

Sociolinguistic Competencies Of Vietnamese First Year College Students Of Thai Nguyen University System: Basis For Creativity Enhancement Activities

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Abstract

Background: At Thai Nguyen University, students have to study English as a compulsory subject right from the first semester and they are evaluated with both communication skill and grammar knowledge. High school graduates come into university with fairly high levels of grammatical competence, but often with correspondingly low levels of sociolinguistic competence. Improving sociolinguistic competence needs to be a part of the language learning process from the beginning. Many language schools and language learning programs focus almost exclusively on language components such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, and very little attention is paid to helping students understand how to be appropriate in a new cultural context. An assumption is often made that language learners will pick up sociolinguistic competence simply by being exposed to the culture. This study was conducted to assess the students' sociolinguistic competencies proposed creativity enhancement activities.

Materials and Methods: The subjects of the study comprised of four hundred college students selected through random sampling out of 8,844 total population and 57 English teachers of the five colleges at Thai Nguyen university. In this study, the descriptive method of research helped to assess the sociolinguistic competencies of Vietnamese first-year students at Thai Nguyen University as basis for creativity enhancement activities. The relationship of English sociolinguistic competencies and variables was determined. The data was gathered by survey questionnaire and teacher – made test.

Results: The students' performance on sociolinguistic aspects was assessed as average with an over-all rating of 5.85. Teachers assessed that students were competent on sociolinguistic competence in terms of respect, confident, resourceful, emotional maturity, friendliness, especially respect obtained the highest mean value of 4.15. There is no significant relationship between the students' performance and the teachers' assessment on sociolinguistic competence because all computed r-values indicate negligible correlation and the resulted p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level. There is no significant difference on the students' responses on their sociolinguistic competence in terms of respect, friendliness as assessed by teachers when grouped according to profile variables.

Conclusion: The level of students' sociolinguistic performance was on the normal range, not so fluent but not pitiable. Moreover, teachers positively assessed that students' possessed a good competence in terms of sociolinguistic aspect. There is no statistically significant relationship between the students' performance and the teachers' assessment on sociolinguistic competencies. Creativity enhancement activity is planned for implementation and evaluation to improve the students' sociolinguistic competence

Key Word: sociolinguistic competencies, first-year student, Thai Nguyen University system, creativity, enhancement activities.

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I. Introduction

In Vietnam, English has been considered an ideal choice of majority of the Vietnamese and has become compulsory subject in many schools from primary to college. Especially, since 2006 when Vietnam joined World Trade Organization, which remarked the turning point of the country in the globalization process, English has considerably confirmed its prime role in the association trend. Studying English is not only an opportunity but also the duty of almost Vietnamese students in order to adjust themselves to the changes of the world, the area in general and the country in particular.

At Thai Nguyen University, students have to study English as a compulsory subject right from the first semester and they are evaluated with both communication skill and grammar knowledge. High school graduates come into university with fairly high levels of grammatical competence, but often with correspondingly low

levels of communicative competence. The widened idea of communicative competence that grammatical knowledge is not enough for communication rather knowledge of language use is essential as well as grammatical knowledge because to interact to others a child must have the ability to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events and to evaluate their accomplishment by others ¹.

Communicative competence in terms of four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. They asserted that these four elements are correlated but relatively independent, and all elements are important and indispensable to successful communication ²

Sociolinguistic competence deals with a language user's knowledge about the culture where the actual communication occurs. It is simply a fact that sociolinguistic competence seems to be more useful than grammatical competence in a specific communication where people are more likely to accept grammar error than pragmatic failure like culture shock ².

Sociolinguistics is a word used to describe the study of the appropriateness of language in different contexts. In other words, sociolinguistics is the study of how situational factors such as the cultural context and setting of a speech event affect the choice of what should be said.

When language learners learn how to manipulate their utterances to make them appropriate to the situation in which they are speaking, it is said that they have achieved sociolinguistic competence in that language.

Good sociolinguistic skills in a second language are important because if one makes serious mistakes in this type of competence, people will not simply think that the person is ignorant but rather, they will think that he is ill-mannered, dishonest, insincere, rude and pushy. If the grammar is excellent, the person will be judged all the more severely for sociolinguistic gaffes. Misunderstandings result in amusement, contempt, disappointment, shock, bewilderment, serious insult, or ethnic stereotypes.

Improving sociolinguistic competence needs to be a part of the language learning process from the beginning. The process of learning sociolinguistic competence is challenging even in one's first language ³. Many language schools and language learning programs focus almost exclusively on language components such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, and very little attention is paid to helping students understand how to be appropriate in a new cultural context. An assumption is often made that language learners will pick up sociolinguistic competence simply by being exposed to the culture. Unfortunately, this is not often the case.

The researcher has recognized that Vietnamese first- year college students may not have realized yet how important and relevant English sociolinguistic competencies to their course and to their life. For this reason, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study to assess the sociolinguistic competencies of Vietnamese first- year students at Thai Nguyen University as well as give creative enhancement activities to improve students' sociolinguistics competencies.

