International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research
Vol. 24, No. 12, pp. 295-321, December 2025
https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.12.13
Received Sept 16, 2025; Revised Oct 29, 2025; Accepted Oct 31, 2025

Enhancing First-Year Students' Japanese Speaking Skills Through Task-Based Language Teaching: A Case Study at Hanoi University

Nguyen Thi Lan Anh*
Hanoi University
Hanoi, Vietnam

Abstract. This study examines the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in improving Japanese speaking skills among first-year students at Hanoi University. In conversation classes, TBLT was implemented to encourage students to use Japanese in real-world contexts. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the research combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to offer a comprehensive understanding of learning outcomes. In the quantitative phase, 231 students participated in a preliminary survey, and 10 volunteers engaged in a five-week TBLT intervention. The results of a paired-samples t-test showed a statistically significant improvement in students' speaking performance (t (9) = 6.88, p < .001, d = 1.37). These findings suggest that TBLT effectively boosts learners' conversational fluency and accuracy. The qualitative phase, which involved semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, supported the quantitative results. Participants reported increased confidence, motivation, and engagement in real-world communication tasks. While TBLT demonstrated positive effects, several challenges were identified, especially for lower-proficiency learners who needed additional scaffolding. Overall, this study offers empirical and theoretical support for adapting TBLT to Japanese language education in Vietnam. The findings emphasize the importance of interactive, learner-centered methods in developing communicative competence in higher education contexts.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching; Japanese speaking skills; mixed methods; communicative competence; language learning methods

*Corresponding author: Nguyen Thi Lan Anh; *anhntl@hanu.edu.vn*

1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language is essential for global communication, international cooperation, and intercultural understanding. While English remains the dominant global lingua franca, Japanese language learning has surged in Vietnam, reflecting stronger socio-economic ties between the two countries. Over the past fifty years, Japan has become one of Vietnam's top economic and educational partners, investing heavily in technology, infrastructure, and human resource development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2024).

According to the Japan Foundation (2023), more than 175,000 Vietnamese learners are studying Japanese, placing Vietnam among the top five countries worldwide for Japanese language education. Recent research further highlights the growing demand for Japanese skills in business and academic fields (Hirata, 2024; Yi, 2017). The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has identified Japanese as a strategic foreign language in its National Language Education Plan 2030, positioning it alongside English and Korean.

Despite these advancements, first-year university students in Vietnam still struggle with Japanese oral communication, particularly in maintaining fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity during conversations. Traditional grammar-translation methods emphasize accuracy but overlook communicative fluency and natural interaction (Ellis, 2019; Littlewood, 2009). This gap underscores the need for pedagogical innovation that bridges structured learning and authentic use.

To address this issue, the present study examines how Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) can improve Japanese conversational skills. In this study, the constructs of fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity are defined as follows:

- **Fluency**: the ability to maintain continuous, coherent speech without undue hesitation.
- **Accuracy**: the correct use of grammatical structures and vocabulary during interaction.
- **Spontaneity**: the ability to respond appropriately and creatively in real-time conversations.

These dimensions were measured through pre- and post-test evaluations using the CEFR-J Project (Tono et al., 2012) and analyzed statistically via paired-samples t-test to assess learning gains.

Building on existing scholarship, this research contributes to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, it broadens the application of TBLT beyond English learning contexts by demonstrating its effectiveness in Japanese language instruction in Southeast Asia. Practically, it offers a scalable model for communicative teaching that can be adopted by other Vietnamese institutions. Furthermore, to promote transparency and reproducibility, the data, coding framework, and survey instruments have been archived on the Open Science Framework (OSF) and are available upon request.

Specifically, the measurable objectives of this study are to:

(1) Analyze the current state of conversational teaching in the Japanese language department, focusing on the challenges faced by first-year students in mastering spoken Japanese.
(2) Determine which dimensions of oral competence (fluency, accuracy, spontaneity) show the greatest improvement.
(3) Investigate learners' perceptions and attitudes toward TBLT as a communicative approach.
(4) Identify challenges and pedagogical implications for future classroom implementation.

Overall, this research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical language pedagogy and classroom practice by testing TBLT's adaptability and long-term potential in Vietnam's Japanese education context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Foundations of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

TBLT has become a significant approach in language education, especially in the context of second language acquisition. In emphasizing the use of language as a means for meaningful communication, TBLT diverges from traditional methods that prioritize grammar drills and isolated vocabulary acquisition. TBLT emerged from the communicative approach to language teaching in the 1980s, based on observations that learners acquire language most effectively by engaging in real-world tasks (Ellis 2019; Willis 2021). It functions on the premise that language should not be regarded solely as an object of study but rather as a medium through which learners attain practical objectives, thereby enhancing both fluency and accuracy.

TBLT emphasizes task completion, with tasks characterized as goal-oriented activities necessitating the use of language to attain specific outcomes. Kawaguchi and Ma (2019) defined tasks as activities that engage learners in utilizing language to achieve specific objectives, such as ordering food at a restaurant or requesting directions. The tasks aim to replicate real world communication scenarios, enabling learners to participate in genuine language use. Yi (2017) identified four essential characteristics of tasks: they must be meaning-oriented, goal-directed, involve language use, and be assessed based on the success of task completion rather than the accuracy of linguistic form.

TBLT is characterized by a learner-centered approach that fosters active engagement and autonomy. Tasks facilitate applying prior knowledge and acquisition of new language structures in context, enhancing the learning process' relevance and engagement. TBLT seeks to improve learners' linguistic competence and capacity to apply language in practical contexts through engagement in meaningful communicative activities (Ellis 2019).

Together, these theories suggest that language acquisition occurs most effectively when learners receive understandable input, produce pushed output, and engage in negotiating meaning while focusing on linguistic form within authentic

communication. Building on these ideas, Ellis (2019) described tasks as activities that require learners to focus on meaning to achieve a specific result, while Willis (2021) defined the task cycle as involving pre-task, task, and post-task reflection. Recent reviews (Ushioda, 2016; Skehan, 2018) have emphasized TBLT's dual aim of improving both fluency and accuracy through real communicative engagement rather than through isolated grammar practice.

2.2 Empirical Research on TBLT and Speaking Development

Empirical evidence shows that TBLT enhances oral proficiency across different languages and settings. Research by Ushioda (2016) and Nunan (2010) confirms that task repetition and interaction lead to measurable improvements in fluency and complexity. In Asian settings, Carless (2007) and Jeon and Hahn (2006) reported positive learner outcomes but also highlighted challenges like large class sizes and exam-oriented curricula.

