

# Student Performance in Michael Halliday's Seven Language Functions: Lesson Guides for Teaching/Learning English Discipline

**Junior K. Ahamad<sup>a</sup>, Abdulhalim H. Jauhari<sup>b</sup>, Suharto A. Luddin<sup>c</sup>, Allan J. Abdurahman<sup>d</sup>, <sup>a,b,c,d</sup>Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines, Email: [aahamadjunior@gmail.com](mailto:aahamadjunior@gmail.com), [bjjau153@gmail.com](mailto:bjjau153@gmail.com)**

This descriptive correlational research attempted to determine the communicative performance of students at two colleges. The two colleges were the Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College (TRAC), and the Mindanao State University Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography (MSU-TCTO). Michael Halliday's seven functions of language methodology was used. Specifically, this study purported to: (1) determine the students' level of oral and written performances in the seven functions of language, to wit: instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, imaginative, heuristic, and informative; (2) determine whether significant difference in the oral and written performances of the respondents existed; (3) determine whether significant relationships existed between the oral and written performances of the respondents; and (4) propose lesson guides in the functional English second foreign language discipline. As disclosed, all respondents obtained a marginal mark in the various communicative tasks. Hence, they were deficient in all the functions of language. In terms of their communicative level in written performance, the respondents from TRAC had better performance than the respondents from MSU-TCTO as manifested by their mean score. Empirically, an expectation for graduates of an academic institution, like the latter, to achieve better performance compared to an agricultural institution in Tawi-Tawi, is unwarranted. The oral communicative performance in the seven functions of language revealed significant differences. However, the respondents from MSU-TCTO had high mean scores than TRAC. Only task 1 (instrumental function) and task 3 (interactional function) of the written performance of the respondents revealed significant difference. Other language functions communicatively explained the same marginal linguistics performance. With regard to the relationship between the students'



communicative oral and written performances, results conclusively divulged a significant relationship.

**Key words:** *Communicative Performance, Halliday's Language Functions, Teaching-Learning, English Second Language.*

## **Introduction**

People use language to put their purposes across. It is toward these purposes that they direct their attention and choose the means to achieve them. For most purposes, language is vital in an intricate process that involves thinking, movement, interaction with other people, and creative effort.

A purpose can take varied forms. It can be doing one's personal chore or whiling away time engaging in one's favourite sport. It can also be a way of expressing conviction, taking part in a social gathering, investing effort for personal moral and intellectual growth, or even getting along with others. While people are striving at concretizing their purposes, their language, their physical skills, and their social skills are used to the utmost. Moreover, the language that is used in actualizing a purpose varies – from a simple word “I” to strings of complicated sentences until using series of paragraphs. These words are the language that can accomplish peoples' purposes effectively and efficiently.

In this respect, learners like students of Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College (TRAC) and Mindanao State University-Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography (MSU-TCTO) are expected to have a minimum communication skill in using such innate capacities to serve the purposes of their own world (Briton as cited by Personke 1987; Newfield, 1978). However, as per observation of this research, students in the mentioned schools have insufficient skills in utilizing their inherent capacity. Such existence could be attributed to the dearth of materials found in schools for language instruction.

As expected, as they acquire proficiency in language, students learn to use it in different ways by changing register – that is, to vary tone, form, and content to suit different contexts. For instance, a learner sharing his book with a classmate might make the forceful instrumental statement, “I want that book that is next to that small glass!” without offending the classmate. However, the same desire should be stated differently to less familiar companion if the social encounter is to process smoothly (“please pass me the book.”). Consequently, the desired result is achieved.

Yet, to a great extent, the culture of the society where schools are located would also influence the language. As gleaned, language carried the social affairs of a certain society. It has its social significance. Without it a society could not exist. Thus, from the standpoint of



Sapir (cited in Brown, 1994), language gradually shapes the view of the reality of the speakers, thereby creating viable thought habits among them.