II. Material And Methods

Study Design: The study is a survey to assess the sociolinguistics competencies of Vietnamese first-year students at Thai Nguyen University system as basic for creativity enhancement activities.

Study Location: This study was conducted at Thai Nguyen University system. Thai Nguyen university consists of five colleges namely: College of Education, College of Information Technology, College of Agriculture and Forestry, College of Sciences, and College of Economics and Business Administration.

Study Duration: August 2019 to August 2020

Sample size: 400 students and 57 English teachers.

Sample size calculation: The sample size was determined using the Slovin's formula with 0.05 margin of error and each college was represented by the obtained sample size using stratified proportional allocation.

Subjects & selection method: The subjects of the study comprised of four hundred college students selected through random sampling out of 8,844 total population and 57 English teachers of the five colleges at Thai Nguyen university. The students were currently enrolled in a freshman English course.

Procedure methodology: Survey Questionnaire was given to the students and teachers as the main device for gathering the data. The first type of questionnaire was given to students-respondents. It consists of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire was used to get the profile of the students in terms of age, gender, educational attainment of parents, exposure to English as a language, monthly family income, types of schools graduated from; and the second part of the questionnaire was used to determine the level of sociolinguistic competencies in terms of respect, friendliness, confidence, resourcefulness and emotional maturity. The same type of questionnaire on sociolinguistic competencies was given to the English teachers. A five-point Likert scale was used to interpret the results.

Options	Ranges	Verbal Interpretations
5	4.50 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.50 – 4.49	Agree
3	2.50 - 3.49	Disagree
2	1.50 – 2.49	Strongly Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.49	Neither agree nor disagree

Teacher - Made Test was used to assess the sociolinguistics competence of Vietnamese first- year college students at Thai Nguyen University. For the purpose of this study, the obtained scores were grouped arbitrarily to delineate the level of sociolinguistic performance of Thai Nguyen University first year college students. Presented below is the grouping of scores with the corresponding verbal interpretations.

Ranges	Verbal Interpretations
Below 4	Poor
4 - 5.5	Low Average
5.6- 6.9	Average
7- 8.4	Moderately Good
8.5 - Above	Good

After survey questionnaire and teacher-made test were validated by reputable experts in the field of study, the researcher had an official communication with Rectors of Thai Nguyen Universities to ask some permission to conduct the study. Included in the communication was the request to administer the questionnaire and test to the students- respondents to get the necessary data and information needed in the study.

When the approved letter was released, the researcher went to the different universities to administer the questionnaire and test. The researcher gave questionnaire and test for respondents (students and English teachers). And she waited for a time to get it back. This process lasted for three week. With the most valued help of the university rectors, respondents- students, collection of data was made possible. The data were tallied, analyzed and interpreted with the able assistance of the statistician.

Statistical analysis: The data generated by the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency distribution, weighted mean, regression analysis, One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson-product Moment Correlation using 0.05 level of significance.

III. Results

3.1. Level of Students’ Sociolinguistic Performance

The researcher conducted a teacher-made test to determine the students’ level of sociolinguistic performance in term of respect, friendliness, confidence, resourcefulness, emotional maturity.

Table no 1: Level of Students’ Sociolinguistic Performance

Component	Rating
Respect	1.26
Friendliness	1.07
Confidence	1.16
Resourcefulness	0.66
Emotional Maturity	1.11
	0.60
Total Performance	5.85

It was observed that the sociolinguistics performance of the respondents’ was 5.85 and verbally interpreted as “average”. This indicates that the performance of the respondents’ was on the normal range, not so fluent but not pitiable. The respondents’ were able to obtain this level of performance since they have the ability to know how to speak to different people in different situations. Because it is not learned naturally, they were very conscientious of their speech until they are able to form a natural flow of language given the situation and people they are speaking to. Sociolinguistic competence and performance is the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of language and of discourse¹. This type of competence requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the rules of the participants, the information they share, and the functions of the interaction. Only in a full context of this kind can judgment be made on the appropriateness of a particular utterance.

3.2. Sociolinguistics Competence as Perceived by the Teachers

3.2.1. Respect.

Table no 2: Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Respect as Perceived by the Teachers

Students are able to:	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Give genuine respect to teachers.	4.49	Agree	1
2. Answer questions in class discussion with respect.	4.07	Agree	7.5
3. Discuss sensitive topics (racism, bias, stereotypes) in class with respect without fear.	3.80	Agree	10
4. Feel grateful when teachers give compliments to their effort and excellent work.	4.27	Agree	3
5. Show admiration to guests and observers in the classroom.	4.13	Agree	6
6. Take negative remarks without feeling offended.	4.06	Agree	9
7. Recognize the value of parents' directives.	4.14	Agree	5
8. Convey positive words to strangers.	4.21	Agree	4
9. Express themselves with modesty.	4.07	Agree	7.5
10. Listen conscientiously to people whenever they share ideas, thoughts and concerns.	4.30	Agree	2
Composite Mean	4.15	Agree	

