

Factors Affecting the Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies in English among Higher Education Teachers in Lipa City

ALLAN D. TIPAN

adtipan222@gmail.com

ORCID No.: 0000-0001-6771-3476

Lipa City Colleges, Lipa City

ABSTRACT

The study attempted to describe the factors affecting the sociolinguistic and strategic competencies in English among teachers in Higher Education Institutions in Lipa City and determine the relationship between the demographic characteristics and their assessments. The study was done during the school year 2010-2011. Three Higher Education Institutions in Lipa City were selected as the research locale. Total enumeration was used as sampling for the study. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. The respondents agreed that the factors of context of acquisition, accommodating speech norms and code switching, degree of contact with second language users and level of confidence affect their sociolinguistic competence. Likewise, they also agreed that the factors of questioning skills and use of non-verbal communication affect their strategic competencies. Variations in terms of the relationships of different demographic characteristics and their sociolinguistic and strategic competencies were also established. A general sense, the teachers' diverse characteristics generated different points of view on how the factors affect their competencies. This led to the conclusion that they are the ones responsible why the factors influence their competencies. They should be the ones responsible for affecting culture and not culture to affect their language competencies. It is of great importance that teachers should take the initiative to study and systematically use the competencies which they can work on. HEI administrators should offer professional development seminars as these are necessary for the effective use of the teachers' competencies.

Keywords - competency, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competency, context of acquisition, code switching, confidence questioning skills, non-verbal communication

INTRODUCTION

For many years, the Philippine economy on one key asset in attracting foreign investors – the Filipino competency in the English language.

Undoubtedly, the Philippines although quite a tiny archipelago in Southeast Asia, owes a big slice of its economic success to the English competency of its people as the country receives worldwide recognition for being a rich source of English speaking global manpower – from skilled laborers to qualified professionals (SJAL M. 2008)

With this, the demand for better English proficient Filipinos gets increasingly more and more important. However reports of the sharp decline in English competencies hover as evidenced by falling school standards. The mass exodus of linguistically skilled professionals compounds the problem. This scenario has become a great challenge to both government and education sector (Fernando& Asucena 2006).

While both sectors are trying their best to address this problem, realities of deteriorating English competencies within the country persist. Reports of low employability, failed English competency results using international standards, increasing low performance in licensure examinations, poor comprehension skills, and sub-standard English skills of more than 400, 000 graduates are evidences of low quality of instruction and training in English (Fernando& Asucena 2006). The Philippine government is trying its best to address this problem as bigger fund allocation (Fajardo, 2009) is given to improve the quality of English instruction in the country.

Lipa City is fast becoming an industrial and business center in the Southern Tagalog region. It is also home to many OFW and business professionals. It is also an important center for education with the numerous establishments of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) which cater to the employment demands of local and foreign industries. Major Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) of the city include prominent establishments like De La Salle Lipa, Lipa City Colleges, and Batangas State University among others. These schools have been home to many graduates of different disciplines.

Given the numerous HEIs, the city also takes a part on the realities happening within the national setting. Concerns of competent graduates who are equipped not only with the specific skills required in their disciplines but also good command of

English as it is the language of most local and foreign employment has continuously been a major challenge on their part.

While it is claimed that it is possible to deliver meaningful, engaging, tertiary-level content to all students while supporting their language development needs as English language learners and much effort have been exerted to improve the quality of English language instruction, still, the HEI graduates barely seem to achieve maximum competencies in learning the English language. Rather, reports showed that the quality of literacy and English language competency continue to deteriorate. Results of the yearly licensure examination produce less than fifty percent on almost all disciplines (PRC, 2008).

Furthermore, many of the graduates from the city did not get jobs immediately because of several factors and one of these is lack of competencies in the English language. Call centers like Teletech and ACS which are based in Lipa City for example, receive numerous applicants monthly however only a few are hired because of the lack of English competencies. In some industries, human resource offices commonly complain about the quality of applicants who fail to be hired because of their failure to pass interviews and written examinations. Some of them lack the ability to express themselves well in English and to engage in meaningful and effective communication. BPAP (2007) attributed these to the inadequacy of training in the college years which is in turn complicated by the quality of instruction and learning experiences provided by their mentors.

