

PROFESSIONAL SPEECH COMPETENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

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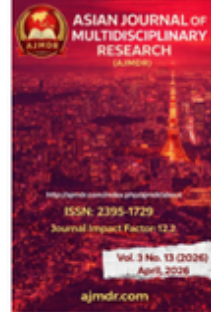
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Abstract. This study addresses the systemic barriers hindering the development of professional speech competence among students in non-linguistic disciplines (e.g., engineering, economics, medicine). In a globalized economy, technical expertise is insufficient without the ability to navigate complex terminological and cultural discourse. By identifying linguistic, psychological, and methodological constraints, this paper proposes a shift toward professionally oriented training models, specifically Task-Based Learning (TBL) and the integration of rhetorical modules. The conclusion emphasizes that professional socialization is a multi-dimensional process requiring synergy between language educators and core department faculty.

Keywords: professional speech competence; non-philological education; English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Task-Based Learning (TBL); Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); communicative competence; terminological acquisition; rhetorical competence; interdisciplinary integration; foreign language anxiety; professional discourse; higher education pedagogy.

Introduction. The modern professional landscape has undergone a paradigm shift. In the 21st century, a mechanical engineer or a data scientist is no longer confined to a laboratory or a workstation; they are required to be negotiators, presenters, and collaborators within international teams. However, higher education for non-philological (non-linguistic) students often remains anchored in traditional models that prioritize "hard skills" at the expense of "soft" communicative competence.

Professional speech competence is defined not merely as the ability to speak a language, but as the mastery of the specific discourse of a field. This includes the nuanced use of terminology, the adoption of appropriate registers, and the ability to



interpret socio-cultural cues in a business context. The persistent gap between educational output and industry requirements suggests a need for a radical restructuring of how language and communication are taught in technical universities.

Despite these demands, higher education institutions continue to prioritize disciplinary knowledge over communicative competence. Language instruction is often treated as supplementary rather than integral, resulting in graduates who possess strong technical expertise but lack the ability to articulate, justify, and present their ideas effectively.

Professional speech competence extends beyond linguistic accuracy. It encompasses:

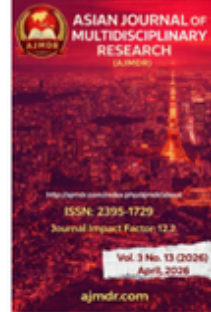
- Discourse competence (field-specific communication norms),
- Sociolinguistic competence (context-appropriate language use),
- Strategic competence (ability to manage communication breakdowns),
- Rhetorical competence (persuasion and argumentation).

The mismatch between academic preparation and workplace expectations highlights the urgency of rethinking pedagogical models in non-philological education.

The first and foremost causes of inability of speech delivery are professional and terminological barriers. One of the most immediate hurdles for non-philology students is the transition from General Language Proficiency to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which is the disconnect between general language proficiency and domain-specific discourse. While a student may be comfortable in a casual conversation, they often alter when tasked with conducting a technical debate or describing complex data. Students often demonstrate intermediate or even advanced conversational ability but struggle with professional communication tasks such as:

- describing technical processes,
- interpreting data visualizations,
- engaging in field-specific discussions.

Terminological deficiency is not just about a lack of vocabulary; it is a lack of conceptual mapping. Students struggle to link abstract linguistic signs to the precise technical operations they represent. When a student cannot accurately describe a graph, a formula, or a table, their perceived professional authority is diminished, regardless of their actual technical talent. This challenge stems from insufficient conceptual integration. Terminology is not merely lexical; it encodes



disciplinary knowledge. Without understanding the underlying concepts, students cannot use terms accurately or flexibly.

Moreover, terminological acquisition is often passive. Students memorize vocabulary lists without engaging in meaningful application, leading to rapid attrition and limited transferability.

There is a notable "stylistic dissonance" in current pedagogical outcomes. Students often utilize a "hybrid" style—mixing informal, everyday slang with rigid, often outdated academic phrases. This results in reports and correspondence that lack the necessary professional "sheen."

Drafting protocols, technical reports, and professional emails requires a specific administrative register. Without explicit instruction in these genres, students remain trapped in a conversational loop that is insufficient for high-stakes professional environments.

Students frequently produce discourse that blends:

- informal conversational elements,
- overly rigid or outdated academic phrasing.

