

Dimensions of Sociolinguistic Competence in English Language Communication of Indigenous People Students: An Exploratory Sequential Approach

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| Fe T. Canoy^{1,*} | Erick T. Baloran² |

¹*Southern Philippines Agri-Business and Marine and Aquatic School of Technology (SPAMAST), Malita, Davao Occidental, Philippines*

²*University of Mindanao-Bansalan College, Bansalan, Davao del Sur, Philippines*

*fecanoy@spamast.edu.ph



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ABSTRACT

This study explored the dimensions of the sociolinguistic competence in English language communication of Tagakaolo senior high school students. Through purposive sampling, the participants of the study were the Tagakaolo senior high school students of the three secondary implementing units in the two municipalities of Davao Occidental. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) yielded four factors: communication context, cultural knowledge, language learning, and language use. The model was found to be the best fit using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and other tests of fit indices. The final questionnaire, which was the main output of the study, consisted of 20 items and found to have good reliability based on its Cronbach's alpha. Based on the results, the developed questionnaire will aid in determining the level of sociolinguistic competence in English language communication of Tagakaolo senior high school students, which can be used in future planning, policy making, and program implementations of different sectors.

KEYWORDS

applied linguistics; English language communication; exploratory factor analysis; Philippines; sociolinguistic competence

INTRODUCTION

Sociolinguistic competence (SLC) is a communicative competence that emphasizes a person's ability to produce socially and culturally relevant and acceptable statements (Canale & Swain, 1980). SLC is necessary for learning other languages, including English (Saputra et al., 2019), and an essential component in attaining communication harmony and understanding. However, as the world progressed, various issues concerning individuals' SLC emerged. Learners of second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) have a severe lack of cultural awareness (Keumala et al., 2019), motivation to learn the target language (Al-Busaidi, 2019), and exposure to the target language's culture (Khouni & Boudjela, 2019).

In the global context, Chinese learners studying English as a foreign language (EFL) have poor SLC as they hesitate to learn English because they fear losing their cultural identity (Malik et al., 2021). Also, according to Sultan and Sultan (2018), postgraduate students in Iraqi universities were unaware of the social domain of English language use, resulting in a low SLC. This complicates maintaining constant communication with native English speakers without accidentally disrespecting, irritating, or causing them to react inappropriately.

Moreover, students at the Thai Nguyen University of Agricultural Forestry in Vietnam had low SLC, as evidenced by their difficulty in starting and engaging in English

conversations and responding in English (Huong & Nga, 2020). Problems with sociolinguistic adaptation have also been discovered among Oralman students in Kazakhstan, resulting in difficulties in learning English (Valieva et al., 2019). According to Mede and Dikilitas (2015), regardless of their level of linguistic knowledge, EFL learners were found to need more knowledge on how to use language appropriately linguistically and socially.

Additionally, Filipino HRM students and graduates are at the beginning level in terms of register and dialect, cultural reference, and metaphorical language, noting that they need to improve their communication skills, particularly in terms of SLC. These students have severe problems with structures, word processing, and using the meaning of words and figures of speech through language culture (Sapungan et al., 2018). According to Terogo et al. (2018), Filipino Senior High School (SHS) students rarely practice sociocultural aspects of language, resulting in incompetence in vocabulary, politeness, and language style. Moreover, as found in the study of Mama-Amella (2019), Matanog National High School students in Maguindanao exhibit ease using their mother tongue, resulting in a lack of proficiency in English grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, which contributes to shyness and a lack of confidence to converse in English.

Various measurement tools to assess SLC, such as a teacher-made sociolinguistic test for Vietnamese first-year college students (Huong & Hoa, 2021), questions 4-11 of the TOEIC model test (Martinez & De Vera, 2019); questionnaire modeled along the lines of a discourse completion test (Matola, 1993); and a self-evaluation survey on students' speaking competence based on perception and assessment of real speaking skills via an impromptu speaking activity and evaluated using a rubric (Terogo, 2018) were crafted to address the different issues in SLC. However, the researcher has not come across studies on students' SLC, particularly in Davao Occidental, in the context of the Tagakaolo tribe.

