RGC Ref. No.:
UGC/FDS14/H01/14
(please insert ref. above)

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

Submission Deadlines:	1. *Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within **six** months of the approved project completion date.*
	2. *Completion report: within **12** months of the approved project completion date.*

Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. **Project Title**

    Task Sequencing with Different Task Types and Conditions in Task-based Language

    Teaching: A Longitudinal Study on Immediate Task Performance and Long-term Proficiency

    Development

2. **Investigator(s) And Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved**

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	BUI Gavin Hiu Yuet / Associate Professor	English Department / The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
Co-Investigator(s)	N.A.	N.A.
Others	N.A.	N.A.

3. **Project Duration**

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval *(must be quoted)*
Project Start Date	1/12/2014		
Project Completion Date	30/5/2017	30/11/2017	21/03/2017
Duration *(in month)*	30	36	21/03/2017
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	30/5/2018	30/11/2018	21/03/2017

Part B: The Final Report

5.   Project Objectives

5.1   Objectives as per original application

1. Contributing to Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) theoretical construction;

2. Providing pedagogical implications for TBLT in classroom teaching;

3. Examining the immediate effects of TBLT on L2 task performance;

4. Examining the long-term effects of TBLT on L2 proficiency;
5. Understanding the effects of different task types (e.g. divergent and convergent tasks) on TBLT;
6. Understanding the effects of different task conditions (e.g. planned and unplanned conditions) on TBLT;

7. Investigating the immediate effects of task sequencing on L2 task performance;

8. Investigating the long-term effects of task sequencing on L2 proficiency;
9. Assessing the value and implications of task sequencing in an L2 teaching syllabus design;
10. Providing theoretical and operational grounds for lexical measures in TBLT research;
11. Evaluating the applicability and effectiveness of the Hierarchical Linear Model in analysing longitudinal data and to provide a sample study, which will be one of the first of its kind in TBLT;
12. Exploring how L2 tasks can be better used in the private higher education sector in Hong Kong.

5.2   Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC:	Dec 9, 2014
Reasons for the change:	Given the reduced budget, the original 12 objectives are slightly adjusted to the current 10

1. Contributing to Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) theoretical construction;

2. Providing pedagogical implications for TBLT in classroom teaching;

3. Examining the effects of TBLT on L2 task performance;

4. Understanding the effects of different task types (e.g. divergent and convergent tasks) on TBLT;

5. Understanding the effects of different task conditions (e.g. planned and unplanned conditions) on TBLT;

6. Investigating the immediate effects of task sequencing on L2 task performance;

7. *Assessing the value and implications of task sequencing in an L2 teaching syllabus design;*

8. *Providing theoretical and operational grounds for lexical measures in TBLT research;*

9. *Evaluating the applicability and effectiveness of the Hierarchical Linear Model in analysing longitudinal data and to provide a sample study, which will be one of the first of its kind in TBLT;*

10. *Exploring how L2 tasks can be better used in the private higher education sector in Hong Kong.*

5.3   Realisation of the objectives
(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)
1. Contributing to Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) theoretical construction;
Well achieved. At least five theoretical contributions have been / will be published: 1) A more full-fledged Task-readiness Theory (CJAL paper); 2) A refined theory of second language utterance fluency (LTR paper); 3) The Complexity, Accuracy, Lexis, and Fluency (CALF) definitions and measurements (the CALF online software); 4) second language lexical complexity theory (IRAL paper under review); and 5) meaning and form in task sequencing (paper in preparation).

2. Providing pedagogical implications for TBLT in classroom teaching;
Well achieved. All findings have high pedagogical relevance; all articles generated from this project mention pedagogical implications as appropriate. These include but are not limited to: task sequencing based on pre-task work and task characteristics (*LTR* paper), content-based language teaching for lexical richness (*IRAL* under-review paper), lexical approach to teaching L2 writing (NOVA book chapter), meaning-form in task sequencing, unwitting and expected task repetition (*System* paper), etc.

3. Examining the effects of TBLT on L2 task performance;
Well achieved. I (together with the RAs) collected a lot of data and were able to investigate the effects of task characteristics (e.g., task types, task structure, and content familiarity), task conditions (e.g., pre-task planning, during-task planning, task repetition), and even learner individual differences (e.g., proficiency) on the four task performance areas: complexity, accuracy, lexis and fluency (CALF).

4. Understanding the effects of different task types (e.g. divergent and convergent tasks) on TBLT;
Well achieved. I have investigated a range of task types (with some overlapping), including divergent and convergent tasks, monologic and dialogic tasks, structured and unstructured tasks, familiar and unfamiliar tasks, etc.

