

Enhancing Communicative English Basing On Sociolinguistic Competence Of TUAf Students

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Abstract

This study was carried out to examine the level of sociolinguistic competence of the students at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (TUAf). Specifically, it figured out the profile of the respondents, their level of sociolinguistic competence and factors contributing to the development of the sociolinguistic competence of the respondents in an attempt to enhance their communicative English. The study utilized the descriptive - correlational design with the use of a questionnaire and a standardized sociolinguistic competence test to gather the data from sixty-eight second year EFL students of TUAf. The findings showed that there was a correlation between students' characteristics and their sociolinguistic competence. It was concluded from the findings that three facilitating factors in the development of sociolinguistic competence of the respondents include (1) the government encourages citizens to learn English; (2) speaking in English gives one an opportunity to work abroad; and (3) English teachers encourage students to use English appropriately to the situation. Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions were also drawn emphasizing on the aim of improving students' communicative English competence.

Keywords: sociolinguistic competence, communicative English, EFL students, TUAf

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I. Introduction

Although the growing need for communicative English skills is highly required to employment in the fast-developing context of Vietnam and the Government's policies are starting the will to upgrade delivery of English language within the educational system, traditional grammar-translation teaching methods have been unresolved and still prevailed. According to Van (2016), blooming of English in Vietnam is causing the country several problems such as disqualified English teachers at primary and lower secondary levels, lacking English speaking environment and communicative interactions, classroom constraints, poor and out of date teaching materials, few class contact hours, mainly focusing on the development of reading comprehension, vocabulary and structural pattern to pass the end of school and entrance examination into colleges and universities, English language teaching has not met the demand for competent English speaking. This issue is alarming since English is regarded as a means of communication all over the world.

The main goal of language acquisition is to have "meaningful interaction in the target language, natural communication, in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the message they are conveying and understanding" (Krashen, 2007). Hence, developing English language learners' communicative competence is the crucial point of language teaching and learning, and it is critical to learners' future development.

Sociolinguistic competence is defined as a person's capacity to create and comprehend suitable utterances within a given milieu. Part of the realm is the usage of speech acts, which are prescribed utterances, used in certain circumstances toward achieving actions like acknowledging, welcoming, demanding, answering, etc. It also includes a person's understanding of propriety in a diversity of societal circumstances.

Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry is a mountainous university, whose students are mainly from the mountainous and rural areas where English is not highly appreciated and considerably interested. English is considered a compulsory subject right from the first semester and students are evaluated in both communication skills and grammar knowledge. In reality, high school graduates come into university with fairly high levels of grammatical competence, but often with correspondingly low levels of sociolinguistic competence in terms of foreign language proficiency.

With the desire of the researcher to increase awareness of EFL students' strengths and weaknesses in sociolinguistic performance, this study on sociolinguistic competence of EFL students at Thai Nguyen

University of Agriculture and Forestry (TUAF) was conducted to determine the level of sociolinguistic competence of students so that sooner they will surely be proud of themselves because of getting a feel for the language and finally be able to communicate with the world without hesitation, in any situation, anywhere and at any time with the highest competence.

II. Review of Related Literature

Communicative Competence

English Language Teaching (ELT) is grounded on the impression that the objective of language attainment is Communicative Competence. The ability of the student to converse successfully is significantly predisposed by the methods utilized in the teaching-learning development. It is claimed that the demand for ground-breaking education methods which would leave room for a person's self-expression and societal interface with others has an impact on the student's capability.

To advance the skills of actual communication, some prototypes of communicative competence have been proposed (Ellis, 1994). Chomsky (1965) differentiated between competence (one's underlying knowledge of the language) and performance (the comprehension of language in specific situations). On the other hand, Hymes (1971) who laid claim to the term "communicative competence" stressed the social collaborative and conveying practice of the language. Hymes stretched Chomsky's idea of competence into communicative competence by counting both grammatical rules and rules of language use. (Hymes, 1971; Taylor, 1983).

