ORAL AND WRITTEN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS BASIS FOR INTEGRATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR BASIS ENGLISH COURSE AT THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess the Oral and Written Discourse Analysis in the Preparation of integrative Activities for Basic Course at Thai Nguyen University with the end view of proposing integral activities. The study made use of the descriptive method of research to determine the Oral and Written Discourse Analysis in the Preparation of integrative Activities for Basic Course at Thai Nguyen University. There were 367 students and 65 teachers who were the respondents of the study. The statistical tools used were mean, percentage, percentile rank, ranking, standard deviation, and t-test.

Key words: *Oral and Written Discourse Analysis, integrative activities, basic English course.*

Introduction

College English is one of the foreign language courses required in the tertiary level curriculum to be taken by freshmen students. This course is known in various titles like Basic English Course, Basic College English, Freshman English or College Composition. A description of this course is that it is designed to assist students in preparing for various types of writing, reading, analyzing and responding expected of the college level student.

In this class, students will learn how to focus and organize essays through practicing several kinds of common writing patterns of organization which the students would employ in their academic writing. In other Universities, students taking up Basic English will study the principles of expository writing, audience-directed prose and are expected to explain and defend ideas. Because reading, viewing, and writing are inextricably linked, first-year English also emphasizes critical reading and viewing. The students are expected to analyse and understand a variety of texts, including expository and literary texts that represent diverse voices and ideas, visual images, and the students' own writing. The focus of College English is to develop the writing skills of the students to be competent as expected college level students.

English language consists of four macro skills namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing and these can be developed in a longitudinal and sequential fashion. This means that as first language is learned it all started with listening to our parents, imitating them until one becomes capable of speaking. Then as more words come as part of one's vocabulary, sentences are recognized and read. As reading skills increase writing skills are developed. Thus, writing is an advanced linguistic skill and it is the primary focus for development in College English.

Aside from these four macro skills, there are also linguistic micro skills and these include: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling. These micro skills are equally important as without them, English will not be sensible. Among the micro skills however, it is grammar that is most important as it is with syntax that group of words that have a sensible meaning. To develop competence in writing, grammatical skill is a vital pre-requisite, more so, when the objective is academic writing as in the case of College English

Discourse analysis is defined as the analysis of language beyond the sentence. This type of analysis is different from those done by modern linguistics, which mainly involves the study of grammar: the study of smaller bits of language, such as sounds which include phonetics and phonology, parts of words or morphology, meaning or semantics, and the order of words in sentences or syntax.

Discourse analysis is concerned with larger chunks of language as they flow together. This is exemplified by two sentences that when taken together as a single discourse can convey meaning quite different from the meaning conveyed by each sentence taken separately. The difference in meaning arises from the context they were

considered, such that a frame analysis is a type of discourse analysis that would be able to shed light on context that mediate this change in meaning.

Discourse analysis is a type of linguistic analysis concerns with whole texts rather than sentences or clauses. It is divided into types like the Spoken Discourse Analysis, which involves the study of conversations, dialogues, spoken monologues, and Written Discourse Analysis, which involves the study of written texts, such as essays, news, and political speeches. Discourse analysis is more concerned with naturally occurring data rather than in made up examples as it wants to prove the rigorousness of its procedures. Its practitioners assert that discourse analysis in fact is a collection of techniques, rather than a single analysis.

Considering the need of the students for a quality English education, and evaluating the current curriculum for College English, it would seem reasonable to evaluate and analyse the oral and written discourse among the College students. These two aspects are important to the development of oral and writing skills, one aimed at developing the sentence to sub-sentence level of knowledge and skills development and the other on the supra sentence level appealing to the intuitive sense of the individual.

As a college teacher teaching observe difficulties among college student include writing effective sentences in a paragraph, conceptualizing a topic in composition as well as difficulties in accuracy, comprehension, vocabulary and phonological aspects in oral discourse. This prompted the researcher to probe deeper into the learning aspects of the college students.

Data Gathering Procedure

Two sets of questionnaires the teacher made test for the student respondents and survey questionnaire for teacher respondents were designed to assess the level of competencies of freshman students in their oral and written discourses. The initial validation of the two sets of questionnaires was performed. The student questionnaires were pilot tested to first year college students not the respondents of the study to determine the strength and weaknesses of the constructed test.

