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MAIN COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The article deals with communicative orientation of educational process. It contains a review of many research teams, researchers and trainers from different countries involved into the development of communicative approach. Language teaching is based on the idea that the goal of language acquisition is communicative competence: the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals. The desired outcome of the language learning process is the ability to communicate competently. Within a language teaching theory, many approaches and theories stem from a fundamental question which addresses the way teachers can help students who are learning a foreign language in a classroom setting, become proficient in that language. Another question arises, then, in relation to what it means to be proficient in a language, and to what a learner has to know in terms of grammar, vocabulary, sociolinguistic appropriateness, conventions of discourse, and cultural understanding in order to use a language well enough for real world purpose. Various definitions of communicative competence and its components and distinguishing features are studied and analyzed in the proposed paper. It is outlined that communicative competence in foreign language is one of the main components of professional competence of a modern specialist. In the article were distinguished main components of communicative competence in English language with the review the available definitions of the notion “communicative competence” by researchers from different fields of science.

Key words: foreign language, communicative competence, knowledge, ability, skill, proficiency, performance, approach.

Стаття містить огляд визначень поняття «комунікативна компетентність» різними дослідниками із різних країн, що зробили вклад у розвиток комунікативного підходу. Піднімається питання комунікативної направленості освітнього процесу. Навчання мовам базується на ідеї про те, що його мета – можливість використовувати мову відповідно до комунікативних цілей. Бажаний результат навчання іноземній мові – сформувані вміння грамотно спілкуватися. У теорії навчання мовам багато підходів виникає із базового питання, спрямованого на те, як викладач може допомогти студентам набутти високого рівня знання мови. Звідси виникає ще одне питання – що значить мати високий рівень володіння мовою, які граматичні, лексичні, соціолінгвістичні, дискурсивні та культурологічні знання повинен мати студент задля користування мовою за вимогами сучасного світу. У статті проаналізовано наявні визначення комунікативної компетентності та виділено основні компоненти англомовної комунікативної компетентності. Визначено, що іноземна комунікативна компетентність – один із основних компонентів загальної професійної компетентності сучасного фахівця.

Ключові слова: іноземна мова, комунікативна компетентність, знання, уміння, навички, високий рівень володіння іноземною мовою, продуктивність, підхід.

Статья содержит обзор определений понятия «коммуникативная компетентность» различными исследователями из разных стран, который сделали вклад в развитие коммуникативного подхода. Поднимается вопрос коммуникативной направленности образовательного процесса. Обучение языкам базируется на идее о том, что его цель – использовать язык в соответствии с коммуникативной направленностью. Желаемый результат обучения иностранному языку – сформировать умение грамотного общения. В теории обучения языкам много подходов возникает из базового вопроса, направленного на то, как преподаватель может помочь студентам приобрести высокий уровень знания языка. Возникает еще один вопрос – что значит иметь высокий уровень владения языком, какие грамматические, лексические, социолингвистические, дискурсивные и культурологические знания должен иметь студент для пользования языком в соответствии с требованиями современного мира. В статье проанализированы существующие определения коммуникативной компетентности и выделены основные компоненты англоязычной коммуникативной компетентности. Определено, что иноязычная коммуникативная компетентность – это один из основных компонентов общей профессиональной компетентности современного специалиста.

Ключевые слова: иностранный язык, коммуникативная компетентность, знания, умения, навыки, высокий уровень владения иностранным языком, производительность, подход

Introduction. Alteration and progress of higher education demand providing a wide range of researches and studies associated with the implementation in the process of learning foreign languages new technologies and modern approaches.

One of the main components of professional competence of a modern specialist is communicative competence in foreign language. Nowadays we have an intention to enhance communicative orientation of educational process – its approximation to the real process of communication. Different research teams and trainers from many countries were involved into the development of the communicative approach. But still there is no single point of view on the allocation of communicative competence basic components in English as a foreign language.

H. Widdowson, W. Littlewood, J.R. Firth, M. Holliday, M. Viatutnev, P. Gurvich, I. Zimnya, Y. Passov, G. Kitaygorodskaya, V. Skalkin, D. Hymes, V. Labov, N. Chomsky, M. Canale, M. Swain and other scientists studied issues of communicative competence in their works. There is no certain and single classification of main components of communicative competence in English language until now.

Aims and tasks. The aim of this article is to distinguish main components of communicative competence in English language. To achieve this aim we should

review the available definitions of the notion “communicative competence” by researchers from different fields of science.

