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Socialist Republic of Vietnam



BATANGAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Republic of the Philippines

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS IN TEACHING THE
BASIC ENGLISH COURSE AT THAI NGUYEN
UNIVERSITY (TNU) SYSTEM**

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of Graduate School
Batangas State University
Batangas City, Philippines

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Of Doctor of Philosophy
Major in English

By:
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APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled “**ENGLISH LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS IN TEACHING THE BASIC ENGLISH COURSE AT THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY (TNU) SYSTEM**” prepared and submitted by **LUU THI HUONG** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy major in English has been examined and is recommended for Oral Examination.

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Approved by the committee on Oral Examination with a grade
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ABSTRACT

Title : English Language Functions in Teaching the Basic English Course at Thai Nguyen University (TNU) System

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Summary

This study aimed to determine the English language functions in teaching Basic English Course at Thai Nguyen University (TNU) System with functional enrichment activities as output of the study. The study covered the student's writing and reading performance in the seven language functions namely; instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative and representational language functions in terms of awareness, degree of importance; teaching reading and teaching writing as well as the teachers' assessments on the said language functions.

The study was conducted in the four (4) Thai Nguyen Universities in Thai Nguyen City and used 40 teachers teaching Basic English course and 300 First Year College students. The study tested the following null hypotheses that there is no significant difference on the teacher's assessment



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in the writing and reading performance of students, and that there is no significant difference between the teacher's assessment and the writing and reading performance of students. The study made use of descriptive method of research. It utilized the following research instrument: teacher – made – test and survey questionnaire. The data gathered were statistically treated with the use of frequency distribution and percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, independent t-test.

Findings of the study revealed that in terms of how Basic English course in the seven language functions are being carried out in the beginning College English course relative to awareness, all of the seven items obtained an affirmative response, which is 100 percent which means that the teacher respondents are unanimously aware of the seven functions of language. For the degree of importance, results revealed that five items got ratings of ≥ 3.5 which is verbally equivalent to important which means that the teachers generally perceived the language functions as important to the students and must be considered at the teaching of beginning English course. The item with the highest score and deemed to be very important is instrumental function and followed by heuristic language. It is the perception of the teacher that these two language functions are the most important ones for the students to



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survive their tertiary education.

In carrying out the teaching of the functions of language in reading, results showed that five out of the seven activities listed had ratings of ≥ 50 percent in the seven language functions which means that the teacher respondents generally agree on the relevance of the five activities in seven functions of language with reading a novel or short story as the activity with highest frequency score of 84.91 percent which means that this activity is the best example of the personal function of language. For carrying out the teaching of the functions of language in writing, results showed that two out of the six activities listed had ratings of ≥ 50 percent in the seven language functions which means that the teacher respondents only see two of these activities as suitable examples of the seven functions of language with writing an instruction or procedure as the activity with the highest frequency score of 52.83 percent which means that this activity is the best example of the informative function of language.

In addition, the reading performance of the students in the seven functions of language was all above 50 percent with equivalent ratings of average with the highest percentage of correct items or 65.25 percent in heuristic language followed by informative language and personal language



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which indicates that the students gave their best performance on this application of heuristic language because among the different functions of language, this is the one that the students would be expected most to develop and apply as they pursued more knowledge in their tertiary education.

As regards level of students' writing performance in the seven functions of language, results showed that they were all above 50 percent with equivalent ratings of average. The highest percentage of correct items is obtained in personal language with a score of 72.35 percent followed by instrumental language and informative language which indicates that the students gave the best performance on the use of personal language or the language of self-expression.

In the differences between reading and writing performance of students, results show that the students' performance in five out of seven functions of language for reading and writing are significantly different as indicated by their p-values of less than 0.05. This indicates that the reading and writing performance of the students for these five functions of language are apart from each other and are not related which means that the language function in the receptive skill of reading is not contiguous with the same language function in the productive skill of writing. It was only in two language functions namely:



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regulatory and informative where the p-values were greater than 0.05, indicating that the reading and writing performance in these functions are not significantly different and are related to each other.

In relation to teachers assessment of the reading and writing performance of students based on the seven functions of language, findings showed that ten out of 14 items obtained an agree score of ≥ 50 percent. Five of these items pertain to both reading and writing respectively which means that the teacher respondents consider these items as valid areas for evaluating the students' performance in the seven functions of language. Four items got a disagree score of ≤ 50 percent. These items pertain to the imaginative language and the heuristic language of both reading and writing. The scores obtained on these items were 41.51 percent for reading and 18.87 percent for writing.

According to teacher respondents' perceptions of the frequency of use by the students, results indicated that all of the items got the ratings of ≥ 4.0 where four items with an always rating were in reading and three items were in writing. The total rating for both reading and writing were 4.5 with verbal equivalent of always which means that the seven functions of language are extensively employed by the students.



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As for teacher respondents' assessments according to their degree of importance, findings showed that all the items had mean scores of ≥ 3.8 or equivalent to moderately important where four items with a rating of Very Important belonged to Reading and three items in writing. The total ratings for both reading and writing were 4.5 with verbal equivalent of Very Important which means that that all the seven functions of language in both reading and writing are very important competencies that the students must demonstrate and lessons along these lines must be taught to the students.

As to comparison of the assessment of teachers and the reading and writing performance of students, results of the study showed that all the reading and writing performance of the students are significantly different from the frequency of use ratings of the teachers which implies that the student's reading and writing performance is not related to the teacher's assessment and that the reading and the speaking performance of the students in the seven functions of language are generally independent of the teacher's assessment.

In relation to the output of the study in the form of proposed functional enrichment activities in reading and writing, these are based on the seven functions of language to supplement this particular group of Vietnamese



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teachers and students. There are also some considerations which are utilized as bases such as low performance score of the students in the tests based on the seven functions of language; low frequency of use scores based on the teacher respondents' perception; and meaningful relationship of the performance scores with the teachers' assessment.

The study recommended that the proposed functional enrichment activities be reviewed prior to its utilization; that the students must be given varied language learning activities to enhance reading and writing performance; and a similar study on the functions of language maybe conducted in other provinces in Vietnam.



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