As revealed from the results, teachers perceived the sociolinguistic competence of students as high with a composite mean of 4.15. Among the items mentioned, give genuine respect to teachers was often observed to the students which obtained a mean value of 4.49. Listen conscientiously to people whenever they share ideas, thoughts and concerns, feel grateful when teachers give compliments to their effort and excellent work and convey positive words to strangers were also observed by the faculty to their students. Though all were observed to the students, answer questions in class discussion with respect (4.07), express themselves with modesty (4.07) and discuss sensitive topics (racism, bias, stereotypes) in class with respect without fear (3.80) got the lowest mean scores. The importance of teaching sociolinguistic competence including awareness of turn-taking and politeness and states that the rules of the appropriate turn-taking in conversations depend also on social roles of participants. When there are rules, there are obviously some expectations about the direction in which the conversation is going to lead.

3.2.2. Friendliness.

Table no 3: Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Friendliness as Perceived by the Teachers

Students are able to:	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Communicate in a friendly way.	4.14	Agree	1
2. Acknowledge appreciation for the outstanding contributions of others.	4.08	Agree	3
3. Encourage other people.	3.97	Agree	5
4. Express positive feelings and emotions.	3.79	Agree	8
5. Respond with a witty comeback on negative comments.	3.99	Agree	4
6. Support other people verbally and non-verbally.	3.77	Agree	9
7. Reflect in their eyes the feeling of being communicated.	3.86	Agree	7
8. Use gestures when they communicate.	3.97	Agree	5
9. Use friendly facial expressions in communication.	3.75	Agree	10
10. Practice open-minded communication.	4.10	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.94	Agree	

The over-all assessment was agree (high) with a composite mean of 3.94. All items were rated “agree” and communicate in a friendly way (4.14) ranked first. Today’s college instructors are expected not only to be engaging in their classes, but to engage students outside the classroom. Whether it’s supervising service-learning, taking students to professional conferences, leading study sessions in coffee houses, or inviting students into our homes, faculty are now expected to be with students in ways that change the kinds of relationships teachers and students have in the classroom. Teachers now interact with their students in a variety of contexts, many of them informal and some of them purely social. These new roles blur the line between being friendly toward students and being a friend of students. All faculty need to know how to build supportive and positive, but businesslike, relationships with students. In this way, students’ behavior reflects what the teachers show to students, and in return students can communicate with them in a nice way and in a friendly way.

The teachers also observed that students practice open-minded communication, acknowledge appreciation for the outstanding contributions of others, respond with a witty comeback on negative comments and encourage other people.

Though assessed positively, the least among the items were express positive feelings and emotions (3.79), support other people verbally and non-verbally (3.77) and use friendly facial expressions in communication (3.75).

3.2.3. Confidence.

Table no 4: Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Confidence as Perceived by the Teachers

Students are able to:	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Feel comfortable asking questions in front of their classmates during class discussion	3.66	Agree	6
2. Feel comfortable asking questions to their classmates in a one-on-one setting	3.99	Agree	1.5
3. Feel comfortable asking questions to their teacher in a one-on-one setting	3.99	Agree	1.5
4. Show confidence that others can understand the questions that they ask	3.48	Disagree	9
5. Willing to ask questions	3.52	Agree	7
6. Give up doing their homework/ assignment when the problems get hard	3.82	Agree	5
7. Ask questions when they are having difficulty in doing their assignment	3.96	Agree	3
8. Find it very easy to communicate on a one-to-one with strangers.	3.87	Agree	4
9. Tell jokes, anecdotes and stories whenever they communicate.	3.13	Disagree	10
10. Assert themselves in social situations.	3.49	Disagree	8
Composite Mean	3.69	Agree	

Result shows that teachers assessed that students also possess sociolinguistic competence with regards to confidence. Among the items enumerated, feel comfortable asking questions to their classmates in a one-on-one setting (3.99), feel comfortable asking questions to their teacher in a one-on-one setting (3.99) and ask questions when they are having difficulty in doing their assignment (3.96) topped on the list which was also the same with the students’ sociolinguistic competence.

On the other hand, assert themselves in social situations, show confidence that others can understand the questions that they ask and tell jokes, anecdotes and stories whenever they communicate were rated disagree (moderate level) which obtained a mean scores of 3.49, 3.48 and 3.13 respectively.

The speaker’s choice of language depends on two factors. The first one is the overall knowledge of the language and the second one is the social context of the situation in which the conversation takes place⁵. The speaker is made to decide whether to use informal or formal language and then the appropriate strategy in order to complete the communicative purpose of the particular social situation. This results in establishing and maintaining social relationship. All these decisions need to be done from the view of cultural norms and attitudes of the participants of an individual social interaction. When the speaker makes the wrong decision by using inappropriate language he/she may be unintentionally sending the wrong signals and the result may be a break-down in communication.