American linguist **Noam Chomsky** determined communicative competence as perfect speaker-listener’s knowledge of a language. Chomsky obviously equates the term competence with knowledge, and separates it from socio-cultural features. Furthermore, he considers the term “competence” as an absolute quality. That is to say, a static concept that characterizes personalities, and which cannot be compared with another person’s competence [2; 15].

Dell Hymes defined communicative competence not only as an inherent grammatical competence but also as the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations, thus bringing the sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky’s linguistic view of competence. He distinguished three components of language activity: 1) verbal repertoire; 2) linguistic routines; 3) domains of language behavior [5; 269-293].

Henry Widdowson in his studying of communicative competence made a differentiation between competence and capacity. In his definition of these two notions he applied insights that he gained in discourse analysis and pragmatics. In this respect, he defined competence, i.e. communicative competence, in terms of the knowledge of linguistic

and sociolinguistic conventions. Under capacity, which he often referred to as procedural or communicative capacity, he understood the ability to use knowledge as means of creating meaning in a language. According to him, ability is not a component of competence. It does not turn into competence, but remains "an active force for continuing creativity. Having defined communicative competence in this way, Widdowson is said to be the first who in his reflections on the relationship between competence and performance gave more attention to performance or real language use [12].

Michael Canale and Merrill Swain considered communicative competence as a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication. In their concept of communicative competence, knowledge refers to the (conscious or unconscious) knowledge of an individual about language and about other aspects of language use. According to them, there are three types of knowledge: knowledge of underlying grammatical principles, knowledge of how to use language in a social context in order to fulfill communicative functions and knowledge of how to combine utterances and communicative functions with respect to discourse principles. In addition, their concept of skill refers to how an individual can use the knowledge in actual communication. According to Canale, skill requires a further distinction between underlying capacity and its manifestation in real communication, that is to say, in performance [1; 26-27].

Sandra Savignon put a much greater emphasis on the aspect of ability in her concept of communicative competence. Namely, she described communicative competence as "the ability to function in a truly communicative setting - that is, in a dynamic exchange in which

linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors" [9; 8].

A more recent survey of communicative competence by **L. F. Bachman** divides it into the broad headings of "organizational competence," which includes both grammatical and discourse (or textual) competence, and "pragmatic competence," which includes both sociolinguistic and "illocutionary" competence. Strategic competence is associated with the interlocutors' ability in using communication strategies [7].

Mark Viatutnev defined communicative competence as "choice and realization of a language behaviour program according to a person's ability to navigate any situation of communication; skill to classify situations according to the topics, tasks, communicative settings that appear before and during the conversation in the process of mutual adaptation". He noted that communicative competence is the ability to use language creatively, regulatory and in interaction with interlocutors [10; 38-45].

V.V. Safonova notes that communicative competence level is one of deliberately defined levels of communicative proficiency with strictly organized characteristics of language, speech and socio-cultural behavior that enable to distinguish this level from other levels of proficiency and knowledge within a certain methodical classification of levels [7].

As to **O.M. Solovova**, communicative competence is necessary for successful professional activity and career development of a specialist at any sphere, herewith communicative competence must be formed in native and foreign language [9].

The researcher emphasizes the fact that development of communicative

skills should be considered not only as a goal but also as a means of a successful mastering of any subject, interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. It is impossible to realize design and planning of personal activity without highly-developed communicative competence.

N.I. Gez considers communicative competence as ability to use language in a proper way in different socially determined situations. In addition to knowledge of a language, communicative competence includes a skill to correlate colloquial expression with the purposes of communicational situations, with understanding of parties cooperation and ability to organize communication properly, considering cultural and social norms of communicative behaviour [4].

The analysis of the scientific literature about the nature of communicative competence shows that there are two **main approaches** to determine the notion of communicative competence.

Some scientists (N.I. Gez, D. Hymes, M.M. Viatutnev) explain communicative competence within the notion of "ability". They consider communicative competence as an ability to use language in different spheres of communication.

Second approach is associated with such scholars as N. Chomsky, M. Canale, M. Swain, V.V. Safonova define communicative competence within "knowledge, skills and abilities".

So, if we consider the concept of "competence" in terms of the educational process, we can say that competence is primarily the result of training. Through the study of educational material the student acquires a particular competence – specific knowledge, skills – and gains experience (professional quality) and thus demonstrates perseverance, self-reliance and responsibility (personal qualities).

