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# A Needs Assessment of Foreign Language Communicative Competence Among ASEAN Language Students in Guangxi Private Universities

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## Abstract

**Background and Aims:** This study aims to examine the constituent dimensions of foreign language communication competence and explore the ASEAN language students at private universities in Guangxi. Based on Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980), foreign language communication competence is defined as comprising four dimensions: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse Competence, and strategic Competence.

**Methodology**: The study employed a questionnaire survey method to collect data on the current and desired competence levels of 218 students. Analyzed the current and desired levels of students through inferential analysis methods. Mean and standard deviation illustrating the distribution of students' levels. The PNI Modified value was employed to identify the most urgent areas for improvement among students.

**Results:** The results showed that students performed relatively well in grammatical (Mean = 2.21, PNI = 0.54) and sociolinguistic competence (Mean = 2.02, PNI = 0.58), but had deficiencies in discourse (Mean = 1.93, PNI = 0.60) and strategic competence (Mean = 1.98, PNI = 0.59); Also had deficiencies in foreign language communication competence were below expectations.

**Conclusion:** This finding underscores the need to cultivate the communicative competence of students studying ASEAN languages at private universities in Guangxi. Given that students' needs in the areas of discourse and strategic competence are most pressing, future reforms in foreign language education management should focus on developing practical language proficiency; this study provides a systematic framework for this purpose.

**Keywords:** Foreign Language Communicative Competence; Needs Assessment; ASEAN Language Student



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## Introduction

Foreign language communication competence has always been a capability that foreign language learners place great emphasis on. In line with the global focus on core competencies, attention to foreign language competence has gradually shifted toward emphasizing foreign language communication competence (Nikitina et al., 2021). In today's era of information globalization, the urgency of cultivating students' foreign language communication competence has grown increasingly significant. Communication competence is essential for future societal development and professional work; only proficient foreign language communication competence can bridge the gap in cross-cultural communication (Gulovich, 2012).

Located in southwestern China and bordering Southeast Asia, Guangxi maintains close ties with ASEAN countries, resulting in a substantial demand for ASEAN language professionals. When recruiting ASEAN language specialists, most enterprises prioritize candidates who possess strong communicative competence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Ma, 2023). This indicates that foreign language communicative competence plays a crucial role in the future employment prospects and long-term development of ASEAN language students. However, Hu (2023) found in a survey of students' self-assessment of their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities that only 9% felt they were proficient in communication, indicating that most foreign language students perceive their foreign language communication competence to be low.

Current research on foreign language communication competence has primarily focused on widely used foreign languages such as English, with relatively limited attention given to non-widely used foreign languages like those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). To address this research gap, this study focuses on private universities in Guangxi as the research scope and ASEAN language students as the research subjects. By examining the level and desirability of foreign language communication competence among ASEAN language students in private universities in Guangxi, this study analyzes the gaps and priorities, providing data support for future targeted educational management of non-mainstream foreign language disciplines.

## Objectives

1) To investigate the current level of foreign language communication competence among ASEAN language students majoring at private universities in Guangxi.

2) To investigate the desirability of foreign language communication competence among ASEAN language students majoring at private universities in Guangxi.

3) To analyze the gap between the level and the desirable based on data collected through questionnaires.



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## Literature Review

Foreign language communicative competence plays an increasingly vital role in our globalizing world. Individuals may interact with people from diverse cultural groups or nations, experiencing profound influences from varied values, practices, and perspectives across different cultural contexts and countries. Foreign language communicative competence constitutes the most fundamental competency within the field of foreign language studies, yet academic definitions of this concept remain relatively broad (Panfilova & Panfilov, 2024).

Communicative competence was first proposed by renowned American sociologist James Hymes in his article “On Communicative Competence.” Hymes argued that language, as a vital means of social interaction, must adhere to specific usage rules; otherwise, grammar would become meaningless. When an individual acquires communicative competence, it signifies not only knowledge of linguistic rules but also the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts (Sun & Wang, 2017).