5. Understanding the effects of different task conditions (e.g. planned and unplanned conditions) on TBLT;
Well achieved. I have investigated a range of task conditions, including planned and unplanned conditions, with or without online planning, different intervals of task repetition, different frequency of task repetition, etc.

6. Investigating the immediate effects of task sequencing on L2 task performance;
Well achieved. The variables listed in Objectives 3, 4, 5 have been investigated in the "performance" perspective, i.e., their immediate effects.

7. Assessing the value and implications of task sequencing in an L2 teaching syllabus design;
Well achieved. I investigated task sequencing based on task complexity, meaning-form, and perceived task difficulty. All this has important implications for L2 teaching syllabus.

8. Providing theoretical and operational grounds for lexical measures in TBLT research;
Well achieved. Based on previous literature, I developed a tripartite conceptualisation of lexical complexity to include lexical diversity, lexical density, and lexical sophistication and provided ways to measures each (see the IRAL paper and the CALF software).

9. Evaluating the applicability and effectiveness of the Hierarchical Linear Model in analysing longitudinal data and to provide a sample study, which will be one of the first of its kind in TBLT;
Mostly achieved but there is room for more certainty. I investigated the applicability and effectiveness of the HLM in some longitudinal (semester-long) data but the results were not very impressive.

10. Exploring how L2 tasks can be better used in the private higher education sector in Hong Kong.
Well achieved. All my data were collected in HSMC, which may be generalised to other private higher education institutions in Hong Kong.

5.4   Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives *(as per 5.1/5.2 above)*	**Addressed** *(please tick)*	**Percentage Achieved** *(please estimate)*
1.Contributing to Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) theoretical construction	✓	100%
2. Providing pedagogical implications for TBLT in classroom teaching	✓	100%
3. Examining the effects of TBLT on L2 task performance	✓	100%
4. Understanding the effects of different task types (e.g. divergent and convergent tasks) on TBLT	✓	100%
5. Understanding the effects of different task conditions (e.g. planned and unplanned conditions) on TBLT	✓	100%
6. Investigating the immediate effects of task sequencing on L2 task performance	✓	100%
7. Assessing the value and implications of task sequencing in an L2 teaching syllabus design	✓	100%
8. Providing theoretical and operational grounds for lexical measures in TBLT research	✓	100%
9. Evaluating the applicability and effectiveness of the Hierarchical Linear Model	✓	80%

in analysing longitudinal data and to provide a sample study, which will be one of the first of its kind in TBLT		
10. Exploring how L2 tasks can be better used in the private higher education sector in Hong Kong	✓	100%

6. Research Outcome

    6.1   Major findings and research outcome

    (Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

Part 1 Theoretical contributions

1) A more full-fledged Task-readiness theoretical framework (cf. *CJAL* paper) that comprises both task-external (previously called various kinds of planning) and task-internal readiness.

2) A refined theory of second language utterance fluency (*LTR* paper) to include, for the first time, eight components, ie., speed, stretch, voicing, mid-clause pauses, independent clause pauses, dependent clause pauses, filled pauses, and repairs. Different pausing positions as an indication of "nativeness" in speaking is a major finding.

3) The Complexity, Accuracy, Lexis, and Fluency definitions and measurements (the CALF tool).

4) Second language lexical complexity theory. The *IRAL* paper (under review) develops previous research and provides a tripartite conceptual framework of L2 lexical complexity to include lexical diversity, lexical density, and lexical sophistication.

5) Meaning and form in task sequencing. This finding contributes to the concept of form-meaning balance in task performance and L2 acquisition.

Part 2 Empirical findings

6) Pre-task planning promotes fluency and complexity, but usually not accuracy. (*LTR* paper)

7) L2 learners reported their attempts in being more accurate in pre-task planning, which was not supported by their actual accuracy performance. However, pre-task planning does render the learners more confident in performance; hence an affective function that was overlooked in previous studies. (*CJAL* paper)

8) Task repetition significantly increases fluency and complexity, and slightly increased accuracy, regardless of the interval between the initial and repeated performance. (*System* paper)

9) Different lengths of interval between the first and the second performance in task repetition do cause variation in second language speech performance. Specifically, shorter lengths favour higher fluency, while a one-week interval is the most conducive to better syntactic complexity, fewer filled pauses, as well as less total repairs. All this has the potential for class design and for spacing different trials of a task for improvement in specific second language areas. (*System* paper)

10) Learners with good background knowledge (familiarity) of a topic could perform better in terms of fluency and (slightly) of accuracy than those without the background knowledge. (*LTR* and *CJAL* papers)

11) Pre-task planning has a stronger effect on CALF than does background knowledge (familiarity) in a topic. (*LTR* paper)

12) Learners' background knowledge helps learners to compensate for their lack of planning time in terms of fluency, and also to some extent, accuracy, but not complexity. (*LTR* paper)

13) Dialogic tasks seem to help with accuracy more than monologic tasks. (paper in preparation)

14) Task difficulty is perceived differently by different learners (*CJAL* paper and another paper in preparation).