Given these realities, teachers of the different higher education institutions in the city feel the lack of success in instruction specifically in teaching English as a second language among their students. They carry the burden of searching for effective formula that will be a solution to this problem. However reports claimed that the biggest reason why such situation exist, is because of poorly trained teachers in English (Seameo Innotech, 2009), and some of them even prefer the alternate use of both Filipino and English inside their classrooms. This is contrary to the specifications of the media of instruction (Visconde, C., 2006). Furthermore, other subtleties of language teaching like proper choice of words, enunciation, use of higher level questions, gestures and meaningful exchange of communication are not properly delivered.

Teachers are one of the primary sources of students' competencies in English. However, the teaching of English is not only confined to teaching the structures of the language but, it is more on teaching the students the ability to use it in actual situations. While technological advancements like the internet, social networks, and textbooks, provide information and knowledge, and serves as an avenue to learn the structures of English as a language; these are the teachers who provide the model to

transform these information and knowledge into actual speech or communication events along with the proper competencies on how to deliver them. Teachers scaffold students' learning and are encouraged to develop their communication skills. The teachers provide situations and the students respond to those situations.

However, communication using English does not mean that information is conveyed only with correct structures of the language but, it requires more complex art and higher competencies. The teaching of English in communication has to be interesting, respectful of individual differences, without biases, meaningful and effective. To do this, a teacher must be an expert not only on grammar skills but also in both sociolinguistic and strategic competencies.

Sociolinguistic competence means knowing how to use and to respond to language situation appropriately when given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. Sociolinguistic competence could be affected by the context of instruction, accommodation of speech norms and code switching, and even the amount of contact with language users. On the other hand, strategic competence refers to knowing how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language. Strategic competencies of teachers could be affected by their ability to handle conversations and work on gaps through the use of questioning skills and non-verbal communication.

These are higher level of competencies required of all teachers in order to deliver effective instruction in English. Failure to use the language using necessary sociolinguistic and strategic competencies may affect how students learn English.

It is important however, to understand fully what causes a teacher to be labeled "unequipped" or "lacking" in the competencies of an ideal teacher. Is it the external environment of teachers that cause their failure to develop the desired competence in English; or is it the teachers themselves who have problems that affect their competence?

The realities mentioned above prompted the researchers to conduct this study. Its purpose is to assess the factors affecting the sociolinguistic and strategic competencies of teachers in Higher Educational Institutions in Lipa City.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study pursued the following objectives:

1. Find out the demographic profile of the HEI teacher-respondents;
2. Determine the factors that affect the teachers' sociolinguistic competence English;
3. Determine the factors that affect the strategic competency in English; and,
4. Trace the relationship on the responses of the teacher-respondents in the sociolinguistic and strategic competencies in English across the Higher Educational Institutions in Lipa City, when grouped according to their profile.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The Survey-Correlation design was used for this study. It was deemed fit for the study as the researcher first conducted a survey and correlated the findings to a second purpose. During the survey, the researcher sought the demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as their evaluation of the factors affecting their sociolinguistic and strategic competencies. Afterwards, the surveyed data about the respondent's demographic characteristics were correlated with their assessment of the factors affecting their sociolinguistic and strategic competencies- thus, the survey-correlation design.

Subjects of the Study

The research respondents were faculty members from three prominent Higher Education Institutions in Lipa City. The researchers utilized total enumeration as sampling method for this study. Out of the total 150 respondents, 68 or 45.33% came from Lipa City Colleges, 58 or 38.7 came from De La Salle Lipa, and 24 or 16% came from the Batangas State University Satellite Campus.

To achieve pertinent information, certain inclusion criteria were imposed. The selected participants were all full time faculty members of their respective institution who teach subjects that require English as the medium of communication. This qualification ensured that the participants understand the nature of the competencies being asked in the questionnaire. The researcher however, did not consider as to what particular subjects or courses the teachers handle.

Data Gathering and Procedure

For this research, two types of data were gathered. These included the primary and secondary data types. The primary data were derived from the answers that participants gave using a survey questionnaire. The secondary data, on the other hand, were obtained from published documents and literatures that were relevant and supportive of the findings of the study. With the use of the survey questionnaire and published literatures, this study took on the combined quantitative and qualitative approach of research. In addition, the researcher also conducted structured interviews among the respondents in order to find out the veracity of the responses and add the gathered information as support for the findings.

