



# Insights into Vietnamese EFL Students’ Engagement in Academic Writing Through Translanguaging

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Received 22/02/2025	<b>ABSTRACT</b>  English-only classes are a common trend across various EFL contexts; however, many students struggle due to limited English proficiency. Consequently, they employ their linguistic repertoire to construct knowledge and skills through translanguaging (TL). To address this, this convergent mixed-methods study explored EFL students’ engagement in an academic writing class through TL. Using convenience sampling, Vietnamese English majors (N = 113) completed a 5-point Likert questionnaire, followed by semi-structured interviews (n = 24). Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, and qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. The results revealed a high level of engagement. Specifically, TL facilitated students’ emotional engagement to a greater extent than their cognitive and behavioral engagement. These findings have pedagogical implications for fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment that values students’ linguistic diversity.
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## Introduction

Within the realm of English language education (LE), a myriad of methods/approaches have been applied to maximize quality and effectiveness; nevertheless, there has been an ongoing controversy regarding whether students' first language (L1) should be incorporated into L2 LE (Vijayakumar et al., 2023). Two opposite viewpoints. The first holds that some teaching methods/approaches disregard the use of L1 because it can hinder students' grasp of the target language, foster bad habits in target-language use, and hinder teaching efforts (Sahib, 2019; Yavuz, 2012). The other viewpoint argues that L1 use can facilitate L2 learning. For example, L1 use can be useful for vocabulary explanation and meaning clarification (Alshehri, 2017) and can facilitate the construction of meanings for difficult and unfamiliar terminology (Sánchez, & González-Romero, 2023). In a multilingual world, English-only policies in English language teaching (ELT) have been gradually phased out as multilingual practices have become inevitable in English LE (Tran, 2021). Liu et al. (2021) asserted that the shift toward multilingualism has led to a move away from the traditional English-only approach toward a new paradigm that embraces the diverse and complex nature of English use and methodology. Additionally, in many countries where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), such as Vietnam, internationalization has led many higher education institutions to adopt English as a medium of instruction (EMI) (Karim et al., 2023; Pham et al., 2023). Although EMI can enhance students' exposure to English, those with limited English proficiency often struggle with comprehension, participation, and confidence. Therefore, the inclusion of L1 in L2 LE has led to an increase in translanguaging (TL), which views languages as interrelated resources (García, 2009).

Translanguaging, which is related to L1, has attracted a large number of researchers, scholars, and educators. Nursanti (2021) claimed that this approach enhances students' confidence, performance, and ideas, enabling them to engage comfortably and confidently in learning English. Yasar and Dikilitas (2022) similarly affirmed that TL plays a crucial role in facilitating learning by helping students feel safe and comfortable in communication, encouraging them to participate, and motivating them to speak. Likewise, Luong (2020) highlighted that TL use can improve students' engagement in class activities and their learning achievements.



Writing is viewed as a fundamental language skill for students. Klimova (2013) stated that writing is an indispensable language skill for learning English, as it can promote communication, critical thinking, and persuasive reasoning. Nonetheless, Brown (2000) argues that writing is one of the most demanding language skills for students to acquire, as it requires specialized thinking, drafting, and revising skills. In Vietnam, English instruction tends to focus more on grammar and vocabulary (Chau & Tran, 2025; Do, 2015). Writing is taught as an assessment instrument rather than as a means of communication, so students are not highly motivated to actively engage in such classes. In the research context, English majors must study a variety of subjects related to English language knowledge and skills. Many students encounter various obstacles, such as low English proficiency, a lack of ideas, and low motivation. Teachers in this research context have attempted to apply various teaching methods and approaches to transform instruction and learning. Accordingly, TL seems to be an appropriate teaching approach for improving students' writing, thereby creating more inclusive and effective instruction. Nevertheless, it is evident that while a myriad of studies has explored various aspects of TL in L2 contexts, research on students' engagement with TL in academic writing in Vietnamese tertiary contexts remains scarce. To that end, the authors examine EFL students' engagement in an academic writing class through TL at a Vietnamese higher education institution. The research question is: what is the engagement of Vietnamese EFL students in an academic writing class through TL?

The authors hope the results will offer insights into TL and further the extant literature. An additional understanding of TL use in academic writing may enable students to become actively engaged by utilizing their entire linguistic repertoire. Furthermore, the findings can enlighten stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, administrators) about the benefits of TL in L2 writing instruction, thereby supporting students with diverse language proficiency levels.

