



# Education Quarterly Reviews

---

**Tejada, Kristoffer Conrad M. (2021). Context Analysis of Non-intellective Correlates affecting Future Educators' Sociolinguistic Competence. In: *Education Quarterly Reviews*, Vol.4, No.4, 111-123.**

ISSN 2621-5799

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1993.04.04.376

The online version of this article can be found at:  
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

---

Published by:  
The Asian Institute of Research

The *Education Quarterly Reviews* is an Open Access publication. It may be read, copied, and distributed free of charge according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

The Asian Institute of Research *Education Quarterly Reviews* is a peer-reviewed International Journal. The journal covers scholarly articles in the fields of education, linguistics, literature, educational theory, research, and methodologies, curriculum, elementary and secondary education, higher education, foreign language education, teaching and learning, teacher education, education of special groups, and other fields of study related to education. As the journal is Open Access, it ensures high visibility and the increase of citations for all research articles published. The *Education Quarterly Reviews* aims to facilitate scholarly work on recent theoretical and practical aspects of education.



ASIAN INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH  
Connecting Scholars Worldwide

# Context Analysis of Non-intellective Correlates affecting Future Educators' Sociolinguistic Competence

Kristoffer Conrad M. Tejada<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Batangas State University, Batangas City, Philippines. Email: kristofferconrad.tejada@g.batstate-u.edu.ph

## Abstract

The study investigated the non-intellective correlates affecting the sociolinguistic competence of teacher education students, with a focus on the analysis of their contexts relative to social experiences, language attitude, and use of linguistic forms in different situations. It also determined the common difficulties they experience in the use of English in both oral and written forms. Descriptive mixed methods were utilized, with a validated questionnaire serving as primary instrument to gather relevant data from 331 teacher education students from different fields of specialization. Focus group discussions were conducted to activate the students' awareness of non-intellective correlates and extract emerging issues in language use. The analysis of the quantitative data together with the coded and categorized transcriptions revealed that while the students generally have a positive attitude towards the use of the English language, they rarely use varied linguistic forms adaptive to different social contexts, implying the need to work on their adaptive capacities in using English for various purposes. Most of the issues they encounter are psychological and socio-physical in nature, while limited vocabulary, over-consciousness in grammar use, and lack of confidence affect their skills most. It was recommended that contextualized activities be developed for integration in the communication courses to highlight the authentic use of language in different social contexts.

**Keywords:** Non-Intellective Correlates, Sociolinguistic Competence, Context Analysis, Language Attitude

## 1. Introduction

Sociolinguistic competence, or the knowledge of social and cultural factors that influence or are expressed via linguistic choices, is one of the four dimensions of communicative competence, which is based on the complex interaction of grammatical, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and probabilistic systems of thought (Wagner, 2005; Canale, 1983). This means that social interaction is inevitably incorporated into linguistic structures. Hence, as people acquire a language, starting from the sounds and word formations, they also connect these sounds and words to particular forms of usage in their immediate social environment.

In the process of linguistic development, people acquire foundation knowledge on when to speak, what words to use, what to talk about with whom, where, when, and in what manner. In short, they begin to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in communicative situations, and evaluate their overall communicative performance.

However, occasional shifts in the type of communication one uses are expected, which require both speaker and listener to adjust the strategies they use in the middle of a communicative exchange. In addition, other participants may enter an ongoing exchange, and communicators ideally resort to their adapted language to be able to ensure the success of the communication process.

Adapted language is used when people vary their choice of words and expressions depending on the contexts of the communicative participants (Rimondini, 2010). This means that speakers are expected to consider age, status, gender, ethnic origin, and other factors in communicating, all of which may be considered as non-intellective correlates that influence one's sociolinguistic competence. Non-intellective correlates such as attitudes and social experiences necessarily influence a person's aptitude in language use in various social situations (Kaufhold & Johnson, 2005).

This is one important development that has taken place within theoretical linguistics, which has given emphasis on understanding the functions of language in a variety of social contexts (Duff, 2014). It includes analyzing the kinds of adaptations speakers know how to make when speaking formally versus informally, when talking about academic topics versus everyday subjects, and when interpreting others' speech and writing, among other facets of sociolinguistics.

