulder, I can refocus this student discreetly without drawing the class's attention and risking humiliating them..." (T3F)*

On the other hand, the first male teacher (T1M) uses most tactics "occasionally", except for gesture and posture ("often"). Additionally, eye contact with each student should be maintained, but only for a short while.

> *"I think body movements make teachers seem more available for interaction... I don't keep eye contact with any student for too long because my eyes seem serious, like I'm glaring..." (T1M)*

This teacher also mentions in-class demonstration of vocal variety as a subtle way to teach intonation, unaware of its immediate impact. T1M "never" leans forward while talking because keeping an arm's length allows other students to observe/hear him too. He also "never" touches their shoulder/arm while talking to avoid causing misunderstanding of harassment.

The other male teacher (T2M) agrees in terms of touch. This teacher states that maintaining appropriate communication with students is really important; thus, behaviors suggesting close physical contact, like touch, would be socially unacceptable. Understanding the tabooness of physical touch in Vietnamese social settings, he completely avoids this tactic. This rings true for both his female and male students as he tries to treat all students equally, regardless of gender.

> *"Male or female students, I use the same types of behaviors to treat them equally." (T2M)*

Notably, T2M is fully aware of his low nonverbal immediacy and says it is his active choice to limit nonverbal behaviors in class.

> *"I want to focus on language while minimizing other possible distractors like body language, since a teacher's role in a first-year speaking class is to model* (verbal)

language use... If I need to make students feel less stressed, I would rather say something funny..." (T2M)

Furthermore, he feels that male and female teachers would have different styles of self-expression in front of students, acknowledging the disparities across genders when it comes to teacher immediacy display. This sentiment is resonated by T1M, revealing a rather sensitive positioning of male teachers with classroom immediacy.

To sum up, four teachers vary in their self-assessment of nonverbal immediacy from low (25%), to moderate (50%), to high level (25%). Female teachers take a slight lead over men. One male teacher actively lowers nonverbal immediacy, particularly the use of body language, to draw more attention to verbal communication. For some teachers, vocal expressiveness is not purposefully used to gain affinity but to incorporate teaching.

Smiling is generally favored by all teachers. Female teachers prefer vocal expressiveness and occasionally used by male teachers. Meanwhile, body language, arms, and hand gestures, to be specific, though helpful, are believed by some to be better utilized in moderation. Too much gesturing could interfere with students' language learning process. Besides, all teachers refrain from touch and physical closeness, but to varying degrees. Male teachers employ tactics like touching the shoulder/arm or leaning forward much less often (almost never) than female ones, seemingly due to their awareness of cultural/social norms.

RQ3: Are there any discrepancies between the two perceptions?

To probe into possible agreement between students' and teachers' perspectives regarding teacher nonverbal immediacy in class, Cohen's Kappa inter-rater reliability measurement is run on each teacher paired with their corresponding class (suffixed "c"). Symmetric measures of four pairs are shown below (See Table 6).

Table 6.

Symmetric measurement

Pair	Kappa Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
T1M - T1Mc	0.195	0.098	2.258	0.024
T2M - T2Mc	0.086	0.111	0.915	0.360*
T3F - T3Fc	0.297	0.113	2.937	0.003
T4F - T4Fc	0.362	0.108	3.410	0.001

For two female teachers who report/are reported higher immediacy, the agreements with students' perception are fair ($0.2<x<0.4$), while those in male teachers are slight ($x<0.2$). Ultimately, an agreement exists between self-perceived and student-perceived nonverbal immediacy, but the extent is not significant. For T1M, T3F, and T4F, students' perspective on how they behave nonverbally somewhat overlaps with their own. Evidently, the level of nonverbal immediacy reported by the first three teachers equates to that of their students. Meanwhile, T2M's students describe him as moderately immediate - higher than he himself reports (low immediacy). Certainly, there are disparities between the two perceptions.

For a clearer understanding of the degree of differences, mean weighted discrepancy scores of 26 items are calculated based on Borich (1980)'s method, then ranked in order of magnitude. A positive MWDS signifies that the teachers rate themselves higher on that particular item, and the magnitude of the discrepancy is reflected by MWDS values, with MWDS < 0.66 equating to close agreement (Estepp et al., 2014). (M_T = self-perceived mean; M_c = student-perceived mean)

Table 7.

Items with Mean Weighted Discrepancy Scores <0.66

Items	M_T	M_c	MWDS
11. My voice is monotonous or dull when I talk to people.	1.75	1.42	0.58
24. I lean away from people when I talk to them.	1.75	1.51	0.43
8. I avoid eye contact while talking to people.	1.50	1.42	0.12
2. I touch others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them.	1.75	1.76	-0.01
23. I try not to sit or stand close to people when I talk with them.	2.25	2.29	-0.08
17. I look directly at people while talking to them.	4.00	4.12	-0.49

There are 6 items (23.07%) that teachers and students closely agree on (<0.66), confirming the low agreement measured above (Table 7).

Table 8.

Items with 0.66< MWDS <1

Items	M_T	M_c	MWDS
3. I use a monotone or dull voice while talking to people.	2.00	1.63	0.73
18. I am stiff when I talk to people.	2.00	1.63	0.73
7. I frown while talking to people.	2.25	1.95	0.68
9. I have a tense body position while talking to people.	1.75	1.37	0.66
25. I smile when I talk to people.	4.00	4.16	-0.66
22. I maintain eye contact with people when I talk to them.	4.00	4.19	-0.76
6. I have a relaxed body position when I talk to people.	4.00	4.20	-0.82
13. I gesture when I talk to people.	3.50	3.74	-0.83
20. I avoid gesturing while I am talking to people.	1.75	2.24	-0.86
16. I move closer to people when I talk to them.	3.25	3.55	-0.97

In Table 8, another 38.46% (10 items) are demonstrating differences but with a small magnitude (<1). Within these 16 items, 9 of them (56%) are negative items (describing actions teachers avoid doing). The main immediacy strategies that show perception unity are posture, eye contact, and smiling.

Table 9.

Items with MWDS >1

Items	M_T	M_c	MWDS
26. I avoid touching people when I talk to them.	4.00	2.58	5.70
5. I move away from others when they touch me while we are talking.	2.50	1.39	2.77
1. I use my hands and arms to gesture while talking to people.	4.00	3.47	2.10
10. I sit close or stand close to people while talking with them.	3.75	3.35	1.51
15. I have a bland facial expression when I talk to people.	2.50	1.91	1.47
4. I look over or away from others while talking to them.	2.00	1.29	1.42
21. I lean toward people when I talk to them.	2.50	2.92	-1.04
12. I use a variety of vocal expressions when I talk to people.	3.75	4.10	-1.33
19. I have a lot of vocal variety when I talk to people.	3.75	4.23	-1.79
14. I am animated when I talk to people.	3.75	4.30	-2.08

Of the remaining items with clearer differences (Table 9), item 26 about avoiding touching people when talking to them scores significantly high (5.70). This means teachers think they "often" avoid touching others in conversation, yet students think the frequency is closer to "occasionally". Such clear divergence (moving from one level of frequency to another) is the biggest gap across all assessed nonverbal behaviors.

Interestingly, two items coded for touch (items 2 and 26) stood at two extremes of the 'similar to different viewpoint' scale. Item 2 describing teachers touching on their students' shoulders or arms while talking to him/her was rated by both sides at 'almost never', with the highest level of unity in the survey. Students know that their teacher refrained from touching them, and teachers show high deliberation in not doing the action. Meanwhile, item 26 is the negative of item 2, describing teachers avoiding touching someone when talking to him/her. Teachers rated this at 'often', so they mostly avoided touch. Yet the outsider viewpoint had it at 'occasionally', so teachers were perceived not to be as reserved with touch as they thought.

Other noticeable differences include: physical proximity, gesture, facial expression, and vocal expressiveness.

Discussion

The perception of first-year EFL students and EFL teachers regarding NTI in speaking classes

This study finds that English-majored first-year students in a Vietnamese university view their speaking teacher as being moderately (75%) to highly immediate (25%). They think teachers employ a variety of nonverbal tactics (facial expression, eye contact, vocal change, gesture). However, they also identify certain immediacy tactics that are less commonly utilized by teachers, most pertaining to a high level of physical closeness.

Meanwhile, four teachers' self-perception varies from low (25%), to moderate (50%), to high level (25%) of NTI, with female teachers taking a slight lead over male counterparts. Teachers self-identify the application of various nonverbal behaviors in speaking class (smiling, vocal expressiveness, gesture), many of which they use with a specific purpose in mind. Across nonverbal behaviors, touch and physical proximity are the most precarious tactics due to cultural and social norms in Vietnam.

Similarities and differences between the two perceptions

Comparison of two perceptions highlights some agreements between self-report and student-report NTI about the overall perceived immediacy level. Teachers who self-report as moderate to high immediacy have their student-report level also at moderate to high. The extent of agreement is stronger for teachers with a higher immediacy level.

As research on comparing self-report and student-report NTI is so sparse, there is yet no clear explanation for this. However, since teachers are found to be aware of their immediacy behaviors in class (Gorham & Zakahi, 1990) and students can observe and identify those behaviors from their instructors quite accurately (Lopez-Ozieblo, 2025), it’s logical to conclude that the two viewpoints would overlap. Therefore, teachers can generally rest assured that the nonverbal cues they give out to lessen proximity with learners would be understood. Of which, some of the most accessible signs would be smiling at students, keeping eye contact with them (though not too long as it might become scary - as forewarned by T1M), or having a relaxed body stance. At the very least, students and teachers easily agree on what nonverbal cues non-teachers do *not* display. It seems the conception of negative items is more universally understood across respondents, so there is more room for similarity.

Nevertheless, findings on differences are more apparent and aligned with prior publications from Estepp et al. (2014) and Roberts et al. (2012), noting the ever-present disparity in perspectives.

First, even when a teacher (T2M) registered himself as of low immediacy, his students perceived him as moderately immediate. Then, several nonverbal tactics regarding physical proximity, gesture, facial expression, and vocal expressiveness also witness a gap between students' and teachers' opinions. Justifying such a discrepancy, Mullane (2014) thinks that this is because teacher answers "require a generalization of the class as a whole" while students' perception is individualized. Even though the teacher thinks they don't use nonverbal affinity-seeking tactics that often in general, students might be able to recognize them more from an observer viewpoint or as the recipient of those interactional gestures. This goes to show how sensitive the students in this research context are to nonverbal communication, and teachers who worry about being too intimidating might feel less burdened.

Most interestingly, behaviors of touch demonstrate the highest polarization. Such a contradiction might stem from some psychological traits. Four teachers were fully aware of the contextual and cultural complications of touch in the Vietnamese classroom (as shown in their interviews), so they answered quite resolutely. However, students, upon seeing the word "avoid" (which generally has a negative connotation), might hesitate to give a strong reaction. Possibly, for students, touch between the instructor and the learner when described quite appropriately as "touch on the shoulder or arm" doesn't seem as impermissible; therefore, they tend to have a milder reaction to item 26. Or, the contradiction might also be a nod to Zhang and Oetzel (2006)'s criticism of the bias in existing nonverbal immediacy measures toward Western classrooms.

It is suggested that teachers adjust this behavior accordingly to their class. For example, teachers might still be able to initiate touch with students to create a sense of closeness, but should be very respectful in manner and conservative in frequency. Light touch on the shoulder for gaining students' attention, or a light tap on the upper arm as encouragement, could be culturally appropriate in the Vietnamese context. Nevertheless, different students/teachers would have different thresholds for such physical proximity, so personal observation and further research/training about learners' psychology might help to inform teachers of the appropriate behaviors.

Conclusion

The study investigates the differences between self-report and student-report nonverbal teacher immediacy at a Vietnamese university. Overall, the level of similarity is quite low, concentrating on posture, eye contact, and smiling. Differences are more present in other groups of immediate behaviors, with touch as the most divisive behavior.

However, since the scope of this study is small (on only four teachers and first-year students in a faculty) and mainly reliant on self-report, more extensive and expansive works could be done to ensure the generalizability of the results.

Later studies might work with a larger sample size, including instructors and students from different educational settings and locations; employ different methods such as observation to complement self-reported data; or conduct longitudinal research by tracking teachers' adaptation of nonverbal behaviors over time to reveal long-term impacts.

There is also potential for comparative studies on the impacts of touch as a nonverbal immediacy strategy on students across cultures, as well as further exploration on how nonverbal immediacy might impact Vietnamese students on various aspects such as motivation, academic engagement, willingness to communicate, and so on. Last but not least, adjustments could be made to existing NTI measuring scales, particularly for touch-related behaviors, so that they can work more effectively in the Asian context.

Acknowledgments

Acknowledging contributions to this research article in the order that best represents the nature and importance of those contributions, such as intellectual assistance and funding support.

References

Bıçkı, A. (2008). An observation of nonverbal immediacy behaviours of native and non-native lecturers. *Journal of Social Sciences, 5*(1), 1-20.

Borich, G.D. (1980). A needs assessment model for conducting follow-up studies. *Journal of Teacher Education, 31*(3), 39-42.

Cai, M. (2021). The predictability of Chinese English as a foreign language students' willingness to communicate through teachers' immediacy and teacher–student rapport. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12:769424. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.769424

Chiew-Goh, S. & Fraser, B.J. (1996). Validation of an elementary school version of the questionnaire on teacher interaction. *Psychological Reports*, 79, 515–522. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1996.79.2.515

Comadena, M., Hunt, S., & Simonds, C. (2007). The effects of teacher clarity, nonverbal immediacy, and caring on student motivation, affective and cognitive learning. *Communication Research Reports*, 24, 241-248.

Dinh, T. T. D., & Ha, Y. N. (2024). Nonverbal Cues in Teaching Foreign Language for Vietnamese Higher Education Learners. *ICTE Conference Proceedings*, *5*, 202–214. https://doi.org/10.54855/ictep.24515

Estepp, C., Shelnutt, K. & Roberts, G. (2014). A comparison of student and professor perceptions of teacher immediacy behaviors in large agricultural classrooms. *NACTA Journal*, 58, 155-162.

Fernández-García, A., & Fonseca-Mora, M. (2019). EFL learners' speaking proficiency and its connection to emotional understanding, willingness to communicate and musical experience. *Language Teaching Research, 26*(1), 124-140. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168819891868

Folwell, A. L. (2000). A comparison of professors' and students' perceptions of nonverbal immediacy behaviors. *Journal of the Northwest Communication Association*, 29, 33-41.

Frymier, A., Goldman, Z., & Claus, C. (2019). Why nonverbal immediacy matters: A motivation explanation. *Communication Quarterly*, 67, 526-539. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2019.1668442

Frymier, A.N. (1993). The impact of teacher immediacy on students’ motivation: Is it the same for all students?. *Communication Quarterly,* 41, 454-464.

Gol, M., Zand-Moghadam, A., & Karrab, M. (2014). The construct of willingness to communicate and its relationship with EFL learners’ perceived verbal and nonverbal teacher immediacy. *Issues in Language Teaching, 3*(1), 135-160.

Hsu, L. (2010). The impact of perceived teachers' nonverbal immediacy on students' motivation for learning English. *Asia EFL Journal,* 12, 188-204.

Hsu, L., Watson, T., Lin, C., & Ho, T. (2007). Explorations in teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors and students’ willingness to talk in English. *English Teaching & Learning, 31*(3), 1-27.

Jin, S. (2023). Speaking proficiency and affective effects in EFL: Vlogging as a social media-integrated activity. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 55, 586-604. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13381

Le, X. M., & Le, T. T. (2022). Factors Affecting Students’ Attitudes towards Learning English as a Foreign Language in a Tertiary Institution of Vietnam. *International Journal of TESOL & Education, 2*(2), 168-185. https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.22229

Lee, J. (2020). Relationships among students’ perceptions of native and non-native EFL teachers’ immediacy behaviours and credibility and students’ willingness to communicate in class. *Oxford Review of Education*, 46, 153 - 168. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2019.1642187.

Lopez-Ozieblo, R. (2025). Do we need to beware of students’ perceptions?: immediacy and emotional relationship between students and teachers in the Asian context. *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación*, *102*, 87-102. https://doi.org/10.5209/clac.101436

McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., Sallinen, A., Fayer, J. M., & Barraclough, R. A. (1995). A cross-cultural and multi-behavioral analysis of the relationship between nonverbal immediacy and teacher evaluation. *Communication Education*, *44*(4), 281–291. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634529509379019

Mehrabian, A. (1968). Some referents and measures of nonverbal behavior. *Behavioral Research Methods and Instrumentation*, 1(6), 203-207.

Mehrabian, A. (1981). *Silent messages: Implicit communication or emotions and attitudes* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Mullane, R.R. (2014). *Student's perception of teacher immediacy behaviors on student success and retention* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee]. UWM Digital Commons.

Nussbaum, J.F. (1984). The Montana program to systematically modify teacher communicative behavior. *The annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, New Orleans.

Ozmen, K.S. (2011). Perception of nonverbal immediacy and effective teaching among student teachers: A study across cultural extremes. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences, 3*(3), 865-881.

Rahimi, M., & Fathi, J. (2022). Employing e-tandem language learning method to enhance speaking skills and willingness to communicate: The case of EFL learners. *Computer*

Assisted Language Learning, 37, 924-960. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2022.2064512.

Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J.C. (2004). *Nonverbal Behaviors in Interpersonal Relations* (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & Johnson, A. D. (2003). Development of the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (NIS): Measures of self- and other-perceived nonverbal immediacy. *Communication Quarterly,* 51, 502-515.

Richmond, V.P., McCroskey, J.C., & Hickson, M.L. (2012). *Nonverbal Behavior in Interpersonal Relations.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Roberts, T.G., Conner, N.W., Estepp, C.M., Giorgi, A., & Stripling, C.T. (2012). Examining the teaching behaviors of successful teachers in a college of agricultural and life sciences. *NACTA Journal, 56*(2), 21-28.

Sheybani, M. (2019). The relationship between EFL learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) and their teacher immediacy attributes: A structural equation modelling. *Cogent Psychology, 6*(1): 1607051. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2019.1607051

Smythe, M., & Hess, J. (2005). Are student self-reports a valid method for measuring teacher nonverbal immediacy?. *Communication Education, 54*(2), 170-179. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520500213389

Tran, A. & Luu, G. (2018). The role of teacher immediacy as a motivational factor in student learning. *The EUrASEANs: Journal on Global Socio-economic Dynamics, 6*(13), 54-63. https://doi.org/10.35678/2539-5645.6(13).2018.54-63

Wang, Y., & Hu, L. (2023). The predicting role of EFL teachers' immediacy behaviors in students' willingness to communicate and academic engagement. *BMC Psychology*, 11, 318-328. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01378-x

Witt, P., & Wheeless, L. (2001). An experimental study of teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy and students' affective and cognitive learning. *Communication Education*, 50, 327-342.

Yuan, L. (2024). EFL teacher-student interaction, teacher immediacy, and Students' academic engagement in the Chinese higher learning context. *Acta Psychologica*, 244, 104-185. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104185

Zhang, Q., & Oetzel, J. (2006). Constructing and Validating a Teacher Immediacy Scale: A Chinese Perspective. *Communication Education*, 55, 218-241. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520600566231

Biodata

MSc. Dan Pham Hoang is an instructor at English Language Faculty, School of Languages and Tourism (Hanoi University of Industry). Working mostly with college students on improving their language competency, Dan Pham's main research interests include effective teacher-learner communication, material development, and innovative teaching methods.