Communicative competence is the objective of language learning. It means making the student able to use the language, to mean something and to get meanings, via the oral and written channels. The impression of communicative competence was firstly from Chomsky's peculiarity between competence and performance. By the competence, Chomsky points out the common knowledge of the perfect speaker-listener set in a totally homogenous speech community. Such fundamental knowledge empowers a user of a language to produce and comprehend an immeasurable conventional of sentences out of a finite set of rules. The transformational grammar offers an unequivocal explanation of this silent knowledge of language structure, which is typically not aware but is certainly implicit. Hymes articulated that the transformational theory "transmits to its excellence the longing to deal in practice only what is internal to language, yet to find in that internality that in theory is of the widest or deepest human significance" (Hymes, 1972, Ohno, 2002 cited by Batang, 2010).

Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and discourse. 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 a judgment be made on the appropriateness of a 'particular utterance', as mentioned by Brown (2000). Bachman's (1990) sociolinguistic competence comprises aspects, which deal with factors such as politeness, formality, metaphor, registers, and culturally related aspects of language.

Sociocultural competence, a broader view of what Canale and Swain (1980) identified as sociolinguistic competence, extends well beyond linguistic forms and does an inter-disciplinary notion have to do with the social rules of language use. It requires an understanding of the "social context" in which language is used: the roles of participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction. Participants in multicultural communication are sensitive not only to the cultural meanings attached to the language itself but to social conventions concerning language use, such things as taking turns, appropriateness of the content, nonverbal language and tone. These conventions influence how messages are interpreted by language users. In addition to cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity is essential. It also includes a willingness to engage in an active negotiation of meaning along with a willingness to suspend judgment and take into consideration the possibility of cultural differences in conventions of use. Together these features might be subsumed under the term "cultural flexibility" or "cultural awareness" (Savignon, 2002).

Sociolinguistic competence also refers to the knowledge and skills involved in using language functionally in a social context. Since language is a social phenomenon, its use requires sensitivity to social norms and customs which affect to an important degree all linguistic communication between representatives of different cultures, even if the participants are frequently unaware of them. These social norms affect, amongst other factors, rules of address, greetings and politeness, the way in which relations between generations, sexes, people of different social status, social groupings are expressed through special language markers, linguistically codified rituals, differences in register, dialect and accent, through vocal rhythms, for example.

Further, sociolinguistic competence refers to the learner's "knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and discourse" (Brown, 2000). In his definition, Brown includes learners' sensitivity to dialect or variety, choice of register, naturalness and knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech. Tarone and Swain (1995) define this competence as the ability of the members of a speech community to adapt their speech

to the context in which they find themselves. In a speech community, members learn to use different varieties of their language in different contexts

Communicative Language Teaching

Richards (2006), suggests that today the responsibility for the learning process is shared by both the teacher and the student. Thus, the teacher is not seen as a missing part of the truth but as a facilitator or moderator of communication between participants in the learning process. Furthermore, classroom activities are oriented towards cooperative rather than individualistic model of learning. This requires an investment of time and effort both by the student and the teacher.

Richard and Rogers as cited by Nunan (1998) offer the following characteristics of communicative view of language:

1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
2. The primary function of language is for interaction and communicative.
3. The structure of language reflects its functional communicative uses.
4. The primary units of language are not merely grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communication meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Hence, Richards (2006) stressed that one learns a language best when using it to do things rather than through studying how language works and practicing rules. Moreover, people learn a language by communicating in it. Thus, classroom activities should be meaningful and should involve real communication. Subsequently, for a teaching design to be genuinely productive, instructional materials have to complement the communicative approach design (Richards 2006). This design requires the use of communicative based activities which come in the form of task-completion activities information-gathering activities, opinion-sharing activities, information-transfer activities, reasoning gap activities and role-plays. Task completion activities come in the form of puzzles, games, map reading and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus was on using one's language resources to complete a task.

Communicative Language Approach is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It is also referred to as "Communicative approach to the teaching of a second and foreign language" or simply the Communicative Approach," as an extension of the national-functional syllabus, communicative language teaching also places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts and places great emphasis on learning language functions. CLT is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching, rather than as a teaching method with a clearly defined set of classroom practices.

