RESEARCH ARTICLES

Task repetition and the public performance of speaking tasks in EFL classes at a Vietnamese high school

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This study investigated the occurrence of language-related episodes (LREs) in interactive tasks performed by pairs of Vietnamese English Foreign Language (EFL) learners and the extent to which linguistic knowledge targeted in these LREs was transferred to subsequent public performance (PP) of the same tasks in front of the class. Task performance data was collected from 24 pairs of learners from six intact grade 11 EFL classes at a Vietnamese high school as they carried out two interactive speaking tasks in consecutive weeks, first privately in pairs and then, within the same lesson, publically in front of the class. Teachers and learners were also interviewed. Results showed LREs to be frequent in task rehearsals. The majority of LREs were resolved correctly by the learners and led to more accurate use of the targeted linguistic items in subsequent public performance. The results and supporting interview data shows how, in this school, the practice of asking learners to repeat the performance of tasks in front of the class positively affected learner engagement and enriched the language learning opportunities available through interactive oral tasks.

Keywords: task repetition, public performance, transfer of knowledge, language-related episodes, Vietnam, young learners

1. Introduction

The current study has its origins in an earlier exploratory study which investigated how English foreign language (EFL) teachers in a Vietnamese high school implemented speaking lessons (B. T. T. Nguyen, Newton, & Crabbe, 2015, 2018). In this earlier study we identified the well-established practice shared by the EFL teachers in the school of repeating speaking tasks, first in pairs or groups and

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then as public performances by selected groups of learners. In simple terms, the lessons were structured in the following way:

1. *Pre-task:* The teacher introduces the task and provides input or suggestions for task performance.
2. *Task performance/rehearsal:* In pairs or small groups all learners in the class complete the task.
3. *Public performance (henceforth PP):* As many pairs or groups of learners as time allows perform the task publically in front of the class.
4. *Post-task:* The teacher responds to the performances and provides feedback on language points.

This article reports on a follow-up quasi-experimental study which investigated more closely the learning opportunities available in steps 2 and 3. Specifically, it looked at: (a) language-related episodes (LREs) in the task performance (step 2) and (b) evidence of transfer of knowledge (Storch, 2002) from LREs in the task performance to public performance (PP) (Step 3). PP has received scant attention in TBLT research (cf. Skehan & Foster, 1997).

Although interactive speaking tasks are an important component in the EFL curriculum for Vietnamese high schools, group work and meaningful interaction in English have traditionally been infrequent in English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms such as these, especially in high school settings (Carless, 2007a; Le & Barnard, 2009). Research in this and other Asian settings has attributed this gap to factors such as overreliance on a shared first language (L1) (Carless, 2004, 2007b) discipline issues, paper-and-pencil examinations (Butler, 2011) and a clash between task-based teaching and prevailing cultural values and educational traditions (Littlewood, 2007). Although our research was primarily concerned with identifying learning opportunities for young learners through task repetition and PP, the study also speaks to this broader cluster of issues that impact on the uptake of TBLT across foreign language contexts.

2. Literature review

2.1 Task repetition and public performance (PP) of tasks

Task repetition has received a lot of attention in recent research (e.g., Bygate, 2018; Hawkes, 2011; Kim, 2013). As Bygate (2016, p. 393) argues, task repetition is of interest for three main reasons: it has been shown to produce significant learning outcomes; it reflects the reiteration typical of everyday language use; and it provides teachers with a pedagogic strategy for encouraging learners to shift focus

between meaning and form across task repetitions in ways that are valuable for language learning. In particular, repeating a task is seen to free up learners' memory and processing capacity which in turn allows them to produce more fluent, accurate and/or complex language in the repeated task performance (Bygate & Samuda, 2005). There are however different views on where task repetition and PP fit within the standard pre-task – during-task – post-task model of task implementation (Willis, 1996). Table 1 summarizes a number of these different views.

Table 1. Task repetition and public performance (PP) in four approaches to task-based teaching

	Skehan (1996); Skehan & Foster (1997)	**Ellis (2005); Bygate & Samuda (2005)**	**Willis (1996)**	**Current study**
Pre-task	Pre-task planning	– Strategic planning – Task rehearsal	– Activating tasks – Input exposure	– Teacher-led activities to activate schemata and engage interest – Teach useful expressions – Model the task
During-task	Task performance	– Task performance	– Task performance – Planning – *Public report*	– Task performance/ rehearsal
Post-task	– *Public performance* – Transcription – Task repetition	– Not specified	– Language analysis – Language practice	– *Public performance* – Feedback – Language analysis and consolidation

In the first view of task repetition presented in Table 1, Skehan (1996) and Skehan and Foster (1997) treat anticipated PP (or, in the case of Foster and Skehan (2013), anticipated transcription) as a post-task variable. Here, the focus is on the washback effect of an *anticipated* post-task activity on performance of the main task as measured by the fluency, accuracy and complexity of learner language production. Skehan and Foster (1997) investigated this effect empirically in a study in which half of the 40 young adult ESL learners who participated in the study were told that after completing various tasks in pairs, some pairs would be selected to perform the tasks again in front of the class. The

other half had no expectation of any additional performance. Skehan and Foster hypothesized that the anticipation of possibly having to perform a task in public would push learners to pay more attention to the accuracy (but not fluency and complexity) of their language during the initial task performance. The results only partly confirmed this prediction with differences between the two groups reaching significance for only one of the three tasks (a decision-making task) they performed.