Hymes posits that communicative competence encompasses four sociocultural factors: degree of possibility, referring to knowledge inherent within a linguistic system such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary; degree of feasibility, about psychological knowledge of language users including individual memory and cognitive abilities; degree of appropriateness, denoting the capacity for accurate language use in communication; and degree of performance, signifying the likelihood of speech acts occurring (Hymes,1972). Hymes has provided a detailed definition of communicative competence, but has not yet established a clear set of dimensions for classifying them.

Canale and Swain (1980) incorporated Hymes' perspective and expanded upon it to form the communicative competence model. They posited that communicative competence encompasses: sociolinguistic competence, which refers to the ability to appropriately understand and express discourse in different contexts; discourse competence, which integrates grammatical form and meaning to express various types of discourse in spoken or written form, essentially the ability to organize language; and strategic competence, which compensates for linguistic deficiencies, meaning the ability to improvise in communication.

Canale and Swain's (1980) communicative model offers a clear and well-defined classification, making it suitable for reference and evaluation. Therefore, the dimensions of foreign language communicative competence discussed in this study are developed based on this model. These include Grammatical Competence, Sociolinguistic Competence, Discourse Competence, and Strategic Competence. These four competence dimensions constitute the criteria for evaluating the foreign language communicative competence of ASEAN language students in Guangxi's private universities in this study.



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## Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in Canale and Swain's (1980) communicative competence model, comprising four dimensions: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Through needs assessment and gap analysis, the framework identifies discrepancies between students' current and desired competence levels. It establishes priority rankings of needs, leading to a conclusion that identifies the most urgent areas for improvement in foreign language communicative competence.

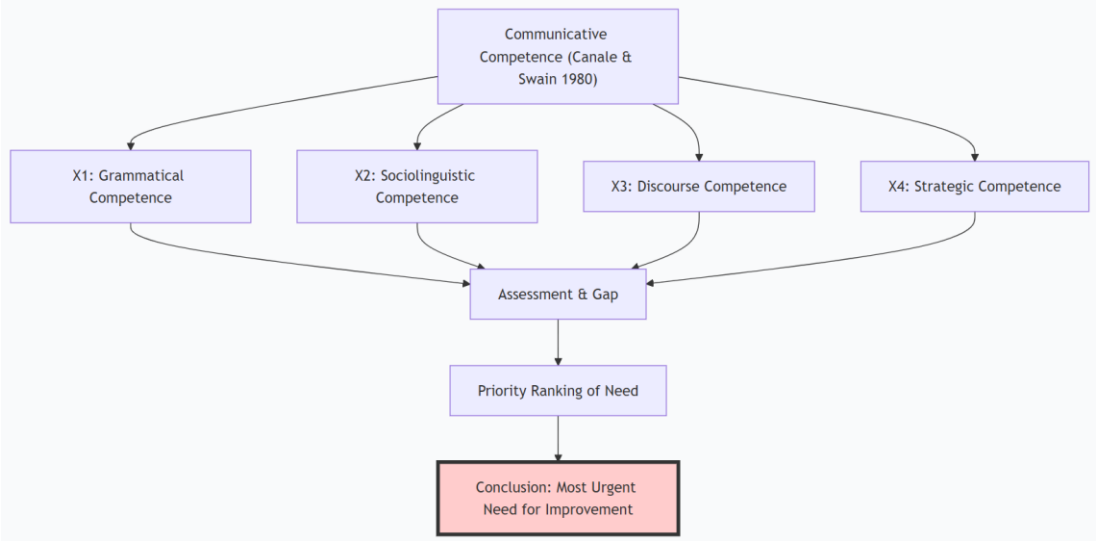



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employs quantitative research methods to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the data. The quantitative findings primarily utilize descriptive statistics to reveal the gap between the current state and expected levels of foreign language communication competence among ASEAN language students at private universities in Guangxi. Compare the mean between the current and desired level and use p-values to explain the significance of the differences. Furthermore, the PNI Modified is applied to identify the competencies most in need of enhancement.

