THE FORMATION OF COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the theoretical and methodological foundations of forming communication competence among learners at various stages of the educational system, encompassing primary, secondary, and higher education levels. The study emphasizes the critical role of communication competence as a fundamental skill necessary for academic achievement and professional development in the 21st century. Through a comprehensive analysis of pedagogical frameworks and empirical research, the paper proposes a multi-layered model for developing communicative abilities tailored to the cognitive and social maturity of learners at each educational stage. The findings indicate that systematic, level-appropriate instruction in communicative strategies yields significantly higher outcomes in students' linguistic and interpersonal skills.

Keywords: communication competence, educational levels, language skills, pedagogy, curriculum design, primary education, higher education, communicative approach

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье исследуются теоретические и методологические основы формирования коммуникативной компетентности у обучающихся на различных ступенях системы образования: начальной, средней и высшей школе. В работе подчёркивается ключевая роль коммуникативной компетентности как фундаментального навыка, необходимого для академической успешности и профессионального развития в условиях XXI века. На основе комплексного анализа педагогических концепций и эмпирических исследований предложена многоуровневая модель развития коммуникативных способностей.

Ключевые слова: коммуникативная компетентность, уровни образования, языковые навыки, педагогика, разработка учебных программ

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada ta'lim tizimining turli bosqichlarida o'quvchilarning kommunikativ kompetentligini shakllantirishning nazariy va metodologik asoslari o'rganilgan. Kommunikativ kompetentlikning XXI asrda akademik muvaffaqiyat va kasbiy rivojlanish uchun zarur fundamental ko'nikma sifatidagi muhim ahamiyati ta'kidlangan. Har bir ta'lim bosqichidagi o'quvchilarning kognitiv va ijtimoiy etukligiga moslashtirilgan ko'p qatlamli model taklif etilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: kommunikativ kompetentlik, ta'lim bosqichlari, til ko'nikmalari, pedagogika, o'quv dasturini loyihalash

1.INTRODUCTION

Communication competence has emerged as one of the most indispensable skills in contemporary education and professional life. As societies become increasingly interconnected through globalization and digital transformation, the capacity to communicate effectively across diverse contexts has transcended its traditional role as a mere linguistic skill and has assumed a central position in educational theory and practice (Hymes, 1972; Canale and Swain, 1980). The formation of communication competence at different educational levels requires a nuanced understanding of learners' developmental stages, sociocultural contexts, and the pedagogical strategies most effective for each stage.

The concept of communication competence encompasses not only grammatical and lexical knowledge but also sociolinguistic awareness, discourse management, and strategic communication abilities (Bachman, 1990). These dimensions must be cultivated progressively and systematically across the educational continuum, beginning with foundational oral and written communication skills in primary education and advancing to sophisticated academic and professional communication abilities at the higher education level.

Despite the recognized importance of communication competence in educational policy frameworks worldwide, significant gaps remain in understanding how to effectively scaffold its development across distinct educational levels.

This study aims to address these gaps by synthesizing existing research and proposing a coherent, level-differentiated framework for communication competence formation.

2.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this study draws upon Hymes' (1972) seminal conceptualization of communicative competence, which extended Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence to include the social rules governing language use. Canale and Swain's (1980) model further elaborated this framework by identifying four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. More recently, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has provided a practical scaffold for assessing and developing communicative abilities across educational levels.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) offers a particularly relevant pedagogical lens for understanding communication competence formation. The ZPD suggests that learners can achieve higher levels of communicative performance with appropriate scaffolding from educators, peers, or structured learning environments.

Contemporary research has also highlighted the role of sociocultural theory in shaping communicative development. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) emphasize that communication is inherently a social activity mediated by cultural tools, and that educational environments must foster authentic communicative interactions to promote genuine competence development.

3.METHODOLOGY

The present study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating systematic literature review with qualitative analysis of pedagogical practices across educational levels. Primary data were collected through structured interviews with 45 educators from primary, secondary, and higher education institutions in Uzbekistan and comparative analysis of curriculum documents from five countries. The systematic review encompassed 87 peer-

reviewed articles published between 2000 and 2024, selected from ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science databases.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis following the protocol established by Braun and Clarke (2006). Quantitative components included analysis of student performance data from 1,240 learners across three educational levels, assessed using validated instruments adapted from the CEFR communicative competence descriptors.

4.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Primary Education Level

At the primary education level, communication competence formation is most effectively achieved through play-based and activity-centered learning environments. Learners at this stage benefit significantly from oral language development activities, storytelling, collaborative games, and early literacy practices that integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing in meaningful contexts. Structured dialogic activities yielded measurable improvements in both linguistic accuracy and communicative confidence.

A critical finding is the importance of establishing a psychologically safe classroom environment. Children who perceived their communicative attempts as valued and non-threatening demonstrated greater willingness to engage in oral communication.

4.2 Secondary Education Level

At the secondary education level, communication competence formation requires an explicit focus on academic discourse, argumentative writing, and sociolinguistic awareness. Adolescent learners benefit from instructional approaches that connect communicative tasks to authentic real-world contexts, including debates, presentations, and research projects.

Peer interaction emerged as a particularly powerful mechanism at this level. Collaborative learning tasks, structured academic controversy, and peer feedback activities were identified as highly effective strategies for developing both the cognitive and interpersonal dimensions of communicative competence.

4.3 Higher Education Level

At the higher education level, communication competence formation must address the specialized demands of academic and professional discourse communities. University students require advanced linguistic proficiency plus the ability to participate effectively in disciplinary conversations, construct persuasive arguments, and communicate across cultural and professional boundaries.

Digital literacy and the ability to communicate through multimodal platforms have become integral components of communication competence in the 21st century, and higher education institutions must systematically address these dimensions.

5.PROPOSED MULTI-LEVEL MODEL

Based on the findings, a three-tier model for communication competence formation is proposed. The first tier (primary education) focuses on foundational communicative abilities: oral fluency, basic literacy, and willingness to communicate. The second tier (secondary level) develops strategic and sociolinguistic competences through authentic task-based instruction. The third tier (higher education) cultivates disciplinary and professional communicative expertise through situated learning in academic and professional communities of practice.

This model emphasizes continuity and progressive complexity, ensuring each educational level builds systematically upon competences developed at the previous stage.

6.CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the formation of communication competence across different levels of education requires a carefully differentiated, theoretically grounded, and contextually responsive approach. The proposed multi-level model offers a practical framework for curriculum designers, educational policymakers, and teachers. Future research should examine the longitudinal effects of this model on learner outcomes across diverse sociocultural and linguistic contexts.

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