In a follow-up study, Foster and Skehan (2013) changed the post-task condition for the experimental group from anticipated PP to anticipated transcription of the task performance. The narrative and decision-making task from the earlier study were used again. The results showed a stronger effect this time of an anticipated post-task activity, with differences between the experimental and control group reaching significance on both of the two tasks for accuracy, and also on the decision-making task for complexity. Again, as hypothesized, there was no effect for fluency.

In a second, contrastive perspective on task repetition, Ellis (2005) treats repetition as constitutive of rehearsal and therefore a form of task planning. From this perspective, the second iteration of the task performance is the 'main performance' (p. 3). Ellis argues that rehearsal offers learners the opportunity to attend to all three components in Levelt's model of speech production – conceptualization, formulation and articulation (Levelt, 1989) and so to lead to "all-round improvements" (p. 14) when the task is repeated. Extending Ellis's view, Bygate and Samuda (2005) argue for treating task repetition as a form of integrated planning involving both strategic and on-line planning. They argue that the first performance of a task allows the learner to create a holistic representation of the task and of the experience of performing it in real time. By drawing on this experience in a second performance, the learner's attentional resources are freed up, allowing the learner to "integrate a broader range of their resources into their performance" (p. 38). Bygate and Samuda tested this hypothesis by re-analyzing case study data from Bygate's earlier (2001) study on task repetition. Their findings show how the repeat performance of a picture-based narrative led to more elaborate framing (e.g., more previewing and summarizing, and the addition of new information on the perspective of the speaker, listener or story characters), which they attribute not to changes in the speakers' linguistic resources but to differences in what the task repetition allowed them to do with their performance.

Willis (1996) offers a third perspective on task repetition and PP. In this model of task-based teaching, the main task is followed by planning and then by reporting publically on the task, all within the during-task phase. So for example, the main task may involve groups of learners working together to agree on a solution to a problem posed in the task. Once the solution has been agreed on, the learners plan

and then deliver to the class a public report on this solution. While this public reporting step is not constitutive of exact task repetition, it clearly involves elements of repetition. It provides an interesting point of contrast with the other approaches to task repetition discussed above and with the current study in which learners perform the task again rather than reporting *on* the task.

In summary, task repetition can be seen to function in different ways within task-based activity cycles. The main distinction is between a view of task repetition as a form of rehearsal, i.e., a task planning option which prepared learners for the main task, and, on the other hand, viewing task repetition (in the form of anticipated PP) as a post-task activity with its main value being that it is anticipated and therefore directs learners' attention to aspects of language production in their performance of the earlier main task. The practice of task repetition and PP in the present study is informed by both these perspectives.

2.2 Young learners, task repetition and focus-on-form

Just as there is growing interest in task-based learning for young learners (García Mayo, 2017; Pinter, 2017), a small but growing body of studies have focused on how young learners respond to task repetition. Earlier studies in this area (Hawkes, 2011; Mackey, Kanganas, & Oliver, 2007; Pinter, 2005, 2007) found positive effects of task repetition on the spoken language of young learners in the repeated task performance, especially for fluency but also for accuracy (e.g., Pinter, 2007) and for complexity (Swain & Lapkin, 2008), although with indications of a trade-off in play. In a more recent study, Sample and Michel (2015) offer further insights into this trade-off effect. This exploratory study looked at how task repetition affected the complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF) of language production across three repeated performances of a spot the difference task by six 9-year old learners of English. They found clear evidence of a trade-off effect over the first two performances of the task (with structural complexity or fluency typically trading off against either accuracy or lexical complexity) but with this effect absent in the third task performance. This suggests that by the third performance learners were able to attend to all three dimensions simultaneously.

While the CAF framework has been the predominant means for measuring the impact of task repetition on learner language production, García Mayo and Agirre (2016) focused instead on the effect of task repetition on how 60 primary school learners of English as a foreign language negotiated for meaning (NfM) and on pair dynamics. The study involved both exact task repetition and procedural repetition (a similar task with different context). Overall, the results show no significant effect of task repetition on NfM strategies, although repetition did appear to have an impact on pair dynamics with over half of the nine learner

dyads displaying more collaborative pair dynamics in the procedural task repetition condition.

