

COMPETENCY 1.0

UNDERSTAND BASIC LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS AND THEIR APPLICATION TO ESOL INSTRUCTION

Skill 1.1 Applying knowledge of phonetics and phonology (e.g. distinguishing between classes of sound)

The definition of phonology can be summarized as “the way in which speech sounds form patterns” (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 1995). Phonology is a subset of the linguistics field, which studies the organization and systems of sound within a particular language. Phonology is based on the theory that every native speaker unconsciously retains the sound structure of that language and is more concerned with the sounds than with the physical process of creating those sounds.

When babies babble or make what we call “baby talk,” they are actually experimenting with all of the sounds represented in all languages. As they learn a specific language, they become more proficient in the sounds of that language and forget how to make sounds that they don’t need or use.

Phonemes, pitch, and stress are all components of phonology. Because each affects the meaning of communications, they are variables that ELLs must recognize and learn. Phonology analyzes the sound structure of the given language by:

- Determining which phonetic sounds have the most significance
- Explaining how these sounds influence a native speaker of the language

For example, the Russian alphabet has a consonant, which, when pronounced, sounds like the word “rouge” in French. English speakers typically have difficulty pronouncing this sound pattern, because inherently they know this is not a typical English sound--even though it occasionally is encountered (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 1995).

Mastering a sound that does not occur in the learner’s first language requires ongoing repetition, both of hearing the sound and attempting to say it. The older the learner, the more difficult this becomes, especially if the learner has only spoken one language before reaching puberty. Correct pronunciation may literally require years of practice because initially the learner may not hear the sound correctly. Expecting an ELL to master a foreign pronunciation quickly leads to frustration for the teacher and the learner. With enough focused repetition, however, the learner may eventually hear the difference and then be able to imitate it. Inadequate listening and speaking practice will result in a persistent heavy accent.

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Phonemes are the smallest unit of sound that affects meaning, i.e. distinguish two words. In English, there are approximately 44 speech sounds yet only 26 letters, so the sounds, when combined, become words. For this reason, English is not considered a phonetic language where there is a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds. For example, consider the two words, “pin” and “bin.” The only difference is the first consonant of the words, the “p” in “pin” and “b” in “bin.” This makes the sounds “p” and “b” phonemes in English, because the difference in sound creates a difference in meaning.

Focusing on phonemes to provide pronunciation practice allows students to have fun while they learn to recognize and say sounds. Pairs or groups of words that have a set pattern make learning easier. For example, students can practice saying or thinking of words that rhyme but begin with a different phoneme, such as tan, man, fan, and ran. Other groups of words might start with the same phoneme followed by various vowel sounds, such as ten, ton, tan, and tin. This kind of alliteration can be expanded into tongue twisters that students find challenging and fun.

Vowels and consonants should be introduced in a deliberate order to allow combinations that form real words, though “made-up” words that have no real meaning in English should also be encouraged when introducing new sounds.

Pitch in communication determines the context or meaning of words or series of words. A string of words can communicate more than one meaning; for example, when posed as a question or statement. For example, the phrase “I can’t go” acts as a statement, if the pitch or intonation falls. However, the same phrase becomes the question “I can’t go?” if the pitch or intonation rises for the word “go.”

Stress can occur at a “word” or “sentence” level. At the “word” level, different stresses on the syllable can actually modify the word’s meaning. Consider the word “conflict.” To pronounce it as a noun, one would stress the first syllable, as in “CONflict.” However, to use it as a verb, the second syllable would be stressed, as in “conFLICT.”

Different dialects sometimes pronounce the same word differently, even though both pronunciations have the same meaning. For example, in some parts of the United States the word “insurance” is pronounced by stressing the second syllable, while in other parts of the country the first syllable is stressed.

At the “sentence” level, stress can also be used to vary the meaning. For example, consider the following questions and how the meaning changes, according to the stressed words:

- He did that? (Emphasis is on the person)
- He **did** that? (Emphasis is on the action)
- He did **that**? (Emphasis is on object of the action)

This type of meaning differentiation is difficult for most ELL students to grasp and requires innovative teaching, such as acting out the three different meanings. However, since pitch and stress can change the meaning of a sentence completely, students must learn to recognize these differences. Not recognizing sarcasm or anger can cause students considerable problems in their academic and everyday endeavors.

