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LEVEL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF FUTURE TEACHERS: EVALUATION CRITERIA

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Abstract

The article discusses subcompetences of foreign language communicative competence of future teachers: cognitive-communicative, linguacultural and informational. The content of each subcompetence, their characteristics and components are defined, and criteria for its assessment are proposed. For the development of foreign language communicative competence of future teachers it is necessary to use a complex approach, which includes ensuring a high level of foreign language proficiency of students, the development of linguistic and cultural concepts of the target language and the development of information competence, which encompasses not only the ability to use digital technology, but also the search, evaluation and analysis of the information received.

Keywords: foreign language communicative competence, future teachers, cognitive-communicative subcompetence, linguacultural subcompetence, information subcompetence, evaluation criteria.

Introduction

In the current interconnected world, the capacity to converse in a second language is increasingly crucial. Consequently, the role of instructors teaching foreign languages is more pertinent than ever. One of the most vital skills of future foreign language teachers is communicative competence in a foreign language.

Communicative competence in a foreign language is the ability to communicate effectively in a target language. It includes not only the ability to speak and understand the language, but also reading and writing. The concept of competence was introduced in 1965 by Noam Chomsky who argued that communicative competence is a tendency among "ideal communicators" and requires grammatical correctness, however, according to Hymes, communicative competence includes four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence, as well as the individual's ability to effectively apply language knowledge in an ever-changing society [1]. They also foster a supportive learning atmosphere and motivate students in language acquisition. Chomsky's emphasis on grammatical correctness acknowledges the importance of a solid linguistic foundation, however the concept of "ideal communicators" might not fully capture the diversity of language use in different contexts. His idea of competence was more concerned with the internalized knowledge of a language's rules, structures, and grammar. While Hymes' communicative competence added a practical dimension to language study by considering the social and pragmatic aspects. It recognized the importance of context and cultural norms in effective communication.

Furthermore, foreign language communicative competence has shown to be a significant indicator of students' achievement in language acquisition [2][3].

Proficient teachers in the language they instruct possess a deeper comprehension of their students' requirements, enabling more effective teaching.

Communicative competence is a structured amalgamation, comprised of distinct components and encompassing multiple tiers: linguistic, conversational, contextual, cultural, and persuasive competences [4]. J. Raven delineates communicative competence as an internal resource system essential for effectively engaging in various interpersonal interactions [5]. These resources encompass a person's cognitive capacities to perceive, assess, and understand situations, the strategic planning of communicative actions during interactions, regulations governing communicative conduct, and methods for rectification. The correction process, driven by communicative competence, aims to alter an individual's system of values and attitudes. While Raven's perspective focuses on the individual's internal resource system, it is important to consider the contextual and relational factors that also influence communicative competence. Effective communication often hinges on understanding and responding to the expectations, norms, and communication styles of others.

Raven's framework highlights the importance of adapting communication strategies to different situations, but it could further benefit from incorporating a more nuanced understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity. Communication competence in one context may not translate directly to another, and individuals need to be mindful of cultural norms and expectations when interacting with others from diverse backgrounds. Diverse perspectives exist regarding the constituents or sub-competences of communicative competence.

Components of foreign language communicative competence

The comprehensive structure of foreign language communicative competence, as articulated by the Council of Europe, encompasses a multifaceted array of elements. These include the linguistic component, encompassing lexical, phonological, and syntactic knowledge and skills, alongside the sociolinguistic and pragmatic components, which encapsulate a broad spectrum of know-how, including existential competence and an understanding of language systems and their sociolinguistic variations [6].

In alignment with the evolving landscape of foreign language professional education, it becomes judicious to consider and delineate several specific sub-competencies that bear significant relevance.

- The cognitive-communicative competence engages cognitive functions alongside communicative

skills, fostering an ability to employ knowledge and aptitudes for effective communication while enhancing the individual's personality and cognitive processes such as memory, attention, and verbal reasoning.

- The linguistic sub-competence involves a nuanced grasp of the cultural and linguistic intersections within language use.

- The informational sub-competence delves into the acquisition and utilization of informational resources, playing a pivotal role in shaping the depth of a learner's sociocultural, discursive, and foreign language experiences.

Initially, **cognitive-communicative competence (CCC)** is a sub-competence of foreign language communicative competence, which includes skills and abilities necessary for the effective implementation of language to solve cognitive tasks. CCC itself includes the following components:

Table-1.