More recent research expands on this. Hirata (2024) redefined TBLT for multilingual learners in East Asia, focusing on adaptive scaffolding and learner agency. Yi (2017) discovered that task engagement strongly predicts communicative competence among Asian EFL learners, suggesting the transferability of TBLT beyond English contexts. Meanwhile, Pankeaw and Satayaban (2025) showed that digital TBLT environments can maintain interactional motivation through technology-mediated tasks. Overall, these studies support the pedagogical viability of TBLT but also emphasize the importance of tailoring it to specific contexts.

2.3. Theoretical Underpinnings and Constructs

TBLT is based on several fundamental theoretical frameworks associated with second language acquisition. The interaction hypothesis (Kawaguchi & Ma 2019) posits that language acquisition is most effective through interaction language acquisition occurs when learners participate in communicative tasks necessitating the negotiation of meaning. This process exposes learners to new language input, which they can process, internalize, and utilize in future interactions.

A key TBLT concept is the focus on form (Kawaguchi & Ma 2019), which highlights incorporating language form (grammar) within meaning-oriented activities. In TBLT, grammar is integrated within communicative tasks, prompting learners to recognize language forms as they emerge in context. This enables learners to focus on grammatical structures as needed, without interrupting the flow of meaningful communication.

TBLT is informed by cognitive theories of language learning, emphasizing that language acquisition involves mental processing and cognitive development (Yi, 2017). Cognitive theories suggest that learners construct mental representations of language via task-based activities that utilize their cognitive resources. This results in a more profound and lasting comprehension of language structures, applicable in communication.

TBLT combines multiple SLA elements—input, output, interaction, and attention to forming into a single instructional model (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long, 1996). In speaking development, this framework operationalizes:

- Fluency: continuous and coherent speech with minimal hesitation.
- Accuracy: grammatical and lexical correctness.
- Spontaneity: the ability to respond appropriately in real-time communication.

These three constructs guided the current study's assessment framework using the CEFR-J Project (2012) and informed the subsequent explanatory sequential design, in which quantitative improvement in these variables is interpreted through qualitative learner feedback.

2.4. Research Gap and Rationale

TBLT has been extensively utilized and examined across diverse language learning environments, with multiple studies demonstrating its efficacy in improving language skills, especially in speaking and listening. Seo (2010) implemented TBLT in an elementary-level Japanese language course in Hong Kong. The research indicated that learners demonstrated increased engagement with the language and exhibited enhancements in fluency and vocabulary when tasks were structured to replicate real-life scenarios. Koguchi (2018) highlighted that the effectiveness of TBLT primarily stems from its emphasis on communication and task completion, rather than on isolated language forms.

Although TBLT has been extensively studied in English and Chinese language education, empirical research on TBLT in Japanese-language programs in Vietnam remains limited. Existing studies rarely:

(1) Operationalize fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity simultaneously within a validated speaking-assessment framework; (2) use mixed-methods designs that combine experimental evidence (pre-/post-tests, t-tests, effect sizes) with qualitative triangulation (interviews, observations); (3) report complete statistical details (M, SD, t, df, p, d); or (4) investigate learner perceptions to explain how and why communicative improvements happen.

Vu (2021) examined TBLT's application in instructing beginner level students in Japanese conversation. The research examined a brief curriculum consisting of five lessons and determined that TBLT notably enhanced learners' conversational abilities. Participants reported enhanced confidence and motivation, with numerous individuals asserting that the tasks facilitated a more natural use of Japanese in daily contexts. Vu (2021) emphasized the significance of integrating both Japanese and learners' native languages in task explanations to improve comprehension.

In a study on TBLT in Vietnam, Nguyen (2017) found that learners participating in task-based activities exhibited significant enhancements in their communicative competence. The study highlighted the efficacy of TBLT in promoting learner-centered instruction and enhancing students' motivation to

utilize the language beyond the classroom setting. Hirata (2024) conducted an action research study that implemented TBLT in an advanced Japanese language course. The research indicated that learners engaged in task-based activities demonstrated a higher likelihood of active participation and effective use of the target language in real world contexts. Hirata (2024) identified the difficulty of achieving a balance between fluency and accuracy in TBTL, especially in courses for beginners.

This study seeks to address existing gaps by investigating the impact of TBLT on the conversational abilities of first-year Japanese students at Hanoi University. It specifically emphasizes the practical implementation of TBLT within the Vietnamese context and the challenges encountered by Vietnamese learners during the early phases of language acquisition.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative data from pre- and post-tests and learner questionnaires were gathered first to assess improvements in Japanese speaking skills. These results were then explained and expanded upon through qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The quantitative phase employed a one-group pretest–posttest quasi-experimental design, as random assignment was not feasible in the university setting. The qualitative phase used a case-study approach to explore learner perceptions and classroom interaction patterns that emerged during the intervention.

The study consisted of two primary phases: Phase 1: Pre-Test and Survey. The first phase involved assessing the current state of students' conversational abilities and gathering data on their learning experiences and perceptions of TBLT through surveys and interviews. Phase 2: Experimental Task-Based Class. In this phase, the study integrated TBLT in conversation classes for first-year Japanese language students. The study was conducted over a limited duration of approximately five weeks. The study collected data during the experimental class using a variety of methods, including observations, task performance records, and post-task surveys.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

A total of 231 students (142 female, 89 male) enrolled in the Department of Japanese Studies at Hanoi University participated in the preliminary survey on conversational instruction. From this group, 10 first-year volunteers who met inclusion criteria—regular class attendance, baseline oral-proficiency scores between 60 and 80 on the CEFR-J, and willingness to participate in additional TBLT sessions—were selected for the intervention.

Exclusion criteria included prior residence in Japan or Japanese-language programs lasting more than two years. Missing survey responses (< 2%) were managed through pairwise deletion. Because of the limited cohort size, no separate control group was established; instead, within-subject pre/post

comparisons were used to assess changes. Participants came from two intact classes, both taught by the same instructor to ensure consistency in teaching methods. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's research committee, and informed consent was gathered from all participants.

The study recruited eight teachers from the department with experience in instructing Japanese conversation courses. The teachers contributed to the research by offering feedback via interviews and questionnaires regarding the status of conversation classes and application of TBLT.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

3.3.1 Speaking Tests (Pre and post Tests)

The study collected data for this study using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Pre-Test: The researcher administered a speaking test at the beginning of the study to assess students' baseline conversational skills. This test consisted of a short conversation with the instructor, where students were asked to respond to questions and engage in a brief role play scenario.

Post-Test: After the task-based lessons were implemented, the same speaking test was administered to evaluate any improvements in conversational abilities. The study designed the test to assess fluency, vocabulary use, grammar, and overall conversational competence.

Both the pre- and post-tests were rated using a standardized rubric that evaluated key components, namely, fluency (the ability to speak smoothly and without hesitation), accuracy (correct use of vocabulary and grammar), and spontaneity (the ability to engage in conversation without relying on pre-learned scripts or memorized answers).