Unlike languages such as Spanish or French, English has multiple pronunciations of vowels and consonants, which contributes to making it a difficult language to learn. While phonetic rules are critical to learning to read and write, in spite of there being numerous exceptions, they do little to assist listening and speaking skills.

Skill 1.2 Applying knowledge of English morphology and lexicon to analyze a word's structure, function, and meaning.

Morphology refers to the process of how the words of a language are formed to create meaningful messages. ESOL teachers need to be aware of the principles of morphology in English to provide meaningful activities that will help in the process of language acquisition.

Morphemic analysis requires breaking a word down into its component parts to determine its meaning. It shows the relationship between the root or base word and the prefix and/or suffix to determine the word's meaning.

A morpheme is the smallest unit of language system which has meaning. These units are more commonly known as: the root word, the prefix and the suffix, and they cannot be broken down into any smaller units.

- **The root word or base word** is the key to understanding a word, because this is where the actual meaning is determined.
- **A prefix** acts as a syllable, which appears in front of the root or base word and can alter the meaning of the root or base word.
- **A suffix** is a letter or letters, which are added to the end of the word and can alter the original tense or meaning of the root or base word.

The following is an example of how morphemic analysis can be applied to a word:

- Choose a root or base word, such as "kind."
- Create as many new words as possible, by changing the prefix and suffix.
- New words, would include unkind, kindness, and kindly.

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Learning common roots, prefixes, and suffixes greatly helps ELLs to decode unfamiliar words. This can make a big difference in how well a student understands written language. Students who can decode unfamiliar words become less frustrated when reading in English and, as a result, are likely to read more. They have greater comprehension and their language skills improve more quickly. Having the tools to decode unfamiliar words enables ELLs to perform better on standardized tests because they are more likely to understand the questions and answer choices.

Guessing at the meaning of words should be encouraged. To often students become dependent on translation dictionaries, which cause the students not to develop morphemic analysis skills. Practice should include identifying roots, prefixes, and suffixes, as well as using morphemic knowledge to form new words.

ESOL learners need to understand the structure of words in English, and how words may be created and altered. Some underlying principles of the morphology of English are:

1. Morphemes may be free and able to stand by themselves (e.g., chair, bag) or they may be bound or derivational, needing to be used with other morphemes to create meaning (e.g., read-able, en-able).
2. Knowledge of the meanings of derivational morphemes such as prefixes and suffixes enables students to decode word meanings and create words in the language through word analysis, e.g., un-happy means not happy.
3. Some morphemes in English provide grammatical rather than semantic information for words and sentences (e.g., of, the, and).
4. Words can be combined in English to create new compound words (e.g., key + chain = keychain).

ESOL teachers also need to be aware that principles of morphology from the native language may be transferred to either promote or interfere with the second language learning process.

Semantics encompasses the meaning of individual words, as well as combinations of words. Native speakers have used their language to function in their daily lives at all levels. Through experience they know the effects of intonation, connotation, and synonyms. This is not true of foreign speakers. In an ESOL class, we are trying to teach what the native speaker already knows as quickly as possible. The objectives of beginning ESOL lesson plans should deliberately build a foundation that will enable students to meet more advanced objectives.

Teaching within a specific context helps students to understand the meaning of words and sentences. When students can remember the context in which they learn words and recall how the words were used, they retain that knowledge and can compare it when different applications of the same words are introduced.

Using words in a variety of contexts helps students reach a deeper understanding of the word. They can then guess at new meanings that are introduced in different contexts. For example, the word “conduct” can be taught in the context of conducting a meeting or an investigation. Later the word “conductor” can be used in various contexts that demonstrate some similarity but have distinctly different uses of the word, such as a conductor of electricity; the conductor of a train; the conductor of an orchestra; and so forth.

Skill 1.3 Identifying syntactic features (e.g., a verb phrase) in sentence context.

A sentence is a group of words that has a subject and predicate, and expresses a complete idea. A subject tells us what or whom the sentence is about and the predicate makes a statement about what the subject is or does. Subjects and predicates can be modified and combined in different ways to make simple, compound or complex sentences. (In all the following examples, subjects are underlined and predicates italicized.)

