Sociolinguistic Communicative Competence of Graduate English Language Education Students in Classroom Interactions
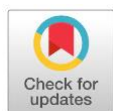
Suciaty Pratiwi[1], Mujib Hasib[1]

[1]English Education Department, STKIP Bina Harapan Celebes, Indonesia

Article History

Abstract

The sociolinguistic communicative competence idea pertains to an individual's ability to proficiently comprehend, produce, and use language in a way that is congruent with the particular situation. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly examine the students' level of competency while they participate in classroom activities, especially throughout the process of engaging in conversations. The present study was carried out at Pascasarjana UNM, including a sample of English graduate students in their third semester. A single class consisted of a total of 25 pupils. The researcher used a discourse analysis methodology to examine and interpret the collected data. A comprehensive collection of six recordings was undertaken to document the students interactions throughout class, supplemented by an additional five recordings derived from the interview segments. Subsequently, the transcriptions underwent meticulous scrutiny and analysis, with a specific emphasis on the student's sociolinguistic proficiency as outlined by Sato & McNamara (2019) in the context of speech actions. The findings unearthed a diverse array of sociolinguistic communicative ability among graduate students, including assertive force, directive force, commissive force, and expressive force. The students used their abilities to embrace their classmates, provide crucial information, inquire, articulate expectations, provide ideas, and condense the subject. Through the analysis of the functions, it was determined that students mostly used a directed approach, characterized by their reliance on questioning. This method was used 67 times, representing 28% of the overall usage. By comprehending the communication patterns of students, instructors may customize their approach and pinpoint efficacious learning tactics for each person.

Introduction

Social life cannot be separated from communication. People communicate with others to share knowledge, experience, information, idea, feeling, attitude etc. Sato & McNamara (2019) comments that communication as the negotiation and exchange of knowledge, information or

[1]Corresponding Author: Suciaty Pratiwi, Email: suciatypratiwi@gmail.com, Address: Jl. Paccinang Raya No. 1, Makassar

thought between at least two persons by using the processes of production and comprehension verbal and non-verbal and oral, written or visual modes. Heath (2020) delve deeper the notion of communication as a contextual and purposeful process of showing what we felt and thought through symbols. The purposes of people's intervention with communication needs are to encourage the advancement of communicative competence so that they could participate entirely in community, interact with other people, and influence on their society (Byram & Golubeva, 2020; Udoudom et al., 2024). Communicative competence has a lot of advantages to individuals' life such as attaining social, educational and personal goals, (Calculator, 2009). People require successful and positive experiences of communication to construct their motivation in attaining communicative competence. (Light & McNaughton, 2014). Therefore, an understanding about communicative competence is very important to know especially for students who learn English as a foreign language.

There are some components of communicative competence, but the researcher considers sociolinguistic communicative competence is the most appropriate competence for students' condition in the class. Sato & McNamara (2019) comments that sociolinguistic competence is the competence of mastering the appropriate language use in different sociolinguistic context. It includes speech acts. Austin (1962) in his book "how to do things with words" argues that sometimes, when people say an utterance, it is not always to describe something. Instead, by uttering utterances, they actually do something. Besides, Rizki & Golubović (2020) and Harris (2019) notes that speech act is an act that a person performs when making utterances. He also categorized five different types of speech acts (illocutionary acts) namely assertive force, directive force, commissive force, expressive force, and declarative force. In educational fields, students need to comprehend those five types because it could let them interact effectively especially in the discussion forum. In research by Doyle (2023) and Dimbleby & Burton (2020) explain that the students will know how to open the discussion, greet the audience, invite the presenters to deliver the material, give suggestions, ask the questions and conclude the material. Therefore, the researcher chose students in advanced level as participants in this study to give a portrait to other students of how to interact effectively in the class during the discussion process.

In analyzing the collected data, the researcher utilized the theoretical framework from Sato & McNamara (2019) about sociolinguistic communicative competence. The researcher conducted this study in Pascasarjana UNM (State University of Makassar). She had done preliminary observation and interviewed some graduate students. Then, it was found that students in the 3rd semester (class C) at English Language Education were more active than other classes in asking questions and helping their friends who being as presenters to answer the question, align with research from Hlas et al. (2019) and Webb & Doman (2020). Besides, their utterances also could be understood well. Thus, they could create good interactions when discussing in the class. Although, there were also some learners who prefer being silent but it was dominated by enthusiastic learners. Research findings in this area will be useful for the students in order to enhance the effectiveness of communication. Moreover, it could give contribution to English teachers or lecturers of how to treat different students by understanding their ways in communication.

