SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACH IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Annotation: This article focuses on communicative approach in teaching a language which is based on communicative competence. It explores school education from sociolinguistic point of view and it argues that the most important role of sociolinguistics in language teaching is not only to provide the learners with the appropriate rules of speaking and writing but also raise their sociolinguistic awareness. By applying sociolinguistics in the classroom we will have more well-rounded and culture-friendly lessons.

KEY WORDS: communicative approach, sociolinguistic awareness, culture-friendly, communicative competence, speech community, false communication.

KALIT SO’ZLAR: muloqot uslublari, ijtimoiy lingvistika bilimi, do’stona madaniyat, muloqotda mohirlik, nutq jamoasi,sun’iy muloqot.

1. Introduction

Language plays key role in every society's social interaction, regardless of place and time. Language education involves not only the elaboration of a grammatical system, but also the ability to use language as an instrument for learning and the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts. There is a mutual relationship between language and social interaction: language forms social interactions and social interactions form a language.

Educators often underestimate the sociolinguistic aspects of teaching language. They are more inclined to teach the language like words, grammar, and pronunciation. Learning a language with sociolinguistics can help the speakers choose appropriate language relating where, whom, and when they speak. Therefore, the teacher should associate the materials to social contexts. Teaching a language involves developing communicative uses of language which is based on communicative competence.



2. Explanation of communicative competence

The term communicative competence was first put forward by Hymes (1972), an American sociolinguist. In his view, the concept of competence should include language usage as well as sentence creation and a speaker needs to know how to be communicatively competent in a speech community. Communicative competence mainly focuses on practicality of language rather than its grammar. For example, when somebody asks the way:

“Could you tell me how to get to the cinema, please”. And the answer is:

“Fine, thank you”.

Apparently, there is no grammatical mistake in the answer, but from communication perspective it is incorrect. So, grammatical competence doesn’t mean communicative competence, while communicative competence should include grammatical competence.

Additionally, communicative approach suggests that we should create the real communicative environment in order to achieve real communication and avoid “false communication”. For example, lesson materials should be taken or recorded in real situation including some dialects or it can be presented through movies in order to be as close as real life communication. Communicative approach emphasizes how language is used in real social settings to perform communicative function and how language is used in varying contexts. Most of our textbooks teach the language through artificial way of communication. For example, the students would communicate with foreigners asking such questions: What's your name? Where are you from? It can show their linguistic competence but not social competence. But linguistic competence and social competence should be combined while teaching a language.

When educators combine sociolinguistics to their lectures, it helps the student put things into context and understand the overall text better.

3. Raising sociolinguistic awareness

The study of sociolinguistics can also help to address cross-cultural issues in



education as it helps us better understand the connections between languages and schools, and helps make necessary improvements in education by developing a program that would welcome the cultural and linguistic diversity of all students.

As subjects at school are delivered through the use of language, it is crucial for all students to be able to understand the language. Students who speak non-standard dialects at home often cannot fully benefit from school education. If the language of school is not the same with the language at home, different teaching methods and literacy practices need to be used so that all children are provided with equal access to education.

According to M. A. K. Halliday, appropriate methodologies need to be culture-friendly if they are to address classroom problems. General public does not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of different dialects and their value for large groups of people. Home dialects cannot be altered by standard varieties. Students’ native languages and dialects must be respected by schools and the general public. Educating people about the importance of language and dialects maintenance and the advantages of bilingualism can prevent discrimination in educational institutions, help meet the needs of students with different dialects, and prevent language loss in our society.

4. Conclusion

Sociolinguistics have always influenced considerably on language teaching and thus it is argued that communicative approach founded on communicative competence should be applied to the way of teaching a language.

And teaching sociolinguistics at schools can widen educational horizons of all student and helps them learn more about language variations and usage. Studying sociolinguistics prepare them to be better involved in social life for their own benefit and for the benefit of other people around them.

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