Components of cognitive-communicative competence

Understanding the meaning of speech	Ability to comprehend the content of this process, highlight its main ideas and arguments. This skill is necessary for students to be able to obtain information from foreign language communication, understand their meaning and use this information to solve various tasks
Analyzing a speech	The ability to identify the structure of a speech, its composition, linguistic means and their role in creating meaning. This skill is necessary for students to recognize how the speech is organized, how its author uses language to express his/her thoughts, and how the speech affects the participants of communication.
Speech synthesis	Creation of new speech based on existing experience and information. This skill is necessary for students to be able to express their thoughts in a foreign language, to create various speech products (e.g., essays, reports, presentations, etc.).
Speech evaluation	Ability to evaluate a speech in terms of its content, structure, linguistic means and compliance with the communicative goal. It is necessary for learners to be able to critically evaluate speech in a foreign language, to determine their advantages and disadvantages.
Problem solving with the help of language	Ability to use language to search for information, formulate hypotheses and test them, make decisions, etc. This skill is necessary for learners to be able to use language to solve various problems in real life.

The second component of foreign language communicative competence is **linguacultural** sub-competence. B. B. Vinogradov in 2004 considered linguacultural competence as a person's ability to use language in accordance with the norms and rules of the culture in which it is used. Vinogradov believed that linguacultural competence includes knowledge of linguistic norms, cultural customs and traditions[7].

B. I. Karasik in his scientific work published in 2002, emphasized the following components of linguacultural competence:

- Language proficiency: this includes proficiency in phonetics, morphology, syntax, lexicon and semantics of the language.
- Cultural awareness: this includes information about history, geography, religion, art, science, philosophy and other areas of culture.
- Awareness of the relationship between language and culture: this includes awareness of how language reflects culture and how culture affects language[8]. While the awareness of this relationship is crucial, the practical application of this knowledge in real-time communication scenarios might pose challenges. It requires individuals to navigate complex cultural nuances during communication.

Karasik believed that linguacultural competence is an important component of communicative competence, which is necessary for successful communication in an intercultural environment. Therefore, linguacultural competence is a person's ability to understand and use language in the context of the culture in which it is used.

Baizhanova A.M. proposed the similar components of lingocultural competence and suggested that linguacultural competence is a complex education that includes knowledge of the language, culture and society of the country of the target language, as well as the ability to use this knowledge in communication. It includes the following components:

Language: grammar, vocabulary and phonetics of the foreign language.

Cultural knowledge: the history, traditions, customs, religion, art and literature of the country of the target language.

Society: the political system, economy, social structure, etc. of the country of the target language.

Ability to use knowledge of culture and society in communication: ability to adapt one's behavior to the cultural norms of the country of the target language, ability to avoid situations that could be considered as

violation of cultural norms[9]. While the model presents a comprehensive view, operationalizing and measuring these components can be challenging. Assessing the "ability to use knowledge in communication" involves subjective judgment and may lack concrete criteria. Baizhanova's model aligns with the broader trend in language education that emphasizes not only linguistic competence but also cultural and sociolinguistic competence. Integrating this model with others, such as Hymes' communicative competence, could provide a more nuanced understanding of language learners' abilities.

The formation of linguacultural competence occurs through several stages: motivational, informational and formation stage [10].

At the initial phase, labeled "motivational," the emphasis lies in fostering psychological preparedness for effective communication. According to M.I. Dyachenko, L.A. Kandybovich, and various researchers, readiness denotes a specific mental condition enabling an individual to interpret situations or initiate action [11]. This stage aims to pique students' interest in acquiring insights about diverse cultures and their people, highlighting the world's vast diversity and the individuals residing within it. However, it is essential to consider the potential variability in students' motivational factors. Different individuals may be motivated by distinct aspects of cultural exploration or language learning. It is possible provide further insights into how educators can tailor motivational strategies to address the diverse needs and interests of students. Additionally, the effectiveness of this motivational phase might be influenced by external factors, such as the teaching methods employed, the learning environment, and the cultural relevance of the materials presented. The primary objective is to instill a positive approach toward learning about varied cultures and cultivate a desire for cross-cultural interaction. Integrating authentic materials like rhymes, songs, and realia fosters student motivation and engagement in foreign language classrooms. Exposure to authentic materials heightens students' cultural awareness and concentration levels. Such exposure enables students to navigate genuine interactions both within and beyond the classroom environment.

The main objectives of the second, informational stage are the collection and processing of learning material that constitutes the learning content. Learning content is considered as a constantly changing and developing category related to the learning process. It includes the following components:

- Linguistic
- Cultural
- Communicative skills.