In the school contexts, specifically the schools TRAC and MSU-TCTO, instructional practices are not geared to provide opportunities for students to use their communication skills serving various purposes. As observed, language teachers would just provide customary English reading materials, with the sole purpose of teaching students only the context, sentence structure and vocabulary which could facilitate work in other subjects. If those things occur, they are incidental to the “how-to” goal. In the teaching of writing, on the other hand, students are taught only the “how to write”, about a thing using letters, words, and sentences unconnected to any other purpose. Even after they have mastered the essentials of writing, they are often not allowed to write to accomplish a purpose, but only to practice the forms that the teacher designates: the haiku, the business letter, the three-paragraph essay. In the aspect of speaking, it is taught so a student can give a speech; and in listening, it is done so a student will know how to listen. Sad to say, many students go all through high school and even college without ever having used language in the classroom to serve their own purposes. Sadder still, in many classroom activities, language learning is not even connected to any purpose of the teacher. That is, students speak, read, write and listen only in exercises (Personke, 1987). Resultatively, the given exercises do not open venues where the students can practice the different functions or uses of language competently (Pinnel 1985).

It is in this vein, that language teachers must give the students the activities necessary to improving their communicative competence in all the functions of language. Thus, the students will develop awareness of audience and context, which is the key to the successful use of language, and one of the goals of language arts instruction. As they increase their awareness of the functions of language, they become empowered to achieve their own purposes through changing register appropriately.

In view of the foregoing observations, it is imperative to determine the oral and written performance of the students in the Seven Functions of Language.

### **Related Literature**

This study is anchored on the seven uses or functions of language of Michael Halliday (1975) and the social theories of linguistics.

The competency and fluency of an individual is contingent upon utilization of the various functions of language, in conveying a message across to an audience. In realizing such a purpose, it is indispensable that language-users like the students of TRAC and of MSU-TCTO should discover and explore the power of language within their environment, both at home and at school. As such, they need to learn how language through its functions allows



them to compose meaning through speaking and writing, and comprehend meaning through listening and reading (Hall 1988).

Halliday (1975) substantiates the above colloquium. Thus, he modifies those uses into seven functions that involve interactions with others, namely:

**Instrumental:** “I like”, “I need” function of language giving the speaker the satisfaction once his material need is being given and received by him/her.

**Regulatory:** the function that controls the behaviour of another person or others. Example: “Do the things I to be finished”. “Leaves that nonsense puzzle.” This function does not dwell on the material things or the services rendered; rather the actor who carries out the issued command.

**Interactional/phatic:** the language used socially by the speaker when dealing with others. When one is talking with people close to one or with people who need one’s responses. This language is used also when answering calls. Example: “You and Me”; “greeting”. Thus, this language is to establish social relationship.

**Personal:** language that enables the speaker to assert one’s individuality. One can speak one’s views out freely. In addition, one can tell people one’s likes, dislike favourite things, interests and other matters that appertain one. It is the language that uses the “Here I come”.

**Imaginative:** “Let’s allow our imagination to run wild” function of the language. Here the speaker expresses one’s imaginative thoughts, fictional ideas, make-believe notions and out of the world stories. One’s creativity is given a way out in this certain function. Furthermore, one builds a fantasy world of one’s own. Thus, allowing one to compose poetry and other written outputs that reveal the power of one’s creative imaginative mind.

**Heuristic:** “explain to me why” language. The speaker’s inquisitive mind is hungry to be quenched by explanation, truth, facts and figures, information, and data. This language allows the speaker to know the truths and reasons behind everything that surround one. The speaker uses one’s knowledge on the art of questioning to extract meanings from the people spoken to.

**Informative:** “I have something to tell you” language. This language gives the speaker the free rein to put one’s pieces of information across. It is in this function that the speaker fills in the minds of people spoken to with information that answer the “why’s”.

