

ISSN 2347 - 503X

Research Chronicler

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Vol III Issue I : January - 2015

Editor-In-Chief
Prof. K.N. Shelke

www.research-chronicler.com

A detailed still-life composition featuring a quill pen as the central element. The quill is positioned diagonally, with its tip resting on a scroll of aged parchment. The scroll is secured with a red wax seal and a red ribbon. In the background, a lit candle in a brass holder casts a warm glow. In the foreground, a glass inkwell with a quill inside and a red wax seal are visible. The entire scene is set on a dark wooden surface.

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A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

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Impact of Sociolinguistics in Technical Education**Deepanjali Mishra***Assistant Professor, School of Humanities, KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, (Orissa) India***Abstract**

Sociolinguistics can be defined as the science that investigates the aims and functions of language in society. Sociolinguistics along with Language Teaching provides an introduction to the field of sociolinguistics for second and foreign language teachers. This branch is also very much crucial at the academic sectors of the society. The academic branches TESOL (Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages), ELT (English Language Teaching), SLA (Second Language Acquisition) etc. are all mostly grounded on sociolinguistics though psycholinguistic factors are also occupied there. A foreign language teacher has to consider all the surrounding social factors of his/her students (age, class, culture, gender, religion and so on) to make them internalize the target language along with its inevitable correlating culture. For example, it is not a good idea for a foreign language English teacher to provide the technical students lessons covering the topic "homosexuality" which is culturally abominable in India but quite acceptable in the western context of English language. Teachers of English can present lessons on less controversial but universally important social issues like wedlock, finance, sports, shopping etc. associating contrastive and complementary linguistic items of the first language (L1) of the students and the TL. A translator must be sociolinguistically alert in translating the text of the source language (SL) into the text of the target language (TL) for the total comprehensibility of his target readers. Thus, sociolinguistics is essentially contributive to the educational sectors in general and technical students in particular. Therefore my paper would concentrate on the following points during the course of this presentation:

Key Words: Sociolinguistics, ELT, homosexuality**1. Introduction:**

A language is essentially a set of items, what Hudson (1996, p. 21) calls 'linguistic items,' such entities as sounds, words, grammatical structures, and so on are both legion and profound. Ronald Wardhaugh has talked about various relationships between language and society. One is that social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and behaviour. Certain evidence may be adduced to support this view: the age-grading phenomenon whereby young children speak differently from older

children and, in turn, children speak differently from mature adults; studies which show that the varieties of language that speakers use reflect such matters as their regional, social, or ethnic origin and possibly even their gender; and other studies which show that particular ways of speaking, choices of words, and even rules for conversing are in fact highly determined by certain social requirements. A second possible relationship is directly opposed to the first linguistic structure and/or behaviour may either influence or determine social structure. A third possible

relationship is that the influence is bi-directional: language and society may influence each other. One variant of this approach is that this influence is dialectical in nature, a Marxist view put forward by Dittmar (1976), who argues (p. 238) that 'speech behaviour and social behaviour are in a state of constant interaction' and that 'material living conditions' are an important factor in the relationship. A fourth possibility is to assume that there is no relationship at all between linguistic structure and social structure and that each is independent of the other. A variant of this possibility would be to say that, although there might be some such relationship, present attempts to characterize it are essentially premature, given what we know about both language and society. Actually, this variant view appears to be the one that Chomsky himself holds: he prefers to develop an asocial linguistics as a preliminary to any other kind of linguistics, such an asocial approach being, in his view, logically prior.

Language use varies according to a wide variety of social factors, including age, gender, education, and communicative context. The study of sociolinguistics - a branch of the field of linguistics - aims to understand this inextricable connection between language and society. Sociolinguistics is a subfield of linguistics concerned with the interaction between language and society. In particular, sociolinguists study how language use varies according to a range of social variables, such as age, gender, educational level, and ethnic background, as well as according to communicative context. Recent approaches to English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction have

incorporated findings from sociolinguistic research to facilitate English-language learners' (ELL) second language acquisition (SLA) and comprehension of other core subject areas.

Recent developments in theories of language acquisition, which look towards sociolinguistic theory, depart substantially from Chomskyan linguistics while building on ideas that emphasize the interactional context of language learning. Based initially on the influential work of sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1974), it is now widely recognized that speaking a language is as much about culturally rooted communicative competence as it is about cognitively rooted linguistic (grammatical) competence. The notion of communicative competence accounts for the fact the speakers know how to adjust their speech according to the situation. For example, one uses a different linguistic register for talking to one's friend on the phone than for speaking with the school principal. The same holds for written communication, as a student knows that he or she should write differently in a journal or blog entry than in a report on migratory birds.

2. Relation between language and Society:

Sociolinguistics can be defined as the science that investigates the aims and functions of language in society. 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-non native speakers; non native-native speakers; and so on). Scientists working in the field of sociolinguistics conduct research on how

language is used in diverse social contexts and the appropriateness of language used in any given context, considering such factors as etiquette, interpersonal relations, and regional dialects. Gumperz (1971, p. 223) has observed that sociolinguistics is an attempt to find correlations between social structure and linguistic structure and to observe any changes that occur. Chambers (2002, p. 3) is even more direct: 'Sociolinguistics is the study of the social uses of language, and the most productive studies in the four decades of sociolinguistic research have emanated from determining the social evaluation of linguistic variants.