## **Literature Review**

### **Translanguaging**

Scholars and researchers have continually refined the concept of TL to provide greater clarity. Williams (1994) delineated TL as a process by which one receives information in one language, explaining that it involves utilizing two languages to construct meanings, develop experiences, and gain knowledge. Likewise, Canagarajah (2011) asserted that TL is the way people use their repertoire to navigate different languages and interact with others. Additionally, Tran (2021) contextualized TL within language ecology as a



learning strategy that enables students to use their languages in their language learning. In this research context, TL is understood as a set of learning activities in which students utilize their L1 to facilitate L2 learning.

Translanguaging has evolved from a classroom practice into a theoretical perspective that offers an alternative view of bi/multilingualism (García, 2009; Vogel & García, 2025). Unlike traditional conceptions that view bilingual or multilingual learners as possessing two or more separate languages, the TL perspective holds that all learners can use a single integrated linguistic repertoire to make meaning across different communicative contexts (García & Wei, 2014). From this view, dynamic language use can enable bilingual, multilingual, or even monolingual learners to strategically select and deploy linguistic features that best serve their communicative intentions (Vogel & García, 2025).

Translanguaging consists of two types: pedagogical TL (planned TL) and natural TL (unplanned TL). The former refers to teaching activities in which the teacher plans to use L1 for pedagogical purposes during instruction (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). The latter is unplanned, sporadic, non-purposeful, and non-creative language activities used by both the teacher and students. Both types allow learners to draw on their entire repertoire during their language learning (Daniel et al., 2019). For this study, pedagogical TL focuses on teaching and learning activities (e.g., explanation, discussion, clarification, feedback) that teachers deploy to support students' learning.

The use of TL can leverage students' full repertoire, resulting in a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Tai (2022) noted that using TL in class can enhance confidence and foster a sense of belonging. In a similar vein, Mendoza (2020) added that TL-based classes can bridge gaps among students with diverse English proficiency levels and enable them to engage meaningfully in class discussions.

## Academic writing

L2 students consider writing one of the most important English language skills to master. Irvin (2010) stated that writing is a crucial communication skill; nevertheless, students frequently find it difficult to attain high proficiency. Johnson (2003) argued that the writing process is often chaotic, as writers initially grapple with words, ideas, and structure, continually revising until they discover exactly what they want to express and how to convey it effectively.

Writing consists of various forms, each with specific purposes, structures, and audiences. In this regard, academic writing is a formal genre with distinct characteristics. Bailey (2017) identified common types (e.g., essays, notes, reports, projects, theses/dissertations, and papers). At the



tertiary level, students are expected to write academically; however, in foreign-language teaching contexts, when they engage in academic writing, they, along with peers and teachers, may inevitably struggle to express themselves in their L2. Therefore, using the L1 can help them navigate the challenges of linguistic and cultural diversity (Rafi & Morgan, 2022).

## **Student Engagement in Academic Writing**

Student engagement is commonly viewed from a convergent perspective. Coates (2005) explained that engagement reflects how actively students participate in academic activities that encourage active learning and ultimately help them achieve their goals. Likewise, Jung and Lee (2018) pointed out that engagement refers to the mental effort and focus students invest in achieving their desired academic performance. Moreover, Tejano (2022) asserted that engagement, which is essential for learning, not only enhances students' knowledge but also allows them to demonstrate what they have learned and build confidence. Regarding academic writing, Kuh (2009) argued that students who are actively engaged in writing tend to develop advanced learning strategies, thereby enhancing their writing skills and academic achievement. Boekaerts (2016) affirmed that students who engage in such writing can develop complex ideas, organize logical arguments, and cultivate their scholarly voice.

Student engagement can be divided into three components: emotional, behavioral, and cognitive (Pérez-Salas et al., 2021; Reeve & Jang, 2020). Emotional engagement involves students' positive and negative feelings toward their teachers, peers, academic work, and school. It plays a key role in influencing their attitudes toward writing tasks and their motivation to persevere with difficult assignments. Hence, enhancing students' positive emotions can lead to greater participation (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-García, 2012). Behavioral engagement, according to Pérez-Salas et al. (2011), refers to students' tangible actions in class. Students who are behaviorally engaged tend to devote more time and effort to their writing, resulting in higher-quality writing and greater academic success (Kuh, 2009). Cognitive engagement refers to the depth of thinking and the mental effort required to comprehend complex ideas and skills (Lei et al., 2018). That is, engagement is the interaction among students, peers, and teachers aimed at achieving academic writing goals, and it can be measured along three dimensions (emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement).