As gleaned above, individuals learn language to socialize and direct the behaviour of others (Pragmatists as quoted by Bruner, 1974). This pragmatic theory further states that besides

learning the meaning and form of language, individuals are motivated to learn language because of the function it performs for them. Morris (quoted in Owens, 1987, 1984) concurred the preceding view saying that language has its effects of utterance. From the speakers' perspective, the desired effect is called intention or the function utterance. This can be expressed in another way as what Dore (1974) and Owens said that before an individual expresses one's first meaningful word or shortly thereafter, one is able to express a range of early intentions. Language structure is acquired as a more efficient means of communicating these intentions. Muma (1978) as cited by Owens (1984) discussed two broad functions of language which he called intrapersonal and interpersonal. The intrapersonal function, dubbed by Halliday (1978) as ideational, is found in the internal language used for memory, problem-solving, and concept development. The interpersonal function of language, on one hand, is communication. One unit for analysis of this communicative function is called a speech act, an "intentional," verbally encoded social gesture by one person to another (Garvey 1977). Dore (1974) defined speech act as "a unit of linguistic communication, which is expressed according to grammatical and pragmatic rules which function to convey a speaker's, conceptual representations and intentions." Searle (cited in O'Grady, 1988) strengthened this point saying, "It is not... the symbol or word or sentence ... which is the unit of linguistic communication, but rather it is the production... in the performance of the speech act that constitutes the basic unit linguistic communication". According to Austin (cited in Parker and Riley 1994) each speech act can be analysed into three parts: locution or proposition, illocutions or intention, and perlocutions or the listener's interpretation.

In addition to the work started by John Austin, he defines an illocutionary act as a string of elements including intonation, mood of verb, presence of a performative verb, plus punctuation in writing or extra-linguistic markers in speech. A performative verb is one that causes an event to occur by its use. Performative verbs include pronounce, as in "I pronounce you husband and wife," and sentence, as in "I sentence you to 10 years of hard labour," he also attempted to differentiate speech act by purpose, interest and status of each participant, extra-linguistic institution, verbs form and strength of the illocutionary act. His proposed speech act categories are as follows:

- Representatives- are statements that convey a belief or disbelief in some proposition, such as an assertion;
- Directive- are attempts to influence the listener to do something, such as a demand or command;
- Commissives - are commitments of self to some future course of action, such as vow, promise or swear;
- Expressives- are expressions of a psychological state, such as thank, apologize or deplore;
- Declaratives- are statements of fact that presume to alter a state of affairs such as "I confer upon you."

Like Halliday, Dore (1974), Mahoney and Seely (1976) commented that language is preceded by, and possibly evolves from a well-integrated nonverbal communication system". Their basic unit of taxonomy is the primitive speech act (PSA) which is "an utterance consisting of labelling, repeating and answering, requesting action, requesting answer, calling, greeting, protesting and practicing". As shown, language acquisition is a process of socialization. Social interaction and social relationship provide a framework that enables an individual to decode and encode language form and content.

On the other hand, those various function of language are also substantiated by the innatist/rationalist theory pioneered by Chomsky, supported by Lenneberg and McNeill (cited in Brown 1987; 1994), and Jones and Dixon (1989). According to them, every individual has the innate capacity to learn any language. Thus, every human being possesses a black box known as the "Language Acquisition Device (LAD), a universal linguistic theory which definitely consists of four innate properties: (1) the ability to distinguish speech sounds from other sounds in the environment; (2) the ability to organize linguistic events into various classes which can later be refined; (3) knowledge that only a certain kind of linguistic system is possible and that other kinds are not; and (4) the ability to engage in constant evaluation of the developing linguistic system so as to construct the simplest possible system out of the linguistic data encountered. Furthermore, this language learning faculty has its built-in program of language that only waits to be activated in due time. Thus, the LAD is the blueprint of the structure of language that fits the heard language into its ready-made pattern. That is why the language acquirer easily learns the target language.