Sociolinguistic competence is hence integral with people's language attitudes, their values and motivations concerning language, including its features and variety of uses. It also covers their knowledge on sociocultural rules of use, which involve the combination and interaction of social and cultural elements. Learning how to be sociolinguistically competent concerns a person's ability to handle different settings, topics, and communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts.

This means that individuals who are sociolinguistically competent are those who have an awareness of the social use of language such as formality, politeness, and directness (Garrets, 2010). They are also knowledgeable and sensitive to the use of nonverbal behaviors and cultural references, which help them in connecting ideas. For instance, highly educated professionals should not speak to uneducated maintenance personnel using jargon or technical language, because this opens a lot of possible instances for communication breakdown. They must adjust their speech and adapt their language to the context of the supposed recipient of the information being conveyed.

This relates to the concept of Bachman (2005) that emphasizes both language competence and knowledge of appropriate language use, which points to the balance in the correct and proper use of language. While it does not diminish the importance of learning grammar and other conventions, it highlights sociocultural rules surrounding language. The appropriateness depends on the setting of the communication, the topic, and the relationships among the people engaged in the communicative situation.

Hence, the correlates influencing the relationships between language and society must be explored, as sociolinguistic competence is necessary to allow people to act appropriately and successfully in a variety of speaking situations (Nordquist, 2010). One important aspect of sociolinguistic competence in language attitude, which undoubtedly permeates people's daily lives. Some are not publicly articulated and hence are not always conscious of the words they use or of the way they communicate with others. There are times when people use language that seems inappropriate in a particular social context, primarily because of their detachment from the established and accepted social rules of language use.

This is one primary reason why this study was conducted, especially in light of the omnipresence of social media, which serves as the predominant platform used by the youth in communicating to the world. As a faculty handling teacher education students, the researcher has noticed the seeming unfamiliarity – sometimes even ignorance – of some students to social variations in communication. While most of them remain active on social media, very few engage in real conversations using the second language.

Hence, determining the students' contexts relative to their social experiences, language attitude, and use of linguistic forms may provide insights on how to improve their sociolinguistic knowledge and apply this properly in the real world. As future educators, the teacher education students are expected to communicate in English almost on a daily basis, as this is their main tool in ensuring the effective delivery of instruction. It is therefore imperative that their contexts relative to non-intellective correlates affecting sociolinguistic competence be assessed in order to purposively address their perceived weaknesses and eventually enhance their sociolinguistic skills.

In relation to the teaching profession, context analysis involves the process of identifying the social and institutional factors that may have an impact on decisions, such as materials development, syllabus preparation or curriculum development (Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 2001). It includes identifying constraints that will have an impact on any course and making decisions about how to account for factors that are particularly challenging.

This study considered the students' social environment, social context, and sociocultural contexts, which refer to the immediate physical and social setting in which they live and where language use is expected to be enhanced. These include the environment where the individual lives in, and the people and institution with whom they interact (Barnett and Casper, 2001).

This study has direct academic implications for Teacher Education faculty and students. For the teachers, this will serve as input in managing and understanding the students' language attitude and unique ways of learning. This can serve as a guide in the design of appropriate methods, strategies, and instructional materials in the teaching of communication courses.

For students, especially those who will use English as primary medium of instruction when they enter the world of work, this study will increase their awareness of sociolinguistics and its implications to their use of language in various social contexts, which will hopefully improve their ability to communicate in a manner that is culturally and socially sensitive. In addition, the study opens a lot of avenues for further research in the field of sociolinguistics and the teaching of English in teacher education institutions.

## **2. Objectives**

The study investigated the non-intellective correlates affecting the sociolinguistic competence of teacher education students from Batangas State University, a Center of Development in Teacher Education recognized by the Philippines' Commission on Higher Education.

The focus was on the analysis of the students' contexts relative to social experiences, language attitude, and the use of linguistic forms in different situations. It also identified the common difficulties they experience in the use of English in both oral and written forms. Further, the study determined if there were significant differences in the responses when grouped according to the respondents' profile variables.

