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## The importance of social context in teaching English as a foreign language among Uzbek students

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**Annotation** *This scholarly article provides extensive research on how social context influences the learners' learning process of English language whose native language is Uzbek. There are various researches have been done of the essence to highlight the features of social background, social status, social group and territorial variation in English teaching as a foreign language. Through these implications, this article outlines the details and characteristics of social context in place, time and individuality. In the context of Uzbek learners, how their background and social context affect while they are exposed to learn English language is project to be examined. Furthermore, this article discusses the significance of approaches to emphasize social context in learning process in the aspect of individuality, the term of 'idiolect'. In addition, the researcher gives possible solutions to strengthen the learners' idiolect in English language learning with the help of emphasizing vocabulary. To implement this technique, the researcher proposes shadowing method for Uzbek students.*

**Keywords** *Social context, social group, territorial variation, social status, idiolect, shadowing*

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## Важность социального контекста в преподавании английского языка как иностранного среди узбекских студентов

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**Аннотация** *В этой научной статье представлено обширное исследование того, как социальный контекст влияет на процесс обучения английскому языку учащихся, родным языком которых является узбекский. Были проведены различные исследования, имеющие важное значение для того, чтобы выделить особенности социального происхождения, социального статуса, социальной группы и территориальной вариативности в преподавании английского языка как иностранного. С учетом этих последствий в данной статье излагаются детали и характеристики социального контекста в месте, времени и индивидуальности. В контексте узбекских учащихся, то, как их происхождение и социальный контекст влияют на то, когда они подвергаются изучению английского языка, является проектом, который будет изучен. Кроме того, в данной статье обсуждается значение подходов, подчеркивающих социальный контекст в процессе обучения в аспекте индивидуальности, термина «идиолект». Кроме того, исследователь предлагает возможные решения для укрепления идиолекта учащихся в изучении английского языка с помощью акцентирования словарного запаса. Для реализации этой методики исследователь предлагает метод «теневого наблюдения» для узбекских учащихся.*

**Ключевые слова** Социальный контекст, социальная группа, территориальная вариация, социальный статус, идиолект, имитирование

## O'zbek talabalari orasida ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rgatishda ijtimoiy kontekstning ahamiyati

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**Annotatsiya** Ushbu ilmiy maqola ijtimoiy kontekst ona tili o'zbek tili bo'lgan o'quvchilarning ingliz tilini o'rganish jarayoniga qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishi haqida keng qamrovli tadqiqotlarni o'z ichiga oladi. Ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'qitishda ijtimoiy kelib chiqishi, ijtimoiy mavqei, ijtimoiy guruhi va hududiy o'zgarishining xususiyatlarini yoritib berish uchun turli xil tadqiqotlar olib borildi. Ushbu ta'sirlar orqali ushbu maqola ijtimoiy kontekstning makon, vaqt va individuallik tafsilotlari va xususiyatlarini belgilaydi. O'zbek tilini o'rganayotganlar kontekstida ularning ingliz tilini o'rganish jarayonida ularning kelib chiqishi va ijtimoiy konteksti qanday ta'sir qilishi ko'rib chiqilishi kerak bo'lgan loyihadir. Bundan tashqari, ushbu maqolada o'quv jarayonida ijtimoiy kontekstni ta'kidlash uchun yondashuvlarning individuallik, "idiolikt" atamasi nuqtai nazaridan ahamiyati muhokama qilinadi. Bundan tashqari, tadqiqotchi ta'kidlangan lug'at yordamida ingliz tilini o'rganishda o'quvchilarning idiolektini kuchaytirish uchun mumkin bo'lgan yechimlarni taklif qiladi. Ushbu texnikani amalga oshirish uchun tadqiqotchi o'zbek talabalari uchun soya qilish usulini taklif qiladi.