TL is believed to create a dynamic and inclusive environment in which multilingual learners can deploy their full linguistic repertoires to make meaning and construct knowledge (García & Wei, 2014). When students use TL in English writing, their emotional engagement can be enhanced through



their linguistic identities, thereby reducing anxiety and fostering a sense of belonging and confidence (Li & Wang, 2024). Their cognitive engagement can also be strengthened as learners progress through different stages of writing (Robillos, 2023; Robillos & Art-in, 2023), where their behavioral engagement is promoted by active participation, collaboration, and sustained effort (Li & Wang, 2024; Sheng, 2024). In brief, TL not only provides learners with a linguistic means of expression but also supports them with meaningful engagement.

## Previous Studies

Numerous studies exploring different aspects of TL in academic writing across various contexts. García and Sylvan (2011), for instance, explored how students used both L1 and L2 in their writing tasks in U.S. bilingual classrooms. They found that when allowed to use TL, students were less anxious and frustrated, felt more comfortable expressing their ideas and emotions, and showed greater enthusiasm and confidence in writing tasks. Similarly, Velasco and García (2014) analyzed young bilingual students' written texts, in which TL was used in the writing process. The findings showed that participants were more emotionally engaged and motivated to write when they could use their L1 during the writing process. Machura (2020) conducted a study at a German university to investigate students' attitudes and behaviors, as well as the quality of foreign-language texts produced in an academic writing class. Participants who were taught through TL showed positive attitudes toward TL, increased confidence in the writing process, and improved language proficiency.

A study conducted in Bangladesh by Rafi and Morgan (2022) examined the impact of pedagogical TL on academic writing among English majors, finding that its use increased engagement, improved academic performance, and boosted metalinguistic awareness and multicompetence. Additionally, students felt more comfortable expressing their ideas freely and had a clearer understanding of the teacher's instructions. Zheng and Drybrough (2023) explored Chinese bilingual students' TL practices in the writing process. They found that TL enhanced students' self-regulation and enabled them to control their recursive, extensive dissertation-writing process. In the Vietnamese context, a few studies have explored the use of TL in ELT and learning. One such study, Luong (2020), explored high school students' perceptions of TL's effectiveness. The findings indicated that using TL in the classroom enhanced students' participation in learning activities and positively impacted their learning outcomes. Another study conducted by Chau and Tran (2025) investigated high school EFL teachers' engagement with TL in English-speaking classes. They found that teachers deployed TL intensively to support



students' cognitive learning, reduce anxiety, encourage participation, and foster an inclusive environment. While various aspects of TL in English LE have been researched across different settings, only a few studies on this topic—particularly regarding students' engagement in academic writing through TL—have been conducted in Vietnam. To address this gap, this study examined Vietnamese L2 students' engagement in an academic writing class through TL.

## Methodology

### Study Setting and Participants

Driven by ontological and epistemological perspectives, this study adopted a convergent mixed-methods design (quantitative and qualitative approaches). It employed a pragmatic worldview for data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to scrutinize Vietnamese EFL students' learning engagement in an academic writing class through TL. The study was conducted at a university in Binh Duong Province, Vietnam, which provides English instruction to both English and non-English majors. Regarding the four-year English language program, learners must take courses in English language skills (i.e., reading, speaking, listening, and writing) in the first two years and specialized courses (e.g., translation, interpretation, semantics, and syntax) in the remaining two years. As for writing skills, students enroll in four courses using the Q: Skills for Success: Reading and Writing 2–5 coursebooks, published by Oxford University Press. Both reading and writing skills are taught in a single course that carries three credits (1 credit for reading; 2 for writing), a total of 45 classes, each lasting 45 minutes. The writing class takes place in three stages: pre-writing, while writing, and post-writing. During the pre-writing stage, the input (e.g., vocabulary, structures, ideas) is provided. While writing, collaborative writing, including various activities in pairs/groups, is conducted to help students practice writing skills. During the post-writing stage, students' writing is checked and commented on by their peers and the teacher. Feedback is also provided. During the class, TL is pedagogically employed for various activities (e.g., explanation, discussion, clarification, and feedback) by both the teacher and students. Translanguaging accounts for approximately 20–25% of the total instruction time.

