

**A STUDY OF THE SOCIOPRAGMATIC KNOWLEDGE OF
FOURTH YEAR NON-ENGLISH SPECIALIZATION
STUDENTS**

Ph D DISSERTATION

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MAY 2018

ABSTRACT

Sociopragmatic competence is crucial for EFL learners to be effective communicators because they are said to use the language they are expected to use irrelevantly or badly if they cannot speak appropriately which different social contexts demand. The present study investigates the sociopragmatic knowledge of 370 fourth year non-English specialization students studying at Yangon University, Dagon University, East Yangon University and West Yangon University. It focuses on the speech acts of “request, invitation, offer, suggestion” and “refusal” to these speech acts. The students’ sociopragmatic knowledge was studied at the recognition level by using multiple-choice discourse completion tests (MDCTs) and at the production level by using discourse completion tests (DCTs). MDCTs and DCTs were constructed based on the language functions found in the coursebooks, “Straightforward” prescribed for the non-English specialization students in universities in Myanmar. The DCT data for the speech acts of “request, invitation, offer and suggestion” were analysed using the “request strategies” proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), “invitation strategies” by Eshreth (2014), “offer strategies” by Barron (2005) and “suggestion strategies” by Martínez-Flor (2005). DCT data for the speech act of “refusal” were analysed using the analytical framework of Beebe et al. (1990). The findings showed that both at the recognition level and at the production level, the strategies mostly used by the students were indirect strategies for the speech acts of “request, invitation, offer and suggestion”. For the speech act of “refusal”, although indirect strategies were used more than direct strategies at the recognition level, the students used more direct strategies at the production level. This shows that at the recognition level, the students have sociopragmatic knowledge. However, at the production level, because of the limitation in “language” and sociopragmatic knowledge, the students could not produce “grammatically correct” and “sociopragmatically appropriate” utterances. Suggestions were made on how to improve students’ sociopragmatic knowledge and some pedagogical implications were presented. The study will be beneficial to teachers teaching language functions in English and to EFL learners trying to be effective communicators in their real life.