

COMPREHENSION OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMPETENCES AND INSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL LANGUAGE USAGE

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ПОНИМАНИЕ СОЦИОЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИХ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЙ И ОБУЧЕНИЕ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЮ СОЦИАЛЬНОГО ЯЗЫКА

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Abstract. A crucial part of communicative competence required for proper language usage in social situations, sociolinguistic competence is thoroughly examined in this review study. The article outlines the fundamental elements of sociolinguistic competence, including linguistic indicators of social relations, politeness norms, register differences, and awareness of dialect and accent, drawing on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and current empirical research. It highlights important obstacles to acquiring this competency, including curriculum that place more emphasis on grammatical correctness than social language proficiency and a lack of opportunity for genuine engagement. The review examines a range of research approaches used in the field, including surveys, performance-based evaluations, and experimental designs, and it provides data from studies showing that specific educational interventions can significantly improve students' sociolinguistic skills. The discussion includes effective teaching techniques, such as using authentic materials, fostering engagement with native speakers, and offering teacher training. The article's conclusion emphasizes the importance of incorporating sociolinguistic competency into language instruction to equip students for effective communication in diverse social contexts. It also urges more study to improve teaching and evaluation methods in this field.

Keywords: dialect; accent; register variation; social affairs; politeness conventions; discourse; paralinguistic; case studies.

Аннотация. Важнейшая часть коммуникативной компетенции, необходимая для правильного использования языка в социальных ситуациях, социолингвистическая компетенция тщательно изучается в этом обзорном исследовании. В статье описываются основные элементы социолингвистической компетенции, такие как лингвистические индикаторы социальных отношений, нормы вежливости, различия в регистрах, а также понимание диалекта и акцента, опираясь на Общеввропейские рамки владения иностранным языком (CEFR) и текущие эмпирические исследования. В ней подчеркиваются важные препятствия на пути к приобретению этой компетенции, включая учебную программу, которая делает больший упор на грамматическую правильность, чем на владение социальным языком, и отсутствие возможности для подлинного взаимодействия. В обзоре рассматривается ряд исследовательских подходов, используемых в этой области, включая опросы, оценки на основе результатов и экспериментальные проекты, и приводятся данные исследований, показывающие, что определенные образовательные вмешательства могут значительно улучшить социолингвистические навыки студентов. В нее включено обсуждение эффективных методов обучения, включая использование аутентичных материалов, содействие взаимодействию с носителями языка и предложение подготовки учителей. В заключении статьи подчеркивается важность включения социолингвистической компетенции в языковое обучение, чтобы вооружить студентов для успешного общения в различных социальных контекстах. Также настоятельно рекомендуется проводить больше исследований для улучшения методов обучения и оценки в этой области.

Ключевые слова: диалект; акцент; вариативность регистра; социальные отношения; правила вежливости; дискурс; паралингвистика; тематические исследования.

Annotatsiya. Ijtimoiy vaziyatlarda tilni to'g'ri qo'llash uchun zarur bo'lgan kommunikativ kompetensiyaning muhim qismi, sotsiolingvistik kompetensiya ushbu sharh tadqiqotida har tomonlama ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqolada ijtimoiy munosabatlarning lingvistik ko'rsatkichlari, xushmuomalalik me'yorlari, registrdagi farqlar, dialekt va urg'uni anglash kabi sotsiolingvistik kompetensiyaning asosiy elementlari, tillar bo'yicha umumiy Yevropa ma'lumotnomasi (CEFR) va hozirgi empirik tadqiqotlarga asoslanadi. U ushbu kompetensiyaga ega bo'lish yo'lidagi muhim to'siqlarni, jumladan, ijtimoiy tilni bilishdan ko'ra grammatik to'g'rilikka ko'proq e'tibor beradigan o'quv dasturini va chinakam ishtirok etish imkoniyati yo'qligini ta'kidlaydi. Sharh ushbu sohada qo'llaniladigan bir qator tadqiqot yondashuvlarini, jumladan so'rovlar, samaradorlikka asoslangan baholash va eksperimental dizaynlarni o'rganadi va muayyan ta'lim tadbirlari o'quvchilarning ijtimoiy-lingvistik ko'nikmalarini sezilarli darajada yaxshilashi mumkinligini ko'rsatadigan tadqiqotlar ma'lumotlarini taqdim etadi. Unda samarali o'qitish usullari, jumladan, asl materiallardan foydalanish, ona tilida so'zlashuvchilar bilan muloqotni rivojlantirish va o'qituvchilar malakasini oshirish masalalari muhokama qilinadi. Maqolaning xulosasi talabalarni turli xil ijtimoiy kontekstlarda muvaffaqiyatli muloqot qilishda qurollantirish uchun sotsiolingvistik kompetensiyani til o'qitishga kiritish muhimligini ta'kidlaydi. Shuningdek, ushbu sohada o'qitish va baholash usullarini takomillashtirish uchun ko'proq o'rganishni talab qiladi.

