






Enhancing Sociolinguistic Competence in Teaching English: Perspectives from University Students in the Journalism Field

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Citation: Teshabayeva, D., Uktamova, N., Artikova, M., Khazratova, Z., Dalieva, M. and Akbarkhodjaeva, F. (2025). Enhancing Sociolinguistic Competence in Teaching English: Perspectives from University Students in the Journalism Field, *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 10(2), 2514-2523. <https://doi.org/10.10.64753/jcasc.v10i2.1971>

Published: November 17, 2025

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to identify the difficulties in mastering the language through criteria formed from the elements of sociolinguistic competence in improving the sociolinguistic competence of future journalist students based on socio-political texts, and to substantiate the fact that the linguodidactical technology "Language Portfolio" is an important tool that helps journalist students achieve high efficiency in the process of improving their sociolinguistic competence based on political and social texts. The issue of forming, developing, and improving students' competence skills in teaching foreign languages using various methods is considered one of the complex tasks. Competence, that is, the consistency of knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as linguistic, pragmatic, discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic competence, which are components of communicative competence, contribute to the deep acquisition of knowledge in mastering foreign languages. Developing sociolinguistic competence through teaching English to prospective journalism students requires a comprehensive approach that combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills. This includes not only learning the language but also a deep understanding of the cultural and social contexts in which the language is used. Teaching a foreign language to students studying journalism is crucial for understanding the global media landscape and for covering socio-political processes, national cultural identity, and English media representations. After all, the main goal of training in specialized areas is to be able to communicate professionally, work with specialized information, competently understand texts, and master the rules of translation.

Keywords: Foreign Education, Linguistics, Language Didactics, Competence, Method, Exercise, English Language, Sociolinguistic Competence, Journalism, Teaching

INTRODUCTION

“The term competence is derived from the Latin word *competentia, competeto*, which means “I achieve”, “I am suitable”, “I am right”. The word “Competence” means the manifestation of knowledge and skills, intelligence, strength and experience acquired by a person in a certain field (Lyle F., Palmer, 1990, p.199)”.

Competence is “a set of psychological capabilities in which, under certain conditions, a person’s knowledge, skills, and abilities are realized and successfully combined (Ermirzayev A, 2023).”

The data collection process will involve the systematic gathering of articles, blog posts, and social media content from reputable online platforms. A diverse range of sources will be considered to capture the dynamic nature of Internet media discourse. To maintain relevance and timeliness, data will be collected within a specified time frame to ensure a representative snapshot of contemporary discursive practices (D.Teshabaev, 2023).

Communicative competence is considered a skill that develops during the period of socialization of a person, which is not limited only to the ability to speak a certain language but also provides the opportunity to present oneself as a participant in a socially accepted communication system. Thus, communicative competence is associated with the processes of socialization and the broader social context in which a person’s speech activity takes place.

In our opinion, the perfect mastery of a foreign language by journalism students serves as a means for them to achieve great success both in their professional and communicative activities. Modern methodologies for teaching foreign languages incorporate research that covers a complex of communication skills, and these communication skills are formed through a system of teaching and learning that is coordinated and interconnected with various aspects of professional speech activity of students (Антонова Е.С., 2007)”. “...with the principles by which communication can be produced and, therefore, understanding cannot occur... (Antonova E.S,2007)”.

The study of various models of the components of communicative competence has shown that in the concepts of many authors, there is a strategic competence, which is considered by researchers as an important component of foreign language communicative competence, which determines communicativeness.

The main content of this article is also related to the term “sociolinguistic competence”.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines sociolinguistic competence as “the ability to use language appropriately in a variety of contexts. Sociolinguistic competence is closely related to verbal competence because it is concerned with expressing, interpreting, and communicating meaning by cultural norms and assumptions (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com>). Students that possess sociolinguistic competence can utilize English in a range of contexts and with grammatical accuracy, which promotes meaningful interactions (Yu, 2006). Moreover, societal attitudes and biases towards non-native English speakers may contribute to feelings of linguistic insecurity among ESL learners, hindering their sociolinguistics development (Norton, 2013).