However, environmentalists' theory as well as the behaviourists' theory negated the rationalist' or innalists' view (cited in Brown 1987; 1994; Norton 1992). To them, the language structure is not innate and built-in but rather dependent on the sound inputs from the environment. Thus, such theories definitely advocate a rigor set of learnt habits acquired through stimulus, response and reward conditions, hence, a habit-formation process. Individuals, like students of TRAC and of MSU-TCTO, learn a typical language reflective of their very being, through imitating positively the language of other speakers in the environment. On one hand, the frequency of language used is dependent on the pleasant positive reinforcement.

The socio-cultural theory of Wells (1979a; 1981b), and the social interaction theory of Barth (cited in Roble 1998), on the other pole, cogently indicate that the role of social context in which exchanging ideas takes place, plays a significant role among the students involved in this study in performing their communication tasks - be they oral or written. In support, (Villiers 1979a; 1979b) pointed out that language functions are always embedded in every activity in every situation an individual engaged in. Hence, Hall (1988) stressed that language is acquired and learnt to fulfil needs within the environment. It modifies and controls not only



the individual's behaviour, but the behaviour of those around them. As a social tool, language becomes a way of sharing ideas with people. It facilitates fuller interaction with others.

**Language Identities Wants and Needs.** Learning to use language results in acquisition of things that satisfy the individuals' primary wants and needs. For example, the child who is thirsty and says "wa-wa" receives water more quickly than the child who merely cries because he/she is thirsty. Similarly, when a child receives a drink after saying "wa-wa" the water itself reinforces the learning and the use of the word.

**Language Changes and Controls Behaviour.** Individuals learn that they can effect changes in their environment, and control or direct behaviour of other people around them by using language. For instance, the young child who says "peek" or "peek-a-boo" knows the response these words elicit from an adult. The adult and child, then, enjoy the consequences of the resulting change in behaviour. The older child who attempts to respond to a teacher's question knows that a partially correct answer elicits a more desirable response from that teacher than silence or a refusal to answer. So the child who seeks approval or wants to avoid disapproval responds with, "I'm not sure, but I think..." rather than no response or "I dunno." At other times a language user may attempt to control behaviour and the environment with the use of intentionally inappropriate language, as when a child swears to gain attention.

**Language Facilitates Cognitive Growth.** Language symbolically identifies both the tangible and intangible. It allows people to retrieve from memory and make connections with newly acquired information. It allows people to speculate and form generalizations about past, present, and future. Language is the system by which people add to the store of knowledge they accumulate through experiences and learning. It allows them to store and sort information that they use to explore and solve problem. Language also helps people know information better when they write or speak about a topic, clarify ideas and also generate new knowledge.

**Language allows Fuller Interaction with Other.** Language permits people to establish and maintain relationships with those around them. They can define and explore their thoughts, feelings, and actions with others through language. People use language to communicate within their own group and participate in a social structure. Language just plays a central role in the successful social functioning of communication among individuals.

**Language Expresses the Uniqueness of the Individual.** Knowledge of how to use language allows people to establish their own individuality. They share personal opinions and feelings in ways that are distinctive and special for each of them. This is readily apparent in young children who often communicate knowledge, understanding, and opinion of their world in uniquely different ways, ways that reflect the development of their individual personalities.

The above-mentioned views are agreed by the sociolinguists whose model of language acquisition lies on the primary communication context of interest. Interactions within this context are considered to be, according to Rees (1978), “the originating force as well as the condition for language learning. As exemplified, language is employed to the attainment of extra-linguistic ends which reinforce the linguistic behaviour. McLean and Snyder-McLean (1978) capsulized the sociolinguistic thought regarding language as;

Acquired because the child has a reason to talk. This, in turn, assumes that he has become ”socialized”... and has learned that he can affect his environment through ... communication. A means of archiving already existing communicative function ... directly related to the ... pragmatic aspect of later language. Initially acquired through the process of decoding and comprehending in coming linguistic stimuli ... Learned in dynamic social interaction involving the individual and the mature language users in his environment. The mature language users facilitate this process...