This stylistic inconsistency undermines credibility in professional contexts. Effective communication in technical fields requires mastery of:

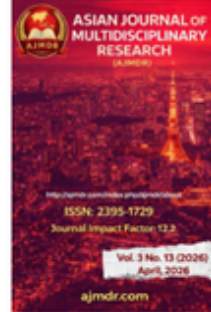
- concise and precise language,
- standardized formats (reports, emails, proposals),
- audience-aware tone and structure.

Without explicit instruction in genre conventions, students remain unable to transition from everyday communication to professional discourse.

The primary criticism of traditional language instruction in technical colleges is its focus on "receptive" skills (reading and translation) over "productive" skills (speaking and writing). Curricula are frequently built around abstract grammar exercises that have no immediate application to the student's future career.

When students are asked to translate a text about "The History of the Internet" instead of simulating a project pitch for a software client, the perceived relevance of the subject drops. This disconnect breeds apathy, as students view language as a hurdle to be cleared rather than a tool to be mastered.

In many non-linguistic programs, language subjects are treated as "secondary" or "service" courses. They are often relegated to the first two years of study and allocated minimal contact hours. This "front-loading" of language instruction means that by the time students reach their senior year—when they are



most in need of professional communication for their thesis or internships—their linguistic skills have often stagnated.

A critical failure in the current model is the "soloing" of departments. Language educators rarely consult with engineering or science faculty. As a result, the vocabulary taught in the language classroom may be ten years behind the technology being taught in the laboratory. Without synchronization, language instruction remains a generic exercise rather than a specialized professional asset.

Communication Apprehension and "Speech Fear". Research consistently shows that non-philology students experience higher levels of "foreign language anxiety" and general public speaking anxiety than their counterparts in the humanities. This stems from a fear of appearing "unprofessional" or making errors in front of peers.

This psychological barrier creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: fear of speaking leads to a lack of practice, which leads to poor performance, which reinforces the fear. Traditional classrooms, which often penalize errors rather than rewarding communication, exacerbate this issue.

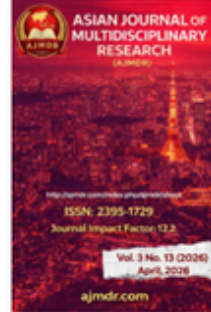
Professional speech is not just about words; it is about "know-how." Many technical curricula omit the socio-cultural nuances of business etiquette. For example, a student may know the word for "contract," but they may not know how to politely disagree in a negotiation or how to navigate the hierarchy of an international meeting. This "hidden curriculum" of communication is often what determines career success in globalized markets.

To bridge the theory-practice gap, institutions must adopt a Task-Based Learning model. In this framework, the "task" is the core unit of the lesson. Instead of studying the "present perfect tense," students are tasked with "Updating a client on the progress of a technical installation."

By centering the lesson on a real-world professional scenario, the language becomes a secondary tool used to achieve a primary professional goal. This mimics the reality of the workplace and increases student engagement.

Instead of focusing solely on grammar, curricula should integrate modules on Rhetoric and Argumentation. Teaching students the structures of persuasion—how to build a logical case, how to handle Q&A sessions, and how to use body language—gives them a "skeleton" for their speech. When a student has a structural map of how a presentation should flow, their psychological anxiety significantly decreases.

The use of multimedia tools—VR simulations of meetings, interactive AI—



driven language platforms, and exposure to authentic technical podcasts—provides a "low-stakes" environment for students to practice. Digital platforms allow for personalized, "just-in-time" learning where students can focus on the specific terminological clusters they need for their individual projects.

Conclusion

The development of professional speech competence in non-philological higher education is a complex, multi-layered challenge. It requires not only methodological innovation but also institutional transformation.

The traditional separation between language and content must be replaced with an integrated model that reflects real-world professional demands. By adopting task-based, rhetorically informed, and technologically supported approaches, universities can produce graduates who are not only technically proficient but also communicatively effective.

Such graduates are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the global workforce, contributing not only as specialists but as active participants in professional discourse communities.

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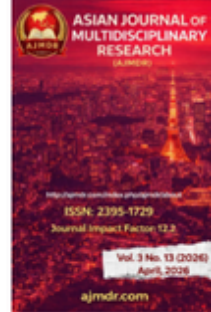
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THE ROLE OF STYLISTIC DEVICES IN WORKS OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

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Annotation: *The presented article describes the stylistic devices in literary works of L.M.Alcott. The given article analyzes the stylistic devices in: “Little women”, The article illustrates the wide variety of devices that support the literary works with figurative language, that makes the novels more colorful and interesting for the reader.*

Key words: *stylistic devices, novel, characters, Victorian literature, ideas, female character.*

The role of stylistic devices has been one of the most significant parts of all literary works. The function of compositional complexity in literary plot, the wide range of stylistic tools to illustrate characters and events. These stylistic devices support the writers’ ideas and help to discover different themes of writer.

