# CÁC YẾU TỐ ẢNH HƯỞNG TỚI KHẢ NĂNG VIẾT TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC CỦA VIỆT NAM

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*Kĩ năng viết đóng vai trò quan trọng trong việc học ngoại ngữ, đặc biệt là đối với sinh viên đại học, những người cần sử dụng kỹ năng này trong quá trình học tập, nghiên cứu ở trường cũng như giao tiếp trong công việc tương lai. Tuy nhiên, đây có vẻ là kĩ năng khó nhất đối với sinh viên Việt Nam. Để tìm hiểu thực tế tình hình học kĩ năng viết tại cơ sở đào tạo của mình, chúng tôi đã thực hiện một cuộc khảo sát nhằm xác định các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến khả năng viết tiếng Anh của sinh viên không chuyên tại Trường Đại học Thăng Long (TLU). 182 sinh viên năm thứ nhất tham gia cuộc khảo sát bằng cách trả lời bảng câu hỏi. Nhìn chung, các yếu tố ảnh hưởng tới khả năng viết tiếng Anh theo quan điểm của sinh viên là cách tiếp cận giảng dạy và đánh giá kĩ năng viết, việc hướng dẫn của giáo viên và thực hành của sinh viên, ảnh hưởng của các yếu tố văn hóa xã hội, mục đích giao tiếp của bài viết. Nghiên cứu này là tiền đề để thực hiện các nghiên cứu hành động, trên cơ sở đó nhằm điều chỉnh chương trình giảng dạy kĩ năng viết cho sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh tại TLU.*

***Từ khóa:** yếu tố ảnh hưởng, kĩ năng viết, sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh.*

*Writing plays an important role in foreign language learning, especially for undergraduate students who need this skill for academic and research purposes as well as for communication in their future jobs. However, writing is deemed to be the most difficult skill for Vietnamese students. Therefore, a survey was conducted to investigate the factors affecting the English writing skills of non-English majored students at Thang Long University (TLU). 182 first-year students participated in this research by responding to a questionnaire. The survey found that the approach to teaching and assessing writing, teacher instruction and student practice, the influence of socio-cultural context, and the writings' communicative purposes influence students' writing capability. This study may act as an impetus for future action research, based on which the curriculum for teaching writing to non-English majored students at TLU can be adjusted.*

***Key words:** affecting factors, writing, non-English majors.*

## FACTORS AFFECTING NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' WRITING AT A UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

### 1. Introduction

The Project entitled "Teaching and Learning Foreign Language in national education system, period 2008-2020" (later adjusted in 2017 to extend the project to 2025) was approved to thoroughly

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renovate the teaching and learning foreign language practice in Vietnam. According to this Project, by 2025, most Vietnamese students finishing vocational and higher education can competently use a foreign language and compete for jobs in the regional and global markets (Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg, 2008 and Decision 2080/QĐ-TTg, 2017). Although the project aims at all foreign languages taught and learnt in the country, the whole society mainly pays attention to English as it is used as global lingua franca in various aspects of life, especially in business, science and trade. English is believed to help individual citizens in their competition for further study and working opportunities, help the country to integrate into the world globalization and compete in the world market. However, many Vietnamese learners of English have not been able to use the language competently yet, especially in their writing skill (Luu, 2011; Trinh & Nguyen, 2014). For example, a majority of exam candidates could not construct a paragraph properly or chose to skip the writing section in the English paper of the Vietnamese National General Certificate for Secondary Education Examination. This partly contributed to their low overall score (mainly between 2.0 and 3.5 points) (Pham & Truong, 2021). Other statistics proving Vietnamese students' difficulty in writing is their IELTS writing band score. Vietnamese test-takers scored the lowest average for writing in the IELTS academic test in 2015 (Nguyen, 2016) and in 2019 (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2022). All the evidence shows that English writing is a big challenge for Vietnamese learners.

However, it is undeniable that writing is crucial for higher education students' academic performance and their later work (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2022). As Vietnam attracts more foreign investments and integrates more deeply in the world's economy, it is worthwhile for tertiary students to prepare themselves with skills to write for professional purposes. Right at the university, they must be well equipped with the range of written genres they will encounter in future working places. Nonetheless, the real writing teaching and learning practice at Vietnam's universities is still a distance from the requirement, especially for non-English major students, who are believed to have weaker language knowledge foundation and fewer opportunities to practice writing skill separately compared to English major ones.

In the context of Thang Long University (TLU), non-English majors do not have writing sessions; instead, they have writing skill as an integral part of integrated lessons. They learn to write a wide range of business-related documents and correspondence such as reports, proposals, emails, letters, etc. in certain provided contexts. However, their products have not met the requirements, and writing has always been the worst among four language skills. For that reason, this study tries to answer the research question:

*What factors affect non-English major students' performance in business-related writing at Thang Long university (TLU)?*

# 1. Literature review

That students' writing is the worst among four English language skills is not only a problem in Vietnam but also in other countries teaching and learning English as a foreign language, such as China, Thailand, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan. Therefore, the effort of international scholars has been invested in discovering factors affecting ESL and EFL students' writing abilities. Because of different socio-economic, cultural, educational conditions, students from different countries have different groups of difficulties; however, some outstanding factors affecting English learners' writing can be identified.