Based on the illustration above, the aims of this study were to Investigate the types of sociolinguistic communicative competence utilized by graduate ELE students in classroom interactions, Find out the functions of sociolinguistic communicative competence applied by graduate ELE students in classroom interactions and Investigate the dominant types of sociolinguistic communicative competence used by graduate ELE students in classroom interactions.

Research Methods

This research aims at examining the various sociolinguistic communicative competencies that exists and the roles it plays, also the extent to which graduate students in classroom practices display it. Bakri carried out the study at the Pascasarjana UNM (State University of Makassar) using 25 third semester postgraduate students in the English Language Education programme. Class C was chosen for this study because the students in this class were more vocal in class discussions from initial observation and interviews made. The purposive sampling technique was used to make sure that the sample comprised of students who are probably involved in more discursive practices hence producing more data for analysis.

The purposive sampling technique was adopted to make certain that the subjects consisted of individuals most capable of describing sociolinguistic communicative competence in elaborate detail. Class C was deliberately selected after early impressions showed that these students tend to be more participative and expressive in classroom participation as opposed to other classes. This selection was deemed appropriate since it helped to focus on the respondents who seemed to be more active in the discussion and whose case could be studied in details thus exploring the notions of sociolinguistic competence within the academic setting.

Data Collection Instruments

The data were obtained in the form of audio and video tapes, field notes, checklists of observations, and semi structured interviews. The six recorded class sessions produced a wealth of verbal behaviour in normal classroom practice and were used as the database for analysis. The researcher took notes on non-verbal aspects of the social interactions included in the field notes since they could affect the interactions. Checklists of observations were used in order to record occurrences of certain speech acts axed, for example, assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive acts with reference to the framework of the study. Furthermore, there were questionnaire surveys and five students were interviewed in an informal and rather unstructured way to get more details of their thoughts about what they think about their communicative behavior during class activities, and how aware they were of the particular situation and the techniques following from this one.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process was carried out in a number of weeks in order for the researcher to capture a typical samples of classroom interactions. Verbal and non-verbal communication was put under an audiovisual recording for each class session to illustrate what was being taught in the class. The records were then transcribed in detail, in which each and every word, accent, tone, intonation, and any form of pause was captured together with the speech acts which the utterances belonged to, and the sociolinguistic environment in which the talk was produced following the conventions put forward by Du Bois (2014). The field notes helped in augmenting these findings by recording details of the classroom conditions, students' participation and other aspects of communication such as non-verbal during the interactions. After these observations, informal interviews were hold with some of the students to give them the chance to elaborate about their interactions in the classroom in order to gain further explanations about their communicative strategies. These interviews were also audio taped and the tapes were then transcribed for the purpose of evaluation.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of the collected data, the research adopted the steps required in the Discourse analysis framework as proposed by Evans et al. (2022) and Willey-Sthapit et al. (2022). First,

all the recorded interviews, field observations and notes, and all the written transcripts of interview were kept safe and stored in a systematic manner which were ready for analysis. The data were then reanalysed and pertinent passages were coded relative to the types of speech acts, which were distinguished in accordance with Franz et al. (2022). The coded data were organized and systematized to allow for pattern recognition and to recognize the major patterns of sociolinguistic competence featured by the students. Last of all, conclusions were made from the synthesized findings and compared them with previous studies to validate the findings and lead to implications for an EFL context in teaching and learning.

Results and Discussion

There are various types and functions of sociolinguistic communicative competence found by researcher in this study. Besides, the percentage frequency is also shown to know the dominant type of the competence applied by learners.

Assertive force

Extract 1 (Concluding the material)

M was the moderator, and he also became the first presenter in this group.

> "*And the last is conclusion. I can conclude here; language testing is the test to know how far students be able to understand the language learner or the material. A test is a method of measuring a person's skill, ability or knowledge in a given area. Assessment is a process of gathering, analysis, interpreting about student learning.*" (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11th)

M said *"And the last is conclusion. I can conclude here"* which indicates that at the end of his presentation, he wanted to summarize the important material. Then, he started explaining 3 main points. Those are *language testing, a test and assessment.* Therefore, it can be seen clearly that the functions of assertive speech act were to conclude and emphasize the essential material so that the audience could get clear understanding. It is also supported by the students' statement below:

> "*Maybe it is as an emphasizing, or it is exactly to make the points clear. Surely, minimally there must be an important thing which could be explained to the audience, I think so).*" (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15th)

Extract 2 (Informing)

M was the moderator in this meeting. In the beginning, after greeting the audience, he gave information about his group and the material that they would discuss.