Using Task-Based Language Teaching to Improve English Speaking Fluency: An Action Research Study with Vietnamese Non-English-Majored University Students

Pham Thanh Su[1*]

[1] University of Economics and Law, Vietnam
[*] Corresponding author's email: supt.ktl@uel.edu.vn
[*] https://orcid.org/0009-0002-9564-6578
https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25542

Received: 13/12/2024 Revision: 09/09/2025 Accepted: 23/09/2025 Online: 20/10/2025

ABSTRACT

This action research project investigated the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving the speaking fluency of 28 non-English major, first-year university students in Vietnam. The study involved a 10-week intervention where students engaged in communicative tasks designed to promote authentic language use. Data were collected through classroom observations, teacher checklists, and informal student discussions. To assess fluency, specific indicators such as speech rate, pauses, and repetitions were examined. The findings revealed that TBLT positively impacted students' speaking fluency, as evidenced by improvements in speech rate, pauses, and repetitions. Students also expressed positive perceptions of TBLT, emphasizing the benefits of pre-task planning, collaborative work, and a focus on meaning over form. The study suggests that TBLT might be an effective approach for enhancing spoken fluency among university students, particularly those with prior grammatical knowledge but limited communicative practice.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching, speaking fluency, non-English major university students

Introduction

Many second language learners prioritize mastering spoken English, often measuring their progress by improvements in their ability to communicate effectively (Richards, 2008). In Vietnam, students with strong English skills benefit from numerous career opportunities. However, English education in Vietnam—similar to other Asian countries—has faced significant challenges, often stemming from Confucian ideals and traditional teaching practices. These approaches typically emphasize linguistic rules and explicit instruction, with minimal focus on communicative competence (Loi, 2011, as cited in Nguyen & Jaspaert, 2020). According to Edwards and Willis (2005, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014), most students who receive instruction primarily through traditional methods graduate without the ability to communicate effectively in English. To address these persistent issues with students' language proficiency, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) took decisive action. In December 2018, it introduced the General Education English Curriculum (GEEC), marking

CITATION | Pham, T. S. (2025). Using Task-Based Language Teaching to Improve English Speaking Fluency: An Action Research Study with Vietnamese Non-English-Majored University Students. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, *5*(4), 16-31. DOI: https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25542

a pivotal shift in language teaching from a language-centered approach to a learner-centered approach. The aim of this new curriculum is to improve communicative competence rather than to master linguistic knowledge.

While GEEC promotes communicative competence and learner-centered instruction at the high school level, many first-year university students still enter higher education with limited spoken fluency. This indicates a gap between the intended outcomes of GEEC and the actual communicative abilities of students. Despite the curriculum's emphasis on communication, the influence of grammar-focused instruction and exam-oriented teaching in secondary schools remains strong. Consequently, first-year university students, particularly those at the CEFR A2 level, often struggle to use English fluently in real-life contexts. This study seeks to address that gap by applying Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is described as the "strong version of the communicative approach, where language is acquired through use" (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 199). This approach motivates learners to utilize language for meaningful, real-life communication (Ellis, 2009), leading to positive attitudes from both educators and students (Bryfonski & McKay, 2017, as cited in Jackson, 2022). For example, teachers have observed students eagerly applying language in authentic scenarios (Erlam & Tolosa, 2022), and students engaged in TBLT spend substantial time communicating, which fosters fluency development (Frost, 2004, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014). A wealth of research supports TBLT's efficacy in enhancing students' communicative competence across multiple dimensions (Nghia & Quang, 2021; Tran, 2022), particularly in improving speaking skills among learners of diverse proficiency levels and age groups (Albino, 2017; Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Masuram & Sripada, 2020; Namaziandost et al., 2019; Nget & Poohongthong, 2020; Ngoc, 2023; Panduwangi, 2021; Sugianto & Han, 2020; Thu, 2021; Zúñiga et al., 2023).

At the researcher's university, first-year students at the CEFR A2 level were frequently assigned to his courses. These learners generally had a solid grasp of English grammar but found it difficult to apply their knowledge effectively in real-world communication. Having been taught mainly through traditional grammar-focused methods, they often struggled with spoken fluency. In response to these challenges, the teacher initiated an action research project that incorporated TBLT into classroom practice. As TBLT has been widely recognized for its potential to support speaking fluency, this study explores how it can address the persistent difficulties faced by these students.

Literature Review

The Theoretical Rationale for TBLT

TBLT is well-supported by both cognitive-interactionist and sociocultural theories of Second Language Acquisition (Erlam & Tolosa, 2022). Key cognitive theories supporting TBLT include the information processing, the noticing hypothesis, the output hypothesis, and the interaction hypothesis (Erlam & Tolosa, 2022). These theories highlight the role of tasks in providing input and opportunities to process language for meaning (Robinson, 2001, as cited in Erlam & Tolosa, 2022), encouraging attention to form (Schmidt, 1995, as cited in Erlam & Tolosa, 2022; Ellis, 2003), encouraging language production (Swain, 2005, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Robinson, 2011, as cited in Erlam & Tolosa, 2022), promoting negotiation of meaning, feedback, output modification, and acquisition (Long, 1983, 1996, as cited in Lightbown & Spada). From a sociocultural perspective, language learning is viewed as a social process that occurs through interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in

Lightbown and Spada, 2013). Tasks create a platform for learners to engage in collaborative dialogue, receive scaffolded help within their Zone of Proximal Development, and co-construct meaning (Ellis, 2003). Tasks are viewed as tools that mediate learning through interaction, with different learners approaching the same task in various ways (Ellis, 2003).

The Role of Tasks in TBLT

Ellis (2003) emphasizes that tasks are central to this instructional model. According to Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011), tasks are defined as purposeful activities that engage learners in communication and have clear objectives, allowing both teachers and students to measure the success of their interaction. Tasks encourage language use, meaning negotiation, comprehension of input, and attention to form - elements that collectively contribute to second language acquisition (Van den Branden, 2006). Ellis et al. (2020) identified four key criteria for defining a task: (1) the primary focus is on conveying meaning; (2) the task involves some type of gap to be addressed; (3) learners rely mainly on their own knowledge and skills; and (4) the task has a specific communicative objective.

Willis (1996) categorizes tasks into six main types: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks. Meanwhile, Prabhu (1987, as cited in Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011) identifies three distinct task types: information-gap tasks, opinion-gap tasks, and reasoning-gap tasks. Information-gap tasks require participants to exchange information to complete a task, while opinion-gap tasks involve learners expressing personal views, preferences, or emotions. In reasoning-gap tasks, learners infer or derive new information by processing the given data. Additionally, Ellis (2009) provides another layer of classification by distinguishing between focused and unfocused tasks, as well as input-providing and output-prompting tasks. Unfocused tasks allow students to engage in general communication without focusing on specific language forms, whereas focused tasks emphasize the use of particular linguistic elements, such as grammar structures. Input-providing tasks encourage receptive activities like listening and reading, often introducing new language forms, while output-prompting tasks require learners to actively produce language through speaking or writing.

A Framework for Task-Based Lessons

Ellis (2006) proposes a structured framework for task-based lessons, consisting of three sequential phases, as shown in Figure 1. This framework ensures a clear and logical flow, while also allowing flexibility in the choice of activities for each phase. Notably, only the during-task phase is essential to the lesson, though the pre-task and post-task phases, though optional, can significantly enhance language development by optimizing task performance.

Table 1

A framework for designing task-based lessons (Ellis, 2006, p. 80)

Phase	Examples of options
A. Pre-task	Framing the activity (e.g., establishing the outcome of the task) Planning time Doing a similar task
B. During task	Time pressure
C. Post-task	Number of participants Learner report Consciousness-raising Repeat task

The pre-task phase is designed to prepare students for task performance in ways that facilitate language acquisition (Ellis, 2006). This preparation can be achieved through three primary strategies: (1) capturing students' interest in the task topic, (2) activating relevant background knowledge, and (3) providing essential language support (Ellis, 2006). Activating learners' prior knowledge benefits their engagement and performance (Jackson, 2020). Additionally, offering a model helps students grasp both the content and the language required to complete the task effectively (Ellis, 2019). Observing others perform the task can also reduce cognitive load, making it easier for learners to complete the task themselves (Willis, 1996). Research suggests that pre-task planning enhances performance by improving both fluency and complexity (Ellis, 2019).

During the task phase, students are given time limits for task completion, which, as Ellis (2019) points out, encourages greater fluency by fostering quicker responses.

The post-task phase plays a vital role in a task-based lesson (Ellis, 2019). In this stage, free practice activities aimed at reinforcing grammar knowledge are incorporated. These familiar activities can make TBLT feel less intimidating for students (Ellis, 2019). Notably, in TBLT, these grammar-focused activities are introduced after the task, reversing the sequence of the traditional Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) approach (Ellis, 2019). Such activities can help learners internalize and automate language forms that they continue to find challenging (Ellis, 2006).

Fluency in Speaking

According to Harmer (2015), fluency reflects effective communication, where even grammatical errors do not hinder the flow if the speaker conveys their message without excessive pauses or struggling for words (Crowther et al., 2015). Hedge (1993) identifies two aspects of fluency in English language teaching (ELT). The first refers to the ability to connect speech units smoothly, without strain, unnatural slowness, or unnecessary hesitation, emphasizing language production. The second focuses on natural language use in classroom activities, which occurs when communication centers on meaning, speakers control the content, meaning is negotiated, strategies are employed, and teacher correction is minimized. Skehan (2003, 2009) further divides fluency into three dimensions: speed fluency (speech rate and density), breakdown fluency (pauses), and repair fluency (self-corrections and repetitions). Ultimately, fluent speech involves maintaining speed, minimizing disruptions, and ensuring effective message delivery (De Jong et al., 2012; Tavakoli et al., 2016), characterized by the absence of excessive pauses, hesitations, or repetitive patterns (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Segalowitz, 2013).

Research Supporting the Effectiveness of TBLT in Improving Speaking Proficiency and Fluency

Numerous studies have demonstrated that TBLT effectively enhances students' speaking proficiency and fluency. A primary theme emerging from this research is the positive impact of TBLT on overall speaking skills and communicative competence. For instance, studies by Sugianto et al. (2020) and Nget et al. (2020) in Indonesia and Cambodia, respectively, found significant improvements in participants' speaking abilities, attributed to engaging tasks, structured task cycles, and relevant topics. Thirty-four undergraduates at the Department of English of Madalika University of Education in Indonesia participated in Sugianto et al.'s (2020) action research, which collected data from observations and pre- and post-tests. Nget et al.'s (2020) study involved seventy-eight students in grade 9 at Rohal High School in Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia.

Furthermore, Panduwangi (2021) in Indonesia showed that TBLT-instructed students outperformed those in traditional settings in terms of speaking accuracy and fluency. Even among non-English major freshmen, TBLT proved more effective (Panduwangi, 2021). Within the Vietnamese context, research by Thu (2023) and Ngoc (2023) further confirms TBLT's positive influence on students' overall speaking abilities, encompassing elements like task achievement, fluent speed, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Thu's study involved thirty-eight non-English major third-year students at Dong Nai Technology University, Vietnam. Sixty students from Saigontourist Hospitality College, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, participated in Ngoc's study. Her quasi-experimental research used data from pre- and post-tests and a questionnaire.

A recurring factor contributing to these positive outcomes is increased student motivation and engagement. Nguyen (2022) examined the effects of task-based instruction on reading comprehension among non-English major university students in Vietnam and found significant improvement in students' reading performance. Although the focus was on reading rather than speaking, the study supports the effectiveness of TBLT in promoting learner engagement and shifting away from traditional grammar-based methods. Learners frequently express positive attitudes towards TBLT, citing its ability to meet their interests and learning needs (Nget et al., 2020). Studies in various countries, including Angola (Albino, 2017), India (Hasnain & Halder, 2023), and Colombia (Zúñiga et al., 2023), highlight how TBLT encourages active participation and fosters a willingness to speak English. Participants consistently report feeling more motivated to use the language, particularly through collaborative activities like pair and group work and well-designed tasks (Hasnain & Halder, 2023; Zúñiga et al., 2023). This heightened motivation is often linked to the authentic, real-life communication scenarios inherent in TBLT tasks (Nget et al., 2020).

Beyond general proficiency, several studies specifically emphasize TBLT's role in developing speaking fluency, characterized by increased speech speed, fewer pauses, elaborated discourse, and improved interaction. Albino (2017) observed enhanced fluency with better accuracy and richer discourse among Angolan students, noting that TBLT encouraged them to speak more. This case study collected data from picture descriptions and interviews. The study involved forty pupils in grade 9 at PUNIX-Cazenga. Similarly, Masuram and Sripada (2020) in India found improvements in college students' task achievement, grammar, and fluency. This quasi-experimental study gathered data from surveys, observations, pre- and post-tests, participants' diaries, and casual interviews. Hasnain and Halder (2023) further confirmed this in India, observing fluency enhancement with fewer pauses and more words. The design of specific task types also plays a crucial role in fostering fluency. Thirty undergraduates who studied for B.Ed from one college in Kolkata, West Bengal, India, participated in the study. Data were obtained from pre- and post-tests, surveys, and semi-structured interviews. Namaziandost et al. (2019) in Iran, for instance, demonstrated that information-gap tasks were particularly effective in influencing EFL students' speaking fluency compared to opinion-gap and reasoning-gap tasks. This quasi-experimental study involved 140 EFL Iranian students aged 15-18 at the CEFR B1 level from two English language institutes. The underlying principle appears to be TBLT's inherent ability to motivate learners to converse and interact extensively in the target language (Zúñiga et al., 2023). This qualitative study used data from surveys, interviews, and speaking rubrics. Twenty EFL undergraduates at the CEFR A2 level from a university in Medellin, Colombia, participated in the study.

While these studies present promising results, they also highlight certain limitations. Most research focuses on general speaking competence without providing an in-depth analysis of specific fluency metrics. Additionally, although TBLT is well-researched across different educational contexts, there is a lack of studies specifically targeting non-English majors, first-year university students - particularly those at the A2 proficiency level - within the Vietnamese context. This gap underscores the importance of investigating how first-year students adapt to TBLT and how it influences their fluency development over time.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study investigates the effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing the speaking fluency of non-English major, first-year students enrolled in an English Foundation course at UEL. To achieve this aim, the study pursued three objectives: (1) to assess the degree to which TBLT improves students' speaking fluency and (2) to explore their perceptions of the approach's impact on their oral communication skills.

Research Question

To achieve the study's objectives, the study addressed the following research question:

How does TBLT affect the speaking fluency of first-year non-English major university students in Vietnam?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The action research was conducted at the University of Economics and Law (UEL), located in Thu Duc District, Ho Chi Minh City. The university offers a range of programs tailored to the proficiency levels of non-English major students, aiming to equip them with the skills needed to use English effectively. Equal emphasis is placed on developing all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—with the goal of helping students achieve a CEFR level of B1, which is required for graduation. The English classrooms at UEL are well-equipped with various educational tools, including television screens, computers, speakers, and other resources that enhance the learning experience. This research site was selected because it was the researcher's current workplace, providing him with direct access and facilitating collaboration. Additionally, the researcher was able to secure permission from the head teacher to carry out the study and collect the necessary data.

The participants in this study were 28 first-year students aged 18-19, enrolled in a Foundation English course during Semester 1 of the 2024-2025 academic year. They were selected through convenience sampling, as the study was conducted in the researcher's own class as part of an action research project. They had taken a placement test administered by the university before they registered for this class. Their English proficiency was at the CEFR A2 level. The students majored in economics or law. They had good knowledge about grammar, but they were not able to apply it in communication. The course lasted ten weeks. There were three 4-hour and 15-minute sessions each week. This class was chosen for this research for various reasons. First, the researcher was assigned this class, so he had certain convenience when conducting the study. Second, the participants, who were familiar with more traditional teaching methodologies, were new to TBLT. Last, the coursebook contains a range of authentic tasks in the speaking sections, which were particularly appropriate for the objectives of the study.

Design of the Study

The researcher utilized classroom-based action research (AR) to achieve the objectives of the study. Classroom-based AR was well-suited to this study for several reasons. Burns (2010) highlights that AR enables teachers to better understand classroom challenges and dilemmas, driving meaningful improvements in their teaching practices. AR helps teachers improve their skills and expertise (Descombe, 2010). Additionally, as Mills (cited in Creswell, 2012) explains, AR involves systematic procedures that allow educators to gather data, refine their instructional methods, and enhance both their teaching effectiveness and students' academic progress. Generally, there are four main phases in AR: planning, acting, observing, and reflection. These four stages create a continued spiral, with cycles iterating until the expected results are obtained. However, due to time constraints, this study implemented only one research cycle, with the hope that future iterations will refine the findings and yield more comprehensive results.

Data collection & analysis

Teacher's Checklist. Five students were randomly selected for observation during task performance. An observation checklist (*see Figure 2*) was used to assess their speaking fluency. The checklist employed a Likert scale, following the recommendation by Burns (2010), to ensure a focused evaluation of specific aspects of fluency. Its primary objective was to measure the learners' speaking fluency and determine the effectiveness of TBLT. The checklist, adapted by the researcher from the IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors (public version) by Cambridge English, focused on three key criteria: rate of speech, pauses, and repetition**.** A Likert four-point scale, ranging from 4 for excellent to 1 for poor, was applied to each of the criteria.

- **Rate of speech**: *4 (fluent and natural, with steady flow)* referred to speech that maintained a consistent rhythm, with only minimal slowing; *1 (very slow, fragmented delivery)* indicated that sentences were frequently broken and difficult to follow.
- **Pauses**: *4 (few brief pauses, rarely noticeable)* meant that hesitations were short and did not interrupt meaning, while *1 (long pauses before most words)* indicated a strong disruption to communicative flow.
- **Repetition**: *4 (rarely repeats words or phrases)* referred to a clear progression of ideas without unnecessary recycling, whereas *1 (excessive repetition, hard to follow)* meant that the speaker relied heavily on repeating words or structures, reducing fluency.

Table 2

Teacher's Speaking Fluency Checklist

Criteria	4 (excellent)	3 (good)	2 (fair)	1 (poor)
Rate of speech	Fluent and natural, with steady flow	Moderate pace, with some slowing	Slow and hesitant at times	Very slow, fragmented delivery
Pause	Few brief pauses, rarely noticeable	Occasional pauses between ideas	Frequent pauses, disrupting flow	Long pauses before most words
Repetition	Rarely repeats words or phrases	Some repetition to maintain flow	Frequent repetition and corrections	Excessive repetition, hard to follow

Before the main study, the checklist was piloted with a small group of students in a similar class to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and ease of use. Revisions were made based on feedback and trial results to improve its reliability for assessing speaking fluency.

Observations. Before conducting this action research, the lecturer informally observed that many students, despite having a solid grasp of grammar, struggled to express themselves fluently in spoken English. This recurrent issue prompted the researcher to systematically explore how Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) might improve students' oral fluency. To investigate this phenomenon more rigorously, two formal classroom observations were conducted - one during the first two weeks (Observation 1) and another during the final two weeks of the course (Observation 2).