The survey questionnaire was used as the main data-gathering instrument for this study. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections: the demographic characteristics, the survey proper and the grammar competency test. The demographic characteristics of the respondents surveyed include the respondent's age, civil status, educational attainment, gender, income, in service trainings, length of service, type, type of collegiate institution, school graduated from, years of teaching experience, and level of proficiency. The survey explored the perception of HEI teachers in terms of the factors affecting their sociolinguistic and strategic competencies.

For the sociolinguistic competence, the factors explored were accommodating speech norms within the context of instruction; context of acquisition; degree of contact with second language users; and their level of confidence.

For the strategic competence, the factors assessed were the respondent's questioning skills, and use of non-verbal communication. To further ensure the veracity of the responses of the teachers, the researcher conducted several classroom observations to see how teachers make use of their strategic competencies. Likewise, the researcher also conducted some focused group discussions among students and asked them how their teachers make use of questioning and non-verbal reactions as they teach. The researcher recorded and noted some of the observations in order to support the findings of the study.

The questions were structured using the Likert format. In this survey type, five choices are provided for every statement. The choices represent the degree of agreement each respondent has on the given statement. The scale below was used to interpret the total responses of all the respondents for every survey question by computing the weighted mean:

Symbol	Range	Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.40 – 4.19	Agree
3	2.60 – 3.39	Moderately agree
2	1.80 – 2.59	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.79	Strongly Disagree

The Likert survey was the selected questionnaire type as this enabled the respondents to answer the survey easily. In addition, this research instrument allowed the research to carry out the quantitative approach effectively with the use of statistics for data interpretation.

Lastly, the grammar proficiency test is used to determine the competency of teachers in the structures of the English language. The aforesaid test is included since grammar competency serves as one of the most important foundation of sociological and strategic competencies. This means that one would have a difficult time conveying information in English if there is poor knowledge of grammar and lexical structure. The grammar proficiency test has been adapted and modified from several sources. Among these sources include the TOEFL online proficiency test and some are adapted from Jonathan Maliki's EFL Learning Book, 2nd Edition. The grammar test was validated using item analysis. Five areas of grammar proficiency were tested. These are subject-verb agreement, tenses, diction, preposition and sentence styles. These are reported to be the common areas where errors are oftentimes committed by teachers as they speak in English. To measure grammar proficiency, the scores were gathered and grouped into their specific ranges. The range for grammar proficiency is the following:

Symbol	Range	Interpretation
5	49-60	Highly Proficient
4	37-48	Proficient
3	25-36	Moderately proficient
2	13-24	Less proficient
1	0-12	Not proficient

Statistical Treatment

The total responses for each item were obtained and tabulated, after gathering all the completed questionnaires from the respondents. Data was then processed and analyzed using the following statistical tools.

1. Frequency Distribution. This was used to gather data about the profile of the respondents.
2. Ranking. This was used to arrange data in a series in ascending or descending order of importance. In this study, the researchers ranked the items in descending order.
3. Weighted Mean. This was used to interpret the Likert scale representing the sociolinguistic and strategic competencies of the respondents.
4. Coefficient correlation. This was used in the validation of the instrument; in determining the degree of relationship between the profiles of the respondents and assessing the factors that affect their competencies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Profile of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) Teachers in Lipa City

The greater part of the research population belong to the ages of 31 – 40, mostly female , married, and graduates of private institutions during their college years . As a requirement for college instructors , majority have finished their Masters and Doctoral degrees . Most of them have also been teaching for 1-8 years and have also undergone in-service trainings in English at about 16-30 hours at a span of 3 years. In terms of their scores in grammar proficiency , most of the respondents were found to be less and moderately proficient in grammar .

2. Sociolinguistic Factors Affecting the Teachers' Competencies in English.

2.1. The Context of Acquisition

The respondents agreed that the context of acquisition affects their sociolinguistic competences. Specifically, they strongly agreed that the institutional context helps to provide them a clearer identity as professionals and is best achieved when their institution encourage them to use English. The lowest in their assessment is that solidarity and unity are best gained among members of the institution when communication is done in English.