> "*We are from the second group and today we would like to % present you % paper entitled % writing course materials for the world: a great compromise.*" (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

M said, *"we are from the second group and today we would like to % present you % paper entitled % writing course materials for the world: a great compromise".* It can be seen clearly that the moderator used assertive force of speech act to inform the other students about his group and the title of discussed material. Indeed, it is important to give preliminary information to the audience before starting the presentation. By knowing the title, they could have a description towards the material. Another example is also given in the following.

Extract 3 (Explaining the material)

P2 was the second presenter who explained the material.

> "*Testing can be conducted in various ways and with different approach such as written exams, essays, oral, exams, conversations between teacher and student or group conversation. And there are 2 kinds of testing there are formal and informal assessment % which is for example, the formal assessment where the student is aware of the fact that he or she is being tested for a reason. And then there are purposes of language testing. There are main reasons to carry out assessment of student language learning can be identified.*" (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11th)

In extract 3, the presenter gave explanation to the audience about testing by saying *"testing can be conducted in various ways and with different approach such as written exams, essays, oral, exams, conversations between teacher and student or group conversation"*. Then, she also uttered *"and there are 2 kinds of testing there are formal and informal assessment"* which indicates further explanation about testing. Therefore, it can be seen clearly that the speaker used assertive force of speech act to explain the discussed material.

Extract 4 (Asserting)

M was the moderator, and he opened the presentation.

> "*Assalamualaikum wr.wb. I repeat again Assalamualaikum wr.wb.*
>
> *"Waalaikumsalam wr.wb."* (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

M uttered *"Assalamualaikum wr.wb. I repeat again Assalamualaikum wr.wb."*. It shows that when the moderator opened the presentation, he greeted the audience by saying *Assalamualaikum wr.wb* but they did not answer it. Thus, M said **"I repeat again"** which indicates as a signal for the audience to give attention to the moderator because he would open the presentation. After saying the words, other students uttered *Waalaikumsalam wr.wb*. In this case, the function of assertive force was to assert something in order to gain others attention.

Directive Force

Extract 5 (Asking the question)

> "*My question is what do you think about this one case because the students nowadays using technology in teaching learning process. So, there is maybe the possibility that not possibility but this is the fact that the students sometimes use technology in cheating on exam. So, how do you think the best way to design teaching learning material that is effective for these three both expect of education cognitive, psikomotorik and affective. Eh apa lagi satu?(eh what is the last one?) Affective, psikomotorik and cognitive. How do you think the best the best way to cope and to design teaching learning materials with technology for these three aspects.*" (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

S said *"my question is"* which indicates she would ask the presenters about the explained material. In discussion, it is better to say the words at the beginning before asking the question as a clue to others so that they will pay attention. Basically, there are some reasons why students want to ask some questions in the discussion. Below is the reasons based on students statement.

> "*Most of us want to know because we also do not really know the material in graduate program. We also have limited prior knowledge. Thus, the first is to know and the*

second is to clarify because there are various resources in the internet. Therefore, according to them which one is true." (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15th)

Extract 6 *(Asking for inviting)*

M was the moderator, and he let the audience for giving some questions.

"*Ok, I think that's all. Is there any question, comment or suggestion?"*

"*(Rising her hand)"*

"*Yes, please. Uci, question for?"*

"*For the fourth speaker."* (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11th)

M said, *"Is there any question, comment or suggestion?"* In this case, the moderator asked the audience who would give question, comment or suggestion. Thus, asking here was to invite other students to participate in the discussion. It is proved by there was a student who suddenly rose her hand. Then, she uttered *"For the fourth speaker"* which means that she wanted to ask a question for the mentioned presenter.

Extract 7 *(Asking for clarifying)*

M as the moderator asked the student to clarify the answer.

"*Ok thank you. How about Miss Muslimawati?"*

"*(nodding)"*

"*Ok now, we move to the next question"* (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11th)

In extract 7, M used a directive force of speech act to ask the student who gave the question by saying *"How about Miss Muslimawati?".* It can be seen clearly that the purpose of asking was to clarify whether S accepted the speaker's answer or not. After S nodded, M could move to another question.

Extract 8 *(Requesting)*

M was the moderator who requested the student to repeat the question.

"*Can you repeat?"*

"*How do you distinguish that the items of evaluating, assessing and testing? Well, the next one is % you mentioned the second speaker % mentioned 5 purposes of language testing."* (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11th)

In extract 8, M uttered *"can you repeat?".* In this case, the moderator requested the student who gave the question to repeat it because he did not catch the meaning. Then, S as the student repeated her question to make it clear. Therefore, it is essential to use directive force of speech act in the discussion process when there is something unclear.