No studies on task repetition with young learners of which we are aware have investigated the topic of the current study, that is, the extent to which young learners engage in focus-on-form (FoF) (Ellis, 2016) in task interaction and the uptake or transfer of knowledge from such FoF episodes into a subsequent repeat performance of a task.

Although studies of this kind involving adult learners are more plentiful, they show limited evidence of language forms targeted in what are referred to as language-related episodes (LREs) (see the Methodology section for a definition) being subsequently incorporated in spontaneous speech or in a repeated task performance. For example, across 65 hours of recordings from listening-speaking classes at an intensive English language programme in the United States, Williams (2001) found that the four pairs of learners in the study made infrequent use of language items they had targeted in LREs in their subsequent spontaneous interaction (only 8–11% of the targeted forms reappeared). Similarly, Loewen (2007) found a low proportion of LRE-targeted items that occurred in 17 hours of communicative lessons in ESL schools in New Zealand being used in subsequent spontaneous speech (19.8% or 24/121 instances). He noted that, "a lack of use of the targeted forms does not necessarily indicate an inability to use those forms; it may simply be that learners had no occasion to use them" (p. 114).

McDonough and Sunitham (2009) obtained similar results from 48 Thai EFL university learners doing collaborative computer self-access activities, noting that the students in their study had little incentive to remember the language points they had discussed because there were no post-task activities. Truong and Storch (2007) investigated transfer of knowledge from collaborative pre-task planning to individual task performance by 17 Vietnamese EFL university students. They found a low occurrence of LREs in interactive planning and, consistent with the studies discussed above, few instances of targeted forms appearing in subsequent immediate performances. Although this study did not involve task repetition, it shares with the current study a focus on PP. Overall, these studies point to the need to provide learners with follow-up opportunities to use the language forms targeted in earlier LREs. In this regard, more research is needed which traces uptake or transfer of knowledge (Storch, 2002) from LREs in interactive planning/rehearsal to interactive PP of the same task by young learners. The current study seeks to address this gap.

3. Methodology

In the context of intact EFL classes at a Vietnamese high school, this study investigated the occurrence of language-related episodes (LREs) in interactive task performances by pairs of learners and the extent to which linguistic knowledge targeted in these LREs was transferred to subsequent public performance (PP) of the same tasks in front of the class. In this paper we refer to the first task performance as 'task rehearsal' to distinguish it from the PP, although it clearly functioned as both rehearsal for PP *and* the main task. We return to this dual function in the discussion section. The research addressed the following research questions:

1. In task rehearsal, did learners engage in language-related episodes (LREs)?
2. How successfully did the learners resolve LREs?
3. Was there transfer of knowledge from task rehearsal to PP with respect to linguistic items addressed in LREs in the task rehearsals?

3.1 The context

Following trends elsewhere in Asia, Vietnam adopted a new high school English curriculum in 2006 (MOET, 2010) which emphasized learner-centeredness and communicative, task-based teaching. The officially mandated textbooks that were introduced with the curriculum (e.g., Hoang et al., 2007) highlight the centrality of tasks as "main activities to develop learners' communicative competence" and state that learners should be "proactive and creative agents in the learning process" (p. 6). Research on the uptake of these reforms from a TBLT perspective has, to date, been limited to a small number of small-scale qualitative case studies. Le and Barnard (2009), for instance, investigated how three teachers implemented the curriculum in a rural high school. They found little evidence of uptake of task-based teaching. Instead, the teaching was predominantly traditional, teacher-led and textbook-reliant. Pressure to cover textbook tasks, teacher proficiency, insufficient resources, and non-task-based examinations were among the teachers' explanations for their classroom teaching. Other more recent studies have produced similar findings (G. V. Nguyen, 2014; G. V. Nguyen, Le, & Barnard, 2015). Given that there are approximately 2.5 million high school students studying through this curriculum under the guidance of thousands of high school EFL teachers,[1] research into the implementation of speaking tasks in this context carries considerable social significance.

1. National Statistics: <https://www.gso.gov.vn>

Our study took place at a co-ed high school in a major city in Vietnam. This high school has a reputation for academic excellence. As mentioned in the introduction, the study reported in this paper was preceded by an earlier descriptive phase of the research which took place one year prior to the main study and which sought to describe and understand the way teachers implemented textbook tasks in this school (B. T. Nguyen et al., 2015, 2018). This earlier study showed a consistent pattern of speaking task implementation consisting of four phases: a pre-task phase in which the task was introduced; a task performance phase in which learners worked on the task in groups or pairs; a PP phase in which as many groups as time allowed stood (usually at the front of the class) one at a time and performed their task; and, if time allowed, a post-task phase in which the teacher typically focused on language issues arising from performances. During the task rehearsal phase, the teachers adopted a reactive role, circulating among groups, encouraging them to talk or providing assistance as necessary to help students prepare for their performance. After the performances, in the post-task phase, the teachers took a more active role, directing the attention of the whole class to language and listening comprehension issues that had arisen in the performances. This particular sequence appeared to have evolved in this setting, since it was not stipulated in teaching materials. A salient feature of the task performances in our data set was the frequency with which learners focused on language issues. It was this that prompted a focus on LREs in the current study.