Observation 1 took place in a speaking lesson that applied the TBLT framework, in alignment with Ellis's (2006) model, which includes pre-task, during-task, and post-task phases. The goal of the lesson is to express interest and excitement. For the pre-task stage, students listened to four conversations in which useful phrases for expressing excitement and interest were used. After that, they answered comprehension questions. The teacher then introduced useful phrases for expressing interest and asking follow-up questions. During the task phase, students worked in pairs, having sufficient time to plan and prepare their ideas. In the post-task stage, the teacher provided feedback, focusing on grammar and vocabulary. Five students - H., Th., T., P., and Ph. - were selected for close observation using the checklist.

Observation 2 was conducted during a speaking lesson in the final two weeks of the course. The lesson focused on discussing upcoming celebrations such as birthdays, holidays, or graduation events. This task aimed to promote spontaneous language use and personal expression, aligning with the principles of opinion-gap and information-gap tasks (Prabhu, 1987; Willis, 1996). In the pre-task phase, the teacher brainstormed vocabulary related to celebrations such as public holidays, gifts, and meals. This step was designed to scaffold learners' lexical resources and reduce cognitive load, consistent with the recommendations of Ellis (2006) and Willis (1996) for preparing learners to perform a communicative task effectively. During the task phase, students worked in small groups to share and compare their plans for future celebrations. They were given time to plan their ideas before discussing them - an approach shown to support fluency by allowing learners to organize thoughts and retrieve relevant language (Ellis, 2019). In the post-task phase, the student with the most interesting plan shared it with the class. The teacher also gave targeted feedback on the use of "*be going to*," as many students struggled with it. As with Observation 1, the same five students - H., Th., T., P., and Ph. - were observed using the fluency checklist, which assessed the rate of speech, pauses, and repetition. These criteria were selected based on Skehan's (2003, 2009) fluency dimensions and adapted from the IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors.

Data from the checklists were compiled and visualized through charts, with scores input into Excel for further analysis. The scores - ranging from 1 (poor fluency) to 4 (excellent fluency) - assessed students' rate of speech, pauses, and repetitions. Excellent speakers demonstrate a fluent, steady flow with minimal pauses and rare repetition. Good speakers maintain a moderate pace with occasional pauses and some repetition to sustain flow. Fair speakers exhibit slow, hesitant delivery with frequent pauses and repeated corrections. Poor speakers speak very slowly with fragmented delivery, long pauses before words, and excessive repetition, making it hard to follow their speech.

Informal Discussions. During the final week, the students engaged in informal group discussions to express their opinions on how TBLT had influenced their speaking fluency. These discussions served two key purposes. First, they provided students with an opportunity to reflect on their learning experiences, helping them become more aware of how specific TBLT activities supported or hindered their fluency development. Second, they allowed the researcher to gather qualitative data based on students' self-reported experiences and insights.

The researcher observed and took informal notes during these sessions, which helped reveal both effective aspects of the TBLT implementation and areas in need of refinement. Although the students were not given explicit theoretical instruction on TBLT, they had engaged with TBLT tasks throughout the course, so their awareness was based on practical exposure rather than formal knowledge of the method. This means their feedback was grounded in experience rather than theoretical bias.

Discussions involved small groups of 4-5 students to encourage active participation and diverse perspectives. This allowed for more focused conversations and prevented individual students from dominating the discussion. While the discussions were largely open-ended, the teacher-researcher used guiding prompts to stimulate student reflection and ensure key areas were addressed. These prompts included questions such as:

"How does this way of learning compare to your previous experiences learning English?"

"Do you feel that your speaking fluency has improved? If so, how?"

"What suggestions do you have for improving our classroom activities?"

Procedure

The research followed an AR model, with each phase aligned to the framework outlined by Burns (2010). The process was divided into four stages:

Phase 1 – Planning. The project began with the identification of a specific problem: the need to enhance students' speaking fluency. The researcher developed a detailed plan to address this issue, including a thorough literature review to identify relevant theories and best practices. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the head teacher at UEL, and the researcher informed the students about the purpose and scope of the study. The project was scheduled to run over a 10-week period (from August 12 to October 20, 2024), integrated into the Foundation English class for Semester 1.

Phase 2 – Acting. The researcher implemented TBLT throughout the semester to evaluate its impact on students' speaking fluency. Observations were conducted at two points: (1) the first observation conducted during the first two weeks of the course (August 12–25) and (2) the second observation conducted during the last two weeks of the course (October 7–20). During these observations, the researcher used the checklist to assess the students' fluency based on the rate of speech, pauses, and repetition. In the final week of the course (October 14–20), the students participated in informal discussions to share their thoughts on TBLT's effectiveness. The researcher observed and took notes to capture key insights in an informal manner.

Phase 3 – Observing. Following the completion of the course, the researcher reviewed the data collected from the observations and informal discussions. Meaningful patterns and trends were identified, leading to data-driven conclusions about the impact of TBLT on students' fluency.

Phase 4 – Reflecting. In the final stage, the researcher engaged in critical reflection, analyzing how the findings could inform future teaching practices. This reflective process, as emphasized by Burns (2010), is an essential element of AR as it deepens the teacher's understanding of their instructional methods. The researcher compiled the results into a comprehensive report that highlighted key findings and their implications for future research and teaching practices.

Results/Findings

Findings from the Checklists

Table 3

Fluence Scores of Observed Students.

Student	Rate of Speech (Weeks 1–2)	Rate of Speech (Weeks 9–10)	Pauses (Weeks 1–2)	Pauses (Weeks 9–10)	Repetition (Weeks 1–2)	Repetition (Weeks 9–10)
H.	2	4	1	4	1	4
Th.	2	4	1	4	1	4
T.	1	3	1	3	1	3
P.	1	3	1	3	1	3
Ph.	1	3	1	3	1	3

Figure 1

Changes in fluency scores over time

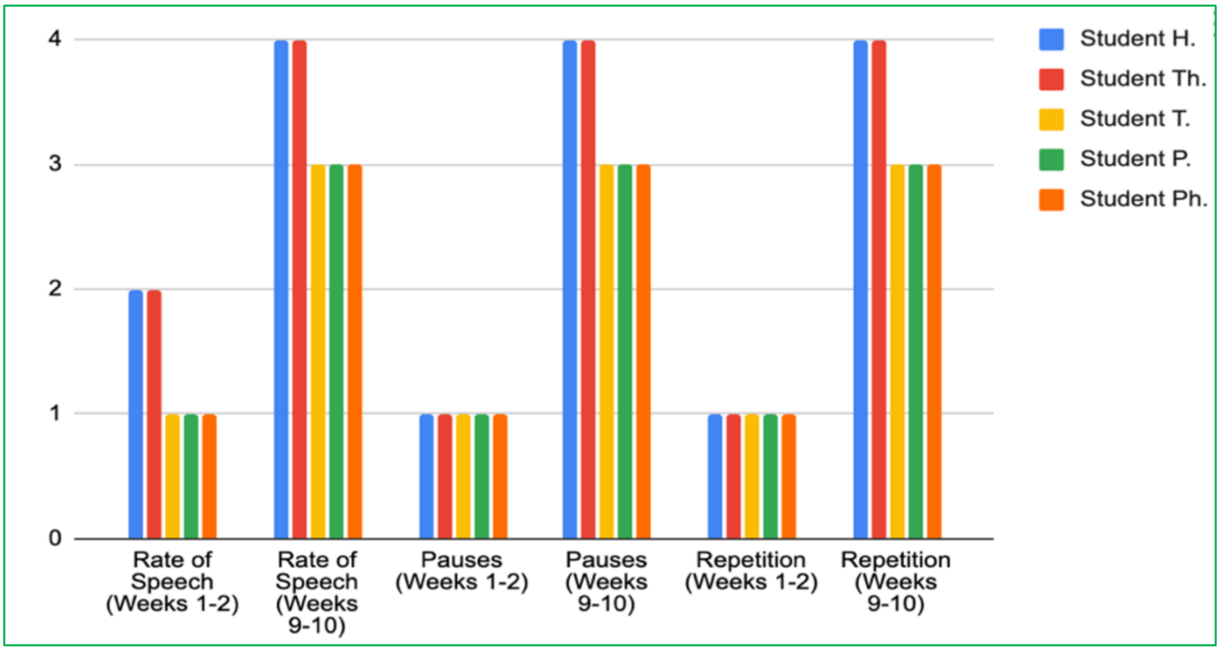


Table 3 shows that in the first two weeks, students H. and Th. scored 2 in rate of speech and 1 in both pauses and repetition, indicating limited fluency. Figure 1 demonstrate that students T., P., and Ph. received scores of 1 in all areas, reflecting significant fluency challenges. However, results from weeks 9-10 show substantial improvement.

Students T., P., and Ph. progressed to scores of 3 in all fluency aspects. In the initial observation, student T. paused frequently between words, but by the end of the study, she only paused occasionally to find the right expression. Her responses evolved from short answers to more extended, well-developed ideas. Similarly, students P. and Ph., who initially struggled with word retrieval and often resorted to Vietnamese, exhibited smoother speech with fewer pauses and repetitions in later sessions.

Notably, students H. and Th. demonstrated the most improvement. By weeks 9-10, both paused only briefly to select appropriate words, with no noticeable repetition. Their speech became smoother and more natural, with student Th. even demonstrating sound linking, as in, "*I'm gonna celebrate...*".

Overall, the charts visually represent the positive impact of the TBLT intervention on students' speaking fluency. The observed improvements in rate of speech, pauses, and repetition suggest that TBLT effectively enhanced students' ability to communicate more fluently and naturally over the course of the study.

Teacher's Notes Analysis

In the final week, the 28 students engaged in informal group discussions about TBLT's effectiveness in improving speaking fluency. The researcher informally took notes during these discussions.

Some students particularly valued the pre-task planning phase, emphasizing how it helped them structure their ideas and reduce hesitation during the task. One student commented, "*I felt much more confident speaking when I had time to think about what I wanted to say beforehand*". However, another student noted that the planning time sometimes led to over-reliance on memorized phrases, hindering spontaneity.

Others emphasized the positive impact of pair and group work on their fluency. A student remarked, "*Working in groups made me feel less nervous about speaking".* Another student shared: "*I had a lot of chances to speak with my partner and sometimes they corrected my mistake. This helped me speak English more fluently and accurately*". Another learner said: "*It was group work that encouraged us to communicate in English a lot. This enhanced my speaking skills, particularly fluency*".

It was noticeable in student feedback that the focus on meaning rather than form was a repeating theme. A number of learners thought that it was focused on expressing their ideas instead of correct grammar structures, which encouraged them to communicate in English with more fluency. One student shared, "*I can speak more fluently if I don't mind whether I use correct grammar or not*". One student explained, "*When I don't focus on correct grammar, this means I don't have to think much before I speak. This improves my fluency*". Another student added, "*Not thinking about grammar too much, I feel less worried and focus more on how to express my ideas successfully*." Similarly, another learner said, "*Thinking about perfect grammar when speaking makes me less confident*".

On the other hand, certain challenges about TBLT are presented in student feedback. Some students felt that they needed more training in grammar since they worried that the accuracy of their utterances suffered without correct grammar. For instance, one student felt that "*incorrect grammar makes your utterances less coherent and cohesive*." One student shared, "*Listeners will find your ideas hard to understand when you use incorrect grammar*". Another student said, "*I'm trying to use accurate grammar in order that my ideas won't be misunderstood*".

Discussion

Impact of TBLT on Fluency

The present action research's findings on learners' improved oral fluency, evidenced by a faster rate of speech, fewer pauses, and repetitions, align strongly with a substantial body of prior research**.** Studies by Albino (2017), Hasnain and Halder (2023), Masuram and Sripada (2020), Ngoc (2023), Panduwangi (2021), Thu (2023), and Zúñiga et al. (2023) consistently demonstrate TBLT's effectiveness in enhancing speaking fluency. This consistent pattern across various contexts underscores TBLT's inherent ability to foster implicit language acquisition (Ellis, 2019), which enables more natural and effortless communication. The structured yet flexible nature of tasks and task cycles, central to TBLT, is frequently cited as a key contributing factor. As supported by Ellis (2006) and Willis (1996), these components are conducive to language acquisition, encouraging meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning (Robinson, 2001, as cited in Erlam & Tolosa, 2022). Collectively, these elements create an environment rich in authentic communication opportunities, directly contributing to the observed fluency gains.

Role of Pre-Task Planning

The present research offers further evidence supporting the crucial role of pre-task planning in boosting speaking fluency, reinforcing and expanding upon existing literature**.** Our participants reported that allocated planning time significantly improved their fluency, reducing nervousness and increasing confidence. This allowed them to organize ideas, preventing communication breakdowns and consequently enhancing their utterance in terms of fluency, word choice, and syntax. These findings are consistent with the observations of Hasnain and Halder (2023), Sugianto et al. (2020), and Zúñiga et al. (2023), who also highlighted the positive effects of planning on fluency and overall task performance. The mechanism behind this improvement, as posited by Ellis (2019) and Willis (1996), is that pre-task planning allows learners to activate prior knowledge and prepare linguistic resources, leading to greater complexity, accuracy, and spontaneity in language use. However, it is imperative to ensure that pre-task planning does not lead to memorized speech, as this could compromise the naturalness of communication, a point that warrants careful consideration in TBLT implementation (Ellis, 2019).

Influence of Collaborative Work

The current action research further validates and expands upon the well-established benefits of collaborative work, particularly pair and group activities, on learners' fluency gains. Our participants consistently reported increased confidence and improved fluency when engaged in collaborative tasks, feeling more relaxed and less inhibited. These findings directly mirror those of previous studies, including Albino (2017), Hasnain and Halder (2023), Nget et al. (2020), Ngoc (2023), and Zúñiga et al. (2023), all of which underscore the significant impact of pair and group work on oral fluency. The underlying reasons for these improvements, as explained by Ellis (2019) and Willis (2016), are multifaceted: collaborative settings foster a safe environment for linguistic experimentation, reduce anxiety about errors, and encourage mutual support and negotiation of meaning when communication challenges arise. This dynamic interaction not only enhances fluency but also develops crucial communication strategies.

Emphasis on Meaning and Its Effects

The current action research provides additional evidence suggesting that a primary focus on meaning over form significantly contributes to the development of learners' fluency, aligning with the theoretical underpinnings of TBLT and prior empirical work. Participants in this study articulated that prioritizing meaning allowed them to produce more fluent utterances; by not overly concentrating on grammatical accuracy, they could devote more cognitive resources to constructing and conveying their ideas effectively. This observation directly supports Willis's (1996) argument that the freedom to experiment with language to achieve task objectives, without undue concern for form, fosters fluency, which is paramount in genuine communication. Similarly, Ellis (2019) noted that reduced anxiety about accuracy boosts spontaneity and fluency by allowing learners to concentrate on ideation and message conveyance. Conversely, participants reported that an overt focus on grammar while speaking could impede their fluency. These findings are consistent with a range of previous research, including Albino (2017), Hasnain and Halder (2023), Masuram and Sripada (2020), Nget et al. (2020), and Zúñiga et al. (2023), all of which highlight the positive correlation between a meaning-focused approach and enhanced oral fluency.

Conclusion

This action research was conducted to examine the extent to which TBLT influences learners' speaking fluency. Evidence from this study suggests that TBLT could possibly contribute to the participants' fluency enhancement, including improved rate of speech, fewer pauses, and reduced repetitions. Furthermore, the participants reported favorable feelings toward TBLT. They attributed their better spoken fluency to pre-task planning, pair and group work, and a primary focus on meaning. Therefore, for EFL teachers who are interested in applying TBLT to their classes, this study recommends providing learners with enough planning time, encouraging them to work with their classmates in pairs or in groups, and establishing a learning environment that fosters real and meaningful language use. EFL instructors teaching learners who already possess good grammar knowledge but fail to use it for communication may also find the results of this research relevant.

Limitations and further recommendations

Action research is inherently context-specific, as it focuses on understanding and improving practices within a particular setting. The findings of this study are therefore limited to the specific context of the foundation English course at one university. While the insights gained may be valuable for educators in similar contexts, it is important to acknowledge that the results may not be directly transferable to other settings with different learning environments, student populations, or institutional factors.

Another limitation lies in the absence of inter-rater reliability. As the checklist ratings were completed solely by the teacher-researcher, the results may reflect individual judgment despite the use of a standardized rubric. In future studies, involving a second trained rater would help establish inter-rater reliability and strengthen the objectivity of fluency assessments. Although the checklist was adapted from the IELTS public descriptors and piloted beforehand, further validation of the tool and procedure is recommended for more generalizable findings.

Another limitation is that students were aware that a new teaching approach (TBLT) was being implemented as part of an action research project. This awareness may have influenced their motivation, engagement, and responses during informal discussions. While this is a common feature of classroom-based action research, it may have introduced some bias in students' self-reported perceptions. However, the triangulation of qualitative feedback with observational checklist data helped strengthen the validity of the findings.

The study does not fully address the potential impact of limited pre-task planning time on learners' oral performance. While pre-task planning was highlighted as a beneficial aspect of TBLT, it is unclear how different time constraints might affect fluency outcomes. Further research could investigate the optimal balance between planning and spontaneous communication in TBLT to provide more nuanced guidance for educators.

In addition, future research could employ a different research design to monitor students' development of speaking fluency over time. Future studies could also involve a control group that is instructed with a different teaching methodology.

References

Albino, G. (2017). Improving speaking fluency in a task-based language teaching approach: The case of EFL learners at PUNIV-Cazenga. *SAGE Open*, *7*(2), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017691077

Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. Taylor & Francis.

Cambridge English. (n.d.). IELTS speaking bands descriptors. Retrieved October 18, 2024, from https://assets.cambridgeenglish.org/webinars/ielts-speaking-band-descriptors.pdf

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative, and qualitative research (4th ed.)*. Pearson.

Crowther, D., Trofimovich, P., Isaacs, T., & Saito, K. (2015). Does a speaking task affect second language comprehensibility? *The Modern Language Journal*, *99*(1), 80–95. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12185

De Jong, N., Steinel, M., Florijn, A., Schoonen, R., & Hulstijn, J. (2012). Facets of speaking proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *34*(1), 5–34. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263111000489

Denscombe, M. (2010). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects (4th ed.)*. Open University Press.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language teaching and learning*. Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (2006). The methodology of task-based teaching. *Asian EFL Journal*, *8*(3), 79-101. https://www.kansai-u.ac.jp/fl/publication/pdf_education/04/5rodellis.pdf

Ellis, R. (2019). *Introducing task-based language teaching*. TEFLIN.

Ellis, R., Skehan, P., Li, S., Shintani, N., & Lambert, C. (2020). *Task-based language teaching: Theory and practice.* Cambridge University Press.

Erlam, R., & Tolosa, C. (2022). *Pedagogical realities of implementing task-based language teaching*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching (5th ed.)*. Pearson Education Limited.

Hasnain, S., & Halder, S. (2023). Task-based language teaching approach for improving speaking fluency: Case study of trainee teachers in West Bengal. *World Futures*, *79*(7–8), 747–775. https://doi.org/10.1080/02604027.2021.1996189

Hedge, T. (1993, July). Key concepts in ELT. *ELT Journal*, *47*(3), 275-276. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/47.3.275

Jackson, D. O. (2022). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014). *The action research planner: Doing critical* *participatory action research*. Springer.

