



SOCIOLINGUISTIC FACTORS IN EFL CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

Some social factors such as situation, context, and social setting that have special roles in language teaching. It describes the main factors which influence on the choice of linguistic units and explains how well contemporary teaching can take account of them. It also investigates obvious variations in the use of language used by people belonging to varieties facets.

Key words: *language teaching, social factors, and sociolinguistics*

ANNOTATION

Language teaching is interrelated with sociolinguistics as it is reflected in distinct spheres. Various social factors affect language teaching and language learning. This paper investigates the relationship between sociolinguistics and language teaching

MAIN PART

Language is a centre to social interaction in every society, regardless of location and time period. Language and social interaction have a reciprocal relationship: language organizes social interactions and social interactions shape language. Learning language is getting through the teaching learning process indoor, outdoor, formal or non formal education. Teaching, learning language, sociocultural contexts and variations of language should be considered because it is influenced by the success of the learning a language. The teacher may not neglect the influences of a variety of languages and sociocultural contexts of the participants, especially in mother tongue or foreign language. This is due to the roles to easier the learners to gain the purposes of teaching learning language. The terms of sociocultural contexts and variations of language may be covered in sociolinguistics study. In order to understand the phenomenon, broad knowledge of the process of language acquisition, second or foreign language education, sociolinguistics, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and specific knowledge of foreign language teaching techniques and methods of measurement and evaluation have become especially important. Sociolinguistics has become a very important role recent, and we have become aware the role of language not just as a means of communication, but also a creator of social identity [1]. Sociolinguistics is an interesting and important area of language for teachers because it deals with how the language is used and thought of in the real world.[2]

There are several researchers or linguists give the definition of sociolinguistics in different perspective. Yasemin defined sociolinguistics as the science that investigates the aims and functions of language in society[3]. It attempts to explain how language differs

from one context to another across geographical borders and how people in one context communicate with people in other contexts (e.g., non native-nonnative speakers; nonnative-native speakers; and so on). He's prone to learn language based on the sociocultural contexts, how the learners can communicate in one context with the others. Sali, sociolinguistics is the interaction between language, culture, and society[4]. Depending on the focus, virtually any study of language implicates a social connection because without this human component language itself would not exist.

In all these definitions, it is clear that sociolinguistics is a discipline that makes a link between sociology and linguistics. It is a branch of sociology and as a concept, it is concerned with how language use is a determinant of a given society's linguistic requirements. Every society has its linguistic codes that are acceptable for interaction. Sociolinguistics shows how groups in a given society are separated by certain social variables like ethnicity, religion, status, gender, age and level of education and how adherence to these variables is used to categorize individuals in social classes[5]. The social study of language is a modern linguistic paradigm because it was the modern linguist who first acknowledged and accepted that language by its nature is totally a social phenomenon (Bell, 1976). All definitions mentioned above demonstrate that sociolinguistics is related to language use and a society's response to it.[1]

One of the uses of language in society is to build and sustain meaningful relationships among people. When we meet people for the first time in a social context, our first reaction often includes speculation, on the basis of their spoken language, about where they come from, and what social class they belong to. Such speculation leads one to form a fuller image and understanding of people, which may or may not be accurate. Sociolinguistics researchers collect reliable data about these topics. Hence, we can define sociolinguistics as the branch of science that analyzes the relationship between language and society on the basis of its use in diverse social contexts[6]. It is one of the most far-reaching subdisciplines of linguistics, interacting with many other disciplines, including foreign language education and international relations. Sociolinguistics employs numerous lines of research, ranging from analysis of local dialects and accents to differences between men's and women's use of language. Some of the basic issues addressed in the field of sociolinguistics can be listed as follows:

1. language variety and change
2. variation and style
3. language attitudes
4. language and culture
5. language and interaction
 - a. interaction analysis
 - b. discourse analysis
 - c. language and interaction in social settings
 - d. use of politeness as a variable in speech
6. bilingualism or multilingualism and multiculturalism
7. social class and language use

8. language contact
9. language and gender
10. language planning and policy
 - a. the selection of foreign language(s) to be taught
 - b. curriculum development
 - c. teacher education

The basic theoretical features of sociolinguistics and the context of its practice lend foreign language education its rich social content. To illustrate, when one considers language education in a school context, noting student-teacher interactions alongside educational components of teaching and learning, the significance of social interactions is readily perceived. Regarding communicational functions, the application of sociolinguistics in a classroom context can contribute enormously to the development of foreign language teaching techniques. Foreign-language-education-related research in areas listed above has been well developed and applied. The theme of this article is the interaction between sociolinguistics and foreign language education because in FLT research sociolinguistics has been an ignored or overlooked area of study. Generally, the FLT researchers do not make any connection between the two even though they make inferences about the significance of the context in developing the communicative competence of the learners of a foreign language. Therefore, it is essential to see the attributes of both sociolinguistics and foreign language education disciplines, such as language attitudes, language and culture, and policies governing the selection of foreign languages to be taught.[7]

It has been said that it does not matter how well a person knows a language's grammar, if he or she does not know how it must be used for successful communication, or how people use it in their native environment. Disadvantages between language learners and native speakers become evident when learners have only been presented with artificial, outdated situations that offer limited or null information on how the language is used at the time it is being learned. E.g. Let us consider a Spanish textbook that includes passages depicting Mexican contexts involving Nuevos Pesos (as Mexican currency was denominated after the big 1994 devaluation, while it is currently called Peso). If a Spanish teacher were to use such textbook in the present, not only would the learning environment not be current, but also irrelevant. The example above mention superficially demonstrates the information that might hinder a learners' progress, but if one dug deeper, one might find expressions that are no longer used as well.