3.2 Participants

Three teachers from the school and selected students from their six grade 11 classes volunteered to participate in the study. All three teachers were female and all had EFL qualifications at Bachelor's level or above. They had all attended workshops run by the local Department of Education and Training on how to use the new communicative textbooks.

Each of the six classes contained approximately 30 students who were around 16 years of age. Most had been studying English as a compulsory subject since they were 11 years old (grade 6). With reference to their performance on an English exam sat at the end of the previous trimester, and on teachers' ratings of the student's proficiency, we assessed the mean proficiency of the students to be at the B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), with a range from upper A2 to B2.

While all the students participated in the lessons included in this study, practical constraints such as the number of recording devices available, number of students who volunteered, and noise levels limited the number of task interactions that could be recorded at any one time in these classes. Consequently, four to six

pairs of students were recorded in each class performing both tasks – a total of 60 students (30 pairs) and 60 task recordings. Of these, recordings from 12 pairs of learners were unusable due to factors such as background noise or technical faults. After excluding this data, the final data set consisted of recordings from 48 students, 28 females and 20 males. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and ethics approval was granted by the Human Ethics Committee at Victoria University of Wellington before data collection began.

3.3 Design

The study involved a quasi-experimental intervention in which two tasks, a problem-solving task and a debate task, were implemented in six intact grade 11 classes in lessons taught by the actual class teachers (each of the teachers was responsible for two grade 11 classes). The six classes performed one task a week over two consecutive weeks. A counter-balanced design was used in which three classes performed the problem-solving task in week 1 followed by the debate task in week 2 and the other three classes performed the tasks in reverse order (see Table 2).

Table 2. Design of the study

	Grade 11 classes					
Class	**Class 11a**	**Class 11b**	**Class 11c**	**Class 11d**	**Class 11e**	**Class 11f**
Teacher	**Teacher A**	**Teacher B**	**Teacher B**	**Teacher C**	**Teacher A**	**Teacher C**
Wk. 1	Debate	Problem-solving	Debate	Problem-solving	Debate	Problem-solving
Wk. 2	Problem-solving	Debate	Problem-solving	Debate	Problem-solving	Debate

In the weeks prior to data collection, students carried out a variety of similar tasks to ensure they were familiar with the task types. The data set for the study consisted of the 48 task rehearsals and 48 corresponding PPs from 24 pairs of learners (three to five dyads from each of the six classes).

3.4 The tasks

Two tasks were created for use in the study; a problem-solving task and a debate task. The problem-solving task required students to reach agreement on what they thought was the best of five given solutions to a problem and the debate task required students to argue for different viewpoints (see Appendix). Both tasks were on the topic of volunteer work which was the theme of the textbook unit

the classes were working on. The decision to focus on these two task types was based on observed classroom practices and task preferences of EFL teachers in the school in the earlier descriptive phase of the research (B. T. Nguyen et al., 2015, 2018). This had the advantage of ensuring that the students' task performances were not affected by task novelty and that the results had direct relevance to the ways that teachers in this context used tasks.

3.5 Task implementation procedures

The teachers who taught these classes spent around five minutes introducing the tasks. They all followed the same procedure in which they explained the task instructions and clarified some of the words in the task input. Students were then given fifteen minutes to perform the task. They were allowed to take notes but, as was the usual practice, these notes were not used during the PP. During the task performance, the teachers circulated around the class. Since the focus of the study was on student-generated LREs, the teachers were instructed to refrain from correcting errors or pre-emptively initiating a focus on form unless it was requested. After the initial task performances, the teachers called on pairs to perform the task in front of the class. These PPs usually lasted around four minutes each. Following the PPs, the teachers typically carried out a whole class discussion of the content of the PPs and of language issues that arose from them.

3.6 Interviews

The second author carried out focus group interviews in Vietnamese with groups of four to six volunteer students in each class soon after they had completed the two tasks in order to investigate their perceptions of the tasks they had just completed and of how speaking lessons were implemented more generally in the program. Focus group participants were chosen at random from a pool of students who had volunteered to be part of these groups. All three participating teachers were also interviewed to investigate their beliefs and rationales for their classroom practices. All interviews were semi-scripted. The following question prompts were used to initiate discussion in the student focus groups: How did you like the tasks? Did you like the problem-solving task? Why?/Why not?; Do you like the debate task? Why?/Why not?; What did you do when given 15 minutes to do the task? Why?