## **3. Methodology**

This study utilized descriptive mixed methods, which entailed the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data for in-depth analysis. A total of 331 teacher education students with different fields of specialization during the academic year 2019-2020 served as the study's respondents.

Direct data survey was conducted to collect quantitative data through a validated, two-part questionnaire. The first part consists of the student-respondents' profile, while the second part consists of descriptive statements related to their contexts anchored on non-intellective factors affecting sociolinguistic competence. Ten items are allotted for each of the identified variables: social experiences, language attitude, and use of linguistic forms in different contexts.

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by field of specialization. To determine the sample size, Raosoft statistical software was used with one-way Anova as tool. It was based on a priori power analysis with the effect size of 0.21 and 0.95 confidence levels. Simple random sampling technique was used to identify the individual members of every sample.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Field of Specialization

Field of Specialization	Population Frame	Percentage
English	35	10.6
Filipino	18	5.4
Science	25	7.6
Mathematics	18	5.4
Technology & Livelihood Education	37	11.2
Music, Arts, PE, and Health	37	11.2
Social Science	15	4.5
General Education	146	44.1
Total	331	100

A four-point scale was used for the scoring of responses, specifically on the frequency of utilization of the English language in various situations and for various purposes:

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.26 – 4.00	Always
3	2.51 – 3.25	Most of the Time
2	1.76 – 2.50	Sometimes
1	1.00 – 1.75	Never

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted to activate the students' awareness of non-intellective correlates and extract the problems they encounter in their use of the English language. Two groups of eight participants each, representing all fields of specialization offered in the university, were gathered on two separate occasions. Their responses were transcribed and categorized to extract emerging themes as regards their difficulties in language use.

For statistical analysis, weighted mean and t-test were utilized, the latter to test the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the responses when grouped according to the respondents' profile variables. For ethical considerations, the researcher acquired informed consent not only from the parents of the students but also from their respective class advisers prior to the questionnaire distribution and FGD.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

After statistical treatment and data extraction from the filled out questionnaires and transcriptions, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the gathered information.

As regards the respondents' profile, 57.4 percent of the respondents were between 16-18 years old, while 36.9 percent were between 19-21 years old. The remaining 5.7 percent were 22 years or older. These figures are consistent with the results in terms of year level, since 61.6 percent of the respondents were either first year or second year college students (some were irregular students), while only 23.9 percent and 14.5 percent were in their third and fourth year in college, respectively. Overall, 80.7 percent of the respondents are female, and only 19.3 are male. These data will be relevant in a later discussion, when the responses are grouped according to the respondents' profile variables.

The primary focus of the study is the analysis of the students' contexts relative to non-intellective correlates in terms of their social experience, language attitude, and use of linguistic forms in different contexts.

In this study, social experiences refer to the actual experiences of the students in using the English language, which may provide important insights on how such experiences help shape their language attitude. The results on this area are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Context in English Language Use relative to their Social Experience

<b>Descriptive Statements</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Use of English at/in... a. home	2.16	Sometimes
b. school	2.74	Most of the
c. restaurants	1.98	Sometimes
d. malls	1.96	Sometimes
e. public vehicles	1.79	Sometimes
f. other public places	1.95	Sometimes
Use of English when... a. talking with relatives	1.98	Sometimes
b. talking with classmates	2.45	Sometimes
c. talking with school officials	2.78	Most of the Time
d. talking with friends (other than classmates)	2.17	Sometimes
Attending seminars where English is used as medium	2.68	Most of the Time
Watching foreign movies and/or TV programs	2.71	Most of the Time
Easily adapting one's language to audience	2.50	Sometimes
Following the English-speaking policy of the department	2.89	Most of the Time
Hanging out with classmates who speak good English	2.28	Sometimes
Having ease in communicating in English to a foreigner	2.28	Sometimes
Communicating easily with people of a different dialect	2.21	Sometimes
Preferring reading instead of conversing in English	2.33	Sometimes
Composite Mean	2.32	Sometimes

The results clearly show that students use English mostly in school, with a weighted mean of 2.74. They only use English sometimes at home, in restaurants, malls, public vehicles and other public places. This coincides with the finding that they also use English mostly when they speak with professors and school officials, with a weighted mean of 2.78, which suggests that they use English most of the time only when they feel like the situation calls for it. These social situations take place mostly in schools and in the presence of school authorities.