Spitzberg and Cupachis (1989) model of Communicative Competence shapes that Communicative Competence is the educator's formative professional competence. Additionally, the teacher's Communicative Competence is the organization of acquaintance, skills, capabilities, possessions and motivational outlook which support active communication in the education procedure and other educational social interactions. (Reardon 1998 cited in Bjekic et.al. 2008:246) highlights that the growth of teacher's Communicative Competence initiates from the consciousness progression. The reflection benefits to appreciate the teacher's reasons, objectives and desires. The teacher's self-awareness sets one's communication with the language learner. Hence, confident thoughtful of the teacher expects promising consequences in a classroom. The teacher's confidence and admiration for the student effects accomplishment of their communication. Subsequently, the student can sense reassurance and endorsement even from the teacher's body language.

Brown (1994) and Richards (1990) made a distinction in oral communication into monologues (planned and unplanned) and dialogues (interpersonal and transaction). Interpersonal conversation "lubricates the social wheels," (McCarthy 1991:136) advances societal roles and dealings and is somewhat changeable. It arrays from a relaxed chat to a more correct and foreseeable meeting or interview. Transactional conversations, on the other hand, tend to be much more foreseeable as information is switched to satisfy a need such as at a doctor's appointment or buying oranges a greengrocers' or a market stall. Other types of genre, such as story narratives, have a predictable pattern and an example can be found in Hedge (2000: 265).

Nunan (1989) resolutely believes that fruitful oral communication encompasses several important features that include the increase of fluency and the aptitude to accomplish both transactional and interactional dialogues, using both fillers as well as long and short turns. This intercession of meaning necessitates actual listening skills and speaking skills. Likewise, it includes effective enunciation of sounds, as well as "mastery of stress, rhythm, intonation patterns." (Hedge. 2000:296).

Brown (1994) recognized the typical speaking complications features of spoken language that maximum students catch with difficulty. The following speaking features as typical problem items in speaking: clustering of words into chunks, breath groups or phrases; redundancy of language; reduced forms such as contractions, elisions, reduced vowels; performance variables such as hesitations, pauses, fillers, backtracking, and

corrections; colloquialism, idioms, slang and colloquial phrases; delivery speed; stress, rhythm, and intonation (as English is stress-timed intonation patterns convey important messages) and interaction with conversational negotiation.

In teaching oral communication, teachers must not confine the students' attention to the complete representation but also the small parts, seeing the pieces to build the whole. Teachers would consider the micro-skills and macro skills of speaking. The micro-skills refer to producing the smaller chunks of the language such as phonemes, morphemes, words, collocations and phrasal units. The macro skills suggest the speakers' emphasis or the superior elements: fluency, discourse, function, style cohesion, nonverbal communication and planned decisions. (Brown, 2001) enumerated 16 items for micro and macro skills of speaking, among them area:

1. Produce chunks of the language of different lengths.
2. Orally produce differences among the English phonemes and allophonic variants.
3. Produce English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structures, and intonational contours.
4. Creation of reduced forms of words and phrases.
5. Practice an adequate number of lexical units (words) to accomplish pragmatic purposes.
6. Produce fluent speech at different rates of delivery.
7. Monitor the production and use various strategic devices pauses, fillers, self-corrections, backtracking to enhance the clarity of the message.
8. Usage of grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc), system (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), word order, patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
9. Production of speech in natural constituents: inappropriate phrases, pause groups, breath groups, and sentence constituents.

III. Research Methodology

Research Design

To attain the objectives of the study, the researcher used the descriptive - correlational design wherein extensive evaluation was undertaken in order to determine the level of the sociolinguistic competence of the second year EFL students at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam. The study described the profile of the respondents on sex, the field of specialization, ethnic group, place of residence, number of years in learning English, grade in English, and language exposure and the level of the respondents' sociolinguistic competence in terms of initiating a talk and responding to talk, features of communication situation and writing an application letter.

The study aimed at finding the correlation of the level of sociolinguistic competence to the profile variables of the EFL students as well as the difference among the respondents' level of sociolinguistic competence when grouped according to their profile variables and the relationship between the respondents' level of sociolinguistic competence and the select profile variables as to average grade in English subjects, number of years in learning English and language exposure to English.

Research Instruments

To establish credibility in investigating the issue of interest and answering the research questions, a questionnaire was distributed to the respondents in soliciting their profile variables.

In terms of determining the level of sociolinguistic competence of EFL student respondents, a standardized sociolinguistic competence test (adapted from Danao, 1987) was administered to all the respondents using the Vietnamese context.