Language is one of the most powerful emblems of social behaviour. In the normal transfer of information through language, we use language to send vital social messages about who we are, where we come from, and who we associate with. It is often shocking to realize how extensively we may judge a person's background, character, and intentions based simply upon the person's language, dialect, or, in some instances, even the choice of a single word. Given the social role of language, it stands to reason that one strand of language study should concentrate on the role of language in society. Sociolinguistics has become an increasingly important and popular field of study, as certain cultures around the world expand their communication base and intergroup and interpersonal relations take on escalating significance.

The basic notion underlying sociolinguistics is quite simple: Language use symbolically represents fundamental dimensions of social behaviour and human interaction. The notion is simple, but the ways in which language reflects behaviour

can often be complex and subtle. Furthermore, the relationship between language and society affects a wide range of encounters--from broadly based international relations to narrowly defined interpersonal relationships.

3. Teaching Sociolinguistics

There are also complications involved in the teaching of sociolinguistics. The sociolinguistic rules of speaking in a given language are so ingrained within a person that a native speaker is often unaware of them (Wolfson, 1989). Fortunately, there are a few good resources available for teachers which offer some excellent points on how to teach speech acts. Cohen & Olshtain (1991), for example, say to limit goals for beginner like ESL IEFL students to awareness of linguistic features, leaving sociolinguistic factors such as situational variance in the intensity of apologies for advanced learners. As for teaching techniques, they suggest model dialogues, student evaluation in pairs of sociolinguistic features of a speech act situation, role-play activities, and discussions on cultural differences in speech act behaviour. Other applications of research to the classroom are harder to find, consisting mainly of statements in published studies regarding the application of the study's findings to the classroom setting. This points out the need for the collection of such information into guidebooks available for teachers who are unsure what methods to use to increase their students' skills in sociolinguistic competence.

Sociolinguistic knowledge also subscribes to ethnical and cultural studies and observations. Just Like Professor Higgins of Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" (1916) a

sociolinguist can trace out the social backgrounds by only listening to the interlocutors' accents .It, therefore, smoothens the path of anthropological studies. When a sociolinguist conducts any synchronic study of language shift of some linguistic community or communities or when he conducts the diachronic study of language change of any linguistic community the study of culture blended with historicity becomes unavoidable.

Culture is something that must be experienced. Teaching alone cannot portray to students the essence of a community's culture. Teachers may feel that their students must experience culture and that classroom instruction is not necessary. However, the classroom may be the only place where students can freely discuss with a native member of the culture the cultural encounters that they have experienced. Also, the teacher can help give students the tools for understanding basic cultural differences that can then be applied to situations encountered outside the classroom. Even if the components of culture and a method for teaching them could be agreed upon, the teaching of culture is still a most difficult task. Teachers are not trained about the characteristics of their native culture since it is often wrongly assumed that they already know them. Thus, it is often hard for a teacher to teach his or her native culture to ESL students, and the teacher may be forced to rely on stereotypes or unfounded assumptions about his or her native culture that could actually mislead the students.

3.1 Effectiveness of Teaching Methods

There is also very little research on the effects of teaching sociolinguistic issues in

the classroom. Olshtain & Cohen (cited in King & Silver, 1993) found in a 1988 study a positive effect from classroom instruction in sociolinguistic aspects of apology use in DCT results, improvement being in the type of semantic formula used, average length of response, and the appropriate use of intensifiers. However, they do not believe that overall proficiency could be improved in a short period of study. Cohen & Olshtain (1991) also asked the students what types of activities they preferred, with students reporting that they preferred an explanation of the main points concerning speech act behaviour. Students also liked information sheets describing these main points as well as role-play activities; however, they felt that they got less of a benefit from listening to model dialogues.

4. Relevance of Sociolinguistics to technical students:

A sociolinguistic approach inherently recognizes that understanding of the social practice in which language is situated is a significant factor of effective communication (Munby, 1978; Long, 2005). This school of thought can be summarized by this typical course description: "[t]he major goals of this course are to facilitate the acquisition of rhetorical skills and strategies necessary for students to successfully integrate into their engineering school environment and to facilitate their transition to the workplace" (Artemeva, Logie & St-Martin, 1999). Sociolinguistic thought explains that "[e]ffective communication begins with rhetorical considerations, resulting in a trade-off of the interests of the target audience, the communicator's organizational and communicative goals (e.g., to inform, persuade or impress), and

the context of the communication” (Brinkman & Geest, 2003). Another important cornerstone of sociolinguistic education is that “[w]riting assignments in English classes should be adapted to real readers in real situations, simulating as closely as possible what students will find on the job” (Andrews, 2003). For practical application in instruction, a sociolinguistic lens includes a look at a communicative event and profiling its information. This process includes a communication setting, a communication domain (educational, occupational or transitional), subject content, an attitudinal tone (e.g., formal), a communicator, a person with whom the communicator interacts, the variety of English used and the target level required (Munby, 1978; Kaewpet, 2009).