## 1.1. Teaching approach

One important factor affecting students' writing performance is the teaching approach (Krisnachinda, 2006; Nguyen, 2018; Yang, 2016). If the teaching approach is appropriate, it will facilitate students' writing; otherwise, it will hamper their skills. As found by previous researchers, linguistic knowledge is still the main focus of most writing classes. For example, at Thai universities, the teaching of writing focuses on producing 'coherent, error-free text' while ignoring purpose, audience and processes of composing the text itself (Krisnachinda, 2006; Nguyen, 2018). Yang (2016) stated that in his country, English writing courses are still traditionally around teachers' lectures, learning is mainly a process of knowledge input. Chinese teachers focus too much on teaching language knowledge with little attention to socio-cultural background. This is also a common practice in Vietnam, where writing classes not only at tertiary but also at lower levels of education are still language-based (Luu, 2011; Trinh & Nguyen, 2014; Evans, 2019; Pham & Truong, 2021). Under such pedagogy, writing activities become tightly controlled tasks. Students often do grammar- or vocabulary-based exercises such as gap-filling, sentence-building, and transformation. Even composition writing tasks are modified into the above-mentioned forms. If students are required to write a composition, their teachers still focus on equipping them with topic-related vocabulary while asking them some lead-in questions to help them shape ideas (Luu, 2011; Evans, 2019; Trinh & Nguyen, 2014). Otherwise, teachers may ask students to imitate, copy, or change words from model text (Krisnachinda, 2006). Such practices emphasize memorization and rote learning, which do not enable students to produce various writings that can 'serve the purpose of plurality of real readers outside the classroom'.

## 1.2. Testing and assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching, it guides teachers in their teaching practice (Shogbesan & Bamidele, 2016). It is undeniable that passing exams is vital to both teachers and students; therefore, it is understandable why teachers are in favor of providing their students with skills necessary to meet the exams' requirement. In China, because of the poor requirement of writing in College English Syllabus, this skill falls far behind others

(Yang, 2016). In Vietnam and Thailand, English tests often include objective-type questions, for instance, sentence completion, reordering jumbled-word sentences, gap filling, error correction, etc. (Luu, 2011; Nguyen, 2018). As a result, most English writing classes are exam-driven with tightly controlled tasks, which causes learners a number of difficulties in producing real communicative writing.

### 1.3. Teachers' and students' involvement in writing

Another factor related to teaching practice that greatly influences students' writing is teachers and students' participation in writing classes. Researchers found that English classes in East Asia are still traditionally teacher-oriented (Luu, 2011; Trinh & Nguyen, 2014; Yang, 2016; Evans, 2019; Pham & Truong, 2021). This leads to a vicious circle between teachers' and students' roles in English writing classes. On the one hand, that teachers focus too much on teaching language knowledge and ignore socio-cultural background, do not provide timely and proper feedback makes students become inactive in learning. On the other hand, students' lack of enthusiasm and contribution in classes in return leads to teachers' passive teaching. This is the reason for the fact that writing falls far behind other skills.

### 1.4. The influence of native culture

Culture is closely related to languages, and has long been considered important in foreign language instruction. Especially,

knowledge of culture was proved to have great impact on students' productive skills (Jamasbi & Bagher, 2017). Therefore, to boost students' writing ability, they should be equipped with linguistic and cultural knowledge of the language they learn. However, it seems that teachers have not paid enough attention to this issue. Lacking teachers' instruction, students have to struggle to complete their writing. Chinese students, for example, tend to apply their native principles into their English writing as their teachers do not notice that Chinese culture and thinking are different from those of Western world (Yang, 2016). Similarly, Thai university students often plan their essays in Thai language and then translate them into English (Nguyen, 2018) without noticing the different nature between the two languages, two cultures and two ways of thinking. This problem was also found in Iranian, Pakistani and Vietnamese contexts (Ariyanfar & Mitchell, 2020; Evans, 2019; Fareed et al., 2016; Luu, 2011; Pham & Truong, 2021; Trinh & Nguyen, 2014). As teachers are not aware of cultural differences and do not equip students with such knowledge, students will easily commit culture-related mistakes. Their negative transfer of their native culture to the target one will make their writing unnatural.

The four mentioned factors unarguably have influence on students' writing but they are not the same across contexts. This study, therefore, aims to examine whether such factors affect students' writing performance in the context of the study (TLU).

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Context of the study

Thang Long University is a practice-oriented training institution in Vietnam, aiming to provide high-quality human resources for the cause of industrialization, modernization and international integration of the country. The university has always considered English a key subject, creating competitive advantages for the school's students. To equip students with practical English for international working environment, TLU is applying an English teaching curriculum of 9 modules from Elementary 1-2-3 to Pre-intermediate 1-2-3, and then Intermediate 1-2-3 for all non-English majors, in which students study business-oriented general English (there is no ESP course) and develop all four language skills. Learners use the course book Market leader Elementary (3$^{rd}$ edition) for the first three levels, and Market leader Pre-intermediate (3$^{rd}$ edition) for the next 3 levels. In the last three levels, students work on TOEIC-based materials to achieve the dual goal of improving their English competency and satisfying the MOET's requirement for outcome standard (non-English major students must have a TOEIC score of at least 450 to graduate from university).