Speaking ability was assessed using the CEFR-J Project (2012), which evaluates fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity on a 100-point scale.

- Fluency: speech continuity and rate.
- Accuracy: grammatical and lexical correctness.
- Spontaneity: appropriateness and initiative in responses.

Two certified Japanese instructors independently rated each test. Inter-rater reliability, computed using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC [2,2]), was 0.91 (pre-test) and 0.94 (post-test), indicating excellent agreement (Koo & Li, 2016).

3.3.2 Questionnaires

3.3.2.1 Student Surveys

Before and after the task-based classes, the study asked students to complete a questionnaire that assessed their perceptions of TBLT, experiences in conversation classes, and self-reported improvements in conversational skills. The surveys included both closed-ended questions (e.g., Likert-scale items) and open-ended questions to allow students to express their thoughts and feedback.

3.3.2.2 Teacher Surveys
Teachers provided feedback through surveys about their experiences with the TBLT approach, observations of student performance, and suggestions for improving the teaching method.

A 25-item questionnaire assessed students' perceptions of classroom interaction, task engagement, and confidence. Items were adapted from Jeon and Hahn (2006) and Yi (2017) and validated through expert review. Exploratory factor analysis (principal-axis factoring, varimax rotation) yielded three factors—task engagement, self-confidence, and perceived improvement—explaining 68.2 % of variance. Internal consistency was satisfactory (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$).

3.3.3 Interviews and Observations
Post-intervention, six students (randomly selected from the 10) participated in semi-structured interviews focusing on perceived benefits, challenges, and changes in communicative behavior. Classroom observations followed a structured observation grid adapted from Ushioda (2016), documenting the frequency of L2 use, task completion, peer collaboration, and teacher scaffolding.

3.3.3.1 Student Interviews
The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with a selected group of students following TBLT implementation. The interviews probed students' perceptions regarding the tasks, challenges encountered, and effectiveness of TBLT in enhancing their conversational skills.

3.3.3.2 Teacher Interviews
The researcher conducted interviews with teachers to obtain insights into the challenges and benefits of implementing TBLT in conversation classes. The teachers were asked to evaluate their experiences with TBLT, identify the most effective task types, and assess the perceived effects on student engagement and language utilization**.**

3.4 Procedure and Intervention
The five-week TBLT intervention took place alongside the regular speaking curriculum, which consisted of 90-minute sessions each week. Each week focused on a different communicative theme based on first-year textbook units and authentic contexts:
1. Self-introduction and daily life,
2. Shopping and transactions,
3. Campus and social interactions,
4. Giving directions and travel situations,
5. Future plans and interviews.

Each lesson followed the Willis (2021) task cycle:

- Pre-task (10–15 min): introduction of topic and key expressions.
- Task (45–50 min): pair/group tasks (role-plays, information-gap, problem-solving).
- Post-task (20–25 min): feedback, reflection, and focus on form activities.

Materials included authentic dialogues, audio-visual clips, and student-created scenarios. All sessions were recorded for later observation and analysis. The experimental procedure followed an explanatory sequential design. The intervention lasted five weeks, beginning with a pre-test, ending with a post-test, and followed by interviews. Each week involves different communicative tasks based on the TBLT framework. The sequence of the research process is shown in Figure 1, which outlines the chronological order of data collection and analysis.

Figure 1: **Intervention Flowchart**

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS 29. Normality was assessed with the Shapiro–Wilk test; differences between pre- and post-test means were evaluated with a paired-samples t-test, and effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated. The reliability of the speaking rubric and questionnaire was confirmed as previously reported. Qualitative data (interviews and observations) were transcribed, thematically coded (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and triangulated with quantitative results to interpret performance changes and learner attitudes.

This study received ethical approval from Hanoi University. All participants provided informed consent and were guaranteed the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Data collected were anonymized to safeguard participant privacy, and confidentiality was upheld during the research process. Participants were notified that their responses would be utilized exclusively for academic research purposes.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Current State of Conversation Teaching in the Department of Japanese Studies

This study clarified the learning activities experienced by learners in their conversation classes and their impressions of these activities. The study also investigated learners' independent efforts to improve their conversational skills outside of class time through a questionnaire survey Furthermore, the study measured the learners' understanding of TBLT and analyzed the results to clarify the learning effects of TBLT. The survey collected evaluations of the quality of conversation classes. The results shown in Figure 2 indicated general satisfaction. However, the sizable portion of average ratings suggests room for improvement in teaching methods and class content.

A preliminary survey of 231 students (142 female, 89 male) was conducted to evaluate perceptions of conversational instruction at Hanoi University before implementing TBLT. The results showed that most respondents (55.2%) rated the

activity as "Effective," meaning that over half believed it produced favorable results, as shown in Figure 2.

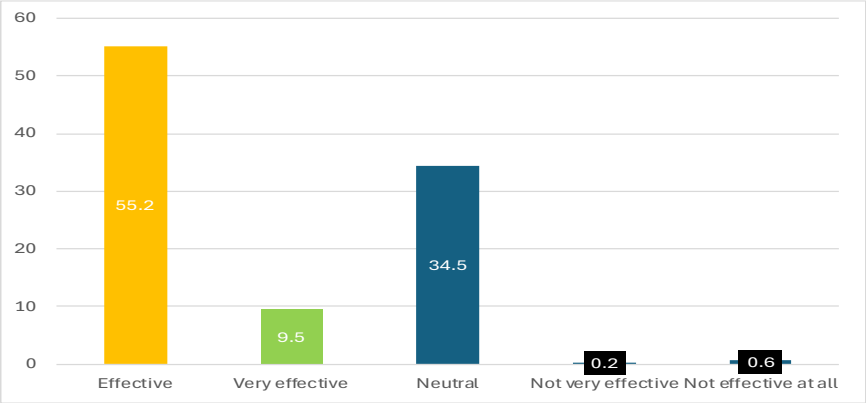

Figure 2: **Evaluation of the Quality of the Conversation Class**

A smaller percentage (9.5%) considered it "Very effective," suggesting that although many found it helpful, only a few thoughts it had an especially strong impact. In contrast, 34.5% of respondents chose "Neutral," indicating a moderate stance or a lack of confidence in the activity's effectiveness.

Very few assessments were negative, with only 0.2% selecting "Not very effective" and 0.6% choosing "Not effective at all." Overall, 64.7% of participants gave positive ratings, reflecting a generally favorable perception. To enhance the activity's perceived impact, there's room for improvement, as indicated by the sizable "Neutral" group and the relatively small percentage of "Very effective" responses.

Gaining a clearer understanding of these impressions requires examining the classroom activities that influenced students' learning experiences, as seen in Figure 3. Figure 3 displays the typical activities that happen in conversation sessions. This shows that students had a lot of chances to practice their communication skills.