Therefore, in the presence of friends and relatives and at the confines of their own home, they rarely use English, primarily because no one uses English there as well, as revealed in the FGD. This is consistent with all their responses in speaking in English in public spaces, with public vehicles receiving the lowest weighted mean of 1.79. This highlights the social nature of language; since very few, if anyone at all, speak in English in these social spaces, they would rather not use it in communicating.

The students who took part in the focus group discussion (FGD) supported these results. They claimed that they speak in English only in school since they are required to do so, especially when speaking with school authorities. At home and in public places, they use their native language almost all the time, suggesting that their only opportunity to use the English language on a consistent basis is within the university, specifically when communicating with authorities.

The results echo the findings of Blanco, et al. (2005) who studied the factors that affect the students' performance in relation to language learning, with a specific focus on oral communication. The findings revealed that while students have a moderately positive attitude towards learning English as a second language, the application of linguistic knowledge is significantly affected by their teachers, parents, peers, and the time they spend in using the language outside the classroom. This suggests that because of the very limited exposure to and use of the English language outside the classroom, language learners find it relatively difficult to associate language rules to real-life, social situations.

This implies the need for English language and communication teachers to conceptualize and develop activities and materials that would bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world. This can be done by designing authentic tasks that address both the learning outcome for language use and the students' contexts on actual use of the language outside the classroom.

Despite this, it is a source of relief that the students still follow the English-speaking policy of the department most of the time, with a weighted mean of 2.89, the highest among the descriptive statements. This means that they try to use the second language in designated English-speaking zones in the college premises and during college-wide events. Watching foreign movies or TV programs most of the time, with a weighted mean of 2.71, presumably help them, at least in exposing them to the English language.

Further, the results revealed that students have a relatively difficult time adjusting or adapting their language use depending on whom they talk to, and have difficulty in communicating to people with a language other than their own. This entails proper, strategic interventions so that this aspect of their journey to mastering English as a second language is applied in their different social experiences.

The composite mean of 2.32 suggests that the students sometimes use English in the different social experiences they have. This may be insufficient if they are to really acquire the language and be able to use it well on a daily basis. The results show that they need more experience with the use of the language so they can apply their linguistic knowledge in various social situations. This is especially important when they become professional teachers, especially for those who use English in the delivery of instruction.

On the other hand, language attitude refers to the manner by which the students perceive the English language and English language use. It covers the way they react in different situations that require the use of the English language. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Students' Context in English Language Use relative to their Language Attitude

<b>Descriptive Statements</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Using standard, formal English when speaking to professors and school officials	2.63	Most of the Time
Using English when the other person also speaks in English	2.73	Most of the Time

Having confidence in speaking with professors and school officials	2.36	Sometimes
Not feeling pressure to commit grammatical mistakes when conversing with friends	2.60	Most of the Time
Enjoying the use of English when talking to professors and/or school officials	2.48	Sometimes
Enjoying conversing with other friends who use English well	2.55	Most of the Time
Having confidence when speaking in English casually	2.38	Sometimes
Preferring the use of English in a formal context even when one can be understood better if Filipino is used	2.35	Sometimes
Preferring to speak in Filipino in off-school contexts because it takes a lot of effort and time to express myself in English	2.60	Most of the Time
Speaking in English or when required by professors or any school authority.	2.87	Most of the Time
Composite Mean	2.56	Most of the Time

The results show that most of the time, students speak in English if they are required by school authorities, with a weighted mean of 2.87. This is parallel with the initial results that reveal how students would only use English as a matter of adherence to school policies. Most of the time, they also speak English only when the other person speaks in English as well, suggesting the reciprocal nature of language use.