A group of 113 English majors was recruited via convenience sampling, all second-year students taking the course Reading and Writing 3. This means they had prior experience with TL from Reading and Writing 1 and 2. Of the 113 students, 73.5% had pre-intermediate English proficiency and 26.5% were at the intermediate level. Although most of them (76.1%)



had spent more than eight years learning English, the rest (23.9%) had spent less than that. Additionally, nearly half of the students (47.8%) allocated one to three hours daily to self-study in English, while 14.1% spent over three hours learning English on their own, and the rest (38.1%) allotted less than one hour daily. Many students (20.4%) had extra English classes after school. Twenty-four students volunteered to participate in follow-up focus group interviews. Consent forms were obtained from all participants.

## **Instruments and Data Collection**

Two instruments were used for data collection: a closed-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire had two sections. The first queried demographic information, while the second, adopted from Fredricks et al. (2004), focused on participants' engagement in an academic writing class through TL, including 12 items across three dimensions (Emotional: E1–E4; Cognitive: C1–C4; Behavioral: B1–B4). The questionnaire was translated into the respondents' L1 to mitigate potential language barriers and facilitate understanding. Afterwards, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted (Yong & Pearce, 2013), yielding a Cronbach's alpha of  $\alpha = .87$ , indicating high reliability.

As for the semi-structured interview, five questions were designed to seek in-depth insights into students' learning engagement in an academic writing class through TL. Designed in English and based on the questionnaire and research objectives, the interview questions were also translated into the respondents' L1.

In addition to those in the main study, 10 students were invited to pilot-test the research instruments. The instruments were then revised for language clarity and content. After that, 120 students were given the questionnaire, resulting in 113 valid responses. The second phase was conducted immediately after the questionnaire data were collected. Six groups of four students were selected for the semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted around 45 minutes. All interviews were conducted in the respondents' L1 and audio-recorded for data analysis.

## **Data analysis**

This study adopted an ecolinguistic approach (Steffensen & Fill, 2014) to understand students' learning engagement in an academic writing class through TL, in relation to the specific research context. This approach delves into how language and engagement interact within a complex ecosystem. As such, data analysis focused on TL's situated functions and their relationship with students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement



during English writing. Two methods were used for data analysis. The questionnaire data were subjected to descriptive analysis using SPSS version 23. The interpretation of the interval scale included five levels: Strongly disagree (1.00-1.80); disagree (1.81-2.60); neutral (2.61-3.40); agree (3.41-4.20); strongly agree (4.21-5.00) (Kan, 2009). The interview data were analyzed using the deductive content analysis approach. First, the recordings were carefully listened to, and the resulting transcripts were translated into English. The interviewees were then consulted for content validation. Second, codes were assigned to the interviewees (I1-I24). Third, the transcripts were reviewed multiple times using codebooks generated to identify themes.

To address the validity and reliability of the data analysis, an inter-rater method was employed. Two experienced researchers were invited to cross-verify the data analysis. They first double-checked the three questionnaire items using randomly selected M and SD scores to ensure their findings aligned with the initial analysis (Marcial & Launer, 2021). Second, three transcripts were randomly selected for re-analysis to assess convergence in results (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

Results

Vietnamese EFL Students’ Engagement in an Academic Writing Class through TL

The learning engagement, consisting of three components (emotion, cognition, and behavior), was employed to determine EFL students’ engagement in the academic writing class through TL. As shown in Table 1, the average mean score for the English majors’ engagement was 4.08 (SD=.96). Specifically, the mean scores for emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement were 4.21 (SD = .91), 4.12 (SD = .96), and 3.93 (SD = .94), respectively. These results suggest that participants were likely to become actively engaged through TL and tended to engage in emotional learning activities using TL more than in cognitive or behavioral ones.

Table 1

*Vietnamese EFL Students’ Engagement in an Academic Writing Class through TL*

No.	Engagement	N = 113	
		M	SD
1	Emotional engagement	4.21	.91
2	Cognitive engagement	4.12	.96



3	Behavioral engagement	3.93	.94
	Average	4.08	.96

### *Emotional Engagement*

With respect to emotional engagement (Table 2), the participants strongly preferred “seeing TL used to explain new words” (E2: M = 4.35; SD = .87) and “[having] their teacher use TL to explain writing mistakes” (E4: M = 4.33; SD = .80). They also enjoyed “learning writing when TL was used” (E1: M = 4.16; SD = .95) and “[having] discuss[ions] with their classmates in their mother tongue” (E3: M = 3.96; SD = .94). This implies that TL facilitated students’ emotional engagement in the class.