**Kalit so'zlar** Ijtimoiy kontekst, ijtimoiy guruh, hududiy o'zgaruvchanlik, ijtimoiy maqom, ideolekt, immitatsiya

Nowadays, English language learners from all over the world have been learning English in different instructions and classroom settings. Obviously, there are various factors that inevitably affect language learning process, such as L1, social context and teaching institutions. "Social variables tend to influence language and its process of learning" (Morales, 2017). However, in this article we are going to discuss the importance and influence of social context in English language learning as a foreign language among Uzbek students. Before moving to the main incidence, we will go through the terms which are related to social context and its main peculiarities in language learning. First of all, there are

questions to put forward to explore the term of social context:

1. What are the components of social context in terms of language learning?
2. How each component correlates with the behavior of language learning process?
3. What are other terms which integrate with social context in EFL?

Eminent scholars such as Labov (2006), Stern (2003) and Mesthrie et al (2009) defined social context from various dimensions. For instance, social context consists of three key components; territorial variation, social group and time (Mesthrie et al, 2009). Territorial variation determines how language learners perceive the importance of learning English

language and teacher's command during the lesson. If we take territorial difference in the context of Uzbek learners, there are a great deal of students who are learning English from far countryside and districts rather than the centers of the cities. From personal experience of the researcher, students from the outskirts of the cities tend to learn languages more effectively as they may not have enough opportunities for quality education. In Uzbekistan there is a big gap in education between urban and rural areas, as there is always lack of skilled teachers for countries. The demand for teachers, especially language teachers are increasing year by year, so the government has been implementing new decrees to improve conditions in rural areas, mainly in schools and promoting language teachers who choose to teach children there.

When it comes to the learners living in urban areas, they are likely to ignore the efforts of the skilled teachers. The opportunities that they have in educational context may decrease the eagerness to learn foreign languages. Living conditions, availability of up-to-date products such as computers, laptops and fast internet may distract them studying the languages. While the learners from villages do their best to get rid of poor conditions of their places and study and live in big cities, city dwellers may let their laziness expand. Still, this hypothesis may be not true for both types of learners. There are still learners who seize those opportunities available in urban areas and vice versa.

"Students' social context is determined by a set of social factors as sociated with their social class, cultural level, home language, environmental language, ethnic and religious context etc" (Daniel Madrid, 1995). Furthermore, in terms of social group, Uzbek learners' attitude towards learning English can be various. For instance, bilingualism at home from one of the parents can be advantageous, since parents speak two languages at home, this will be preliminary exposure to learning a foreign language.

However, it does not mean that children who grow up in a traditional Uzbek family may not have equal chances to learn the foreign language. Self-interest may appear from any source of motivation. It can be TV shows, a neighbor or even a close friend of a child might urge the child to learn a foreign language. Apart from these factors, family conditions form certain factors of social group. A child brought up in a dysfunctional family may lose focus on their studies, since their concentration is broken due to the issues at home. In this case, a professional teacher can approach these types of children and talk to them individually trying to help them how to avoid excessive stress and give motivation to continue studying hard.

The effect of cultural level is crucial in language learning. In fact, English language intercultural and global language across the world, millions of people communicate with it and in many countries, people are learning this language to blend with English speaking countries for job, study and travelling purposes. The word "cultural level" is defined and categorized variously, however, it has got three dimensions: national, organizational and professional level. Each level influences students' language learning. In cultural levels, Uzbek students are regarded as Eastern students who are learning Western language with its culture. There are many cross-cultural factors, such as student-teacher communicational behaviors. In western education, the students are involved in more case studies and the teacher acts as an instructor who directs possible instructions to the students to make them more independent. Eastern education system, on the other hand, works oppositely.

The teacher-centered method is preferred and the learners strictly follow the rules. Making mistakes is more favorable in Western classroom rather than Eastern ones, where mistakes are punished by the teacher. Apart from that, instructional setting is also different. In Western classroom, the teacher

uses more pair and group works to enhance natural language learning environment. Eastern context favors more likely individual attention to each student and equal learning process is provided.

Ethnic context, on the other hand, is considered one of the most important factors, since ethnicity of the Uzbek learners are totally distinctive from English language and culture. While learning English as a foreign language, the students need to improve their overall 4 skills, listening, reading, writing and speaking. In order to acquire those skills, they obtain the information given in the textbooks, video and audio sources. Those sources may be mainly about English culture, history, environment related topics. Through these topics the students start to realize what kind of differences are apparent between Uzbek and English culture and ethnic groups.