In addition, competence in the

educational process is the result of integrated learning (the integration of theory and practice, the integration of teaching methods and educational technologies, the integration of academic disciplines). Competence is characterised by the possibility (the ability, willingness) to apply knowledge and skills in real life, showing the best personal qualities.

Having considered both approaches we can make a conclusion that formation of communicative competence needs certain generated knowledge, skills and abilities gained in the process of specially organized training.

Considering the above approaches and classifications we can distinguish **three main components** of communicative competence:

1. Linguistic competence (language and speaking components).

Linguistic competence is a term used by speech experts and anthropologists to describe how language is defined within a community of speakers. This term applies to mastering the combination of sounds, syntax and semantics known as the grammar of a language. People with such competence have learned to utilize the grammar of their spoken language to generate an unlimited amount of statements. This term is distinct from the concept of communicative competence, which determines what is socially appropriate speech.

Language component. Complex of skills and abilities giving the possibility to use foreign language in professional activity and self-development.

Speaking component. Knowledge of foreign language involves not only producing language correctly, but also using language for particular purpose. When learners are able to perform the communicative functions that they need, they achieve speaking competence in the language. In order to be fluent in

a foreign language, we need to have a command of the language. This we can attain by achieving speaking competence in English as a foreign language.

According to Chomsky linguistic competence can be separated from the rest of communicative competence and studied in isolation but socio-linguist, like Dell Hymes believes that the notion of linguistic competence is unreal and that no significant progress in linguistics is possible without studying forms along with the ways in which they are used. For one thing, social interaction is actually skilled work, and it requires effort. It is not innate (inborn or genetically endowed). It has to be learnt from others. A person who faces to learn and make himself and others uneasy in conversation and perpetually kills, encounters is a faulty person. **Dell Hymes** maintains that competence is dependent upon the fore features listed below: 1) whether (and to what degree) something is possible; 2) whether (and to what degree) something is visible (in relation to the means available); 3) whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, in relation to the context in which it is used); 4) whether (and to what degree) something is performed (actually done and what the doing entails).

So, we can see that linguistic competence generally implies knowledge of vocabulary units and grammar rules which convert lexical units into meaningful statements.

2. Professional.

Professional competence is the ability of a specialist to meet the requirements of the chosen profession through effective and purposeful professional activity. This competence includes professional knowledge, skills, abilities and readiness for professional work and a set of professional qualities (communicative

skills, creative approach, striving for self-realization, etc.).

Professional competence is the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served. Competence builds on a foundation of basic skills, scientific knowledge, and moral development. It includes a cognitive function – acquiring and using knowledge to solve real-life problems; an integrative function – using data in educational reasoning; a relational function – communicating effectively with students and colleagues; and an affective/moral function – the willingness, patience, and emotional awareness to use these skills judiciously and humanely. Competence depends on habits of mind, including attentiveness, critical curiosity, self-awareness, and presence. Professional competence is developmental, impermanent, and context-dependent.

3. Socio-cultural.

Socio-cultural competence is a complex phenomenon. It includes the following components:

- linguistic-cultural – knowledge of lexical items with the socio-cultural semantics (e.g., greeting, forms of address, and farewell, in oral and written speech);
- sociolinguistic – knowledge of the language features of social classes, different generations, genders, social groups;
- cultural component – knowledge of cultural peculiarities of English-speaking countries, their habits, traditions, standards of behaviour, etiquette and the ability to understand and use them appropriately in the communication process, while

remaining a carrier of another culture [3].

G.A. Vorobjev notes "socio-cultural competence is a complex phenomenon and includes a set of components belonging to different categories" [11]. According to R.P. Milrud, "sociocultural competence refers to the activity-component of communicative competence" [6]. V.V. Safonova believes that "didactic description of the objectives of socio-cultural education by means of a foreign language is to be done in terms of socio-cultural competence" [7].

Socio-cultural competence as the possession of and the ability to apply a set of multicultural knowledge, skills and

qualities in the process of intercultural communication in the specific conditions of life and tolerance towards people of other nationalities.

Conclusions. So, in this article we considered various definitions of communicative competence and its components and distinguishing features worked out by many research teams, researchers and trainers from different countries involved into the development of communicative approach.

We can make a conclusion that communicative competence is a complex formation consisting of three main components: linguistic, professional and socio-cultural.

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