As soon as the two sets of questionnaires were improved based on the comments and suggestions in the initial validation, letters of requests for content validations were sent to the members of the panel and expert on the field. With the validated questionnaires, letters of requests to administer the tests to the respondents to the identified research environment were sent to the administrators for permission.

When permission was secured the teacher -made test was administered to student respondents and a short briefing was given to all participants to explain the study's objectives, procedures and the importance of completing the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to the subjects given a maximum of one-hour to answer. Proper classroom conduct was observed the entire time of testing. The completed questionnaires were then collected by the examiner and compiled in sealed envelopes. The survey questionnaire on the other hand was also given to teacher respondents. Schedule for the test administration and giving of survey questionnaire were set in order to have organization. As soon as the conduct of the test and survey questionnaire was accomplished, the test items for students were checked and both the scores of the students and the items in the survey questionnaires were tallied for analysis and interpretation.

Discussion
Level of Oral and Written Discourse Competencies of Students

The level of oral and written discourse competencies of student respondents were analyzed through a teacher-made test.

Table 1
Performance of Student Respondents in the Oral Discourse Competence Test

Competency item	No. of Items	Average Score of Correct Items	Mean % of Correct Items	Description
Pronunciation and fluency	1	2.80	56.02	Average
Comprehension and vocabulary	1	2.84	56.84	Average

Grammatical accuracy	1	2.71	54.11	Average
Total:	3	Mean= 2.78	Mean= 55.66	Average

Number of student respondents: 367

As reflected in the table, it can be observed that for pronunciation and fluency, the average score of correct items is 2.80 with a mean % score equivalent of 56.02 percent which is above 50 percent. This value has a verbal description of average. This indicates that the level of pronunciation and fluency competence of the students is average for this set of student population.

For comprehension and vocabulary, the average score of correct items is 2.84 with a mean % score equivalent of 56.84 percent and above 50 percent. This value has a verbal description of average. This indicates that the level of comprehension and vocabulary competence of the students is average.

In terms of grammatical accuracy, the average score of correct items is 2.71 corresponding to a mean % score equivalent of 54.11 percent. This value is above 50 percent and has an equivalent verbal description of average. This indicates that the level of grammatical accuracy competence of the students is average.

Table 2
Performance of Student Respondents in the Written Discourse
Competence Test

Competency item	No. of Items	Average Score of Correct Items	Mean % of Correct Items	Description
Cohesion and coherence	11	4.53	41.14	Average
Logical order	5	2.00	40.00	Average
Student written paragraph				
Completeness	1	3.06	61.20	Average
Order	1	2.92	58.37	Average
Unity and Coherence	1	2.95	58.91	Average
Total:	19	Mean= 3.09	Mean= 51.92	Average

Number of student respondents: 367

The equivalent verbal description is average. This result not only reflects the poor performance of the students but also the relative difficulty of these test items.

In the case of logical order, five test items were used in the evaluation of student competence. The results show that the average correct score is 2.0 with an equivalent mean % score 40.0 percent. This value is below 50 percent and its verbal description equivalent is average. This result is similar to the result obtained for cohesion and coherence where the mean % score is numerically low. This indicates the poor performance of the students and the relative difficulty of these question items.

For the student written paragraph, three competency areas were evaluated namely: completeness, order, unity and coherence. In terms of completeness, the average correct score is 3.06 with an equivalent mean % score of 61.2 percent. This is above 50 percent and has a verbal description equivalent of average. This indicates that in terms of completeness of written paragraph, the students' performance was average for this given population.

In the aspect of logical order, the result shows a mean score of 2.92 with a corresponding mean % score of 58.37 percent which is above 50 percent. This value has a verbal description equivalent of average. This indicates that the performance of the students in insuring logical order of a written paragraph is average for this population.

For unity and coherence, the mean score obtained was 2.95 and a mean % score of 58.91 percent. This value is above 50 percent and has a verbal description equivalent of average. This indicates that the ability of the students to achieve unity and coherence in their written paragraph is average.