Grammar makes language work, but it does not provide all the meanings deposited in concepts that exists in different contexts due to different styles, degrees of formality, and language varieties[8]. Language is social, people form society, and it is within this system where language becomes riches, undergoes evolution and contributes to the creation of knowledge. Thus, while it might seem a rather optimistic thought, aiming a language appropriately should eventually contemplate the idea of willing to participate in the creation of new understandings within the social core of the culture where the language is spoken.

Thus, in order to have successful performance, students have to become aware of the vast possibilities in which communication is taking place. Learners need to be sensitive to the contexts to which their linguistic knowledge has prepared and readied them; they have to be

conscious of the potential contribution they can make by simply using language effectively; and most importantly, they must be intuitive of the ways in which one interaction will take them to a plateau where different interactions will occur. As it can be seen, sociocultural competence goes beyond grammar, connotation, levels of formality, style, register. It is neatly a power that stimulates knowledge and empowers learners to co-construct new paradigms through communication.

At this point, it is important to question how well students use the knowledge they possess; how prepared they are to embrace new knowledge; whether they can be perceptive enough to realize they have come across new knowledge; and whether the language classroom can host the production of such knowledge. The most obvious appreciation one can make is that knowledge will emerge in the environment where its structure is addressed (facts, examples, details, hypothesis, thesis, etc); and since certain language structures can directly promote addressing elements of knowledge structure (second conditional in English can be used to study hypothesis), one can logically think that a language classroom that invites and welcomes reality and information beyond the learners' mother culture and that of the language they are learning, will certainly have scope to help students use language for greater purposes than classroom communication.

By using language as a means to communicate while exploring different scenarios, students will observe how meaning happens, how language changes to accommodate new discoveries, how language transforms according to social movements, and how language will always be ready to be a significant tool when innovating. For example, how many languages have a word for 'software'? In Spanish we use the words as it is for there is no official term yet; how has the meaning of the word *gay* changed from Shakespeare's times to the present? How will scientist name different inventions? And how will one know when using X word is no longer appropriate?

As it can be seen, consolidated sociolinguistic competence will serve as the foundation for learners to be able to change as language evolves. While it is not easy to visualize how a language's grammar has such a strong impact on the learning of new information, one can simply see how tenses affect the information and data we acquire, which, in other words, explains how real, true information can be erroneously conveyed, hence hindering one's quality of knowledge. Let us observe these statements where wrong grammar or a specific element of sociolinguistic competence is wrongly used:

- Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California are part of Mexico- Correctly structured sentence but wrong fact caused by the incorrect use of the tense.
- Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California were part of Mexico- correct statement and fact, with correct tense.
- (To a senior professor, in Mexico, in Spanish) ¡Explica por favor nuevamente! – correct request in terms of tense and structure, but inappropriate in terms of social context, degree of formality and verb form choice. The correct form should be: ¡Explique por favor nuevamente! The use of third person singular in Spanish can be used to denote formal *you* – usted.

From the three examples above, while a limited appreciation, one can see how sociolinguistic competence does have a significant role in the way language is used to communicate, to interact, share and acquire new knowledge. For this reason, while interaction with native speakers might be a reliable tool that will help learners understand the way language is used in a sociolinguistically successful manner, experimenting with different situations and with a

wide range of information might also help students devise means to use their sociolinguistic knowledge to fulfill the needs of the situation they are presented with.[9]

Language is the communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of subjective signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols which is used by a nation, people, or other distinct community. On the other hand Society is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations, or a large social grouping sharing the same geographical or vital territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Sociolinguistics is an integral part in the study of language in common, and in the study of the impact of society over language. So, it is really important in the sphere of the study of language. So, sociolinguistics is the field of study having to do with the interaction of language and society, how all aspects of society have an effect on language, and how language has an effect on society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, I sum up that sociolinguistic has an important role in language teaching because it is consist of the study of the link between language and society, of language variation, the attitudes about language. It is noteworthy in learning language because it can give the suitable perspective of language. According to Broersma (2001) ‘having a good sociolinguistics competence means knowing how to “gives every person his or her due.” Means when someone be quiet, talk, give compliments to others, and apologize. Sociolinguistics also ably lead the learners to speak in appropriate social context, therefore, it is very important to the teachers to introduce the sociolinguistics through teaching language materials in order the students will have knowledge of relationship language and social context. They may just not focus on how to speak fluently but speak appropriately is needed too. So much of actual communication is beyond knowing just words and grammar, and without considering communication in its entirety, the learners will never really fluent in another language. Each language is used within different contexts by different people and for different reason and when learning language, it is important to consider those factors to effectively communicate with others. Therefore, In language teaching the teachers have to determine all facets linked to use of a language either speaking or written. The teachers cannot hope to transform their students’ sociolinguistic competence overnight, but by contextualize the presentation of language, regularly reviewing the impact of social and cultural factors on language and including lessons with a functional approach, teachers can hope to increase the sociolinguistic awareness of their students. These things need not be introduced as isolated exercises, but a context and social aspect could be incorporated to most exercises and examples.

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