### Setting and Participants

The objective of this study is to analyze the gap between the level and desirable of foreign language communication competence among ASEAN language students at private universities in Guangxi. The target population for this study is students majoring in ASEAN languages at private universities in Guangxi. According to documents published by the Guangxi Department of



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Education, there are a total of four private universities in Guangxi that offer ASEAN language majors. Therefore, the students enrolled in these four universities' ASEAN language departments constitute the target population for this study, with a total of 545 individuals. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formulas, the sample size was calculated to be 218 individuals.

Through stratified sampling, the required sample size for each major in the ASEAN language program will be allocated based on the category and proportion of each school. Subsequently, a purposive sampling method will be employed to select third- and fourth-year students with relatively strong language proficiency, in order to better analyze the gap between current foreign language communication competence and expected standards. Finally, simple random sampling was used to select the final research sample. The final student sample consisted of 143 female students and 75 male students aged 18 to 22. All participants were third- or fourth-year students in the ASEAN language program with at least five years of foreign language learning experience. Consequently, they possessed a basic understanding of theories related to foreign language communication skills, and their foundational abilities met the research objectives.

**Research instrument**

There were no existing research instruments that fully aligned with the objectives and target population of this study. Therefore, a self-developed questionnaire was employed for data collection. The design of the instrument was grounded in the communicative competence model proposed by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (1980), which provided the foundational framework for identifying the key dimensions of foreign language communicative competence. In addition, the development of specific questionnaire items was informed by the Chinese Standards of English Language Ability (Scale, 2018), as discussed by Jing Liu and Bing Han (2020).

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section gathered respondents' demographic information, including gender, age, academic year, major, and foreign language learning experience, comprising a total of five items. The second section measured respondents' self-assessed current and expected levels of foreign language communicative competence across four dimensions: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. This section included a total of 40 items. All items in the second section were rated using a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from A (strongly agree), B (agree), C (neutral), D (disagree), to E (strongly disagree).

Since the questionnaire was specifically developed by the researchers for this study, reliability and validity analyses were conducted first. To assess the content validity of the data collection instrument, the researchers first sent the designed questionnaire items to five experts (including three educational administration experts and two ASEAN language experts) for review, using the item-object consistency (IOC) index. The IOC values for most items ranged from 0.80 to



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1.00, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.78 proposed by Lynn (1986), indicating that these items possess good content validity. Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted with 50 participants similar to the target respondents. The results showed that the overall Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was 0.965, while the Cronbach's alphas for the four dimensions were 0.931, 0.934, 0.945, and 0.936, respectively. According to Nunnally's (1994) evaluation criteria, a value of 0.9 or higher indicates excellent reliability. This suggests that the questionnaire's reliability meets distribution standards, and formal data collection can proceed.

**Data Collection**

This study primarily collected data through questionnaires using a combination of offline and online methods: At the researcher's university, participants were gathered in a designated classroom according to the sampling plan. The research objectives were explained verbally and in writing. After obtaining informed consent, participants completed the questionnaires on-site. For the remaining three private universities in Guangxi, constrained by time and geographical limitations, the study distributed online questionnaires via the "Wen Juan Xing" platform. Faculty members at each institution were commissioned to assist in gathering sampled participants in classrooms for unified completion. All participants were informed of the voluntary principle and confirmed their willingness to participate via an online informed consent page before beginning the questionnaire. The offline questionnaires were administered in a centralized setting, and the response rate was quite satisfactory. Given that online distribution might lead to issues such as incomplete responses or a low response rate, a total of 240 questionnaires were distributed for this study, with 221 returned. After excluding invalid responses, a final sample of 218 valid responses was obtained for subsequent data analysis.

**Data analysis**

When analyzing the collected data, we first calculated the gap between the level and desirable of foreign language communication competence among students majoring in ASEAN languages at private universities in Guangxi using the mean and standard deviation. According to the Likert scale scoring criteria proposed by Alsalhi et al. (2020), a mean score between 1 and 1.8 is classified as "Very little", 1.81–2.6 as "Little", 2.61–3.4 as "Moderate", 3.41–4.2 as "High", and 4.21–5 as "Very high". A gap between the current situation and expectations is considered statistically significant only when P-values are less than .001. Then calculated the priority using the PNI Modified value to conclude this study. The calculation formula for Modified Priority Needs Index ($PNI_{Modified}$) (Wongwanich, 2019) is as follows.

$$\text{Modified Priority Needs Index } (PNI_{Modified}) = \frac{I - D}{D}$$



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## Results

### The level and desirability of foreign language communication competence among ASEAN language students majoring at private universities in Guangxi

The research results are shown in Tables 1-5.

