

INFORMATION ON DOCTORAL THESIS

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- 5. Admission decision number:** 1502/SĐH according to the Decision of the Director of Hanoi National University, dated on November, 08th 2011.
- 6. Changes in academic process:** Two year extension.
- 7. Official thesis title:** Designing a Competency-based English Oral Communication Course for Vietnamese Undergraduate Business Administration Students (*Thiết kế khoá học giao tiếp nói tiếng Anh dựa trên đường hướng năng lực cho sinh viên Quản trị Kinh doanh ở Việt Nam*)
- 8. Major:** English Language Teaching Methodology
- 9. Code:** 62140111
- 10. Supervisors:**
Supervisor 1: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Phuong Nga
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- 11. Summary of the new findings of the thesis:**

Based on the conceptual framework and the results of data, the present study managed to offer a broad picture of designing a competency-based EOC course covering its whole process from a thorough NA to course verification, pilot study, course implementation and evaluation. Specifically, a generative framework for designing a competency-based EOC course with learning plan developed in light of SCT and also practical framework for designing the course assessment were proposed to the ESP course designers and teachers. Quantitative and qualitative data of course evaluation in different stages namely pre-course, during course, end-of course and post-internship evaluation indicate positive results of and opinion toward the designed course, which emphasizes the importance of applying complementary research instruments and theories in the whole process of course design.

The data were collected from the two main phases of the present study namely phase 1 (Establishing course components) and phase 2 (Implementing and evaluating). Phase 1 consists of three stages namely stage 1 (needs analysis), stage 2 (course verification), and stage 3- pilot

study. In needs analysis (NA), the findings of semi-structured interviews which were conducted with all the stakeholders to build the list of key EOC competencies for BA undergraduates were used to develop the items for the survey questionnaire with the undergraduates. After the course was designed based on NA findings, it was validated with the language teachers in course verification and adjusted. Then, the course was readjusted after being piloted in three first units and a class observation by another teacher. In the course implementation and evaluation, different instruments were used to ensure the objectivity of the results. The pre-test, midterm and final oral test were administered with another examiner. Undergraduates' self-assessment and reflective journal after each unit helped the teacher also as the course designer update the participants' perceptions towards each lesson regularly to make any necessary adjustments. At the end of the course, focus group interviews aimed at exploring the participants' perspectives of the whole course to clarify the results from end-of-course questionnaire for appropriate adjustments. In post-internship evaluation, both BA undergraduates who used EOC during internship and their supervisors were invited to complete survey questionnaire to examine their EOC performance in the workplace for the evaluation of the course outcomes from workplace perspectives.

Theoretically, it is hoped that the present study will provide ESP course designers with a framework for designing a competency-based EOC course, particularly its assessment with multiple methods and learning plan with socio-cultural theory (SCT). Besides, the present study can help enrich the theory of course design which is not just based on academic perspectives (teachers, undergraduates) but also all the stakeholders' (employers and graduates) to help the course match with workplace requirements. Finally, post-internship evaluation with both undergraduates and their supervisors during internship hopefully can contribute to the theory and practice of course evaluation. Methodologically, this study can contribute to the innovative application of mixed methods for the data collection procedure to design a course.

12. Practical applicability:

The application of competency-based approach with its crucial features such as the course outcomes made explicit at the beginning of the course and heavy emphasis on practicing each competency with various activities played a pivotal role in enabling the undergraduates to achieve the course outcomes. Next, the multiple methods of assessment were necessary and beneficial to be applied in a competency-based course. Besides, the application of SCT is intended to support the understanding of collaborative practice for a supportive learning environment.

Furthermore, the application of technology may be useful for preparing the learners with appropriate competencies required for 21st century development. Finally, the course evaluation in the present study with different steps and particularly after internship can contribute to the practice of ESP course evaluation to ensure its objectivity and the practicality of the course.

13. Further research directions:

The fulfillment of this research indicates a number of further research possibilities: more universities that have ESP course(s) for BA undergraduates, and more groups of BA undergraduates to have the course implemented; an experimental design with the experimental group and the control group in course implementation; audio-taped or videotaped lessons for discourse analysis of SCT used in the classroom interaction; and finally, designing an English written communication course for BA undergraduates.

14. Thesis-related publications:

1. Nguyen, T. M. T. (2010). "Appropriate classroom activities for effective teaching of business English speaking skill necessary for Vietnamese businessmen". *Journal of Science* 26(4), 257-261.
2. Nguyen, T. M. T. (2014). "Designing an oral communication for Business English undergraduates" In *Abstracts of Presentation at "Critical Competencies for the 21st century language classroom- 49th RELC International Seminar"*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
3. Nguyen, T. M. T. (2016). "Necessary English competencies in oral communication for Business Administration graduates to work effectively: A workplace reflection". *Journal of Science* 32(2), 65-74.
4. Nguyen, T. M. T. (2016). "Designing an English oral communication course for undergraduate Business Administration students at a university in Northern Vietnam". *Journal of Science* 32(4).