Sociolinguistic competence (Compétence sociolinguistique) – “social adaptability, the ability to apply a culture of interaction in interpersonal communication, the ability to work in a team; the ability to defend one’s own opinion while respecting the opinion of the interlocutor in communication, and the ability to convince him/her (Common European Framework of reference for language learning and teaching / Draft 1. – Strasbourg. Council of Europe, 1993. p. 104.)”.

It should be noted that sociolinguistic competence plays an important role in our ability to communicate and interact in society. At the same time, understanding and using language-specific features, national and cultural aspects in the process of communication in foreign languages, and speaking in many languages, as well as cultural diversity, is becoming more and more common, which encourages us to interact more successfully and harmoniously. Therefore, the development of sociolinguistic competence remains an urgent issue for both individuals and society. Sociolinguistic competence plays a fundamental role in successful communication and interaction between people. It allows us to adapt our communication to be more perceptible and understandable in different socio-cultural environments.

METHODS

In this article, the process of improving sociolinguistic competence in teaching English to students of journalism faculties was chosen as the object of research.

In addition, the main task of conducting experimental tests is to analyze the stages of teaching political and social texts to journalism students in English lessons using a text-based integrated approach, identify difficulties

in improving students' sociolinguistic competence in the process of teaching English, develop a system of classification and exercises, organize and conduct pedagogical experimental work, and determine the effectiveness of the developed methodology.

The specifics of the formation of sociolinguistic competence through foreign language teaching in the training of future international journalists include their ability to understand and process information between different social groups, translate it, and adapt it to the target audience. When learning English, it is necessary to take into account the socio-cultural background and linguistic differences of the country whose language is being studied since this affects the success of learning the language. The professor has a special role in mastering the subject.

One of the primary challenges in developing sociolinguistic competence is the lack of cultural awareness among ESL learners. Understanding cultural norms, values, and social conventions is essential for effective language use in diverse contexts. For example, greetings, forms of address, and politeness strategies vary significantly across cultures (Kramsch, 1993). ESL learners may struggle to navigate these cultural nuances, leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations in communication. Sociolinguistic competence is defined as the ability to use language appropriately in a variety of social contexts, taking into account a multitude of factors, including the characteristics of the audience, the purpose of communication, and the cultural norms that shape language use (Celce-Murciab et al., 2020). This holistic approach to language proficiency goes beyond mere linguistic correctness and fluency. It delves into the nuanced and contextually relevant use of language, where learners are not only expected to be grammatically sound but also socially astute in their communication.

"Sociolinguistic competence allows you to create an environment where you can represent all kinds of cultural and social groups and hear their opinions. This helps to cover events more objectively and from all sides (Kirillov B, 20176 p.5)". It is clear that the different languages and socio-cultural contexts of the participants, especially their mother tongue or foreign language, should not be ignored. This is seen as a phenomenon "...related to the task of facilitating the achievement of students' language of instruction goals"(Faizin A, 2015, p.66).

The purpose of stages of teaching journalism students English include several aspects:

"Formation of Sociolinguistic Knowledge: This stage aims to teach students various aspects of communication in English, sociolinguistic aspects, that is, how language is used in different sociocultural contexts."

"Supporting the Need to Learn a Foreign Language: The task of this stage is to stimulate students' interest and need to learn English and understand a foreign culture."

"Teaching to Analyze a Communicative Situation: Students complete exercises that help them analyze a communicative situation, identify the communicative registers being used (i.e., communication style), and justify their choices."

"Learning the Functional Aspect of Language: This stage involves imitative and substitution exercises aimed at understanding and using language in different situations. This may include understanding and using different lines in dialogues."

"Acquiring New Lexical Units: An important aspect of this stage is the acquisition of new lexical units, that is, expanding the students' vocabulary."