Kalit soʻzlar: dialect; urgʻu; registr oʻzgarishi; ijtimoiy ishlar; xushmuomalalik qoidalari; nutq; paralingvistik; amaliy tadqiqotlar.

Introduction

The notion of communicative competence, discovered by Dell Hymes in 1966, focuses on language teaching from grammatical accuracy to the capacity to employ language properly within social settings [Hymes 1972: 250]. An important element of this framework is sociolinguistic competence, which enables students to effectively manage the social dimensions of language use. Sociolinguistic competence entails comprehension and employing social guidelines of language, including politeness conventions, register variations, and cultural norms, confirming that interaction is linguistically error-free and socially appropriate. According to Canale & Swain [Canale 1980], it is an important element of communicative competence and serves as a vital component in successful interaction within a second language. Students who improve sociolinguistic awareness are superior well-appointed to understand meaning outside literal phrases, particularly within multilingual or multicultural backgrounds [Celce-Murcia 1995]. They give vigorous evidence accompanying the efficiency of these approaches, showing quantifiable enhancements within students' capacities to utilize language properly within different social schemata [Mede 2015: 16]. Moreover, implementing sociolinguistic competence into language teaching not only enhances interaction skills but also improves broader cultural comprehension and compassion [Perez-Ferra 2022: 119].

As the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) claimed, sociolinguistic competence entails the understanding and skills necessary for addressing the social ranks of language usage, entailing linguistic indications of social rapport and politeness conventions. Aspects of sociolinguistic competence [Council of Europe 2001: 275].

The CEFR gives an in-depth outline for sociolinguistic competence, framing the main elements that students must excel in.

- Linguistic indications of social affairs: Acknowledging the ways in which language imitates social hierarchies and rapport. Including the usage of names or honorifics.
- Politeness conventions: Comprehension culturally certain approaches to mention courtesy, as expressing "please" or bowing within cultures.
- Register variations: Adjusting language formality according to the settings, including the usage of formal language within professional schemata compared to informal language with peers.
- Dialect and Accent: Investigating and, when suits properly, adjusting to regional language differences.

These elements are evaluated among CEFR proficiency ranks (A1–C2), together with beginners employing fundamental polite practices and progressive learners implementing idiomatic words and humor properly.

Table 1*The advancement of sociolinguistic competences among CEFR levels*

| CEFR Level | Sociolinguistic competence rules |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A1-A2 | Employs fundamental greetings and polite practice, following common social routines. |
| B1-B2 | Adjusts register to schemata, identifies socio-cultural keys, carries out language navigations properly |
| C1- C2 | Uses idiomatic words, humor, and difficult language, facilitates efficiently among societies. |

Cases of sociolinguistic competence

As Koay [Koay 2021] mentioned, sociolinguistic competence appears within daily communications, as showcased by the following cases:

1. Appropriate identification: a teenager may mention “Hey, John!” to a peer yet “Excuse me, Mrs. Scarlet!” to a school principal, showing a comprehension of social hierarchies.
2. Topic choosing: At an official dinner, having discussion provocative themes as politics is frequently prevented, yet these topics might be satisfactory across close friends with common interests.
3. Language convention: In a job interview, a candidate employs official language, preventing slang, when casual conversations with friends encompass colloquialisms.
4. Cultural adjustability: In some cultures, direct avoidances are considered impolite, so students need to employ indirect expressions as “I’ll think about it” to detest an invitation in a respectful way.

These cases showcase how sociolinguistic competence empowers learners to fix their language to be appropriate for social schemata, improving communication efficiency.