**Table 1** Needs of foreign language communicative competence

| Dimension | Current | | Desirable | | Needs | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | $PNI_{Modified}$ | Rank |
| X1 | 2.21 | 0.48 | 4.81 | 0.20 | 0.54 | 4 |
| X2 | 2.02 | 0.55 | 4.84 | 0.18 | 0.58 | 3 |
| X3 | 1.93 | 0.56 | 4.81 | 0.18 | 0.60 | 1 |
| X4 | 1.98 | 0.56 | 4.85 | 0.24 | 0.59 | 2 |
| **Total** | **2.03** | **0.54** | **4.83** | **0.20** | **0.58** | |

Table 1 presents the level and desirable foreign language communication competence among ASEAN language students at private universities in Guangxi. X1 represents grammatical competence, X2 represents sociolinguistic competence, X3 represents discourse competence, and X4 represents strategic competence. The overall average score is at a low level (M=2.03), while the overall demand is at a very high level (M=4.83). From the perspective of priority needs, the most critical area for improvement is discourse competence ($PNI_{Modified}$ = 0.58), indicating that this competence is the priority to be improved. The following sections will analyze the specific items across the four dimensions.

**Table 2** Research results of grammatical competence

| X1 | Current | | Desirable | | t | P-value | $PNI_{modified}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | | |
| X1-1 | 2.55 | .637 | 4.73 | .443 | -39.757 | 0 | 0.46 |
| X1-2 | 2.17 | .727 | 4.78 | .412 | -46.490 | 0 | 0.54 |
| X1-3 | 2.21 | .785 | 4.94 | .246 | -49.297 | 0 | 0.55 |
| X1-4 | 2.09 | .772 | 4.77 | .424 | -45.288 | 0 | 0.56 |
| X1-5 | 2.04 | .764 | 4.85 | .359 | -47.986 | 0 | 0.58 |

*p < .005, **p < .001

X1-1: You can master the basic pronunciation techniques of a foreign language.

X1-2: You can master the basic vocabulary and grammar of a foreign language.

X1-3: You can master the correct writing style of a foreign language.



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X1-4: You can master the basic listening skills of a foreign language.

X1-5: You can master the basic reading skills of a foreign language.

As shown in Table 2, students' grammar competence is at a relatively low level (M=2.21). Among the specific items, the highest score was for basic pronunciation skills (M=2.55), which is close to the intermediate level (2.61–3.40), indicating that students have a good grasp of the most fundamental pronunciation skills. The lowest score was for reading skills (M=2.04), indicating that students have insufficient vocabulary and are unable to effectively comprehend reading materials.

**Table 3** Research results of sociolinguistic competence

| X2 | Current | | Desirable | | t | P-value | $PNI_{modified}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | | |
| X2-1 | 1.98 | 0.718 | 4.74 | 0.438 | -50.475 | 0 | 0.58 |
| X2-2 | 2.00 | 0.747 | 4.94 | 0.229 | -54.522 | 0 | 0.59 |
| X2-3 | 2.04 | 0.767 | 4.88 | 0.330 | -51.220 | 0 | 0.58 |
| X2-4 | 1.96 | 0.733 | 4.78 | 0.412 | -48.682 | 0 | 0.59 |
| X2-5 | 2.13 | 0.757 | 4.87 | 0.335 | -48.454 | 0 | 0.56 |

*p < .005, **p < .001

X2-1: You can select appropriate foreign language expressions based on the age and status of the other party.

X2-2: You can select appropriate foreign language expressions based on the specific situation.

X2-3: You can select appropriate foreign language expressions based on the purpose of communication.