The course books Market Leader are divided into 12 units; each unit consists of seven parts: starting up, vocabulary, reading, listening, language review, skills and case study. Students in the first six modules study writing integrated in case studies, in which they are given a practical situation, they then discuss in pair or in group to solve the problem(s) and writing is a follow-up activity basing on that case situation and discussion. Such writing is believed to be practical and useful for students' written communication as it mimics what they have to deal with in later jobs. To be specific, at Elementary level, students have to write a wide range of business-related documents such as emails, letters, messages, plans, company profiles, action minutes. At pre-intermediate, students are required to deal with a higher level of business correspondence writing tasks such as emails, letters, reports and proposals.

### 2.2. Research method

To have a thorough look at all the factors affecting TLU non-English major students' writing performance, this study employed a quantitative method. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire included 15 items, of which five were close-ended and the other ten allowed respondents to choose more than one option or provide additional information. Quantitatively, Microsoft Excel was utilized to count frequencies and percentages of the responses to close-ended questions. For those open questions, data collected were then synthesized, compared and contrasted to qualitatively draw a comprehensive picture of factors affecting students' writing.

### 2.3. Participants and sampling strategies

Participating in the study were 182 non-English specialized freshmen coming from

nine classes of six consecutive levels from Elementary 1 to Pre-intermediate 3. The sampling approach adopted in this study is non-probability sampling or purposive sampling for specific. Within this study, according to the theoretical foundation mentioned in the literature review, students' both past and current experience should be investigated to have a thorough look at teaching approach throughout different education levels, one of the factors affecting students' writing performance. Therefore, the participants should be those who were studying English writing at TLU, meanwhile they could still remember their experience with previous teaching and learning writing practice. Accordingly, first year students were chosen.

### 2.4. Data collection and procedures

A questionnaire with 15 items were employed to collect data. This survey instrument was designed based on the literature review to check if TLU students have encountered the same problems as those reviewed in the literature when they study business-related writing. The questionnaire was consulted and proof-read by two expert researchers. The survey aimed to collect data on the factors affecting students' writing performance; therefore, it concerned teachers' teaching approach, testing and assessment, prior learning experience and difficulties.

The questionnaire was distributed to 297 non-English specialized freshmen from nine classes of six consecutive levels from Elementary 1 to Pre-intermediate 3, from which 182 responses were received, showing the response rate of 61.3%, an acceptable rate in education (Fincham, 2008). Data collected were counted and analyzed using Excel to construct frequency and percentage distribution tables and graphs based on the questionnaire items.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. Status quo of students' writing performance

It can be seen clearly that a majority of students at TLU have not achieved targeted requirements for the writing skills.
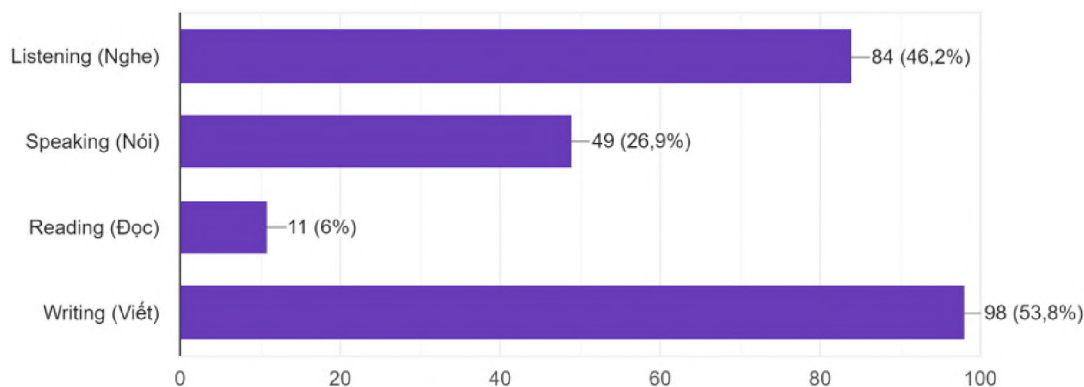


*Figure 1. Skill(s) students achieved the lowest mark in their latest midterm*

As stated in the survey, some students obtained the same lowest mark for two skills; however, it cannot be denied that writing was their worst performance. Out of 182 survey participants, up to 98 (accounting for 53.8%) had the worst performance in writing in their latest four-skill mid-term test. This seems to go in accordance with TLU non-English major students' end-of-term test results for Semester 3 Group 2 (academic year 2021-2022). Statistics showed that 47.5% test takers performed the worst in their writing. This alarming fact urges the researcher to find out what causes students to underperform in writing so that solutions to improve their skill will be found accordingly.