**Table 2**

#### *Emotional Engagement in an Academic Writing Class through TL*

No.	In an academic writing class . . . ,	N =113	
		M	SD
E1	I enjoy learning writing when TL is used.	4.16	.95
E2	I prefer seeing TL being used to explain new words.	4.35	.87
E3	I enjoy discussing with my classmates in my mother tongue.	3.96	.94
E4	I prefer my teacher to use TL to explain writing mistakes.	4.33	.80

Both qualitative and quantitative results were compatible. Remarkably, most interviewed students reported that they liked TL because it was easy for them to acquire new knowledge and understand exactly what their teacher instructed. Some examples are as follows:

It is interesting to use TL in an academic writing class because it seems easy for me to gain new knowledge.... (I9)

I will get bored in the academic writing class if the class is completely taught in English. Because many things are difficult to understand, teachers’ explanations in English are not fully understood. (I11)

Using TL in an academic writing class is so enjoyable. TL helps me to understand the meaning of technical terms exactly. (I23)

However, a few participants expressed their dislike of TL use. Here are some reasons that they shared:

I think English should be used in academic writing. If Vietnamese is used, it will not help me improve my English. (S15)



My major is English, so English should be used in class. If there is a problem that we do not understand, we use Vietnamese. This reduces our acquisition of English. (S13)

*Cognitive Engagement*

Regarding cognitive engagement (Table 3), the participants reported that when TL was used, they could remember “sentence structures ... (C1: M = 4.45; SD = .93), “how to write ...” (C2: M = 4.13; SD = .95), “become aware of [their] writing errors ... (C4: M = 4.14; SD = .90) and “understand the lessons better” (C1: M = 4.03; SD = .82). Overall, it can be understood that TL promoted high cognitive engagement among the participants.

**Table 3**

*Cognitive Engagement in the Academic Writing class through TL*

No.	When TL is used in an academic writing class . . . ,	N= 113	
		M	SD
C1	I can understand the lessons better.	4.03	.82
C2	I can remember how to write better.	4.13	.93
C3	I can remember sentence structures better.	4.15	.95
C4	I can better become aware of my writing errors.	4.14	.90

Turning to the interview results, participants reported that using TL facilitated their understanding and retention of the material. Interviewee I12 shared that “I can remember the learned knowledge longer. For example, I remembered the knowledge from previous lessons when the class used translanguaging. [Conversely,] I forgot everything in the class in English only, and I had to learn again.” Additionally, I12 added that if the lessons were taught in English, he was still confused at some points; however, he could ask for further clarification in TL.

In addition, the qualitative results indicated some neutral responses. One student acknowledged the limitation of using TL: “This approach has two aspects. The advantage is that I can know the reason why some English structures should be used in academic writing easily, while the disadvantage is that I do not think too much about analyzing the content” (S8).

*Behavioral Engagement*

As seen in Table 4, participants reported that when TL was used, it affected behavioral engagement: They “[paid] full attention to [their] teacher’s



explanation” (B4:  $M = 4.26$ ;  $SD = .82$ ) and “[worked] attentively with [their] peers to write” (B3:  $M = 4.06$ ;  $SD = .92$ ). Additionally, they revealed that they “[participated] in the learning activities with peers actively” (B1:  $M = 3.73$ ;  $SD = .89$ ) and “[discussed] the learning activities with [their] teacher confidently” (B2:  $M = 3.64$ ;  $SD = .71$ ). In short, these results indicate that TL supported L2 students’ active engagement.

**Table 4**

*Behavioral Engagement in an Academic Writing Class through TL*

No.	When TL is used in an academic writing class,	N =113	
		M	SD
B1	I participate in the learning activities with my peers actively.	3.73	.89
B2	I discuss the learning activities with my teacher confidently.	3.64	.71
B3	I work attentively with my peers to write.	4.06	.92
B4	I pay full attention to my teacher’s explanation.	4.26	.82

Aligned with the quantitative results, the qualitative findings showed that the interviewed participants were actively engaged in academic writing activities using TL. They shared:

With the use of TL, I could understand the taught lessons more easily and participated in writing activities actively. (I2)

I actively took part in writing activities using TL and finished the writing tasks efficiently. (I3)

Being afraid of misunderstanding the teacher’s instruction in the English-only writing class, I didn’t dare to raise my hand. With TL, I got engaged in answering my teacher’s questions actively. (I10)

Nevertheless, a few interviewees shared their opposite thoughts about the use of TL. They believed that an English-only class could foster their behavioral engagement. One shared: “I usually tend to participate in learning activities actively if English is used for all learning activities” (S2).

## Discussion

The study has revealed some insights into Vietnamese EFL students’ engagement in an academic writing class through TL. Participants demonstrated active engagement when using TL. Among the three engagement components, students’ emotional engagement ( $M = 4.20$ ) was higher than their cognitive ( $M = 4.11$ ) and behavioral ( $M = 3.92$ ) engagement.



