



**Lighting the way for Literacy
ALEA National Conference – 9-12 July 2026**

Professional learning on functional grammar and genre pedagogy for Vietnamese teachers: Findings and Implications

Vinh To, University of Tasmania, Launceston, Australia
Giang Tran, Duy Tan University, Danang, Vietnam.
Thuy Thanh Thao Vo, Sai Gon University, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam
Phi Tran, Sai Gon University, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Corresponding Author: Vinh To, University of Tasmania
Email: Vinh.To@utas.edu.au

Abstract

Traditional grammar, which focuses on decontextualized practice, has strongly influenced the EFL curricula and teaching in Vietnamese higher education for many decades. Vietnamese students are taught how to use traditional grammar terminologies and do grammar exercises without meaningful contexts. They are not taught how to link grammar to writing effectively to achieve the social purpose of a particular text type. Teaching writing explicitly with a social purpose, a staged-structure and value language choices is known as the genre-based approach which originated from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed and used in Australian schools over the past four decades. It has also strongly influenced the teaching of English in many other countries and has proved to improve outcomes in student writing at both school and university levels, especially for students in low socio-economic areas, and students learning English as an additional language. Due to limited training, EFL teachers in Vietnam are not familiar with SFL and the genre-based approach. Adopting the qualitative research design, this project provided professional learning in this area to 66 EFL teachers at two universities in Vietnam in late 2024. Reflections right after the workshops from 32 teachers revealed their enhanced knowledge and understanding of SFL and genre pedagogy and their plan to use SFL in their teaching and research writing. Individual interviews with 10 teachers three months after the workshop showed some initial success of the application of SFL in the Vietnamese classroom contexts as well as identified challenges. These findings have led to practical implications and recommendations for further professional learning. While this research is specific to the Vietnamese contexts, the findings and implications are of relevance to other global contexts including Australia and the ALEA 2026 conference theme, given the influence of SFL and genre pedagogy on the Australian Curriculum: English and Australian teachers' practices.

Key words: functional grammar, Systemic Functional Linguistics, genre pedagogy, professional learning, EFL teaching, Vietnamese higher education