These aspects of English language teaching seem to be aimed at developing the ability to understand and use the language in different contexts and situations, as well as the skills to communicate adequately in English. We have identified that students learning a foreign language have different levels of need for a foreign language, different interests in learning it, and different understandings of the social significance of knowing a foreign language. This situation sets us the task of increasing interest in this subject and the level of knowledge and skills in some students, as well as forming in them the need for active interaction in society and the manifestation of their skills. The goal of other students is to maintain and strengthen the needs and skills they currently have. To solve this problem, we have created individual educational programs for them, taking into account the individual characteristics and abilities of each student.

Culturally oriented approaches to foreign language teaching indeed require methodologists to develop new methodological technologies. These approaches involve students in a deeper involvement in the sociocultural context of the language being studied and an understanding of the importance of cultural aspects in the communication process.

To implement such approaches, methodologists need to study in detail the structure of sociolinguistic aspects of communicative competence in a foreign language, including greetings, norms of communication, and nonverbal elements of communication. Based on such knowledge, they develop exercises and methodologies aimed at not only forming language literacy in students but also the ability to interact effectively in various sociocultural environments.

The stages of improving the sociolinguistic competence of future journalists studying foreign journalism in teaching a foreign language are as follows:

1. At the stage of forming sociolinguistic knowledge, students master the theoretical foundations of the sociolinguistic aspects of language, including understanding different registers of communication, the specific features of language in various sociocultural contexts and communicative situations.
2. At the stage of development through the improvement of sociolinguistic skills, students begin to actively apply their knowledge in practice, strengthening their skills in analyzing communicative situations, identifying and using sociolinguistic registers of communication. This allows them to apply theoretical knowledge in practice.
3. At the stage of improving sociolinguistic skills, students deepen their skills in interacting in different sociocultural environments and learn to adapt their communication depending on the situation and the purpose of communication. This develops their ability to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

Overall, this three-stage technology is effective in improving students' sociolinguistic competence, which is an important element in implementing effective communication in a foreign language in different cultural environments.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the methods of forming thoughts with the help of language, which provide the ability to organize and implement speech acts, as well as the ability to use such means to understand the thoughts of other people and express one's thoughts. It also refers to the ability to use language in a speech act. Researchers also call this type of competence sociolinguistic competence, and by this, they emphasize the ability of a person who possesses such competence to choose the linguistic form and method of expressing a thought based on the circumstances of the speech act: "the situation, communicative goals, and the speaker's intention. To learn this, the language learner must know the semantic properties of words and expressions, how they change depending on the style and nature of communication, and the impact they can have on the interlocutor" "Sociolinguistic competence is a complex phenomenon that encompasses the knowledge and skills needed to use language effectively in a variety of social situations. This competence has a significant impact on the way people interact with language in different cultural contexts" (<https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/formirovanie-sotsiolingvisticheskoy-kompetentsii-studentov-na-zanyatiyah-po-inostrannomu-yazyku>).

The formation of sociolinguistic competence in the process of teaching English to students studying journalism is one of the important tasks in the process of modern language teaching aimed at deepening understanding of the interrelationship between society, culture, and language. It is not enough to teach a foreign language, in particular, English, only in grammatical and lexical terms; it is also important to develop students' ability to use the language in various social and cultural contexts.

The purpose of the study is to substantiate an effective methodological approach aimed at forming sociolinguistic competence in the process of studying English among journalism students and to develop practical recommendations in this regard.

The main problems of the research are the following: insufficient coverage of sociocultural and sociolinguistic elements in the existing educational programs of sociolinguistic knowledge and skills necessary for journalists, lack of effective methodological tools for the formation of skills of active use of language in various social situations, and low integration of contextual materials intended for work in mass media into the educational process.

The research topic is covered using pedagogical observation, comparative analysis, experimental testing, pedagogical monitoring, questionnaires, mathematical and statistical analysis, and generalization methods.

Principles of Selecting Socio-Political Texts

The use of socio-political texts in teaching English to journalism students plays an important role in improving their professional skills. This method helps students not only develop their language skills but also serves to deepen their views on political and social issues. A journalist spends the main part of his work working with texts, creating them, and this fact shows that the use of texts in the process of teaching English to future journalists serves to increase the effectiveness of education.