5. Analysis of essential Communication skills:

Basically there are five most essential communication skills in engineering – oral presentations, professional conversations and report writing, soft skills and technically enabled communication

5.1 Oral Presentations:

Engineering students and engineers often report being weak in oral presentations. In the context of the University of Manitoba in Canada (Mann, Ingram, Dick, Petkau & Britton, 2007), students realized that their communication effort was not simply an academic exercise, but a real-world challenge. Engineering students enrolled in design courses co-taught by English and engineering professors. They were assigned to present a literature review and an open design project obtained from industry, required to receive feedback from classmates, professors and industry representatives, and reciprocally evaluate

classmates’ oral presentations. The students were expected to apply the skills from the educational context to an occupational situation. Therefore, the communication took place in a transitional domain. The attitudinal tone was noticeably academic and technical. The communicators were from different linguistic backgrounds including English native speakers. Therefore, the variety of English could be classified as ELF and/or EIL. The target language level required for communication was native or near-native in order to accomplish such tasks.

5.2 Professional Communication:

Engineers rarely work alone. They often discuss tasks and duties among colleagues, subordinates, superiors and external partners (Brinkman & Geest, 2003). In one of the most common authentic situations identified by ten multi-national chemical engineering engineers, chemical engineering students were trained to negotiate conflicts arising at workplaces (Kassim & Radzuan, 2008). The students resolved conflicts and solved problems in role-play situations. The unit of study covered topics including roles in a conflict, conflicts within organizations, conflicts with external correspondences, conflicts over business ideas, decisions and actions. The students were trained in a transitional domain and the communication was formal and technical. The communication took place among the students themselves but might have involved those with different first languages. The target level of communication was likely to be near English-native, as the communication required high-order thinking skills.

5.3 Report writing:

Report writing is one of the competency gaps among new engineers (Society of Manufacturing Engineers Education Foundation, 1997). Artemeva, Logie & St Martin, (1999) assigned students one major course project that involved writing a formal business letter, proposal, progress report and completion report. The course was designed to enhance students' opportunities for collaborative discussion and feedback in which they gradually become members of the discourse community. The focus of the instruction was to make the communication course part of the students' engineering learning experience. The situation was actually created to help transition to the workplace. One of the subjects chosen by the students was introduction to engineering materials and one content area involved methods of corrosion prevention in metals. The attitudinal tone of the communication was not always formal and technical. For example, newsgroup communications were informal and dialogic. The students interacted with experienced writers including advanced engineering students, teaching assistants and instructors. The course was taught in a North American university. Therefore, the variety of English used in this situation was local, where the communicators were all native speakers of English.

5.4 Soft Skills:

Soft Skills refers to those extraordinary skills like personality traits, social graces, excellent communication skills, friendliness, optimism, etc which is needed by a person to achieve success in professional world. These skills are very different from hard skills or technical skills which a candidate has already acquired during his or her career. Therefore we can

say that soft skills are beyond hard skills. Soft skills definitely play a significant role in a candidate's career. It helps a person to achieve success professionally.

5.5 Technically Enabled Communication:

Communication taking place through latest innovation in technology is called technically enabled communication. We can sit in Bhubaneswar and send message to our business partner in New York. Similarly a person in Lucknow can talk to another person over phone in London. Wireless technology has made communication faster and easier. Videoconferencing and Teleconferencing is possible only through advancement in technology. Electronic mail or email, internet chatting are being carried out only because technology has enabled us to get accessed to these forms of communication. The importance of personal contact has been replaced with face to face communication. The time required to make decisions has decreased because managers have access to increased information source. Advancement in computer technology have enabled organizations to communicate more closely and frequently within and outside. Those organizations who don't update themselves with the latest technologies aren't been able to survive in this highly competitive world.

6. Conclusion:

The engineering profession demands engineering graduates with oral and written English communication competency. The sociolinguistic perspective sheds light on giving more importance to the discourse practice in which English is needed, which should inform English instruction. More emphasis needs to be placed on training in authentic

communicative events, particularly those necessary in the workplace. Transition of skills from the classroom to the workplace is expected by employers. Subject content should be discipline-specific to prepare students adequately for effective communication (Boyd & Hassett, 2000; Andrews, 2003). As seen from the publications, the required comprehensibility of communication is close to the level of native speakers; this should be kept in mind during preparation of lessons. The literature review also indicates that requirements may differ from context to context (Long, 2005) and from discipline to discipline (Artemeva, Logie & St-Martin, 1999). It cannot be assumed that engineering or English use in engineering are the same everywhere (Artemeva, 1998; Reimer, 2002). More importantly, the findings of the analysis in the current report were from studies that were not based on sociolinguistic theory. Further examination of the required English oral and written communications in relation to an individual context could lead to satisfactory impact on engineering students and engineers' communication demands.

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