3.2.4 Resourcefulness.

Table no 5: Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Resourcefulness as Perceived by the Teachers

Students are able to:	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Think of how other people feel.	4.49	Agree	1
2. Approach different situations in a systematic way.	4.23	Agree	3
3. Postpone unpleasant tasks that they can perform immediately.	3.45	Disagree	9
4. Resolve disagreements.	4.28	Agree	2
5. Speak very frequently in most social situations.	4.13	Agree	5
6. Become courageous in most social situations.	4.06	Agree	6
7. Welcome healthy arguments.	4.14	Agree	4

8. Emphasize a point using a concrete language.	3.92	Agree	7
9. Handle unforeseen situations.	3.31	Disagree	10
10. Innovative in doing things.	3.54	Agree	8
Composite Mean	3.95	Agree	

The over-all observation was “agree” with a composite mean of 3.95. Think of how other people feel was rated agree with mean value of 4.49, followed by resolve disagreements, approach different situations in a systematic way, welcome healthy arguments, speak very frequently in most social situations, become courageous in most social situations, emphasize a point using a concrete language and innovative in doing things. The above mentioned items were also assessed agree.

However, postpone unpleasant tasks that they can perform immediately and handle unforeseen situations were the only item that was rated disagree with a mean score of 3.45 and 3.31.

The knowledge of the conventions that rule what is commonly referred to as “body language” has been claimed to be crucial in social behaviour and language-mediated communication. As such, it is an intrinsic part of the sociocultural competence of any fluent user of the language, and must be acquired and applied (more or less consciously) by all potential speakers. Learners need to ask themselves what kind of extra-linguistic knowledge is necessary to undertake an activity. Learners who wish to communicate as fluently and “sound as natural” as a native speaker, for example, will need to draw upon their repository of knowledge about the suitable body position, distance from others, associated gestures, etc. to a given message. This only implies that students should be resourceful in understanding those cultural differences in expressing ideas.

3.2.5 Emotional Maturity.

Table no 6: Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Emotional Maturity as Perceived by the Teachers

Students are able to:	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Communicate clearly and respectfully to the needs and perspectives of others.	3.82	Agree	3
2. Listen to others and experience empathy	3.87	Agree	2
3. Depend on others to validate decisions.	3.18	Disagree	7
4. Speak in public or to strangers.	3.00	Disagree	8
5. Broaden their horizon.	3.96	Agree	1
6. Frank on others who hurt them or make their lives difficult.	3.20	Disagree	6
7. Feel good about themselves even without the approval of others.	3.65	Agree	4
8. Welcome disagreements as part of a healthy discussion.	2.66	Strongly Disagree	10
9. Share problems with peers comfortably.	3.39	Disagree	5
10. Stop and think first on what to do next.	2.69	Strongly Disagree	9
Composite Mean	3.34	Disagree	

As seen from the table, teachers only observed positive assessment to students sociolinguistic competence in terms of emotional maturity on broadening their horizon (3.96), listening to others and experience empathy (3.87), communicating clearly and respectfully to the needs and perspectives of others (3.82) and feeling good about themselves even without the approval of others (3.65). It may not always be easy, or even possible, to empathize with others but through good communication skills and some imagination we can work towards more empathetic feelings. Research has suggested that individuals who can empathize enjoy better relationships with others and greater well-being through life.

However, they do not observed students sharing problems with peers comfortably, frank on others who hurt them or make their lives difficult, depend on others to validate decisions, speak in public or to strangers with 3.39, 3.20, 3.18, and 3.00 respectively. But it was also observed that students stop and think first on what to do next and welcome disagreements as part of a healthy discussion got the lowest mean values of 2.69 and 2.66 and rated strongly disagree. Most people and even students have no interest in creating conflict with others. They know enough about human behavior to distinguish between healthy communication and the words or actions that contribute to smooth relationships. It is in one person’s interest to maintain relations which are smooth, flexible and mutually enhancing. However, there are times that disagreements are experienced but with a good purpose sometimes.

3.2.6 Summary Table.

Table no 7: Summary Table on Sociolinguistics Competence as Perceived by the Teachers

	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Respect	4.15	Agree	1
2. Friendliness	3.94	Agree	3
3. Confidence	3.69	Agree	4
4. Resourcefulness	3.95	Agree	2
5. Emotional Maturity	3.34	Disagree	5
Composite Mean	3.81	Agree	

As seen from the result, the respondents' were competent on sociolinguistic in reference to respect since it obtained the highest mean value of 4.15. This indicates that the respondents' know how to respect other people particularly the culture. The respondents' were able to acquire cultural knowledge that leads them to respect people when communicating. It was followed by resourcefulness which was given by the mean score of 3.95. An individual is said to be resourceful when he employs his language for successful, socially acceptable adjustment. We come across several persons with very good command over language. But either a-social or antisocial by nature.