Extract 9 *(Inviting the presenter)*

The moderator let P3 as the third presenter to deliver the material.

"*Ok, the next section will be explained by Miss Kartika."*

"*Ok the next is case studies in process of materials writing and there are some steps."* (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

M used directive force to invite the presenter in order to explain the material to the audience by uttering *"ok, the next section will be explained by Miss Kartika"*. The moderator mentioned the name and it was a good way to let the speaker deliverithe material. Thus, other students could know who the next presenter would be. Moreover, it was also as a clue *"the next section"* to move to another subtopic. Another example of inviting will be shown in the following.

Extract 10 (Inviting the audience)

M as the moderator invited the student to give the question.

> *"Ok that's the question from Mr. Aldi. Next question maybe from…"*
>
> *"(Rising his hand)"*
>
> *"Mr. Jahar. Time is yours."* (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

In extract 10, M as the moderator said *"ok that's the question from Mr. Aldi"* which means that Mr. Aldi had given his question. Then, M invited another student to ask by uttering *"Next question maybe from…."*. At the same time, S was rising his hand which revealed that he had something to ask. Afterwards, the moderator let the student speak by saying *"Mr. Jahar. Time is yours"*. Actually, this case is almost the same as the previous extract when the moderator let the presenter speak. In this case, M also mentioned the name of the student who would ask and let them speak by saying *"time is yours"*. Therefore, in extract 39, 40 and 41, the moderator used directive force to invite the presenters and students to explain or share what were in their mind. Those are effective ways to employ especially in the discussion process in order to get a good interaction.

Commissive Force

Commissive force in speech acts shows the speaker's intention in the future. In this study, the researcher only found one function used in the interaction namely expecting. It is a new finding in this part.

Extract 11 (Expecting)

In this case, there was no lecturer in the class. Thus, many students felt bored and not really enthusiastic in the discussion.

> *"Brother and sister, I hope you still wake up, open your eyes, open your heart."*
>
> *"@@@"*
>
> *"ok, please rise your hand. Time is yours."* (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

M said, *"Brother and sister I hope you still wake up, open your eyes, open your heart"*. It indicates that the moderator wanted if the audience still paid attention and involved in the discussion process. There was no lecturer in the class who made the audience inattentive to the presenters. Thus, the moderator said those words in order to create humorous effect and made the audience interested in the discussion. It is proved by the students who were laughing after hearing the moderator's utterance. Laughing is symbolized @@@ in the extract. Therefore, the function of commissive force here was to show speaker's expectation towards the students' attitude in involving the discussion process.

Expressive Force

Extract 12 (Greeting the audience)

M as the moderator opened the presentation by greeting the students.

"Ok, Assalamualaikum, wr.wb."

"Waalaikumsalam, wr.wb." (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11ᵗʰ)

In extract 12, in the beginning, M said *"Assalamualaikum, wr.wb."* (piece be upon you all). Then, all students responded *"Waalaikumsalam, wr.wb."* (piece be upon you too). It is an Islamic greeting, and it shows a politeness attitude. Thus, it is one of good ways to begin the communication. Actually, the moderator used it in order to open the presentation. Other moderators from different groups also used Islamic greeting in the first until the fourth meeting. Based on the interview section, the researcher found that there are some reasons underlying it.

> *"(I think, it is an obligation because greeting others refers to our belief. However, in my opinion, it is a tradition, and it does not need to be a problem. Thus, it is as my obligation to greet others and the second is as a respect)."* (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15ᵗʰ)

S above was the second interviewee who stated that greeting becomes an obligation and a tradition. It also refers to our belief to greet others.

Extract 13 (Greeting the audience)

> *"Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Assalamualaikum, wr.wb."*

> *"Waalaikumsalam, wr.wb."*

> *"And good afternoon % well today % I would present % about my paper with entitled language testing and assessment."* (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11ᵗʰ)

In extract 13, M firstly said *"Bismillahirrahmanirrahim"* before greeting the students in the class. It also became one of good alternatives to start the communication by saying *basmalah* as an expectation form towards the discussion process. Hopefully it could be fine. Afterwards, the moderator utilized two ways in greeting the students. He used Islamic greeting *"Assalamualaikum, wr.wb"* (piece be upon you all) and English greeting *"good afternoon"*. Both ways are accepted in the student's interaction.

Extract 14 (Greeting the audience)

M as the moderator tried to get the students attention.