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques & principles in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned (4th ed.).* Oxford University Press.

Masuram, J., & Sripada, P. N. (2020). Developing spoken fluency through task-based teaching. *Procedia Computer Science*, *172*, 623-630. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.05.080

Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). (2018). Chương trình giáo dục phổ thông - Chương trình môn tiếng Anh [General education curriculum - English curriculum].

Namaziandost, E., Hashemifardnia, A., Shafiee, S., & Feng, G. C. (2019). The impact of opinion-gap, reasoning-gap, and information-gap tasks on EFL learners' speaking fluency. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *5*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1630150

Nget, S., Pansri, O., & Poohongthong, C. (2020). The effect of task-based instruction in improving the English speaking skills of ninth-graders. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 13*(2), 208-224. https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/243708

Nghia, V. N. D., & Quang, N. N. (2021). Task-based language teaching to enhance learner communicative competence in Vietnam: A matter of opinion?. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, *4*(8), 151–159. https://al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijllt/article/view/2070

Ngọc, N. T. L. (2023). The effects of task-based language teaching on EFL learners' speaking performance. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 5*(3), 108-134. https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2023.5.3.13

Nguyen, T. A., & Jaspaert, K. (2020). Implementing task-based language teaching in an Asian context: Is it a real possibility or a nightmare? A case study in Vietnam. *ITL – International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 172*(1), 121-151. https://doi.org/10.1075/itl.16022.ngu

Nguyen, T. T. T. (2022). The effects of task-based instruction on reading comprehension of non-English major students at a university in the Mekong Delta. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, *2*(4), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.22241

Panduwangi, M. (2021, June). The effectiveness of task-based language teaching to improve students' speaking skills. *Journal of Applied Studies in Language*, *5*(1), 205-214. https://ojs.pnb.ac.id/index.php/JASL

Richards, J. C. (2008). *Teaching listening and speaking: from theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Segalowitz, N. (2013). Fluency. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *The Routledge encyclopedia of second language acquisition* (pp. 240–244). Routledge.

Skehan, P. (2003). Task-based instruction. *Language Teaching*, *36*(1), 1–14.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231787670_Task-Based_Instruction

Skehan, P. (2009). Modelling second language performance: Integrating complexity, accuracy, fluency, lexis. *Applied Linguistics*, *30*(4), 510–523. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amp047

Sugianto, S., Kamarudin, K., & Han, A. (2020). Improving students' speaking skill through task-based language teaching at Mandalika University of Education. *JUPE : Journal Pendidikan Mandala, 5*(6), 56-61. http://dx.doi.org/10.58258/jupe.v5i6.1615

Tavakoli, P., Campbell, C., & McCormack, J. (2016). Development of speech fluency over a short period of time: Effects of pedagogic intervention. *TESOL Quarterly*, *50*(2), 447–471. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.244

Thu, T. T. M. (2021). How to improve speaking skills for undergraduates at Dong Nai Technology University. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 5*(2), 81-89. https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2023.5.2.10

Tran, T. T. N. (2022). The Effects of Task-Based Instructions on Secondary Students' Reading Performances. *International Journal of Language Instruction*, *1*(1), 9-18. https://doi.org/10.54855/ijli.22112

Zúñiga, E. C., Mayorga, E. & Ruiz, N. (2023). Potential implications of task-based language teaching on developing EFL learners' oral fluency. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *22*(11), 130-149. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.11.8

Van den Branden, K. (2006). *Task-based language teaching: from theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Addison Wesley Longman Limited.

Biodata

Pham Thanh Su is a guest lecturer of English at the Institute of Foreign Languages at University of Economics and Law, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He holds Master's degree in TESOL from Edith Cowan University, Australia. He has worked as an EFL teacher for 10 years. He is interested in language teaching methodologies, testing and assessment, and EFL teachers' well-being.

A contrastive analysis of the Conceptual Metaphor "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English electronic news

Nguyen Luu Diep Anh[1*]

[1] University of Foreign Studies, the University of Da Nang, Vietnam
[*] Corresponding author's email: nldanh@ufl.udn.vn
[*] https://orcid.org/0009-0009-3649-5248
https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25543

Received: 16/05/2025 Revision: 05/10/2025 Accepted: 11/10/2025 Online: 20/10/2025

ABSTRACT

This study conducts a contrastive analysis of the conceptual metaphor “finance is fluid” in Vietnamese and English electronic news, based on a dataset of 200 metaphorical expressions (100 per language) collected from online financial articles. Employing the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by the Pragglejaz Group (2007), the research systematically identifies and categorizes metaphorical language mapping financial concepts onto fluid dynamics. Two main cognitive models are established: (1) “financial situation is the state of liquid” accounting for 57% of Vietnamese and 55% of English cases, and (2) “supplying finance is supplying liquid” comprising 43% and 45% respectively. Key expressions such as “ngập” (flooded), “chảy” (flow), and “bơm” (pump) in Vietnamese, and “drown,” “flow,” and “pump” in English, illustrate both universal and culture-specific metaphorical patterns. The findings reveal subtle differences in linguistic choices but a shared cognitive mapping across both languages. Importantly, the study discusses concrete implications for TESOL, highlighting how awareness of metaphorical structures can enhance learners’ comprehension, translation, and communication of financial concepts in multilingual contexts.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor; mapping; finance; fluid; teaching & learning

Introduction

Metaphors play a crucial role in financial discourse, enabling speakers to conceptualize abstract economic phenomena through familiar, concrete experiences. In daily language, metaphors such as “cash flow” or “liquidity dries up” vividly illustrate the dynamic and often unpredictable nature of financial systems (Geary, 2012; Kövecses, 2005). The metaphor “finance is fluid” is especially powerful, as it frames finance in terms of movement, change, and instability, qualities drawn from the physical properties of liquids.

CITATION | Nguyen, L. D. A. (2025). A contrastive analysis of the Conceptual Metaphor "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English electronic news. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, *5*(4), 32-47. DOI: https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25543

Previous research has documented the creative use of metaphors in economic language across cultures. Studies have examined metaphors like "economic growth is a journey" (Liang, 2021), "the stock market is the sea" (Nguyễn, 2019), and "the financial market is a battlefield." However, most of these works focus on general metaphorical patterns or specific domains, rather than providing a detailed, contrastive analysis of the "finance is fluid" metaphor in both Vietnamese and English. Moreover, while the cognitive and cultural significance of metaphors is well established, their practical implications for language teaching and translation remain underexplored. Beyond economics, other studies also highlight how metaphors reflect cultural and cognitive patterns, such as Pham (2023) on Vietnamese literature and Le & Nguyen (2023) on language learning.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how the metaphor "finance is fluid" is conceptualized and linguistically realized in Vietnamese and English electronic news. By analyzing metaphorical expressions mapped from the domain of fluidity onto finance, this research aims to uncover both universal cognitive patterns and language-specific differences. The study also examines the frequency and structure of these metaphors, providing insights into how cultural and linguistic contexts shape financial concepts.

Significantly, this research highlights the pedagogical value of metaphor awareness in TESOL and translation. Understanding how metaphors function in financial contexts can enhance learners' comprehension of abstract vocabulary, improve intercultural communication, and support effective translation of economic texts. This article demonstrates that a contrastive analysis of the "finance is fluid" metaphor in Vietnamese and English not only reveals underlying cognitive and cultural patterns in financial discourse but also offers practical insights for teaching and translating financial language in multilingual settings.

Literature Review

Metaphor has long been a central concern for linguists and philosophers. Classical scholars such as Aristotle (1954) regarded metaphor primarily as a rhetorical device that enriches language through comparison and substitution. While this perspective laid foundational groundwork, it does not fully account for the profound cognitive role metaphors play in shaping meaning in specialized domains, including finance.

A significant transformation occurred with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which reframed metaphor as a fundamental cognitive mechanism. According to CMT, metaphors structure our understanding of abstract domains by mapping them onto more concrete, experiential source domains. This insight has become central to metaphor studies and continues to inform research across disciplines. Kövecses (2005, 2010) extended this framework by emphasizing the influence of cultural background and physical experience on metaphor development, highlighting both universal and culture-specific patterns. However, early work in CMT primarily addressed general language usage, leaving the exploration of metaphors in specialized fields like finance relatively underdeveloped.

Recent scholarship has begun to address this gap, particularly with the emergence of corpus-based and contrastive studies focused on financial discourse. For example, Liang (2021) analyzed financial metaphors in *The Economist*, revealing the creative and pervasive use of metaphor in economic reporting. Vietnamese research by Pham, T.T. T. (2017) and Nguyen, T. T. H. (2019) examined metaphorical conceptualizations in economic texts, identifying metaphors such as "the market is the sea" and "the economy is a living body." While these studies illustrate the diversity of metaphorical thinking in financial contexts, they rarely address the pedagogical implications for English language teaching or translation.

The need for updated, domain-specific research has become increasingly recognized in recent years. Le & Nguyen (2023), for instance, explored the role of cognitive linguistics in second language acquisition, demonstrating that awareness of metaphorical structures significantly enhances learners' ability to understand and communicate complex concepts, especially in fields like finance and commerce. This aligns with the prevailing view that metaphor studies are vital for TESOL and translation, where abstract thinking is central.

Contemporary research has further substantiated and expanded CMT in financial language. Zhang and Yang (2023) demonstrated, through corpus-based and experimental approaches, that metaphors based on natural disasters (e.g., "landslide," "flood") are highly effective in framing economic downturns in Mandarin, influencing both public perception and risk communication. In Vietnamese, Nguyễn T.B.H. (2024) applied cognitive linguistic methods to teaching idioms, finding that a metaphor-focused approach improves learners' comprehension and practical use, especially for foreign students engaging with culturally embedded expressions.

In English financial discourse, Qiu (2023) categorized metaphors in The Economist into structural, orientation, and ontological types and examined translation strategies for financial metaphors. This research highlights the cognitive basis of metaphor use and the challenges of cross-linguistic transfer, with direct significance for ESP (English for Specific Purposes) teaching and translation.

Beyond finance, conceptual metaphors are also prominent in business and commercial language. Nguyen T.T.H. (2024) identified the metaphor "business is a journey" in business terminology, mapping journey-related attributes onto business processes—such as companies as travelers and growth as progress. Pham T.G. (2025) conducted a contrastive study of "commerce is sport" in Vietnamese and English news discourse, using the Pragglejaz method to analyze sub-metaphors, frequency, and cultural cognitive patterns. These studies reveal both universal and culturally specific aspects of metaphor use, demonstrating how metaphors shape media discourse and public understanding.

The pedagogical value of metaphor awareness is increasingly emphasized in recent scholarly work. Tsitoura (2023) found that explicit instruction based on CMT significantly improves EFL learners' comprehension and interpretation of metaphorical expressions. Raising metaphor awareness helps students decode semantic motivations and enhances proficiency, especially in specialized domains such as finance.

Although metaphors are pervasive in financial language, their impact on English teaching and learning remains underexplored. Expressions such as "flow", "dry capital", or "pump money" are not merely creative language; they embody complex economic concepts and cognitive frameworks that can be challenging for learners. Incorporating metaphor awareness into TESOL programs enables students to interpret figurative language more effectively, enhance reading comprehension, and translate financial texts with greater accuracy. Explicit instruction on the cognitive connections underlying these metaphors fosters critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and practical communication skills, preparing learners to engage successfully with financial discourse in both Vietnamese and English.

Research Questions

This article examines the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English electronic news. It focuses on identifying and analyzing the metaphorical models that arise from mapping the source domain " fluid " onto the target domain "finance". This investigation seeks to uncover the cognitive structures that shape how finance is conceptualized and portrayed across linguistic contexts, highlighting cross-cultural similarities and differences in metaphorical expression.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions will guide the investigation:

1. How is the conceptual metaphor “finance is fluid” conceptualized in Vietnamese and English electronic news?
2. What similarities and differences exist in the conceptual metaphor “finance is fluid” between Vietnamese and English with respect to metaphorical expressions, frequency, and cognitive significance?
3. What are the implications of the metaphor “finance is fluid” for understanding financial concepts in both Vietnamese and English electronic news contexts?

Methods

This research uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), to explore how the metaphor “finance is fluid" is reflected in Vietnamese and English online news. The study emphasizes transparency in its methods and ensures reliability in how data is coded. Articles were sourced from well-known financial news websites —VNExpress, Tuổi Trẻ, Dân Trí, and VietnamNet — for Vietnamese content, and from Bloomberg, Reuters, The Economist, Financial Times, and NBC for English content, covering publications from 2020 to 2025. To be included, texts needed to explicitly address financial or economic topics and feature metaphorical language related to fluids or liquids in a financial context; articles not directly linked to finance or using fluid-related words literally were excluded. The initial selection involved searching for key terms like “dòng tiền” (capital flow), “bơm vốn” (pump capital), “ngập nợ" (drowning in debt) in Vietnamese, and "capital flows," "pump money," "drowning in debt" in English. This process yielded a targeted sample of 100 metaphorical expressions from each language, ensuring that both major metaphor models were represented.

Metaphors were identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) introduced by the Pragglejaz Group (2007), which examines each word or phrase in its context to determine how the metaphor maps from the source domain (fluid) to the target domain (finance). These expressions were then sorted into two main cognitive metaphor models: “financial situation is the state of liquid” and “supplying finance is supplying liquid.” The frequency of each model was calculated and compared between Vietnamese and English. The research followed a clear sequence: gathering data, identifying metaphors using MIP, categorizing them into cognitive models, and analyzing their frequency. To enhance reliability and transparency in coding, two independent coders with backgrounds in linguistics and metaphor analysis were trained in the MIP protocol and familiarized with key financial and fluid-related terms in both Vietnamese and English. Each coder independently reviewed the selected articles and identified metaphorical expressions according to MIP guidelines, with any differences in identification discussed and resolved through mutual agreement.

Results/Findings

Analysis of 200 metaphorical expressions, 100 from Vietnamese financial news and 100 from English sources reveals two predominant cognitive models: “financial situation is the state of liquid” and “supplying finance is supplying liquid” In both languages, metaphors such as “flow,” “pump,” “dry,” “evaporate,” “stagnant,” and “flooded” are frequently used to conceptualize finance. In Vietnamese, the metaphor “ngập" (flooded) appears 15 times, typically in emotionally charged contexts such as personal debt or market collapse. Its English equivalent,“drown", occurs less frequently (8 times) with similar meaning. The metaphor "cạn” (dry) is found 6 times in Vietnamese and “dry” 9 times in English, both referring to financial shortages. “Bốc hơi” (evaporate) and “evaporate” are used to describe sudden financial loss (10 occurrences in Vietnamese, 9 in English), while “ứ đọng” (stagnant) and “stagnant” highlight unproductive or immobilized capital (9 in Vietnamese, 4 in English). “Nhỏ giọt” (drip) and “drip” indicate limited or delayed credit release (7 in Vietnamese, 5 in English), and “chảy” (flow) is used 10 times in Vietnamese and 20 times in English to emphasize the movement and distribution of financial resources. Regarding the “supplying finance is supplying liquid” model, metaphors such as “bơm” (pump), “rót” (pour), and “đổ” (pour/spill) are prevalent in Vietnamese (“bơm” 13 times, “rót/đổ” 30 times), while “pump” appears 16 times and “pour” 29 times in English, typically describing the injection or channeling of capital into markets or sectors. Quantitative analysis shows that the “financial situation is the state of liquid” and “supplying finance is supplying liquid” model accounts for 57% of Vietnamese expressions and 55% of English ones, whereas “financial situation is the state of liquid” and “supplying finance is supplying liquid" comprise 43% in Vietnamese and 45% in English.

The survey clearly shows that the metaphor “finance is fluid” is a prominent and frequently used concept in both Vietnamese and English online news reports. According to the principles of partial mapping, attributes from the source domain “fluid" are activated and transferred to the target domain "finance," endowing financial concepts with properties of fluid dynamics. Based on an analysis of 200 news articles from Vietnamese and English online newspapers, the conceptual model of “finance is fluid” can be represented through the mapping structure presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Mapping the structure of the Conceptual metaphor FINANCE IS FLUID

SOURCE: FLUID	Mapped onto	TARGET: FINANCE
Liquid flooding and rising uncontrollably	→	Debt piling up uncontrollably
A heavy object sinking into water	→	Bankruptcy, economic collapse
A water source drying up	→	Running out of money, cash flow problems
Liquid being absorbed or evaporated	→	Running out of money; financial depletion
Water becoming stagnant, not flowing	→	unproductive capital
Water dripping slowly, drop by drop	→	Limited, delayed, or insufficient capital/credit release
Water flowing into different directions	→	Movement and allocation of financial resources

Dams and blockages preventing water flow	→	Economic obstacles or restrictions limiting financial circulation
Pumping liquid into a system	→	Injecting capital or funds into the economy or specific sectors
Pouring liquid into a container	→	Channeling capital into targeted industries or businesses
Liquid being stored or blocked	→	Funds being held back or not yet released

Based on the mapping structure of the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" in Table 1, we establish the cognitive metaphor models of finance, with the source domain being Fluid, as follows.

Table 2.

Metaphorical Expression Statistics of Conceptual Metaphor "finance is fluid"

The similarities between the source and target domains	**Metaphorically-expressed words**	**Vietnamese**	**English**	**Total number of metaphorical expressions**
		Occurrences	**Occurrences**	
overflow, flow, disappearance, stagnation	Ngập, chìm (drown, submerged)	15	8	200
	Cạn (dry)	6	9	
	Bốc hơi (evaporate)	10	9	
	Ứ đọng (stagnant)	9	4	
	Nhỏ giọt (Drip)	7	5	
	Chảy (Flow)	10	20	
flow, volume, directionality, and system impact	Bơm (pump)	13	16	
	Rót, đổ (Pour)	30	29	
Total		**100**	**100**	

By using the mapping structure outlined in Table 1 for the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid", we can understand different cognitive metaphorical models of finance, with fluid serving as the source domain, as follows.

Table 3.

The cognitive metaphor models of "finance is fluid"

Cognitive metaphor models	**Vietnamese**		**English**	
	Occurrences	**(%)**	**Occurrences**	**(%)**
FINANCIAL SITUATION IS THE STATE OF LIQUID	57/100	57	55/100	55
SUPPLYING FINANCE IS SUPPLYING LIQUID	43/119	43	45/100	45
Total	100	100	100	100

The conceptual metaphor "“ finance is fluid”" draws parallels between the domain of "FLUID " and that of “finance”. Through the analysis of 200 metaphorical expressions, the paper identified two cognitive models: (1) “financial situation is the state of liquid” and (2) “supplying finance is supplying liquid”. In Vietnamese, the predominant model is "financial situation is the state of liquid " (57%), followed by “supplying finance is supplying liquid” (43%). Similarly, in English, the predominant model is " financial situation is the state of liquid " (55%), followed by “supplying finance is supplying liquid” (45%).

The conceptual metaphor “financial situation is the state of liquid”

From Table 2, it can be seen that 'drown,' 'dry,' 'evaporate,' 'stagnant,' 'drip,' and 'flow' are metaphorical words employed in the state of liquid' metaphor to refer to financial situations. Below are some typical examples taken from the corpus.