Resourcefulness consists, secondly, not only in mere social adjustment in a passive sense of the term, but in the utilization of one's language ability to control and change the social environment for the better. A passive submission to the ways and norms of socially requires no high level of resourcefulness. A resourceful person most creativity uses his language ability to control his environment and change it in the most constructive manner. He stands against injustice hypocrisy and social malpractices, and exerts his resourceful for constructive reforms.

On the other hand, the least observed was emotional maturity. This was observed since respondents' do not welcome disagreements as part of healthy discussion with foreign colleagues and do not share problems with friends comfortably. In this context there is a growing intercultural awareness, i.e., sensitivity for the linguistic and extralinguistic peculiarities of each speaker's community. Students' learners now seek to be interculturally competent with a two-fold objective: firstly, to fully perceive and understand the words, feelings, and intents of an interlocutor with a different cultural background and, secondly, to control the impression that such an interlocutor may develop of our own words, feelings and intents.

3.3 Significant Differences on the Students' Level of Sociolinguistic Competencies as Assessed by the Teachers When Grouped According to Profile Variables

3.3.1. Respect.

Table no 8: Difference of Responses on Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Respect When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables		Mean	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	16 - 20 years old	3.92	0.117	0.889	Not Significant
	21 - 25 years old	3.93			
	26 - 30 years old	4.03			
Father	College Graduate	3.99	0.565	0.638	Not Significant
	High School Graduate	3.93			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.87			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.92			
Mother	College Graduate	3.99	0.518	0.670	Not Significant
	High School Graduate	3.93			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.88			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.85			
Income	10,000 and above	3.93	0.273	0.845	Not Significant
	9,000 - 8,000	3.94			
	7,000 - 6,000	3.87			
	5,000 and below	3.93			
Gender	Male	3.94	0.712	0.477	Not Significant
	Female	3.91			
Type	Public	3.92	0.015	0.988	Not Significant

	Private	3.92			
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Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table above shows that there is no significant difference on the students' responses on their sociolinguistic competence in terms of respect. This was observed from the computed F-values which were all less than the critical value and the resulted p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the assessment of sociolinguistic competence in terms of respect is rejected. This only implies that the respondents' assessment were the same whatever is their profile, whether they belong to different groups. Based from it's definition, sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use. As was remarked with regard to socio-cultural competence, since language is a socio-cultural phenomenon, much of what is contained in the framework, particularly in respect of the socio-cultural, is of relevance to sociolinguistic competence. Similarly, politeness conventions provide one of the most important reasons for departing from the straightforward application of the co-operative. This vary from one culture to another and are a frequency source of inter-ethnic misunderstanding, especially when polite expressions are literally interpreted. This proves why politeness conventions provide one of the most important reasons for departing from the straightforward application of the co-operative principle. But with these, the respondents' still have similar level of sociolinguistic competence with reference to respect.

This type of competence requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the rules of the participants, the information they share, and the functions of the interaction. Only in a full context of this kind can judgment be made on the appropriateness of a 'particular utterance'. Sociolinguistic competence comprises aspects, which deal with factors such as politeness, formality, metaphor, registers, and culturally related aspects of language⁶.

3.3.2 Friendliness.

Table no 9: Difference of Responses on Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Friendliness When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables		Mean	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	16 - 20 years old	3.65	0.275	0.759	Not Significant
	21 - 25 years old	3.66			
	26 - 30 years old	3.85			
Father	College Graduate	3.57	0.22	0.883	Not Significant
	High School Graduate	3.66			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.66			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.64			
Mother	College Graduate	3.78	0.738	0.530	Not Significant
	High School Graduate	3.66			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.59			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.64			
Income	10,000 and above	3.62	1.01	0.388	Not Significant
	9,000 - 8,000	3.71			
	7,000 - 6,000	3.54			
	5,000 and below	3.67			
Gender	Male	3.63	0.685	0.494	Not Significant
	Female	3.66			
Type	Public	3.66	1.073	0.284	Not Significant
	Private	3.57			

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

As seen from the result, all computed F-values were all greater than the critical value at 0.05 alpha level and p-values were all greater than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no difference observed and indicates that the students have the same competence in terms of friendliness. The result was also supported by the obtained mean values from each profile.

Though the use of Standard English is very much desired, one must not dismiss the significance of other varieties of the language⁷ Students must be made to realize the importance of Standard English in academic and formal settings; but at the same time be conscious of the communicative function of Vietnam English. This language helps learners to bridge the gap between the use of acrolect among proponents in an academic setting and the basilect used among their peers to facilitate understanding. More importantly, Vietnam English has a social function of fostering ties. It motivates students to move from one speech to another level through the opening up of communication channels across the sociolects. Students realize that the main objective of learning English is not to acquire native speakers' competency but rather to be intelligible among international English speakers and those within their community. Students are conscious that dialects are not inferior languages and should be respected, and that Standard English is necessary only in a formal context.