Religious context which is the other crucial part of social context plays important role while learning English language. As Uzbek learners are Muslim students, western culture offers them new aspects and perspectives of life. Although some people argue that language and religion may not align with each other, it is true that religion affects language learning process. In fact, it is again about sources that are available for language learners. The sources, especially books written by native speakers of English language, express some ideologies of western culture religious practices. For example, stories, fairy tales, even Western festivals and holidays, such as Christmas eve, Halloween day and etc. These religious rituals ignite interest in learning the language more deeply and Uzbek learners enjoy the journey of learning English as a foreign language.

Last but not least, time frame is also essential social factor when it is referred as an adapting the process of learning atmosphere. In addition, time can be aligned with parental bilingualism in social context in learning English. The students whose parents are bilingual tend to be more adaptive to learning

environment since this may not seem new condition to them. On the other hand, it may take little longer time blend with the group of other students.

When it comes to individuality of the student in learning English language, there is not enough research has been conducted (Mesthrie et al, 2009). Although a language is seen as a social networking connector, every individual conveys and produces own speech distinctively.

There are several factors individuality occurs in speaking and learning a certain language in social context: classified those factors as "dialect, accent and the level of standardization of the language" (Mesthrie et al, 2009).

The word "dialect" is defined differently varying to every linguist's research results and methods. However, core meaning lying is the same no matter how individuals perceive it. Dialect becomes apparent when the speakers of a certain language seeming to be differently pronounced, rhythm patterns, vocabulary range and etc. In every language there are various dialects mostly because of territorial variety and also social context.

A language performs not only as a means of communication but also an essential bridge to build relationships which directly affects social behavior of the speakers (Fatchulkip, 2008). He also mentioned that this language in social context occurs in dialectical nature since an individual produces and performs distinctively.

Accent on the hand, can be classified as separately from the dialect, because a person may speak standard language with an individual accent and it does not mean that person speaks a particular dialect (Mesthrie et al, 2009).

The last point of the article is about the importance of "idiolect" in English learning as a foreign language as a part of social context. Many prominent researchers suggested their own definitions. "The totality of the possible utterances of one speaker at one time in using

a language to interact with one other speaker" (Bloch, 1948). Every speaker of the language produces both unique speech sounds and written performance.

Other researchers such as Dittmar (1996) noted a distinctive description which adds individual's speech habits and stylistic features, as well as their life phase effect different from others as a communicative means.

Uzbek learners' idiolect in English may be limited due to the lack of vocabulary bank and words in context. Constantly, while checking the learners' speech in the classroom, we can notice that each student has got a certain grammar structure even some words they often repeat when speak. For instance, sentence fillers: "you know", "err", "well", "I mean" and etc. This state can be true in their native language too. Every speaker utilizes their favorite grammar structure or words. A language instructor should pay attention to how their students are acquiring the sentence structures or words so that afterwards they will become more apparent in their speech. There are various methods to implement it. One of the ways of it is "shadowing".

There are a great deal of video and audio sources for English learners, not only educational and adapted ones, but also "realia" (content which is not intended for English learners). Uzbek students are widely

familiarized with well-known English movies and podcasts. As most of them have got their favorite movie characters and role models, they may easily adopt their speech patterns. The language instructors need to sort out proper materials for their learners, since the students may feel demotivated if the material is too difficult to follow or uninteresting for them.

In order to foster this method, the learners must be exposed to that audio or video material on a daily basis. After repeating the process for a particular period of time, they may start to produce their speech reflected by their role model's speech pattern. The time frame for this process can be unpredictable, since each learner's acquisition is unique and it may take some days or even a couple of weeks to get preferred result from the process.

In conclusion, this article highlighted how Uzbek learners may acquire English language when they have different social contexts and backgrounds. Their social context is explained and examined through three key dimensions; place of learning, time frame and individuality. Moreover, the researcher tried to explain the term of idiolect and its effect in Uzbek learners' language learning. In addition, the researcher offered possible solution for improving the students' idiolect in English language while expanding their vocabulary bank with the help of shadowing.

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