

Research on Oral Expression and Communication Skills Development from the Perspective of Applied Linguistics

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Abstract: Applied linguistics provides a systematic theoretical framework for the development of oral expression and communication skills. The constituent elements of oral expression and communication skills can be summarized from three dimensions: linguistics, pragmatics, and socio-cultural aspects, and development strategies are proposed based on relevant theories. Contextual awareness, cultural adaptability, and cognitive regulation play key roles in improving oral communication effectiveness. Task-based teaching, authentic language materials, and metacognitive training can effectively promote learners' oral proficiency development, providing theoretical guidance and implementation pathways for language education practice, meeting the demands for efficient communication in the information age.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics; Oral Expression; Communication Skills; Pragmatic Competence; Communication Strategies

1. Introduction

Language, as the primary tool for human interaction, plays a crucial role in social interaction through its oral expression form. With the acceleration of globalization and increasingly frequent cross-cultural exchanges, effective oral communication skills have become essential qualities for individual career development and social integration. The field of language education currently faces a contradiction between traditional teaching methods and modern communication needs, with excessive emphasis on grammatical rules and vocabulary memorization, while neglecting the social function of language and practical application scenarios. Applied linguistics integrates multi-disciplinary theories, providing a comprehensive analytical

framework for oral proficiency development, exploring the social context of language use, communicative purposes, as well as the cognitive processes and emotional factors of language users.

2. Theoretical Overview of Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics, as an important branch of linguistics, focuses on the patterns and application issues of language in practical use, providing a solid theoretical foundation for oral expression and communication skills. Applied linguistics has formed a diversified theoretical system including pragmatics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and other fields, breaking through the limitations of traditional linguistics that focus on language structure research, and emphasizing the exploration of authentic situations and social functions of language use^[1] The pragmatic perspective emphasizes speech act theory and cooperative principles, revealing the decisive role of contextual factors in meaning construction; sociolinguistics focuses on the interactive relationship between language variation and socio-cultural factors, clarifying identity construction and power relations in oral expression; psycholinguistics analyzes oral production mechanisms from the perspective of cognitive processing, providing an explanatory framework for understanding language anxiety and fluency issues. The interdisciplinary nature of applied linguistics comprehensively grasps the complexity of oral expression, constructing a multi-level analytical framework for oral communication competence by integrating three dimensions: language form, functional meaning, and social cognition. In the context of globalization, applied linguistics emphasizes that language competence is a comprehensive quality for effective communication in multicultural contexts, guiding language education to shift from formal training to functional

development and communicative practice.

3. Constituent Elements of Oral Expression and Communication Skills

3.1 Linguistic Elements of Oral Expression Skills

The linguistic elements of oral expression skills include three core components: phonetics and intonation, vocabulary usage, and grammatical structure, which together form the basic framework of oral expression. Phonetics and intonation, as the physical carriers of oral expression, involve not only the accuracy and clarity of pronunciation but also suprasegmental features such as stress, pause, and intonation variation, which directly affect the listener's reception and understanding of oral information^[2]. Vocabulary usage ability is reflected in the breadth and depth of vocabulary, where effective oral expression requires speakers to have a rich vocabulary reserve, being able to accurately select the most appropriate words to express precise meanings, while also mastering fixed collocations, idioms, and colloquial expressions. Grammatical structure ability focuses on syntactic organization and semantic coherence, including the correct use of grammatical categories such as tense, voice, and modality, as well as the flexible application of complex sentence patterns and discourse markers. Although grammatical structures in oral expression are more flexible than in written language, they still need to follow basic grammatical rules to ensure the accuracy of information transmission. These three major elements are closely connected and mutually influential in actual oral communication, forming a balance between language accuracy and fluency, supporting the linguistic foundation of oral expression.

3.2 Pragmatic Elements of Communication Skills

The pragmatic elements of communication skills focus on the patterns of language use in specific contexts, emphasizing meaning negotiation and interaction management abilities, which are the core guarantees for effective oral communication. Contextual awareness enables speakers to accurately grasp the communication situation, topic nature, and participant relationships, adjusting the

formality, politeness strategies, and professional depth of language expression accordingly^[3]. Speech act competence is reflected in the ability to appropriately implement different types of speech acts such as requests, promises, apologies, and suggestions, understanding the differences between direct and indirect speech acts, and the expression methods of speech acts in different cultures. Conversational cooperation ability involves three aspects: turn-taking, topic management, and conversation repair. Effective communication requires speakers to follow the principle of conversational cooperation, maintaining the coherence and interactivity of communication. The ability to use discourse markers is also an important component, managing turns, connecting topics, adjusting tone, and enhancing the coherence and interpersonal function of oral expression through discourse markers such as "you know" and "I mean." Meta-pragmatic awareness enables speakers to reflect on and monitor their own language use, be aware of pragmatic failures and make adjustments, and flexibly switch communication strategies in different contexts. These pragmatic elements together constitute the strategic level of oral communication skills, providing guiding principles for the selection of language forms.