3.3.3 Confidence.

Table no 10: Difference of Responses on Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Confidence When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables		Mean	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	16 - 20 years old	3.59	2.283	0.103	Not Significant
	21 - 25 years old	3.61			
	26 - 30 years old	2.93			
Father	College Graduate	3.60	0.085	0.968	Not Significant
	High School Graduate	3.59			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.58			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.51			
Mother	College Graduate	3.69	3.663	0.013	Significant
	High School Graduate	3.62			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.51			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.05			
Income	10,000 and above	3.29	2.625	0.050	Not Significant
	9,000 - 8,000	3.33			
	7,000 - 6,000	3.64			
	5,000 and below	3.61			
Gender	Male	3.59	0.126	0.900	Not Significant
	Female	3.58			
Type	Public	3.60	1.000	0.318	Not Significant
	Private	3.50			

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Statistical results shows that only educational attainment of mother shows significant difference on the level of sociolinguistic competence in terms of confidence since the obtained p-value of 0.013 is less than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the students' level of confidence on sociolinguistic competence varies as to the degree of education their mothers earned. There was the association between mother's educational attainment and changes in children's academic achievement particularly in English. In this study, mothers' educational levels were increased by additional schooling and their academic skills were examined after the completion of the additional schooling and then the results were compared with their children's academic achievement⁸. The findings suggested that mothers' education can be a good predictor for children's academic achievement in young and low-educated mothers; whereas, older and highly educated mothers' increased knowledge was not a good predictor for their children's achievement. Other do not shows significant difference and implies that the students have the same level of competence when compared on the tested profile variables.

3.3.4. Resourcefulness.

Table no 11: Difference of Responses on Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Resourcefulness When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables		Mean	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	16 - 20 years old	3.52	2.671	0.070	Not Significant
	21 - 25 years old	3.78			

	26 - 30 years old	3.30			
Father	College Graduate	3.53	0.421	0.738	Not Significant
	High School Graduate	3.56			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.46			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.48			
Mother	College Graduate	3.82	3.078	0.027	Significant
	High School Graduate	3.57			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.39			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.32			
Income	10,000 and above	3.28	1.197	0.311	Not Significant
	9,000 - 8,000	3.37			
	7,000 - 6,000	3.58			
	5,000 and below	3.55			
Gender	Male	3.58	0.941	0.347	Not Significant
	Female	3.52			
Type	Public	3.56	1.745	0.082	Not Significant
	Private	3.38			

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Based from the result, only education earned by the students' mother shows significant difference because the obtained p-value of 0.027 which was less than 0.05 level of significance. This only indicates that the students' competence varies when grouped according to mothers' educational attainment.

Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to be involved in their children's schools. For example, in 2012, more than 85 percent of students whose parents had a bachelor's degree or higher had a parent who attended a school event, compared with 48 percent for students whose parents had less than a high school education. This gap is even wider when it comes to volunteering: 19 percent of students with no parents who had graduated high school had a parent volunteer or serve on a committee, compared with 61 percent of students who had at least one parent who had completed graduate or professional school.

Other variables do not show significant difference on students' competence on sociolinguistic competence with regards to resourcefulness because all computed p-value were greater than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the students' have the same level of competence.

3.3.5 Emotional Maturity.

Table no 12: Difference of Responses on Sociolinguistics Competence in terms of Emotional Maturity When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables		Mean	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	16 - 20 years old	3.62	0.611	0.543	Not Significant
	21 - 25 years old	3.73			
	26 - 30 years old	3.78			
Father	College Graduate	3.59	0.176	0.913	Not Significant
	High School Graduate	3.63			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.66			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.56			
Mother	College Graduate	3.94	2.669	0.047	Significant
	High School Graduate	3.64			
	Secondary School Graduate	3.53			
	Elementary School Graduate	3.43			
Income	10,000 and above	3.52	0.929	0.427	Not Significant
	9,000 - 8,000	3.45			
	7,000 - 6,000	3.62			

	5,000 and below	3.65			
Gender	Male	3.58	1.060	0.290	Not Significant
	Female	3.65			
Type	Public	3.63	0.664	0.507	Not Significant
	Private	3.57			

Legend: Significant at p -value < 0.05

It can be seen from the table that only education earned by the students' mother shows significant difference because the obtained p -value of 0.047 which was less than 0.05 level of significance. This only indicates that the students' competence varies when grouped according to mothers' educational attainment. Socioeconomic status depends on a combination of variables, including occupation, education, income, wealth and place of residence. Sociologists often use socioeconomic status as a means of predicting behavior including performance academically.

Pupils with parents who did not finish primary or just finished primary, pupils with parents who fished four or senior 6 or university perform considerably better. The highest increase in test scores of students whose fathers had a university degree⁹. Compared to earlier research, mothers' education has a significant effect on students' performance. Those results possibly reflect the ability of parents to support the students' school work and likely interactions of literate parents with their children in school related or literacy nurturing activities as well as their ability to support their students with homework or help with difficult homework questions including English language.