The standardized test is composed of 50 items, divided into the three following subtests, namely: (1) 20 items for Initiating a talk and responding to talk, (2) 20 items for Features of the communication situation, and (3) 10 items for Writing an application letter. Adopting the procedure and rubrics as well as that of Danao in the writing of application letter text.

Data Gathering Procedure

The letter of request was submitted to the Rector of the University. Then, the Rector endorsed and sent it to the Deans of the three faculties and the Deans set the schedule of time and place for the conduct of the study. As soon as the schedule was approved, the researcher immediately conducted the said questionnaire and test.

The adapted sociolinguistic competence test was validated by a pool of English teachers in Vietnam before it was administered to the respondents. The researcher explained the directions to the respondents and they were given ample time to answer the sociolinguistic competence test.

The respondents were divided into three groups to go to three different classrooms to answer the test individually and independently. Each teacher was available to observe the testing process and to explain all the respondents' questions related to the test.

To determine the objectivity of the test in subtests 3 of the standardized sociolinguistic competence test, three English teachers were commissioned to do the inter-rater validity assessment using Carol's Academic Writing Scale.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the test, the researcher and some teachers of English administered and treated the results using appropriate statistical tools.

Data Analysis

In determining the profiles of the respondents, frequency and percentage distribution were used in the study. On the other hand, mean and standard deviation were also utilized to determine the level of sociolinguistic competence of second-year students. Moreover, Chi-square was also used to find out the significant relationship between the level of sociolinguistic competence of the respondents and their profile. ANOVA and T-test were used to determine the significant difference among the respondents' level of sociolinguistic competence when grouped according to the profile variables.

IV. Findings

From the data obtained in the study, the following findings were revealed:

Distribution of the Students' Profile

The profile of the respondents indicates that there is an equal number of male and female respondents in the study, most of them come from Tay and Kinh groups, the majority of them are from the rural areas and most of them are enrolled in the Faculty of Environment. The following tables present the frequency distribution of the student respondents as to equivalent categories.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Students' Profile in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency (n=68)	Percentage (%)
Male	34	50.0
Female	34	50.0

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of the Students' Profile in terms of Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Frequency (n=68)	Percentage (%)
Kinh group	21	30.9
Tay group	22	32.4
Nung group	11	16.2
Thai group	2	2.9
Others (Ethnic minorities)	12	17.6

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of the Students' Profile as to Place of Residence

Place of residence	Frequency (n=68)	Percentage (%)
In the urban	9	13.2
In the rural	59	86.8

Moreover, majority of them are learners of the English language for 7-8 years; most of them obtained a moderate average grade in English (Grade C); the majority are exposed to the English language at home for 1 to 2 hours and; they are sometimes exposed to mass media to learn English.

Respondents' sociolinguistic competence in terms of initiating and responding to a talk

As can be seen in Table 4, the mean score was 7.50 with a standard deviation of 1.90. The mean score of 7.50 in the scale is considered incompetent. This finding indicates that the respondents found difficulty in initiating and responding to a talk in English. They could hardly start conversing in English with foreigners and their teachers. They also found difficulty in handling situations where they had to respond in English such as in applying for a job in an agency or office, responding to visitors in school, leaving on a trip and other similar circumstances.

Table 4. Performance of the students in initiating and responding to a talk.

Level of Performance (20 items)	Frequency (n=68)	Percent
Very Competent (17 – 20)	-	-
Competent (13 – 16)	-	-
Moderately Competent (9 – 12)	22.0	32.4
Incompetent (5 – 8)	42.0	61.8
Very Incompetent (1 – 4)	4.0	5.9
Mean = 7.50 SD = 1.90		

Respondents’ sociolinguistic competence in terms of understanding the features of a communicative situation

In 20 item features of the communication situation subtest, the students answered some questions related to the situation given. The mean score for this dimension was 9.09 with a standard deviation of 3.14. The data reveals that the respondents are moderately competent in responding to questions such as asking where a person is, asking for directions, asking for favors and asking for reasons. They are also moderately competent in making an appointment, encashing checks and answering directions.

