

Online Task-Based Language Teaching and Face-to-Face TBLT Utilizing SIKOLA in Writing Class: How does It Affect EFL Students' Writing Performance and Attitude?

Marleiny Radjuni¹

¹Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

*Correspondence: marleinyradjuni@unhas.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the online task-based language teaching (TBLT) and face-to-face learning affects EFL learners' writing performance and attitude. The study focused on the application TBLT in teaching writing using two methods: online learning with SIKOLA platform and face-to-face learning which had only recently been developed. This research used mixed-methods. This study included one class of twenty-four undergraduate students (aged 19-21). Students were asked to complete the tasks online and face-to-face using the LMS SIKOLA, which has been used throughout the semesters at the university. The study discovered that students had positive attitudes toward the use of online task-based language teaching in terms of providing better drafts and revision. The study also discovered that there was a strong understanding of the procedures for carrying out the task-based assessments. In other words, they found out themselves that these methods can improve their performance in writing such as writing better drafts and revisions. The findings will help EFL students understand the procedures of online TBLT and face-to-face TBLT strategies in writing classes. Learners are encouraged to actively participate in both online and face-to-face learning discussions.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Published June 1st 2023



KEYWORDS

EFL Students; Face-to-Face; Language Teaching; SIKOLA; Writing Class.

ARTICLE LICENCE

© 2023 Universitas Hasanuddin
Under the license CC BY-SA
4.0



1. Introduction

Writing is an important part of language learning. It is required at the university level to express ideas and thoughts for academic purposes. Despite its importance, teaching writing to student writers appear to be a complex matter that requires more attention from language teachers (Cheung, 2016; Hidayati, 2018). This is because EFL students face a wide range of writing issues, including linguistic, cognitive, and affective issues (Fareed et al., 2016). In line with this notion, university teachers require more innovative teaching strategies to help students solve writing problems and improve their writing skills.

Because of the rapid advancement of Internet technology, language teachers are being forced to use language tools in their classrooms (Hockly, 2015). Several studies have shown that internet technology promotes language learning (Hockly, 2016; Sharma, 2008). Currently, many students use laptop/tablet and/or smartphones in their daily activities. Thus, university teachers can use these devices to help teaching language skills. Many scholars in language learning utilize these to improve English achievement (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012; Jarvis, 2015; Liu, Zheng, & Chen, 2019).

Prior research (Baralt & Gomez, 2017; Park, 2012) reveals that the majority of online TBLT (Task-based Language Teaching) strategies are used in ESL settings. Only a few studies investigated the use of web based TBLT in EFL classrooms. Regarding this matter, Hasanuddin University, as a place to do this research currently establish one platform called SIKOLA (Learning Management System) for internal use, as a basis of online learning. SIKOLA is an updated Learning Management System (LMS) application, where the teaching and learning process and interactions between lecturers and students take place through online. Unhas has previously developed an LMS, where the transformation towards SIKOLA can be likened to changing a vehicle from an old model to a new model. Therefore, this research will integrate TBLT with is platform in EFL contexts using this LMS. As a result, research on the impact of online and face-to-face TBLT strategies on writing performance and attitude among EFL learners is critical. The current study is concerned with the application TBLT in teaching writing using two methods: online learning with SIKOLA platform and face-to-face learning.

Many researchers in language learning contexts have been drawn to TBLT for many years (Calvert & Sheen, 2014; Long, 2016; Skehan, 2016). The TBLT strategy is typically divided into two phases: pre-task, and post-task (Willis,

2012). According to previous research, TBLT improves learners' language performance (Adiantika & Purnomo, 2018; Jurenko, 2015). Furthermore, TBLT has been used to teach writing skills (Rahimi & Zhang, 2017), and it has been discovered that when teachers use the TBLT strategy for teaching writing, students' writing proficiency improves.

Online learning is regarded as a type of distance learning or distance education delivered via the internet (Bartley & Golek, 2004). Several studies have found that online learning improves language learning outcomes (Al-Maqtri, 2014; Sharma, 2006). Because it is a free collaboration tool for teachers and their students, Google Classrooms has grown in popularity for online learning. Google Classrooms also provides online material delivery and task management tools for language teachers. Learners can communicate with their peers and teachers online through Google Classrooms, which may increase learner participation in online settings (Heggart & Yoo, 2018).