3.7 Data coding

Language-related episodes (LREs)

We adopted Swain and Lapkin's (2001, p. 104) definition of an LRE as "any part of a dialogue where students talk about language they are producing, question their language use, or other- or self-correct their language production". LREs are usually though not exclusively documented in learner-learner interaction and can involve learners (and the teacher) using their first language (L1) alongside their second language (L2) to resolve issues in their use or understanding of the second language (e.g., Leeser, 2004; Williams, 2001). In the current study LREs were coded as either (1) correctly resolved, (2) incorrectly resolved or (3) unresolved. An example of (1) is provided in Excerpt 4 in the discussion section. An example of (2) and (3) are provided below in Excerpts 1 and 2 below.

Excerpt 1. An incorrectly resolved LRE (Problem-solving task-LL-11d)

S2: Erm now (.) vừa lòng là răng? (Erm now (.) how to say 'pleased'?)

S1: Uhm ý mi nói răng? (Uhm, what do you want to mean?)

S2: Tôi vừa lòng với cuộc sống của tôi rồi. (I feel pleased with my life.)

S1: I feel pleasure erm with my (.) with my life. S2: Ừ. (Yeah.)

Excerpt 2. An unresolved LRE (Debate task-HH-11a)

S1: encourage them to study better xxx erm tạo điều kiện là chi? (how to say 'create conditions'?)

S2: Chịu. Thôi bỏ qua đi, ý khác. (I give up. Stop, skip that, think of other ideas.)

If more than one solution to an LRE was proposed during an LRE sequence, the final solution the students agreed on determined how the LRE was coded. LRE resolutions were calculated as a proportion score defined as "the number of LREs in each resolution category divided by the total number of LREs" (Kim & McDonough, 2008, p. 193). As with the LRE frequency data, LRE resolutions per dyad were counted. Although lexical and grammatical LREs were also distinguished in the data and their distribution across task types and resolution types analyzed, a full analysis of this data is neither central to or within the scope of this article and so will not reported here. The 49 instances of LREs in which students requested help from the teacher were excluded from analysis. An important aspect of LREs in the data is that they usually involved a combination of L1 and L2, a point we return to later in this paper.

Transfer of knowledge

Storch (2002) introduced the term 'transfer of knowledge' to describe instances in which knowledge introduced in collaborative interaction is consolidated, extended or, in the case of new knowledge, used in subsequent individual performance. We use it here to refer to instances where linguistic information introduced in an LRE in rehearsal is subsequently used in PP by the student whose language gap triggered the LRE. In tracing transfer of knowledge, the current study adopted a process-product approach used widely in research on written tasks (e.g., Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010). This involved identifying and coding all LREs, and then tracking the linguistic items that were targeted in the LREs to see whether they were or were not used correctly in subsequent PP. The few studies that have used this approach in research on interactive speaking (e.g., Truong & Storch, 2007) are small scale, focused on individual presentation and did not report on the relationship between transfer of knowledge and how learners resolved their LREs in the preceding interaction. An example of transfer of knowledge is provided in Excerpt 4 (see the discussion section below) involving the phrase 'earn a lot of money'. An example of incorrect transfer of knowledge is provided in Excerpt 3 below, and concerns the phrase "One three" which is introduced in the rehearsal and taken up in the subsequent PP.

Excerpt 3. Incorrect transfer of knowledge (Debate task-HL-11f)

Rehearsal	**Public Performance (PP)**
S2: Thì đó là lý do đầu tiên, có nhiều tiền *(That's the first reason, having a lot of money)*. Oh my grandfather has do charity every month em [] he erm he use one three tức là một phần ba (*that is one-third*) his salary to do S1: Chi? *(What?)* S2: One-three. S1: One third! S2: One three là một phần ba *(One three means one-third)* S1: Rồi *(OK)*	S1: No, for example my family is normal and my grandfather use his salary erm he use ***one three*** of it to do charity xxx give to the orphanage or he buy some gift to the poor

3.8 Inter-coder reliability

Inter-coder reliability checking was carried out by one of the researchers and a second coder on a subset of the LRE data consisting of 18 randomly selected rehearsals and 18 corresponding performances (18/48 transcripts: 38% of the data). Inter-coder reliability scores were calculated for the identification and coding of LREs and transfer of knowledge using both percentage agreement and Cohen's kappa co-efficient (κ). Percentage agreement for the various coding decisions ranged from 91 to 95%, with κ from 0.77 to 0.89.