And at the last stage of linguacultural subcompetence formation there is a determination of ways of

skills manifestation in modern conditions and practical consequences. Students formulate possible strategies to counteract prejudices and preconceptions. As Bazylova and et.al. note that at the stage of formation there is an integration of linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills into a unified system. The authors emphasize that at this stage students should be able to use their knowledge and skills in various communication situations.

The last component of foreign language communicative competence is **informational sub-competence**.

Informational competence includes the following components:

- Information search skills: the ability to use various sources of information, including printed, electronic and oral, as well as the ability to determine the relevance of information for the task.
- Information processing skills: the ability to analyze information, highlight the main points, draw conclusions and generalizations.
- Information evaluation skills: the ability to critically evaluate information, determine its reliability and relevance.
- Information communication skills: the ability to present information in various forms, including oral and written [12].

In addition, information competence includes adherence to academic ethics. This means that a person with information competence knows how to use information in accordance with the rules of academic ethics, in particular, knows how to properly cite sources of information and avoid plagiarism.

Information technology (IT) can play a significant role in the development of cognitive-communicative competence (CCC) by providing students with access to authentic educational resources, enabling computer modeling, and creating a technologically enhanced learning environment.

For the understanding of informatial competence, the TPACK model, which was provided in 2006 by Mishra and Koehler, should be emphasized.

The TPACK framework is a holistic model that integrates three types of knowledge: Technological Knowledge (TK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), and Content Knowledge (CK). It is a useful framework for teachers to consider when designing and implementing technology-enhanced learning activities[13].

Technological Knowledge (TK) refers to the teacher's knowledge of technology tools and resources, and how to use them effectively in the classroom. This includes knowledge of hardware, software, and applications, as well as an understanding of how to use technology to support different learning styles and needs.

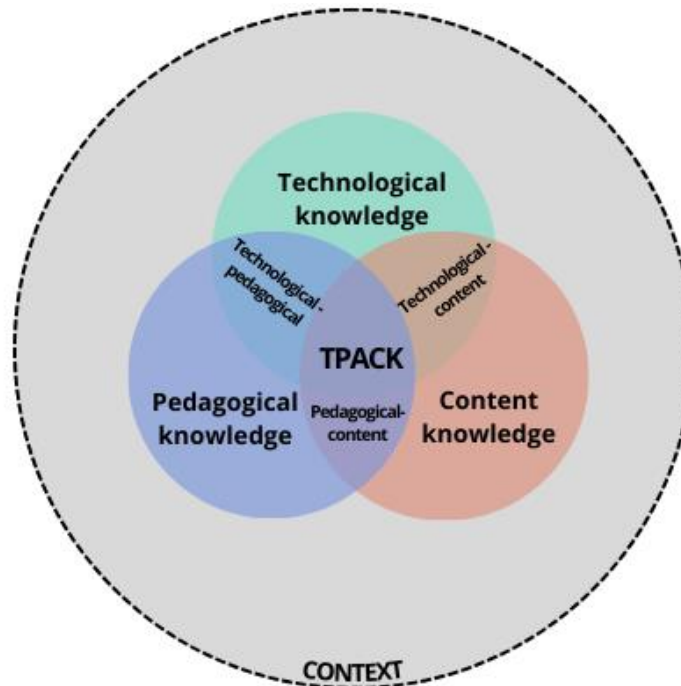


Figure 1 - TPACK model by Mishra and Koehler, 2006

Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) refers to the teacher's knowledge of teaching and learning theories and practices. This includes knowledge of how to create a positive learning environment, how to manage a classroom, and how to assess student learning.

Content Knowledge (CK) refers to the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter being taught. This includes knowledge of the key concepts and principles of the subject, as well as an understanding of how to make the subject matter accessible and engaging for students.

The TPACK framework suggests that the most effective teaching with technology occurs when teachers have a deep understanding of all three types of knowledge. When teachers have strong TPACK, they are able to use technology in ways that support effective pedagogy and content delivery. This model facilitates a more complete understanding of how knowledge is organized under the conditions of using information technology in education from the perspective of a future teacher. Informational competence is achieved if these skills are acquired either completely or partially.

Assessment criteria for foreign language communicative competence

Formation of these sub-competences within the foreign language communicative competence can be examined by means of assessment, but evaluation of the competence is a challenging issue. Competence includes not merely facts and knowledge, but skills and abilities, therefore the most appropriate means of assessment is through the application of criteria. It is suggested to use three levels, namely low, medium and high level. In each degree the student masters certain characteristics and abilities. Moreover criteria-based assessment is more transparent than traditional assessment methods because the criteria and the assessment process are clearly defined and known to the candidate in advance. This helps to build trust in the assessment process and to provide feedback to the candidate on their performance.