In terms of the total performance of the students in written discourse, the mean score obtained was 3.09 with a mean % score of 51.8 percent. This value has a percentile rank of 51.92 percent and a corresponding verbal description of average. This indicates that in general, the written discourse performance of the student respondents is average.

Significant Relationships between the Students' Oral and Written Discourse Competencies.

As shown in the table, it can be observed that among the 28 mean combinations being compared, 19 mean combinations showed significant differences or 67.9%. This indicates that majority of the means compared are significantly different and are generally not related to each other. These mean combinations with significant differences involved the competency items of the written discourse namely: cohesion and coherence, logical order and completeness, all with respect to the oral discourse competencies, pronunciation and fluency, comprehension and vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy as well as the written discourse competencies of order, and unity and coherence.

The result further showed that there are more mean combinations that are significantly different among oral to written discourse (i.e., 12 out of 15 or 80% combinations), than between oral to oral (i.e., 1 out of 3 or 33%) or written to written (i.e., 6 out of 10 or 60%). This indicates that as the component skill departs from its skill classification, the more significantly different they are from each other.

The competency items that did not show significant differences were the mean combinations involving the oral discourse and last two items of the student written paragraphs namely order and unity and coherence. These mean combinations with p-values above 0.05 are indicative of existing statistical relationship and are predictive of each other.

Table 3
Student's t-test Comparison of the Mean % Score for each Test Group shown as P-values

	Oral Discourse		Written Discourse				
	Comprehension and vocabulary	Grammatical accuracy	Cohesion and coherence	Logical order	Completeness	Order	Unity and Coherence
Oral Discourse							
1. Pronunciation and fluency	0.5011	0.1467	0.0000	0.0000	0.0002	0.0996	0.0433
2. Comprehension and vocabulary		0.0414	0.0000	0.0000	0.0022	0.2897	0.1525
3. Grammatical accuracy			0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0054	0.0018
Written Discourse							
4. Cohesion and coherence				0.3343	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
5. Logical order					0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
6. Completeness						0.0767	0.1539
7. Order							0.7371

Note: Mean scores with p-values below 0.05 are significantly different and shown in shaded areas.

Teachers Assessment of the Students' Oral and Written Discourse Competencies

A list of 19 competency items was presented for evaluation to the teacher respondents for them to consider whether these competencies are valid or not. One of these items pertains to oral discourse competency and 18 are classified under the written discourse competency. The result is summarized in Table 3.

As indicated in the table, it can be observed that all the items obtained an agree score of above 50 percent. The oral disclosure competency item got a 98.46 percent agree response (i.e. Item no. 1). Four items with the least

agree response are: those pertaining to Parallel Structure used, Personal Pronouns, order of importance, and to making a written composition that is complete, orderly, unified, and coherent. This may indicate that the written discourse competency items presented are not the preferred items as compared to the oral discourse items. This further implies that the respondents think that there could be other appropriate items that can be used to assess written discourse competency.

　　　The same set of competency items were evaluated by the teacher respondents according to the frequency they were observed to be practiced by students. The result is shown Table 3.

Table 4
Validated Skills as to Oral and Written Discourse Competencies

Student Skill	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Rank
1. The student is able to correctly answer questions on speaking skills.	64	98.46	1	3.33	5.5
2. The student is able to identify all the devices which are used to achieve coherence.	64	98.46	1	3.33	5.5
3. The student is able to discriminate the following devices:					
a) Conjunctions and transitional adverbs used;	46	70.77	19	63.33	14.5
b) Reference used;	63	96.92	2	6.67	8.5
c)Repetition of key words;	64	98.46	1	3.33	5.5
d)Parallel Structure used;	41	63.08	24	80.00	19
e)Synonyms or related words used;	64	98.46	1	3.33	5.5
f) Inclusive words or parts and wholes used;	54	83.08	11	36.67	13
g) Contrasts used;	65	100.00	0	0.00	2
h) Word pairs;	58	89.23	7	23.33	10
i) Personal Pronouns;	45	69.23	20	66.67	17
j) Adverbs of time;	46	70.77	19	63.33	14.5
4. The student is able to recognize the logical orders of support in a paragraph.	65	100.00	0	0.00	2
5. The student is able to discriminate the following logical orders:					
a) chronological,	63	96.92	2	6.67	8.5
b) spatial,	55	84.62	10	33.33	11.5
c) order of importance,	45	69.23	20	66.67	17
d) comparison and contrast	65	100.00	0	0.00	2
e) other logical orders	55	84.62	10	33.33	11.5
6. The student is able to make a written composition that is complete, orderly, unified, and coherent.	45	69.23	20	66.67	17