Brown (1987a; 1994b) has stated that initial language learning is “a process of cognitive socialization”. The individual’s own linguistic categories become integrated with the categories of one’s environment through interaction. This integrative model assumes that language is interrelated with but separate from social and cognitive development (Vygotsky in Parker and Riley 1994). As the individual matures, there is a gradual delineation of these separate aspects of development. As Mclean and Snyder-Mclean (1978) conclude, “by nature of its content, language carries within it the product of the cognitive developmental domain; by nature of its function, language carries within it the product of human social development; by nature of its form, language carries within it the complex products of all of the input identified... plus the effect of the nature and function of the human physiological and neurological system”.

As individuals grow older, their ways of expressing their intention improve, and their use of the structure of language is clear and comprehensible. This improvement according to the cognitivists (qtd. in Hall 1988) means that language is learned as a result of the active role the individual takes in that learning. This theory stipulates that the individual is born with a propensity to act on the environment, process information and reach conclusions about the structure of language. Thus, language growth according to Piaget (qtd. In Brown, 1987a; 1994b) is progressive, as it occurs in stages which develop as a result of experiencing and reasoning. It is in this reason that the language user can easily and readily change register, which means that the language user responds according to the presented situation.

As exemplified, the need to learn to control the seven functions to become competent users of the second language is strongly emphasized by Michael Halliday (1973). He added that it is conceivable that these functions identify the initial development of language in all cultures, which has major implications for comprehending language. Furthermore, the need of

assessing the language competence, which according to Dell Hymes, as cited by Halliday (1978), is the language user's knowledge of lexical items and a text according to the different kinds of knowledge use, to monitor the individual's growing ability to use the language skilfully in the social milieu. Frank Smith (as cited by Tompkins and Hoskisson 1991), has made a number of observations about how these language functions are learned and applied in school settings:

Language is learned in genuine communication experiences, rather than through practice activities that lack functional purposes.

Skill in one language function does not generalize to skill in other functions.

Language is rarely used for just one function at a time; typically, two or more language functions are involved in talking and writing.

These language functions involve an audience – listeners for talking and readers for writing.

Language is one communication alternative; other alternatives include gestures, drawing, pantomime, and rituals.

In addition, Pinnell (1975) re-joined saying that when learners use language functionally, they use it for real communication and interactions with others. Finocchiaro (1979) substantiates such a claim. She stressed that the primary focus of communication is the function of language- the communicative purpose of interlocutors. She continued, saying that communication takes place in varied sociolinguistic situations involving both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. Furthermore, she singled out three factors that underlie any speech act: (1) the functions that language serves in real-world, everyday use; (2) the varieties of language possible within each function; (3) the shared sociocultural allusions- what some writers have called presuppositions, which are not only necessary to a complete understanding of the oral or written messages a person may receive, but which also determine their acceptability or appropriateness. She also categorizes the function of language as: personal, interpersonal, directive, referential, and imaginative.

Below are Finocchiaro's definition of each of the function:

Personal function refers to the speaker's or writer's ability to express his innermost thought as well as the gamut of emotions that every human being experiences: love, joy, disappointment, distress, anger, frustration, annoyance at missed opportunities, sorrow.

Interpersonal function enables the person to establish and maintain desirable social and working relationships: expression of sympathy, joy at another's success, concern for other



people's welfare, the making or polite breaking of appointments, apologizing for error or commitments not met, the appropriate language needed to indicate agreement or disagreement to interrupt another speaker, or to change an embarrassing subject—all of which persons/people use in everyday situations.

Directive function enables persons or people to make requests or suggestions, to persuade or to convince.

Referential function of language is concerned with talking or writing about the immediate environment and about language itself.