(1) Ngập đầu dù có mớ sổ đỏ trong tay (*Drowning in debt despite holding a pile of land-use right certificates)*

(2) Giới trẻ Hàn Quốc "ngập" trong nợ nần vì cố mua hàng hiệu *(South Korean youth are "drowning" in debt due to overspending on luxury goods)*

(3) Ngập nợ vì vay nóng, lừa đảo người thân, bạn bè gần 4 tỉ đồng *(Drowning in debt after taking high-interest loans and defrauding relatives and friends of nearly 4 billion VND)*

(4) Lỗ 9 quý liên tiếp, Vinafood 2 chìm đắm trong nợ nần *(After nine consecutive quarters of losses, Vinafood 2 is sinking in debt)*

(5) Lạm phát cao đẩy nước Anh chìm sâu vào nợ nần *(High inflation is drowning the UK in debt)*

(6) Nga có thể cạn tiền trong năm 2024, rất cần vốn đầu tư nước ngoài *(Russia may face drying up of funds in 2024, urgently needing foreign investment)*

(7) Cạn tiền, đại gia bất động sản chuyển hướng "đánh bắt xa bờ" để... "nuôi quân" *(As cash dries up, real estate tycoons shift to 'offshore fishing' to... 'sustain their forces')*

(8) Thêm khách hàng tố tài khoản tại MSB 'bốc hơi' gần 28 tỷ đồng *(Another customer claims that nearly 28 billion VND in their MSB bank account has “evaporated”)*

(9) Cảnh giác tiền tỉ trong tài khoản dồn dập 'bốc hơi' *(Be alert: billions of VND in accounts are “evaporating” rapidly)*

(10) Lãi suất giảm liên tục, trăm ngàn tỷ ứ đọng trong ngân hang *(As interest rates keep falling, hundreds of trillions of VND are stagnating in banks)*

(11) 168.000 tỷ đồng vốn ngân hàng đang bị ứ đọng (*168 trillion VND in bank capital is currently stagnant)*

(12) Tín dụng cuối năm: Vốn vào sản xuất nhỏ giọt, cửa hẹp cho bất động sản *(Year-end credit: capital drips into production, leaving narrow access for real estate)*

(13) Mở rộng tiền tệ, nhưng cơ chế tạo vốn 'nhỏ giọt' *(Monetary expansion is underway, but the capital generation mechanism is only dripping)*

(14) 2,1 triệu tỷ đồng tín dụng chảy vào đâu? *(Where is the 2.1 quadrillion VND in credit flowing?)*

The metaphorical expressions “ngập,” “chìm,” “cạn,” “bốc hơi,” “ứ đọng,” “nhỏ giọt,” and “chảy” in examples (1)-(14) illustrate the conceptual metaphor “financial situation is the state of liquid” where different physical states and behaviors of liquids are used to describe financial conditions. This metaphor draws on the shared attributes between the source domain of liquid—such as overflow, stagnation, evaporation, scarcity, and flow—and the target domain of finance, which includes concepts like debt overload, bankruptcy, cash shortages, loss of funds, financial stagnation, restricted funding, and capital movement. The mapping is rooted in our physical and perceptual experiences with liquids, making these abstract financial situations more vivid and easier to understand. In example (1) "nợ ngập đầu" (debt up to one's head), the verb "ngập" (flooded) draws on the image of a person submerged in water, mapping onto the experience of being overwhelmed by debt. Similarly, in (2), the phrase "ngập trong nợ nần" (flooded with debt) evokes the same state of being financially overwhelmed, suggesting that debt is rising like water and surrounding individuals. In (3), "ngập nợ" (drowning in debt) continues this mapping, reinforcing the sense being unable to escape and lacking control in difficult financial situations. Examples (4) and (5) use "chìm" and "chìm sâu" (to sink/deeply sink) to describe entities like Vinafood 2 and the UK economy as being submerged in debt. The metaphor of sinking draws a parallel between worsening financial conditions and a heavy object slowly sinking into water, highlighting a gradual decline and a sense of helplessness. In examples (6) and (7), "cạn tiền" (running out of money) transfers the image of a drying water source to the gradual loss of financial resources, implying a shortage and urgency. These expressions suggest that financial reserves, like water, can dry up, requiring alternative sources to restore them. Examples (8) and (9) feature "bốc hơi" (evaporate), metaphorically describing large sums of money disappearing mysteriously from bank accounts. Here, the sudden, inexplicable loss of funds is mapped to the evaporation of water, which visually and experientially vanishes without a trace, signaling instability and a loss of control. The expressions "ứ đọng" in (10) and (11) refer to capital being stuck or stagnant in banks. This draws from the behavior of water that cannot flow, mapping to funds that are frozen or unutilized, suggesting inefficiency or systemic blockage in financial circulation. Examples (12) and (13) employ "nhỏ giọt" (trickling) to depict the slow and limited release of credit or capital. The metaphor relies on the image of water slowly dripping, highlighting the constrained and insufficient financial supply, particularly in the production and real estate sectors. Finally, in (14), "tín dụng chảy vào đâu?" (where is the credit flowing?) uses the verb "chảy" (to flow) to conceptualize credit as a liquid capable of movement. It reflects the idea of financial resources circulating in an economic system, akin to water flowing through channels, and invites inquiry into the direction and efficiency of capital distribution. In summary, these metaphorical expressions using liquid-state terminology create a rich cognitive framework for understanding financial conditions. The shared features, such as containment, movement, and transformation- make financial phenomena more vivid and culturally accessible in both Vietnamese and English electronic news.

In the following section, we explore a range of metaphorical expressions in English that use the concept of liquids to describe financial situations. Phrases like "drowns," "dried up," "evaporated," "stagnant," "dripping," and "flowing into" show how people make sense of abstract financial conditions by relating them to the physical properties and behaviors of liquids.

By examining these expressions, we aim to uncover the underlying conceptual metaphor: "financial situation is the state of liquid". The similarities between the two domains—such as volume, movement, blockage, depletion, and accumulation—make these metaphorical connections possible. This analysis not only sheds light on how financial matters are framed and communicated in English but also enables meaningful comparisons with similar expressions in Vietnamese, offering deeper insight into how language, cognition, and culture shape metaphorical thinking.

(15) Some states reserved funds for residents facing homelessness, but Maine allowed the funds to be used to house newcomers. Now that federal cash has dried up, the state is

asking taxpayers to fork over $182 million for the migrants' hotel and motel rooms.

(16) Venezuela, a nation in economic and political crisis, sits atop the world's largest crude reserves, but that source of cash has dried up under years of mismanagement and more recently stiff U.S. sanctions aimed at forcing Maduro out

(17) Thousands of workers lost their jobs. Investors' money evaporated.

(18) Other revenue also disappeared. Over the summer, for example, many schools are accustomed to hosting alumni events and other types of gatherings, Hartle noted. But all that auxiliary money evaporated as the world screeched to a halt.

(19) China's stagnant funds sector spurs foreign JVs to branch out

(20) Foreign money managers in China have begun chasing tens of billions of dollars in funds expected to be drawn in over the coming years as Beijing steps up its opening of its capital markets, creating fresh opportunities for China's stagnant fund sector.

(21) That money is flowing into solar, wind, hydrogen and carbon-capture projects in Europe — as is the case in the U.S.

(22) Long-shot money is flowing into start-ups that seek the energy of the stars. Driving the investments is a rising alarm about global warming.

(23) Xi Digs In With Top-Down Economic Plan Even as China Drowns in Debt

(24) Americans are still going to college; many are just drowning in debt as a result.

(25) Private Liberal Arts College Is Drowning in Debt. Should Alabama Rescue It

In examples (15)–(25), the expressions "dried up," "evaporated," "stagnant," "flowing into," and "drowning in debt" reflect a metaphorical transfer from the source domain "the state of liquid" to the target domain "financial situation", forming the conceptual metaphor "financial situation is the state of liquid". In examples (15) and (16), "dried up" is used to describe the complete depletion of financial resources, federal funds in Maine and oil revenues in Venezuela, much like how a water source disappears when it dries up, symbolizing financial exhaustion and the end of economic support. In examples (17) and (18), "evaporated" suggests a rapid, almost unnoticed disappearance of money —whether investors' capital or school funds —paralleling the process by which liquid turns to vapor, emphasizing the speed and permanence of financial loss. Examples (19) and (20) employ the metaphor "stagnant" to characterize China's financial sector as inactive or unmoving, like stagnant water, suggesting a lack of growth, innovation, or productivity in financial terms. By contrast, in examples (21) and (22), "flowing into" describes money actively invested in renewable energy and new businesses. Here, financial capital is compared to liquid flowing into a container or channel, emphasizing movement, direction, and growth. Finally, examples (23), (24), and (25) apply the metaphor "drowning in debt" to national economies, students, and institutions, respectively. This metaphor conveys a sense of being overwhelmed and unable to breathe under financial burdens, similar to a person trapped underwater with no way out. Collectively, these metaphors draw on shared experiential qualities between the liquid state (e.g., movement, depletion, stagnation, lack of air) and financial dynamics to make abstract economic phenomena more concrete, visual, and emotionally impactful for the audience. Such metaphoric expressions not only enhance the communicative power of financial discourse but also reflect culturally rooted ways of understanding complex financial realities.

The conceptual metaphor "Supplying finance is supplying liquid"

The metaphorically-expressed words of the 'supplying liquid' metaphor are listed in Table 2 along with their frequencies. It can be seen that two key words, "pump" and "pour", are identified in this metaphor. Below are some example sentences taken from the corpus.

(26) Ngân hàng Nhà nước bơm mạnh tiền, giá USD không ngừng leo thang *(The State Bank aggressively pumped money into the market, driving the USD price continuously upward)*

(27) Ngân hàng chủ động "bơm vốn" *(Banks proactively pumped capital into the economy)*

(28) Làm sao 'bơm' hơn 1 triệu tỉ đồng vào nền kinh tế? *(How can more than 1 quadrillion VND be pumped into the economy?)*

(29) Ngân hàng Nhà nước yêu cầu "bơm" vốn cho doanh nghiệp nhập thêm xăng dầu *(The State Bank requested that capital be pumped into enterprises to support additional fuel imports)*

(30) Quỹ ngoại muốn rót vốn lớn vào doanh nghiệp Việt 'giỏi và ngoan' *(Banks are pouring capital en masse into the infrastructure sector)*

(31) Ngân hàng ồ ạt rót vốn vào lĩnh vực hạ tầng *(Banks are pouring capital en masse into the infrastructure sector)*

(32) Rót tiền vào đâu trong năm Giáp Thìn? *(Where should capital be poured in the Year of the Dragon?)*

(33) Trung Quốc rót 55 tỷ USD cho các ngân hàng lớn *(China poured 55 billion USD into major banks)*

(34) Gần 7 tỷ USD vốn đầu tư nước ngoài đổ vào Việt Nam 2 tháng đầu năm *(Nearly 7 billion USD in foreign investment poured into Vietnam during the first two months of the year)*

(35) Vốn đầu tư nước ngoài "đổ" vào bất động sản đạt gần 5,23 tỷ USD *(Foreign investment poured into real estate reached nearly 5.23 billion USD)*

(36) Gần 4,4 tỷ USD vốn ngoại đổ vào bất động sản *(Nearly 4.4 billion USD in foreign capital flowed into the real estate sector)*

(37) Dòng vốn FDI đổ vào bất động sản tăng hơn 4 lần so với cùng kỳ 2023 *(FDI poured into the real estate sector, surging more than fourfold compared to the same period in 2023)*

The metaphors "bơm" (pump), "rót" (pour), and "đổ" (pour/spill) in examples (26)-(37) illustrate the conceptual mapping from the source domain 'supplying liquid'to the target domain 'supplying finance'. These metaphors draw on shared attributes between the two domains —such as the flow, volume, and distribution of a substance —to depict the movement and provision of financial resources in a more concrete way. In examples (26)-(29), the metaphor "bơm" (to pump) refers to the injection or flow of money into the economy or specific sectors. The image of pumping liquid into a system is mapped onto the idea of supplying or channeling capital or resources into the financial system. For example, in (26), the metaphor conveys a deliberate, forceful injection of liquidity into the financial system. Similarly, in (28), the metaphor emphasizes the challenge and the strategic effort required to inject a large amount of capital into the economy. The shared attribute between the flow of liquid and the provision of funds helps create a vivid picture of the act of supply and its impact on the financial landscape. In examples (30)-(33), the metaphor "rót" (to pour) represents the controlled supply of capital into specific sectors or projects. The pouring of liquid is mapped onto the process of channeling finance into particular areas. In (30), the metaphor emphasizes the careful allocation of financial resources to a targeted sector. In (31), the metaphor highlights a significant, controlled infusion of funds into a specific area, akin to pouring liquid into a container. In examples (34)-(37), the metaphor "đổ" (to spill or pour) portrays a more overwhelming or large-scale inflow of finance. The metaphor of liquid spilling or flowing freely is mapped onto the idea of large quantities of money being invested or directed into specific markets. In (34), the metaphor suggests a rapid, large-scale influx of financial resources, akin to liquid spilling into a space. The metaphor is used to depict the scale and impact of the financial surge, highlighting its forceful or substantial nature. Overall, the metaphors "bơm," "rót," and "đổ" help us understand financial supply in terms of liquidity, highlighting similarities in volume, flow, and distribution. This metaphorical mapping clearly illustrates how capital is transferred into different sectors of the economy, emphasizing the intensity, scale, and purpose behind these financial activities. By framing financial infusion in this way, the abstract concept becomes more tangible and accessible, shedding light on the dynamics of economic management and investment.

In the following section, we will explore similar metaphors in English and compare their usage and implications with those found in Vietnamese texts. By examining these examples, we aim to understand how different linguistic and cultural backgrounds shape the conceptualization of financial activities—especially the act of providing funds—through metaphor. In particular, we focus on the conceptual metaphor “Supplying finance is supplying liquid”, which draws on the connection between the movement of liquids and the distribution of financial resources.

(38) China pumps $188 billion into the economy to counter real estate slump

(39) Saudi Arabia ‘bullies’ wealthy families to pump cash into oil IPO

(40) The nation’s finances have proven resilient, despite punishing sanctions, giving it leeway to pump money into its military machine.

(41) Democrats Pour Money Into Florida Races to Erode GOP Majority

(42) Investors pour money into US corporate bond funds at record rate

(43) Investors pour money into US corporate bond funds at record rate

(44) Central Banks to Pour Money Into Economy Despite Sharp Rebound

(45) Foreigners Pour Money Into Turkish Stocks on Hopes for U-Turn

In these examples, the verbs “pump” and “pour” serve as vivid metaphors that reflect the idea of supplying finance as if it were supplying a liquid. Here, the act of moving or directing liquid is mapped onto the act of distributing money, highlighting qualities like flow, force, and abundance. For example, in (38), the verb "pump" emphasizes a controlled and substantial injection of finance, akin to how a pump forces liquid into a system. Similarly, in (39) "pump" suggests a directed, pressured flow of money into a specific financial project, drawing on the imagery of forceful liquid flow. In (40), the metaphor of "pumping money" evokes the image of a continuous supply of resources, akin to a steady flow of liquid into a system, to sustain and strengthen military operations. On the other hand, the metaphor "pour" in examples like (41),” and (42) conveys the idea of a steady, perhaps overwhelming flow of money, similar to the action of pouring liquid into a container. "Pour" suggests an abundant, steady stream of finance, highlighting the volume and impact of financial contributions. In (43), the metaphor reinforces the notion of liquidity, where the financial market is metaphorically filled with monetary investments, just as a container might be filled with liquid. Similarly, (44) suggests an ongoing, substantial release of financial resources into the economy, comparable to pouring liquid into a system to sustain or stimulate it. Finally, in (45), the verb "pour" emphasizes the rapid, large-scale entry of foreign investment, portraying money as flowing into the stock market like liquid flowing into a vessel. Both “pump” and “pour” highlight the process of injecting or releasing financial resources into specific areas, whether to stimulate, maintain, or redirect economic activity. The shared imagery of liquid movement—forceful, steady, and abundant—effectively communicates the dynamic and impactful nature of financial transactions. Through these metaphors, finance is portrayed as something that can be managed, directed, and distributed, with significant consequences for the systems it enters, just like liquid in a physical environment.

Similarities and Differences of the Conceptual metaphor of "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English

Analyzing the "finance is fluid" metaphor in both Vietnamese and English reveals that, while there are many similarities, the two languages also differ in how they depict financial concepts through fluid-related imagery. In both languages, the metaphor draws on shared ideas about how fluids behave —flowing, stagnating, evaporating, or accumulating —to describe various aspects of finance. For example, words like "chảy" (flow) and "rót" or "đổ" (pour) are used in Vietnamese and English to illustrate the movement and distribution of money. Both languages employ "chảy" and "flow" to depict financial circulation, and "bơm" (pump) and "pump" to suggest the injection or infusion of funds. Similarly, expressions like "ngập" or "chìm" (drown) in Vietnamese and "drown" in English are used to convey financial crises or overwhelming situations, while "cạn" (dry) and "dry" describe shortages or resource exhaustion. Statistical analysis shows that these metaphors are fairly evenly distributed, with around 200 instances in total—100 in Vietnamese and 100 in English. The overall patterns in how people conceptualize finance as a liquid or flowing entity are remarkably similar, with roughly 55% of the metaphors aligning with the idea that "financial situation is the state of liquid" and the remaining 45% emphasizing the notion that " supplying finance is supplying liquid". This suggests a shared cognitive framework in how both cultures perceive financial processes. However, some distinctions can be observed in the specific lexical choices and their relative frequencies. Metaphors with strong imagery, such as "ngập" and "chìm" (drown/submerge), appear more frequently in Vietnamese—about 15 times—than in English— 8 times. Conversely, the term "flow" is used more often in English (approximately 20 times) than in Vietnamese (around 10), suggesting a greater emphasis on the continuous, systematic movement of financial resources. These subtle cultural and cognitive differences in metaphorical framing are reflected in these variations. Nevertheless, the dominant metaphor of finance as a fluid system remains consistent across both languages, underscoring its universal role in shaping financial discourse.

Implications for foreign language teaching and learning

Gaining a clear understanding of the similarities and differences in the metaphor "finance is fluid” can provide valuable benefits for teaching and learning foreign languages. It's important to recognize that metaphors are more than just decorative language—they play a crucial role in helping people grasp abstract ideas, such as finance. This awareness can make it easier for learners to handle complex financial terms in both Vietnamese and English. Teachers can help students realize that metaphorical words like "flow," "dry," "pump," or "evaporate" aren't randomly chosen but are based on common ways of linking the behavior of fluids to economic concepts. By encouraging students to find and compare these metaphorical expressions in both languages, educators can promote critical thinking and intercultural understanding. This exercise not only shows how financial topics are talked about differently across cultures but also explains why those differences exist, rooted in cultural views and language habits. Additionally, bringing in other finance-related metaphors, such as “finance is plant” or “finance is fire," can broaden students’ metaphorical skills and deepen their connection to abstract vocabulary. Ultimately, learning through conceptual metaphors helps students form meaningful connections, enhancing both their understanding and ability to express ideas. This method also invites learners to explore the reasoning behind metaphorical thinking and appreciate how each language uniquely reflects cultural values and cognitive patterns.