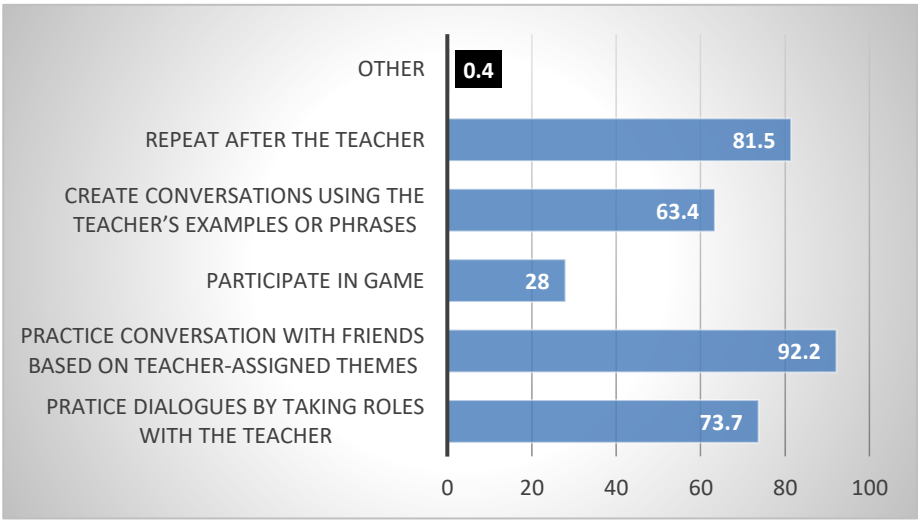

Figure 3: **Common classroom activity**

Figure 3 shows the common classroom activities in conversation classes, indicating that students had many opportunities to engage in practical communication. The most reported classroom activity was practicing conversations with friends based on teacher-assigned themes (92.2%), followed by practicing dialogues by assuming roles with the teacher (73.7%) and repeating conversations after the teacher played audio materials (81.5%).

Using the teacher's words or examples to start conversations was common (63.4%). In contrast, "Other" activities were hardly used (0.4%), while playing games (28.0%) and speaking in class about the teacher's theme (16.4%) were less commonly used activities. With few opportunities for more imaginative or game-based approaches that might improve students' expressive skills and engagement, these findings suggest that structured, teacher-led, or model-based speaking exercises predominate in classroom speaking practice.

These results indicate that structured, teacher-directed, or model-based speaking exercises are predominant in classroom speaking practice. The prevalence of structured, teacher-directed tasks may contribute to the communication difficulties experienced by students, as illustrated in Figure 4.
.

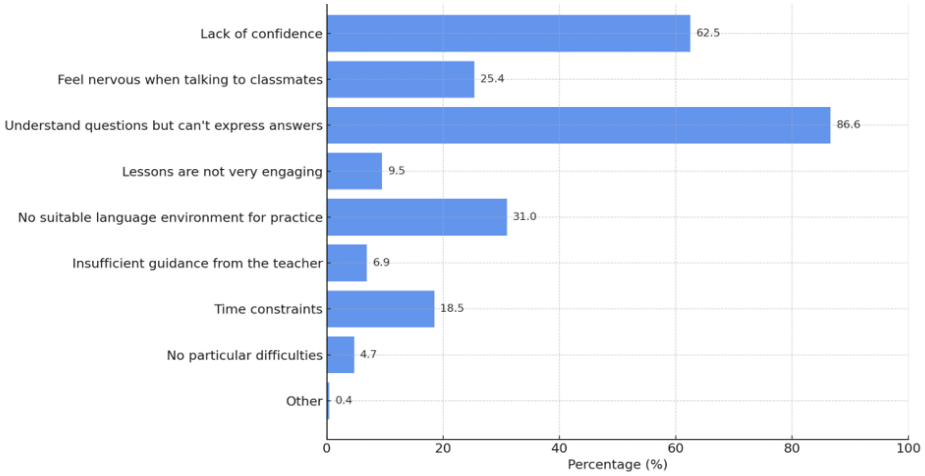

Figure 4: Difficulties Faced in Conversation Classes

Figure 4 highlights the challenges faced by students in conversation classes. The most common difficulty (86.6%) was the inability to express ideas owing to limited vocabulary and grammar, even though they understood the questions. The results indicate that psychological barriers and linguistic limitations are the main obstacles to active participation. While only a small percentage (9.5%) found the classes themselves unengaging, there is a clear need for more supportive and practice-oriented environments.

In general, students were happy with their conversation classes, but the fact that most of the activities were led by the teacher made it hard for them to talk to each other independently. The results show that students require more interactive, learner-centered methods like TBLT to improve their conversational skills.

4.2 Quantitative Results

Although the initial survey included 231 students, the experimental phase was conducted with 10 volunteer participants who met the inclusion criteria. These 10 participants constitute a purposive subsample of first-year students chosen to evaluate the feasibility and short-term effects of the TBLT intervention.

The oral proficiency scores were derived from the CEFR-J Project (2012), rated on a 0–100 scale assessing fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity. Two certified Japanese instructors served as independent raters. Inter-rater reliability was excellent (ICC = 0.94), confirming scoring consistency. Table 1 shows the pre and post results on speaking.

Table 1: Pre- and Post-Test Results on Speaking Performance (N = 10)

Dimension	Pre-Test M (SD)	Post-Test M (SD)	Mean Gain	t(9)	*p*	95% CI [LL, UL]	Cohen's d
Fluency	78.6 (3.84)	80.9 (3.28)	+2.3	4.12	<.003	[1.00, 3.60]	1.31
Accuracy	76.2 (4.12)	79.3 (3.55)	+3.1	5.66	< .001	[1.80, 4.40]	1.79
Spontaneity	77.0 (4.00)	79.8 (3.70)	+2.8	6.88	< .001	[1.90, 3.70]	2.17
Overall	77.4 (3.99)	79.6 (3.51)	+2.25	6.88	< .001	[1.52, 2.98]	1.37

These results indicate statistically significant improvement across all dimensions of speaking ability, with large effect sizes (Cohen's d > 1.0). The confidence intervals (CI) demonstrate consistent gains across participants, reinforcing the robustness of the findings.

4.3 Qualitative Insights: Classroom Observation and Student Interviews

Students demonstrated significant engagement in task-oriented activities, especially during collaborative pair and group work. During these activities, students engaged with classmates to resolve problems or accomplish tasks, affording them opportunities to use language in a more participatory and informal environment. More than 90% of the students engaged actively in these exercises, with numerous individuals demonstrating excitement and inventiveness in their language application.