3.9 Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were obtained to provide information about means, standard deviations, standard errors and skewness. Tests of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) were conducted before decisions were made on whether to use paired samples t-tests or Wilcoxon Signed ranks tests to see effects of task types. We focused on the number of LREs, LRE resolutions and transfer of knowledge to avoid the likelihood of Type 1 error that results from multiple comparisons of the same data. The effect sizes, and *d* values of .60, 1.00, and 1.40 were considered small, medium and large respectively for the within-group comparisons with paired samples t-tests (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014), Where the data were not normally distributed, individual non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed ranks tests were used, in which case, *r*-values of .2, .3, .5 were considered small, medium and large respectively (Field, 2005). The alpha level was adjusted for all the five comparisons involved for a small dataset at .01.

4. Results

In this section, results are reported for the frequency and type of LREs that occurred in task rehearsals (Research questions 1 and 2) and for the uptake of linguistic material from the LREs in subsequent PPs (Research question 3). Although the analysis we report here includes information on the effect of task type, it is beyond the scope of this article to treat task type as a separate variable and so these results are only discussed briefly.

4.1 LREs in task rehearsal

Research question 1 addressed the occurrence of LREs in rehearsal. The data consisted of transcripts of 48 task rehearsals. The total number of LREs was tabulated

for each task type (problem-solving or debate) and for resolution (correctly resolved, incorrectly resolved and unresolved). A total of 648 LREs were produced by the learners with a mean of 13.5 LREs per task rehearsal. The results of a paired-samples t-test showed that learners discussed significantly more LREs in the problem-solving task ($M=15.38$, $SD=5.80$) than the debate task ($M=11.63$, $SD=4.38$) ($t(23)=3.338$, $p=.003$, $d=.68$) (See Table 3).

Research question 2 addressed the success with which learners were able to resolve LREs. As shown in Table 3, of the 648 LREs, the majority (495/76%) were correctly resolved, 105 (16%) were incorrectly resolved and 48 (7%) were unresolved. An analysis of task type effect on LRE resolution showed a greater proportion of LREs were correctly resolved in the problem-solving task ($M=.81$, $SD=.14$) than the debate task ($M=.76$, $SD=.17$), but the difference was not significant ($t(23)=1.813$, $p=.083$). Learners incorrectly resolved a higher proportion of LREs in the debate task ($M=.21$; $SD=.17$) than in the problem-solving task ($M=.10$, $SD=.10$) and the result was significant ($z=-3.323$, $p=.001$, $r=.48$). A greater proportion of LREs were unsolved in the problem-solving task ($M=.09$, $SD=.09$) than the debate task ($M=.03$, $SD=.06$) but this was not a significant difference ($z=-1.972$, $p=.049$, $r=.28$.)

Table 3. LRE resolutions by task type

	Problem-solving			**Debate**						
	Sum	***Mean***	***SD***	***Sum***	***Mean***	***SD***	**Totals**	***t(z)***	***p***	***d(r)***
Correctly resolved	290	.81	.14	205	.76	.17	495	1.813	.083	.37
Incorrectly resolved	43	.10	.10	62	.21	.17	105	−3.323	.001	.48
Unsolved	36	.09	.09	12	.03	.06	48	−1.972	.049	28
Totals	**369**			**279**			**648**			

4.2 Transfer of knowledge in PP

Research question 3 addressed the extent to which the learners utilized in their public performances the linguistic information provided in LREs in rehearsal. Table 4 shows the amount of transfer of knowledge across the two task types. Transfer of knowledge was high with 428 (66%) of the 648 LREs in rehearsals resulting in transfer of knowledge in performance. Of these, 333 involved successful transfer of correct LRE resolutions, 68 transfer of incorrect resolutions, 19 partially successful attempts to use correct resolutions and eight instances of correct use of forms that were incorrectly resolved in rehearsal. Transfer was significantly higher in the debate task ($M=.78$, $SD=.15$) compared to the problem-solving task ($M=.59$, $SD=.10$) ($t(23)=-5.023$, $p=.000$, $d=-1.03$).

Table 4. Transfer of knowledge in task performance

	Problem-solving			Debate					
	Sum	*Mean*	*SD*	*Sum*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Total transfer of knowledge	218	.59	.10	210	.78	.15	−5.023	.000	−1.03
No transfer of knowledge	151	.41	.10	69	.22	.15			
No. of LREs	*369*	*15.4*	*.8*	*279*	*1.6*	*4.4*			

To summarize the results, in the task rehearsals, and especially in the rehearsals for the problem-solving tasks, the learners engaged extensively in language focused activity, as reflected in a high frequency of LREs. The majority of LREs were resolved successfully by the students through collaborative discourse and without teacher assistance. However, 16% of LREs (66/428) were resolved unsuccessfully; that is, incorrect information was used to resolve the LRE.