This may imply that the use of TL is likely to provide an inclusive and supportive environment in which students feel more emotionally engaged than cognitively or behaviorally. From the lens of emotional scaffolding (Back et al., 2020), it may be that teachers' and peers' affective support (e.g., encouragement, empathy) creates a safe and motivating environment that sustains students' willingness to engage in English writing. Within TL spaces, when students' sense of belonging is enhanced, their emotional connections to the writing tasks may be fostered. As a result, students' emotional engagement becomes a central mediating force linking TL practices to their cognitive and behavioral engagement in English writing.

With regard to emotional engagement, the Vietnamese EFL students seemed to enjoy using TL in the academic writing class. This may be because most participants had studied English for a long time; however, not many students were highly proficient in English. Additionally, English was used as a foreign language in the Vietnamese context, so students had few opportunities to use it outside of class. Therefore, if L1 (using TL) was present in the class, students were likely to engage comfortably in learning activities (e.g., explanation, discussion, clarification, feedback). Previous studies (García & Sylvan, 2011; Rafi & Morgan, 2022; Velasco & García, 2014) supported this finding, indicating that students felt more secure and positive about TL use in the classroom, and TL could make students feel comfortable using their linguistic repertoire to express their ideas and understanding of teachers' instruction.

Concerning cognitive engagement, participants recognized the usefulness of TL and applied it to their academic writing. Consequently, they demonstrated that they could deploy their full repertoire to improve their writing skills.

A plausible explanation is that the Vietnamese EFL students in this study may have encountered difficulties comprehending English-only lessons, so using L1 could facilitate cognitive enhancement. Comprehending how to write English well and improving skills could be prioritized in their academic writing learning. Hence, TL played a crucial role in enhancing EFL students' comprehension of the target knowledge. This finding resonated with Yuzlu and Dikilitas (2022), who reported that students promoted cognitive engagement through the use of TL.

Regarding behavioral engagement, participants possessed a high level of engagement. In other words, EFL students were actively engaged thanks to TL. When the teacher gave students L1 space in their academic writing class, they were more likely to understand the lessons, leading to higher engagement. The teaching of writing in this study was carried out across three stages (pre-, while-, and post-writing), with collaborative writing as the focus. Additionally, the process approach was implemented rather than the product



approach. Therefore, various writing activities required students to use TL to construct and negotiate writing knowledge and build up their writing skills. This finding aligned with that of Chen et al. (2019), which found that participants tended to engage in TL across the various writing steps, from pre-writing to post-writing.

## Conclusion

The study emphasizes the importance of TL in fostering an inclusive environment that promotes Vietnamese EFL students' learning of academic writing. Thanks to the deployment of TL, students were actively engaged in the learning process. They could make sense of their learning emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally. In particular, students' emotional engagement was higher than their cognitive and behavioral engagement. Some pedagogical implications can be drawn from these findings. Firstly, in contexts like Vietnam, English is a foreign language, so not many students can meet the language requirements. Therefore, teachers should be trained to deploy pedagogical TL effectively and appropriately to create a more inclusive learning space in which students' multilingualism is valued as a valuable resource. Moreover, students' higher emotional engagement indicates that teachers should establish a supportive, inclusive, and equitable environment where students can feel supported, safe, and respected, and especially where they can feel connected to the content; however, teachers should also enhance students' cognitive and behavioral engagement by providing more explicit scaffolding and encouraging active participation. Secondly, TL allows students to effectively engage in the writing process, so they should be encouraged to view their L1 as a valuable resource. Thirdly, administrators should recognize pedagogical TL as a meaningful teaching approach in LE and assist teachers in implementing it in their teaching. Training workshops should be provided for teachers and students to understand and use pedagogical TL effectively and appropriately. They should also create an inclusive environment that values students' linguistic diversity.

Although this study yielded meaningful findings, it still experienced some limitations. Firstly, it focused only on EFL students' engagement in the academic writing class. Secondly, it was conducted with a small sample size at a single institution. Thirdly, data were collected through students' self-reported questionnaires and interviews; therefore, future research should adopt a quasi-experimental design to measure EFL students' writing skills (using pre- and post-tests) to ensure more valid and reliable findings. If the survey research design were still to be used, it would be prudent to survey a larger sample from similar institutions where academic writing classes are



organized. Accordingly, this would support the generalizability of the findings across different contexts.

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