The goal of all the HEIs under study is to prepare their students to be globally competitive professionals. It is part of their accountability and corporate responsibility to provide their students and clients with competencies required by the global market. To become globally competitive, one has to transform its goals into social practices. Social practices are transcended to language that afterwards the practice shape identities (Chan 2007). Language gives the identity of social practice, it gives the identity of culture, it molds the shape of existing statuses of people in society.

On the other hand, solidarity and unity are perceived not to be gained by speaking the English language alone as schools contain diverse cultures, beliefs, interests, religions and economic systems. While the English language is contributory to the school success, others find it also as a cause of division among members of the institution.

2.2. Degree of Contact and Input.

The respondents agreed that the degree of contact and input affect their sociolinguistic competences. Specifically, they attested that the exchanges of information that they encounter daily are comprehensible. They barely agreed on the idea that speaking in English is a living experience within the community.

Although the use of English is being emphasized in schools subject, other subject areas except Filipino and Social Studies do not have strict rules in using English as their medium of instruction. Other teachers on the other hand have difficulty translating Tagalog words in English.

2.3. Accommodating Speech Norms and Code Switching.

The respondents considered the addresses, associated topics, and settings of conversation make them shift in the native language. This is when they talk with other members in their community like the janitorial staff, canteen personnel and other individuals whom they encounter in the institution.

The reason behind is that oftentimes, the teachers would meet or will be put in situations where there is a separation of functions for their two languages. While teaching, the teachers would interact fully in English, but as they go out of the classrooms, they would eventually meet speakers with whom the use of the native language will better meet the communicative ends or the precision of meaning will be better imparted in the native language. According to the Milroys, use of the standard language is associated with high social status dictated by the norm-enforcement mechanisms. Individuals from workplaces tend to shift from the standard language

used in work into the vernacular as this indicates solidarity with local people, customs, and norms.

On the other hand, the respondents barely agreed with the idea that they shift to their native language during conversational interaction with students, peers and co-workers based on school rules to use English in communicating with their students and peers. Furthermore, the teachers attested that they have no problems with their ability to communicate in English but oftentimes, they shift to the native language as a form of empathy to their acquaintances, who most of the times, are not proficient with the English language.

2.4. Level of Confidence.

The respondents agreed that level of confidence also affects their sociolinguistic competence.

Primarily, they find that their English language competency is adequate to produce meaningful interaction between them and the people whom they are talking with. Herbert Marsh (2006), noted academic self-confidence is indeed sometimes separate for specific areas. They tend to remain silent specifically when the topic is (far) different from their expertise. However, they are very loud and eloquent when the topics are of common interest to them.

Furthermore, the respondents barely agreed that they are comfortable using English whenever they talk with people. This can be attributed to the fact that they have problems with proficiency. As Krashen (1981) noted, a speaker must have comprehensible input before he can produce comprehensible output.

3. *Factors Affecting the Teachers' Strategic Competencies in English.*

3.1. Questioning Skills

It was summarized that the teachers agree that their questioning skills affect their strategic competencies in English.

They strongly agreed that they see to it that the manner in which they ask questions is appealing enough to create a response. The teachers recognize that it is the quality of questions that elicit the best response and the continuity of communication. Appealing questions encourage continued conversation, and help them get more information and the best possible response. Appealing questions also provide opportunities to gain insight into the other person's feelings thus making the listener more connected with the speaker.

The respondents, however barely agreed that the way they ask questions identify the things that their acquaintance would like to see changed, and set the process for problems to be solved. They attested that questions were meant to identify needs and understand more of the situation but not a way to impose status and power.

3.2. Non-Verbal Communication.

Eye contact proves to be the most important non-verbal factor agreed by the respondents to affect their strategic competences. They maintain eye contact and smile whenever they are talking and shun the idea of avoiding eye contact.

The respondents put emphasis on the importance of eye contact as well as smiling to be highly effective. For the teachers, sustained eye contact is a rich dimension of non-verbal reaction that speaks volume. For the speakers, it expresses truth and genuine sincerity and as a listener it means interest and attention. For them when individuals respond with their eyes they allow others to have a sense of their emotional state and increase feelings of communication satisfaction. Likewise, the teachers attested that they use smiling as it elicits positive reaction. According to them, they are perceived as likable, happy, friendly, warm and approachable. They shared that the reaction of the people whom they are talking with are more favorable whenever they smile.