Also, most studies conducted in the Davao Region, including the study of Andoyo and Nebrida (2022), Corpuz (2021), and Daligdig et al. (2022), focus on communicative competence and only include SLC as one of its indicators. Furthermore, the researcher discovered no studies that investigated the dimensions of SLC using an exploratory-sequential study design, resulting in a feasible instrument for assessing the level of SLC among Indigenous People, particularly Tagakaolo.

Given the issues on students' SLC and lack of available tools to measure it, this study intends to explore the language use, cultural knowledge, communication context, and language learning of Indigenous People students that affect their SLC. This study is grounded in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of second language acquisition and Giles' communication accommodation theory. The socio-cultural theory argues that learning, including language acquisition, is a social process that requires support of parents, caregivers, friends, and the community (Vygotsky, 1978). Meanwhile, Giles' communication accommodation theory asserts that people usually always make the appropriate modifications to reduce social differences among conversation participants.

Using exploratory sequential research design, this study aimed to develop a contextualized survey questionnaire on the dimensions of SLC in English language communication among ethnic groups, particularly the Tagakaolo SHS students. Particularly, it sought to provide answers to the following research questions: (1) How do Tagakaolo students perceive their SLC in English language communication? (2) What are the underlying dimensions of the SLC in English language communication of the students? and (3) What measurement tool, based on the findings of the analysis, is appropriate for assessing the SLC of Tagakaolo students?

RESEARCH METHODS

The study utilized an exploratory sequential mixed-method research design to develop an instrument for assessing the level of SLC in English language communication of indigenous people students, particularly Tagakaolo. 27 SHS students from the three implementing public secondary schools of the two municipalities of Davao Occidental participated in the qualitative phase of the study. In which, 15 participated in the in-depth interview (IDI) and 12 took part during the focus group discussion (FGD) to shed light on their perception about their SLC in English language communication. An interview guide was used during the IDI and FGD. Further, 530 students from the same schools participated in the quantitative phase, specifically 250 for the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), 250 for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and 30 during the pilot testing of developed instrument. Considerations pertaining to ethics, particularly social value, the vulnerability of research participants, the risks, benefits and safety, privacy and confidentiality of information, justice, transparency, qualification of the researcher, adequacy of facilities, and community involvement, were given importance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the goals of this study is to explore the perception of the Tagakaolo students on their SLC in English language communication through IDI and FGD. The gathered information from the participants lead to the emergence of the four essential themes, particularly *language use*, *cultural knowledge*, *communication context*, and *language learning*.

The findings of this study agree with the findings of Haeiva (2022) stating that SLC particularly in English language communication, requires the speaker and listener to consider the communication context, language use, and cultural knowledge. It also supports the findings of Mizne (1997) indicating that learning the language and its cultural rules of speaking are necessary for developing SLC. Moreover, the findings of the study are consistent to Terogo et al.'s (2018) study stating that mastery of the socio-cultural components of language, including precisely using and responding to it, are vital in developing SLC. It also agrees with Savignon's (1997) findings emphasizing that SLC includes the knowledge of socio-cultural rules of communication and language, which allows understanding the social context in which language is used. Based on previous studies, SLC can be determined in terms of language use, cultural knowledge, communication context, and language acquisition, allowing individuals to apply appropriate communication methods and strategies based on the socio-cultural setting.

Language use. This theme focuses how Tagakaolo SHS students communicate, including the use of English language. Based on the findings, students modify and play with language as they communicate, particularly when speaking with their peers. They use difficult-to-understand trendy terminologies, such as placing the phoneme /p/ in every syllable (p-words) of a word like *papaweper* instead of power, backslang of English words (reversing words) like *lodi* instead of idol, and everyday English slang like *wazzup* (what's up), to connect with people their age. This aligns with the study of Yap and Saludez (2022) stating that Filipinos, particularly the millennials, have been highly flexible and adaptive in employing trendy languages, including slangs, in their daily conversations.