> *"Thank you very much for the chance. I'll try to answer."*

> *"Hello. attention please."*

> *"There are 5 purposes of multi testing and one of them is accountability."* (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11ᵗʰ)

In extract 14, P2 as the second presenter wanted to answer the question from audience but the moderator who looked at the disorganized situation suddenly spoke *"hello. attention please"*. Here, the main purpose of using expressive force was not to greet the audience but to reach their attention. After saying the words, other students gave their attention to the speaker so that the presenter continued to answer the question. Actually, M demonstrated of how to attract the audience's attention. It is one of effective strategies which could be done in order to make our participants still focus in the discussion process.

Extract 15 (Thanking)

> *"(Rising his hand)."*

> *"Yes, time is yours please."*

"Ok, thank you very much for % chance. I am still confused about the word compromise related to the process of materials writing. I am still confused the use of the word compromise here. So, could you explain me in simple way based on your own understanding? Thank you." (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

In extract 15, M as the moderator let the student ask a question. Afterwards, S expressed his attitude by giving thanks to the moderator for the chance. Then, after giving the question, he said thanks to the moderator once again *"Thank you".* Actually, thanking is an effective way to express our respect after getting a chance to speak. Moreover, it shows a polite attitude in doing interaction with others. Therefore, it is essential to use the words in the discussion process.

Extract 16 (Thanking)

"Ok, thank you very much for your attention and I am so sorry if we have made many mistaken from this material because we share each other. And then we close our discussion today by reciting hamdalah today." (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

In extract 16, M said thanks to the audience *"thank you very much for your attention".* It is crucial to utter the words before closing the discussion as respectful and appreciative form because the audience had given the questions, suggestions or comments and they also had paid attention to the presenters. This finding is also supported by students' statement below.

"The factor is because audience's attention so that we should thank to them." (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15th)

S as the first interviewee argued (the factor is because audience's attention so that we should thank to them).

"I think, it is to look humble. Moreover, in discussion, we should respect each other whether to the presenters and the participants. We should appreciate all the questions, explanations, etc)." (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15th)

S as the second interviewee gave his statement that he said thanks whether to presenters and participants as a respect and humble form.

"The purpose is to appreciate my friends as the participants for giving questions and suggestions."

"Like that, respecting each other"

"Yes, respecting each other" (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15th)

S as the third interviewee argued that the function of saying thanks was to appreciate the audience for giving questions and suggestions.

"We said thanks to appreciate others attention to us. Just it)." (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15th)

S as the fourth interviewee gave his comment that he said thanks to appreciate the participants who had paid attention.

"Because discussion is a formal situation, so it is more polite if we say thanks." (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15th)

S as the last interviewee uttered "because discussion is a formal situation, so it is more polite if we say thanks". Based on the five statements above, all of the interviewees have quite same

opinions. They argue that the purposes of using thank words are to appreciate the student's attention and participations after giving questions, suggestions and comments. Moreover, it is to look humble and polite.

Extract 17 (Apologizing)

M as the moderator let the student to ask the question.

> *"Anymore? ... Ok miss Suci miss Ima sorry."* (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

In extract 17, M used expressive force to apologize to the participant who wanted to give a question. M uttered *"Ok miss Suci miss Ima sorry"*. The moderator expressed his regret by saying *sorry* because he realized that he had made mistake in mentioning an incorrect name. After saying the first name, he said another name again and it indicates that the moderator changed the name from Suci to Ima. That is why, M had apologized before letting the student deliver her question. Let us see other examples of apologizing in different case below.

Extract 18 (Apologizing)

M as the moderator in this group and he also acted as the first presenter.

> *"Assessment is a broad term that include sorry that includes testing. A test is a special form of assessment."* (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11th)

In extract 18, M explained his material to the audience but suddenly he apologized by saying *"Assessment is a broad term that include % sorry that includes testing"*. As seen in the extract, the moderator used expressive force to apologize because he had done grammatical mistake. In this case, M demonstrated about what the speaker has to do when realizing that there is a mistake happened during presenting the material. Besides, he showed his polite attitude by saying ***sorry.*** In fact, it is a good example that could be followed especially in formal situation like discussion process in the class.

Extract 19 (Apologizing)

M was the moderator, and he also became the first speaker in this meeting.

> *"And the last is language dominant test to assess bilingual language relative strange of the second language sorry of the two languages. Sorry actually there are types of tests the last one is aptitude test means to predict a person's future success in learning % foreign language."* (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11th)

In extract 19, M said *"assess bilingual language relative strange of the second language sorry of the two languages"* which indicates that he apologized because he was wrong in saying the words so that it must be changed. Afterwards, he uttered sorry at the second time *"Sorry actually there are 8 here types of tests"*. In this case, M realized that there was wrong in the slide. He typed incorrectly the amount of test types. Therefore, M thought he must apologize to the audience.