Example: The snow *falls quietly*.

Subject: The subject, or the topic of a sentence, consists of a noun or a pronoun and all the words that modify it. “The snow” is the subject in the above example. The simple subject is the main part of the subject. “Snow” is the simple subject.

Predicate: The predicate makes a statement or a comment about the subject and it consists of a verb and all the words that modify it; “falls quietly” is the predicate in the above example. The simple predicate is the main part of the predicate and is always the verb; “falls” is the simple predicate.

Compound subject: When the subject consists of two or more pronouns, e.g. Books and magazines *filled the room*.

Compound predicate: A predicate that contains more than one verb pertaining to the subject, e.g., The boys *walked and talked*.

Sentences in English are of three types:

Simple Sentence: A simple sentence, or independent clause, is a complete thought consisting of a subject and a predicate:

The bus *was late*.

Compound Sentence: A compound sentence consists of two independent clauses joined together by a coordinator (and, or, nor, but, for, yet, so):

Tom *walked to the bus station* **and** he *took the bus*.

Complex Sentence: A complex sentence is a sentence consisting of a dependent clause (a group words with a subject and predicate that are not a complete thought) and an independent clause joined together using a subordinator (although, after, when, because, since, while):

After I write the report, I will submit it to my teacher.

Sentences serve different purposes. They can make a statement (declarative); ask a question (interrogative); give a command (imperative); or express a sense of urgency (exclamatory). Understanding the different purposes for sentences can help ELLs understand the relationship between what they write and the ideas they want to express.

ELLs often over-generalize that sentence fragments are short and complete sentences are long. When they truly understand what constitutes a sentence, they will realize that length has nothing to do with whether a sentence is complete or not. For example:

“He ran.” is a complete sentence.

“After the very funny story began” is a fragment

To make these distinctions, learners must know the parts of speech and understand the difference between independent clauses, dependent clauses, and phrases.

Phrase: a group of words that does not have a subject and a predicate and cannot stand alone. The most common types of phrases are prepositional (in the room); participial (walking down the street); and infinitive (to run).

Parts of speech: the eight classifications for words. Each part of speech has a specific role in sentences. This can be quite difficult for ELLs because the same word can have a different role in different sentences, and a different meaning entirely. Identifying the subject and predicate of the sentence helps to distinguish what role a particular word plays in a sentence. Since English is an S-V-O language, the placement of a word in a sentence relative to the subject or verb indicates what part of speech it is.

- That TV **show** was boring.
- I will **show** you my new dress.
- The band plays **show** tunes at half-time.

In these examples, the word **show** is first a noun, then a verb, and finally an adjective.

The parts of speech include:

Noun: a person, place, thing or idea. Common nouns are non-specific, while proper nouns name a particular person, place, thing, or idea, and are capitalized.

Verb: an action or state of being.

Pronoun: a word that takes the place of a noun.

Personal pronouns can be

- first, second, or third person (I, you, he, she, it);
- singular or plural (I/we, you/you, he, she, it/they); and
- subjective or objective (I/me, you/you, he/him, she/her, it/it, we/us, they/them).

Possessive pronouns show ownership (my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, your, yours, their, and theirs).

Indefinite pronouns refer to persons, places, things or ideas in general, such as any, each, both, most, something.

Adjective: a word that modifies a noun or pronoun. They answer the questions, *What kind? How many? and Which?*

Adverb: a word that modifies a verb, and adjective, or another adverb. They answer the questions, *How? When? Where? How often? and To what extent?*

Prepositions: occur in a phrase with a noun or pronoun and show the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word in a sentence. They describe, or show location, direction, or time. Prepositional phrases can have as few as two words, but can include any number or adjectives.

Interjection: a word that shows surprise or strong feeling. It can stand alone (Help!) or be used within a sentence (Oh no, I forgot my wallet!)

Constructing sentences involves combining words in grammatically correct ways to communicate the desired thought. Avoiding fragments and run-ons requires continual sentence analysis. The test of a complete sentence is: Does it contain a subject and predicate and express a complete idea? Practice identifying independent clauses, dependent clauses, and phrases will help ELLs to write complete sentences.