　　　It can be observed that the frequency scores of the differentcompetency items ranged from 3.18 to 3.98 with equivalent rating of sometimes to often respectively. This means that majority of the items (i.e., fifteen out of nineteen) were often practiced by the students. Fourteen of these are written discourse competency items. This indicates that both competency items of the oral and written discourse are equally well practiced by the students as perceived by the teacher respondents.

Table 5
Student Oral and Written Discourse Skills According to the Frequency of use.

Student Skill	Mean	Rank	Rating

	score		
1. The student is able to correctly answer questions on speaking skills.	3.54	12	O
2. The student is able to identify all the devices which are used to achieve coherence.	3.26	18	S
3. The student is able to discriminate the following devices:			
a) Conjunctions and transitional adverbs used;	3.83	5	O
b) Reference used;	3.83	5	O
c)Repetition of key words;	3.80	7	O
d)Parallel Structure used;	3.18	19	S
e)Synonyms or related words used;	3.35	17	S
f) Inclusive words or parts and wholes used;	3.52	14	O
g) Contrasts used;	3.52	14	O
h) Word pairs;	3.46	16	S
i) Personal Pronouns;	3.75	8	O
j) Adverbs of time;	3.92	3	O
4. The student is able to recognize the logical orders of support in a paragraph.	3.55	11	O
5. The student is able to discriminate the following logical orders:			
a) chronological,	3.98	1	O
b) spatial,	3.86	4	O
c) order of importance,	3.98	1	O
d) comparison and contrast	3.65	10	O
e) other logical orders	3.75	8	O
6. The student is able to make a written composition that is complete, orderly, unified, and coherent.	3.54	12	O

The same set of competency items were evaluated by the teacher respondents according to their degree of importance. The result is shown Table 5.

Table 6
Student Oral and Written Discourse Skills According to the
Degree Importance

Student Skill	Mean score	Rank	Rating
1. The student is able to correctly answer questions on speaking skills.	4.55	1,5	VI
2. The student is able to identify all the devices which are used to achieve coherence.	4.09	4	MI
3. The student is able to discriminate the following devices:			
a) Conjunctions and transitional adverbs used;	3.58	11	MI
b) Reference used;	3.23	16.5	SI
c)Repetition of key words;	2.98	19	SI
d)Parallel Structure used;	3.25	15	SI
e)Synonyms or related words used;	4.35	3	MI
f) Inclusive words or parts and wholes used;	3.89	9	MI
g) Contrasts used;	3.42	13	SI
h) Word pairs;	3.32	14	SI
i) Personal Pronouns;	3.20	18	SI
j) Adverbs of time;	3.23	16,5	SI
4. The student is able to recognize the logical orders of support in a paragraph.	3.85	10	MI
5. The student is able to discriminate the following logical orders:			
a) chronological,	4.00	5	MI
b) spatial,	3.91	8	MI

c) order of importance,	4.00	5	MI
d) comparison and contrast	4.00	5	MI
e) other logical orders	3.45	12	SI
6. The student is able to make a written composition that is complete, orderly, unified, and coherent.	4.55	1,5	VI

It can be observed that the scores of the competency items based on the degree of importance ranged from 2.98 to 4.55 with equivalent ratings of slightly important to very important respectively. Two items were considered to be very important: the item that pertains to correctly answer questions on speaking skills, and the item pertains to making a written composition that is complete, orderly, unified, and coherent. There were nine competency items considered to be moderately important and eight competency items considered to be slightly important all belonging to the written discourse classification.

The four items of least importance are those that pertains to Reference used, to the Repetition of key words, Personal pronouns and adverbs of time. This indicates that in general, the teachers perceived all the component competency items of the oral and written discourse to be important.