A closer perusal of the data reveals that 33 or 48.5 percent obtained 9-12 scores (moderately competent) and 18 or 25.5 percent registered a score of 5-8 (incompetent). The moderate competence of the respondents signifies that they can fairly respond to communicative situations such as asking where a person is, asking for directions, and asking for favors. On the other hand, those who are incompetent in communicative situations are hard up in asking for reasons, making an appointment, encashing checks and answering directions.

Table 5. Performance of the students in understanding the features of a communicative situation.

Level of Performance (20 items)	Frequency (n=68)	Percent
Very Competent (17 – 20)	1.0	1.5
Competent (13 – 16)	9.0	13.2
Moderately Competent (9 – 12)	33	48.5
Incompetent (5 – 8)	18.0	26.5
Very Incompetent (1 – 4)	7.0	10.3
Mean = 9.09 SD = 3.14		

Respondents’ sociolinguistic competence in terms of writing an application letter

Using Brendan Carroll’s Academic writing as a rubric, the performance of the students in writing an application letter is shown in table 6. In 10 item writing application letter subtest, the students wrote an application letter in which they stated their qualifications aside from any personal information and all the necessary parts to a person whom they thought should act favorably to their letter. As gleaned from table 6, it can be confirmed that a huge number of the respondents, 56 or 82.4 percent, got a band 0-1 which has an adjectival rating of non-writer.

Table 6. Performance of the students in writing an application letter

Level of Performance (10 items)	Band	Frequency (n=68)	Percent
Non-writer	0-1	56	82.4
Intermittent Writer	2	6	8.8
Extremely Limited Writer	3	-	-
Marginal Writer	4	-	-
Modest Writer	5	1	1.5
Competent Writer	6	2	2.9
Good Writer	7	2	2.9
Very good Writer	8	1	1.5
Expert Writer	9-10	-	-

Significant Difference in the respondents’ level of sociolinguistic competence

Table 7 below presents the sociolinguistic performance of the students when grouped according to selected variables. Among all the variables, it is only sex which spells out difference in the sociolinguistic performance of the respondents. This is reflected in the computed t-value of 3.16 with a probability value of 0.002. Hence, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected in this variable.

On the other hand, the lack of difference in the sociolinguistic competence of the respondents based on place of residence, ethnicity and specialization means that students coming from the rural or the urban, being

Kinh, Tay, Nung, Thai or other ethnic groups, majoring in Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine, Forestry, or Environment had a commonality in sociolinguistic performance. Such is reflected in the computed t-value 0.47 and a probability value of .696 for the place of residence. Meanwhile, ethnicity has a computed t-value of 0.781 with a probability value of 0.542 while specialization has a computed t-value of 0.233 and 0.793 probability value.

Table 7. Comparison of the sociolinguistic performance of the student when grouped by select variables

Variables	Group Mean	Statistic	df	Computed Value	Prob.	Statistical Inference
Sex						
<i>Male</i>	16.68					
<i>Female</i>	19.65	t	66	3.16	0.002	Significant at 0.01
Place of Residence						
<i>Urban</i>	18.22					
<i>Rural</i>	18.15	t	66	0.47	0.969	Not significant
Ethnicity						
<i>Kinh</i>	18.43					
<i>Tay</i>	18.95					
<i>Nung</i>	18.18					
<i>Thai</i>	16.50					
<i>Others</i>	16.50	F	4/63	0.781	0.542	Not significant
Specialization						
<i>Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine</i>	18.67					
<i>Forestry</i>	17.87					
<i>Environment</i>	18.06	F	2/65	0.233	0.793	Not significant

Facilitating Factors in the Development of Sociolinguistic Competence of the Respondents

Table 8 presents the facilitating factors in the development of sociolinguistic competence of the respondents. The most essential facilitating factor is that "the government encourages citizens to learn English" which was revealed by 48 or 70.6 percent of respondents. This means that they perceived the encouragement of the government to use English as a way of developing their sociolinguistic competence.

The second facilitating factor for the development of sociolinguistic competence of the respondents is "speaking in English gives one an opportunity to work abroad" which was revealed by 47 or 69.1 percent respondents. This facilitating factor implies that the respondents believed that anyone who has a good command of the English language had higher opportunities to land in a job overseas.