Sill 1.4 Identifying discourse features (e.g., cohesion) in a textual context

The term discourse refers to linguistic units composed of several sentences and is derived from the concept of “discursive formation” or communication that involves specialized knowledge of various kinds. Conversations, arguments, or speeches are types of discourses. Discourse shapes the way language is transmitted, and also how we organize our thoughts.

The structure of discourse varies among languages and traditions. For example, Japanese writing does not present the main idea at the beginning of an essay; rather, writing builds up to the main idea, which is presented or implied at the end of the essay. This is completely different than English writing, which typically presents the main idea or thesis at the beginning of an essay and repeats it at the end.

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In addition to language and structure, topic or focus affects discourse. The discourse in various disciplines approach topics differently, such as feminist studies, cultural studies, and literary theory. Discourse plays a role in all spoken and written language, and affects our thinking.

Written discourse ranges from the most basic grouping of sentences to the most complicated essays and stories. Regardless of the level, English writing demands certain structure patterns. A typical paragraph begins with a topic sentence, which states directly or indirectly the focus of the paragraph; adds supporting ideas and details; and ends with a concluding sentence that relates to the focus and either states the final thought on that topic or provides a transition to the next paragraph when there are more than one. As with spoken discourse, organization, tone, and word choice are critical to transferring thoughts successfully and maintaining interest.

As skills increase, paragraphs are combined into stories or essays. Each type of writing has specific components and structures. Story writing requires setting, plot, and character. Initially, following a chronological order is probably easiest for ELLs, but as learners become more skillful, other types of order should be practiced, such as adding descriptions in spatial order,

Teachers frequently rely on the proverbial three- or five-paragraph essay to teach essay writing because it provides a rigid structure for organizing and expanding ideas within a single focus. It mirrors the paragraph structure organizationally in that the first, introductory paragraph provides the main idea or focus of the essay; each body paragraph adds and develops a supporting idea and details; and the concluding paragraph provides a summary or other type of conclusion that relates to the main idea or focus stated in the first paragraph. Obviously no one considers such mechanical essays to be the ultimate goal of essay writing. However, especially for ELLs, having a rigid structure teaches the basic organizational concept of English essays. By offering strictly defined limits, the teacher reduces the number of variables to learn about essay writing. Starting with a blank page can be overwhelming to ELLs. Working within this structure enables learners to focus on developing each paragraph, a challenging enough task when one considers the language skills required! As learners become better able to control their writing and sustain a focus, variations can be introduced and topics expanded.

Skill 1.5 Applying knowledge of linguistic concepts in interlanguage analysis.

During the acquisition of a second language, learners develop a linguistic system that is complete in itself and is different from both the learner's first language and the target language. Interlanguage is a temporary and changing grammatical system which approximates that of the language being learned. In the process of L2 acquisition, interlanguage (IL) continuously evolves getting more and more like the target language. Ideally, the second language learner's IL should become equivalent or nearly equivalent to the target language. However, for various reasons, at times IL may cease to grow and does not become like the target language. This is termed as *fossilization* (Selinker, 1972), where the progress in the acquisition of L2 terminates despite repeated efforts.

Interlanguage can be a cause of several different processes. These include (a) borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, (b) extending patterns from the target language, (c) expressing meaning using the words and grammar which are already known (Richards, 1992). Because IL is a development process, teachers can give appropriate feedback for further improvement. Similarly, learners should not be worried about making mistakes as it is a natural process on the continuum of second language acquisition. This gives learners margin for errors and relieves them from constant supervision by the teachers thus leading to pair and group work.

Interlanguage consists of a structural simplification, e.g., omission of all morphological marking, fixed word order, reduced vocabulary, etc. Another example is the acquisition of relative clauses. Some languages like English and Arabic have relative clause while others, like Japanese and Chinese, do not (Ellis, 1997). Therefore, learners whose L1 has relative clause will learn them more easily and will not avoid using them then those that lack this lexical feature in their L1. The linguistic aspect of relative clause affects another way, too. In English, the relative clause

- Can be attached to the end of the main clause, e.g., The ambulance took the woman to the hospital who was struck by lightning.
- Can be embedded in the main clause, e.g., The woman who was struck by lightning was taken to the hospital by the ambulance.