Difficulties in enhancing sociolinguistic competences. A study underscores the significant challenges in developing sociolinguistic competences among language learners. Research on English as foreign language (EFL) students discovered that even mastered learners are challenged with sociolinguistic skills, frequently limited to fundamental practices like greetings. Total mean scores among CEFR ranks showcased lower sociolinguistic competence at mastered levels, with A1 students gaining 3.48, as well as C2 students 2.22-2.48. According to the reports of Martinez and De Vera [Martinez 2019], there was low sociolinguistic competence, with mean marks reaching to 2.00 (C2) and 3.94 (A1), features exposure to native speakers, as well as syllabus highlighting grammatical knowledge. Main difficulties entail:

- Pedagogical problems: Limited chances for real-life communication with native speakers.
- Syllabus design: Lack of implementation of sociolinguistic competence within instructing sources.

- Evaluation practices: Concentrating on linguistic accuracy over interaction skills/
- Personal restraints: Both learners' and teachers' outlooks and effort ranks.

These difficulties are gathered by non-native instructors' inconveniency with teaching sociolinguistic components because of their own restricted competence, allowing prevention within classroom rehearsal. By focusing sociolinguistic competence, language teachers could prepare students to prosper within globalized atmospheres professionally, giving their success within distinctive contexts [Ritchie 2011: 135]. Improving assessment tools which clearly get students' abilities to utilize language in settings stays a vital field for progress [Rehner 2023: 118].

Methods

To study sociolinguistic competence, scholars use different methodologies matched with the nuanced approaches language is employed within social schemata. Common ways entail:

- Surveys and Questionnaires: These devices compile data on students' knowledge of sociolinguistic norms, including proper language usage within various circumstances. Surveys frequently ask respondents to choose the most appropriate answers within a provided social situation.
- Performance – based evaluations: Tests such as TOEIC module test are adjusted to assess sociolinguistic competence by evaluating how learners can perform language navigations properly, including making requests or mentioning views in schemata.
- Experimental designs: Mediation research, frequently employing pre- and post-tests, assesses the efficiency of educational programs targeted at improving sociolinguistic skills. These researchers associate control and experimental groups to analyze the influence of instructing approaches.
- Ethnographic approaches: Qualitative methods, entailing participant observation, as well as interviews, give a detailed visions into how language is employed in a natural way in social schemata, leading researchers to comprehend the contextual aspects affecting language choice.
- Discourse completion tasks: These tasks improve language usage within controlled settings, leading scholars to evaluate sociolinguistic competence. They encompass written discourse completion tasks, multiple-choice discourse completion tasks, as well as oral discourse completion tasks. These tasks make authentic sociolinguistic circumstances by differentiating aspects as power, social distance, and nuisance.
- Self-evaluation devices: Structured surveys measure students' views of their sociolinguistic capacities that could be associated with their authentic enactment. These tools frequently employ common or rankings to measure confidence within tasks such as mentioning politeness or adjusting register.

- Oral proficiency evaluations: Tools including the student oral language observation matrix, simulated oral proficiency interview, as well as oral proficiency interview assesses total oral mastery together with sociolinguistic competence. These evaluations concentrate on criteria, entailing sayings span, intricacy, rapidity and suitability.
- Recording and investigation of speech: Scholars gather audio or video data of both natural and enhanced interviews to identify sociolinguistic aspects, including register differentiation or politeness strategies. This approach is frequently employed by interview specialists, as well as interactional sociolinguistics to do research in-depth language usage.
- Case studies: In detailed research of individual learners or small groups give in-depth visions into sociolinguistic competence improvement, essentially within communities such as children or progressive students. For instance, research on children's acquisition of sociolinguistic competence debated approaches as choosing participant groups and gathering different data categories.

These methods, frequently combined in mixed-methods strategies, empower scholars to identify and meet the requirements of sociolinguistic competence, providing robust data to inform language education preparation.

For example, research on Webster university students in Tashkent employed a descriptive, as well as correlational design. Scholars handed out a survey to the profile of respondents' socio-cultural and language learning personality, as well as an adapted TOEIC model test to evaluate sociolinguistic competence. Information was identified employing occurrence, proportions, mean, standard deviation, and spearman rho correspondence to investigate rapports across sociolinguistic competence and profile variables.