Online TBLT entails assigning tasks to language learners via SIKOLA tool. A number of studies have found that internet based, TBLT improves language achievement, particularly writing skills (Oskoz & Elola et al., 2014). This study focuses on an online TBLT strategy for teaching writing through online task delivery aided by SIKOLA. Online classroom activities are used in the pre-task, during-task, and post-task phases of teaching.

The goals of this study are to highlight the effects of online TBLT and face-to-face TBLT on EFL learners' writing performance and to describe their attitudes toward online TBLT practices. The attitude of learners, perceived benefits, and challenges of implementing online TBLT are also discussed in depth.

The following research questions will be addressed in this study:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in writing performance between groups of students taught through online TBLT classes and groups of students taught through face-to-face TBLT classes?
2. What are the learners' feelings about online TBLT activities?

SIKOLA

To improve the online-based learning system, Hasanuddin University launched the SIKOLA Application (Learning Management System). SIKOLA is an updated Learning Management System (LMS) application, where the teaching and learning process and interactions between lecturers and students take place online. Unhas has previously developed an LMS, where the transformation towards SIKOLA can be likened to changing a vehicle from an old model to a new one.

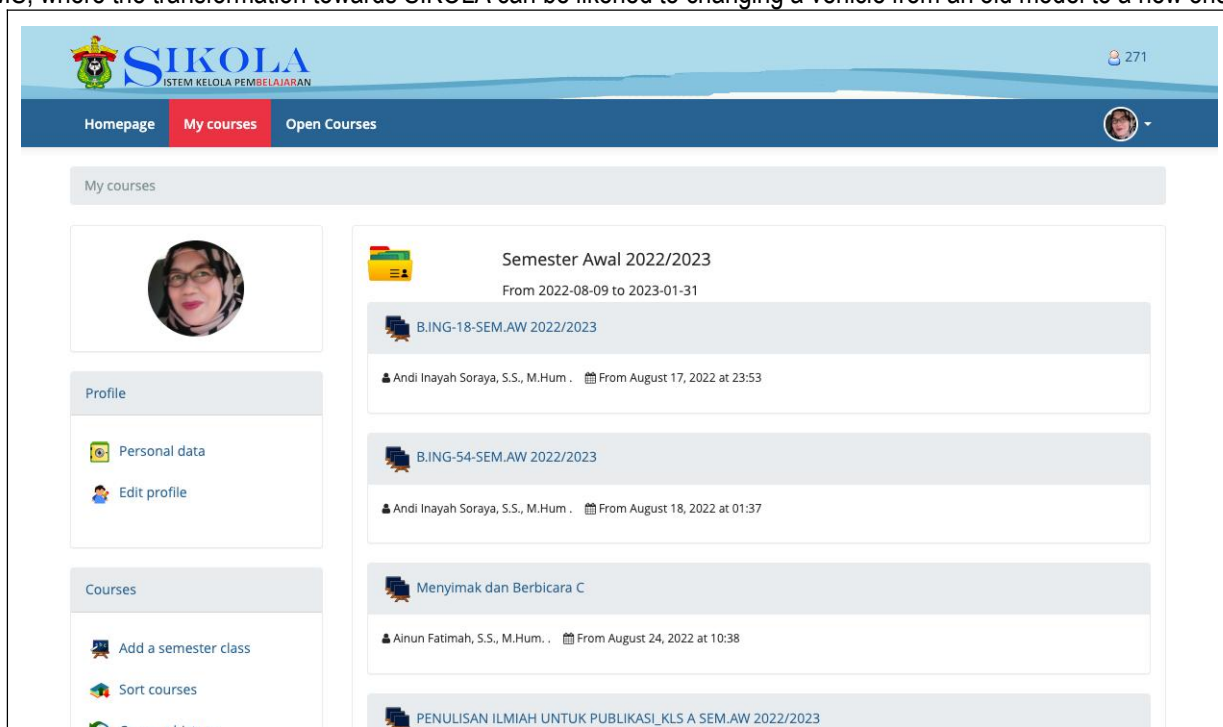


Figure 1. The user of SIKOLA Profile

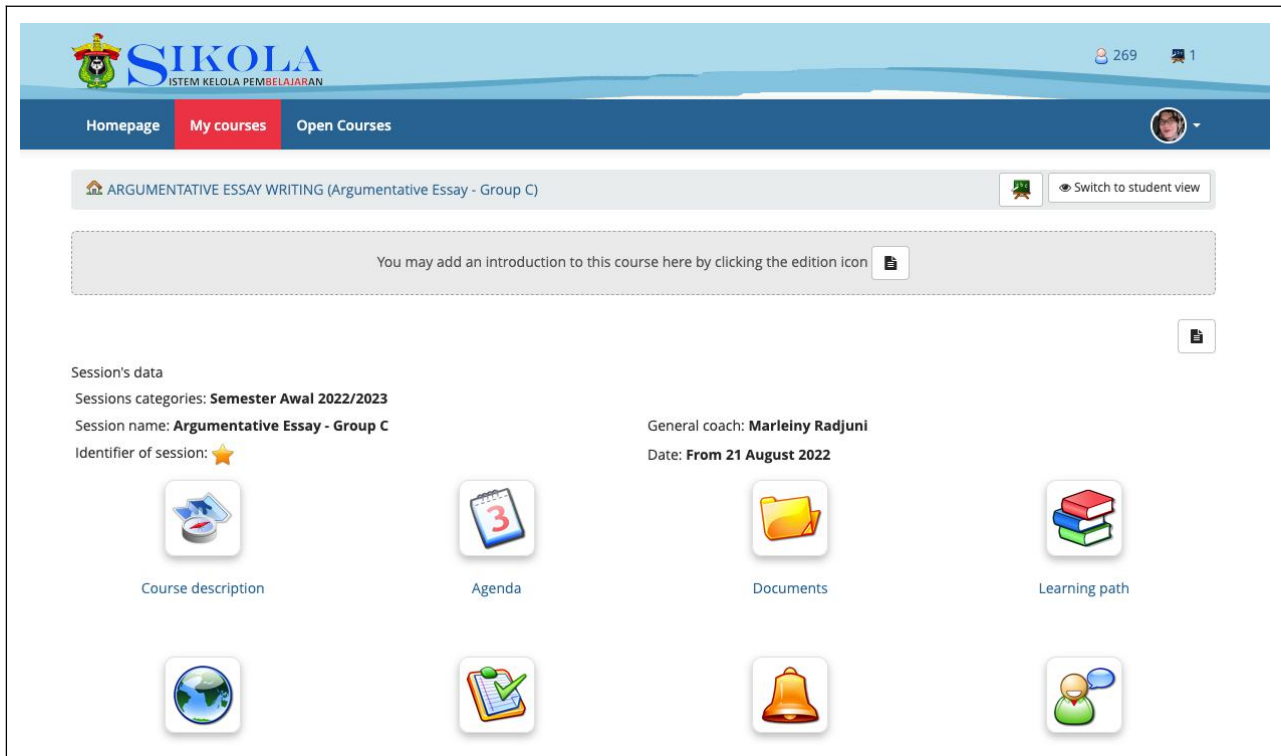


Figure 2. The SIKOLA Dashbor

2. Methodology

A. Participants