### 3.2. Factors affecting students' writing performance

#### 3.2.1. Approach to teaching and assessing writing

Students' learning experience at both high school and university was investigated to see how they were and are being taught to write in English. The findings indicate that writing classes at different educational levels are still predominantly language-based and teacher-centered; therefore, students lack the skills to produce pieces of writing with practical values.
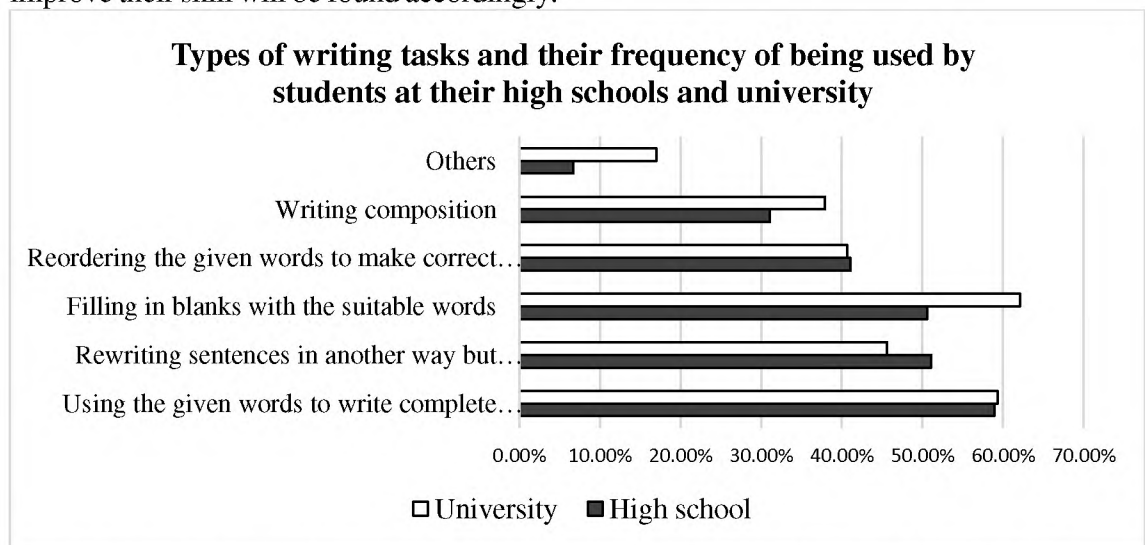


Figure 2. Types of writing tasks and their frequency of being used by students at their high schools and university

Figure 2 shows, although there is a slight difference in the frequency of use of each type between high school and university, it is obvious that the most common writing exercises throughout the educational systems are all grammar- and vocabulary-based. Specifically, "using given words to write complete sentences" was the highest frequently-used type of task to the survey participants (58.9%) at high school, the second popular type was "rewriting the sentences without changing the meaning" (51.1%), two following types were "filling in blanks with suitable words"

and "reordering the given words to make correct sentences". Regarding university experience, the list of writing tasks sorted top-down by frequency of being used by students is as follow: filling in blanks with suitable words (62.1%), using given words to write complete sentences (59.3%), rewriting the sentences without changing the meaning (45.6%) and reordering the given words to make correct sentences (40.7%). Even the "others" that survey participants mentioned also check their linguistic knowledge, for instance, "matching sentences halves", "multiple-choice questions", "error finding and correction", and "writing conversations". In the meantime, writing composition - the task with practical communicative purpose - just accounts for small portions of the respondents' writing classes. This result goes in line with previous research. According to Evans (2019) and Luu (2011), students were given not only pure language-checking exercises but also certain writing tasks, for instance, letter writing, in the form of grammar and vocabulary practices. Pham & Truong (2021) also found out that a majority of high school students normally practiced writing in a tightly controlled way. Consequently, they did not possess any strategies for composing texts independently. All in all, writing composition has not been given enough attention although this activity is closest to real-life written communication.

Regarding writing compositions, survey participants affirmed that teachers prefer providing direct instruction to analyzing sample text(s) to help students understand what to do. 19.1% of respondents stated that their high school teachers gave them samples, while only 7.3% said their university teachers did that. No matter what approach teachers choose, there is an obvious common feature that they still focus more on linguistic knowledge.

|  | High school | University |
|---|---|---|
| Analyze the instruction to help students understand the requirements | 69.1% | 47.5% |
| Make guiding questions to help you shape your ideas | 38.2% | 9.5% |
| Provide vocabulary related to the topic | **37.6%** | **7.8%** |
| Provide syntactic structures that can be used in the target composition | **44.4%** | **20.7%** |
| Initiate the format of the target composition | 19.1% | 7.3% |
| Analyze the social context and communicative purpose of the target writing | 4.5% | 7.3% |

*Table 1. Steps teachers do to directly instruct students on how to write a composition at high schools and university*

As can be seen in Table 1, the former groups of teachers often prioritized helping their students understand the requirement correctly, and then they made sure that students could produce a composition with the fewest grammatical and lexical

mistakes. For the latter group, providing language features was even a top priority. Data in Table 2 shows that teachers most often tried to equip students with vocabulary and grammar input.

|  | High school | University |
|---|---|---|
| Give the model text as a sample answer only | 4.7% | 5.5% |
| Pick up the language features and teach vocabulary, syntactic structures | **61%** | **52.8%** |
| Analyze the format of the model text(s) | 20.9% | 26.4% |
| Analyze the cultural and social context, communicative purpose of the model text(s) | 7.6% | 7.4% |
| Analyze the idea development of the model text(s) | 4.7% | 4.3% |
| Distinguish the tone of the model text(s) | 1.2% | 3.7% |