Another research entailing future ESL teachers in Uzbekistan State World Languages University in Tashkent employed a quasi-experimental design together with a non-equivalent control group (the necessity of training). Moreover, the experimental group took part in a "Disturbing e-learning+" platform, and both groups were evaluated before and after the mediation applying performance criteria regarding paralinguistics, oral language, as well as register usage. Statistical investigations, such as descriptive and inferential approaches, were piloted applying SPSS v23.

Results and discussions

As Nordquist [Nordquist 2023] stated, an Empirical study on sociolinguistic competence has given significant insights into its enhancement, evaluation, and improvement via educational mediations. The subsequent discoveries from different research underscore the multidimensional nature of this knowledge as well as its approachability to directed teaching approaches. The study showcased the influence of the "Disturbing e-learning+" platform on 380 future ESL education instructors in Tashkent. The research employed a pre- and post-test design together with a non-equivalent control group (112 controls, 268 experimental). Pre-

test outcomes showcased no vital enhancements within the experimental group among multiple sociolinguistic competence criteria, together with a total impact dimension of $d=0.81$. The table below concludes impact dimension for primary enactment criteria, as stated within the research's both descriptive and inferential investigation:

Table 2

Impact dimensions for chosen enactment criteria in English study

| Competence unit | Criterion | Impact dimension | Clarification | p-value |
|---------------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|---------|
| Paralinguistic | PRLG1 | 0.89 | High | 0.000 |
| Non-verbal language | LNV-PROX2 | 0.95 | High | 0.000 |
| Register usage | URAC2 | 0.95 | High | 0.008 |

These high Impact dimension showcases that the program importantly improved capacities as enunciating obviously, employing non-verbal components, as well as adjusting language to schemata. But the research claimed tenacious difficulties within non-verbal language and proxemics, requiring for supplementary video-based or in-person instruction.

The research demonstrates the evaluation for the sociolinguistic competence of 50 foreign college students in the Tashkent employing an adapted TOEIC module test. The research a descriptive – correlational design, discovering that most individuals above mediocre, with a mean score of 14.7 (SD =8.627). Important correspondences were perceived between sociolinguistic competence and multiple profile varieties, as demonstrated in the table below:

Table 3

Correspondences with sociolinguistic competence at Tashkent study

| Variable | p-value | Importance |
|-----------------|---------|------------|
| Native language | 0.017 | Important |
| Attitude | 0.014 | Important |
| Motivation | 0.042 | Important |
| Can-do tasks | 0.020 | Important |

These discoveries recommend that aspects as motivation and approach play significant role within enhancing sociolinguistic competence, together with native language affecting students' capacity to adjust to social schemata.

The research investigated the rapport between sociolinguistic competence and speaking proficiency across EFL students, employing a survey and TOEFL ranks and discovered a positive correspondence ($r = 0.688$, $p < 0.001$), showing that upper sociolinguistic competence relates to more improved speaking skills. The scattering of speaking mastery levels across participants is demonstrated below:

Table 4

Scattering of speaking mastery rankings

| Mastery rankings | Proportion |
|------------------|------------|
| Advanced | 32% |
| Intermediate | 45% |
| Basic | 18% |
| Below basic | 5% |

Qualitative data showcased students' predilections for official language in academic context (78%), as well as informal language across friends (62%), underscoring the significance of schemata within language usage. The research discovered that 50% of students mentioned both communicative and understanding sociolinguistic capacities, 42% claimed just receptive capacities, as well as 8% mentioned neither.

Students with advanced self-rated proficiency (according to a 1-5 scale among speaking, listening, reading and writing) employed a broader ranking of sociolinguistic deviations, as demonstrated below:

Table 5

Students' usage of sociolinguistic deviations by mastery level

| Mastery level | Vernacular | Informal | Formal | Hyper-formal |
|---------------------|------------|----------|--------|--------------|
| Low (4-8 points) | 1% | 37% | 62% | 0% |
| Mid (9-15 points) | 1% | 35% | 64% | 0.2% |
| High (16-20 points) | 2% | 45% | 53% | 0.2% |