Discussion

The present study’s findings on the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" in Vietnamese and English electronic news can be best understood within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). According to CMT, abstract domains such as finance are often interpreted through more concrete, embodied experiences, in this case, the physical properties and behaviors of liquids. This theoretical perspective is supported by the frequent use of fluid-related metaphors in both languages, as shown by the corpus analysis of 200 metaphorical expressions.

Comparing these results to previous research reveals several similarities and differences. Liang (2021) and Qiu (2023) both highlight the importance of fluid metaphors in English-language financial journalism, noting frequent use of terms such as “cash flow,” “liquidity dries up,” and “capital flows.” The present study confirms these observations, showing that English financial discourse tends to use technical, process-oriented metaphors that emphasize movement, supply, and blockage within economic systems. This is consistent with Kövecses’ (2005, 2010) argument that metaphors in specialized fields often reflect established and analytical viewpoints, especially in English-speaking contexts.

In contrast, Vietnamese financial news features a more vivid and emotionally charged set of metaphors, with frequent use of expressions such as “ngập” (flooded), “chìm” (sinking), and “bốc hơi" (evaporating). This pattern aligns with the findings of Pham T.T.T. (2017) and Nguyen T.T.H. (2019), who observed that Vietnamese economic discourse often employs nature-inspired imagery and dramatic language to describe financial events. The present study builds on these observations by measuring how often and how widely these metaphors appear, showing a consistent preference for expressive language and story-like presentation in Vietnamese financial reporting.

The cross-linguistic similarities observed —namely, the mapping of fluid dynamics onto financial processes —support the universality of certain conceptual metaphors, as argued by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2005). However, the differences in how metaphors are expressed in Vietnamese and English highlight the importance of cultural variation in metaphor use (Kövecses, 2010). While both languages draw on the main features of the source domain (fluidity), the specific words used and the emotional impact of these metaphors are influenced by unique cultural attitudes toward finance, risk, and stability.

Furthermore, the findings have pedagogical implications consistent with recent work on metaphor awareness and language teaching (Le & Nguyen, 2023; Tsitoura, 2023). Explicit instruction in metaphorical structures, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and TESOL contexts, can enhance learners’ comprehension of abstract financial vocabulary and improve their ability to interpret and translate financial texts. The challenges faced by Vietnamese learners, whose native language metaphors are more emotive and narrative, when encountering the more neutral and technical metaphors of English financial discourse mirror the difficulties noted by Qiu (2023) and Nguyen T.B.H. (2024) in cross-cultural metaphor transfer and idiom acquisition.

In summary, this study's results not only support the main ideas of Conceptual Metaphor Theory but also build on previous research by offering a systematic, quantitative comparison of metaphorical models in Vietnamese and English financial news. The findings reveal both universal cognitive connections and culturally specific patterns, underscoring the importance of cross-cultural awareness of metaphor in language education. By relating these results to established theoretical frameworks and earlier research based on real-world data, the discussion provides a more objective and thorough explanation of how the metaphor "finance is fluid" influences financial discourse and language learning across cultures.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This study offers a detailed cross-linguistic examination of the conceptual metaphor "finance is fluid" as it appears in Vietnamese and English electronic news. The analysis reveals two main metaphorical frameworks: (1) viewing financial situations as states of liquidity, and (2) framing the act of supplying finance as akin to supplying liquidity. Both models are found at similar rates in the news articles from each language, about 55–57% for the first and 43–45% for the second. These results underscore the role of fluid-related imagery —such as flow, stagnation, evaporation, and pumping —in shaping financial discourse across cultures.

Beyond mapping metaphorical expressions, this research sheds light on important cross-cultural dynamics. While both Vietnamese and English rely on fluid metaphors, Vietnamese expressions tend to be more vivid and emotionally charged (for example, “ngập,” “chìm,” and “bốc hơi”), whereas English typically favors more technical and neutral terms like “capital flow” and “liquidity dries up.” These distinctions reflect differing cultural perspectives on financial issues and have clear implications for language instruction. For educators working in TESOL and ESP, awareness of these metaphorical patterns is essential. By actively teaching students about cross-cultural metaphors in financial English, instructors can help learners develop a deeper understanding of authentic financial texts. Recognizing how metaphors encode cultural values and technical detail enables students to engage with financial discourse more confidently and bridge gaps in intercultural communication.

Looking ahead, future research should broaden its scope to include spoken language and examine how "finance is fluid" metaphors are used in everyday conversations, business meetings, and media broadcasts. Experimental studies could also explore how learners of English as a foreign language comprehend and produce these metaphors, and how targeted instruction might enhance their financial literacy and communicative skills. Such work would further clarify the role of metaphor in financial understanding and contribute to more effective language teaching methods.

In sum, this study deepens our understanding of how metaphorical thinking shapes financial language across cultures and underscores the importance of fostering metaphor awareness in ESP and TESOL contexts.

The findings of this study hold significant implications for TESOL practitioners, particularly those engaged in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) with a focus on finance. The prevalence and cultural nuances of the "finance is fluid" metaphor in both Vietnamese and English highlight the need for explicit metaphor instruction in the language classroom. TESOL educators should include targeted activities that raise students' awareness of metaphorical language, especially as it relates to financial contexts. By comparing and contrasting metaphorical expressions across languages, instructors can help learners recognize underlying cultural attitudes, thereby enhancing both comprehension and production of authentic financial discourse. It is recommended that teaching materials include real-world examples from electronic news and encourage students to analyze and create metaphorical expressions themselves. Furthermore, integrating discussions on how metaphors shape meaning and reflect cultural perspectives can foster deeper intercultural competence. Future TESOL research should investigate the effectiveness of metaphor-focused instruction in improving learners' financial understanding and communicative confidence. Ultimately, embedding metaphor awareness into ESP curricula will better equip students to handle complex financial texts and participate actively in global business environments.

References

Aristotle. (1954). *Rhetoric and poetics*. The Modern Library.

Dang, T. H. T. (2012). The conceptual metaphor of gold in Vietnamese from the perspective of source domains. *Journal of Linguistics*, (12), 19–22. Institute of Linguistics.

Geary, J. (2012). *I is an other: The secret life of metaphor and how it shapes the way we see the world*. HarperCollins Publishers.

Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in culture: Universality and variation*. Cambridge University Press.

Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought* (pp. 202–251). Cambridge University Press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.

Le, M. T., & Nguyen, T. B. (2023). Roles of cognitive linguistics to second language acquisition. *ICTE Conference Proceedings, 3*, 118–126. https://doi.org/10.54855/ictep.2339

Liang, S. (2021). A corpus-based study on conceptual metaphors in the finance & economics column of The Economist. *International Journal of English Language Studies,* 3(8), 14-26. DOI: https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2021.3.8.3

Nguyen, T.B.H. (2024). Teaching conceptual metaphors in Vietnamese idioms to foreign learners through a cognitive linguistic approach. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology, 8*(6), 7008–7021. https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v8i6.3516

Nguyen, T. T. H. (2019). The metaphor "Stock market is a battlefield" in Vietnamese stock market news reports. *Social Science Human Resources*, (2), 82–88.

Nguyen, T.T.H. (2024). Conceptual Metaphor BUSINESS IS A JOURNEY in Business Terminology. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 14*(11), Article 15. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1411.15

Pham, T. G. (2023). Conceptual metaphor "WOMEN ARE ANIMALS" in 20th century Vietnamese literature. *ICTE Conference Proceedings, 3*, 26–40. https://doi.org/10.54855/ictep.2333

Pham, T. G. (2025). Conceptual metaphor "COMMERCE IS SPORT" in Vietnamese and English commercial news discourse: A contrastive study. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies, 41*(2), 42–55. https://doi.org/10.63023/2525-2445/jfs.ulis.5401

Pham, T. T. T. (2017). Metaphorical expressions in Vietnamese economic discourse. *Journal of Foreign Languages, 52*, 23–33. Hanoi University.

Pragglejaz Group. (2007). MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol, 22*(1), 1–39.

Qiu, X. (2023). Translation Strategies for Conceptual Metaphors in Financial Discourse-Taking The Economist as An Example. *Journal of Education, Teaching and Social Studies, 5*(2), 11–21. https://doi.org/10.22158/jetss.v5n2p11

Tsitoura, M. (2023). Conceptual Metaphor Theory in English Language Teaching: Developing EFL Learners' Metaphor Awareness. *Selected Papers of ISTAL 24*, 804–817. https://doi.org/10.26262/istal.v24i0.9222

Zhang, Y., & Yang, W. (2023). The landslide's conceptualizing economic decline and its framing effect: Mandarin evidence. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 1271911. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1271911

Biodata

Dr. Nguyen Luu Diep Anh is currently the Deputy Director of the Center for Information Technology & Learning Resources at University of Foreign Studies, the University of Da Nang. She has earned a PhD in Linguistics from University of Science and Education, the University of Da Nang. Her interests include media, English language teaching at all levels, and communication/linguistics.

Sequencing Research Writing and Research Methodology Courses: Implications from Students' Course Evaluation

Nguyen Hoang Quynh Anh[1*], Dao Nguyen Anh Duc[1]

[1] International University, Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
[*] Corresponding author's email: nguyenhoangquynhanh2909@gmail.com
[*] https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9330-0437
https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25544

Received: 18/03/2025 Revision: 19/09/2025 Accepted: 20/10/2025 Online: 20/10/2025

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine if there are any significant differences in Research Writing course evaluation made by English Linguistics (EL) students learning Research Writing (RW) before Research Methodology (RM) (group 1) and those learning RW after RM (group 2) at the International University – Vietnam National University (IU-VNU), from which students' perceptions towards the sequencing of the two courses are discovered. Initially, a questionnaire was designed to collect the RW course evaluation from 119 EL students in both groups. Subsequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed to identify which questionnaire items showed significant differences between group 1 and group 2 responses, from which interview prompts were developed to elicit interviewees' perceptions of RM-RW course sequencing in both groups. The study revealed that four items showed significant differences between group 1 and group 2's evaluations. Moreover, all interviewees perceived that taking RW after RM helped facilitate RW learning more than taking RW before RM. These findings may suggest that RW should be required to learn after RM to improve the performance of IU EL students in the RW course.

Keywords: course sequencing, Research Method (RM), Research Writing (RW), course evaluation, CIPP model

Introduction

In the School of Languages (SoL) at IU-VNU, English Linguistics and Literature (EL) students acquire basic research knowledge through the two compulsory courses, Research Methodology (RM) and Research Writing (RW). The RM course provides students with instructions regarding the employment of appropriate methods and techniques to address research questions (Kumar, 2010). Meanwhile, RW focuses on the accurate use of language in presenting evidence gathered from articles or journals logically and convincingly (Peat et al., 2013). In an academic year at SoL, the RM course is delivered in semester one, while RW is available in semester two. In the curriculum provided by SoL, RM is recommended to be learned before RW. However, there was no official obligation to follow that sequence. Therefore, students can take RM

CITATION | Nguyen, H. Q. A., & Dao, N. A. D. (2025). Sequencing Research Writing and Research Methodology Courses: Implications from Students' Course Evaluation. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, *5*(4), 48-66. DOI: https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25544

before/after RM. However, as a former IU EL student, the researcher was informally told by some other IU EL fellows taking RW before RM that they had difficulties understanding RW lectures. According to Woosley et al. (2010), course sequencing can affect students' performance in a particular course if it is related to other courses in terms of content. Nevertheless, no evaluations were conducted by IU or SoL to examine the impact of course sequencing on IU EL students' evaluations/perceptions of their course performance. Therefore, the researcher conducted this study to investigate whether there are significant differences in RW course evaluations made by IU EL students who took RW before RM and those who took RW after RM, thereby uncovering in depth their perceptions of the sequences of RW and RM.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences in the evaluation of the RW course made by students who took RW before RM and those who took RW after the RM course?
2. How do IU EL students perceive the two different sequences of RW and RM?

Literature Review

Perception

In pedagogical settings, perception is defined as knowledge and ideas about something, formed through experience related to that thing (Newton & Kinskey, 2021). In the study's context, examining IU EL students' perceptions towards their performance on the RW course and RM-RW course sequencing, perception can be inferred as a student's knowledge and ideas towards his/her RW course performance as well as course sequencing of RM and RW, which is gained through experience of learning these two courses in a specific sequence.

Course sequencing

Course sequencing is defined as the order in which students take courses (Woosley et al., 2010; Richards, 2012). Applying this definition, the course sequencing of RW and RM means the order in which IU EL students take RW and RM courses.

Course sequencing is considered an important element in curriculum design, as it can affect students' academic performance (Deng, 2015; Maitra et al., 2015). According to Allen (2002), courses are interconnected, and proper course sequencing can help students learn more effectively in subsequent courses and develop a broader knowledge base. For example, studies in economics, communication, and psychology have shown that sequencing suitable prerequisites can facilitate learning in subsequent courses (Von Allmen, 1996; Adam, 2012; Maitra et al., 2015; Betancur et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to carefully examine the sequence of courses in curriculum design.

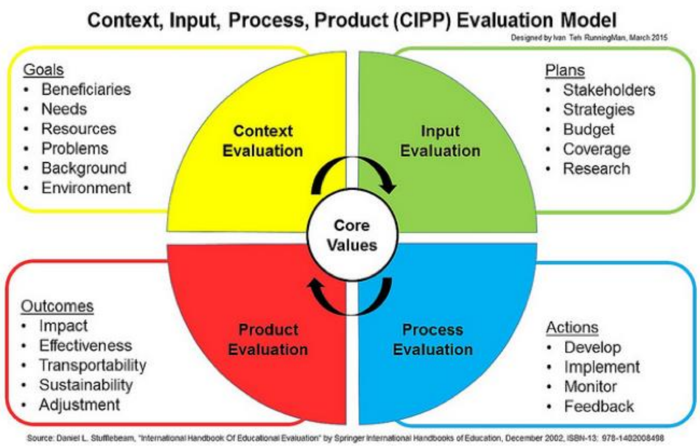
Course evaluation and evaluation framework

Evaluation is defined as the process of assessing the quality of something (Scriven, 1991; Vedung, 2017). Therefore, course evaluation can be interpreted as the assessment of the quality of a course or RW course in the study's context.

The CIPP model was created by Daniel Stufflebeam in the late 1960s and is considered a comprehensive framework for examining different aspects of the evaluation of courses, programs, or curricula within the education field (Mathison, 2005; Sopha & Nanni, 2019). In particular, the model assesses 4 dimensions: Context (C), Input (I), Process (P), and Product (P). Context focuses on studying needs, goals, assets, and problems within a defined environment. Input examines the strategies, work plans, and budgets of the selected approach. Process considers the implementation of planned activities. The product aims to assess the descriptions and judgments of outcomes from the intended participants, which helps decide whether to make any modifications to the course (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).
The primary reason the CIPP model is appropriate for this study is that it is not designed to meet the specific needs of certain evaluation types. Instead, it allows the researcher to selectively and appropriately incorporate methods and tools according to the studies' contexts (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Therefore, it can be inferred that it is unnecessary to cover all elements listed in the four components of the model. The diagram of the CIPP model is presented below.

Figure 1

CIPP model (Stufflebeam, 2003)



Factors affecting students' grades

Students' grades are affected by several factors. For personal factors, some aspects affecting students' grades can be students' gender, interests (David Kolo et al., 2015), and study behavior (Kassarnig et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2019). Regarding family-related factors, parents' income (Igere, 2017; David Kolo et al., 2015), their education (Idris M et al., 2020; Qu, 2025), and study support (Qu, 2025) can affect students' academic performance or grades to some extent. In terms of academic attributes, some factors such as high school grades (Kassarnig et al., 2018), previous-semester mark, and class test grades can also contribute to students' course grade (Al-Barrak & Al-Razgan, 2016; Nahar et al., 2021). Additionally, some institutional factors may have a certain influence on students' grades, such as the medium of instruction (Muttaqin et al., 2022; Masrai et al., 2022), teaching methodology (Tran, 2022; Davaatseren et al., 2024), and curriculum (Le & Le, 2022). In curriculum design, course sequencing is a factor that can affect students' grades, but has not been largely examined (Richard, 2012).

Effects of course sequencing on students' grades

Given that a sequence includes two courses, which are course A and course B, no studies up to now have compared course A's evaluations made by students taking course A before and after course B to investigate the effect of course sequencing on students' perceptions of their performance in course A. Therefore, the studies by Betancur et al. (2019) and Woosley et al. (2010) are considered the most relevant to this research topic. Generally, instead of comparing students' evaluations of course A, these two studies compare course A's grades between students who took course A before and those who took it after course B to examine the effect of course sequencing on students' grade performance in course A.

The study by Betancur et al. (2019) investigated whether students' grades in Psychology courses were related to the sequence in which students take methodological courses (statistics and research methods) and Psychology courses. A longitudinal institutional dataset including 2,720 undergraduate students' grades in psychology-related courses was analyzed. The findings revealed that taking methodological courses before topical Psychology courses tended to result in better grade performance in Psychology courses. This means that the sequence of methodological courses and Psychology courses can contribute to students' high or low grade performance to some extent.

However, the impact of course sequencing on students' performance is ambiguous within the Department of Information Systems (IS) at Ball State University. Specifically, Woosley et al. (2010) used students' academic transcripts from the IS core course to examine whether the order in which students took IS core and business courses had an impact on their grades in IS core. The findings showed that course sequencing, as a sole factor, did not lead to significant differences in students' grade performance in the IS core course.

Research gaps

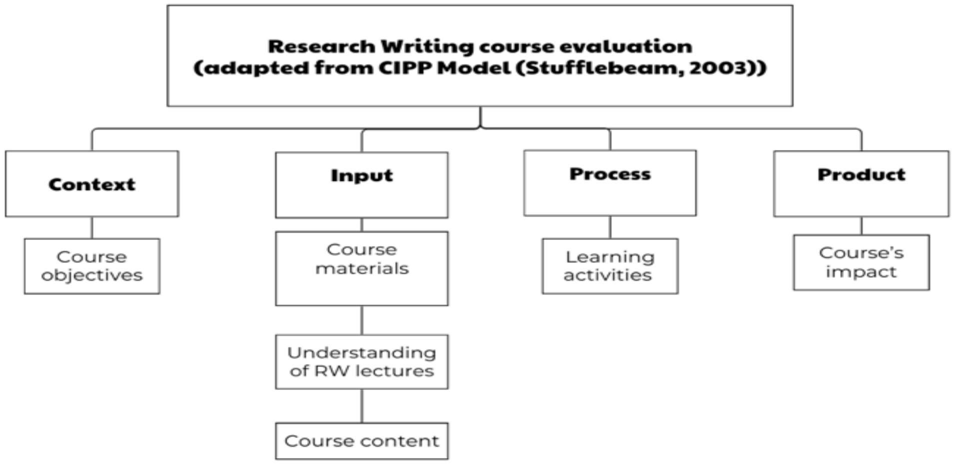
The aforementioned studies used students' grades to examine the effect of course sequencing on the students' grade performance in one course within the sequence. However, so far, the researcher has found no studies that use students' course evaluations to examine the effect of course sequencing on students' perceptions of their performance in a course. Additionally, there is hardly any previous research examining students' perceptions of course sequencing. Therefore, this study was conducted to address these two gaps by examining whether there are significant differences in RW course evaluations made by IU EL students learning RW before and after RM, and by delving into students' perceptions of the sequence of RM and RW courses.