On the other hand, they do not approve it when their audience avoid eye contact. For them it is a sense of disinterest, avoidance or deviousness.

3.3. Critical Thinking Skills.

The respondents strongly agreed that they are likely to try and gain the best possible understanding of a given situation/response based on reasons and evidence. They barely agreed that they are likely to ignore reasons and relevant evidence which may go against their personal beliefs and opinions. This finding showed that teachers are rational whenever they communicate with the members of their community. They value the importance of sound evidence and opinions in their evaluation before responding to a question or problem at hand. This is the very essence of critical thinking.

4. Correlation between Profile and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies.

4.1. Correlation between Age, and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

Age is significantly related to the respondents' approval that questioning skills affect their sociolinguistic and strategic competencies. The teachers understand that inquiry lies at the heart of every academic endeavor. The art of inquiry as a skill improves through age. This is the reason why the best professors and perhaps the most experienced ones do not want to teach their students the "facts" (unlike the young and aggressive ones) of the discipline so much as they want to help them construct knowledge by asking interesting questions within that discipline. They want their students to develop appreciative inquiry of things.

Age has no significant relationship with the teacher's assessment that context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, level of confidence, nonverbal communication and critical thinking skills because these factors are powered by normative pressures. At any given age, the factors will come into the picture as they are dictated by social and cultural constructs. It is up to the teachers to react and make use of their competencies as these factors appear into their communicative events.

Batstone (2002) classified that language users essentially confront two contexts: communicative and learning. Communicative contexts require that the learner use the English or the second language as a tool of sorts for exchanging information and participating in important social and interpersonal functions. Learning contexts are those in which input and learner output are fashioned normally with the assistance of an environmental factors. In communicative contexts, learners may or may not be as oriented toward furthering their linguistic development as they would be in a learning context.

Questioning skill is a communicative context while context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, level of confidence, non-verbal communication and critical thinking skills are learning contexts

4.2. Correlation between Civil Status, and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

Civil Status is significantly related to context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, level of confidence, non-verbal communication and critical thinking skills but not related to the questioning skills.

The context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, level of confidence, non-verbal communication and critical thinking skills are learning contexts and questioning skills are communicative contexts. Having these, one has to understand that the home (of married and non-married teachers) and the external environment (outside of the institution) of teachers are heavily biased towards learning contexts as they are confronted by the affective variables that are built heavily into social and interpersonal functions. While teachers dedicate all of their time to using their communicative competencies in English inside the school these are sometimes opposed by the family context where the surrounding culture is their native language. The balance is stuck between learning and communicative contexts because participants are asked to agree, in principle, to switch the language that they use for professional functions to the language that they use for social and interpersonal functions.

4.3. Correlation between Educational Attainment and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

Educational attainment is significantly related to the assessment of the respondents' level of confidence but is not significantly related to their assessments of the context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, questioning skills, and non-verbal communication.

The respondents agree that given their varying educational attainment, the level of confidence affects their sociolinguistic and strategic competencies. This is due to the fact that the level of confidence is part of their internal locus of control while the other factors that include the context of acquisition, and degree of contact and input are part of the external locus of control.

A study by Rotter (1954) and Rotter, Chance, and Phares (1972) suggested that people generally identify either an internal or external locus of control in their lives. Those with an internal locus of control tend to believe in their own ability to control events, whereas people with an external locus of control believe other people or events determine their own circumstances. The essential difference is that self-direction focuses on internal standards of direction for behavior, whereas conformity focuses on externally imposed conditions. Level of confidence is a moving force within the respondents are essential in directing whether they would conform or not to the socio-cultural standards set by the institutional context.

Vitz, P. (1995) noted that self-actualization or fulfillment of one's potential and accomplishments in the real world affects one's attitudes. It could be inferred that people who have had a great deal of accomplishments has a higher level of confidence.

On the other hand, the context of acquisition, degree of contact, accommodating speech norms, questioning skills, non-verbal communication and critical thinking skills are external factors which are directly imposed on HEI teachers.