It is advisable to use socio-political texts in the teaching process based on the stages of working with several texts developed in the methodology of foreign language teaching. The initial stage is the pre-text, that is, the preparatory stage; the second stage is the stage of reading and understanding the text, and the final stage is the post-text stage.

In order to consider the criteria for selecting socio-political texts in teaching English to future journalists, the subject of this subject, teaching tasks, goals, and principles were clarified.

The subject of the study is socio-political texts. The process of implementing student teaching strategies in the process of foreign language teaching can be complicated by various factors.

Methods of Forming Sociolinguistic Competence using Socio-Political Texts

It is advisable to use texts on the political and social sphere in the teaching process based on several stages of working with texts developed in the methodology of foreign language teaching. The initial stage is the pre-text, that is, the preparatory stage; the second stage is the stage of reading and understanding the text, and the final stage is the post-text stage. Based on the exercises used in the initial stage, the pre-text, that is, the preparatory stage, students learn lexical and grammatical material and reading techniques.

We can give the following examples of exercises based on texts from the political and social sphere (see Table 2.8):

Table 2.8. Suggested Pre-Text Exercises

Vocabulary Preview	Students are given a list of key vocabulary from the upcoming text related to political and social topics. They match the words with their definitions, use them in sentences, or find synonyms/antonyms.
Pre-Reading Questions	Before reading the text, students answer questions related to the theme of the text. This could include their opinion on a political issue, predictions about what the text will discuss, or their knowledge about a social event.
Picture Predictions	If the text comes with images (e.g., photographs related to a social movement or a political event), students can discuss what they see and predict how it relates to the upcoming text.
Scanning for Specific Information	Students are asked to scan the text to find specific information, such as dates, names, or places related to political/social events. This helps develop their reading speed and ability to extract information.
Finding Context Clues	Before diving into the text, students are taught how to use context clues to infer the meaning of unknown words or phrases. They practice this skill by looking at sentences or paragraphs from the text and guessing the meanings of highlighted words.
Discussion on Theme	Engage students in a discussion about the theme of the text they are about to read. For instance, if the text is about democracy, discuss what democracy means to them and what aspects of democracy they think will be covered in the text.
Identifying Perspective	Introduce the concept of perspective and bias in texts, especially in political/social topics. Ask students to think about what perspective they might encounter in the text and why recognizing the author's perspective is important.

The second stage requires students to read and understand the text, extract information from the text, and include exercises to test their level of understanding:

“Comprehension Questions” - Students are asked a series of questions that test their main ideas, details, and implications about the text. The questions can range from direct comprehension (What is referred to as the “Fourth Estate” in the context of the text?) to inferential (What is referred to as the “Fourth Estate” in the context of the text?) and evaluative (Do you agree with the assertion that the primary goal of journalism is to serve the public interest? Why or why not?) questions.

“Summarization” - students are asked to briefly summarize the text in their own words, focusing on the main points and important details. This exercise will increase their ability to summarize information and improve their ability to convey the essence of the text concisely.

“True/False Statements” - Students are given a series of statements about the text and must determine whether each statement is true or false, providing evidence from the text to support their answers.

“Discussion Questions” - A class discussion is conducted with open-ended discussion questions that encourage students to express their thoughts, interpretations, and connections to the text. This may include the implications of the text for society, comparisons to their own experiences, or debates about the perspective presented in the text.

“Find and Correct the Mistakes” - Students are tasked with finding and correcting errors in a summary of a text that are intentionally misstated with facts or details. This tests their attention span and level of comprehension.

“Role-Play” - Students are tasked with creating roles based on characters or perspectives presented in the text. They are asked to act out or discuss a scenario from the text, emphasizing that they should use information from their reading to support their roles.

“Text-Based Project”- Students carry out a project that requires deeper analysis or research related to the topic of the text. For example, they may create a presentation, write a related article, or conduct a survey.

As an example for the second stage, we have provided the “True/False Statements” exercise.