Second language learners typically acquire the first type of relative clause with more ease than the later. Furthermore, studies have also shown that L2 learners tend to acquire first the relative clause with a subject pronoun (for example, *who*) than with an object pronoun (for example, *whom*). This shows certain predictability in the acquisition of certain structures which would help teachers in developing materials for different levels of students at various proficiency levels.

Chomsky put forward his theory of *universal language* which assumes that all languages have a common structural basis and provides parameters which are given particular settings in different languages. Chomsky based this on his research on L1 acquisition by children. He observes that the input that the children are exposed to is insufficient for them to learn the rules of their target language. Therefore, he hypothesized that these children must rely on innate knowledge of language in order to acquire their respective L1. There is a great debate over the accessibility of UG in second language acquisition.

The above controversy also considers whether the access of universal grammars depends on the age of the language learner called the *critical period hypothesis*. This hypothesis states that there is a period during language acquisition when learners are able to achieve native-like proficiency in the target language. Studies show that L2 learners who began learning as adults are unable to achieve native-like ability in either grammar or pronunciation. However, there is a difference in competence level with respect to L1 and L2 learners. This could be due to the difference in social conditions where L1 learners have a lot of opportunity to interact in their first language. Additionally, it could be because L1 and L2 have separate learning mechanisms because most adult L2 learners do not have access to UG. However, many theories have been postulated with respect to universal grammar in second language acquisition. This ranges from complete access, no access, partial access (L2 learning is partly regulated by UG and partly by general learning strategies) to dual access (rely on both learning strategies and UG, but can only be fully successful if they depend on UG).

Another theory with respect to linguistic concepts in interlanguage analysis is the study of *nakedness*. This puts forward the theory that some structures are more common in world's languages than others which are referred to as unmarked whereas marked structures are those that are not common. One hypothesis that emerged from this theory is that the less marked structures are acquired earlier than more marked structures. However, other studies have found out that L2 learners are more likely to acquire a marked structure frequent in input than an unmarked structure that is not used frequently. Furthermore, research has pointed out the role of L1 transfer in this area. It had been suggested that learners might be able to transfer unmarked structures from their L1 than unmarked structures.

Another set of theories is based on Stephen Krashen's research in L2 acquisition. Most people understand his theories based on five principles:

1. The acquisition-learning hypothesis: There is a difference between learning a language and acquiring it. Children "acquire" a first language easily—it's natural. But adults often have to "learn" a language through coursework, studying, and memorizing. One can acquire a second language, but often it requires more deliberate and natural interaction within that language.
2. The monitor hypothesis: The learned language "monitors" the acquired language. In other words, this is when a person's "grammar check" kicks in and keeps awkward, incorrect language out of a person's L2 communication.

3. The natural order hypothesis: This theory suggests that learning grammatical structures is predictable and follows a “natural order.”
4. The input hypothesis: Some people call this “comprehensible input.” This means that a language learner will learn best when the instruction or conversation is just above the learner’s ability. That way, the learner has the foundation to understand most of the language, but still will have to figure out, often in context, what that extra more difficult element means.
5. The affective filter hypothesis: This theory suggests that people will learn a second language when they are relaxed, have high levels of motivation, and have a decent level of self-confidence.

The above discussion of the L2 learners’ interlanguage shows the importance of analyzing the students native language as well as an understanding the linguistic concepts of the target language in order to understand the different stages on L2 development within a classroom. It is important for the teachers to try to introduce new materials based on this analysis and provide learners with appropriate learning strategies that would help them achieve native-like proficiency in the target language.

Skill 1.6 Applying knowledge of the structure of the English language.

Syntax involves the order in which words are arranged to create meaning. Different languages use different patterns for sentence structure. Syntax also refers to the rules for creating correct sentence patterns. English, like many other languages, is a subject-verb-object language, which means that in most sentences the subject precedes the verb, and the object follows the verb. ELLs whose native language follows a subject-verb-object pattern will find it easier to master English syntax.