*Table 2. Steps teachers do when using model text(s) to instruct students on how to write a composition at high schools and university*

This finding is in accordance with that of Trinh and Nguyen (2014) that teachers often provide students with topic-related vocabulary and guiding questions for brainstorming ideas. Model texts may also be provided, but language form, rather than the communicative purpose and audience of that model, is often analyzed. The current teaching writing approach is believed to help students produce error-free texts following the models of correct language with similar topic only. They are not equipped with enough crucial features of the text types needed for their independent text compositions, such as social purposes, schematic structure and proper linguistic aspects typical for a certain type of writing. There is no doubt why students do not pay attention to the communicative purpose and audience of their writings. They they often fail to produce a successful written text when the topic is dissimilar to that they have been taught by teacher. In fact,73.9% of the respondents said that they were asked to write a composition of the same or similar topic to that of the sample. As a result, 79% are not confident that they can write effective compositions of the type they have learnt, no matter what topic is required.

That such an improper teaching approach remains consistent throughout the education system can partly be attributed to testing and assessment.

|  | Testing writing | | Teaching writing | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | High school | University | High school | University |
| Using the given words to write complete sentences | 57.4% | 58.7% | 58.9% | 59.3% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rewriting sentences in another way but remain the same meanings | 52.3% | 53.1% | 51.1% | 45.6% |
| Filling in blanks with the suitable words | 50.6% | 50.8% | 50.6% | 62.1% |
| Reordering the given words to make correct sentences | 44.9% | 39.7% | 41.1% | 40.7% |
| Writing composition | 30.7% | 33% | 31.1% | 37.9% |
| Others (Finding and correcting errors) | 6.3% | 10% | 6.7% | 17% |

*Table 3. Comparing the frequency of writing tasks appearing in classroom and in the test*

Survey results show that the frequency of occurrence of each exercise type in the tests and during the learning process is proportional to each other. Teachers spend more time preparing students for the task types that appear more often in the tests. As a result, students get more used to doing language-based exercises rather than composing their own complete product. In general, long-term exposure to this exam-driven teaching style makes it difficult for students to achieve the real objective of writing.

Another aspect of teaching approach is the role of teachers and students in the class. According to Nguyen (2009), most of EFL teachers in Vietnam find writing a complicated skill to teach. This may explain for their inactive participation in their own teaching. Students in the solid Vietnamese writing classrooms of all levels often play the role of passive language knowledge receivers and imitators while teachers are providers (Tran, 2007; Trinh & Nguyen, 2014; Pham & Truong, 2021). This is proved to be true in the case of TLU. Teachers play the central role in giving instruction or modelling the text(s) before students work out their own writing. As stated in *2.3*,

teachers mostly provide necessary language-based input from their viewpoint. Students are not provided with "discovery tasks" so they are not motivated to participate in and integrate "all receptive and productive skills" in classroom activities. These teacher-centered practices lead to passive learning attitudes among students (Trinh & Nguyen, 2014). In such classes, interaction is often one-way from teachers to students and there are a few collaborative activities (Trinh & Nguyen, 2014). In fact, 133 out of 182 non-English majors participating into the survey stated that they practiced writing individually, while only 49 said they worked with a partner to produce a joint composition after their teachers' lecture.

*3.2.2. Teachers and students' lack of attention to cultural differences and culture-related issues in writing*
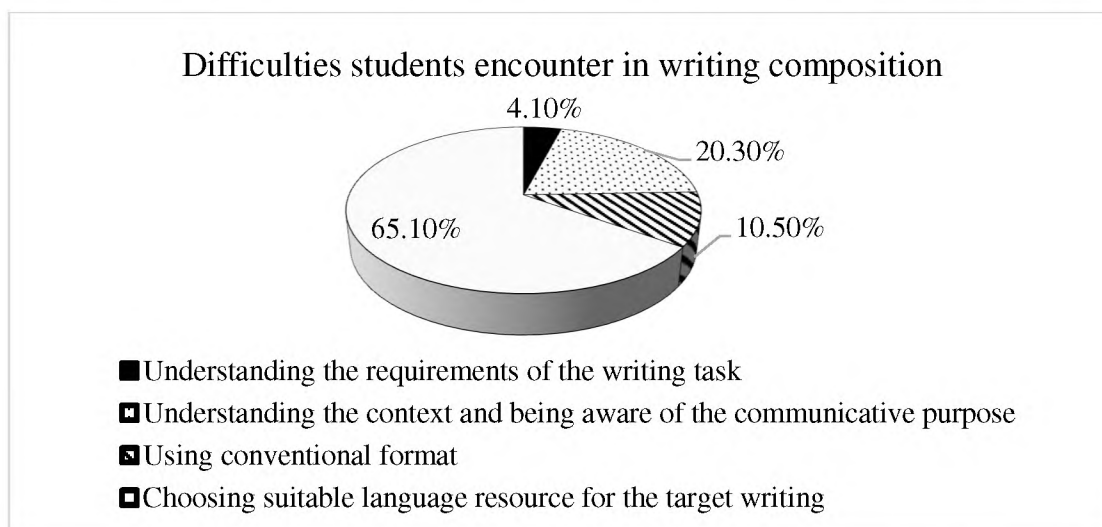
Statistics from Table 1 and Table 2 reveal that social and cultural features have not been given adequate attention. When teachers provide direct instruction, only 4.5% of those from high schools and 7.3% from university mention the target writing's social context and communicative purpose. The figures are slightly higher when teachers modelling the sample(s), 7.6%