Conceptual framework

As Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017) noted, it is unnecessary to cover all elements in the four components of the CIPP model. In this study, which focuses on RW course evaluation, the Context component examines the course objectives, while the Input dimension examines the RW course materials, content, and understanding of RW lectures. Regarding process, learning activities in RW classes are rated in terms of difficulty level to see if students struggle with any activities. The last aspect – Product examines students' general attitude towards research after finishing the RW course, or the course's impact in brief. The course evaluation's framework is outlined in Figure 2. Then, the interview guide will be established based on the results of the course evaluation.

Figure 2

Conceptual framework



Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The targeted population of this research was all IU EL juniors (K21) and seniors (K20) who completed both Research Methodology and Research Writing courses. According to SoL's course sequencing, students are expected to complete the skills subjects (Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing) in the first year before taking RM and RW courses in the second or third year, which is equivalent to C1 level on the CEFR. According to the School of Languages' statistics, the number of students across the two intakes was approximately 160. Among 160 students from the two intakes, the researcher collected data via questionnaires from 119 participants using purposive sampling. Sixty-eight of them took RW before RM, and 51 took RW after RM. Collecting data from two intakes increased the sample size compared to a single intake.

Based on the results of RQ1, interviews were conducted to delve into the reasons for interviewees' evaluations of these items, from which their opinions on the sequence of RM and RW were examined. Regarding qualitative data, the researcher was able to interview four participants from the questionnaire due to limited data-collection time. In each sequence (learning RW before/after RM), two participants who were familiar with the researcher were selected to examine their perceptions of the RM-RW course sequencing. Therefore, interviews were conducted to delve into the interviewees' explanations of their evaluations of these items, from which their opinions on the sequence of RM and RW are examined. There were four participants taking part in the interviews. Two of them took RW before RM (group 1), and the other two took RW after RM (group 2). Since participants' names were confidential information, they were assigned codes to facilitate differentiation. Particularly, group 1 included participants 1-A and 1-B, while group 2 included participants 2-A and 2-B.

Design of the Study

This study employed a mixed-methods, sequential, explanatory design to thoroughly examine the IU EL students' RW course evaluations and perceptions of the sequencing of RM and RW. Specifically, this design includes two stages. In the first stage, quantitative data were collected and analyzed, followed by a qualitative approach using thematic analysis in the second stage (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Findings from the qualitative phase were used to explain and elaborate on interpretations drawn from the quantitative phase (Kroll & Neri, 2009).

Instruments

Regarding Research Question 1 (RQ1), an online questionnaire with 5-point Likert scales was distributed via Google Forms to collect quantitative data. Except for five questions asking for personal information and the sequence of RM and RW, the survey contains 38 items (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was self-developed by the researcher using the CIPP model and the RW course syllabus (see Appendix A). There were four main parts in the survey: Context, Input, Process, and Product. The Context part examined course objectives, while the Input examined course materials, understanding of lectures, and course contents. The Process and Product parts were intended to evaluate the difficulty of learning activities in RW classes and the impact of the RW course on students after completing it.

The Cronbach alpha values are around 0.7 or more for most constructs, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable (Hair, Black, & Babin, 2010; Schmitt, 1996) (Table 1). Regarding the "Understanding of lectures" construct, its Cronbach's alpha value (0.356) is generally considered low for reliability. However, Sijtsma (2009) stated that a low alpha value could be attributed to the data's multidimensionality. This means a large variation in answers may lead to a low Cronbach's alpha value. This was true for the case of the "Understanding of RW lectures" construct since the SDs for all items in this construct were relatively high (Figure 3). This indicated that the large variation in answers may be the reason for the low alpha value for this construct, not because items are unreliable. Therefore, this construct's items are still analyzed in this study.

Regarding Research Question 2, interview guides were used to collect the students' opinions on the sequence of RM and RW courses. The guides consist of 6 compulsory items and four optional questions for those taking RW before RM (group 1). Regarding those taking RW after RM (group 2), there were seven compulsory items and four optional questions (see Appendix B). Subsequently, general prompts asked about students' perceptions of the RM and RW course sequencing, with two for group 1 and three for group 2. These guides were developed based on the results of RQ1, which showed that four questionnaire items demonstrated significant differences in evaluations made by IU EL students taking RW before and after RM. For each item, there was one compulsory prompt asking the interviewees to explain their choices for that item. Additionally, there was an optional question asking whether learning RM first could help interviewees learn RW better, particularly in the situation described in the item.

Table 1

Cronbach's alpha of the main study's questionnaire

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Course objectives	4	0.737
Course materials	4	0.730
Understanding of lectures	5	0.356
Course contents	10	0.802
Learning activities	12	0.784
Course's impact	3	0.655

Figure 3

SDs of Understanding of the lectures' items

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Std. Deviation
C1	119	.850
C2	119	.792
C3	119	1.006
C4	119	.915
C5	119	.957

Data collection

In this study, the quantitative component involved using questionnaires to collect students' evaluations of the RW course. Firstly, the consent form was sent to the SoL to ask for permission to collect data in targeted classes. After receiving permission, the researcher sent emails to the classes' lecturers to determine the time for data collection. Then, the questionnaire was shared with the students who had completed both RM and RW via class visits. Before asking for students' consent to take part in the study, they were given basic information about the research topic and clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire.

Regarding the qualitative components, after collecting sufficient data for the questionnaire, the researcher selected two participants who had previously completed the questionnaire in each group and obtained their consent before conducting semi-structured interviews.

Data analysis

To examine whether there are significant differences between responses of participants taking RW before RM (group 1) and those taking RW after RM (group 2), a frequency chart was observed to examine group 1 and group 2's answer distribution of each item. Then, the Mann-Whitney U (MWU) test was used to analyze the responses to determine whether any items showed significant differences in the evaluations made by group 1 and group 2. The MWU test is used to compare differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is ordinal or continuous data. Since the dependent variable in this study, a 5-point Likert scale, was ordinal, this test was appropriate. Items with p-values < 0.05 from the MWU test results were considered to have significant differences in item evaluation between group 1 and group 2. The mean ranks of these four items were then examined to compare the trend of responses between the two groups. Based on the results of RQ1, open questions regarding these items were developed for the interview. The researcher aims to interpret the mean ranks of the four items showing significant differences in the two groups' evaluations. Moreover, comparisons with other studies/theories are made if possible. For further reference, see Table 2 for the statistics on these items.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the study's qualitative data across five stages. First, the recordings from the interviews were transcribed and translated into English, and the researcher reviewed the answers to identify general points. Second, keywords/phrases expressing the main ideas of interviewees' answers were highlighted. From that, themes were identified in the next stage. Then, the themes were reviewed to ensure the accurate interpretation of interviewees' answers. Lastly, the themes were named and their content documented.

Results/Findings

Findings from the survey

According to the MWU test results, four items have P-values < 0.05 (Table 2). This indicates significant differences in the evaluation of these four items (A4, C1, D8, E5) between IU EL students who took RW before RM (group 1) and those who took RW after RM (group 2). Specifically, these items refer to four aspects, which are RW objectives achievement (A4), the need to read materials before classes (C1), the difficulty level of the topic "Writing the Methods section" (D8), and the difficulty level of the task of identifying a section's elements (E5). Regarding item A4, it can be inferred from the mean rank that group 2 tended to find the RW objectives more achievable than group 1. Regarding item C1, group 1 was more likely to agree that they tended to read materials before class to better understand the lectures than group 2. In item D8, group 2 tended to find the topic about the Methods section in the RW course easier than group 1. Concerning item E5, group 2 tended to find the activity "identifying different elements of a section" easier than those in group 1.

Table 2

MWU test result of item A4, C1, D8, E5

Item	Group 1 (RW>RM)	Group 2 (RW<RM)	z	P-value
	Mean rank			
A4: Overall, I think these objectives are achievable. (RW objectives: Appendix A)	58.68	61.75	-1.98	.047
I had to read the course materials (*coursebooks and the supplementary handout provided by the instructor*) **BEFORE** the class to better understand the lectures.	61.09	58.55	-2.69	.007
D8: Rate the difficulty level of the topic: **Writing the Methods section** (**Contents:** Structure and content; a model for the Methods section; useful words and phrases)	55.09	66.55	-2.26	.024
E5: How difficult did you find it when identifying different elements of a section?	55.17	66.44	-2.17	.03

Findings from the interview

As presented in the previous section, four items (A4, C1, D8, E5) were found to have significant differences in evaluation between students taking RW before and after RM. Therefore, interviews were conducted to delve into interviewees' explanations of their evaluations of these items, from which their opinions on the sequence of RM and RW are examined. There were four participants taking part in the interviews. Two of them took RW before RM (group 1), and the other two took RW after RM (group 2). They were assigned codes for easier differentiation. Particularly, group 1 included participants 1-A and 1-B, while group 2 included participants 2-A and 2-B.

The interview results indicated that all participants acknowledged that learning RM before the RW course helped students achieve the RW course objectives more effectively. In particular, two interviewees who learned RW before RM were not certain they could achieve the objective: "I could write up a research paper in my areas of interest after the RW course." Regarding the reason, interviewee 1A did not think she achieved the objective relating to writing research papers because "[she] had difficulties in writing the data analysis part" while 1B supposed "RW focuses more on language used to express the available information", not about "what information should be included in each section." Therefore, sometimes she did not know which content should be written in some sections of a research paper, which was taught more in depth in the RM course. This led her to believe that she "would be able to write a research paper better after the RW course if [she] learnt RM before RW." Meanwhile, both interviewees learning RW after RM were confident that they could achieve this objective. Interviewee 2A could "understand the purposes of different sections, write a research paper with correct structure" while 2B said her score in the RW course "was quite high", which somehow reflected that she “could achieve all objectives after the RW course.”

Regarding the need to read materials before classes, all interviewees believed that learning RM first could help them understand RW lectures better, without needing to read materials beforehand. Interviewees who learned RW before RM seemed to have difficulty understanding RW lectures if they did not read the materials beforehand. Interviewee 1A mentioned that “The Methods section had some specialized terms which were quite difficult to understand without reading the textbooks before the class”. However, interviewees in group 2 did not read the material before RW classes, yet still understood RW lectures well. One of them explained that she already had “knowledge regarding the structure and definitions of specialized terms of a research paper from the RM course”, so she could “understand RW lectures in class without reading materials before classes.” All interviewees later supposed that learning RM first could help them understand RW lectures better.

In terms of the difficulty level of the topic“Writing the Methods section” in RW course, 1A rated this topic as “Quite difficult” because the RW course focused more on the writing skills while knowledge regarding methods and data collection was not taught in detail, [she] mainly learnt it from reading research papers.” In contrast, 2B found this topic “quite easy” because she “gained knowledge about the Methods section in RM course before”. Therefore, when she learnt the topic the topic “Writing the Methods section” in RW, she could “have another opportunity to review this section.” Finally, interviewees in both groups agreed that learning the RM course first could help them better understand this topic in the RW course, since the structure, content, and specialized terms of the Methods section were explained in greater depth in the RM than in the RW courses.

Regarding the task “identifying elements of a section” in the RW course, all interviewees found this task quite challenging, but in different sections. 1A found the Methods and Results sections were “the most difficult part to identify elements since [she] did not learn RM before RW,” while the Literature review was the most difficult one for 1B, as she “had to read many previous papers relating to the research topic and identify the gaps, which was quite difficult for [her].” Turning to group 2, 2A found other sections quite difficult to identify elements, except for the Methods section, because the elements in this part “had clearer division compared to other sections”. Moreover, she added that sometimes she referred to the RM materials “to search for meaning of some specialized words/phrases in Methods section”, which was partly the reason why she “found the Methods section’s elements easy to identify.” According to 2B, Literature review was the “most difficult part to identify elements” because she spent “lots of time finding the articles, and then background in Introduction section.” Regarding other sections’ elements, she found them “somehow relevant to knowledge learnt in RM course”, which was “quite easy to identify.”

Discussion

Research Question 1

In this section, the researcher aims to interpret the mean ranks of the four items showing significant differences in the two groups' evaluations. Moreover, comparisons with other studies/theories are made if possible.

Item A4's mean ranks show that group 2 (students learning RW after RM) tended to find the RW objectives more achievable than group 1 (students learning RW before RM), especially the third objective of the RW course (I could write up research papers in areas of my interest after the RW course). This can be attributed to the different focuses of the RW and RM courses. While RM is a content subject focused on what should be included in a research paper, RW is a language subject focused on choosing appropriate language and structures to deliver that content. Hence, despite developing research writing skills, those learning RW first may have found it difficult to achieve the third RW objective, as they lacked the prior content knowledge that group 2 had gained in the RM course.

The mean ranks for item C1 indicate that group 1 tended to read materials before class to better understand the lectures, whereas group 2 relied more on personal awareness than on classroom rules. This may reflect that group 1 has more difficulty understanding RW lectures than group 2, due to a lack of prior knowledge about the research paper. Therefore, they may not have understood the RW lectures well if they had not read the materials before class.

Item D8's mean ranks show that the topic about the Methods section in the RW course had the tendency to be easier for students in group 2 than in group 1. The different focuses of RM and RW courses can explain this phenomenon. While RW usually focuses on writing skills such as language use and structure, RM concentrates on the content of research papers. Since group 2 had content knowledge from the RM course, such as understanding specialized terms and describing methodology, they found the topic "Writing the Methods section" in RW classes easier to understand than group 1.

Item E5's mean ranks indicate that group 2 tended to find the activity "identifying different elements of a section" less difficult than those in group 1. This may result from the content knowledge of a research paper's structure learnt in the RM course, which enables group 2 to better distinguish the elements of a section than group 1 in RW classes.

To sum up, group 2 (RW after RM) tended to have more positive responses in four items than group 1 (RW before RM). Particularly, group 2 found the RW objectives more achievable than group 1, understood RW lectures better without having to read materials before RW classes, and found the topic "Writing the Method section" and the task of identifying different elements of a section in the RW course easier than group 1. This may indicate that sequencing RW to be learnt after RM results in better comprehension of RW and, more generally, research knowledge.

Research Question 2

Students' perceptions towards learning RW before RM

After analyzing interviewees' answers, the researcher found that those who took RW before

RM tended to have greater difficulty learning RW. First, the third objective of RW (writing a research paper in my areas of interest) was unlikely to be achieved due to a lack of understanding of the structure and content of different sections of a research paper, leading to an inability to write the paper properly. Second, students who learned RW before RM sometimes had difficulty understanding RW lectures without reading the course materials beforehand. This was attributed to specialized terms in research papers, as they were not taught before. Therefore, they had to read the course materials before class to ensure they understood these terms, thereby understanding the RW lectures better. Third, the topic “Writing methods section” in the RW course was not particularly easy to learn before RM, because students could not clearly distinguish specialized terms related to the Methods section, leading to a vague understanding of the topic. Finally, not learning RM beforehand could cause some students to struggle to identify the Methods section in the RW course. The reason is that this section is taught in more detail in the RM course.

Overall, the main reasons for problems in learning RW are a lack of basic knowledge of research papers, such as structure, content, terminology, and research types. This knowledge is taught in more detail in the RM course. Therefore, students may understand RW better when taking RW after RM than when taking RW before RM.

Students' perceptions towards learning RW after RM

The aforementioned problems when learning RW before RM tend to be minimized when RW is taken after RM. Specifically, all interviewees agreed that prior knowledge from the RM course helped them achieve the third RW objective better (write up a research paper in my areas of interest, understand the RW lectures easily, especially the topic "Writing the Methods section", and identify the Methods section’s elements more easily). The common reasons were that the RM course provided interviewees with the general structure, content, and definitions of specialized terms in a research paper, serving as a basic understanding of research before delving into writing research papers in the RW course. Moreover, students can refer back to RM materials when they forget some concepts or terms while learning RW, which facilitates their learning of RW.

Generally, RM is somewhat equivalent to an Introduction to research course, and RW is more likely a specialized course. This point aligns with Richards' (2012) study, which showed that students taking lower-division courses before upper-division courses performed better in upper-division courses than those taking them in the opposite sequence.

Suggested learning sequence of RM and RW courses

When asked, all the interviewees suggested learning RW after RM because RM serves as a foundation course, providing general knowledge and skills in research, before learning RW, so that students can benefit more from the RW course. This aligns with Allen (2002), stating that foundation courses (RM), which aim to improve academic skills, should be learnt before exploration courses (RW), which focus more on practical applications and, at the same time, offer opportunities for continued development of the foundation. Additionally, one interviewee suggested that RM and RW should be taught in 2 consecutive semesters in the third year, to prevent students from forgetting research knowledge when writing their theses in the fourth year.

From the interviewees' perceptions of RM and RW course sequencing, it can be inferred that sequencing could play a role in students' understanding of the RW course. This interpretation aligns with the results of Betancur et al. (2019)'s study, which found that course sequencing may be one of the factors affecting students' grade performance. Nevertheless, the results of the study by Wooseley et al. (2010) contrasted with those of the present study and Betancur et al. (2019), as it concluded that course sequencing did not show significant differences in students' course grades.

Conclusion

This study examined potential differences in RW course evaluations between IU EL undergraduates who took RW before RM (group 1) and those who took RW after RM (group 2). Additionally, major differences were examined in more detail to uncover students' perceptions of the RM and RW course sequence. After a thorough analysis, this study has successfully answered the two research questions. Regarding RQ1, there were significant differences in the RW course evaluation between students in groups 1 and 2. Regarding RQ2, it was commonly perceived that students who learned RW before RM tended to have more difficulty learning RW than those who took the two courses in the opposite sequence. Furthermore, all interviewees suggested learning RW after RM or learning RM first to facilitate their comprehension of RW. These results have several theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical implications

This study advances knowledge of course evaluation by using CIPP as a model. Moreover, since there have been few studies on course sequencing, especially regarding students' perceptions of it, this study's results serve as a valuable resource for future research in this area. Additionally, it is expected to offer further insights into the role of course sequencing on students' performance and course evaluation. Finally, this study suggests a new approach to investigating students' perceptions of course sequencing by using results from course evaluations, which future studies can refer to.

Practical implications

Regarding SoL's board of directors, the results of this study may suggest that there should be an official obligation for IU EL students to learn RW after RM to better understand research overall. For teachers at IU SoL, these results may prompt them to pay closer attention to the influence of course sequencing on students' performance not only in RW but also in other courses in the program, enabling them to develop the curriculum more effectively. Regarding IU EL students, this study can provide useful information for them to consider learning RW after RM to better understand RW lectures and research in general.

In terms of educators and curriculum developers of English majors in other Vietnamese universities, they may consider the role of course sequencing when structuring/modifying research courses to enhance students' understanding of research. Additionally, they may become more aware of the impact of course sequencing on students' comprehension of other courses in the programs.

Limitations

Despite the significant contribution to theoretical and practical aspects, this study still presents certain limitations. First, there are few previous studies relating to students' RW course evaluation and perceptions of the sequencing of RM and RW, for reference, which have led to limited integration of the study into existing literature.

Since the participants in this study are IU EL undergraduates who have taken both RM and RW, they may not accurately recall their experiences with RW, as they learnt these courses a long time ago. To collect more precise information, future studies can target IU EL undergraduates who have taken RW and are learning RM, or those who have taken RM and are learning RW.

Third, the number of interviewees was not large enough due to time constraints. Therefore, future studies should interview more people to obtain more valuable insights into students' perspectives on the sequencing of RM and RW.