5. Discussion

The results show that during the first task performance/rehearsal the pressure to prepare for an imminent PP pushed the learners to frequently engage in pre-emptive LREs through which they sought help with the linguistic resources needed to express a meaning. Reactive LREs through which learners sought to resolve a problem in interpreting meaning were much less common in the data set. The predominance of pre-emptive LREs shows how the "need to mean" (Samuda, 2001) pushed the learners to retrieve, search for and pool English resources. These LREs constitute "learner-regulated" focus on form (Ortega, 2005, p. 107) through which learners addressed their own "problematicity" (Long, 2007) which in this data set primarily involved problems with vocabulary.

Regarding LRE resolutions, the results show that the learners were able to correctly resolve a majority (76%) of their language problems. Excerpt 4 provides an example of a pair of learners doing this. In the rehearsal, one of the learners, S1, seeks help from her partner (S2) with the phrases "do business" and "earn a lot of money". Her partner, S2, provides these items, which S1 subsequently uses fluently in PP of the task.

Excerpt 4. Transfer of learning (Debate task)

Rehearsal	**Public Performance (PP)**
S1: I'm erm mình nói kinh doanh have business à? (I want to say "do business". Should it be "have business"?) S2: I do business thôi!*(I do business!)* S1: I do business and erm I gain kiếm được … kiếm được là chi? *(earn … how to say "earn money"?)* S2: raise (.) uhm kiếm được là chi hè *(how to say "earn ")* (.) earn (.) earn! S1: and I earn a lot of money	S1: Hi Linh. How are you doing? S2: I'm fine. And what's your job? S1: I ***do business*** and I ***earn a lot of money*** and I want to take uhm part in volunteer work S2: Ok. That's good idea and erm what are you going to do with this money?

A much smaller number of LREs were incorrectly resolved (105/648 or 16%), and in slightly more than half of the cases (68/105) these led to subsequent use of the incorrect items in PP. This points to an important role for the teacher in assisting with LREs in rehearsal and, in the post-task phase of a lesson, directing the learners' attention to errors that had reappeared in PP. In fact, both these practices were frequent in all the classes observed in the earlier descriptive phase of the research (B. T. Nguyen et al., 2015, 2018).

An additional point concerns the role that L1 played in these speaking lessons. One of the frequently cited reasons EFL teachers give for avoiding interactive speaking tasks is what they perceive as the intrusive use of L1 such tasks entail (e.g., Carless, 2004, 2007b). Indeed, our data shows the learners used their L1 extensively in task rehearsal, as illustrated in Excerpt 1. However, as we see here, rather than being intrusive, L1 functioned as a powerful mediating tool for resourcing the upcoming PP in L2. Other studies have similarly shown how learners use L1 to scaffold their own and each other's task performance (although typically to a lesser extent) (e.g., Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2007, 2009; Azkarai & García Mayo, 2015; Storch & Aldosari, 2010). What is perhaps unique in our data in contrast to these studies is the way the learners used L1 to develop a loose 'script' (either spoken or written) for PP, and so were strongly focused on finding and expanding the L2 linguistic means they needed to deliver their L2 task performance to the class.

In the interviews, the reasons the teachers gave for using PP show that they were attuned to the language learning opportunities provided in PP and particularly to the role of PP in motivating and engaging learners, promoting

holistic development, and creating a cohesive social community in the classroom. As one of the teachers commented, PP successfully countered the problems that so often beset teachers when they attempt to carry out interactive speaking tasks in EFL classes:

> Public performance is the stage where students appear, they want to be good in other people's eyes, they have to make learning endeavors while they are doing the task in their own group, … and some do want to impress the audience through their presentation. Otherwise, you know, it's not easy, because no oral task exams or tests, no speaking outside the classroom, a shared L1 in the classroom, etc.

A final point concerns the way in which anticipated PP changed the nature of the activity that learners and teachers construed from the task-as-workplan (Ellis, 2009) in these classrooms. In anticipation of performing publically, the learners attended less to the reasoning demands of the tasks and more to constructing a performance. In the problem-solving task for example the pairs typically selected two charity options quickly and then brainstormed reasons for their choices without carefully considering and eliminating other options. Similarly, in the debate task, the pairs typically agreed quickly on who would be for or against the statement and then focused on constructing their performances. In other words, for the learners it was how to prepare for PP rather than the set task objective that became their primary orientation. This finding suggests that PP influences how learners engage with a task in a way that is quite distinct from other forms of task repetition. But it is also worth noting that because PP was conventional practice in these classes, the teachers and learners are likely to have developed expertise in using this form of task practice in ways that would not be evident in experimental studies such as that carried out by Foster and Skehan (1996) in which anticipated PP was sprung upon the learners. Our data suggests that the ways in which learners develop task expertise and how this expertise impacts on learning opportunities through tasks deserves more attention in the field.

6. Conclusions

This research was distinctive in the way it began with a description of the naturalized task practices of teachers in a particular setting and then reintroduced these same practices into the teachers' classrooms in a quasi-experimental study so as to investigate more thoroughly the learning processes and outcomes associated with them. The findings offer insights into the language learning opportunities available through rehearsal and interactive public performance (PP), an under-researched aspect of task-based teaching. While these insights are partic-

ularly relevant to Vietnamese teachers working with this curriculum, they have more general provenance.

