COMPONENTS FORMING SPEECH CULTURE

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Abstract: Speech culture is a multidimensional phenomenon studied in linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, rhetoric, and pedagogy. It encompasses the mastery of literary language norms, communicative appropriateness, ethical standards, and stylistic competence in oral and written discourse. This article analyzes the core components forming speech culture based on established linguistic and pedagogical research. Drawing on works in communicative competence theory, functional stylistics, and language normativity, the study identifies linguistic, communicative, pragmatic, ethical, cognitive, and sociocultural components as fundamental elements in shaping speech culture. The research synthesizes theoretical findings and highlights their relevance for educational practice and language policy.

Keywords: Speech culture, communicative competence, language norm, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, stylistics, rhetoric, discourse, language education, linguistic competence

Introduction

Speech culture (often referred to as "culture of speech" or linguistic culture) is traditionally defined as the ability to use language correctly, appropriately, and effectively according to established literary norms and communicative goals [1, p. 7]. In linguistic scholarship, the concept is closely connected with language normativity, stylistic differentiation, and communicative competence [2, p. 14].

The development of speech culture has been widely discussed in Russian, Uzbek, and Western linguistic traditions. For instance, the Prague Linguistic Circle emphasized functional language norms and stylistic differentiation as key aspects of cultured speech [3, p. 82]. Later, communicative approaches introduced by Dell Hymes expanded the understanding of language mastery beyond grammatical correctness to include sociocultural appropriateness [4, p. 277].

Modern linguistics views speech culture as an integrative construct that includes linguistic accuracy, communicative expediency, ethical standards, and stylistic expressiveness [5, p. 23]. Therefore, identifying its structural components is essential for both theoretical linguistics and language education.

Methodology

The study is based on descriptive, comparative, and analytical methods. Foundational works in general linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and pedagogy were analyzed to determine the structural elements of speech culture. The methodological framework relies on:

- The theory of communicative competence [4, p. 281];
- The concept of language norm and codification [1, p. 15];
- Functional stylistics [3, p. 90];
- Pragmatic theory of speech acts [6, p. 47];
- Sociolinguistic models of language variation [7, p. 112].

A systematic review of academic literature was conducted to synthesize empirically established components without introducing speculative assumptions.

Results

The analysis of linguistic and pedagogical sources allows distinguishing the following key components forming speech culture:

Linguistic (Normative) Component

Correct pronunciation, lexical accuracy, grammatical correctness, and adherence to literary norms constitute the primary layer of speech culture [1, p. 21]. According to Vinogradov, mastery of codified norms ensures clarity and stability of communication [2, p. 29].

Communicative Component

Dell Hymes' concept of communicative competence includes knowledge of when, where, and how to speak appropriately [4, p. 279]. This component integrates grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences [8, p. 31].

Pragmatic Component

Speech culture requires understanding the intention and perlocutionary effect of utterances. Austin's speech act theory demonstrates that utterances perform actions, and their success depends on contextual conditions [6, p. 52].

Stylistic Component

Functional stylistics distinguishes scientific, official, journalistic, conversational, and artistic styles, each governed by specific norms [3, p. 95]. The ability to select appropriate stylistic means according to context forms an essential part of speech culture [5, p. 37].

Ethical Component

Politeness strategies and speech etiquette are central to cultured communication. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory explains how speakers mitigate face-threatening acts through linguistic strategies [9, p. 68].

Sociocultural Component

Language reflects cultural values and social identity. Sociolinguistic research confirms that speech norms vary according to social group, status, and context [7, p. 118]. Awareness of these variations contributes to effective intercultural communication.

Cognitive Component

Language competence is connected with cognitive processes such as conceptualization and categorization [10, p. 121]. The development of speech culture involves cognitive organization of discourse and logical coherence.

Analysis and Discussion

The structural components of speech culture identified in linguistic scholarship—linguistic normativity, communicative competence, pragmatic awareness, stylistic differentiation, ethical regulation, sociocultural sensitivity, and cognitive organization—should not be treated as autonomous layers functioning independently of one another. Rather, they operate within a dynamic and hierarchical system in which each component reinforces and conditions the others. The integrative nature of speech culture has been emphasized in communicative theory, where grammatical competence alone is regarded as insufficient for successful interaction [4, p. 283].

The linguistic component provides the foundational framework of correctness. Codified norms regulate pronunciation, word usage, morphological forms, and syntactic constructions [1, p. 21]. However, as demonstrated in studies of communicative competence, grammatically correct utterances may still be inappropriate if they disregard contextual or sociocultural constraints [4, p. 279]. For example, an utterance that strictly follows grammatical rules but violates politeness conventions or social hierarchy may be perceived as impolite or culturally insensitive. This observation confirms that linguistic accuracy is a necessary but not sufficient condition of speech culture.

Functional stylistics further clarifies this relationship by demonstrating that language operates through differentiated functional styles adapted to specific communicative domains [3, p. 95]. Scientific discourse is characterized by terminological precision, syntactic complexity, and logical sequencing. Official discourse relies on standardized formulas and impersonal

constructions. Journalistic discourse combines informational clarity with persuasive expressiveness. Conversational discourse prioritizes spontaneity, emotional coloration, and interpersonal markers [3, p. 101]. Speech culture therefore requires not only knowledge of language norms but also the ability to select stylistic resources appropriate to the communicative situation. Stylistic flexibility becomes a measurable indicator of speech maturity because it reflects the speaker's capacity to adapt linguistic means to discourse type.