3.4. Significant Relationships Between the Students' Performance and Teachers' Assessments on Sociolinguistic Competencies

3.5.

Table no 13: Relationship Between the Students' Performance and Teachers' Assessment on Sociolinguistic Competencies

Sociolinguistic Competence in reference to:	r - value	p - value	Interpretation
Respect	0.007	0.885	Not Significant
Friendliness	0.000	0.995	Not Significant
Confidence	0.028	0.583	Not Significant
Resourcefulness	-0.017	0.731	Not Significant
Emotional Maturity	-0.013	0.801	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p -value < 0.05

Based from the result, all computed r -values indicates negligible correlation and the resulted p -values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level, thus the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the students' performance and the teachers' assessment on sociolinguistic competence is retained. This means that there is no relationship observed and implies that the students' sociolinguistics competence is not affected by their sociolinguistic performance. In addition, the students's competencies do not depend on their performance.

3.5. Manifested Parameters by the Students' on Sociolinguistics Competencies

Table no 14: Sociolinguistic Parameters of Sociolinguistic Competencies that Manifest to Students

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	F
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	5.787	0.593		9.766
respect	0.03	0.145	0.012	0.211
friendliness	-0.012	0.123	-0.006	0.099
confidence	0.12	0.124	0.064	0.968
resourcefulness	-0.087	0.117	-0.049	0.741
emotional	-0.033	0.113	-0.018	0.293

Significant if $p < 0.05$; $R^2 = 0.003$; $F_c = 0.230$; $F_t = 2.30$

As seen from the table, $F = 0.230$ has a p -value greater than 0.05, indicating that the null hypothesis is true. Thus, the researcher infers that there is none on the B coefficient in the model is not zero. This was observed from the f -test value for each B coefficient which was not significant. It can also be observed that for

sociolinguistic competence in terms of respect, $f = 0.211$ has a p-value of 0.838 (greater than 0.05), indicating that null hypothesis is true. Thus, it can be infer that respect do not affects significantly on the students' English performance. The result also shows on other parameters.

In addition an r^2 of 0.003 indicates that the five independent variables explained about 0.3% of the variability of students' performance in English. The other 99.7% can be explained by other variables not included in the analysis.

This shows that no single sociolinguistic parameters was manifest to students but can be considered treated as all since their performance was high as to their sociolinguistic competence. This only shows that the mastery of cultural rules of use of the language and rules of discourse was practiced by the students. Even so, as the result of the sociolinguistics test is only average, creativity enhancement activities.

4. Creativity Enhancement Activities Towards Improved Sociolinguistic Competence

The creativity enhancement activities were designed to address the gaps found through the study and thus enhance the performance of the students in their sociolinguistic competency.

<i>Situation/Scenario</i>	<i>When Asked</i>	<i>What to say</i>
At the Cafeteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask about the meals available 2. Ask about the price of meals 3. Ask a stranger if you can have a seat with him. 	<p>Good morning! What's available for today? How much for the noodles and the vegetable salad?</p> <p>Hi, I see that the cafeteria is full, would you mind if I can share a table with you?</p>
At the Clinic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell the nurse what is wrong (how are you feeling) 2. Request for proper medication 3. Ask if there is a doctor available 	<p>My stomach is not on the perfect condition today. I feel bloated and nauseous at the same time.</p> <p>Do you have any medicine for indigestion?</p> <p>I would like to see a physician, is anyone available?</p>
At the Library	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask if the materials/books you need are available 2. Ask if there are CDs/films/e-books on the topics assigned to you 3. Thank the staff for the assistance 	<p>I would like to borrow a David Levithan book. It's entitled Lover's Dictionary.</p> <p>May I know if there's some material I can borrow for my reporting today? It's something about French literature.</p> <p>Your kind assistance is much appreciated. Thanks!</p>
In the Mall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask for locations of different shops 2. Request a sales lady for a certain brand 	<p>Excuse me can I know where I can find a good place to eat?</p> <p>By the way, do you have this color on a Lacoste brand?</p>
In the Airport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inquire on where is Vietnam Air counter is 2. Request for the location of the rest room 3. In a hurry to Gate # 13 	<p>Good evening! Would you mind directing me where the Vietnam Air counter is?</p> <p>I really have to go to the rest room, can you please help me?</p> <p>Sorry, but I badly need your assistance. My boarding time has passed and I need to go to Gate 13.</p>
In the gym	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greet a friend 2. Invite the friend over lunch 3. Encourage friend to continue going to the gym 	<p>Hi. How's your day going?</p> <p>Would you mind grabbing some lunch with me? You're looking fit and well, you're doing a great job on working out.</p>
At School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A new classmate is entering the class room. You want to ask him/her name. 2. You want to let the classmate know that the teacher will soon arrive. 2. The whole class is very noisy. The teacher will be in in a moment. You want the class to keep quiet so that the teacher will not get mad. 	<p>Hi. I see you're a new student. I am Rose. What's your name?</p> <p>Our professor will be arriving soon. She's a good teacher, you'll learn a lot from her.</p> <p>Excuse me, but can we turn our voices down? Our teacher's coming in a while as well.</p>