Moreover, the theme language use also covers students' difficulties in understanding English colloquial terminologies, and their efforts to cope with it. They shared how they employ proactive strategies to understand difficult English terms when engaging in communication. The participants highlighted that they search for meaning and pronunciation of unfamiliar English terms in different online platforms. This agrees with Ambarwati and Mandasari's (2020) findings, which indicate that students use online dictionaries to improve

their pronunciation and vocabulary. It also agrees with Ules et al. (2022) indicating that using internet resources, such as videos, helps learners enhance their pronunciation of English terms.

Table 1. Perception of the Tagakaolo Students on their SLC in English Language Communication

| Essential Theme | Core Idea |
|-----------------------|---|
| Language Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic adaptation and playfulness • Efforts in understanding colloquial language • Language choice for effective communication • Contextual language adaptations • Political terminology for enhanced conversation • Language switch • Respectful verbal and non-verbal communication |
| Cultural knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language adaptation for cross-cultural communication • Cross-cultural understanding and respect • Politeness as cultural bridge • Tagakaolo identity • Social dynamics and hierarchy in communication • Sharing knowledge of the Tagakaolo tribe • Sensitivity and respect to cultural differences • Intergeneration language preservation • Gendered communication |
| Communication Context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of emotion strategies • Comfortable communication engagement • Open communication with parents • Polite expression of disagreement • Humor and classroom environment |
| Language Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in speaking • Coping with speaking difficulty • Language proficiency and motivation • Cultural influence in learning a language |

Furthermore, Tagakaolo SHS students switch from their native language to English to express their thoughts. They also shared that they use the English language in posting or commenting using their social media accounts, like Facebook, to catch attention of readers. This finding is consistent with Banuag's (2018) study, which found that 21st-century learners code-switch even in social media posts to highlight their message and emotions and keep up with trends.

Also, based on the answers of the participants, considering the social dynamics of the target audience of communication can be demonstrated through effective language use. They constantly use polite verbal cues like *po* and *opo*, even when answering in English, and talk slowly and calmly when talking to someone older or in authority. This finding agrees with Rañosa-Madrurnio (2014) which found out that polite words like *po* and *opo* are used to express respect for an older person.

The theme of *language use* conforms with Ho's (2022) study, which states that SLC includes choosing a language to be utilized in conversation based on its significance, societal uses, and speaker-listener relationships. It implies using words to convey an impression of cultural respect. It also agrees with Galante (2022) and Kumar (2020) stating that appropriate language use includes mixing or switching languages during talks based on the context,

participants, and reasons. Additionally, it supports the findings of Napitu and Suhardianto (2020) indicating that people's language use and their choices while using it are essential for successful communication.

Cultural Knowledge. This essential theme refers to Tagakaolo students' understanding of their own cultural customs and practices, as well as their respect for other cultures. Based on the findings of the study, it includes adapting language for interactions between cultures that foster understanding and respect. The interview revealed that the participants opted to use Bisaya as their mode of communication and to explain their cultural practices. The participants shared that, unlike English or Kaolo, they prefer using Bisaya because it is a language that many people can understand. This finding shows that the Tagakaolo students possess knowledge of the culture of the people around them. Further, this finding supports the result of Tektigul et al. (2023), which stated that language cannot be separated from culture because of its interconnectedness.

Additionally, cultural knowledge includes knowing the importance of politeness in maintaining harmonious relationships with people from different cultural groups while maintaining one's cultural identity. The Tagakaolo students emphasized the need for polite communication with others. Students believe social dynamics and hierarchy should be considered when interacting with others. In this study, cultural knowledge refers to a student's ability to impart tribal knowledge and preserve their language while keeping them aware and appreciative of the unique traits of different cultures. It includes an unwavering commitment to continue using their language, the Kaolo, alongside Bisaya and English. This finding supports Muhamadjonovna's (2020) findings that cultural knowledge, such as cultural norms, rules, shared information, and practices, promotes the development of SLC among individuals.

Furthermore, the findings of this study affirm the findings of Luo et al. (2021), who stated that culture plays an integral part in the communication process; thus, having culture in mind strengthens interaction. It also agrees with Ilkhamova's (2022) result indicating that having a broad understanding of culture and communication can aid in understanding the necessary conditions for successful communication. The findings of this present study suggest that understanding people's ways of life promotes mutual understanding among different groups. It also improves the effectiveness and efficiency of communication.