The pragmatic dimension deepens this analysis. According to speech act theory, utterances perform actions, and their effectiveness depends on contextual felicity conditions [6, p. 52]. Illocutionary force—such as requesting, promising, apologizing, or warning—determines how an utterance functions in communication. Pragmatic failure often arises when speakers misinterpret or misuse speech acts, particularly in intercultural communication [6, p. 60]. For instance, direct commands that are grammatically correct may appear impolite in cultures that favor indirectness. Thus, pragmatic competence is inseparable from speech culture because it governs the interaction between linguistic form and communicative intention.

Ethical norms operate as regulatory mechanisms ensuring communicative harmony. Politeness theory demonstrates that speakers employ strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts and maintain social balance [9, p. 68]. The use of honorifics, modal verbs, hedging expressions, and indirect forms serves to protect the interlocutor's social dignity [9, p. 74]. In institutional contexts, such as education or governance, adherence to speech etiquette signals professionalism and respect. Even when linguistic norms are observed, disregard for ethical conventions may be interpreted as communicative incompetence. Consequently, ethical regulation must be regarded as an integral component of speech culture rather than an optional embellishment.

Sociolinguistic research further supports the contextual nature of speech culture. Language varies according to social class, region, age, gender, and professional affiliation [7, p. 118]. Standard language competence provides access to formal domains of communication, including academia, administration, and public discourse [1, p. 34]. At the same time, awareness of dialectal and sociolectal variation enhances communicative adaptability. Labov's research on linguistic variation illustrates that speech forms carry social meaning and index group identity [7, p. 125]. Therefore, speech culture involves not only conformity to standard norms but also sensitivity to social variation and the ability to navigate between linguistic registers appropriately.

The cognitive dimension complements sociolinguistic and pragmatic perspectives by emphasizing the mental organization underlying discourse production. Cognitive linguistics demonstrates that conceptualization and categorization shape linguistic expression [10, p. 121]. Coherent discourse depends on thematic progression, logical sequencing, and the establishment of cohesive ties [12, p. 4]. Halliday and Hasan's analysis of cohesion in English identifies reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion as structural mechanisms ensuring textual unity [12, p. 15]. Mastery of these mechanisms reflects a developed speech culture because it indicates the speaker's ability to structure information logically and comprehensibly.

An integrative perspective reveals that breakdown in any component may compromise communicative effectiveness. A speaker with strong grammatical competence but weak pragmatic awareness may produce structurally correct yet socially inappropriate statements. Conversely, a speaker with high pragmatic sensitivity but insufficient linguistic accuracy may struggle to convey complex ideas clearly. Effective speech culture therefore requires balanced development across components.

Educational research underscores the necessity of systematic instruction targeting all dimensions of speech competence. Psycholinguistic studies emphasize that speech production involves planning, lexical selection, syntactic encoding, and articulation [11, p. 56]. Training in pronunciation enhances phonetic clarity, while vocabulary enrichment expands expressive potential. Stylistic exercises cultivate awareness of functional differentiation, and rhetorical training develops persuasive and argumentative skills. Such pedagogical strategies align with

communicative approaches that integrate grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse competences [8, p. 31].

The interdependence of components also has implications for language policy and academic standards. Codification of literary norms ensures stability and mutual intelligibility within a speech community [1, p. 15]. However, rigid prescriptivism that ignores communicative realities may hinder linguistic creativity and adaptation. The Prague School's functional approach highlights the dynamic equilibrium between stability and change in standard language development [3, p. 90]. Speech culture thus evolves alongside social transformation while preserving core normative principles.

Intercultural communication provides further evidence of the integrative nature of speech culture. Differences in politeness strategies, indirectness, and discourse organization may lead to pragmatic misunderstandings even when participants share a common language [9, p. 74]. Awareness of sociocultural norms and contextual expectations enhances communicative success. Therefore, speech culture in a globalized environment increasingly requires intercultural competence alongside linguistic proficiency.

Moreover, the role of discourse coherence deserves special attention. Cohesive devices ensure continuity and clarity, while thematic progression guides the reader or listener through the argument [12, p. 10]. Logical structuring of information, supported by appropriate connectors and referential markers, contributes to the perception of intellectual maturity. In academic discourse, coherence is often evaluated as a criterion of communicative quality.

The analysis demonstrates that speech culture cannot be reduced to correctness alone. It encompasses adaptability, ethical sensitivity, contextual awareness, and cognitive organization. Each component reinforces communicative clarity and social harmony. Empirical research in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, stylistics, and psycholinguistics consistently confirms this multidimensional structure [4, p. 283; 7, p. 125].

Conclusion

Speech culture is a complex integrative construct formed by linguistic normativity, communicative competence, pragmatic awareness, stylistic flexibility, ethical regulation, sociocultural sensitivity, and cognitive organization. These components function interdependently and collectively determine the quality of oral and written communication.

Theoretical and empirical research confirms that mastery of literary norms alone is insufficient; effective communication requires contextual appropriateness and ethical responsibility. Consequently, speech culture should be developed through comprehensive linguistic and pedagogical strategies grounded in established academic research.

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