It is important to highlight Victorian literature that closely reveals a vast view of different details that present the criteria of society and time, which make it difficult for the general reader. Victorian literature and the works of many writers fulfilled with general details of lifestyle, including descriptions of domestic settings, culture of aesthetics and clothes. The novel got its peak at 19 centuries. It became more realistic and described problems of people, out of big amount of poetry, the writers used it only at lyrical digression.

The stylistic devices often help to support simplicity of feelings, beauty of language, that are missing the novels of the early time. The author often uses such stylistic devices as metaphor, slimily, hyperbole and the other. It makes the text easier and phonetically more musical.

“Margaret, the eldest of the four, was sixteen, and very pretty, being plump and fair, with large eyes, plenty of soft brown hair, a sweet mouth, and white hands, of which she was rather vain. Fifteen– year – old Jo was very tall, thin, and brown, and reminded one of colts, for she never seemed to know what to do with her long limbs, which were very much in her way. “[1]

Analyzing literary works of Louisa May Alcott “Little women”, we can see many female characters that revealed in unique way of description in the novels. In the novel female characters illustrated with help of four sisters, the writer detached many actions revealed to the plot. The characters questioning and trying to answer in the novel. Each sister possesses her own distinct speaking style. The main character of the novel Jo, she is vibrant and active young girl that faced with difficulties of self –esteem, she faced with the challenges that make her to analyze her life and people around her, it makes reader interested in life of young girls. Her

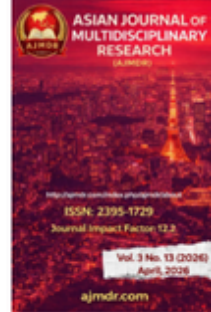


image is not typical for Victorian time. Louisa May Alcott, is using the action verbs in speech of heroes, in order to highlight the active character like Jo in “Little Women”.

“How I wish I was going to college! You do not look as if you liked it”.[2]

The contradictory position of Meg turns the reader to different angle. Being secondary character in the book, her image is strong demonstrate the image of Victorian angel, that been quite popular in her time. She is the eldest sister and writer shows her with help of epithet.

“It is like other people, you know, and I always envy girls who do such things, I am so found of luxury, said Meg, trying to decide which of two shabby gowns was the least shabby”.[3]

Though Jo and Laurie are friend in the book, they do not have much in common. The writer used vivid antithesis to show big contrast for the life attitudes. The novel “Little women” has vivid antithesis that prove the contrasting images: the contrast of wealth and poverty. Jo’s desire for education as the contradiction Laurie’s had no personal motivation to study and work. The striking metaphors in the text capture the mischief of childhood.

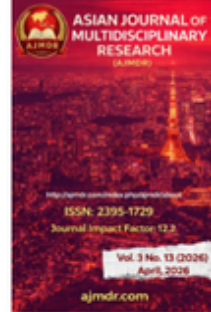
“I like his manners, and he looks like a little gentleman, so I have no objection to your knowing him, if a proper opportunity comes. He brought the flowers himself, and I should have asked him in, if I had been sure what was going on upstairs. He looked so wistful as he went away, hearing the frolic and evidently having none of his own”. [4]

The same approach can be found in another works such as “An old-fashioned girl”. In the novel reader can see contrast of class inequality. In this literary work L.M. Alcott introduce two new characters, young girls Polly and Fanny, so opposite in everything that is only possible. For the main character Fanny neatness is important, she presents the image of ideal girl in contradiction to visual image high manners writer shows countryside girl Polly, she is lack of manner but her inner world is fulfilled with good character and tender soul.

“I will try to take things as the come, and make the best of them”.[5]

Another novel that completely different by its look on people images and novel that shows psychological depth that gripped the attention of reader until the last word, is “Behind the mask, or a Woman’s power” the writer using many details to depict the image of Jean Muir, deceptive person that practice with manipulation.

“The curtain is down , so I may be myself for a few hours”.[6]



In conclusion, Loisa May Olcott used uncommon style, by blending realism novels with elements of romanticism, by adding stylistic devices. The figurative language that helped her to move from the standards of her time novel. Her characters are full of psychological challenges that makes it interesting out of the written time. The novels that filled with devices are not only moving the reader from the simple critical opinion about problems it helps to deep understanding of human soul, feeling, and shows the necessity of analysis in life of people.

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