The final stage, after the text, involves exercises aimed at developing speaking, listening comprehension, and writing skills based on the vocabulary and information of the text. As an example of this stage, we can give the following scheme (see Figure 2.10):

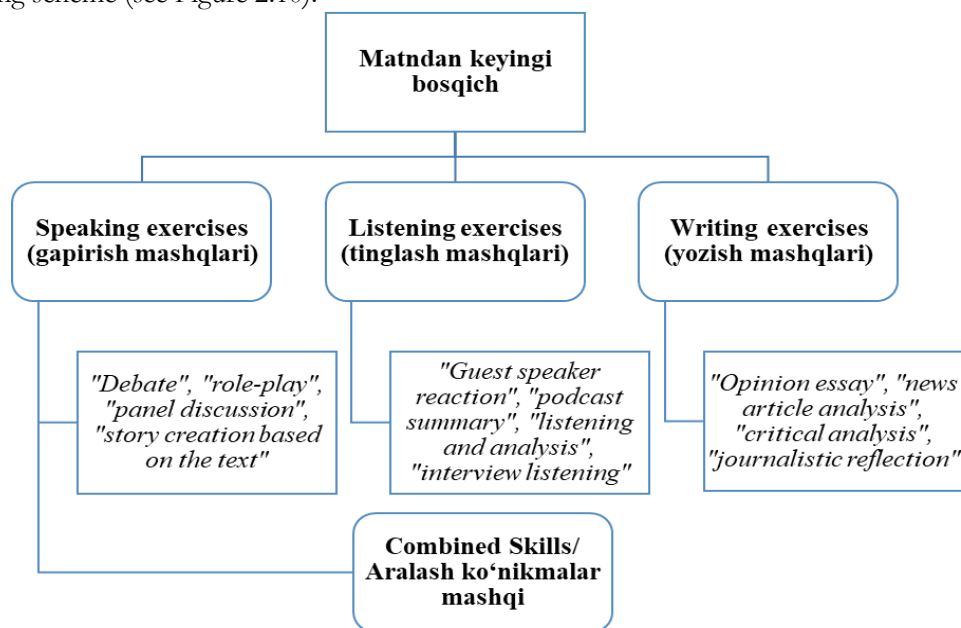


Figure 2.10. Post-Text Exercises

The following exercises can be considered as examples of “Combined Skills” exercises: 1. “Group Presentation” - students are divided into small groups, the text given to them is also divided into parts and presented to the students. Students create a group presentation (poster, ppt, paper steps) based on the content of the text given to them and the idea put forward. 2. “Discussion Circles” - small groups discuss various questions related to the text, for example, the impact of digital media on journalistic integrity, and they should use the vocabulary in the text. Each group should present their discussion in front of the class. 3. “Project Presentation” - Students are divided into groups and work on a project related to journalism and media studies. When the project is completed, they present their work in front of the class and answer questions from others.

As we have seen, future journalists work with texts as a primary task throughout their educational activities, and the main goal of this process is to teach and develop journalism students such aspects as working with texts, analyzing them, and creating creative texts.

Research shows that journalists use a large number of different texts as a means of mass communication. As an educational tool, texts are divided into six main types in terms of form and content:

- Current news texts;
- Information-analytical texts;
- Advertising texts;
- Political-social, official texts;
- Interview texts;
- Artistic-popular texts.

We will focus on the analysis of several typologies of exercises aimed at improving sociolinguistic competence through exercises. In her research, S.A. Ziyeyeva develops a three-stage algorithm for improving sociolinguistic competence. The first and second stages of this algorithm are based on pre-communicative tasks and exercises of a sociolinguistic nature, and the third stage is based on communicative tasks and exercises of a sociolinguistic nature (Ziyayeva, 2020, p.40).