and 7.4% of the survey participants said that their teachers from high school and university, respectively analyzed the cultural and social context, communicative purpose of the model text(s). Such survey results confirm the common practice found earlier by Chinese and Arab scholars (Ariyanfar & Mitchell, 2020; Yang, 2016) that, in English classes for non-English majors, teachers have long been focusing on teaching language knowledge, and paying relatively little attention on instructing students on social and cultural background. In addition, EFL students have long been used to their first language's writing practice, including "a wide range of communicative acts: stylistics, rhetorical devices, grammar awareness, contextual awareness (setting audience, and readership), the physical aspects of writing and thought process" (Ariyanfar & Mitchell, 2020; Elachachi, 2015). Therefore, students tend to translate their own cultural values, norms and writing tradition from their first language into their writing in English, which makes their products fall far behind standard English pieces of writing in terms of content, organization, vocabulary use and even mechanical issue as punctuation. In other words, students' unawareness of socio-cultural variation between their L1 and L2 and lack of understanding of social context for the writings make their products fail to achieve the communicative purposes in target language, they just sound Vietnamese English (Nguyen, 2009).

### 3.3. Difficulties students encountered in writing composition

It is common to believe that with the current consistent teaching approach from high school to university, as presented above, students can have sufficient language input necessary for their composition production. However, the finding is really surprising in the way that a majority of students joining the survey (65.1%) have troubles choosing suitable language resources for their expression. Understanding the context and being aware of communicative purpose just ranks second in students' list of difficulties when it was named by 20.3% of the survey participants. Using conventional format and understanding the writing task requirements occupy positions three and four in the list with only 10.5% and 4.1% respectively. This survey result points out two notable facts: (1) students are crammed with too much language knowledge but they actually lack understanding on how to use this input properly in practical situations; (2) for students, it is more important to produce a free-of-error composition than a communicative fitting the context. This also shows that students are so used to the current teaching and assessing writing approach.

Difficulties students encounter in writing composition

4.10%

20.30%

65.10%

10.50%

- ■Understanding the requirements of the writing task
- ◙Understanding the context and being aware of the communicative purpose
- ◙Using conventional format
- ▢Choosing suitable language resource for the target writing

*Figure 3. Difficulties students encounter in writing composition*

In conclusion, the underperformance of non-English major students in writing can be attributed to three main reasons. First, the approach to teaching and assessing writing skills at all educational levels in Vietnam is improper. Although this approach is language-based, it cannot equip students with enough knowledge to properly use the language input when needed. Second, the role of teacher and students in writing classes is inadequate. Students are given little chance to contribute to their own skill development. Finally, students cannot write effectively because they lack awareness of cultural variance between English and Vietnamese and they tend to transfer their native cultural features into their writing in target language. These causes to students' poor performance have posed an urgent need to change the way writing is being taught.

## 4. Conclusion, Implication and Limitation

As writing in English gets increasingly important for students' academic and professional purposes, it has been given more attention; however, students' performance is still in many defects. Students' writing ability is affected by the systematic improper teaching and assessing approach, inadequate teacher instruction and students' practice, underestimation and negative transfer of cultural variances.

From the findings, the language-based tasks were popular not only in the classrooms but also in the tests. It means improper teaching approach cannot be fully blamed on teachers. They were constrained by the test format. To innovate teaching methods, testing and assessment should be changed first.

It was also found out that students could only write at sentence level as they were usually given sentence-level tasks. In addition, students could not use language input properly. Another result from the study shows that students' writing products have not achieve the target communicative

purposes as students lacked cultural knowledge.

Therefore, to make students be able to communicate in real life, the writing tasks should use authentic materials such as real-life correspondences to provide them with accurate linguistic and culture-related input and the contexts they are used.

Although the study did obtain the aim of finding out factors affecting TLU non-English majors' writing ability, it revealed a few limitations such as its limited scope (survey only at one university), lack of qualitative data, and simple data analysis employment (no inferential data analysis as t-test, correlation, etc.).

To improve TLU students' writing performance, a genre-based teaching approach is recommended as it is particularly relevant for non-English majors, suitable for academic and professional setting. Genre-based teaching and learning cycles help students to learn from very simple and dependent to independent steps. Working under this process, students can enhance their four language skills, promote cultural knowledge of the target language, promotes student autonomy and teamwork spirit, and, more importantly, improve their progress in writing. Therefore, this study serves as a rationale for the following research in which genre pedagogy can be applied and evaluated so that the curriculum will be adjusted to best facilitate students' writing improvement.