The table demonstrates that progressive proficiency students unified more informal and vernacular forms, replicating superior sociolinguistic tractability. Students also analyzed missing aspects such as confidence and nuanced vocabulary as obstacles to communicative competence, recommending fields for directed teaching. These discoveries cooperatively highlight the efficiency of structured mediations, the impact of student characteristics, as well as the relationship between sociolinguistic competence and other language skills, specifying a vigorous fundament for educational approaches. To tackle with the difficulties, instructors can adjust the subsequent approaches, maintained by study and practical implementation:

| Strategies | Descriptions | Benefits |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Native speaker communication | Simplifying conversations together with native speakers, either in-person or perhaps through online programs, reveals students to authentic sociolinguistic norms. Research on intercultural online interchange demonstrated that non- | Supplies real-life exposure to cultural as well as language norms |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | native English students enhanced their sociolinguistic competence via computer-intervened interaction together with native speakers | |
| Real-life resources | Employing videos, podcasts, as well as social media permits students to identify authentic language usage. For instance, instructors can showcase a dinner conversation clip to contrast theme selections, as well as turn-taking | Improves observation as well as identification of authentic world language usage |
| Curriculum integration | Implementing sociolinguistic competence into lesson plans, together with tasks concentrating politeness approaches and register discrepancy | Confirms systematic instructing of sociolinguistic skills |
| Teacher training | Supplying professional improvement to develop instructor's sociolinguistic skills, tackling their own restraints | Enhances instructor's capacity to design and teach sociolinguistic competence |
| Role-playing | Involving students in settings as job interviews or casual conversations assists them perform schemata-appropriate language | Permits practical comprehension within stimulated social schemata |
| Performance-based evaluation | Enhancing performance-based evaluations, like the TOEIC model test, to assess sociolinguistic competence. | Assesses capacity to employ language properly within settings |

Teaching sociolinguistic competence has attained attention within TESOL and applied linguistics because of its relativity in authentic conversations. Instructors are empowered to involve real-life resources, including movies, social media dialogues, as well as role-play scripts, to

assist students comprehend pragmatic rules and social language use [Taguchi 2008: 428]. Furthermore, instructional approaches which emphasize speech acts such as requesting, apologizing, complimenting could aid learners gain aspects of communication which vary from their native language norms [Kasper 2002: 225]. Technology-intensified language learning has contributed to the teaching of sociolinguistic competence. Revealing to online discourse societies provides students with visions into informal language application, slang, as well as platform-specialized conventions [Thorne, 2003: 45]. That's why, comprehending and instructing sociolinguistic competence is central within organizing language learners for generally applicable conversation within various atmospheres.

Conclusion

Sociolinguistic competence is compelling for efficient interaction within a foreign language, as it engages students to employ language in how they suit to the social and cultural schemata. This competence surpasses linguistic accuracy, including the capacity to monitor social norms, adapt language register, as well as comprehend cultural distinctions. Improving sociolinguistic competence is vital for students to be involved in a meaningful way within different social communications, from casual interviews to professional exchanges. Although the difficulties connected with instructing and learning sociolinguistic competence, including restrained exposure to real-life language usage and a curriculum which frequently spotlights grammatical knowledge, have been studied, efficient approaches to tackle these barriers have been analyzed. Communication together with native speakers, application of real-life materials as well as aimed instructor training are across the strategies which have been illustrated to improve students' sociolinguistic skills importantly. In today's unified world, in which cross-cultural interaction is progressively mutual, the capacity to communicate efficiently among cultural margins is more vital rather than ever. It is significant for the area to continue progressing study on innovative instructing and evaluation approaches for sociolinguistic competence. This entails investigating the possibility of digital devices, including virtual authenticity, as well as online programs, to make wider learning experiences which excite authentic social communications. Cooperation between teachers, scholars and policy-makers would be primary to humanizing prior practices, as well as tackling with emerging necessities within language teaching, making sure that sociolinguistic competence is efficiently combined into curriculum across the globe. To conclude, sociolinguistic competence is a vital element of language proficiency which guarantees concentrated in educational schemata. By adjusting the approaches and visions discussed in this article, teachers could improve their teaching practices and provide their learners with opportunities to interact efficiently and properly with the differences of social schemata, finally enhancing more comprehensive and compassionate large-scale interaction.

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