In journalistic text creation exercises, students are given exercises related to the characteristics of creating media texts and their genre specifics. The following genres form the basis of the exercise:

Informative	Analytical	Literature – Journalistic
Newspaper;	Correspondence genre;	Essay;

Radio; Television; OAV Internet;	Article genre: (Problem article; scientific and educational article; popular article;) Opinion; Review; Journalistic investigation genre; Commentary genre;	Feleton; Pamphlet; Essay; Letter;
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Journalistic writing is a powerful and effective means of communication. It is designed for different purposes and audiences and can be informative, analytical, and artistic. Each of these genres performs a specific function in creating a journalistic text. A journalist chooses one or more of them, depending on his purpose and the audience he wants to address. For example, an analytical article or a journalistic investigation is preferable to cover a serious political event, but at the same time, a feuilleton or essay can be written to satirize these events. The journalist makes his choice taking into account the interests of this audience, the specificity of the event or topic itself, and the characteristics of the platform on which it is presented - for example, a newspaper, radio, television program, or the Internet. As a result, he/she both creates text and engages in critical and analytical thinking.

RESULTS

The effectiveness of the research was also determined by the fact that during the pedagogical study, the difficulties that students may encounter in the process of improving their sociolinguistic competence were studied and alternative solutions were proposed” (Uzbekistan Republic Higher Attestation Commission. (2010, February 25). Decision of the Presidium No. 162/7. Retrieved March 12, 2023, from <https://lex.uz>).

The pilot study consisted of testing and validating a methodology developed to improve sociolinguistic competence in teaching English to journalism students. The main stages of the pilot study we conducted were carried out in four stages. Its structure can be seen in the table below (see Table 3.1).

Table 1. Description of the Stages of Experimental Work Carried out During The Study

Nº	Experimental Stage	Organized Processes	The Goal of Organization
1	Diagnostic and prognostic stage	-research objects were determined; -existing problems were identified, and topics were formulated; -the purpose of the experiment, scientific hypothesis, and tasks were determined;	Identifying problems that arise in the process of studying of journalism students through a questionnaire;
2	Organizational - preparation stage	-the experimental site and the composition of the participants were determined; -methodological and organizational support for the experimental work was developed;	Developing methodological and didactic support based on the problem identified at the initial stage;
3	Practical stage	-Emphasis, formative and control experimental work was carried out; experimental work was carried out in groups step by step	Determining the level of effectiveness based on the practical application of methodological and didactic support;
4	Generalizing stage	-the experimental results were obtained and analyzed; - the experimental results algorithm was developed; - the implementation phase was carried out.	Implementation of the developed methodological and didactic support;

Diagnostic and Predictive (Prognostic) Stage

“The diagnostic and predictive (prognostic) stage involved analyzing a collection of documents from educational institutions specializing in journalism, including working curricula, literature, and monitoring English language classes” (Uzbekistan Republic Higher Attestation Commission. (2010, February 25). Decision of the Presidium No. 162/7. Retrieved February 12, 2023, from <https://lex.uz>). Then, a questionnaire was administered to teachers and students to explore the issues that arose during the lesson.

The empirical method of the research is a questionnaire survey, which is aimed at studying the effectiveness of organizing foreign language lessons for journalism students, as well as analyzing the problems that students may encounter when working with political and social texts.

Another question from this section, “What problems do you have in the process of learning a foreign language?”, prompted students to mention the following difficulties:

- Problems with memorizing words;
- Problems with pronunciation;
- Inability to speak fluently and independently;
- Problems with listening.

So, the questionnaire asked the participants to rate their knowledge according to the CEFR level as follows:

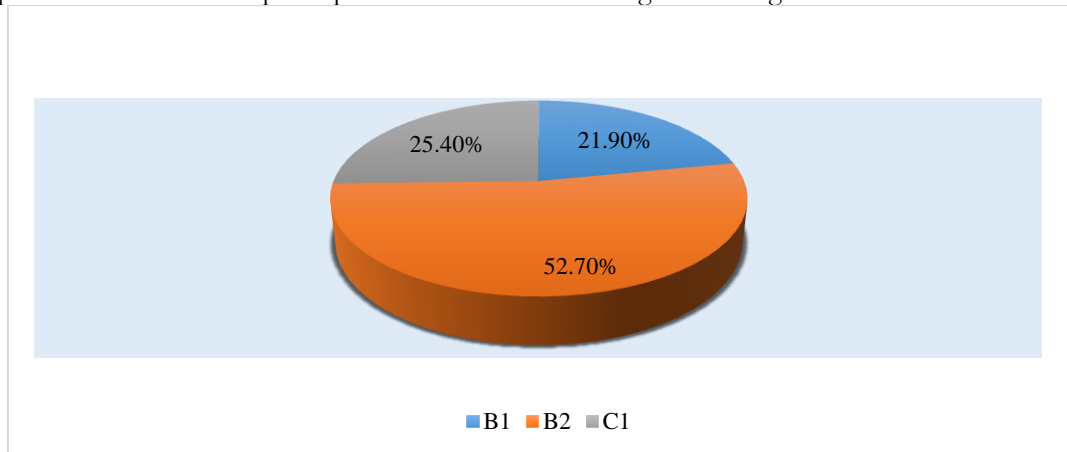


Figure 1. Indicator of Language Proficiency Levels of Respondents

The results show that 21.9% of our respondent students expressed their level as B1, 25.4% as C1, and 52.7% of the students, who constituted the majority, as B2. Regarding the duration of their study of a foreign language, 152 out of 366 students, or 41.5%, answered between 6 months and 1 year, 146 students, or 39.9%, answered between 1 and 3 years, and 60 students, or 16.4%, answered between 4 years and more. 8 students indicated a period of up to 6 months, which is 2.2%.

The questions of the second stage of the questionnaire were aimed at studying the effectiveness of the organization of the educational process.

During the diagnostic, predictive (prognostic) and practical stages of the experiment, the interference that occurred in students, that is, the negative impact of the native language (mixing, migration) in the process of learning a foreign language, was identified and classified.

During the experiment, the criteria for enhancing sociolinguistic competence and the development level of journalism students through reading texts related to the political and social spheres were established, and within the framework of the developed methodological system, a technology for improving students' sociolinguistic skills in English lessons was created.

During the research, theoretical (analytical-synthetic, comparative), diagnostic (surveys, tests, observations), prognostic (expert evaluation) and mathematical-statistical (statistical processing of data and graphical representation of results) methods of teaching a foreign language were used.

The experimental work was carried out in 3 stages. During the formative and confirmatory experiments, the level of development of sociolinguistic competence in teaching English to future journalists was determined according to the criteria indicated above.

It is possible to see that the criterion for assessing the effectiveness of training is equal to one, and the criterion for assessing the level of knowledge is equal to zero. Statistical analysis shows that the mastery of the experimental groups in improving sociolinguistic competence in teaching English to future journalists is higher than the mastery of the control groups (by 13.4%).

Table 2. The Final Analysis of the Results of the Experimental Test on Improving sociolinguistic Competence in Teaching English to Future Journalists

Category	Experimental Groups	Control Groups
Excellent	53	16
Good	83	47
Satisfactory	28	84
Unsatisfactory	20	35

Thus, the conducted experimental work confirmed the increased effectiveness of training in improving sociolinguistic competence in teaching English to future journalists.

DISCUSSION

The need to form sociolinguistic competence for future journalists is important in order to form their skills, such as actively operating in the international information field, effectively communicating at the intersection of cultures, and translating information from a foreign language into their native language for the audience. However, in practice, there are several difficulties in forming sociolinguistic competence in future journalists, which include: insufficient coverage of sociocultural content in curricula; in most cases, special attention is paid to grammar in curricula, and the role of language in sociocultural activity and its functions in communication are studied less. This prevents students from forming the ability to correctly understand the context and select appropriate language units for it; failure to take into account national and cultural differences; students often have difficulty correctly perceiving cultural elements such as idioms, speech etiquette, humor, or caution typical of Anglo-American culture, which, as a result, leads to misinterpretations and the formation of incorrect attitudes in communication; lack of authentic materials close to reality, etc.

The creation of texts in the media space is described as a journalistic discourse and is created in accordance with communicative, methodological and linguistic norms. The function of sensitivity is the most important task of the newspaper journalistic style. Therefore, the correct solution to the problem of the character, means of expression and sources of journalism is of great not only theoretical, but also of great practical importance (D. Teshabayeva, 2021).