3.3 Socio-cultural Elements of Communication Competence

Socio-cultural elements of communication competence focus on the social environment and cultural background of language use, which are key factors for successful cross-cultural communication. Cultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity enable speakers to understand value concepts and communication habits in different cultures, avoiding communication barriers caused by cultural differences^[4]. Identity recognition and positioning ability is reflected in the speaker's awareness of the relationship between language use and social identity, choosing appropriate expression methods according to their roles. Social norm awareness enables speakers to understand language usage rules in specific groups, including taboo topics and the usage range of professional terminology. The interpretation and use of non-verbal communication signals are equally important; facial expressions, eye contact, and other

non-verbal factors carry rich socio-cultural information and influence communication effectiveness. Critical discourse awareness enables speakers to perceive ideologies implied in language, understanding the social meanings behind language choices. These socio-cultural elements complement the linguistic and pragmatic elements, enabling language users to engage in appropriate communication activities in multicultural backgrounds.

4. Oral Expression and Communication Skills Development Methods from the Perspective of Applied Linguistics

4.1 Pragmatics-based Oral Teaching Methods

Pragmatics-based oral teaching methods focus on cultivating learners' ability to use language in authentic contexts, emphasizing the application of speech act theory and conversational principles in teaching. The speech act teaching method uses functions such as requests, apologies, and suggestions as teaching units, enabling learners to master expression forms and applicable conditions through situational practice. Conversation analysis teaching integrates turn management, topic switching, and repair strategies into oral training, where learners identify effective communication discourse markers and interaction patterns by analyzing authentic conversation recordings. Contextualized teaching activity design simulates various real communication scenarios, such as interviews, academic discussions, or service consultations, allowing learners to practice adjusting language formality and interpersonal expression. Metapragmatic awareness cultivation guides learners to reflect on their own language use, improving their judgment of language use appropriateness through cross-cultural pragmatic failure analysis and communication strategy discussions. These teaching methods organically combine language form and function, breaking through the limitations of traditional grammar-translation methods, enabling learners to develop strategic abilities to cope with various communication situations while mastering language structures.

4.2 Communication Competence

Development Combined with Sociolinguistics

Communication competence development combined with sociolinguistics focuses on the social dimension of language use, helping learners understand the relationship between language variants and identity expression. Authentic corpus teaching utilizes natural dialogue materials from oral corpora, exposing learners to authentic language use, including language characteristics of various social groups and stylistic variations^[5]. Code-switching awareness cultivation is aimed at learners in multilingual environments, helping them understand the strategies and significance of switching languages or styles in different social situations through case analysis and role-playing. Cross-cultural communication skills training uses cultural comparison and critical incident analysis to help learners recognize the impact of cultural differences on oral expression, such as preferences for direct versus indirect expression, appropriateness of humor use, etc. Sociolinguistic survey projects encourage learners to collect and analyze language usage patterns in specific communities, enhancing sensitivity to language social variation. These development methods go beyond pure language skills training, emphasizing the social appropriateness of language use, enabling learners to adjust oral expression according to social context.

4.3 Oral Expression Training Integrating Psycholinguistics

Oral expression training integrating psycholinguistics focuses on the cognitive psychological processes of language processing, aiming to improve the fluency and naturalness of oral production. Cognitive load regulation training gradually increases the complexity and immediacy of oral tasks, such as progressing from prepared speeches to impromptu responses, helping learners gradually automate the language production process. Language anxiety intervention strategies include systematic desensitization, cognitive restructuring, and positive self-dialogue techniques, combined with group collaborative activities and supportive feedback mechanisms, creating a safe oral practice environment and reducing learners' emotional barriers. Working memory

enhancement exercises improve learners' ability to simultaneously process content conception and language forms through repetition training and multi-task oral activities. Metacognitive strategy guidance cultivates learners' ability to monitor and adjust their own oral production, including oral planning development and self-correction techniques, such as recording and analyzing their own oral performance, identifying pattern errors, and making targeted adjustments. These training methods are based on the psychological mechanisms of language processing, intervening in the cognitive foundations and emotional factors of oral production, making the development of oral expression skills more systematic and efficient.

5. Conclusion

Applied linguistics provides a systematic theoretical framework and methodology for the development of oral expression and communication skills. Language accuracy, contextual adaptability, and cultural sensitivity constitute the core elements of effective oral communication. Functional teaching, authentic materials application, and cognitive strategy training form a comprehensive system for oral proficiency development. Future research could further explore the application potential of digital technology and artificial intelligence in oral teaching, improve assessment systems, and develop differentiated development strategies for different learner groups. Strengthening the combination of theory and

teaching practice will promote innovation in language education and enhance learners' adaptability and communication effectiveness in multicultural environments.

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