### ***Objective of the study***

The main thrust of this study was to determine the communicative performance level of the students of Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College (TRAC) and of Mindanao State university- Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography (MSU-TCTO) in Halliday's seven functions of language.

Specifically, this study aimed to identify (a) the students' level of both oral and written performance in the seven functions of language such as Instrumental, Regulatory, Interactional, Personal; Imaginative, Heuristic; and Informative; (b) the significant difference in both oral and written performance of the respondents in the communicative proficiency tasks; (c) the significant relationship between the oral and written performance of the respondents in the communicative proficiency tasks; and (d) the lesson guides which could be proposed for teaching/learning English as a second language.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Research Design***

This study utilized the mixed (quali-quant) descriptive-correlational type of research designs. The descriptive type of research was employed to describe the student level of oral and written performances in the seven functions of language. Correlational, on the other hand, was used to determine significant difference/relationship between the students' oral and written performance in the communicative proficiency tasks.

#### ***The Respondents***

The respondents in this study were the first year college students at TRAC and of MSU-TCTO, Bongao. For the TRAC, Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering, and Bachelor of Science in Home Technology were the fields included in the study. For the MSU-TCTO, on

the other hand, the chosen fields were Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, Bachelor of Science in Fisheries, and Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. Since the combined population would reach to 640, the researchers resorted to utilizing stratified sampling to obtain the desired number of respondents for the study. The following procedures were then ensued by the researchers, to wit: (1) the researchers identified the population of the respondents; (2) the researchers utilized Sloven's formula using the marginal error of .05 in determining the sample size; (3) the researchers grouped the respondents into eight categories according to the school they belonged to; and (4) the researchers computed the sample proportion (percent) employing the formula:  $\frac{n}{N} \times 100$ , where n refers to the size of the sample; N pertains to the size of the population; and 100 is constant.

**Table 1:** Population Distribution of the Respondents

School Covered	Frequency	Sample Size
<b>TRAC</b>	100	38
1. Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education		
2. Bachelor of Science in Agriculture	100	38
3. Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering	30	12
4. Bachelor of Science in Home Technology	30	12
<b>MSU-TCTO</b>	100	38
1. Bachelor of Science in Mathematics		
2. Bachelor of Science in Fisheries	100	38
3. Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education	100	38
4. Bachelor of Science in Education	80	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>245</b>

***The locale of the study***

Tawi-Tawi is a melting pot of a multi-ethnic groups of people speaking different forms and functions of language, to valuably carry the social affairs of the society. Thus, this study was



conducted within the two tertiary schools in Tawi-Tawi, Bongao, namely: MSU-TCTO and TRAC.

By virtue of Republic Act number 6060, Sulu College of Technology and Oceanography (SCTO) was established as a unit of Mindanao State University. Hence, the name MSU-TCTO. Its existence in the locality, moreover, aims at extending educational services to Muslims and other cultural minority groups. Nonetheless, by virtue of Batas Pambansa Bilang 197 PB number 201, the name MSU-TCTO was changed to Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography (MSU-TCTO), to further promote the social and economic development of the people in the area.

TRAC (formerly Sulu National Regional Agricultural School was founded in 1963), on the other hand, obtained its name by virtue of Batas Pambansa Blg. 384 aiming at providing the people in the area with professional, technical, and specialist training in agriculture. In like manner, the said school was also envisioned not only in terms of progressive leadership in the fields of Agriculture and Home Technology (qtd. In Asaali 1998).

### ***Research Instrument***

In obtaining the desired data of this endeavour, the following instruments were used (a) the observation form by Gay Su Pinnel exemplifying the seven functions of language of Halliday (cited in Norton, 1993), which was used to monitor the respondents' records on the various tasks given to them, and (b) the researchers gave the respondents various activities exemplifying the seven functions of language, to readily gauge their written and oral performance levels.

