



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF DISCURSIVE COMPETENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO NON-PHILOLOGICAL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article explores the importance of developing discourse competence in foreign language education for students. In the context of growing international collaboration and the global labor market, medical professionals are expected to communicate effectively in foreign languages. The study distinguishes between the concepts of "competence" and "competency," emphasizing the need for not only knowledge but also practical communication skills. It also defines discourse as a communicative phenomenon that includes both verbal and non-verbal aspects, contextual factors, and cultural appropriateness. Special attention is given to the integration of discourse-based approaches in foreign language instruction, highlighting their effectiveness in training competent medical specialists capable of participating in international academic and professional settings.

Keywords: Discursive competence, non-philological education, competence, competency, communicative approach.

Introduction

International collaboration is growing across all areas of knowledge, and the current global job market demands that graduates of higher medical institutions be more than just experts in their specific fields. They must also be well-rounded professionals who are proficient in foreign languages, enabling them to communicate effectively on an international level.

A competent professional should possess the ability to communicate fluently in foreign languages with colleagues from various countries, engage in discussions on advancements in medicine while considering current trends, deliver presentations at international medical congresses, symposiums, and conferences, and appropriately adapt their language use to fit different communicative contexts.

For this reason, it is essential to enhance future physicians' proficiency in foreign language communication in line with the Common European Framework of Reference. This requires developing new approaches to teaching foreign languages as a mandatory subject in higher non-philological education. It is also necessary to implement interactive teaching methods and technologies that support the development of verbal discursive skills in a foreign language, grounded in the systematic acquisition of knowledge throughout the educational process.

Main part

The goal of foreign language learning in higher education is not only to acquire the language as a means of communication but also to develop professionally oriented foreign language competence, enabling future specialists to perform their professional duties effectively.

The concepts of "competence" and "competency" are viewed and interpreted differently by various scholars depending on their disciplinary perspectives.

Andrii Khutorskii makes a clear distinction between the terms "competence" and "competency." According to him:

- Competence refers to a set of interrelated human characteristics, such as knowledge, abilities, skills, and methods of activity that are necessary for effective performance in a specific area.
- Competency, on the other hand, is defined as the actual possession and demonstration of that competence by a person, and it also includes the individual's personal attitudes, values, and feelings toward the subject or activity in question [1].

In short, competence is the potential, while competency is the realized and personal expression of that potential in real-world contexts.

According to the definitions of these terms, competence should be understood as a clearly defined requirement or standard that determines the expected

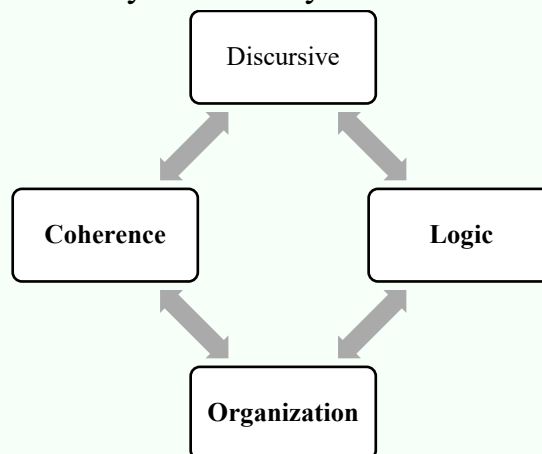
educational level of future physicians. In contrast, competency refers to the actually developed personal qualities and minimal practical experience that a student possesses. Foreign communicative competence is considered an integral component of a specialist's professional activity. It comprises several substructures:

- **Activity component:** Includes knowledge, abilities, skills, and methods required to perform professional tasks.
- **Communicative component:** Encompasses knowledge, abilities, skills, and strategies necessary for effective professional communication.

This highlights the importance of not only acquiring theoretical knowledge, but also developing practical communication skills in a foreign language, which are essential in today's global medical environment [2].

The discourse component refers to the set of rules that govern how meaning is constructed within a specific type of speech or communication. Discourse represents a form of communicative meaning—that is, not only what should be said, but also how it should be expressed. It is always directed toward an interlocutor, listener, or reader.

Discourse is characterized by several key features:



These features are particularly important in written discourse, where lexical and grammatical connections, the logical structure of meaning, and effective organization of the speech are more critical than in spoken interaction.

In modern linguistics, discourse is defined as a complex communicative phenomenon that encompasses not only the text itself but also extralinguistic factors such as background knowledge, worldviews, the intentions and attitudes of the speaker or listener which are essential for the accurate interpretation of a message. Unlike a simple text, discourse is primarily seen as an example of how



specific communicative intentions are realized within a particular communicative context, and in interaction with a specific interlocutor who may belong to a different cultural background. This interaction involves both verbal and non-verbal means, tailored to the given situation. The appropriateness and effectiveness of a speaker's language behavior within discourse is judged by the success of the communication i.e., whether the intended communicative goal was achieved and by how well it aligns with the norms of verbal and non-verbal behavior typical for a particular linguocultural community.

A new approach to defining discourse has largely emerged within the field of foreign language teaching. According to foreign scholars such as discourse competence is understood as both the knowledge of various discourse types and their structural principles, as well as the ability to construct and interpret discourse appropriately based on different communicative contexts [4]. H. Douglas Brown described discourse as the human ability to link sentences into coherent discourse segments, thereby producing a semantically meaningful text from a collection of individual phrases [3]. This discourse-based approach to studying linguistic phenomena has significantly influenced the methods and techniques used in foreign language instruction, as it emphasizes the procedural and functional unity of language behavior by integrating both verbal and non-verbal components. As a result, the concept of the text—viewed as a central communicative unit and a complex semiotic structure formed through semantic elements aligned by the author's communicative intention—has gained prominence in foreign language education. As noted by Kruchyna, the text serves as a primary source of discourse information and is now widely recognized in theory and practice as the core unit for teaching language communication [5].

Conclusion

Discourse competence refers to a person's ability to produce coherent and connected speech, taking into account grammatical, lexical, and syntactic rules, as well as the communicative context and extralinguistic factors, which are essential elements of the communication process. It involves logically organizing utterances into complete texts and presenting them in line with the appropriate speech style and principles of rhetorical effectiveness.

In the development of students' foreign language competence, there is a noticeable shift in focus: from simply using the text as a model of discourse forms

in spoken communication to emphasizing the strategies and means of expressing and achieving communicative goals with an interlocutor.

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