With regard to learning from tasks, our research provides evidence that PP pushes learners in rehearsal to engage in extensive language and form-focused collaborative discourse (i.e. LREs) as they seek to resource the upcoming performance. PP is a high motivator in language learning. Anticipated PP also appeared to shift the way learners orient to tasks, causing them to focus on rehearsing and scripting a 'performance' in addition to focusing on the task objective and the reasoning challenges it provides.

For the learners in this study, collaborative LREs were, on the whole, successfully resolved in rehearsal and subsequently taken up in performance. That is, there was plentiful evidence of transfer of knowledge. This finding is in marked contrast to the low frequency of LREs and of transfer of knowledge reported by Truong and Storch (2007) as discussed earlier, a difference we attribute to the productive relationship between rehearsal and PP in the current study which contrasts with collaborative planning for individual presentations in the Truong and Storch study. Rehearsal also provided a learning space in which the learners productively drew on their L1 to resource their L2 performance. This suggests scope to explore in research and in advocacy for practice the ways in which translanguaging practices (García & Wei, 2014) can be harnessed to promote learning in a rehearsal-performance approach to oral task implementation.

Because the research sought to understand the actual practices of teachers and students in a particular setting, a Vietnamese high school, it also has something to say about this setting. The descriptive phase of the research showed TBLT to be alive and well in the EFL classrooms in this Vietnamese high school. Teachers in the school had replaced the teacher-led, form-focused instruction traditionally used to begin a lesson with the localized practice of engaging learners in meaning-focused task rehearsal in pairs or groups and then following this with PP of the rehearsed speaking tasks. They believed that this practice motivated learning and solved the oft-cited difficulties of using interactive speaking tasks such as over-reliance on L1 (Carless, 2004) and the invisibility of oral proficiency in high stakes exams (Butler, 2011). Our research confirms the teachers' intuitions concerning the value of PP and shows congruence between the teachers' beliefs and practices and theoretical perspectives on TBLT. Comparing these findings to Butler's (2011) claim that adaption of TBLT in Asian contexts typically resulted in a watered-down task-supported version of TBLT, the evidence from this school is indeed of adaptation. But in this school, it was adaptation that strengthened rather than diluted the task-based nature of instruction.

As with most other countries in Asia, Vietnam is investing considerable resources in upgrading the provision of EFL so as to develop a base of proficient

users of English who can further pursue global integration and economic prosperity. To this end, Vietnam has introduced an EFL curriculum which explicitly draws on TBLT. The findings from this research provide evidence that this curriculum can be effectively implemented in the kind of setting in which it has often been shown to fail. This positive outcome is important for the thousands of EFL high school teachers and millions of students in Vietnamese schools who are using the new task-based textbooks. It is no less relevant to other EFL contexts in which teachers may wish to or are required to embrace teaching and learning through tasks.

In making this claim we are mindful of at least three limitations of the research, which warrant investigation in future research on this topic. First, as noted earlier, the school in which this research was carried out was an elite school, and so not representative of the less well-resourced schools or lower proficiency learners much more typical in Vietnam, and indeed, much of Asia. While the successful use of tasks in this setting and the positive views of TBLT expressed by the teachers and learners are encouraging signs, there is clearly scope to investigate the viability of this approach in other less conducive contexts. Second, there was clear evidence in our data of a task type effect on the extent to which learners focused on language during the task performances. Space constraints prevent us from exploring this effect further but we see it as a potential avenue for further research. A third limitation is that the transfer of knowledge we investigated was only from rehearsal to performance of a speaking task within a single lesson, and so does not tell us anything about the durability of this learning.

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Appendix

The problem-solving task

Imagine you have 500 million VND and you want to do charity work. Discuss in pairs, which of the following options you will choose to do and why. You both must agree on two options only and give at least three reasons for each choice you make. You have 15 minutes to do the task and you can take notes if you want. After that you will be called upon to perform the task in front of the class, and notes are NOT allowed.

1. Providing funds for heart operations for poor child patients in Vietnam
2. Building flood shelters for people in Central Vietnam
3. Providing job training, or education programs for disabled people in Vietnam
4. Providing scholarships for high school students who are financially disadvantaged in Vietnam
5. Providing rehabilitation or education programs for drug addicts in Vietnam

The debate task

"Charitable giving should be natural to those who are rich."

What do you think? Discuss in pairs, one of you is for, and the other is against. Each of you has to think of at least three ideas to defend your viewpoint and refute your friend's. You have 15 minutes to do the task and you can take notes if you want. After that you will be called upon to perform the task in front of the class, and notes are NOT allowed.

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