### ***Data Gathering Procedures***

For the purpose of collecting the information needed for the study, the respondents were made to pick up situations prepared by the researchers. During the oral performance exercises the researchers observed, analysed and evaluated the respondents' oral communicative language performance. As such, the result from the observation was used to analyse the types of language demonstrated by individual students as well as by the entire class.

On the other pole, to test the respondents' writing skill using the function of language, the researchers gave them tasks. These tasks called for certain language forms which would be used and evaluated by a panel of experts.

Moreover, the respondents' final score for each criterion of the variables would be obtained by getting the average of all the ratings.



### ***Statistical Treatment of Data***

To arrive at an accurate interpretation of the obtained data, the following statistical tools were used with the aid of a MICROSTAT program (ECOSOFT, 1984).

To determine the respondents' written and oral performance in the seven functions of language, mean and ranking were used.

To determine significant difference in the oral and written performance of the respondents in the different function of language, T-test was employed.

To determine relationship between the oral and written performance of the respondents, the Pearson-Product Moment Correlation was utilized.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***Respondents' level of oral performance in the different tasks engaged in the Seven Functions***

As disclosed, all the respondents obtained a marginal mark in the various tasks given to them. Hence, they were deficient in all functions of the language.

The results revealed that one hundred percent of the respondents had a marginal mark. Such a finding indicates that all of them are orally deficient in all language functions. Thus, they manifested hardships in conveying\expressing their ideas properly. The activities given to them involved ordering, buying, demonstrating the steps involved in cooking, sharing personal experiences dealing with an alien, mate-searching, interviewing an applicant, and giving a lecture. Such activities are very common, yet the respondents failed to express themselves using the target language, English, in the various functions of language according to Michael Halliday.

More pervasively, the difficulty in the five oral English skills such as accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension always go together when transporting the functions of language. The faulty use of each component, therefore, affects one's oral performance. From the result of this endeavour, one can deduce that the English classroom in the two schools (TRAC and MSU-TCTO) has utilized less opportunity to employ the different functions of language during classroom interactions. As such, the students' ability to develop orally would be impaired.



### ***Respondents' Level of Written Performance in the Seven Functions of Language***

In terms of their levels of written performance, the TRAC respondents performed better than the MSU-TCTO respondents, as manifested by their mean scores.

The writing activities included the following: writing invitation letters, writing letters of request/inquiry, reacting to editorials, telling one's personal experience, conducting an interview, giving information in a certain specialization.

The students in TRAC, specifically BSAgEd, BSAgri, BSAgEng, obtained good written performance in all the language functions as manifested by their means. Only the BSHTech group had a marginal written performance as exemplified. From this finding, one can deduce that it is only the BS Home Technology students who have marginal performance. The result could be attributed to their field of specialization focusing only within technological skills/aspects, not so much with writing.

On the contrary, only two MSU-TCTO groups of students obtained good written performance. These were the BSFish and BSEduc students, in all the functions of language. Meanwhile BSMath and BSEEduc students had marginal written performance, as manifested by their obtained means. Shown in this atmosphere, one can infer that the latter groups somehow have insufficient background in terms of writing, since their writing skills are deficient. Such findings indicate that less writing opportunity was given to the enhancement of the various functions of language in their writing class.

### ***Significant Difference in the Respondents' Oral Performance in the Seven Functions of Language***

As regards the respondents' oral performance in the seven functions of language, the findings revealed significant difference. However, the respondents from MSU-TCTO had high mean scores compared to the TRAC respondents.

As a result, the hypothesis was rejected. In addition, the difference of their performance in the oral test could be attributed to the very nature of courses each school is offering. The TRAC is offering courses dealing more with technical aspects while MSU-TCTO offers courses designed for teaching academic English disciplines.

### ***Significant Difference in the Respondents' Written Performance in the Seven Functions of Language***

As found out, only task 1 (instrumental function) and task 3 (interactional function) of the written performance of the respondents revealed significant difference.