The process of second language acquisition includes forming generalizations about the new language and internalizing the rules that are observed. During the silent period, before learners are willing to attempt verbal communication, they are engaged in the process of building a set of syntactic rules for creating grammatically correct sentences in the second language. We don’t yet fully understand the nature of this process, but we do know that learners must go through this process of observing, drawing conclusions about language constructs, and testing the validity of their conclusions. This is why learners benefit more from intense language immersion than from corrections.

Language acquisition is a gradual, hierarchical, and cumulative process. This means that learners must go through and master each stage in sequence, much as Piaget theorized for learning in general. In terms of syntax, this means learners must acquire specific grammatical structures, first recognizing the difference between subject and predicate; putting subject before predicate; and learning more complex variations, such as questions, negatives, and relative clauses.

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While learners much pass through each stage and accumulate the language skills learned in each progressive stage, learners use different approaches to mastering these skills. Some learners use more cognitive processing procedures, which means their learning takes place more through thought processes, while other learners tend to use psycholinguistic procedures, which employs processing learning more through speech. Regardless of how learners process information, they must all proceed through the same stages, from least to most complicate.

Experts disagree on the exact definition of the phases, but a set of six general stages would include:

<u>Stage of Development</u>	<u>Examples</u>
1. Single words	I; throw; ball
2. SVO structure	I throw the ball.
3. Wh- fronting Do fronting Adverb fronting Negative + verb	Where you are? Do you like me? Today I go to school. She is not nice.
4. Y/N inversion Copula (linking v) inversion Particle shift	Do you know him? Yes, I know him. Is he at school? Take your hat off.
5. Do 2 nd Aux 2 nd Neg do 2 nd	Why did she leave? Where has he gone? She does not live here.
6. Cancel inversion	I asked what she was doing.

Each progressive step requires the learner to use knowledge from the previous step, as well as new knowledge of the language. As ELLs progress to more advanced stages of syntax, they may react differently depending on their ability to acquire the new knowledge that is required for mastery. A learner who successfully integrates the new knowledge is a “standardizer”; he/she makes generalizations, eliminates erroneous conclusions, and increasingly uses syntactical rules correctly. However, for some learners, the next step may be more difficult than the learner can manage. These learners become “simplifiers”; they revert to syntactical rules learned at easier stages and fail to integrate the new knowledge. When patterns of errors reflect lower level stages, the teacher must re-teach the new syntactical stage. If simplifiers are allowed to repeatedly use incorrect syntax, they risk having their language become fossilized, which makes learning correct syntax that much more difficult.

COMPETENCY 2 UNDERSTAND BASIC SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONCEPTS RELATED TO ESOL INSTRUCTION.

Skill 2.1 Demonstrating knowledge of sociolinguistic concepts (e.g., dialect diversity in English, intercultural differences in communication styles, code switching)

American English usage is influenced by the social and regional situation of its users. Linguists have found that speakers adapt their pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure depending on the social situation. For example, the decision to use –ing or –in at the end of a present participle depends on the formality of the situation. Speakers talking with their friends will often drop the “g” and use of –in to signal that the situation is more informal and relaxed. These variations are also related to factors such as age, gender, education, socioeconomic status, and personality.

We call this type of shift a change in register, how language is used in a particular setting or for a particular purpose. People change their speech register depending on such sociolinguistic variables as:

- Formality of situation
- Attitude towards topic
- Attitude towards listeners
- Relation of speaker to others

Changing speech registers may be completely subconscious for native speakers. For example, if a university professor takes his car in for servicing, the manner and speech he uses to communicate with the mechanic differs significantly from the manner and speech he uses to deliver a lecture. If he were to use a formal tone and academic vocabulary, the mechanic might think the professor was trying to put him down, or he might not understand what the professor was saying. Likewise, when the mechanic explains the mechanical diagnosis, he most likely chooses a simplified vocabulary rather than using completely technical language, or jargon, that the professor wouldn't understand. Using the jargon of any field the listener doesn't know will likely make the listener feel stupid or inferior, and perhaps that the speaker is inconsiderate,

Language registers are also used to deliberately establish a social identity. Hispanics deliberately refer to themselves as La Raza (the race) to imply dignity and pride for what they are and where they come from. Using a Spanish term when speaking English is called code switching. As a result, this term is becoming (or has become) a part of the American vocabulary. Symbolically it represents both the Hispanics' distinction and their integration into American culture.