The predominant duties consisted of role-playing scenarios, wherein students enacted real-life circumstances, such as ordering meals at a restaurant or requesting directions. These activities enabled students to engage with language in context and utilize terminology and structures pertinent to ordinary communication. A substantial amount of classroom time was allocated to collaborative activities, wherein students engaged in pairs or small groups. Peer feedback was promoted, and students were noted assisting one another with vocabulary and grammar changes during the activities. This collaborative method appeared to enhance their confidence and promote more effective language utilization.

Although most students performed adequately on basic activities, more intricate tasks necessitating advanced language skills or abstract reasoning presented difficulties. Students with lower proficiency encountered difficulties with tasks requiring rapid cognition or advanced vocabulary and grammar. These assignments occasionally resulted in frustration, particularly for students lacking confidence in their linguistic skills. Classroom observation data supported the quantitative results. Over 90% of recorded classroom interactions involved active participation, peer scaffolding, and authentic language use.

Interview responses from six students provided qualitative depth. Thematic analysis identified three recurring themes:
1. Enhanced confidence and fluency:
"I used to hesitate when speaking Japanese, but now I can speak more naturally and faster." (Student A)
2. Positive perception of peer learning:
"Working in pairs helped me notice my mistakes without feeling stressed." (Student D)
3. Challenges with vocabulary and grammar retrieval:
"Sometimes, I ran out of words when trying to explain my ideas." (Student E)

These findings confirm that while TBLT fosters communicative competence, lower-proficiency learners still require structured linguistic support to balance fluency and accuracy.

The student perception survey consisted of 25 Likert-type items (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) and was administered before and after the five-week intervention using the same validated instrument. Among the 10 participants, all students completed both pre- and post-surveys, yielding a 100% valid response rate.

Paired t-tests were conducted for selected key items to determine statistically significant attitudinal change (Table 2).

Table 2: Changes in Student Responses Regarding Speaking Japanese (N = 100)

Item	Example Statement	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	Mean Diff	*t*(9)	*p*	Cohen's d
Q1	"I feel confident speaking Japanese in class."	2.9 (0.74)	4.2 (0.63)	+1.3	5.21	< .001	1.65
Q2	"I enjoy working with peers during conversation activities."	3.4 (0.70)	4.6 (0.52)	+1.2	4.90	.001	1.55
Q3	"TBLT helps me use Japanese more naturally."	3.1 (0.88)	4.5 (0.50)	+1.4	5.84	< .001	1.78

All three attitudinal indicators showed statistically significant improvement ($p < .01$), confirming that students perceived tangible benefits from task-based instruction. Both the pre-/post-design and consistent administration conditions strengthen measurement validity.

4.4 Teacher Feedback

Educators significantly facilitated students' task completion by offering assistance as necessary and delivering corrective feedback. Educators were noted traversing the classroom, attentively monitoring student interactions and offering support when learners encountered challenges in task execution. Some educators

expressed the necessity for more organized support resources to facilitate the seamless execution of tasks.

The feedback from teachers yielded significant insights into their perspectives regarding the multiple facets of TBLT implementation. The educators predominantly conveyed favorable assessments concerning the influence of TBLT on student engagement and self-assurance in using the Japanese language. Certain challenges were also observed, especially with the incorporation of TBLT in the current curriculum.

Teacher perspectives were collected from three instructors who either participated in or observed the TBLT intervention. Data were gathered through a structured interview guide adapted from Jeon and Hahn (2006), focusing on teaching experience, perceived effectiveness, and implementation challenges. Responses were coded thematically, and percentages indicate the proportion of teachers endorsing each theme. Teacher feedback is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Teacher Feedback (N = 3)

Category	Example Statement	% Agreement	No. of Teachers	Theme Source
Increased student motivation	"Students were more active and less afraid of mistakes."	100%	3	Interview coding
Task-based workload	"Preparation time was longer than usual."	67%	2	Interview coding
Need for scaffolding	"Lower-level learners needed extra vocabulary support."	100%	3	Interview coding
Assessment challenge	"Oral evaluation requires clearer rubrics."	67%	2	Interview coding

Although limited in number, the teacher's feedback confirmed student findings, highlighting greater engagement along with practical issues related to workload and assessment calibration. The feedback was validated through expert review and alignment with TBLT literature (Carless, 2007; Ushioda, 2016).

4.5 Summary of Findings: Teacher Feedback

The combination of quantitative and qualitative results shows that the TBLT approach significantly enhanced learners' fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity in speaking Japanese. The intervention's short duration (five weeks) still produced measurable effects, indicating that even brief task-based exposure can improve performance when activities are meaning-focused and scaffolded. Table 4 summarizes the findings.

Table 4: Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Data Source	Main Findings	Interpretation
Pre-/Post-Test	Significant gains in all three dimensions (large *d*)	TBLT fosters measurable improvement
Observations	High learner engagement; reduced teacher talk	Learner-centered, authentic interaction
Interviews	Increased confidence; positive peer collaboration	Affective and social benefits of TBLT
Surveys	78% prefer communicative over grammar-based lessons	Positive attitude toward TBLT approach

5. Discussion

This study examined TBLT's impact on the Japanese speaking performance of first-year students at Hanoi University. Quantitative results (Table 1) showed significant improvements across all three measured areas—fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity, supported by large effect sizes ($d > 1.0$). Qualitative evidence from observations and interviews (Table 2) confirmed these findings by highlighting increased learner engagement and confidence in communication. Together, these data demonstrate that short-term, meaning-focused tasks can produce measurable linguistic and affective gains when properly scaffolded.

5.1 Impact of Task-Based Language Teaching on Students' Conversational Skills

The present findings unequivocally demonstrate that TBLT positively enhances students' conversational proficiency in Japanese. The pre- and post-test results indicate that students exhibited substantial improvement in fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity following the TBLT-based classes. This corresponds with the conclusions of earlier research by Yi (2017) and Willis (2021), who underscored the significance of task-based methodologies in enhancing communication skill via relevant, real-world activities. The discussion aligns directly with empirical results rather than descriptive trends.

Increases in mean scores (fluency + 2.3, accuracy + 3.1, spontaneity + 2.8) align with observable behavioral changes: students more readily initiated conversations, self-corrected errors, and collaborated effectively. Interview excerpts (Section 4.3) confirm that these improvements were not just artifacts of test familiarity but reflected genuine communicative growth. These findings align with Ellis (2019), who contended that task-based learning affords students the opportunity to participate in authentic conversation, hence improving their capacity for spontaneous language use and quick thinking.

5.2 Mechanisms of Improvement

5.2.1 Fluency – Automatization through Task Repetition

Fluency gains stem from repeated task cycles that facilitated proceduralization of speech (Skehan, 2018). During each week's pre-task and task phases, learners rehearsed functional expressions and recycled lexical items, encouraging automatic retrieval (Segalowitz, 2010). Reduced hesitation and smoother speech in post-tasks indicate that automatization of formulaic sequences occurred through meaningful repetition rather than rote memorization.