At the same time, there are several difficulties in the formation of sociolinguistic competence through socio-political texts, which include:

1. Socio-political texts are often tied to certain cultural, historical, and political realities. If a student does not have sufficient background knowledge of this context, he or she will not be able to understand the full content of the text. This leads to a misunderstanding of lexical units and incorrect interpretation of ironic and metaphorical expressions of words.
2. The language used in political speeches, analyses, and articles is of a high level of formality and style. Understanding and reinterpreting texts in this style requires sociolinguistic preparation. In particular, diplomatic, soft expressions, epithets, metonymy, roundabout expressions, and similar stylistic elements pose difficulties for students.
3. The concepts, ideas, and values reflected in socio-political texts are often characteristic of Anglo-American culture. It is not easy for Uzbek students to understand these ideas deeply, to interpret them in relation to their own cultural thinking. This leads to misinterpretation of meaning, to a one-sided understanding of the information.
4. Students often cannot distinguish what function linguistic units in socio-political texts perform (for example, to influence, to persuade, to compare, to refute, etc.)
5. Socio-political texts come in different genres - news, analytical articles, official speeches, interviews, declarations. Each genre has its own style and language characteristics. The lack of skills to approach them accordingly hinders the formation of sociolinguistic competence.

To overcome the above-mentioned difficulties, it is necessary to develop special programs, training modules and a system of exercises aimed at the formation of sociolinguistic competence, to teach student journalists to conduct meaningful communication in sociocultural situations, to improve the skills of English teachers, as well as to widely use authentic materials and interactive methods in education.

Socio-political texts are an important educational resource in the process of teaching English, especially for students studying journalism. Because through such texts, students not only learn language units, but also deeply understand their social function, meaning-content, and role in expressing actions. This is one of the main factors in the formation of sociolinguistic competence.

The effectiveness of the research was also determined by the fact that during the pedagogical pilot work, the difficulties that students may encounter in the process of improving their sociolinguistic competence were studied and alternative solutions were proposed. After all, sociolinguistic competence in foreign language teaching includes the ability to correctly select linguistic means depending on the social position, context of communication and cultural characteristics of the interlocutors. This competence is especially important for journalism students, since they are expected to be able to effectively communicate with a wide foreign audience, maintaining clarity, impartiality and ethical principles in their messages.

The article aims to identify political and social texts that students can use in foreign language lessons, as well as exercises based on them, and on this basis, analyzes the difficulties that students encounter in the process of working with the text.

CONCLUSIONS

Sociolinguistic competence plays a fundamental role in successful communication and interaction between people. It allows us to adapt our communication in different socio-cultural environments to be more perceptible and understandable. The process of improving the sociolinguistic competence of journalism students should be developed in close connection with the development of linguistic and speech competencies, in an integral relationship, and in the context of the content and goals of the discipline. Knowledge of the English language should be developed as a vital necessity. When designing a technology for teaching reading political and social texts, it is of great scientific and methodological importance to pay attention to: a) stages of working with the text; b) types of reading; and d) reading techniques and processes related to the content.

Teaching reading political and social texts is considered one of the effective methods for forming independent, creative, free, consistent thinking and speech skills of journalism students. This is achieved by teaching students to read political and social texts in English classes.

An integrated approach based on political and social texts ensures the effectiveness of improving sociolinguistic competence in the process of working with information for student journalists, including logical understanding of reality, critical thinking, expressing attitudes, data enrichment, translation proficiency, journalistic text creation, and speech skills.

The results of the experimental work on improving the sociolinguistic competence of student journalists, as well as the statistical analysis, indicate the effectiveness of the methods and strategies of the proposed new methodology. The process of improving sociolinguistic competence includes a sequence of actions that help future journalists develop the ability to adapt and modify language expressions in accordance with the context. To communicate effectively in English when working with information, it is important to observe sociocultural norms, understand the role of the participants in the interaction, the type of information being transmitted and the interaction, and take into account the different levels of students' preparation and the characteristics of the multi-stage learning process in English language training at international journalism faculties.

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- While ESL education traditionally focuses on linguistic proficiency, sociolinguistics competence plays a crucial role in achieving effective communication in diverse sociocultural settings (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

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