An explanatory mixed-methods design was used in this study. This study included one class of twenty-four undergraduate students (aged 19-21). The research was conducted at a state university in Makassar, named Hasanuddin University, Indonesia. The data was gathered during a genre-based writing course in the odd semester 2022/2023. The class intake was divided into two groups: one that received online TBLT and another that received face-to-face TBLT. The lecturer had been teaching writing courses at this university for over ten years. Furthermore, she taught both groups at the same time to reduce bias during the intervention stage.

B. Instruments

Writing tests were used to collect quantitative data, while semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Writing tests were used to assess students' writing abilities before and after treatment with online and face-to-face TBLT strategies. Writing prompts were tested for validity and reliability before being used with groups of students. Each group of students was assigned to write an expository text on a specific topic. Learners' writing products were graded using a five-criterion system based on the following aspects of their writing: organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

To obtain more detailed results, semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data. The interviews were designed to gather information about learners' perceptions of online and face-to-face TBLT implementation in writing activities. The interview guide included five questions about attitudes, benefits, and challenges associated with online TBLT practices.

C. Procedures

Data for the study were gathered using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The interventions took place over the course of thirty-two meetings. Participants were initially asked to write an expository text on the topic of "positive and negative effects of social media" to collect quantitative data. The students were given sixty minutes to create a text on their own. Following that, both groups received interventions with varying treatments.