Extract 20 (Apologizing)

S was the student who gave a question and SS were the students who corrected S pronunciation.

> *"No, no, no yang I mean ada yang disitu stronger, ada yang weakness, ada yang pake ada yang butir 3 sampai 4. How to determine that their question is %..."*
>
> *"Determine (correcting the pronunciation)."*
>
> *"Determine, yes sorry."* (Classroom Interaction. Wednesday, on April 11th)

In extract 20, S repeated her question, but suddenly other students interrupted by saying "determine". They corrected S pronunciation so that she showed her regret by saying the word correctly and then apologizing *"determine, yes sorry"*. In this case, S demonstrated an effective way of how to handle the situation when making mistake. Furthermore explanation, let us see another example of apologizing below.

Extract 21 (Apologizing)

M as the moderator closed the discussion.

> *"Ok, thank you very much for your attention and I am so sorry if we have made many mistakes from this material because we share each other. And then we close our discussion today by reciting hamdalah today."* (Classroom Interaction. Friday, on May 11th)

In extract 22, M firstly apologized to the audience before closing the discussion by saying *"I am so sorry if we have made many mistakes from this material because we share each other"*. M showed us how to end the discussion politely. Not only giving thanks to the audience but also apologizing for unsatisfied presentation. There are some reasons why students sometimes apologize in the last of discussion forum based on the interview section below.

> *"What had been explained was not satisfied yet or maybe there was something which was not explained. Moreover, maybe the audience did not really comprehend the material. Thus, the moderator said sorry because he/she was not gratified with the presentation)."* (Interview Section. Tuesday, on May 15th)

S said that the moderator uttered sorry because she or he was not gratified with the presentation. The audience did not really understand the material or maybe there was material which was not explained well yet. The researcher had analyzed the dominant type of sociolinguistic communicative competence that occurred in EFL classroom interactions from the first until the fourth meeting. The results can be seen in the following:

Table 1. The Frequency of Using Sociolinguistic Communicative Competence

Sociolinguistic Competence	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	4th meeting	Total
Assertive Force					
Concluding	3				3
Reviewing				1	1
Informing	9	9	10	11	39
Explaining	4	5	5	5	19
Asserting			1		1
Directive Force					
Asking	32	13	9	13	67
Requesting	4		1	3	8
Inviting	3	7	11	10	31
Commissive Force					
Expecting				1	1
Expressive Force					
Greeting	6	1	3	3	13
Thanking	13	9	15	7	44
Apologizing	7	1	3		11
Total	**81**	**45**	**58**	**54**	**238**

Table 1 shows combinations of sociolinguistic communicative competencies that the students use, with the over emphasis on the directive force, specifically for the act of questioning to further affirm the highly engaging and active classroom setting. This often duty to question indicates that such students may only participate in class, the questions being asked and answered are questions that do not invite critical and thoughtful responses. The assertive force, especially when it comes to informing and explaining, accentuates the students' preference for sharing knowledge rather than analysis more generally; a culture that endorses clarity and the restatement of ideas. Gratitude as one of the expressive forces finds the speaker to align herself with the rules of politeness and it therefore creates a culture where any negative force such as criticism that may be vital in academic engagement is often suppressed. The navailable of commissive force, with the sole usage of expecting, suggests a deficit in the encouragement of forward planning and proposing necessary for future-oriented academic and occupational maturity. This distribution of communicative acts indicate that, although the classroom is lively and people are participating and polite there is dire need for a move towards enhanced cognitive learning as oppose to just participation as observed and illustrated in class.
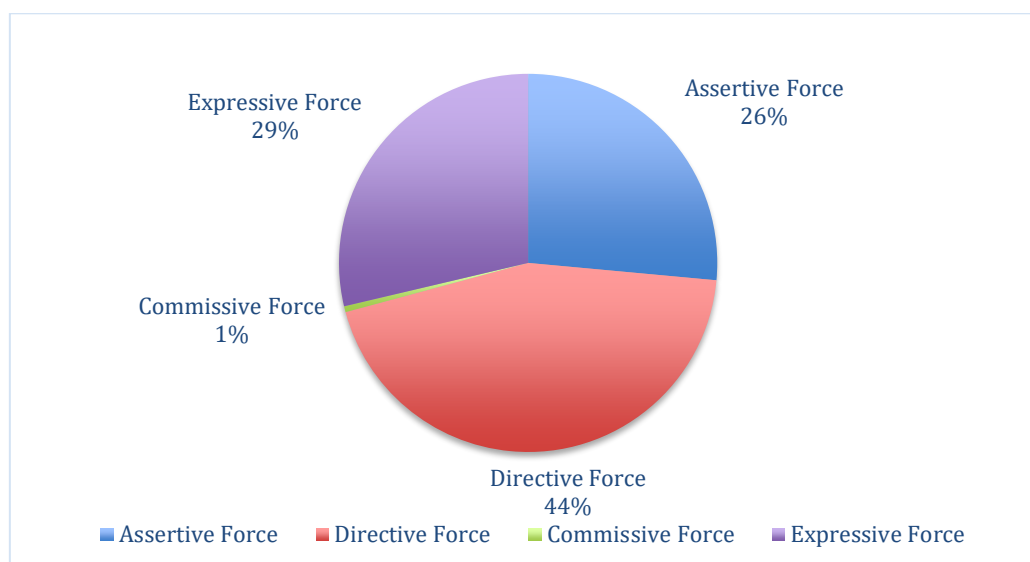