The third facilitating factor as revealed by 41 or 60.3 percent of respondents is "English teachers encourage students to use English appropriately to the situation". Such finding illustrates that they found their teachers to be very essential in developing their sociolinguistic competence

The fourth facilitating factor in the development of the sociolinguistic competence of the respondents is "It is important to learn English to communicate with friends abroad" which was revealed by 35 or 51.5 percent of respondents. This finding implies that the respondents had also obtained friends abroad who either used English as a first or second language.

The least factor that facilitates the development of the sociolinguistic competence of the respondents is "Engineers and doctors who speak English are more successful" which was revealed by 22 or 32.4 percent of respondents. Probably, this may be the least facilitating factor because engineers and doctors in Vietnam are still earning substantially even if they are not very competent sociolinguistically. In Vietnam, these professionals still communicate with their patients and clients in the Kinh language. Thus, sociolinguistic competence is not an essential requirement for them to become successful in practicing their professions in the country.

Table 8. Facilitating Factors that develop the sociolinguistic competence of the respondents

Reasons	Frequency (n=68)	Percent
Friends are trying hard also to learn in English	33.0	48.5
It is important to learn English to communicate with friends abroad	35.0	51.5
English teachers encourage students to use English appropriately to the situation	41.0	60.3
Engineers and doctors who speak English are more successful.	22.0	32.4
Speaking in English gives one an opportunity to work abroad	47.0	69.1
Speaking in English allows one to have clients among foreigners.	32.0	47.1
Parents encourage their children to learn to speak in English	30.0	44.1
The government encourages citizens to learn English.	48.0	70.6

Learning performance improves with a knowledge of English.	31.0	45.6
Knowledge in science increases when one reads /speaks in English	25.0	36.8

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study determined the level of sociolinguistic competence of the second-year students at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (TUAF) and correlated it with their profile variables. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

Developing effective sociolinguistic competence among Vietnamese students poses a great challenge for English teachers and schools in the country. The incompetent sociolinguistic performance of the students demands more effort and time among students, teachers and institutions if they desire to achieve global competitiveness as well as meet the competencies required in ASEAN integration. The crux to the matter is that today, English is still considered as a foreign language and not embraced as a second language in the country. One good proof of this is that majority of the students have less exposure to learning the English language and less exposure to learning English using the mass media.

In enhancing the sociolinguistic competence of the students, the primordial concern must be given to the males than females as sociolinguistic competence differed by sex. Males tend to perform lower sociolinguistic tasks than females. Moreover, it has been proven by the study that the average grade in English plays a critical role in developing the sociolinguistic competence of the students. This positive correlation between an average grade in English and sociolinguistic competence ushers the idea that improved academic performance in English is a good vehicle towards the development of sociolinguistic competence. In short, the grade in English is already a reflection of their sociolinguistic performance. Thus, it merits that the teachers need to improve their English language instruction as this is a sound driver in making the students perform sociolinguistic tasks.

In light of the foregoing findings, the following recommendations are given:

1. Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry must adopt the proposed workbook as this can enhance the sociolinguistic competence and English proficiency of the students in the university;
2. Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry should design and implement more English language communication programs that create an effective and useful language learning environment to enhance students' sociolinguistic competence. The programs could be in the form of teaching and learning activities designed to address the knowledge of cultures, the confidence in communication, etc... and to build different communicative situations for students to experience and practice. These programs must be focused on the male students of the university who were found to perform lower sociolinguistic competence than female students.
3. A policy like "This is an English Speaking Campus" should be introduced to enhance language competence in general and sociolinguistic competence in particular. Such a policy will motivate and force the students to speak the English language more often as they stay inside the premises of the university;
4. Since the study found out that average English grade is much related to sociolinguistic competence, there is a need to strengthen English language instruction in English subjects 1,2, and 3.
5. The government should make the English language as a second language as English is the lingua franca of globalization and ASEAN integration. Only by doing this that students' sociolinguistic competence and English proficiency are enhanced.
6. Students should be taught of pragmatic aspects on the target culture better in order not only to speak grammatically but also to initiate and respond to a conversation appropriately and effectively in every situation.
7. Students have to pay much more attention to extent of the English language exposure to the mass media and actively take part in actual communications in the target language in the setting.
8. A similar study with a wider scope is recommended in the researcher's university and other universities in Vietnam.

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