15) Tasks sequencing can be based on task conditions and characteristics on an increasing complexity scale. One example is a sequence of 1) planning (task conditions) + familiar (task characteristics), 2) planning + unfamiliar, 3) non-planning + familiar, to finally 4) non-planning + unfamiliar topics. (*LTR* paper)

16) The form-then-meaning task sequencing orientation outperformed the meaning-then-form orientation in immediate task performance, but in the long run, the two sequencing orientations were not significantly different. (paper in preparation)

17) Lexical complexity is useful concepts and pedagogical means in both teaching second language speaking and writing. (the *IRAL* paper and the NOVA book chapter)

18) A reduced portion of writing mechanics instruction and an increased portion of lexica formality instruction help with better second language writing quality. (NOVA book chapter)

19) Second language writing tasks can be better sequenced from a lexis-then-noun-phrase-driven manner for lower-intermediate learners at private higher education sector in Hong Kong.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action
(Maximum half a page)

This three-year project has investigated task conditions and task characteristics and their relevance to task sequencing from a comprehensive perspective. Further research can further consider the following areas, which are not the focusses of this current project:

1) Though my CJAL article has made an encouraging attempt to analyse learner perceptions of task performance from a qualitative perspective, longitudinal *qualitative* research is needed to follow learner growth (or backtracking) in second language proficiency.
2) Task motivation is a new area of interest (Cf. Dornyei's recent works).
3) Except for linguistic performance, further research into learners' pragmatic competence, willingness to communicate, and strategic competence in task-based language teaching and learning is largely lacking.

7. Layman's Summary
(Describe <u>in layman's language</u> the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) as a variation of the communicative approach has developed substantially in both research and pedagogy over the past 30 years. Less encouraging, however, has been the trend to alienate task research from the natural classroom. Most TBLT studies merely focus on task performance to assess the immediate effects of the intervention. It remains unclear to what extent tasks would facilitate second language acquisition in the long run. This study explored both the immediate and long-term effects of tasks *per se* and task sequencing in the English learning classrooms of a college in Hong Kong. It investigated how combinations of task types and conditions in different task sequencing orientations influence students' task performance over three semesters, yielding evidence about the sustainable effectiveness of the tasks. Conventionally, task performance has been measured for complexity, accuracy and fluency; however, this study will also examine the lexical aspects of learner performance, as these should also be recognised in the second-language development of students. This study provides pedagogical implications for TBLT, based on its empirical research results. At a broader level, it will also contribute to theoretical development in task-based language teaching and, more generally, in the field of applied linguistics.

Part C: Research Output

8.   Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising <u>Directly</u> From This Research Project
(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) *(denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)*	Title and Journal / Book *(with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)*	Submitted to RGC *(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)*	Attached to this Report *(Yes or No)*	Acknowledged the Support of RGC *(Yes or No)*	Accessible from the institutional repository *(Yes or No)*
Year of Publication	**Year of Acceptance** *(For paper accepted but not yet published)*	**Under Review**	**Under Preparation** *(optional)*						
2018				Gavin Bui* & Zeping Huang	L2 fluency as influenced by content familiarity and planning: Performance, methodology and pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, *22*(1), 94-114. DOI: 10.1177/1362168816656650 **[SSCI]**	Nov 30, 2016 (online published)	Yes	Yes	Yes
2018				Gavin Bui* & Feng Teng	Exploring learners' self-reported behavioral patterns in two task-readiness conditions: A qualitative study. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 41(2), 129-149. DOI: 10.1515/cjal-2018-0008 **[Scopus/ESCI]**	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
2018				Gavin Bui*	A lexical approach to teaching formality in freshman L2 academic writing. In L. T. Wong & W. L. Wong (Eds.), *Teaching and learning English for academic purposes: Current research and practices* (pp.111-124). New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc. **[Scopus-indexed]**	Nov 30, 2016 (in review)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	2018			Gavin Bui, Mohammad Ahmadian*, & Ann-Marie Hunter	Spacing effects on repeated L2 task performance. *System*. **[SSCI]**	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	2018			Gavin Bui*	Task-readiness conditions and L2 task performance across proficiency levels. In Z. Wen & M. Ahmadian (Eds.), *Researching L2 task performance and pedagogy: In honour of Peter Skehan*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Under 2nd review		Gavin Bui*	Influence of learners' prior knowledge, L2 proficiency and pre-Task planning time on L2 lexical complexity. *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*. **[SSCI]**	No	Yes	Yes	Not Yet
			✓	Gavin Bui*	Lexical Complexity and Formality Instruction in L2 Writing. Intended for *TESOL Quarterly*. **[SSCI]**	No	No	Yes	Not Yet
			✓	Gavin Bui*	Task repetition and rehearsal: A task-readiness perspective. Intended for a book chapter in TBLT	No	No	Yes	Not Yet