Figure 1. The Percentage of Using Sociolinguistic Communicative Competence

In sociolinguistic communicative competence, most of students used directive force in order to ask questions, request and invite the audiences and presenters to speak. They applied it as 106 times with the percentage 44%.

The way students actively use assertive force in additional talks and particularly when summarizing the information and returning to the main concepts, indicates the issues of strategic communication that is based on the matters of clarity and, to some extent, on comprehensibility. This is in line with the current focus in tertiary education to help students improve on their communicative, presentation and summarizing skills to express rather simple as well as advanced concepts (Virtanen & Tynjälä, 2019; Algouzi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, this clearly observable high behavioral frequency of assertive acts like summarizing and concluding on the side of students is a positive sign indicating their selectively integrative processing ability which, however, gives rise to some epistemologically critical and methodologically worrying questions regarding the depth and density of the students' surface level academic activities.

Such use of assertive force might suggest that students are more interested in complicated showmanship in trying to get an 'A' on the exam by making the right moves and saying the 'right' things. This observation accords with the findings of Algouzi et al. (2023) and Ballantine et al. (2018) who pointed out that students adopt surface approaches to learning that enable them get good grades but does not facilitate deep learning. Consequently, assertive acts have doubtless significance, but educators have to be careful not to confuse their frequent employment with enriching knowledge (Desai & Wane, 2022). There was, however, no attempt made to persuade students to think past outlining and paraphrasing and analyse the material critically. If attained, this approach would not only improve their curriculum releases that are important when doing academic work, but also polish their critical thinking abilities that are crucial for their future jobs.

The conclusion that the most often used force in the communicative regulation is directive force with the element of questioning is a cause for optimism and concern at the same time. On the one hand, the high rate of questioning is suggestive of psychological climate that embraces the spirit of oral participation and knowledge creation that is a key component of knowledge creation (Nguyen et al., 2020; Farny et al., 2019). At the same time, the nature of these questions requires more attention. Are these inquiries the result of interest and curiosity as to what is happening, or are they just questions being made to meet the required number of questions per week?

In the more recent work by Wegerif (2019), the role of cultivating the rights to inquire refers not only to asking questions to meet the criterion but to inquire, to ask the questions that enable critical and rigorous thinking on the content. In this regard, it becomes very important that facilitators distinguish between more challenging type of questions aimed at provoking critical thinking on the one hand and transitional questions that are asked only in order maintain the flow of the conversation on the other. If students are made to ask more beyond the surface questions like those questions that are asked under the categories of questioning that involves probing assumptions, judging evidence, and going further to comprehend consequences, then there will be so much improvement in the two classroom discussions compared to what we have seen. Further, this approach would complement the cognitive trend in skills demanded in students that is already gaining currency in higher learning institutions as significant for performance both academically and professionally (Castro, 2019; Urquía-Grande & Perez Estebanez, 2020).

According to Pinker & Jackendoff (2005) that commissive force is not used very often language that communicates commitments and expectations and that is mostly used to make promises shows that there is the potential for further growth in this realm of language proficiency. Commissive acts are extremely useful in academic and business contexts, where the capacity to verbalise obligations and future undertakings is relevant to planning and shared work structures (Mourik et al., 2021; Seregina, 2020). That is why the appearance of commissive acts, even if they are only a few, points to the fact that students start wandering beyond the here and now of communication, considering future outcomes of the actions they commit.