Consistent with their other responses, the students revealed that even when they feel like committing grammatical mistakes when using English in communicating can be taken lightly, they feel this only when they speak in front of friends, with a weighted mean of 2.60. On the other hand, they would also rather speak in Filipino because most of the time, it takes a lot of effort and time for them to express themselves in English, with a weighted mean of 2.60. It was clarified, however, that this happens mostly in out-of-school contexts, suggesting that they still use English in formal situations in school. There are also times when they do not want to express themselves in English, especially if they feel like using Filipino is more convenient and effective in sending their message across.

The students' level of confidence when speaking in English or speaking with someone who is fluent in the language is also a matter worth looking into. While this is highly a psychological rather than an intellectual factor, it is also worth noting that some students simply have trouble in language use because of lack of self-confidence, as revealed in the FGD which will be discussed in the later part of this research. Two descriptive statements received the same weighted mean of 2.36: they sometimes feel confident when speaking with their professors and school authorities, and they feel confident whenever they speak with someone in English.

Both statements received the second lowest weighted mean, which implies that students have difficulty expressing themselves in English in the instances when they are required to do so. It is worth noting that the previous table revealed how students would use English mostly when speaking with professors and school authorities, and the current table revealed that they lack confidence when speaking with professors. This means that the students need to gain more confidence in speaking, especially when communicating with authorities or other professionals with good command of the language.

In light of the apparent intricacies of the social aspect of language use, language learners inevitably experience challenges and difficulties. Some of them address these issues directly, while some seemingly ignore these despite their effects to their ability to use language properly. According to Walt and Schilling (2015), some language learners simply lack the motivation or have the don't-care-attitude. They lack interest, focus and engagement, which eventually lead to poor enthusiasm and passion to improve. While this is not necessarily the case for majority of the teacher education students in this study, it is still necessary for language teachers to address these first and pique their interest before they can address the learners' linguistic skills.



Confidence is an attribute that is not taught but is rather built up internally, so it is imperative for language instructors to strategize and design activities that would enhance the students' confidence in using the English language. The first step would always be to provide an atmosphere that is not punitive but is rather formative in nature, so that the students will not fear using the language. This is true especially since the study also revealed that most of the time, they enjoy speaking with friends who are good in English, which suggests that they are willing to learn and apply their knowledge of the language. The composite mean also shows that most of the time, students have a positive attitude towards the use of the English language.

One factor that makes sociolinguistic competence so hard to acquire is the large amount of variance in cultural rules of speaking; in other words, what is appropriate to say in one culture may be completely inappropriate in another culture, even though the situation in which it is said is the same. The learner is often unaware of these differences, and uses the rules of speaking of his or her native culture when communicating in the second or foreign language.

Therefore, the third variable explored in this study is the use of linguistic forms in different contexts. This is the heart of sociolinguistic competence, as it covers how and how often students use variations in language amidst varying social contexts. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Students' Context in English Language Use relative to their Use of Linguistic Forms in Different Contexts

<b>Descriptive Statements</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Using colloquial English language in casual, everyday conversations	2.55	Most of the Time
Using intimate language when talking with a significant other, or with any close acquaintance	2.27	Sometimes
Using different language/ words when speaking with friends compared to when speaking with professors.	2.39	Sometimes
Speaking differently when speaking with parents than speaking with a stranger	2.50	Most of the Time
Using English words in updating one's Facebook or Twitter account, or any social media account	2.56	Most of the Time
Writing differently when emailing/ texting a friend than when emailing/ texting a professor	2.57	Most of the Time
Being conscious of one's grammar when writing any article/written output for school	2.76	Most of the Time
Using literary words in writing literary pieces	2.50	Sometimes
Using slang (e.g. jeje) words in texting or chatting with classmates online	1.82	Sometimes
Using formal language when writing and presenting one's report	2.83	Most of the Time
Composite Mean	2.48	Sometimes

It can be gleaned from the table that the two statements with the highest weighted means are school-related in nature, which implies that students use English mostly in the academic contexts. These are using formal language when writing and presenting reports (2.83) and being conscious of grammar when preparing written academic outputs (2.76).