Comparing the written performance of the two groups, TRAC students are better than the MSU-TCTO students as revealed by their mean scores.

The writing activities included the following: writing invitation letters, writing letters of request/inquiry, reacting to editorials, telling one's personal experience, conducting an interview, giving information on a certain field of specialization.

From this finding, one can deduce that it is only the BS Home Technology students who have marginal performance. The result could be attributed to the fact that their field of specialization focuses only within technological skills/aspects to be developed, not so much with writing.

On the contrary, only two groups of students in MSU-TCTO obtained good written performance. However, comparing the written performance of the two groups TRAC students are better than the MSU-TCTO students as revealed by their mean scores.

When they are asking/requesting something from their classmates, they would always resort to utilizing the instrumental function, and when they give their views regarding a certain issue they would always employ the interactional function of language, to foster better ways of exchanging ideas. Thus, the hypothesis in this aspect is rejected.

On the other hand, such findings indicate their deficient skills in employing the seven functions of language orally. The deficiency, according to Malicsi (2000), could be ascribed to the interference of their native language, which could valuably affect their performances in the situations that demanded the employment of English language alone. Their use of a low vulgar type of language, on the other hand, also contributed to getting a deficiency mark. This was exemplified when they utilized slang words just to seek the approval of peers (O'Grady, 1981).

### ***Students' oral and written performance: their correlations***

With regard to the relationship between the students' oral and written performance, the results divulged significant relationships between interactional and informative functions; regulatory and informative functions; instrumental and informative functions; regulatory and heuristic functions; instrumental and heuristic functions; personal and imaginative functions; interactional and personal functions; and instrumental and regulatory functions.

In summary, the respondents employed various functions of language (both in oral and written form) in bringing their ideas across to their classmates. The interplay between regulatory and informative, instrumental and informative regulatory and heuristic,

instrumental and heuristic, personal and imaginative, interactional and personal, and instrumental and regulatory, in their oral and written performances, typically indicate the true relationship between oral and written forms. Thus, the independent functions and interlocking functions of language – be they oral and written - should be treated as equally important in teaching English. The results further suggest that to produce quality student language, teachers should and must focus on the various functions of language in the teaching of English done orally or in written form. Shown in this context, teachers should teach students how to tie up relationships between what they say and what they write, so they would be able to amass functional knowledge deemed necessary in combating future problems that would crop up outside the school.

### **Conclusions**

The respondents lack the necessary skills in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary when speaking. Such dearth of skill has basically affected their fluency and effectiveness in transporting their ideas across to their interlocutor. In short, they have a scrawny foundation for the rudiments of communication.

In oral performance, all of them have a marginal mark(s) indicating their deficiency in all the functions of language. However, in written performance, the TRAC respondents performed better than the MSU-TCTO as exemplified by their mean scores. This result probably can be attributed to the kind of institutional standards and the subjectivity biases of the individuals (instructors) exercising their teaching profession. Based on the empirical, observable, common knowledge, the performance of students in the academic institution should excel rather than the vocational, in terms of academic rating performances in respective academic fields.

Comparing their oral performance, on the other hand, the respondents from MSU-TCTO (academic institution) have performed better than the TRAC (vocational institution) students, as shown by their mean scores in English discipline. Conclusively, the performance of students holds much water in the actual exercise of the course discipline.

As regards the respondents' written performance in the various functions of language, only the instrumental and interactional functions of the language display significant difference. Hence, one can infer that the field of specialization of a student dictates the type of function to use when writing.

Oral and written performances of the respondents, on one hand, indicated significant relationships for the following language functions: interactional and informative; regulatory and informative; instrumental and informative; regulatory and heuristic; instrumental and heuristic; personal and imaginative; interactional and personal; and instrumental and



regulatory. Such relationships makes one infer that specific language functions interlap/overlap in the process of communication done in oral or in written forms.



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