4.4. Correlation between Monthly Income, and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

Monthly Income is significantly related with the assessment of context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, questioning skills but is not significantly related to non-verbal communication critical thinking skills. As the majority of the respondents belong to average incomes, they generally agreed that the context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, questioning skills affect their sociolinguistic and strategic competencies. The reason behind these is that the aforementioned variables are social constructs that define a person's prestige or social class. These factors are commonly wound up with identity and with a sense of the community affected by cultural norms rooting from varying degrees of class stratification. People with high income usually belong to high prestige classes and definitely use varying degrees of communicative competence and strategies in their communication. The same is true with the degree of contact and input, in accommodating speech norms and even in questioning skills. Usually people in high prestige stratum have higher control and access of communicative events. On the other hand, people in low prestige has limitations as their use of language is only associated with a choice that is gained from within group social identification. On the other hand, non-verbal communication and critical thinking skills are not limited by prestige as both are available and applicable at any given situation.

4.5. Correlation between In-service Training, and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

In- service training is related with questioning skills, context of acquisition but not related with the degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, level of confidence, and non-verbal communication.

In-service trainings are significant to the factor of questioning skills. Trainings are given to fill knowledge and practice gaps within the existing context of instruction. During in-service functions, teachers are equipped with strategies and tools that allow the analysis of problems and situations. In doing so, the teachers are presented with current developments which allow them to make sense of the new concepts that are

going to be explained, and, at least, guarantee the interest and, motivation to learn them. It is followed by training, which is more related with instruction where they are presented with clear and structured concepts on how to fill the gaps in knowledge. The last stage of the process is an action that consists of implementing the practice of the acquired knowledge or competency. The teacher's self-awareness of the gaps within knowledge predetermines her or his communication with the student.

The respondents perceived that their in-service training has a significant relationship with the context of acquisition as the influence of the aforesaid training will consequently influence the context. The implication of the training and innovation programs influences the final effects in the teaching practice and ultimately the atmosphere of the school.

The teachers assess that their in-service training have no significant relationship with the degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, level of confidence, non-verbal communication and critical thinking. This is partly because the trainings in English that were given to them are very minimal and barely touches the sociolinguistic and strategic competencies. Oftentimes, the trainings given were on teaching strategies and linguistic competencies.

4.6. Correlation between Collegiate Institution Attended, and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

Collegiate institution attended is significantly related with context of acquisition but not related with the degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, level of confidence, questioning skills, non-verbal communication and critical thinking skills.

This finding elucidates the nature of interdependence between individual learning and social processes in learning and development. The first is that individual development, including higher mental functioning, has its origins in social sources. The individual dimension of consciousness and knowledge are derivative and secondary. From this perspective, the mental functioning of the individual is not simply derived from social interaction; rather, the specific structures and processes revealed by individuals can be traced to their interactions with others.

As the teachers who were learners before participate in a broad range of joint activities and internalize the effects of working together, they acquire strategies and knowledge of the world and culture. The learner therefore, comes to an understanding that it is adequate for using the culturally elaborated object in the novel life circumstances and situations he encounters. Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when an individual is

interacting with people in his environment and peers. Thus, learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions and this is the main reason why the collegiate or previous education is very much relative to the context of acquisition.

During interviews, the teachers attested that their previous education affected their ways of communication in the sense that those were the days that they were fully trained of their competencies.

4.7. Correlation between Gender, and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

Gender is related with context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms, level of confidence, and non-verbal communication in the sense that these factors are socio-cultural normative. Meaning, they could contain norms that may invoke comparison of status and social significance between the masculine and feminine gender. The socio-cultural context, for example, could show notions of gender as a social and cultural construct often invoking explanations based on women's supposed greater status consciousness, greater awareness of the social significance of variants, and concern for politeness. However, this consciousness often invoke women within a context have greater tendencies to "over-report" or "over-react" their usage of communicative competencies. There is also greater tendency for women to use more non-verbal reactions than that of the men and women may defend that such use is a way to achieve status denied to them through other outlets.

4.8. Correlation between Length of Years in Service, and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

Length of years in service is related with accommodating speech norms, questioning skills critical thinking skills but not related to context of acquisition, degree of contact and input and non-verbal communication. Length of service is significantly related with strategic competencies but not with the sociolinguistic competences. This could be attributed to the fact that the teachers have been working at an average of 8 or more years. Thus, it is perceived that they have already adjusted themselves to the culture and patterns of communication used in their institutional setting.