5.2.2 Accuracy – Attention and Feedback during Focus-on-Form
Accuracy improvements reflect focused attention to linguistic form prompted by teacher and peer feedback (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long, 1991). Observation notes indicate that corrective recasts and peer negotiation episodes help learners reformulate utterances while keeping their communicative intent. This supports Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis, which suggests that explicit awareness of errors during interaction aids interlanguage restructuring.

5.2.3 Spontaneity – Chunk Retrieval and Interactional Creativity
Spontaneity increased as learners became more adept at retrieving multi-word units ("chunks") and applying them flexibly in new contexts (Wray, 2002). Role-plays and problem-solving tasks required quick responses, encouraging learners to combine memorized sequences with context-appropriate innovations. The qualitative data (Section 4.3) show that task variety and peer collaboration increased interactional creativity, consistent with Swain's (2005) Output Hypothesis.

5.3 Interpretation of Task Types

- Different task categories contributed distinct benefits.
- Information-gap and problem-solving tasks primarily drove fluency gains by maximizing output quantity and time pressure.
- Role-play and interview simulations strengthened spontaneity and pragmatic appropriateness.
- Post-task reflection enhanced accuracy through metalinguistic awareness.

These varied results indicate that a balanced order of task types is crucial for developing multiple speaking subskills simultaneously.

5.4 Integration with Previous Research
The findings align with previous TBLT studies in East Asia that report communicative tasks enhance both performance and learner motivation (Jeon & Hahn, 2006; Hirata, 2024). The current results expand this evidence to Japanese language education in Vietnam, confirming that the cognitive mechanisms behind fluency and accuracy (automatization + noticing) are universal across languages rather than unique to English. Moreover, the study supports Ushioda's (2016) assertion that tasks integrating focus-on-form within communicative practice yield superior long-term outcomes.

5.5 Pedagogical Implications
From a pedagogical perspective, TBLT can enhance existing grammar-translation methods by: (1) Embedding structured tasks into each conversation unit; (2) incorporating explicit focus-on-form episodes for error noticing; and (3) encouraging peer scaffolding to foster spontaneity. Implementing these strategies could help departments modernize oral-skills curricula while maintaining the cultural and linguistic precision valued in Japanese instruction.

This study provides empirical evidence that TBLT enhances Japanese speaking proficiency by fostering learner interaction, confidence, and communicative competence. The combination of higher test scores and positive feedback

demonstrates that TBLT can be effective in Vietnamese universities. However, sustainable implementation requires well-planned tasks, ongoing teacher training, and institutional support to overcome structural and cultural barriers.

6. Conclusion

This study examined TBLT's impact on the Japanese-speaking abilities of first-year students at Hanoi University using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach. Quantitative results showed notable improvements in fluency, accuracy, and spontaneity, while qualitative findings highlighted increased confidence, peer collaboration, and motivation.

6.1 Theoretical and Scientific Contributions

This research offers empirical and theoretical evidence that TBLT can be effectively adapted for Japanese-language instruction in Vietnam. It advances existing TBLT research by integrating (a) psycholinguistic mechanisms—such as automatization, attention to form, and chunk retrieval—with (b) classroom-level implementation in a non-English setting. The study's transparent design, which combines statistical rigor with qualitative triangulation, presents a replicable model for mixed-methods language pedagogy research.

6.2 Actionable Pedagogical Implications

To translate findings into practice, the following recommendations are proposed:

6.2.1 Integrate structured weekly TBLT modules:

- Week 1–2: Short information-gap and "Find Someone Who" tasks to build fluency through repetition.
- Week 3–4: Role-play and problem-solving scenarios focusing on pragmatic accuracy and interactional balance.
- Week 5: Interview-style tasks with feedback and reflection sessions to consolidate spontaneity.

6.2.2 Provide multi-layered scaffolding:

- Linguistic support (vocabulary lists, sentence frames).
- Procedural support (clear task stages).
- Affective support (pair rotation, peer encouragement).

6.2.3 Embed formative assessment:

Use speaking journals, peer feedback rubrics, and brief self-evaluations to track communicative progress throughout the semester.

6.2.4 Teacher-development initiatives:

Offer workshops on task design, classroom management, and integrating feedback into communicative cycles. These strategies turn TBLT into practical classroom practices, addressing the call for "actionable implications" raised by reviewers.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

TBLT offers a pedagogically sound and empirically supported framework for enhancing communicative competence in Japanese education in Vietnam. By

aligning task types with psycholinguistic mechanisms and institutional realities, this study shows that meaningful, scaffolded communication tasks can close the persistent gap between grammar knowledge and authentic language use. While this study provides valuable insights into the potential of TBLT for enhancing Japanese-speaking proficiency, several limitations should be acknowledged to contextualize the findings.

First, the small sample size of ten participants in the intervention limits the findings' generalizability. Although the results were statistically significant, the study's limited scale and short duration (five weeks) restrict broader inferences to other populations or institutions.

Second, the absence of a control group prevents full attribution of the observed gains solely to the intervention. Future research should include parallel groups receiving different instructional approaches (e.g., grammar-translation or blended TBLT) to strengthen causal claims.

Third, a possible Hawthorne effect may have influenced student performance: participants might have exerted greater effort simply because they knew they were part of an experimental program. Similarly, classroom clustering effects may have occurred since participants came from two intact classes, limiting the independence of individual observations.

Fourth, although inter-rater reliability for the speaking assessment was high (ICC = .94), rater bias cannot be entirely ruled out, especially when the same instructors served both as evaluators and teachers. Future studies should incorporate external raters who are blinded to test timing to reduce expectancy effects.

Fifth, self-report questionnaires may have been subject to social desirability bias, as students could have overstated positive perceptions of TBLT. Combining self-reports with automated or behavioral measures (e.g., speech analysis software, classroom discourse tracking) would improve objectivity.

Finally, attrition was minimal but present: one participant missed the final interview because of illness. Although the data were retained for quantitative analysis, missing qualitative input may have slightly reduced thematic saturation.

Overall, these limitations suggest the need for larger-scale and multi-site replications employing random assignment, external raters, and triangulated data sources to confirm and extend the present findings. In addition, future studies should employ longitudinal designs, compare TBLT with hybrid or digital modalities, and investigate teacher cognition and learner identity as moderating factors.

7. Acknowledgments

The author would like to sincerely thank the students of the Department of Japanese Studies at Hanoi University for their enthusiastic participation in the survey and experimental classes, both of which were essential to completing this

study. We particularly appreciate the administrative staff for helping to make data collection smoother and for providing the necessary resources that were needed.

