

VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HANOI
UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

GRADUATION PAPER

**WEAKNESSES OF VSTEP-LIKE ARGUMENTATIVE
ESSAYS BY SECOND-YEAR MAINSTREAM
STUDENTS IN FELTE, ULIS, VNU**

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ĐẠI HỌC QUỐC GIA HÀ NỘI
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ
KHOA SƯ PHẠM TIẾNG ANH

KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

ĐIỂM YẾU CỦA NHỮNG BÀI VĂN NGHỊ LUẬN
THEO ĐỊNH DẠNG VSTEP VIẾT BỞI SINH VIÊN
NĂM HAI HỆ ĐÀO TẠO CHUẨN KHOA SƯ PHẠM
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ABSTRACT

From a long time, argumentative writing has been proved to be of fundamental importance to university students. For second-year students in ULIS, VNU, argumentative writing seems to be more important as it is also one of the genres tested in the VSTEP exam. However, many of students still encountered great difficulties with this genre, which is one factor leading to their reluctance to take the test. This study was conducted with an aim to investigating the most frequent problems in students' VSTEP-like argumentative essays and thus, getting them ready for the writing part in the VSTEP exam. The participants are 36 mainstream students of QH.2015. They did the questionnaire first and then wrote the essays in 40 minutes. While questionnaire was used to find out students' perceptions about their weaknesses in four aspects, namely Task Fulfillment, Organization, Vocabulary and Grammar, writing test was used to evaluate their actual competence and detect their weaknesses. To ensure the reliability of the results, two VSTEP-trained raters were asked to mark 36 essays separately and point out the problems. The questionnaire reveals that the weakest area perceived by students was Vocabulary and four problems that troubled them the most were "*developing ideas*", "*not smooth transitions of ideas*", "*using mainly common words*" and "*making grammar/ punctuation mistakes*". The marking, on the other hand, shows that students' weakest area was Organization and detects two new problems which are "*using unclear reference*" and "*having unclear expressions*". It is also noted that students' score marked by raters was higher than the score they perceived and there existed quite a few gaps between students' perceived weaknesses and their actual ones.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – The importance of argumentative essays for the VSTEP exam as perceived by students	28
Figure 2 – Students’ assumed score for argumentative.....	29
Figure 3 – Problems in Task Fulfillment as perceived by students.....	31
Figure 4 – Problems in Organization as perceived by students.....	32
Figure 5 – Problems in Vocabulary as perceived by students.....	32
Figure 6 – Problems in Grammar as perceived by students.....	33
Figure 7 – Students’ actual score for argumentative.....	34
Figure 8 – Problems in Task Fulfillment as detected by raters.....	35
Figure 9 – Problems in Organization as detected by raters.....	39
Figure 10 – Problems in Vocabulary as detected by raters.....	41
Figure 11 – Problems in Grammar as detected by raters.....	43
Figure 12 – Students’ overall score (perception vs actual marking).....	45
Figure 13 – Problems in Task Fulfillment (perception vs actual marking).....	45
Figure 14 – Problems in Organization (perception vs actual marking).....	46
Figure 15 – Problems in Vocabulary (perception vs actual marking).....	47
Figure 16 – Problems in Grammar (perception vs actual marking).....	47

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The average score in four criteria as perceived by students	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 2: The score in four criteria as marked by the raters	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 3: Type and proportion of grammar and punctuation mistakes.....	44

ABBREVIATIONS

ULIS: University of Languages and International Studies
FELTE: Faculty of English Language Teaching Education
VSTEP: Vietnam Standardized Test of English Proficiency
CLTA: Center of Language Testing and Assessment
ELT: English Language Teaching
ET: English Translation
EB: English Business

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