The results are still consistent with the previous data that revealed how students use English mostly in school and for academic purposes. This highlights how they rarely use the language outside of the school, and how they seemingly remain indifferent in using it in their daily life.

It is quite contradictory, however, that the results reveal how the students claim to use colloquial English language most of the time in daily conversations, with a weighted mean of 2.55. This was clarified during the

FGD, wherein the students consider ‘daily conversations’ as those they engage in inside the classroom on a daily basis. This confirms earlier findings of massive English language use in the school setting, but very little use outside of it.

The results also reveal how students do not vary their language and word use in different situations all the time. With a weighted mean of 2.39, they sometimes use different words when speaking with friends compared to when they speak with persons of authority, such as their professors. While it is expected that they should communicate to authorities with much more formality and respect compared to speaking with friends, results reveal that they do not do it all the time. This can mean two things: either they do not know how to adjust their language based on context, or they simply treat their professors the same way they treat their friends, with the latter being ‘acceptable’ in modern society. Despite this, the students should still learn how to adjust their language not only based on context but on the people with whom they are communicating.

As Mizne (1997) claimed, one important contributing factor for incompetence in the second language is that the speaker does not know which utterances are appropriate in the social situation in which he or she is speaking. This ability to adjust one's speech to fit the situation is important for without this ability, even the most perfectly grammatical utterances can convey a meaning entirely different from that which the speaker intended.

Another relatively surprising finding is that students do not use slang in texting or chatting with friends all the time. They do this sometimes, with a weighted mean of 1.82. The conventional response would be that they use slang most of the time, if not all the time, when they are communicating with friends in a non-restrictive environment such as the social media. The positive result is that while they use slang in informal communicative situations, they still use formal language in formal communication as revealed in the previous data.

It is also worth noting that the students adapt their language to the situation in written discourse more than they do in oral discourse. This suggests that the activities to be designed to address the students’ contexts relative to their sociolinguistic competence may focus more on oral communicative tasks rather than on written tasks. If ever written activities are to be prepared, this may focus on the use of literary terms when drafting literary pieces, since this is the only written task that seemed problematic.

The composite mean of 2.48 means that students sometimes use varied linguistic forms adaptive to different social contexts, suggesting they still need to work on their adaptive capacities in using the English language for various purposes, in different instances, and with different people.

The study also determined if there were significant differences in the responses as regards social experiences, language attitude, and use of linguistic forms in different contexts when these are grouped according to the respondents’ profile variable. The data are presented in Tables 5 – 7.

Table 5: Difference on Respondents’ Social Experiences when grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile	t-value	p-value	Decision	VI
Age	-2.681	0.036	Reject Ho	S
Sex	0.456	0.643	Fail to reject Ho	NS
Field of Specialization	-1.380	0.187	Fail to reject Ho	NS
Year Level	1.708	0.092	Fail to reject Ho	NS

*S – Significant Difference; NS – No Significant Difference*

Table 6: Difference on Respondents' Language Attitude when grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile	t-value	p-value	Decision	VI
Age	-1.120	0.310	Fail to reject Ho	NS
Sex	0.167	0.868	Fail to reject Ho	NS
Field of Specialization	-1.588	0.132	Fail to reject Ho	NS
Year Level	2.788	0.007	Reject Ho	S

*S – Significant Difference; NS – No Significant Difference*

Table 7: Difference on Respondents' Use of Linguistic Forms in Difference Contexts when grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile	t-value	p-value	Decision	VI
Age	-0.739	0.492	Fail to reject Ho	NS
Sex	0.324	0.747	Fail to reject Ho	NS
Field of Specialization	-0.701	0.494	Fail to reject Ho	NS
Year Level	1.708	0.092	Fail to reject Ho	NS

*NS – No Significant Difference*

The data show that the respondents' age is the only variable where a significant difference in the responses as regards social experiences were found, while a significant difference in the responses as regards language attitude was found only in the respondents' year level, which is also indicative of their age.