X2-4: You can select authentic foreign language expressions that align with local culture.

X2-5: You can understand the meaning conveyed by non-verbal behaviors (gestures or facial expressions) of foreigners.

As shown in Table 3, students' sociolinguistic competence is at a relatively low level (M=2.02). Among the specific items, the highest score was for the ability to understand non-verbal behavior (M=2.13), indicating that students can capture the intended meaning of others through body language even under limited understanding conditions. The lowest score was for the ability to use authentic expressions tailored to the local culture (M=1.96), indicating that students lack understanding of the culture and customs of the target language country.



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**Table 4** Research results of discourse competence

| X3 | Current | | Desirable | | t | P-value | $PNI_{modified}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | | |
| X3-1 | 1.94 | 0.772 | 4.74 | 0.438 | -45.990 | 0 | 0.59 |
| X3-2 | 1.99 | 0.725 | 4.86 | 0.345 | -49.314 | 0 | 0.59 |
| X3-3 | 1.93 | 0.746 | 4.93 | 0.261 | -55.544 | 0 | 0.61 |
| X3-4 | 1.89 | 0.735 | 4.63 | 0.483 | -46.361 | 0 | 0.59 |
| X3-5 | 1.89 | 0.764 | 4.90 | 0.302 | -52.155 | 0 | 0.61 |

*p < .005, **p < .001

X3-1: You can integrate individual foreign language vocabulary and grammar into complete sentences and express ideas.

X3-2: You can engage in oral communication with foreigners using a foreign language.

X3-3: You can engage in written communication with foreigners in a foreign language.

X3-4: You can perform oral translation in a foreign language.

X3-5: You can perform written translation in a foreign language.

As shown in Table 4, students' discourse competence is at a relatively low level(M=1.929). Among the specific items, the highest score was for oral communication ability (M=1.99), indicating that students are more proficient in oral language communication than in more formal written expression. The lowest score was for translation ability (M=1.89), indicating that students cannot apply and convert knowledge, and are unable to effectively utilize foreign language knowledge for translation activities.

**Table 5:** Research results of strategic competence

| X4 | Current | | Desirable | | t | P-value | $PNI_{modified}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | | | |
| X4-1 | 1.98 | 0.759 | 4.78 | 0.412 | -50.206 | 0 | 0.58 |
| X4-2 | 1.99 | 0.725 | 4.91 | 0.289 | -54.309 | 0 | 0.59 |
| X4-3 | 1.93 | 0.740 | 4.86 | 0.350 | -53.507 | 0 | 0.60 |
| X4-4 | 1.89 | 0.729 | 4.81 | 0.395 | -55.122 | 0 | 0.60 |
| X4-5 | 2.10 | 0.722 | 4.87 | 0.340 | -51.199 | 0 | 0.59 |

*p < .005, **p < .001

X4-1: When communicating in a foreign language, you can read and understand words in foreign articles and comprehend the meaning of sentences.

X4-2: When communicating in a foreign language, you can understand the pronunciation and words of foreigners and integrate them into complete sentences.



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X4-3: When making mistakes in foreign language expression, students can quickly respond and correct them to the correct expression.

X4-4: When foreign language communication is not smooth, students can quickly find alternative vocabulary.

X4-5: When foreign language communication is not smooth, students can promptly use gestures or body language to supplement their communication.

As shown in Table 5, students' strategic competence is at a relatively low level (M=1.976). Among the specific items, the highest score was for body language expression ability (M=2.10), indicating that under conditions of limited foreign language expression ability, students can fully utilize their strategic abilities to express their intentions through body language. The lowest score was for language substitution ability (M=1.89), indicating that students have not formed a complete knowledge system and cannot find alternative expressions when incorrect.

