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**ENHANCING STUDENTS’ POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN ENGLISH AT THE C1
PROFICIENCY LEVEL**

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Abstract: The mastery of political discourse in English is an essential component of students’ academic and professional development in the context of globalization and international communication. Political discourse encompasses rhetorical strategies, persuasive techniques, critical argumentation, and intercultural sensitivity, all of which demand a high level of linguistic competence. This paper explores the enhancement of students’ political discourse skills in English at the C1 proficiency level, where learners are expected to demonstrate advanced accuracy, fluency, and pragmatic competence. The study emphasizes the theoretical foundations of discourse competence, identifies the main linguistic and cultural challenges, and proposes pedagogical strategies such as debate-based learning, role-playing, CLIL methodology, and critical discourse analysis. Moreover, the article highlights the role of higher education institutions in integrating political discourse into curricula and fostering critical thinking. The findings suggest that improving students’ political discourse in English at the C1 level not only strengthens their communicative competence but also prepares them for participation in international academic, diplomatic, and professional settings.

Keywords: Political discourse; C1 proficiency; English as a foreign language; discourse competence; critical thinking; communicative skills; higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a central role in shaping political, cultural, and social realities. Political discourse, in particular, is a unique type of communication that combines linguistic mastery with persuasion, argumentation, and critical evaluation. In the context of English as a foreign language, political discourse represents not only a linguistic challenge but also a cultural and intellectual one. As English has become the lingua franca of international politics, diplomacy, and academia, students who aspire to engage in global affairs require strong competence in political communication. At the C1 proficiency level, learners are expected to achieve near-native fluency, demonstrating the ability to express complex ideas, engage in critical debates, and adapt language to different communicative contexts. Political discourse demands even more than general proficiency; it requires mastery of rhetorical strategies, the ability to analyze ideological implications, and sensitivity to cultural differences. In Uzbekistan and other multilingual societies, English proficiency has become a strategic tool for international cooperation. Universities increasingly emphasize not only linguistic skills but also communicative and intercultural competence. Therefore, enhancing students’ political discourse in English at the C1 level is not merely a linguistic goal, but also a crucial step toward preparing globally competent specialists.

This article aims to examine the theoretical foundations of political discourse competence, identify the challenges students face at the C1 level, and suggest effective pedagogical strategies for improving their skills.

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MAIN BODY

1. Theoretical framework of political discourse

Political discourse is generally defined as the use of language within political contexts, aiming to influence, persuade, and justify positions. It is closely linked with concepts of discourse competence, communicative competence, and critical discourse analysis. Scholars such as van Dijk (2018) emphasize that political discourse reflects power relations, ideologies, and cultural values. For students, engaging with political discourse in English requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, rhetorical strategies, and critical awareness.

2. Challenges in developing political discourse skills at the C1 level

Although C1 learners are highly proficient, they still face specific challenges when engaging in political communication:

- **Linguistic challenges:** mastery of specialized vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and academic register;
- **Pragmatic challenges:** using irony, politeness strategies, and implicit meaning;
- **Cultural challenges:** understanding political traditions, ideologies, and rhetorical norms across English-speaking countries;
- **Cognitive challenges:** constructing coherent arguments, responding critically, and sustaining debates.

3. Pedagogical strategies for enhancing political discourse

To address these challenges, educators can adopt integrative approaches:

- **Debate-based learning:** classroom debates on political and social issues help students practice persuasion, rebuttal, and evidence-based argumentation.
- **Role-playing and simulations:** activities such as mock parliaments, model United Nations, and press conferences simulate real political contexts.
- **CLIL methodology:** teaching political science or international relations content through English strengthens both subject knowledge and language skills.
- **Critical discourse analysis:** analyzing authentic political speeches, debates, and media texts enables students to identify rhetorical strategies and ideological meanings.
- **Writing tasks:** producing policy briefs, essays, and critical reviews helps refine formal political communication in written English.

4. Pedagogical implications and curriculum design

The integration of political discourse into English language curricula requires well-structured courses that combine theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Universities should design modules that encourage critical thinking, intercultural awareness, and linguistic flexibility. Assessment should not

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only measure grammar and vocabulary but also rhetorical effectiveness and argumentation skills. Teachers must act as facilitators, guiding students toward autonomy in political communication.

5. Practical recommendations for teachers and students

- Encourage active participation in debates and discussions;
- Provide exposure to authentic political speeches and media;
- Incorporate collaborative projects on international issues;
- Emphasize intercultural competence and respect for diverse viewpoints;
- Use digital tools, podcasts, and online debates to extend practice beyond the classroom.

CONCLUSION

The enhancement of students’ political discourse in English at the C1 proficiency level is a complex but achievable goal. It requires not only advanced linguistic competence but also rhetorical awareness, critical thinking, and intercultural sensitivity. By applying debate-based learning, simulations, and discourse analysis, educators can provide learners with meaningful opportunities to engage in authentic political communication. Developing such skills has practical importance for students pursuing careers in diplomacy, international relations, journalism, and academia. It also strengthens their role as active participants in democratic societies and global discussions. Higher education institutions, therefore, bear the responsibility of integrating political discourse training into curricula, ensuring that students not only master English but also use it effectively in political and professional contexts.

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