This implies that the students' age is a factor in determining their social experiences and attitude relative to language use. This is consistent with research findings that with age comes social roles and a variety of activities and experiences that go with such roles, which contribute to the development of certain expertise (Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2010; Hess, Osowski & Leclerc, 2005). Such expertise may include the use of language, suggesting that as students develop and move to higher year levels, they are exposed to more social experiences requiring the use of English, which eventually enhance their attitude towards the language. The null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the responses when grouped according to profile variables is therefore accepted, except for the two variables discussed herein.

The study took a qualitative approach using thematic analysis in determining the common problems and difficulties encountered by the students in the use of language. Through two sets of FGD, with each group comprised of students representing all fields of specialization, the researcher was able to extract themes as emerging issues in English language use.

The ten most common problems revealed by students during the FGD are ranked and are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Common Problems and Difficulties of Students in English Language Use

Items	Rank
Limited vocabulary and vocabulary skills	1
Over consciousness in use of grammar	2
Lack of confidence	3
Easily intimidated by fluent English speakers	4
Too much exposure to gadgets, affecting one's language skills	5
Lack of motivation, both internal and external	6
Limited knowledge in proper pronunciation	7
Lack of exposure to English-speaking environments	8
Low comprehension level	9
Lack of proper training and practice	10

Topping the list is the limited vocabulary and vocabulary skills, which means that students do not vary the language they use despite variations in communicative contexts because they struggle for words due to poor vocabulary. This is followed by over consciousness in the use of grammar, as they fear committing grammatical mistakes which would eventually be a cause of humiliation if and when they are mocked or laughed at due to lapses in grammar.

The third and fourth most common difficulties are somehow related, since the students claimed that they lack confidence in using the second language especially when the person they would speak with is a fluent speaker of English. Again, there is an apparent psychological issue of fear of second language use because of possible humiliation, bullying or ostracism. The fifth top factor is too much exposure to gadgets, thus affecting one's language skills because of the apparent freedom and non-restrictive nature of language use in gadgets.

The sixth to tenth factors that affect their socio-linguistic competence are a mix of intellectual and socio-physical reasons, with lack of proper training and practice being the tenth most common issue according to the students. This highlights the role of teachers in addressing sociolinguistic competence through in-class activities that would expose students to various speaking situations in different communicative contexts.

The results are consistent with the findings of Acuna and Cantos (2000), who delved on the linguistic performance of students and their ability to adapt in new language learning environments. The study revealed that the students' lack of confidence in speaking is rooted on their lack of linguistic knowledge for self-expression. Further, the students refrain from engaging in social communication using the second language as a result of this low level of confidence.

Generally, the most common difficulties affecting the students' sociolinguistic competence can be categorized into psychological, intellectual, and socio-physical in nature. Items 2, 3 and 4 can be categorized under the psychological aspect, while items 1, 7 and 9 can be under the intellectual aspect. On the other hand, items 5, 6, 8, and 10 can be categorized under the socio-physical aspect relative to their specific contexts. Hence, 70 percent of the problems are non-intellective in nature, which highlights the importance of addressing the non-intellective correlates that affect students' socio-linguistic competence.

Anchored on the data gathered from the questionnaire and the results of the FGD, several courses of action were conceptualized to address the problems commonly encountered by students in relation to the non-intellective correlates affecting their sociolinguistic competence. First is the formalization of a focused set of activities for sociolinguistic exposure. This is intended to develop a dynamic list of contextualized, communicative activities that can be used in teaching the use of the English language under different social circumstances. This list should be comprehensive and should appeal to various audiences; categorized by social contexts; varied in speaking environments and levels of formality; and focused on vocabulary complexity. In addition, all learning materials should be carefully chosen in harmony with the students' ability, and activities should become increasingly more complex as they progress.

The second entails a restructuring of the syllabi of communication courses, especially with the offering of a new general education course starting the academic year 2018-2019, Purposive Communication. All syllabi of courses related to communication and the teaching English as a second language should be restructured by providing a good balance of conventional and authentic tasks, all geared towards greater student engagement in enhancing their sociolinguistic competence. This may include political analysis paper, literary criticism, book or movie reviews, concept paper, and position paper for writing tasks; and mock debates, interviews, multimodal presentations, or invitation to cause-oriented events for speaking tasks. In addition, language and communication instructors are also expected to extend their repertoire of teaching strategies and other related activities to raise students' linguistic capabilities in using language in various contexts.