**The gap between the level and the desirable is based on data collected through questionnaires.**

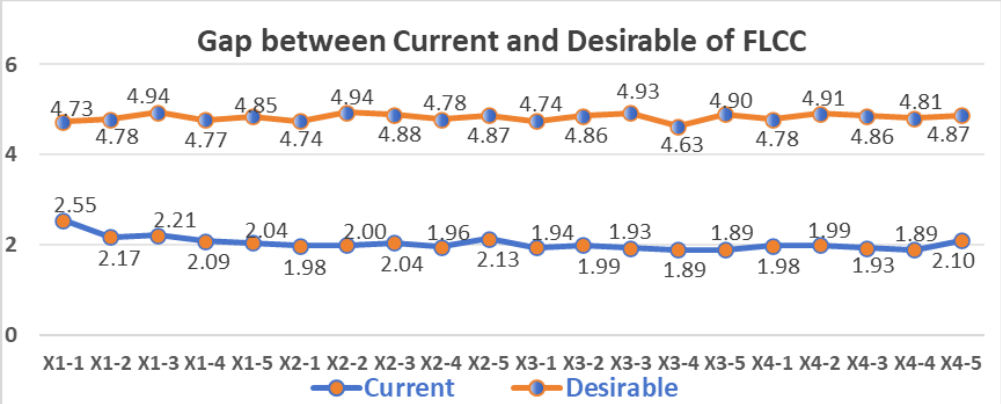



**Figure 2** Needs Assessment of Foreign Language Communicative Competence

As shown in Figure 2 and Tables 1-5, there is a significant gap between the foreign language communication competence level and desirable of students majoring in ASEAN languages at private universities in Guangxi. Most students have weak mastery of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence, and their current level falls short of their desired level. According to Valeeva et al. (2016), the causes of this phenomenon may include insufficient intrinsic motivation among students, inadequate teacher competence, or deficiencies in school management. Therefore, future research should focus on



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identifying the causes and influencing factors of this gap and propose practical and feasible methods and strategies from an educational management perspective.

## Discussion

This study sought to examine the proficiency levels and requirements of foreign language communicative competency among students specializing in ASEAN languages at private universities in Guangxi. The results indicated that students had a relatively low level of foreign language communicative skill (M = 2.033, SD = 0.536), while their needs are exceedingly high (M = 4.829, SD = 0.199). This mismatch distinctly illustrates a significant competency gap between students' current abilities and their anticipated levels, highlighting an urgent necessity for focused enhancement.

The examination of the revised Priority Needs Index ($PNI_{Modified}$) revealed that the domains necessitating the most immediate enhancement, ranked from highest to lowest, are discourse competence ($PNI_{Modified}$ = 0.60), strategic competence ($PNI_{Modified}$ = 0.59), sociolinguistic competence ($PNI_{Modified}$ = 0.58), and grammatical competence ($PNI_{Modified}$ = 0.54). The results indicate that students prioritize the enhancement of advanced language skills, especially those associated with discourse competency. This dimension includes advanced skills such as structuring cohesive writings, scholarly reading, analytical writing, and translation, all of which are vital for effective communication in academic and professional settings.

The significance of discourse competency as the paramount area for enhancement can be ascribed to deficiencies in existing language instruction methodologies. In numerous educational settings, training often prioritizes grammatical precision and structural comprehension over substantive communication and the amalgamation of language abilities in genuine scenarios. Consequently, pupils may have fundamental language understanding yet lack the capacity to formulate and comprehend extended speech proficiently. This study aligns with Mammadov (2019), who indicated that students' reading and writing abilities are comparatively weak and necessitate systematic and targeted improvement, especially in higher education environments where competency in academic language is crucial.

This study reveals that students majoring in ASEAN languages at private colleges in Guangxi demonstrate a notable deficiency in foreign language communicative skills, particularly in discourse competency, which necessitates urgent focus. This outcome corresponds with the observations of Valeeva et al. (2016), who noted that the foreign language communicative skill of the majority of students was inadequate. Valeeva et al. posited that this issue may arise from various sources, including pupils' deficient intrinsic desire, inadequate pedagogical proficiency among educators, and constraints in institutional support and management systems.