Learners in the online TBLT group practiced writing in small online groups. The three teaching phases were used to guide the learning activities. Before beginning the task, the lecturer provided the students with activities such as

introducing interesting topics, essential vocabulary, and grammatical structures in the pre-task. Following that, students were asked to compose a text using the writing prompts provided during the task phase. The drafts were written by groups of students, and their peers responded by providing online feedback. The students rewrote expository texts for online task discussions during the post-task phase. The teacher discussed writing aspects such as content, grammar, and vocabulary.

EFL learners in the face-to-face TBLT group participated in activities similar to those in the online TBLT group, but the lecturer taught and assigned tasks to the students in class. In pairs or small groups, the students collaborated to complete the tasks. Both groups were given a writing prompt on the topic "Death penalty for drug dealers" at the most recent meeting.

Several students (six people) were interviewed to explore their attitudes toward online TBLT activities in order to collect qualitative data. The representatives were chosen based on their participation in the online classroom discussions. Each respondent was given fifteen minutes to express their feelings about their attitude, as well as the benefits and challenges of learning writing with online TBLT. The interviews were audio-recorded in order to collect additional data.

D. Data Analysis

This study analyzed two types of data: quantitative and qualitative data. Statistical measures such as the t-test were used to proceed quantitative data. The results of learners' writing were graded using genre-based writing criteria. SPSS 22 was also used as a statistical program to support. Learners' responses were analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative data analysis. The utterances of learners were transcribed and coded based on themes and indicators. To answer the research questions, all data collected were analyzed concurrently using multiple procedures.

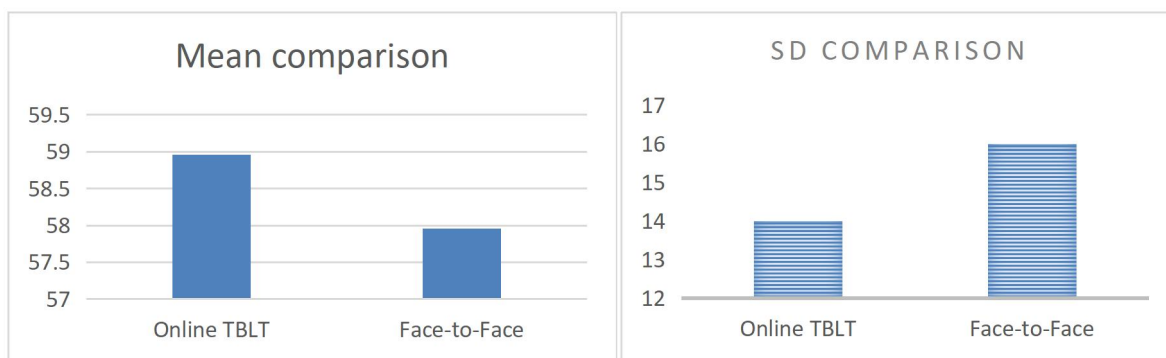
3. Result and Discussion

According to the descriptive analysis, the mean and standard deviations in the online TBLT group were 58.96 and 13.99, respectively, while the scores in the face-to-face TBLT were 57.96 and 15.19.

Table 1. Pre-test Results in the Online and Face-to-face TBLT Groups

Group	Mean	SD	t-test	Sig.
Online TBLT	58.96	13.99	.247	.806
Face-to-face	57.96	15.19		

The next chart is about a mean comparison between online TBLT and face to face.



Because the significance value (0.806) was greater than 0.05, the results of the independent-samples t-test show that there was no significant difference in pre-test writing results between online TBLT and face-to-face. This means that before the interventions, the learners' writing performance in both groups was comparable.

Table 2. Pre-test and Post-test Results in the Online and Face-to-face TBLT Groups

Groups	Mean/Pre-test	Mean/Post-test	SD/Pre-test	SD/Post-test	t	Sig.
Online TBLT	58.96	74.08	13.99	12.86	39.198	.000

Face-to-face	57.96	72.08	15.19	16.92	28.753	.000
--------------	-------	-------	-------	-------	--------	------

Because the significance value (0.000) was less than 0.05, the paired-samples t-test results show that there was a statistically significant difference in writing results between pre-test and post-test scores for the online TBLT group. It was also evident from the pre-test (58.96) and post-test mean scores (74.08). This means that the online TBLT strategy was successful in improving writing performance. Similarly, as evidenced by the significance value of 0.000, the face-to-face TBLT strategy was effective for teaching writing, and the mean score of the post-test was higher than that of the pre-test (72.08 > 57.96).