Difference between the Students' Oral and Written Communication and the Teachers' assessment on the Same Areas

The comparison between the combined students' oral and written communication competencies and the teachers' assessment on the same areas was evaluated by comparing the mean % score of the students' performance in the different oral and written discourse items with those of the teachers assessment based on frequency using t-test. The result is shown in Table 6.

As shown in the table, it can be observed that the p-values of the majority of the different mean combinations were less than or equal to 0.05 that is 150 combinations out of 152, indicating these means as significantly different. This implies that these mean combinations such as oral and written discourse performance of students vis-a-vis frequency of student skill as perceived by the teachers are not the same.

Two mean combinations have p-values above 0.05, indicating these means are not significantly different indicating that the performance of the students and the evaluation of teacher are statistically the same.
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Table 7
Students' Performance in the Different Oral and Written Discourse Competencies as Assessed by Teachers.

Student Skill	Pronunciation and fluency	Comprehension and vocabulary	Grammatical accuracy	Cohesion and coherence	Logical order	Completeness	Order	Unity and Coherence
1. The student is able to correctly answer questions on speaking skills.	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0002	0.0000	0.0000
2. The student is able to identify all the devices which are used to achieve coherence.	0.0000	0.0001	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0552	0.0017	0.0040
3. The student is able to discriminate the following devices: a) Conjunctions and transitional adverbs used;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
b) Reference used;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
c)Repetition of key words;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
d)Parallel Structure used;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0817	0.0010	0.0046
e)Synonyms or related	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0025	0.0000	0.0001

words used; f) Inclusive words or parts and wholes used;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
g) Contrasts used;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
h) Word pairs;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0016	0.0001	0.0002
i) Personal Pronouns;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
j) Adverbs of time;	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
4. The student is able to recognize the logical orders of support in a paragraph.	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
5. The student is able to discriminate the following logical orders:								
a) chronological,	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
b) spatial,	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
c) order of importance,	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
d) comparison and contrast	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
e) other logical orders	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
6. The student is able to make a written composition that is complete, orderly, unified, and coherent.	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0017	0.0001	0.0004

Table 8

Basic for the Design of Integrative Activities for Basis English

Oral and written discourse items	Mean % score of students in the test (S1)	No of items with p≤0.05 (S2)	Combined factor (in percent)	Rank based on highest to lowest combined factor
Pronunciation and fluency	56.02	19	10.644	5
Comprehension and vocabulary	56.84	19	10.799	6
Grammatical accuracy	54.11	19	10.281	3
Cohesion and coherence	41.14	19	7.8170	2
Logical order	40.00	19	7.6000	1
Completeness	61.20	17	10.404	4
Order	58.37	19	11.090	7
Unity and Coherence	58.91	19	11.193	8

Based on Table 13, the list will include three competency items under the written discourse, namely: 1. Logical order, 2. Cohesion and coherence, and 3. Grammatical accuracy. This is based on the combined factor (S1xS2) which was obtained as a product of S1 or the mean % score of the students in the test and S2 or number of items with p-values less than or equal to 0.05. The main justification for the choice of these three items were the low student mean % scores for the first two items and the least number of p-values with less than 0.05 for the third item,

since this indicates a significant statistical relationship with the teachers' perception. The rest of the items were not considered as the results suggested that the students are performing better in those areas.

Conclusions
　　　Based from the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:
1. Majority of the student respondents are females, come from different places in Vietnam, studied in the public school, and parents' educational attainment in the tertiary level with high percentage English media exposure.
2. The level of oral and written discourse competencies of students are all average.
3. Students competencies and characteristics are significantly different and are not related to each other.
4. Majority of the oral and written competencies were well practiced by students.
5. Students' oral and written communication and the teachers' assessment are not statistically related.
6. Proposed integral activities are comprised of exercises designed based on least rated scores where students demonstrate poor performance to improve their written proficiency.

Recommendation
　　　From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:
1. Evaluation of the proposed integral activities by other English teachers with expertise in instructional material development is recommended.
2. Utilization of the integral activities in the classroom by English Teachers
3. Conduct similar studies related to teaching oral and written discourse.

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