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Furthermore, the elevated degree of articulated demands among students signifies a robust knowledge of the necessity to enhance their foreign language skills. This understanding might be regarded as a beneficial element that educators and institutions can utilize when developing curricula and instructional methodologies. To rectify the stated deficiencies, it is imperative to implement learner-centered methodologies that prioritize genuine communication, incorporate diverse language competencies, and facilitate possibilities for significant language application in practical contexts. Improving instructional design, teacher training, and institutional support systems will be essential in bridging the disparity between existing competence levels and students' requirements, thereby enhancing overall foreign language communicative competence in the long term.

## Conclusion

This study makes the following two contributions. First is the empirical contribution. Through an empirical survey of students studying ASEAN languages at four private universities in Guangxi, this study reveals the current reality that students' foreign language communicative competence is relatively low, indicating a significant gap between their current proficiency and educational objectives. This finding enables teachers and educational administrators to accurately identify the areas where students have the most urgent needs, providing clear empirical support for the targeted advancement of teaching reforms and educational management.

Second, the study makes a contribution in terms of research tools. Grounded in the educational context of private universities in Guangxi, this study independently developed a scale suitable for assessing the foreign language communicative competence of students studying ASEAN languages. Existing communicative competence assessment tools are mostly developed for foreign language learners in Western contexts and may not align with the actual scenarios of ASEAN language teaching. To address this, this study combined the language learning characteristics of Chinese students with the disciplinary features of ASEAN languages to localize classic theoretical dimensions and design assessment items, thereby filling a gap in assessment tools in this field. This scale provides an operational definition and measurement paradigm for future research, advancing the study of communicative competence from theoretical discourse toward quantitative validation.

Of course, this study also has some limitations. For instance, the research process relied solely on quantitative methods, lacking qualitative methods such as interviews or discussions to serve as supplementary support. The research sample was drawn exclusively from private universities in Guangxi; therefore, the conclusions may not be generalizable to public universities



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in Guangxi. Finally, this study was limited to students majoring in ASEAN languages, and it remains to be seen whether its conclusions apply to students in other foreign language majors.

In summary, this study offers a valuable perspective for foreign language teaching and educational administration. The findings help educational administrators and teachers at private universities in Guangxi identify existing gaps in the foreign language communicative competence of students majoring in ASEAN languages, providing empirical evidence and guidance for optimizing foreign language teaching practices and curriculum management in the future.

## Recommendation

### Suggestions for implementation

1. Teachers can establish a diversified assessment system based on the foreign language communicative competence scale used in this study, providing a comprehensive evaluation of students across four dimensions: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Building on this foundation, targeted teaching strategies can be designed to foster discourse competence. For instance, task-based learning can be employed to strengthen students' discourse organization and logical expression skills; translation workshops can be organized to guide students in focusing on textual cohesion and coherence mechanisms; and cross-cultural projects can be implemented to hone students' discourse construction abilities in authentic contexts, thereby helping students comprehensively enhance their communicative skills.

2. Educational administrators can draw upon the findings of this study to formulate precise educational management policies by addressing the gap between students' current foreign language communication abilities and the intended learning objectives. In terms of curriculum design, course modules that support the development of discourse competence can be added, such as Fundamentals of Applied Linguistics, Discourse Analysis and Writing, and Practical Cross-Cultural Communication; Regarding faculty allocation, teaching teams composed of instructors with backgrounds in linguistics and applied linguistics can be formed to collaboratively deliver specialized instruction in discourse competence; regarding teaching resources, multimodal corpora, authentic discourse materials, and cross-cultural project resources can be introduced to create a multicultural foreign language learning environment for students, thereby effectively promoting the development of their discourse competence.

### Suggestions for future research

1. Future research could consider expanding the sample size to include students majoring in other languages or non-language majors, and compare the results with the current study to



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examine whether there are differences in the foreign language communication competence and needs of students from different majors.

2. Future research could consider expanding the scope of the study to include public universities in Guangxi and universities in other provinces and municipalities in China, to compare the findings of this study and examine whether there are differences in the level of foreign language communication competence and needs among students in different regions and schools of different types.

3. Future research could consider adopting a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis with qualitative research methods such as interviews and classroom observations to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying various influencing factors and students' actual learning experiences, thereby enhancing the depth and interpretive power of the research findings.

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