9. **Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered**
(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC *(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)*	Attached to this Report *(Yes or No)*	Acknowl-edged the Support of RGC *(Yes or No)*	Accessible from the institutional repository *(Yes or No)*
04/2017/ University of Barcelona, Spain	Influence of learners' prior knowledge, L2 proficiency and pre-task planning time on L2 lexical performance.	Colloquium "Individual Differences and TBLT" at the Seventh Task-based Language Teaching Conference	Nov 30, 2017	Yes	Yes	Yes

10. **Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning**
(Please elaborate)

Yes. Two sets of experience and new knowledge have been transferred to teaching and learning. First, the CALF online software reported above transferred the new knowledge of the measurements of second language complexity, accuracy, lexis, and fluency to the public for free. Teachers and researchers can use it to analyse student oral or written performance. Second, the research findings have been shared at international conferences, departmental seminars, the college new staff orientation seminar, and in mentorship for junior staff.

Some positive results in teaching and learning at HSMC have begun to emerge. Some teachers began to adopt the lexical formality approach rather than the APA mechanics approach in the English for ENG2010 Academic Purposes module, which was welcomed by students. The task-based approach to teaching second language speaking with different task types and task conditions have also made some impact on the delivery of relevant courses at HSMC, such as ENG1020 English for Public Speaking.

11. **Student(s) Trained**
(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
NA	NA	NA	NA

12. Other Impact

(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

1. The paper "L2 fluency as influenced by content familiarity and planning: Performance, methodology and pedagogy", since its online publication in *Language Teaching Research* in July 2016, has been among the top three most-read papers until the end of the year. It has five SSCI / Scopus journal citations as of Oct 2018, according to Google Scholar.

Please note that this SSCI-indexed journal is a high-ranking linguistics/ applied linguistics journal:

		Ranking
2018 Impact Factor	2.086	Linguistics 16 out of 181 | Education & Educational Research 50 out of 238
5-Year Impact Factor	2.536	Linguistics 17 out of 181 | Education & Educational Research 58 out of 238

Source: Journal Citation Reports®, 2018 release, a Clarivate Analytics product

2. I have collaborated with a world leading applied linguist, Prof. Peter Skehan, to develop the free online research tool CALF. It is expected that this online tool will be used by many applied linguists in future and it will to some extend standardise the practice of measuring Complexity, Fluency, Accuracy and Lexis in the field. Teachers can also use it to assess students' second language performance.

3. In the past year, the CALF online tool has attracted international attention. I developed a collaboration with the well-known UK analytical tool TextInspector (https://textinspector.com/). It provided an API for my CALF to embed some of its features. In return, I will provide the CALF functions for TextInspector. Therefore, the CALF tool continues to develop after the project was completed!

4. Our research has been noted by quite some scholars.
- The *System* paper has become a Hong Kong-UK joint collaboration as two experts in task repetition (M. Ahamdian and A. Hunter) were interested in my project and asked to contribute to the theoretical construction of this aspect of task performance.
- Similarly, the Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics article became a joint effort between scholars at HSMC and HKBU. (Note: I was the lead author of all these publications).
- The NOVA book article was an invited chapter from the editors who noticed my work.
- The TBLT 2017 Conference paper was also an invited paper for a colloquium on task-based language teaching but not an individual presentation.

13. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	**Reasons**
NA	NA

RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report - Attachment
(for completed projects only)

RGC Ref. No.:	**UGC/FDS14/H01/14**
Principal Investigator:	BUI, Hiu Yuet Gavin
Project Title:	Task Sequencing with Different Task Types and Conditions in Task-based Language Teaching: A Longitudinal Study on Immediate Task Performance and Long-term Proficiency Development

Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (Please specify)
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project [or conference]	4 (3 published, 1 under review)	1	2	0	1 research and teaching software (free online tool CALF)