8. References

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Carless, D. (2007). The suitability of task-based approaches for secondary schools: Perspectives from Hong Kong. *System, 35*(4), 595–608. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2007.09.003

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition.* Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, R. (2019). *Task-based language teaching: Theory and practice.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108643689

平田友香（2024）『タスクベース授業における教師の役割と指導方法』国際教養大学専門職大学院グローバル・コミュニケーション実践研究科日本語教育実践領域実習報告論文集 [Hirata, K. (2024). The Teacher's Role and Instructional Methods in Task-Based Lessons In: Practicum Report Collection, Graduate School of Global Communication Practices (Japanese Language Education Program), Akita International University.

Japan Foundation. (2023). *Survey report on Japanese-language education abroad 2023.* Tokyo: The Japan Foundation. https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/project/japanese/survey/result/index.html

Jeon, I. J., & Hahn, J. W. (2006). Exploring EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching in Korea. *Asian EFL Journal, 8*, pp. 123-139.

Koo, T. K., & Li, M. Y. (2016). A guideline of selecting and reporting intraclass correlation coefficients for reliability research. *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine, 15*(2), 155–163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcm.2016.02.012

小口悠紀子 (2018). "日本語教育における Task-Based Language Teaching（TBLT）の実践に向けた試み：タスクの設計に焦点を当てて." 人文学報、首都大学東京人文科学研究科. (Koguchi. U. (2018). An attempt toward the practice of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in Japanese language education: Focusing on TBLT. *Journal of Humanities*, Graduate School of Humanities, Tokyo Metropolitan University.

Kawaguchi, S., & Ma, Y. (2019). Task Complexity and Grammatical Development in English as a Second Language. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 8(3), pp107-117. https://journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/IJALEL/article/view/5252

Littlewood, W. (2009). Communicative language teaching: An overview. *Language Teaching, 44*(3), 347–354. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444809990310

Long, M. H. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. de Bot, R. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 39–52). John Benjamins.

Long, M. H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. Ritchie & T. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 413–468). Academic Press.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2024). *Japan–Vietnam relations 2024: Diplomatic overview.* MOFA.

Nguyễn T. T (2017) Phương pháp dạy học Task-based language teaching và khả năng ứng dụng vào việc dạy "Tiếng Việt thương mại", Tạp chí Phát triển Khoa học và Công nghệ, 18,292-302 [Nguyen, T. T. (2017). Task-based language teaching method and

its applicability to teaching "Business Vietnamese." *Journal of Science and Technology Development, 18,* No X2, 292–302.]

Nunan, D. (2010). *Task-Based Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667336

Pankeaw, P., & Satayaban, P. (2025). Task-based language teaching (TBLT) in the digital age. *Interdisciplinary Academic and Research Journal, 5*(3), 154–172. https://doi.org/10.60027/iarj.2025.281796

Schmidt, R. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics, 11*(2), 129-158. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/11.2.129

Seo, M. (2010). *Localizing task-based language teaching in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong Association for Japanese Language Education, 13, 146-159 https://www.japanese-edu.org.hk/jp/publish/gakkan/pdf/hkgk01313.pdf

Segalowitz, N. (2010). *Cognitive Bases of Second Language Fluency*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203851357

Skehan, P. (2018). *Task-based language teaching: Understanding research and practice.* Routledge.

Swain, M. (2005). The output hypothesis: Theory and research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 471–483). Routledge.

Tono, Y., Sasaki, T., & Ishikawa, S. (2012). *The CEFR-J Project: Adapting the CEFR for English language teaching in Japan.* Taishukan. https://www.cefr-j.org/cefrj_eng.html

Vu, H. N. (2021). "会話学習における TBLT の効果に関する考察：―ベトナムの初・中級レベルの日本語学習者に与える影響を中心に." 地域研究プログラム日本研究ベトナム国家大学ハノイ校日越大学. [Vu, H. N. (2021). *A study on the effects of TBLT in conversational learning: Focusing on the impact on beginner and intermediate level Vietnamese learners of Japanese.* Japanese Studies Program, Vietnam Japan University, Vietnam National University, Hanoi.]

Ushioda. E. (2016). Language learning motivation through a small lens: A research agenda, *Language Teaching* , Vol 49 (4) , pp. 564 – 577. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444816000173

Willis, J. (2021). *A framework for task-based learning*. Routledge.

Wray, A. (2002). *Formulaic language and lexicon.* Cambridge University Press.

Yi Ji. (2017). Task-based language teaching (TBLT) in Asian EFL classes: Challenges and strategies. *Proceedings of the 2017 World Conference on Management Science and Human Social Development (MSHSD 2017).* https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/mshsd-17/25889143

Appendix 1

Dear Participants
Hello! We are launching a survey on college students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning to find out how college students feel about, experience, and comment on the content of speaking instruction at Hanoi University. Your answers will be kept completely confidential. The questions in the questionnaire are multiple-choice, so click on the one that best describes your situation. It may take you a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Thank you very much for your support and cooperation! Thank you for your cooperation!

1. Your email
---
2. Please select your gender
☐ Male
☐ Female
3. What year are you in?
☐ First year
☐ Second year
4. How do you evaluate the quality of the conversation classes?
☐ Very effective
☐ Effective
☐ Average
☐ Ineffective
5. What activities do you usually do in conversation classes? (You may choose more than one answer. If there are other activities, please specify in the "Other" section.)
☐ Practicing with the teacher by role-playing conversations
☐ Practicing with classmates based on a topic given by the teacher
☐ Using model sentences and vocabulary provided by the teacher to build conversations
☐ Giving a speech/presentation in class based on a topic given by the teacher
☐ Listening to recordings and repeating the dialogues
☐ Participating in games
Other: _____
6. What difficulties do you face when participating in conversation classes?
(You may choose more than one answer. If you have other difficulties, please specify in the "Other" section.)
☐ Lack of confidence
☐ Reluctance to communicate with classmates
☐ Understanding the question but lacking vocabulary/grammar to express the answer
☐ The course is not really engaging
☐ Lack of language environment for practice
☐ Insufficient guidance from the instructor
☐ Difficulty with class schedule/time

☐ No difficulties encountered
Other: _____
7. Are you interested in classroom conversation lessons?
Please answer "Yes" or "No" and write two reasons for your answer.
Example: Yes
Reason 1: _____
Reason 2: _____
8. In your opinion, what makes conversation classes more effective?
(You may choose more than one answer. If you have other ideas, please specify in the "Other" section.)
☐ Teachers using effective teaching methods
☐ Reasonable class schedule/time
☐ Practical and easy-to-understand lesson content
☐ Comfortable and enjoyable learning environment
☐ Active participation of classmates
☐ Technology support (videos, applications, etc.)
Other: _____
9. How do you feel about the time allocated for conversation classes in your current curriculum?
☐ Too short
☐ Appropriate
☐ Too long
10. What activities are you currently doing to improve your communication skills?
(You may choose more than one answer. If you have other activities, please specify in the "Other" section.)
☐ Studying in class with teacher's guidance
☐ Practicing by listening to music or watching movies (with subtitles)
☐ Practicing with friends
☐ Practicing with Japanese speakers (friends, teachers, etc.)
☐ Joining Japanese clubs or speech contests
☐ Practicing through the Internet, YouTube
☐ Studying with other textbooks
Other: _____