The growth in popularity of rap demonstrates how and why sociolinguistic changes occur over time. The term “rap” dates back to 16th century Britain and has connections to Celtic music. In the 1960s, Black Americans adopted the term to describe the rhythmic style of speaking they used to distinguish themselves from White Americans.

Their need for distinction arose from the frustration over years of discrimination. Since White Americans had difficulty understanding rap, this speech register gave Black Americans a unique identity and perhaps a sense of superiority that they hadn't felt before socially. By the 1970s spoken rap evolved into hip hop and Latinos also became proficient in this new art form. The music, in turn, lent itself to additional language variations such as slam poetry. By the 1990s, hip hop had evolved into a more militant, anti-social genre in which violence; promiscuity, drug use, and misogyny dominated the music, which represented a particular social cross-section of the population. Now the genre has spread to a variety of applications.

ESOL teachers should be aware of these sociolinguistic functions of language and compare different social functions of language with their students. Knowing and being able to use appropriate registers allows learners to function more effectively in social situations. Learners must acquire the social, as well as the linguistic aspects of American English. Sociolinguistic functions of a language are best acquired by using the language in authentic situations.

Sociolinguistic diversity, which is language variations based on regional and social differences, affects teachers' language attitudes and practices. Teachers must respect the validity of any group's or individual's language patterns, while at the same time teaching standard English. Vernacular versions of English have well established patterns and rules to support them. Making learners aware of language variations leads to increased interest in language learning and better ability to switch among one or more register or dialect and standard English.

ELLs tend to adapt linguistic structures to their familiar culture, modifying specific concepts and practices. Teachers must identify these variations, call attention to them, and teach the standard English equivalent. The goal is not to eliminate linguistic diversity, but rather to enable learners to control their language use so that they can willfully use standard English *in addition to* their cultural variation.

Various functional adaptations of English have great significance to the cultural groups that use them. Attempting to eliminate variations is not only futile, but raises hostility and reluctance to learn English. Stable, socially shared structures emerge from the summed effects of many individual communication practices. Firmly engrained language patterns serve a purpose within the community that uses them.

Unique variations can arise in as limited a spectrum as within a school. New non-standard English words can represent a particular group's identity, or function as a means to solidify social relationships. As long as students recognize that a variation should not be used as if it were standard English, there should be no problem with its use.

Skill 2.2 Demonstrating knowledge of academic discourse

Academic discourse refers to formal academic learning. This includes all the four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Academic learning is important in order for students to succeed in school. Cummins differentiated between two types of language proficiency: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). According to research, an average student can acquire BICS within two to five years of language learning whereas CALP can take from four to seven years. A lot of factors are involved in the acquisition of CALP such as age, language proficiency level, literacy in the first language, etc.

Academic discourse not only includes the knowledge of content-area vocabulary but also the knowledge of various skills and strategies that are essential to successfully complete academic tasks in a mainstream classroom. It includes skills such as inferring, classifying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Textbooks used in classroom require abstract thinking where the information is context reduced. As students reach higher grades, they are required to think critically and apply this knowledge to solve problems.

Additionally, the language of academic discourse is also complex for English language learners. With respect to reading and writing, use of complex grammatical structures is frequently found in academic discourse which makes it challenging for the learners. Also, passive voice is normally used to present science and other subject area textbooks. Similarly, the use of reference, pronouns, modals, etc is also a common feature of academic discourse which might cause problems for ESL learners. All of these language features of academic discourse help to convey the intended meaning of the author. Therefore, it is necessary to explicitly teach these language features of the text to the students in order for them to become skilled readers and writers.

Furthermore, genre is also an important aspect of academic discourse. It employs a different style of writing that is unique in itself. The organization of a text structure differs according to the purpose of the author, for example, mystery versus romance. Likewise, in academic reading students come across multiple texts that vary in organization and style according to the purpose of the author and the audience in question. Students need to realize the different features of multiple texts to be efficient readers. With respect to writing, students need to determine the purpose of their writing, for example argumentative writing versus story writing.

In short, explicit instruction of these language skills, grammar, vocabulary, and genre should be provided to the students to help them learn academic discourse in order for them to succeed in a school setting.