This study's findings are similar with the findings of Sverdlova and Piao (2020), who claimed that SLC necessitates knowledge and awareness of cultural communication components. Also, it agrees with Benattabou (2020) and Salamatina et al. (2022) stating that cultural understanding is essential for effective communication. Previous study has underlined the importance of cultural awareness in developing sociolinguistic ability and facilitating positive cross-cultural engagement.

Communication Context. Another important aspect of SLC that emerged from participant responses is communication context. It focuses into the student's awareness of the various situations that affect their communication style. It considers the interconnected aspects that influence the meaning of messages. This finding is aligned to Bonvillain's (2019) result that sensitivity to the communication context may be linked to social factors impacting message understanding.

Furthermore, in this study, communication context refers to how students express their emotions so that they can speak comfortably. During the interview, participants stated that they cried or remained silent when angered. They also stated that they prefer to resolve conflicts with their peers in private. The students also said they apologize to their parents when they make mistakes. They even mentioned using the English word sorry to seek an apology. To communicate their disagreement, they use code-switching from their mother

tongue to English. In addition, the communication context in this study includes students' reactions to jokes in class. These findings support Qodriani and Wijana's (2020) study which revealed that word choice is influenced by sensitivity to communication context, which includes the relationship between speakers and listeners, as well as their feelings and emotions. Demonstrating SLC requires awareness of the context, attained primarily through practical and polite communication across social settings.

Language Learning. Language learning is another essential theme that arises from the answers of the Tagakaolo SHS students. It focuses on the students' experiences in learning the English language for communication, their coping mechanisms, and their purpose of using the English language. This finding aligns with Sarimsakova (2021), who stated that SLC is learning and organising a language based on the situation. In this study, language learning includes students' challenges in speaking and how they cope with it. It also includes their proficiency and motivation in using the language, as well as the influence of their culture in learning it.

During the interview, the participants expressed their difficulty learning English. They highlighted that their difficulty in English grammar, constructing English words, and pronouncing English words makes them anxious about participating in class activities. This struggle to communicate using the English language affects their confidence. However, they still acknowledge the importance of learning English, especially for work. They even highlighted that they are motivated to learn the language and unconsciously use it to express sudden emotions.

This study agrees with the findings of Sudarmo (2021) stating that language learners experience difficulties learning a language because of several issues, including noisy environments. It also agrees with Espino et al. (2021) who avowed that learning a language requires acknowledging and accepting the veracity of the language as a whole. Additionally, it affirms with Widdowson (1983) as mentioned in Obenza & Mendoza's (2021) study indicating that learning a language is a multifaceted process that includes acquiring its grammatical structure and understanding when to employ it.

Underlying Dimensions of the SLC in English Language Communication of Indigenous People Students

Based on the participants' responses, a checklist composed of 100 items was developed to assess the SLC in English language communication of Tagakaolo SHS students. The checklist was administered to 250 Tagakaolo SHS students from the three secondary implementing unit schools in the two municipalities of Davao Occidental. In this survey, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each item on the checklist using a five-point Likert scale.

The responses to the checklist for assessing the SLC in English language communication of Tagakaolo SHS students were encoded and subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the underlying dimensions. The scree test was used to identify the number of factors to be retained, which are data points that are more than the break or point of inflection. According to Cattell (1966), scree test is a graphical test that determines the number of factors to be kept. It can be observed in Figure 1 that there are four data points about the break, which is equivalent to four dimensions in the scale.