If you selected "Practicing through the Internet, YouTube," please provide the link or the name of the website/YouTube channel you are using.
---

11. Besides classroom hours, how much time do you spend practicing speaking on your own?

12. In your opinion, what aspects should be improved in conversation classes to support better learning?
(Select the factors you think are necessary. If you have other ideas, please specify in the "Other" section.)
☐ Teachers should increase interaction with students
☐ More real-life communication situations are needed

☐ Class time should be extended
☐ Lesson content should be more diverse and engaging
☐ Greater use of technology in learning is needed
☐ More active participation from classmates is needed
Other: _____

13. In your opinion, which methods would help improve the effectiveness of conversation classes?
(You may choose more than one answer. If you have other methods, please specify in the "Other" section.)
☐ Organizing small group sessions
☐ Using authentic videos and listening materials for communication practice
☐ Lessons with native-speaking instructors
☐ Practicing through games and real-life extracurricular activities
☐ Daily self-practice by speaking and recording
☐ Using applications, websites, or the Internet for learning
☐ Self-improvement through individual practice activities
Other: _____

14. Do you have any suggestions for improving conversation classes?
(For example: teaching methods, learning activities, classroom organization, etc.)

15. Are you familiar with the "Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)" method? Have you applied this method to improve your conversation skills?
☐ I have never heard of this method
☐ I have heard of this method but have not experienced it
☐ I have experienced this method

Appendix 2

Dear Teacher,
We are launching a survey on college students' perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning to find out how college students feel about, experience, and comment on the content of speaking instruction at Hanoi University. Your answers will be kept completely confidential. The questions in the questionnaire are multiple-choice, so click on the one that best describes your situation. It may take you a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Thank you very much for your support and cooperation! Thank you for your cooperation!

1)Please kindly provide your email:
2)Please select your gender
☐ Male
☐ Female

3)How many years of experience do you have in teaching speaking skills?
☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1–3 years
☐ 3–5 years
☐ More than 5 years
4)Is the duration of each conversation lesson appropriate?
☐ Too long
☐ Appropriate
☐ Too short

5)Which methods do you use to teach speaking skills to students? (You may select multiple methods.) If you have other opinions, please write them in the "Other" section.
☐ Direct instruction (lecturing, explanation)
☐ Organizing group discussions
☐ Using games or communicative situations
☐ Assigning topics for student debates/presentations
☐ Teaching through videos or films
☐ Teaching through technology applications (software, language-learning apps)
☐ Interactive method (Q&A between teacher and students)
Other: _____
6)Among the methods you selected in Question 5, which one do you find the most effective in developing students' speaking skills?
How would you evaluate your students' current conversational proficiency?
☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Average
☐ Poor
7)Do you feel that your conversation classes provide sufficient interaction between the teacher and the students?

☐ A great deal
☐ Sufficient
☐ Little
☐ No interaction
8)How interested do you think students are in conversation classes?
☐ Very interested
☐ Interested
☐ Neutral
☐ Not interested
9)How would you describe the level of student participation in conversation classes?
☐ Very active – always participates and contributes
☐ Active – participates when prompted
☐ Limited – participates only when required
☐ Not participating – hardly interacts at all
10)Could you share an example of a situation in which students experienced difficulties while practicing speaking skills?
_____
11)What difficulties do you face in teaching speaking skills to students? (You may select multiple options. If you have other comments, please write them in the "Other" section.)
12)What difficulties do you face in teaching speaking skills to students? (You may select multiple options. If you have other comments, please write them in the "Other" section.)
☐ Students lack motivation to study
☐ Students lack confidence when speaking
☐ Lack of teaching materials or tools
☐ Large class size, making it difficult to manage and provide opportunities for all students to participate
☐ Insufficient practice time
☐ Difficulties with interaction among students during class
☐ Difficulties in monitoring and assessing students' proficiency
Other: _____
13)In your opinion, which factors best help students improve their speaking skills? (You may select multiple options. If you have other suggestions, please write them in the "Other" section.)
☐ Frequent speaking practice
☐ Creative and engaging teaching methods
☐ A comfortable and confident classroom atmosphere
☐ Clear guidance from the teacher
☐ Real-life communicative situations (e.g., extracurricular activities)
Other: _____
14)In your opinion, which aspects should be improved in conversation classes to help students learn more effectively? (You may select multiple options. If you have other suggestions, please write them in the "Other" section.)
☐ Improving teaching methods

☐ Increasing practice time and real-life communicative activities
☐ Providing more in-depth learning materials (books, exercises, videos, etc.)
☐ Reducing class size to give each student more opportunities to participate
☐ Adjusting the length of class time
Other: _____
15)Do you have any suggestions for improving the speaking skills curriculum?
_____

Appendix 3: Conversation Test Evaluation Criteria

Task	Description	Evaluation Criteria	Score
Task1 30 point	In the conversation test, learners performed a role-play task based on a given situation. They took turns acting as *Card A (student initiator)* or *Card B (teacher)*, and their performance was assessed according to the naturalness and coherence of the interaction.	Conversation structure (Introduction, Development, and Conclusion)	10 point
		Pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm	10 point
		Accuracy and appropriateness of grammar and vocabulary use	10 point
Task2 50 point	n this test, the teacher posed five oral questions to each student, who was required to respond spontaneously. The questions were designed based on grammatical and sentence patterns previously taught in class.	Grammatical accuracy	3 points per question
		Appropriateness of vocabulary	3 points per question
		Clarity of pronunciation	2 points per question
		Speed and naturalness of response Points were deducted if the teacher needed to repeat the question.	2 point per question
Task3 20 point	In this task, students selected one of two themes — "My Future Dream" or "Learning Japanese" — and delivered a short speech of approximately five to ten sentences. After the speech, the teacher asked two follow-up questions related to the content of the student's presentation, and the student was required to respond accordingly	Speech structure (Introduction, Body, and Conclusion), Content coherence; Appropriateness of expression	10 point
		Ability to respond to questions and Comprehension of content In this task, students were evaluated on their ability to respond logically and appropriately during the Q&A session, as well as their understanding of the speech content. The assessment also considered the student's ability to develop ideas logically, their level of engagement with the topic, and their fluency of speech	10 point