Table 3. Normality Test Results in the Post-test

Groups	Kolmogorov-Smimov/Statistic	olmogorov-Smimov/df	olmogorov-Smimov/Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk/Statistic	olmogorov-Smimov/df	olmogorov-Smimov/Sig.
Online TBLT	.108	31	.200	.938	31	.122
Face-to-face	.104	31	.175	.924	31	.054

Using a Shapiro-Wilk test, all normality test significance values were greater than 0.05 when compared to levels of significance. Table 3 shows that the data for online TBLT (0.122) and face-to-face TBLT (0.054) groups had normal distributions.

Table 4. Homogeneity Test Results in the Post-test

Groups		Level Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Strategy	Based on Mean	2.491	1	60	.121
	Based on Median	2.167	1	60	.142
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.167	1	56.129	.148
	Based on trimmed mean	2.421	1	60	.126

The Levene test was used to determine whether the data were homogeneous. Table 4 demonstrated that all homogeneity test significance values were greater than 0.05. This implies that the post-test scores were homogeneous, with significance values of 0.121.

Table 5. Post-test Results between Online and Face-to-face TBLT Groups

Groups	Mean	SD	t	Sig.value
Online TBLT	74.08	12.86	.480	.121
Face-to-face TBLT	72.08	16.92		

The descriptive analysis revealed that the mean and standard deviation of the online TBLT group were 74.08 and 12.86, respectively, while the mean and standard deviation of the face-to-face TBLT group were 72.08 and 16.92. Because the significance value (0.121) was less than 0.05, there was no statistically significant difference in post-test writing results between the online TBLT and face-to-face TBLT groups, according to Table 5. It demonstrated that there was no significant difference in writing performance between groups of students enrolled in online TBLT classes and groups of students enrolled in face-to-face TBLT classes.

A thematic analysis was used to interpret learners' responses to interview questions for the qualitative interview data in this study. As shown in the following tables, 6 and 7, the data were coded according to certain emergent themes of perceptions, namely attitude, benefits, and challenges.

Table 6. Learners' Attitude towards Online Practices

Perception	Coding Results
------------	----------------

Attitude	Improving Motivation
	Building up interest
Benefits	Facilitating material delivery
	Maximizing writing drafts
	Improving revision
Challenges	Poor participation
	Confusion

Table 7. Example of Learners' Attitude toward Online TBLT Practices

Perception	Coding Results	Example of Statement
Strategy	Improving motivation	<p>"I was motivated to study because this strategy was new for me."</p> <p>"I had high motivation to write since lecturer always gave feedback on my writing."</p>
	Building up interest	<p>"I was interested in writing activities since I could study at home."</p> <p>"I was keen on learning because of using mobile phones for writing."</p>
Benefits	Maximizing writing draft	<p>"Peer drafting was easy by SIKOLA due to facilities in it."</p> <p>"Writing draft was easier because of online discussions with my peer and teacher."</p>
	Improving revisions	<p>"Revising my writing was directly done after getting feedback from my teacher and peers."</p> <p>As the lecturer chose a sample of writing, it could become a good example for whole-class students to revise their writing.</p>
Challenges	Poor participation	<p>"I was lazy to participate in class discussions because the lecturer did not observe directly the classroom activities."</p> <p>"I do not to take part actively in class. I only need to finish all tasks given by the lecturer."</p>
		<p>"I was confused to comprehend materials in texts. Lecturer never explained clearly during online discussions due to written</p>

	Confusion	<p>explanation only.”</p> <p>“I felt isolated in writing activities. I needed a lecturer in person to clarify certain information in the tasks given.”</p>
--	-----------	--

The t-test analysis revealed that there was no significant difference in writing performance between learners who took online TBLT and those who took face-to-face TBLT. The first finding was demonstrated by the t-test results, where the t-value (0.480) was lower than the t-table (2.000) with a significance value of 0.121. The descriptive test results also revealed that the mean scores (74.08 > 72.08) were similar. This finding backed up previous research (Nguyen, 2015; Vendityaningtyas & Styati, 2018) on the impact of online and face-to-face learning on writing skills. It was discovered that students had difficulty sharing ideas during online discussions. Working on tasks with online communication was also time consuming and taxing/challenging for students.