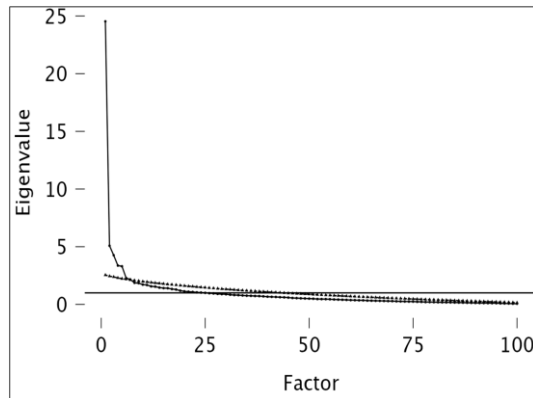


Figure 1. Screen Plot

After determining that the data comprised four factors, the 100 items were subjected for rotation. Promax rotation was used because the factors were not constrained to be uncorrelated, and the data was not orthogonal. Items with factor loading of less than 0.4, suggesting unreliable items, were discarded. The retention of factors with load values less than 0.4 may result in less interpretable solutions; thereby, discarding such weakly loaded items will improve the factor structure (Hayton et al., 2004). As a result, only 53 items were retained.

The rotated factor matrix from Principal Axis Factoring with Promax rotation and Kaiser Normalization indicates that all item loadings across the four parameters exceed the 0.4 criteria, in relation to the claim of Hayton et al. (2004). Items that did not reach the specified loading value were removed.

Table 2 shows the four-factor structure of the underlying dimensions of Tagakaolo SHS students' SLC after removing items with a factor loading of less than 0.4 and cross-loadings. When a variable has more than one significant loading, depending on the sample size, this is referred to as cross-loading, making it difficult to identify all the factors that share the same variable thereby making them distinct and representing various concepts. Using the EFA, the 4-Factor model with 53-item SLC scale was developed, namely: *Communication Context, Cultural Knowledge, Language Learning, and Language Use*.

The KMO and Bartlett's Test results is presented in table 3, showing that the KMO value is 0.879, which is higher than the suggested value of 0.50 and thus acceptable. This suggests that the sample is significant and sufficient for factor analysis. The results also showed that the Bartlett's test of Sphericity has a value of 0.000, interpreted as statistically significant. It implies that the data contains patterned relationships, and factorability is expected. The results of the two tests indicate that the dataset is appropriate for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Table 2. Rotated Factor Matrix

| Item Number | Factor | | | |
|----------------|--------|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Item53 | 0.716 | | | |
| Item54 | 0.435 | | | |
| Item55 | 0.813 | | | |
| Item57 | 0.610 | | | |
| Item59 | 0.573 | | | |
| Item60 | 0.546 | | | |
| Item61 | 0.568 | | | |
| Item62 | 0.476 | | | |
| Item65 | 0.482 | | | |

| | | |
|--------|-------|-------|
| Item66 | 0.678 | |
| Item67 | 0.654 | |
| Item68 | 0.659 | |
| Item69 | 0.486 | |
| Item70 | 0.420 | |
| Item71 | 0.592 | |
| Item76 | 0.551 | |
| Item21 | | 0.747 |
| Item22 | | 0.828 |
| Item24 | | 0.645 |
| Item25 | | 0.415 |
| Item28 | | 0.434 |
| Item36 | | 0.774 |
| Item37 | | 0.630 |
| Item40 | | 0.502 |
| Item42 | | 0.523 |
| Item43 | | 0.739 |
| Item44 | | 0.533 |
| Item45 | | 0.708 |
| Item46 | | 0.760 |
| Item47 | | 0.686 |
| Item77 | | 0.526 |
| Item78 | | 0.428 |
| Item79 | | 0.514 |
| Item80 | | 0.456 |
| Item81 | | 0.515 |
| Item82 | | 0.561 |
| Item83 | | 0.663 |
| Item84 | | 0.528 |
| Item85 | | 0.706 |
| Item86 | | 0.615 |
| Item87 | | 0.633 |
| Item88 | | 0.603 |
| Item89 | | 0.422 |
| Item90 | | 0.565 |
| Item91 | | 0.601 |
| Item92 | | 0.531 |
| Item93 | | 0.539 |
| Item94 | | 0.459 |
| Item96 | | 0.402 |
| Item7 | | 0.462 |
| Item11 | | 0.604 |
| Item12 | | 0.605 |
| Item19 | | 0.465 |

Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization
 Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring Rotation