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**Appendix**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**An investigation into the status quo of non-English major students' learning writing at Thang Long university**

**Khảo sát thực trạng học kĩ năng viết tiếng Anh của sinh viên không chuyên tại Trường Đại học Thăng Long**

*This questionnaire is intended to investigate the status quo of non-English major students' learning writing skills at Thang Long university. Data collected from this survey will be used for research purpose and as a foundation for teaching method improvement. All responses will be kept anonymous and no one will be identifiable in the research.*

*Thank you very much for your kind taking time and effort!*

*Bảng câu hỏi này nhằm điều tra hiện trạng học kỹ năng viết của sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh tại Trường Đại học Thăng Long. Dữ liệu thu thập được từ cuộc khảo sát này sẽ được sử dụng cho mục đích nghiên cứu và làm nền tảng cho việc cải tiến phương pháp giảng dạy. Tất cả các câu trả lời sẽ được giữ ẩn danh và thông tin cá nhân của người tham gia sẽ được giữ kín.*

*Xin chân thành cảm ơn các bạn đã dành thời gian và công sức tham gia khảo sát!*

**1. What level of English in the curriculum are you taking? Cấp độ tiếng Anh bạn đang học ở trường là gì?**
A. Elementary 1 (Sơ cấp 1)
B. Elementary 2 (Sơ cấp 2)
C. Elementary 3 (Sơ cấp 3)
D. Pre-intermediate 1 (Sơ trung cấp 1)
E. Pre-intermediate 2 (Sơ trung cấp 2)
F. Pre-intermediate 3 (Sơ trung cấp 3)

**2. In which skill did you get the lowest mark in your latest midterm? Trong bài kiểm tra giữa kì gần nhất, kĩ năng nào bạn đạt điểm thấp nhất?**
A. Listening (Nghe)
B. Speaking (Nói)
C. Reading (Đọc)
D. Writing (Viết)

**SECTION 1: STATUS QUO OF LEARNING WRITING SKILL – HIỆN TRẠNG HỌC VIẾT HIỆN NAY**

**3. What type(s) of writing tasks do you often do in classes (You can choose more than one option)? Loại bài tập viết nào bạn thường làm trên lớp (bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)?**
A. Rewrite the sentences without changing the meanings (Viết lại câu sao cho nghĩa không đổi)
B. Reorder the given words to make correct sentences (Sắp xếp từ thành câu hoàn chỉnh)
C. Use the given words to write complete sentences (Dùng từ gợi ý viết câu hoàn chỉnh)
D. Fill in the blanks with suitable words (Điền từ vào chỗ trống)
E. Write compositions (Viết bài luận)
F. Other (Khác …..)

**4. In composition writing classes, your teacher often …**
**Khi học viết luận, giáo viên của bạn thường …**
A. instructs how to write directly. (If you choose this, answer question 5)
   trực tiếp hướng dẫn cách viết bài. (Nếu bạn chọn phương án này, trả lời câu hỏi 5)
B. provides and analyzes sample text to show what to do. (If you choose this, answer questions 6-7)
   cung cấp bài mẫu, phân tích bài mẫu để thuyết minh cách viết bài. (Nếu bạn chọn phương án này, trả lời câu hỏi 6-7)

**5. If your teacher instructs how to write directly, what does he/she often do (You can choose more than one option)? Khi trực tiếp hướng dẫn viết bài, giáo viên của bạn thường làm những gì? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)?**
A. Analyze the instruction to help students understand the requirements (Phân tích yêu cầu của đề bài để sinh viên nắm được yêu cầu của đề bài)
B. Make guiding questions to help you shape your ideas (Đặt câu hỏi dẫn dắt để tìm ý)
C. Provide vocabulary related to the topic (Cung cấp từ vựng liên quan đến chủ đề bài luận)
D. Provide syntactic structures that can be used in the composition (Cung cấp cấu trúc câu có thể sử dụng trong bài luận)
E. Analyze the format of the target text (Phân tích cấu trúc cần có của bài viết)
F. Analyze the social context and communicative purpose of the target writing (Phân tích bối cảnh xã hội và mục đích giao tiếp cần có của bài viết)

**6. If your teacher provides the sample composition, your teacher often ... (You can choose more than one option)**
**Khi giáo viên cung cấp bài luận mẫu, giáo viên thường ... (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)**

A. Give the model text as a sample answer only (chỉ dùng bài mẫu như một ví dụ về câu trả lời)
B. Pick up the language features and teach vocabulary, syntactic structures (lựa chọn các chi tiết ngôn ngữ điển hình như từ vựng, cấu trúc câu để dạy)
C. Analyze the format of the model text(s) (phân tích cấu trúc bài mẫu)
D. Analyze the cultural and social context, communicative purpose of the model text(s) (phân tích bối cảnh văn hóa và xã hội, mục tiêu giao tiếp của bài mẫu)
E. Analyze the idea development of the model text(s) (phân tích cách phát triển ý trong bài mẫu)
F. Distinguish the tone of the model text(s) (phân biệt văn phong của bài mẫu)

**7. After the sample analysis, you are often asked to ... Sau khi phân tích bài mẫu, bạn thường được yêu cầu ...**
A. practice writing individually. (tự luyện viết phần bài của mình)
B. practice writing collaboratively before doing it yourself. (viết bài chung với bạn trước khi tự mình viết bài)