The proposed courses of action should be initiated by English language teachers, in coordination with the program chair and the college administration, as some activities may require revision of the curriculum or procurement of other resources and instructional materials.

## **Conclusions**

After careful interpretation and analysis, the study found conclusive data that the teacher education students need more experience and exposure in using the English language, and more opportunities for the application of their linguistic knowledge in various social situations. Most of the time, they have a positive attitude towards the use of the English language, but they rarely use varied linguistic forms adaptive to different social contexts outside the classroom, which suggests that they still need to work on their adaptive capacities in using the English language for various purposes, in different instances, and with different people.

The students' age was found to be the only factor affecting their language use vis-à-vis their social experiences, while their response on language attitude differs only when grouped per year level.

The data further revealed that students use English mostly in informal school situations, especially when communicating with their professors and with school authorities. However, it is also in these situations when they lack confidence and feel intimidated the most, suggesting the effect of psychological factors in using the English language.

The most common problems and difficulties affecting the teacher education students' use of the English language can be categorized into two: psychological and socio-physical in nature, both being non-intellective correlates affecting their sociolinguistic competence. Thematic analysis revealed three most common difficulties: limited vocabulary and vocabulary skills, over-consciousness in the use of grammar, and lack of confidence in the use of the English language.

## **Recommendations**

Since the results of the study would serve as valuable input to the enhancement of communication courses, especially in Purposive Communication, the researcher recommends that teachers formalize a focused set of activities centered on sociolinguistic exposure, and restructure the syllabi of all communication courses to

highlight the authentic use of language in different social contexts. In addition, more authentic, contextualized, student-centered approaches and activities should be developed and implemented to enhance the teacher education students' sociolinguistic competence.

### References

- Acuna, C.A. and Cantos, J. (2000). Linguistic Performance of Selected Elementary School Pupils in the Division of Batangas City. Master's Thesis, Batangas State University, Philippines.
- Bachman, S. (2005). *What is the matter with communicative competence? An Analysis to Encourage Teachers of English to Assess the Basis of their Teaching*. LIT Verlag Munster.
- Barnett, E. and Casper, M. (2001). A definition of social environment. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91 (3):465. Retrieved on October 2017 at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1446600/pdf/11249033.pdf>
- Blanco, J., Castillo, R. and Hernandez, J. (2005). Factors that Affect Students' Performance towards Language Learning. Master's Thesis, Batangas State University, Philippines.
- Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. Richards and R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and Communication*. London, UK: Longman.
- Duff, P. (2014). Communicative Language Teaching. In Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton D., Snow, M.A., (Eds.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Garrets, P. (2010). *Attitude to Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hess, T., Osowski, N. and Leclerc, C. (2005). Age and experience influences on the complexity of social inferences. *Psychology and Aging*. Vol. 20, No. 3, 447-459.
- Kaufhold, J.A. and Johnson, L.R. (2005). The analysis of emotional intelligence skills and potential problem areas of elementary educators. Education 2005. Retrieved on October 2017 at [www.go.galegroup.com](http://www.go.galegroup.com).
- Lodi-Smith, J. and Roberts, B. (2010). Getting to know me: Social role experiences and age differences in self-concept clarity during adulthood. *Journal of Personality*, Wiley Periodicals. Accessed on October 2017 at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2010.0065.x>.
- Mizne, C.A. (1997). Teaching Sociolinguistic Competence in the ESL Classroom. Retrieved on October 2017 at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_interstp2/20](http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_interstp2/20)
- Nation, I.S.P. and Macalister, J. (2010). *Language Curriculum Design*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Nordquist, R. (2012). *English Historical Linguistics*, Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Rimondini, M. (2010). *Communication in Cognitive Behavioral Theory*. Springer Science and Business Media.
- Wagner, P. (2005). *Teaching American English Pronunciation*. Oxford University Press.
- Walt, W.A and Schilling, N. (2015). *American English: Dialects and Variations*. Wiley, J. & Sons.