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

| | KMO | Approx. Chi-square | df | Sig | Interpretation |
|----------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|------|------|----------------|
| KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy | 0.879 | 7218.783 | | | Acceptable |
| Bartlett's test of Sphericity | | | 4950 | .000 | Significant |

Factor Structure of the Questionnaire on Assessing the SLC in English Language Communication of Indigenous People Students

In determining the best fit model of the items to its factor, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted. The developed 53-item checklist for assessing the SLC of the Tagakaolo SHS students based on the result of the EFA was administered to 250 respondents from the three secondary schools of Malita, Davao Occidental and Sta. Maria, Davao Occidental. In this CFA survey, the respondents were asked to rate their agreement to the statements through a Five-point Likert scale.

Items with cross-loadings with other dimensions and poor loadings of less than 0.40 were removed during CFA to obtain the best fit model for the factor items. Figure 2 shows the CFA model of the underlying dimensions for assessing the SLC of Tagakaolo SHS students. Since some of the 53 items had cross-loading values less than 0.40, some items were removed to generate a model with items having factor loading of more than 0.40.

Moreover, table 4 shows that all model fit values meet the index criteria (TLI, CFI, and GFI > 0.95), with RMSEA and SRMR < 0.08. Tucker and Lewis (1973), Hu and Bentler (1999), and Byrne (1994) define a good fit as having a TLI, CFI, and GFI value greater than 0.95, respectively. Also, Hayashi et al. (2011) indicated that RMSEA and SRMR values < 0.08 indicate a good fit. Further, according to Kline (2015), a CMIN/DF value of < 3 indicates a good fit. This means that the model fits well with the data and therefore implies to be the best fit model for SLC. The results show that the identified model is the best fit for the data.

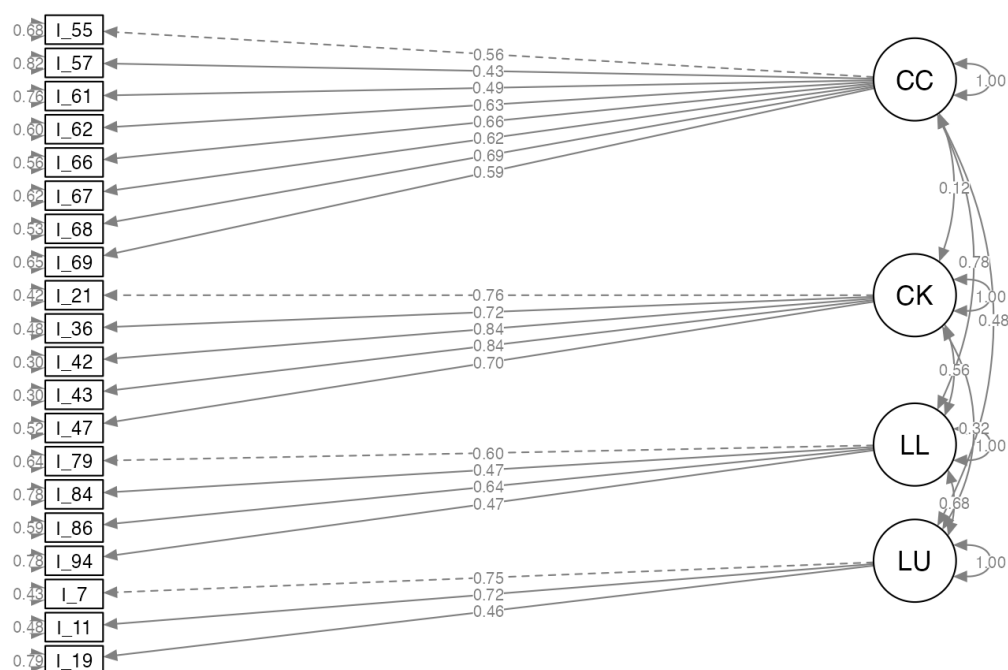


Figure 2. CFA Model of SLC in English Language Communication Scale for Tagakaolo SHS Students

| Index | Criterion | Model Fit Value | Interpretation |
|---------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|
| CMIN/DF | < 3 | 1.024 | Good Fit |
| CFI | > .95 | 0.999 | Good Fit |
| GFI | > .95 | 0.985 | Good Fit |
| TLI | > .95 | 0.999 | Good Fit |

| | | | |
|-------|--------|-------|----------|
| IFI | > .95 | 0.999 | Good Fit |
| RMSEA | < 0.08 | 0.010 | Good Fit |
| SRMR | < 0.08 | 0.057 | Good Fit |