This discovery is especially significant in the light of graduate education where, in addition to having content knowledge, the learners are supposed to acquire the professional skills as preparators for leadership in professions. Instructing the use of commissive language may be useful if adopted in the interactions between the students and the teacher, since the students would become more responsible and take charge of their learning activities. In this respect educators could engage the students in discussions that would call for goal setting and personal

commitments to peers as a way of embedding commissive acts as part of their repertoire to communicate effectively (Jensen et al., 2021; Huber & Morreale, 2023). The tendency for the use of expressive force is frequently observable, especially when probing the domains of thanking and apologizing which again underline the communal aspect of interpersonal relations in the classroom context where sustainability of positive interpersonal affiliations is deemed of great importance to learners. This finding supports Markowitz (2023) and Róin et al. (2021) of presentation self where use language to control the impressions and interaction with people. In academic environments, for example, the mentioned expressive acts can help build a positive learning climate that might positively influence students interactions and cooperation (Hong et al., 2021; Andres, 2020).

Yet, it can also be a disadvantage that the striving for harmony and mutual agreement is too sharply stated. If students are overly concerned with being polite and avoiding confrontation, they may avoid engaging in more contentious arguments, or refrain from giving constructive criticism, which is all part of the academic process. This issue is described by Levin (2024) and Koehler et al. (2022) and they pointed out that productive conflicts are the source of the deepest learning in the framework of learning discussions. Hence, as useful as the expressive rituals are in creating the classroom culture, building the environment in which escalation of disagreement and confrontation is possible and students do not feel intimidated into submission, is equally significant task. To this, educators can facilitate through examples of how they foster critical, yet civil conversations to their students and remind the students that conflict implies difference which is healthy and important rather than a threat to the group's unity (Mac Ginty, 2021; Paraskeva, 2021; Zimmerman, 2022).

The implication of the study for education and student has the following implications particularly in graduate school. Drawing attention to such a perspective, the study suggests that assertive force, the task of getting the message across, directive force and the need to take responsibility for making a commitment and expressive force or the ability to negotiate interpersonal relationships should also form part of the balanced communicative competence (Ladegaard, 2011; Thaler, 2012). All these competencies are useful in both academic and workplace environments and should be the purposefully nurtured in graduate education. To achieve this however, there is need for educators to take broader perspective in the causality of communicative competence. It might be the active implementation of the communication skills into the curriculum as part of the learning objectives/teaching strategies, projects, and case studies, role play and many others more. These strategies can enable students to attempt a range of special forms of communicative acts in the context of a non-threatening classroom and hence have a more diversified communicative repertoire (Van Viegen & Zappa-Hollman, 2020; Toomaneejinda & Harding, 2018).

Therefore, the present research suggests that teachers should receive continuous training on ways of how to enhance students critical thinking and real life learning in the classroom. In coordination with what Nguyen et al. (2020) and Pekarek Doehler (2021) proposed, teacher bears an important responsibility of how classroom interaction will be conducted and consequently, how the students communicative proficiency is nurtured. In this way, caring for own mentoring communication skills, educators open the paths for students, preparing them for the academic and work world organized according to competencies that imply teamwork.

Conclusion

The present work has aimed at disseminating knowledge as to the status of sociolinguistic communicative competence of the graduate students and identifying the patterns of multiple and varying communicative practices within the framework of classroom communication. Employing the division of assertive, directive, commissive and expressive forces the study has revealed the aspects of students learning which are successful when engaged in academic discussions as well as the areas of improvement. The result confirms the notion that forceful assertive communications is critical for clear and piercing yet the result also points towards the dangers of skin deep interaction with academic material especially with a tendency to focus on summarization and conclusion without critical analysis. Likewise, the high rate of directive force is an indication of a positive classroom climate where students actively engage themselves in the class discussions but it also poses several questions concerning the quality of questioning, and extent of knowledge with in the students. The appearance of commissive force, though less often, can be thought of as evidential of an increased stability in the student's pragmatic repertoire as a sign of their increasing ability to make future commitments and consider the consequences of their actions. This is an area that needs further research because collaboration and leadership skills are necessary for functioning both in academia and the working world. This study also establishes the relevance of expressive force to the coordination of Interpersonal Relations in the classroom. Although this competence is useful in fostering team cohesion and harmony to create a conducive learning environment, it becomes important to encourage social friction so that students feel free to engage in purposeful and constructive 'conflict' to deepen learning. The study therefore underpins the call for a pragmatic orientated approach towards teaching and training in communication competencies in graduate education. Educators should work not only on the development of the student's language competence, but also on critical thinking, genuine learning, and the skills of handling the social and professional life. In this manner, they are exposing them to tools that prepare them for the challenges of a progressively integrated, teamwork-oriented society.

ORCID

Mujib Hasib https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5516-6257

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