In the study's questionnaire, the items in the construct "Understanding of RW lectures" show a relatively low Cronbach's alpha, which may be attributed to a high level of variation in responses. This may result from the ambiguous expression of ideas in the items, leading participants to interpret them differently and, consequently, to a wide distribution of answers. Future studies should be careful in establishing items to avoid misinterpretation among participants.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor for her guidance, expertise, and invaluable feedback throughout the research process. Her insights and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping this study. I am also thankful to the faculty members of International University, who have provided me with a conducive academic environment and access to resources crucial to carrying out this research. I extend my appreciation to my friends and family for their unwavering support and understanding during this journey.

References

Al-Barrak, M. A., & Al-Razgan, M. (2016). Predicting students final GPA using decision trees: A case study. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, *6*(7), 528–533. https://doi.org/10.7763/IJIET.2016.V6.745

Allen, T. (2002). Charting a communication pathway: Using assessment to guide curriculum development in a re-vitalized general education plan. *Communication Education*, *51*(1), 26–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520216502

Betancur, L., Rottman, B. M., Votruba-Drzal, E., & Schunn, C. (2019). Analytical assessment of course sequencing: The case of methodological courses in psychology. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *111*(1), 91–103. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000269

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. SAGE.

Davaatseren, A., Myagmar, M., & Dulamsuren, N. (2024). Factors affecting students' academic performance: (In the case of the accounting study of national university of Mongolia). In H. Batmend & O. Ganbold (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Transforming Education-new Generation of Learners (QAHE 2023)* (Vol. 18, pp. 39–44). Atlantis Press International BV. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-382-5_6

David Kolo, K., A. Adepoju, S., & Kolo Alhassan, J. (2015). A decision tree approach for predicting students academic performance. *International Journal of Education and Management Engineering*, *5*(5), 12–19. https://doi.org/10.5815/ijeme.2015.05.02

Deng, Z. (2015). Organization and sequencing of subject matters. In *The SAGE guide to curriculum in education* (Vol. 10, p. 78). SAGE Publications. https://books.google.com/books?hl=vi&lr=&id=MvwOCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA78&dq=curriculum+sequencing+importance&ots=7DQTlUUIM8&sig=BoZkDUIHOg5J1z-wSVnhJUmVA1A

Dr. Muhammad Idris, Dr. Sajjad Hussain, & Dr. Nasir Ahmad. (2020). Relationship between parents' education and their children's academic achievement. *Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, *7*(2), 82–92. https://doi.org/10.46662/jass-vol7-iss2-2020(82-92)

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., & Babin, B. J. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis: A Global Perspective*. Pearson Education.

Igere, M. A. (2017). Career choice and its influence on academic performance of library and information science students in a Nigerian university. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, *8*(2), 90–98. https://doi.org/10.4314/iijikm.v8i2.8

Kroll, T., & Neri, M. (2009). Designs for mixed methods research. In S. Andrew & E. J. Halcomb (Eds.), *Mixed Methods Research for Nursing and the Health Sciences* (1st ed., pp. 31–49). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444316490.ch3

Kumar, R. (2010). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. SAGE.

Le, X. M., & Le, T. T. (2022). Factors Affecting Students' Attitudes towards Learning English as a Foreign Language in a Tertiary Institution of Vietnam. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, *2*(2), 168–185. https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.22229

Maitra, S., Shivakumar, R., & MallikarjunaBabu, K. (2015). Importance of course sequencing in overall learning. *2015 IEEE 3rd International Conference on MOOCs, Innovation and Technology in Education (MITE)*, 204–207. https://doi.org/10.1109/mite.2015.7375315

Marcenaro–Gutierrez, O., Lopez–Agudo, L. A., & Ropero-García, M. A. (2018). Gender differences in adolescents' academic achievement. *YOUNG*, *26*(3), 250–270. https://doi.org/10.1177/1103308817715163

Masrai, A., El-Dakhs, D. A. S., & Yahya, N. (2022). What Predicts academic achievement in EMI courses? Focus on vocabulary knowledge and self-perceptions of L2 skills. *Sage Open*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221101044

Mathison, S. (2005). *Encyclopedia of evaluation*. SAGE.

Montolio, D., & Taberner, P. A. (2021). Gender differences under test pressure and their impact on academic performance: A quasi-experimental design. *Journal of Economic*

Behavior & Organization, *191*, 1065–1090. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2021.09.021

Moral-García, J. E., Urchaga-Litago, J. D., Ramos-Morcillo, A. J., & Maneiro, R. (2020). Relationship of parental support on healthy habits, school motivations and academic performance in adolescents. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(3), 882. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17030882

Muttaqin, S., Chuang, H.-H., Lin, C.-H., & Cheng, M.-M. (2022). When proficiency and education matter: The mediating role of English proficiency and moderating effect of parents' education in the SES–academic achievement relationship during EMI. *Sage Open*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221103542

Nahar, K., Shova, B. I., Ria, T., Rashid, H. B., & Islam, A. H. M. S. (2021). Mining educational data to predict students performance: A comparative study of data mining techniques. *Education and Information Technologies*, *26*(5), 6051–6067. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10575-3

Newton, M. H., & Kinskey, M. (2021). The association between course context and preservice teachers' perceptions of SSI instruction. In W. A. Powell (Ed.), *Advances in Educational Technologies and Instructional Design* (pp. 192–222). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-4558-4.ch007

Peat, J., Elliott, E., Baur, L., & Keena, V. (2013). *Scientific writing: Easy when you know how* (1st ed.). BMJ Books. https://www.perlego.com/book/1006571/scientific-writing-easy-when-you-know-how-pdf

Richards, A. S. (2012). Course sequencing in the communication curriculum: A case study. *Communication Education*, *61*(4), 395–427. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2012.713500

Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation thesaurus*. SAGE.

Sijtsma, K. (2009). On the use, the misuse, and the very limited usefulness of Cronbach's alpha. *Psychometrika*, *74*(1), 107–120. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11336-008-9101-0

Sopha, S., & Nanni, A. (2019). The CIPP model: Applications in language program evaluation. *The Journal of AsiaTEFL*, *16*(4), 1360–1367. https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.4.19.1360

Stufflebeam, D. L. (2003). The CIPP Model for Evaluation. In T. Kellaghan & D. L. Stufflebeam (Eds.), *International Handbook of Educational Evaluation* (pp. 31–62). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0309-4_4

Stufflebeam, D. L., & Zhang, G. (2017). *The CIPP evaluation model: How to evaluate for improvement and accountability*. Guilford Publications.

Tran, T. T. N. (2022). The effects of task-based instructions on secondary students' reading performances. *International Journal of Language Instruction*, *1*(1), 9–18. https://doi.org/10.54855/ijli.22112

Vedung, E. (2017). *Public policy and program evaluation*. Transaction Publishers.

Von Allmen, P. (1996). The effect of quantitative prerequisites on performance in intermediate microeconomics. *Journal of Education for Business*, *72*(1), 18–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.1996.10116820

Woosley, S. A., Truell, A. D., Alexander, M. W., & Zhao, J. J. (2010). Course seuqencing and performance: An investigation of using business college requirements in relation to an information systems core course. *Issues In Information Systems*, *XI*(1). https://doi.org/10.48009/1_iis_2010_559-565

Xu, X., Wang, J., Peng, H., & Wu, R. (2019). Prediction of academic performance associated with internet usage behaviors using machine learning algorithms. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *98*, 166–173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.04.015

Biodata

Nguyen, H.Q.A. is a recent graduate from School of Languages – International University (Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam. She is currently an English teacher at Stemhouse. Her research interests are teaching methodology, course evaluation, technology-enhanced language learning and The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

Dr. Dao, N.A.D. is currently a lecturer at the School of Languages– International University (VNUHCMC), Vietnam. She also works as a local trainer for Cambridge University Press. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Nottingham. She holds an MA in TESOL Studies from the University of Queensland, and an MBA from Bolton University. Her research interests are teaching methodology, L2 pronunciation teaching and learning, and teaching writing.

Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

CONTEXT

A.Course objectives

(1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: neutral, 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree)

After the RW course, I could:

1.Explain basic and advanced concepts in research paper writing.

2. Analyze the conventional structure of a research paper and elements of a strong research paper.

3.Write up research papers in my areas of interest.

4.Overall, I think these objectives are achievable.

INPUT

B.Course materials

(1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: neutral, 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree)

1. The examples in the coursebooks help me understand the lectures better.
2. The coursebooks' exercises allow me to apply what I learnt in class.
3. Coursebooks provide me with enough knowledge of the course.
4. Overall, course's materials supported me well during the course.

C.Understanding of lectures

(1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: neutral, 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree)

1. I had to read the course materials (coursebooks, supplementary hand out provided by instructor) AFTER the class to understand the lectures more.
2. I had to read the course materials (coursebooks, supplementary hand out provided by instructor) BEFORE the class to understand the lectures more.
3. I had to ask my friends to explain again the part(s) that I did not understand during the lectures.

4. I had to read extra materials beyond the given materials to understand the lectures more.
5. Overall, how confident were you about your understanding of the lectures?

A. 1: not confident, 2: Quite confident, 3:Very confident, 4: Extremely condifdent

D.Course content

How difficult did you find the following topics? Please choose ONE option.

(1: Very difficult, 2: Quite difficult, 3:Neutral, 4: Quite easy; 5: Very easy)

1. The academic writing process

(Academic vs. Personal style of writing; Thinking about writing process)

2. Researching and writing

(Types of research; The structure of a research paper; Identifying elements of a research paper)

3. Writing the Introduction

(Structure and content, model for introduction, useful words and phrases; Mapping out the research field; Identifying the research gap; Writing Introduction)

4. Writing definitions

(Definitions in academic text; Writing definitions (sentence, extended, contrastive, comparative))

5. Writing the abstract

(Elements of an abstract; A generic abstract model; Identifying different types of abstract; writing an abstract)

6. Avoiding plagiarism

(What is plagiarism?; Summarizing and paraphrasing; Citing & Referencing in APA 7th)

7. Writing the Literature Review

(Researching ideas and information; Reviewing the literature; Variation in reviewing the literature)

8. Writing the Methods section

(structure and content; a model for the Methods section; useful words and phrases)

9. Writing the Results section

(structure and content; a model for the Results section; useful words and phrases)

10. Writing the Discussion section

(Structure and content; A model for the Discussion section; Useful words and phrases)

PROCESS

E.Implementation of learning activities

Rate the level of difficulty while doing these activities in RW class:

(1: Very difficult, 2: Quite difficult, 3:Neutral, 4: Quite easy; 5: Very easy)

1. How difficult did you find when language practice

(Distinguishing between academic and personal styles; learnning to use language for introduction/Literature Review/Method/Result/Discussion part)

2. How difficult did you find when identifying types of research v

(Examples: Qualitative/Quantitative)

3. How difficult did you find when selecting research topic ?

(brainstorming topics, narrowing down topic)

4. How difficult did you find when identifying different SECTIONS of a research paper ?

(Sections: Introduction/Literature Review/Methodology)

5. How difficult did you find when identifying different ELEMENTS of a section?

(Elements of Introduction section: establish the importance of your field, provide background information,. . .)

6. How difficult did you find when writing the introduction?
7. How difficult did you find when writing different types of definitions?
8. How difficult did you find when identifying research gaps?

9. How difficult did you find when writing an abstract?
10. How difficult did you find when writing the Literature Review section?
(Researching literature for the selected topic; Organising the Literature Review; Reviewing selected work)
11. How difficult did you find when writing the Methods section?
12. How difficult did you find when writing the Result and Discussion section

PRODUCT

F.Course's impact evaluation *(1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: neutral, 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree)*

1. I gain more knowledge about research writing after the course.
2. I am more confident in writing research paper after course.
3. I intend to participate in a research contest after the course.

Appendix B: Interview prompts

Items	Students taking RW BEFORE RM	Students taking RW AFTER RM
A4: Overall, I think these objectives are achievable.	- Please explain your choice for this item - (OPTIONAL) Do you think learning RM first will help you achieve objectives of RW course better?	- Please explain your choice for this item - (OPTIONAL) Do you think learning RM first helped you achieve objectives of RW course better?
C1: I had to read the course materials (coursebooks, supplementary hand out provided by instructor) **BEFORE** the class to understand the lectures more.	- Please explain your choice for this item - (OPTIONAL) Do you think learning RM first will help you understand the RW lectures better?	- Please explain your choice for this item - (OPTIONAL) Do you think learning RM first helped you understand RW lectures better?
D8: Rate the difficulty level of the topic: Writing Methods section (structure and content; a model for the Methods section; useful words and phrases)	- Please explain your choice for this item - (OPTIONAL) Do you think learning RM first will help you find the contents of this topic easier to understand?	- Please explain your choice for this item - (OPTIONAL) Do you think learning RM first helped you find the contents of this topic easier to understand?
E5: How difficult did you find when **identifying different ELEMENTS of a section**? **(Elements of Introduction section**: establish the importance of your field, provide background information,. . .)	- Please explain your choice for this item (OPTIONAL) Among 5 sections of the research paper (Inroduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results and Discussion), which parts did you find difficult to identify the elements? Why?	- Please explain your choice for this item (OPTIONAL) Among 5 sections of the research paper (Inroduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results and Discussion), which parts you find difficult to identify the elements?
General prompts	1)What has been the greatest problems you have encoutered when taking RM after RW? 2)In what order would you suggest learning RW and RM? Why?	1)Tell me about how learning RM before RW help you understand RW more in depth. 2) What would be the consequences if students took RW before RM ? 3) In what order would you suggest learning RW and RM? Why?

International Journal of TESOL & Education

ISSN: 2768-4563

Vol. 5, No. 4 (2025): TESOL & Education
Doi: https://doi.org/1054855/ijte.2554
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3233-457X

Publisher: ICTE Press

Address: International Association of TESOL & Education, 5243 Birch Falls Ln, Sugar Land, Texas, USA, 77479

Aims and scopes

Aims and scopes

The mission of the IJTE (ISSN: 2768-4563) is to contribute to the literature of instruction by publishing high-quality studies in the areas of TESOL, Education, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), m-learning, e-learning, curriculum development, learning environments, Pedagogies & Language Teaching, translation and interpretation, teacher education, educational technology, educational developments, quality assurance in education, cultural studies, and other learning-instruction issues. As a peer-reviewed journal, one of our priorities is to ensure high standards of publishing. Publication ethics is an important concern, and editors, peer-reviewers, and authors should pay great attention to meeting ethical standards.

Open Access Policy

IJTE aims to increase visibility and make easier use of open access scientific papers. Readers and their institutions are supported for online access without asking for any royalty, personal information, or log-in details. According to the open-access policy of our journal, all readers are permitted to read, download, copy, distribute, print, link to, and search our articles with no charge.

Copyright

Ethics and Malpractice

The Statement of Publication Ethics & Malpractice

The International Journal of TESOL & Education (ijte) (ISSN: 2768-4563) is committed to upholding ethical standards, retracting and correcting errors. The editorial team's primary responsibility is to discourage publishing malpractice. Any type of unethical conduct is unacceptable, and this Journal's Editorial Team does not tolerate plagiarism in any form. All manuscripts must be the authors' original work and free of indications of plagiarism.

Conflicts of Interests

Authors are requested to disclose interests that are directly or indirectly related to the work submitted for publication. Interests within the last 3 years of beginning the work (conducting the research and preparing the work for submission) should be reported. Interests outside the 3-year time frame must be disclosed if they could reasonably be perceived as influencing the submitted work. Disclosure of interests provides a complete and transparent process and helps readers form their own judgments of potential bias. This is not meant to imply that a financial relationship with an organization that sponsored the research or compensation received for consultancy work is inappropriate. Please download this form.

Disclosures and declarations

All authors are requested to include information regarding sources of funding, financial or non-financial interests, study-specific approval by the appropriate ethics committee for research involving humans and/or animals, informed consent if the research involved human participants, publication on vulnerable populations, and a statement on the welfare of animals if the research involved animals (as appropriate).

The decision on whether such information should be included is not only dependent on the scope of the journal, but also the scope of the article. Work submitted for publication may have implications for public health or general welfare and in those cases, it is the responsibility of all authors to include the appropriate disclosures and declarations.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

To ensure objectivity and transparency in research and to ensure that accepted principles of ethical and professional conduct have been followed, authors should include information regarding sources of funding, potential conflicts of interest (financial or non-financial), informed consent if the research involved human participants, publication on vulnerable populations, and a statement on the welfare of animals if the research involving animals.

Authors should include the following statements (if applicable) in a separate section entitled "Compliance with Ethical Standards" when submitting a paper.

Originality and Plagiarism

Authors can guarantee that their writings are entirely unique and that any writing or words credited to another are properly referenced. Additionally, publications that had an impact on the nature of the finding reported in the manuscript should be acknowledged. The writers must certify that the manuscript has never been written before.

It is not permitted to copy text from other publications without correctly attributing the source (plagiarism) or to publish several papers with nearly identical material by the same writers (self-plagiarism). It is against the law to concurrently apply the same results to more than one Journal. It is prohibited for authors to present results collected from others as their own. Authors should consider the work of those who shaped the direction and course of their research.

Check plagiarism

The ijte will conduct a plagiarism check on all submitted papers using Turnitin's program. The ijte only considers papers with less than 20% similarity index for publication. IJTE will immediately reject any paper that involves plagiarism.

AI and AI-Assisted Tools

Authorship implies human-only responsibilities and duties. Each author is responsible for ensuring that any questions regarding the accuracy or integrity of any portion of the work are adequately investigated and resolved, and authorship requires the ability to endorse the final version of the work and consent to its submission. The authors are also responsible for ensuring that the work is original, that the indicated authors qualify for authorship, and that the work does not violate the rights of third parties.

Papers generated by AI or AI-assisted Tools are not accepted for publication in this Journal. This policy pertains only to the writing process and not to the use of AI tools to analyze data and gain insights for the research procedure. This policy does not prohibit the use of artificial intelligence and AI-assisted instruments in formal research design or research methods. When AI or AI-assisted tools are used in this context, they should be described in the Methods section as part of the work's methodology.

The authors are responsible and answerable for the content of their work. The authors should indicate in their manuscript if they utilized AI and AI-assisted technologies, and a corresponding statement will appear in the final product. Disclosure of the use of these technologies promotes honesty and trust among authors, readers, reviewers, editors, and contributors and facilitates adherence to the tool's or technology's terms of service.

Brief Information

Country of Publication: Texas, United States
Publisher: ICTE Press, https://i-cte.org/press
Website: https://i-jte.org
Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/@ictepress
Open Access: Yes
ISSN: 2768-4563
Frequency: 4 issues per year
Publication Dates: February, May, August, and November
Language: English
Scope: TESOL, Languages & Linguistics, Education, Pedagogies & Language Teaching, Translation & Interpretation, Cultural studies, Quality Assurance in Education
Article Processing Charges: $70
Types of Journal: Academic/Scholarly Journals
Indexed: Google Scholar, ORCID, Crossref, DOI, Library of Congress, PKP PN, LOCKSS, CLOCKSS, Semantic Scholar, ROAD, EuroPub, J-Gate,
Policy: Double blind peer review
Plagiarism check: Turnitin
Contact: editor@i-jte.org; publishing@i-cte.org