Legend:

- CMIN/DF - Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory/Degrees of Freedom
- CFI – Comparative Fit Index
- GFI – Goodness Fit Index
- TLI – Tucker Lewis Index
- IFI – Incremental Fit Index
- RMSEA – Root Mean Square of Error Approximation
- SRMR - Standardized Root Mean Square Residual

Reliability Test of SLC in English Language Communication Scale

The developed measurement tool for assessing the SLC in English language communication of Tagakaolo SHS students is comprised of 20 items, with Factor 1 has eight statements, factor 2 has five statements, factor 3 has four, and factor 4 has three, was evaluated for reliability to determine the internal consistency of items.

The instrument developed in this study is found to have a good overall reliability with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.845. Further, all items have good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha of above 0.8. Cronbach's alpha values can range from zero to one, with values closer to one indicating that items measure the same dimension (Bujang et al., 2018). Based on the findings, the instrument is considered suitable for collecting accurate data on the level of SLC in English language communication of Tagakaolo SHS students.

CONCLUSION

The Tagakaolo senior high school students perceived their sociolinguistic competence based on different aspects. They all shared that they use language playfully and even use colloquial and political terminologies to communicate in different contexts effectively. They also employ code-switching, exhibiting the ability to choose appropriate language for effective interactions. They also value the use of verbal and non-verbal language to show respect, being one of the traits of the Tagakaolo community.

Moreover, they show their sociolinguistic competence through expressing emotions effectively to engage in comfortable communication. However, they have expressed the challenges they experience in speaking, particularly when required to talk in English. Showing resourcefulness, the Tagakaolo senior high school students shared their ways of coping with the difficulty they experienced. They have also employed ways to enhance their proficiency in using the language while preserving and respecting their culture. They shared the adjustments they make in communicating with people from different cultures.

The dimension of sociolinguistic competence includes communication context. This covers the adjustments and preferences of the Tagakaolo senior high school students in showing empathy during conversations. Another dimension of the sociolinguistic competence of the Tagakaolo SHS students is cultural knowledge, which focuses on building connections while preserving their cultural identity. Also, language learning is another dimension of sociolinguistic competence. This covers the difficulties and coping mechanisms of students in learning and using the language. Lastly, the fourth dimension of sociolinguistic competence is language use, which includes strategies for communicating.

There is a model that best fits the sociolinguistic competence of the Tagakaolo senior high school students. The values have successfully met the criteria set for each index, and its dimensions have also been tested. The model leads to the development of the measurement tool to assess the level of sociolinguistic competence that ensures the

representation of each item to its factors. However, due to the limitations of the developed instrument, other researchers may conduct studies to validate the questionnaire and provide more statistical analyses to make the questionnaire more robust.

Further, there is a significant correlation among the emerging variables from the thematic analysis. Also, the measurement tool has a good internal consistency since its Cronbach's alpha value shows good reliability. This finding means that the tool developed measures what it intends to assess.

Confirmation of Theory Lens. The findings of this study supported Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of second language acquisition. It confirms Vygotsky's (1978) theory that adapting language for effective communication necessitates awareness of the communicative context, including cultural diversity, as well as the use of various resources. Furthermore, it supports Giles' communication accommodation theory. Based on the findings, Zhang and Giles' (2018) assumption that individuals either adapt the language used by others to show respect or stress their differences through the use of verbal and nonverbal language is valid. Tagakaolo senior high school students use and adjust appropriate language when talking based on the context of the conversation. They use various techniques to deal with their challenges in using the language. Despite expressing respect through verbal and nonverbal gestures, they continue to communicate, preserve, and teach about their cultural identity.

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