



SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMPETENCE AS THE MAIN COMPONENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT

This article gives a general overview of some aspects of sociolinguistic competence as the main component of intercultural communication, difficulties students of non-linguistic tertiary institutions face when expressing themselves in a foreign language, the component of sociolinguistic competence as described in the CEFR as well as the ways of how sociolinguistic competence can be measured and checked.

KEYWORDS: *sociolinguistic competence, CEFR, communicative competence, intercultural communication*

DISCUSSION

The Council of Europe document *Common European Framework of References for Language Competencies: teaching, learning, evaluation* considers sociolinguistic competence as one of the most important components of intercultural communicative competence, the formation of which is the goal of teaching a foreign language in non-linguistic tertiary institutions. In this article, we are talking about the need to allocate sociolinguistic competence as an independent object of control, since the level of formation of this competence affects the degree of success of the implementation of intercultural communication by students.

Traditionally, the object of control is the linguistic side of speech, or in terms of the competence approach, linguistic competence. Recently, however, more and more attention has been paid to the so-called pragmatic mistakes or sociocultural errors, the presence of which leads to a violation of communication, such mistakes made in a conversation with a native speaker the latter relate to the personality of the speaker, to his level of culture and thus are the cause of various misunderstandings, up to the unwillingness to understand the language.

Domestic researchers include sociolinguistic competence in the broader concept of socio-cultural competence, but it is possible to narrow the object of control to sociolinguistic competence, since this competence, in turn, has several components identified in the CEFR:

- Language markers of social relations

- Standards of politeness
- Variability
- Differences in the communication register
- Adequate use of strong expressions, quotes, etc.

In the components of sociolinguistic competence separate components are also distinguished that allow us to determine the speech means of expressing social relations that are subject to control and evaluation. As indicated in the CEFR, the measurement of elements of sociolinguistic competence is very difficult, so it seems legitimate to allocate speech means that are subject to control. The requirements for level B1 are described as follows: *Can implement a wide range of speech functions and respond to them using the most commonly used speech means and a neutral register. Performs speech actions in accordance with the generally accepted norms of politeness. Aware of the most important differences in customs and traditions, ideas, values and beliefs typical for the society of the countries of the studied language, and understands the corresponding signals* [1, p. 122].

Since the requirements for the level of proficiency in sociolinguistic competence are somewhat vague, it is necessary to distinguish individual components, the requirements for the ownership of which can be described more precisely, and can be measured and controlled accordingly. These components include:



- Etiquette formulas of greetings, farewells, addresses, and thanks.
- Expression of a polite request, wish, interest, concern.
- Congratulations, expressions of sympathy, expressions of gratitude.
- Expression of regret, use of extenuating language.
- Expression of discontent, impatience, complaints.
- The use of all the above-mentioned speech means, considering
- the communication registers.
- Understanding the most commonly used stable expressions.
- Understanding the differences between different versions of the English language.

As mentioned above the B1 level students should be able to realize voice actions in accordance with the norms of politeness, speech etiquette, etc. Therefore, it seems possible to check and correct the level of completeness as in the productive types of speech activity (speaking and writing) and passive types (reading and listening). At the same time checking for the last two components is advisable at the level of recognition and understanding, since modern programs do not provide for mastering dialects and variants of the English language, given their huge diversity, this task is practically impossible within the framework of the university program.

Active knowledge of idioms at the level of B1, the use of proverbs, sayings, stable expressions, etc. in speech is also not provided for by the requirements for this level of language proficiency, as well as, as has been repeatedly indicated in the literature. Foreigners who constantly try to insert an idiom into their speech, most often become the object of ridicule from native speakers, so it seems more correct to master this component at the level of understanding, the ability to "spread out" the meanings of such words and expressions, to find their equivalents in their native language. Having thus considered the component composition of the sociolinguistic competence, we turn to the problem of drawing up tasks that control the level of formation of this competence.

As we know, each test task must meet three main criteria: objectivity, reliability, and validity. In competence testing, compliance with the test validity criterion is the most difficult, since, as already noted, the very description of the requirements for the possession of sociolinguistic competence is somewhat vague and focuses on speech means. Helmut J. Vollmer distinguishes between tests that control competencies and tests that control different types of speech activity. [2, p.365]. The competence tests are based on the abilities that control speech and language skills. Communication behavior, both

within and outside of test situations. In tests of certain types of speech activity, possible reactions in situations of real speech consumption and speech behavior are modeled using various tasks.

The most common and popular tests are that control the skills and abilities in certain types of speech activity, as well as individual components of linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, phonetics).

As already mentioned above, the most difficult when composing a test for verification of the level of formation of the sociolinguistic competence, is compliance with the validity criterion. In this case it is necessary to classify possible errors. The traditional classification is as follows:

- phonetic / phonological errors;
- morphosyntactic errors;
- lexicosemantic errors;
- pragmatic mistakes;
- actual errors.

These errors can also be divided into errors that lead to a violation of communication and errors that do not lead to a violation of communication. Obviously, the first group of errors is more gross, because it makes it difficult or impossible to communicate further, or such errors can lead to serious problems like misunderstandings between partners.

As already mentioned above, this group primarily includes pragmatic or socio-cultural errors, therefore, the diagnosis of these errors, their correction and work on them in order to prevent their repetition is no less important than work on the linguistic side of speech.

A large number of grammatical, phonetic, and lexical errors also complicates communication, complicates the perception of both oral and written speech, which can, as a result, lead to an unwillingness to continue communication. In order to correct errors and further work on this aspect, a number of tasks are proposed in the form of a speech situation, in which the test takers must offer an adequate version of the situation. Each task describes the system of scoring points, but the main criterion remains the relevance of the proposed option, its adequacy to the given situation. In the second place, the correct grammatical, lexical, and syntactic design of the utterance is evaluated, since the proposed tasks are aimed at checking. If the sociolinguistic competence is formed in oral speech, then it is possible not to consider spelling errors, since they will be invisible in speech. Since foreign language communicative competence of a graduate of a non-linguistic university is an integral part of his overall professional competence, further socio-cultural nature of errors in general, and sociolinguistic nature particular, may reduce the effectiveness of his work. As V. V. Safonova noted in her work "In bi-



cultural/intercultural communication arise the difficulties which do not exist in monolingual/monocultural communication, the necessity of correlating phenomena of a different culture with the phenomena of native culture can cause difficulties and lead to sociocultural errors” [3, p.13]. Therefore, control over the level of formation of sociolinguistic competence should be carried out constantly, not only with the help of tasks specifically aimed at assessing this particular competence, it is also possible to include components of sociolinguistic competence in the criteria for evaluating the products of students' speech activity.

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