**8. What type(s) of writing tasks do you often do in the tests? (You can choose more than 1 option). Loại bài tập viết nào bạn thường gặp trong các bài kiểm tra? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)**
A. Using the given words to write complete sentences (Dùng từ gợi ý viết câu hoàn chỉnh)
B. Rewriting sentences without changing the meanings (Viết lại câu sao cho nghĩa không đổi)
C. Filling in blanks with suitable words (Điền từ vào chỗ trống)
D. Reordering the given words to make correct sentences (Sắp xếp từ thành câu hoàn chỉnh)
E. Writing composition (Viết bài luận)
F. Other (Khác) …

**PART 2: HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE WITH LEARNING WRITING SKILL**
**9. What type(s) of writing tasks did you often do in classes (You can choose more than one option)? Loại bài tập viết nào bạn thường làm trên lớp (bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)?**
A. Rewrite the sentences without changing the meanings (Viết lại câu sao cho nghĩa không đổi)
B. Reorder the given words to make correct sentences (Sắp xếp từ thành câu hoàn chỉnh)
C. Use the given words to write complete sentences (Dùng từ gợi ý viết câu hoàn chỉnh)
D. Fill in the blanks with suitable words (Điền từ vào chỗ trống)
E. Write compositions (Viết bài luận)
F. Other (Khác …..)

**10. In composition writing classes, your teacher often …**
**Khi học viết luận, giáo viên của bạn thường …**
A. instructed how to write directly. (If you choose this, answer question 12)
   trực tiếp hướng dẫn cách viết bài. (Nếu bạn chọn phương án này, trả lời câu hỏi 12)
B. provided and analyzed sample text to show what to do. (If you choose this, answer questions 13-14)
   cung cấp bài mẫu, phân tích bài mẫu để thuyết minh cách viết bài. (Nếu bạn chọn phương án này, trả lời câu hỏi 13-14)

**11. If your teacher instructed how to write directly, what did he/she often do (You can choose more than one option)? Khi trực tiếp hướng dẫn viết bài, giáo viên của bạn thường làm những gì? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)?**
A. Analyzed the instruction to help students understand the requirements (Phân tích yêu cầu của đề bài để sinh viên nắm được yêu cầu của đề bài)
B. Made guiding questions to help you shape your ideas (Đặt câu hỏi dẫn dắt để tìm ý)
C. Provided vocabulary related to the topic (Cung cấp từ vựng liên quan đến chủ đề bài luận)
D. Provided syntactic structures that could be used in the composition (Cung cấp cấu trúc câu có thể sử dụng trong bài luận)
E. Analyzed the format of the target text (Phân tích cấu trúc cần có của bài viết)

F. Analyzed the social context and communicative purpose of the target writing (Phân tích bối cảnh xã hội và mục đích giao tiếp cần có của bài viết)

**12. If your teacher provided the sample composition, your teacher often ... (You can choose more than one option)**

**Khi giáo viên cung cấp bài luận mẫu, giáo viên thường ... (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)**

A. gave the model text as a sample answer only (chỉ dùng bài mẫu như một ví dụ về câu trả lời)

B. picked up the language features and taught vocabulary, syntactic structures (lựa chọn các chi tiết ngôn ngữ điển hình như từ vựng, cấu trúc câu để dạy)

C. analyzed the format of the model text(s) (phân tích cấu trúc bài mẫu)

D. analyzed the cultural and social context, communicative purpose of the model text(s) (phân tích bối cảnh văn hóa và xã hội, mục tiêu giao tiếp của bài mẫu)

E. analyzed the idea development of the model text(s) (phân tích cách phát triển ý trong bài mẫu)

F. distinguished the tone of the model text(s) (phân biệt văn phong của bài mẫu)

**13. After the sample analysis, you were often asked to ... Sau khi phân tích bài mẫu, bạn thường được yêu cầu ...**

A. practice writing individually. (tự luyện viết phần bài của mình)

B. practice writing collaboratively before doing it yourself. (viết bài chung với bạn trước khi tự mình viết bài)

**14. What type(s) of writing tasks did you often do in the tests? (You can choose more than 1 option). Loại bài tập viết nào bạn thường gặp trong các bài kiểm tra? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)**

A. Using the given words to write complete sentences (Dùng từ gợi ý viết câu hoàn chỉnh)

B. Rewriting sentences without changing the meanings (Viết lại câu sao cho nghĩa không đổi)

C. Filling in blanks with suitable words (Điền từ vào chỗ trống)

D. Reordering the given words to make correct sentences (Sắp xếp từ thành câu hoàn chỉnh)

E. Writing composition (Viết bài luận)

F. Others (Khác) ...

**PART 3: DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING WRITING SKILL**

**15. What are your difficulties in writing a composition? (You can choose more than one option). Những khó khăn bạn gặp phải khi viết bài luận là gì? (Bạn có thể chọn nhiều hơn một phương án trả lời)**

A. Understanding the requirements of the writing task (Hiểu yêu cầu của đề bài)

B. Understanding the context and being aware of the communicative purpose (Hiểu được bối cảnh của bài viết và xác định được mục đích giao tiếp cần có của bài viết)

C. Use conventional format (viết đúng cấu trúc của thể loại bài viết)

D. Choosing suitable language resource for the target writing (Lựa chọn các yếu tố ngôn ngữ phù hợp cho bài viết)

E. Other (Khác) ...

*(Ngày nhận bài: 27/7/2022; ngày duyệt đăng: 06/4/2023)*