Assessment criteria for foreign language communicative competence

Sub-competence\Level	Low	Medium	High
Cognitive-communicative	- Limited understanding of basic linguistic structures. - Difficulties in expressing their thoughts and ideas in a foreign language. - Limited stock of active vocabulary. - Difficulties in listening comprehension of foreign language speech.	- Basic understanding of grammatical structures and vocabulary. - Ability to maintain basic conversation on everyday topics. - Limited proficiency in complex language constructions. - Requires additional support when communicating in a foreign language.	- Deep understanding of grammatical structures and vocabulary. - Ability to express complex ideas and articulate thoughts accurately. - Ability to apply a variety of cognitive strategies to successfully solve communicative problems. - Effective interaction in a foreign language in a variety of contexts.
Linguacultural	Students have a basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language, but lack the skills or understanding to recognize and use sociocultural norms. They may make mistakes in understanding and producing foreign language speech, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in communication.	Learners have a more profound knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the foreign language, as well as some familiarity with sociocultural norms. They can communicate in most situations, but may have obstacles in complex situations related to the cultural peculiarities of the country of the target language.	- Mastery of the use of culturally specific language constructions, demonstrated by a high level of linguistic flexibility and accuracy. - Deep understanding of cultural contexts, ability to adapt easily to different cultural circumstances, successful interaction in a variety of linguistic environments. - High sensitivity and receptivity to cultural aspects through language, ability to accurately and appropriately interpret messages in a sociocultural context.
Informational	- Limited information retrieval and processing skills. - Limited understanding of information resources. - Difficulties in assessing the reliability of information.	- Basic skills in searching and analyzing information. - Ability to identify relevant information for specific tasks. - Conscious use of various information resources.	- Effective skills in searching, analyzing and evaluating information. - Ability to critically evaluate and select the most appropriate information resources. - Active application of information skills in educational and professional contexts.

The previously indicated three levels of formation of each sub-competence can demonstrate the proficiency of the students' foreign language communicative competence. At the lowest tier, students typically lack sufficient or any command of these attributes and skills, significantly impacting their cross-cultural communication and overall proficiency in the foreign language. The intermediate tier is marked by foundational knowledge suitable for basic communication or addressing challenges in a foreign language setting. The teacher should personally adapt each description of a particular proficiency level based on the lesson's topic, goals, and objectives to assess the development of these skills objectively and accurately.

Conclusion

In the modern educational context, the formation of future teachers requires a comprehensive development of foreign language communicative competence. This competence is not limited to mere knowledge of

the language, but includes a number of subcompetences, such as cognitive-communicative, linguacultural and informative. Each of these subcompetencies plays a key role in the formation of future teachers' skills of effective communication in a foreign language.

The cognitive-communicative subcompetence represents the student's ability to use language taking into account the norms and rules of culture. This subcompetence includes understanding of various aspects of cognitive processes such as perception, evaluation and interpretation of situations. The key criteria for assessing the cognitive-communicative subcompetence are the level of mastery of cognitive skills in the context of intercultural communication and the student's ability to use them effectively in learning. Linguacultural subcompetence expresses the student's readiness to classify, systematize and process information using language. It includes not only knowledge of cultural features, but also the ability to apply them to solve communicative tasks in educational discourse. Criteria

for assessing linguacultural subcompetence may include the student's level of mastering cultural norms and values, as well as the ability to integrate them into the educational process. The informative sub-competence implies the student's ability to effectively collect and process learning material related to language learning. Assessment of this subcompetency may include analyzing the student's success in collecting and interpreting the material, as well as his/her ability to apply the acquired knowledge for successful learning. Key evaluation criteria include the effectiveness of information resource utilization and its impact on the level of informative competence development.

In general, the assessment of subcompetences of foreign language communicative competence of future teachers should be comprehensive and adapted to specific learning objectives.

It is important to take into account that these subcompetences are interrelated and influence each other. Students who have successfully mastered cognitive-communicative, linguacultural and informative subcompetences will acquire not only language skills, but also the ability to effectively apply them in pedagogical activity. Thus, the development of subcompetences in foreign language communicative competence of future teachers is a complex and important process that requires a flexible approach and attention to the individual characteristics of each student. Assessment should stimulate the development of all aspects of communicative competence, creating a solid foundation for successful professional activity in the educational environment.

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