	3. Your new friend seems to be very uncomfortable. You would like to find out what seems to be the problem.	Hey, what's troubling you?
Showing interest	1. You would like to show interest on the topic you're discussing with a friend. 2. You would like to disagree on a comment that he has just recently said.	Yes, keep going. I'm still listening. I tend to disagree on you last statement.
At the market	1. Ask for a bottle of orange juice. 2. Ask how much a cluster of banana is. 3. Ask someone where you can buy fruits.	I'd like to have a bottle of orange juice please. Those bananas seem to be delicious. How much for a cluster? Excuse me, where's the fruit section?
Free time	1. Ask a friend what he does during free time. 2. Express agreement. 3. Tell about your activities during your free time.	What do you do on your free time? Well, that seems to be a very interesting hobby. I love reading and writing blogs during my free time. I feel it's my way of relieving stress.
At the restaurant	1. Ask for the menu. 2. Ask for the appetizer. 3. Order the course you would like to eat. 4. Request for the desert. 5. Comment about the food.	Waiter, can I have the menu please? I'd like to start with a mushroom soup. I'd like to have a Bolognese and a clubhouse sandwich. I'm having a macaroon with chocolate ganache. Thank you. The food is great. I'll definitely recommend it to my friends.
At class	1. You receive you test back from your professor. You see that he has added the points incorrectly and that you should actually have ten more points than he gave you. What do you say to your professor? 2. You discover your library book must be returned today and you will have to pay a fine if you don't return it immediately. How would you ask permission to your professor? 3. In order to get to the library fast, you need to borrow a friend's bicycle. Ask permission to your friend.	Professor, can I have a few minutes with you? I see that you have incorrectly recorded my points, can you please double check it for clarification? Excuse me Ma'am, I'd like to excuse myself from the class. I'll just have to return this book today. Hey, can I borrow your bicycle for a while? I badly need to return this book or else I'm paying a fine.
At a Hospital	1. You want to have your overall check up. Set your appointment by talking to the nurse at the front desk. 2. Ask approximately how much will be the cost of the check up. 3. Request for assistance.	Good morning! I'd like to set an appointment for an overall check-up please. How much will I be paying for the check-up? I would like to seek your assistance today. Thank you.

IV. Discussions

The study determined the level of Students' Sociolinguistic Performance in term of respect, friendliness, confidence, resourcefulness, emotional maturity through a teacher-made test. The students' performance on sociolinguistic was assessed as average with an over-all rating of 5.85. This indicates that the performance of the respondents' was on the normal range, not so fluent but not pitiable. The respondents' were able to obtain this level of performance since they have the ability to know how to speak to different people in different situations. Because it is not learned naturally, they were very conscientious of their speech until they are able to form a natural flow of language given the situation and people they are speaking to.

Teachers play an important role in assessing the sociolinguistics competencies of students. Teachers assessed that students were competent on sociolinguistics competence in terms of respect, confident, resourceful, emotional maturity, friendliness, especially respect obtained the highest mean value of 4.15. This indicates that the respondents' know how to respect other people particularly the culture. The respondents' were able to acquire cultural knowledge that leads them to respect people when communicating. It means that teachers positively assessed that students' possessed a good competence in terms of sociolinguistic aspect. There is no significant

relationship between the students' performance and the teachers' assessment on sociolinguistic competence because all computed r-values indicates negligible correlation and the resulted p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level. This means that there is no relationship observed and implies that the students' sociolinguistics competence is not affected by their sociolinguistic performance. In addition, the students' competencies do not depend on their performance.

Since the computed F-values which were all less than the critical value and the resulted p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level so there is no significant difference on sociolinguistic competence in terms of respect, friendliness as assessed by teachers when grouped according to profile variables.

Statistical results shows that only educational attainment of mother shows significant difference on the level of sociolinguistic competence in terms of confidence, resourcefulness, emotional maturity since the obtained p-value of 0.013, 0.027, 0,047 is less than 0.05 level of significance.

V. Conclusion

The level of students' sociolinguistics performance was on the normal range, not so fluent but not pitiable. Moreover, teachers positively assessed that students' possessed a good competence in terms of sociolinguistic aspect. There is no statistically significant relationship between the students' performance and the teachers' assessment on sociolinguistic competencies. The five independent variables (respect, friendliness, confidence, resourcefulness and emotional maturity) was not considered the best predictor of the students sociolinguistic competencies. Creativity enhancement activity is planned for implementation and evaluation to improve the students' sociolinguistic competence.

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