On the other hand, the length of service is of a significant relationship with the strategic competencies because, teachers are exposed to diverse personalities and cultures. The school likewise offers a variety of systemic changes where the teachers are the primary end-user. In this diversity and unexpected changes, teachers have to

deal with decisions requiring their strategic competency skills.

4.9. Correlation between Grammar Proficiency, and Sociolinguistic and Strategic Competencies

Grammar proficiency is significantly related with the level of confidence and not related with context of acquisition, degree of contact and input, accommodating speech norms and code switching, questioning skills, and non-verbal communication.

This finding can be best explained by Labov's (1981) definition of linguistic insecurity. This is very common among bilinguals. Linguistic insecurity is the anxiety or lack of confidence experienced by speakers and writers who believe that they do not conform to the principles and practices of Standard English. Oftentimes, linguistic insecurity occurs among people belonging to low prestige status. This linguistic insecurity is shown by the very wide range of stylistic variation used by lower-middle-class speakers, by their great fluctuation within a given stylistic context, by their conscious striving for correctness, and by their strongly negative attitudes towards their native speech pattern.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of data, the respondents agreed that their sociolinguistic competence was significantly affected by the factors of context of acquisition, accommodating speech norms and code switching, degree of contact with second language users, and level of confidence.

Likewise, the respondents agreed that questioning skills and critical thinking skills and non-verbal communication affect their strategic competence.

Variations in terms of the relationships of different demographic characteristics and their sociolinguistic and strategic competencies were also established. In a general sense, the teachers' diverse characteristics generated different points of view on how sociolinguistic and strategic competencies affect their English competencies. It was their diverse characteristics that influence varied psychological, emotional and social perceptions about their competencies. Among the pertinent examples are their views that gender and context causes them to do code switching, gender influences their confidence while talking, grammar proficiency influences their confidence, educational attainment influences their questioning skills- among others. In totality, the teachers need to exert more initiative and self-determination to improve themselves in order to achieve the desired competence.

LITERATURE CITED

Batstone, R.

2010 *Sociocognitive Aspects of Second Language Learning and Teaching*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Business Processing Association of the Philippines (BPAP)

2007 Average Won't Do for Philippines BPO Industry. <http://bpoindustryphilippines.blogspot.com/2011/12/average-wont-do-for-philippines-bpo.html>.

Chan

Adrian *Social Interaction Design*

2009 <http://www.gravity7.com/blog/media/2009/09/social-interaction-design-beyond-use.html>

Fajardo, Lorelie

2009 *The Philippine English System*

<http://maricelmar.wordpress.com/2012/12/20/the-philippine-english-system/>

Gumperz J.

1993 *Discourse Strategies*. *Studies in International Linguistics*. Edition 9. Cambridge University Press. New York

Labov W.

2003 *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, New York

Marsh H.

2006 Reciprocal Effects Between Academic Self-concept, Self-esteem, Achievement, and Attainment over Seven Adolescent Years: Unidimensional and Multidimensional Perspectives of Self-concept. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18340036>

Mills, Sarah

2003 *Gender and Politeness*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, New York

Milroy, Lesley

1980 Language and Social Networks. Oxford: Blackwell

PRC.

2008 Performance of Schools , Top Performing Schools September 2008 LET Results. <http://www.prcboardnews.com/2012/11/performance-of-schools-top-peforming.html> (Retrieved, June 2008)

Rotter, J., Chance, J., & Phares, J.,

1972. Applications of a Social Learning Theory of Personality. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Vizconde Camilla J.

2006 Attitudes of Student Teachers towards the Use of English as Language of Instruction for Science and Mathematics in the Philippines. Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD), University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines. Http://www.linguistics-journal.com/November_2006_cjv.php (Retrieved, June 2008)

Vitz, Paul

1995 The Problem with Self-Esteem. <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/education/ed0001.html>



Pursuant to the international character of this publication, the journal is indexed/aggregated by the following agencies: 1) Public Knowledge Project, a consortium of Simon Fraser University Library, the School of Education of Stanford University, and the British Columbia University, Canada; 2) Philippine E-Journals; 3) Google Scholar; 4) Index Copernicus; 5) Scholastica; 6) Researchgate; 7) Laccree of France; 8) University Library of Leipzig, Germany; 9) Linguist List; and 10) The JournalTOCs.