Unlike the post-test results, both groups could improve their writing performance. Writing improvement was 15.18 points with a significance value of 0.000 in groups of learners taking online TBLT. Similarly, 14.12 points of writing improvement were observed in groups of learners taking face-to-face classes, with a significance value of 0.000. Several studies on the effects of online TBLT with collaborative learning (Bailey & Judd, 2018; Cullen, Kullman, & Wild, 2013) and face-to-face TBLT (Chen, 2018; Sundari, Febriyanti, & Saragih, 2018) on writing performance supported this hypothesis. Working in pairs or groups on the tasks assigned by the teacher could help both online and face-to-face TBLT groups improve their writing performance.

Consistent with previous research (Andrew, 2019; Ardiasih et al., 2019), the findings revealed that learners had favorable attitudes toward online TBLT practices. The majority of students were enthusiastic about learning to write using SIKOLA module. They saw this strategy as providing a flexible time and place for learning.

The findings revealed that online TBLT promotes better writing drafts and revisions. This finding supported previous research (Haro et al., 2019) on the effects of online TBLT on writing processes. Learners understand writing content by using examples and feedback from online class discussions. Such activities aid understanding of their writing problems as they relate to the texts produced.

This finding also revealed that online TBLT had some difficulties, such as low participation and learner confusion. They had difficulty participating in online classroom discussions. This was consistent with a previous study (Iveson, 2015) on the challenges of implementing the online TBLT strategy. According to the findings of this study, learners are hesitant to participate in class because their peers in groups tend to dominate online discussions. Indeed, classroom interactions are still negotiated and emphasize form over meaning.

4. Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, there is no significant difference in EFL writing performance between learners taught via online TBLT and learners taught via face-to-face TBLT. It does, however, show that online TBLT using SIKOLA can improve EFL learners' writing. Online TBLT via SIKOLA can be used instead of teaching writing. Although learners occasionally experience confusion and their participation is often poor, the majority of them have positive attitudes toward the implementation of online TBLT because it assists them in writing better drafts and revisions.

The findings will help EFL students understand the procedures of online TBLT and face-to-face TBLT strategies in writing classes. Learners are encouraged to actively participate in both online and face-to-face learning discussions. Language teachers should also pay more attention to appropriate topics and time allocation when assigning online tasks to their students.

References

- Adams, R., Amani, S., Newton, J., & Alwi, N. (2014). Planning and production in computer-mediated communication (CMC) writing. In H. Brynes & R. M. Manchón (Eds.), *Language learning- insights from and for L2 learning* (pp. 137-162). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Al-Maqtri, M. A. T. (2014). How effective is e-learning in teaching English? A case study. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 3(2), 647-669.
- Ardiasih, L. S., Emzir, & Rasyid, Y. (2019). Online collaborative writing technique using Wiki: How effective is it to enhance learners' essay writing?. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 6(1), 531-546. doi:

10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.2.6.531

- Bailey, D. R., & Judd, C. (2018). The effects of online collaborative writing and TOEIC writing test- preparation on L2 writing performance. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 15(2), 383-397. doi: 10.18823/ asiatefl.2018.15.2.8.383
- Bailey, S. (2011). *Academic writing: A handbook for international students* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Baralt, M., & Gomez, J. M. (2017). Task-based language teaching online: A guide for teachers. *Language Learning and Technology*, 21(3), 28-43.
- Bartley, S.J., & Golek, J. H. (2004). Evaluating the cost of effectiveness of online and face-to-face instruction. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 7(4), 167-175.
- Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2010). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices* (2nd ed.). New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Calvert, M., & Sheen, Y. (2014). Task-based language learning and teaching: An action-research study. *Language Teaching Research*, 8, 1-19. doi: 10.1177/1362168814547037
- Cheung, Y. L. (2016). Teaching writing. In W. A. Renandya & H. P. Widodo (Eds.), *English language teaching today: Building a closer link between theory and practice* (pp. 1-20). New York: Springer International.
- Cullen, R., Kullman, J., & Wild, C. (2013). Online collaborative learning on an ESL teacher education programme. *ELT Journal*, 67(4), 425-434. doi: 10.1093/elt/cct032
- Dudeny, G., & Hockly, N. (2029). ICT in ELT: How did we get there and where were we going?. *ELT Journal*, 66(4), 533-542. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccs050
- Ellis, R. (2017). Position paper: Moving task-based language teaching forward. *Lang. Teach*, 50(4), 507- 526. doi: 10.1017/S0261444817000179
- Fareed, M., Ashraf, A., & Bilal, M. (2016). ESL learners' writing skills: Problems, factors, and suggestions. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 81-92. doi: 10.20547/jess04 21604201
- Haro, A. V., Noroozi, O., Biemans, H. J. A., & Mulder, M. (2019). The effects of an online learning environment with worked examples and peer feedback on students' argumentative essay writing and domain-specific knowledge acquisition in the field of biotechnology. *Journal of Biological Education*, 53(4), 390-398. doi: 10.1080/00219266.2018.1472132
- Hidayati, K. H., (2018). Teaching writing to EFL learners: An investigation of challenges confronted by Indonesian teachers, Langkawi. *Journal of The Association for Arabic and English*, 4(1), 21-31. doi: 10.31332/llkw.v4i1.772
- Hockly, N. (2015). Developments in online language learning. *ELT Journal*, 69(3), 308-313. doi: 10. 1093/elt/ccv020
- Hockly, N. (2016). Special educational needs and technology in language learning. *ELT Journal*, 70(3), 332-338. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccw033
- Iveson, J. (2015). Challenges of task-based language teaching in online and blended learning contexts. *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Computer Supported Education*, 277-282. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccw033
- Jarvis, H. (2015). From PPP and CALL/MALL to praxis of task-based teaching and mobile assisted language use. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 19(1), 1-9.
- Jurčenko, A. (2015). Applying task-based language learning method for teaching vocabulary. *Rural Environment Education Personality*, 5, 423-428.
- Liu, X., Zheng, D., & Chen, Y. (2019). Latent classes of smartphone dictionary users among Chinese EFL learners: A mixed-method inquiry into motivation for mobile assisted language learning. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 32(1), 68-91. doi: 10.1093/ijl/ecy019
- Long, M. H. (2016). In defense of tasks and TBLT: Nonissues and real issues. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36, 5-33. doi: 10.1017/S0267190515000057
- Nguyen, T. (2015). The effectiveness of online learning: Beyond no significant difference and future horizons. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 11(2), 309-319.

- Oskoz, A., & Elola, I. (2014). *Promoting foreign language collaborative writing through the use of Web 2.0 tools and tasks*. In M. Gonzalez-Lloret & L. Ortega (Eds.), *Technology-mediated TBL* (pp. 115-148). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Park, M. (2012). *Implementing computer-assisted task-based language teaching in the Korean secondary EFL context*. In A. Shehadeh & C. A. Coombe (Eds.), *Task-based language teaching in foreign language contexts* (pp. 215-240). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Rahimi, M., & Zhang, L. J. (2017). *Effects of task complexity and planning conditions on L2 argumentative writing production*. *Discourse Processes*, 8, 1-17. doi: 10.1177/1362168818761465
- Sharma, P. (2006). Language learning online: Towards best practice using the web to support language learning. *ELT Journal*, 60(3), 309-312. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccl015
- Sharma, P. (2008). CALL dimensions: Options and issues in computer-assisted language learning. *ELT Journal*, 62(1), 102-105. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccm086
- Skehan, P. (2016). Tasks versus conditions: Two perspectives on task research and their implications for language pedagogy. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36, 34-49. doi: 10.1017/S0267190515 000100
- Vendityaningtyas, V., & Styati, E. W. (2018). Effect of computer mediated communication and face-to-face communication on the students' writing. *Lingua Cultura*, 12(3), 233-239. doi: 10.21512/lc.v12i3.4235
- Wellington, J. (2010). More than a matter of cognition: An exploration of affective writing problems of post-graduate students and their possible solutions. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15(2), 135-150. doi: 10.1080/13562511003619961
- Willis, J. (2012). *A framework for task-based learning*. Harlow: Longman.